

Cambodia begins vaccination campaign against COVID-19

February 10 2021



Cambodia's Lt. Gen. Hun Manet, a son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, thumbs up as he receives a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)

Three sons of Cambodian leader Hun Sen were inoculated against COVID-19 on Wednesday as the country began distributing vaccines donated from its closest ally, China.

Hun Manet, the head of the army and Hun Sen's eldest son, urged all Cambodians to be vaccinated and thanked China for the donation.

"I trust this [vaccine](#) and that is why I have been vaccinated with it," Hun Manet said.

China is donating 1 million doses of the Chinese-made Sinopharm vaccine, enough for half a million people, and the first shipment of 600,000 doses arrived in Cambodia on Sunday.

Hun Sen's two sons-in-law, government ministers and other officials were vaccinated at a state-run hospital.

Hun Sen himself backtracked on receiving the vaccine because he is 68.

In China, the Sinopharm vaccine was approved only for people ages 18-59 because that is the population studied in clinical trials. While there is not yet data on its effectiveness for other age groups, other countries have discretion to use it in older people.

China is Cambodia's biggest investor and its closest political partner, while Hun Sen is shunned by some Western nations who consider his government to be repressive. Cambodia in turn backs Beijing's geopolitical positions in international forums on issues such as China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.



A Cambodian nurse prepares the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)



Cambodian Environment Minister Say Sam Al, right, receives a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)



Cambodia's Lt. Gen. Hun Manet, right, a son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, prepares to receive a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)



Cambodia's Lt. Gen. Hun Manet, right, a son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, receives a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)



Cambodia's Lt. Gen. Hun Manet, a son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, receives a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)



A Cambodian nurse gives a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021. Cambodia began its inoculation campaign against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines donated from China, the country's closest ally. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)

China also announced it would give Cambodia 1 million doses of the vaccine produced by Beijing Institute of Biological Products Co., but a date for delivering the rest of the promised amount has not yet been set.

Cambodia has recorded 478 confirmed cases of infection with the [coronavirus](#), with no deaths.

Hun Sen said earlier this month that Cambodia seeks to reserve 20 million vaccine doses to inoculate 10 million people, roughly two-thirds

of its total population.

In addition to the Chinese donation, Australia has announced a grant of \$28 million to purchase 3 million doses, and it is set to get 7 million doses through the World Health Organization's COVAX initiative.

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