



By: TA | AP Brief

South Korea and Cambodia open talks to fight criminal cyberscams



South Korea's foreign minister met Monday with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, keeping up pressure to suppress burgeoning large-scale **online scam** operations that have been blamed for the brutal death of a Korean student.

Hun Manet said on social media that he had met with Foreign Minister Cho Hyun but did not provide details of their talks in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh.

Seoul's foreign ministry said last week Cho's visit would include discussions on cooperating to eradicate scam-related crimes in Cambodia and launching a joint police task force on the problem. Cho is scheduled to depart Tuesday.

The efforts followed the death of 22-year-old **Park Min-ho**, who was reportedly lured to Cambodia and forced to work in a scam center before his body was found tortured and beaten in August.

His death triggered outrage in South Korea, prompting the government to send a delegation to Phnom Penh for urgent talks.

Online scams

Online scams, many based in **Southeast Asian countries**, have risen sharply in recent years.

Thousands of people, many of them kidnapped or tricked, have been forced to work in guarded compounds, under the threat of violence.

The United Nations and other agencies have estimated that cyberscams earn international criminal gangs billions of dollars annually.

The cybercriminals feign friendship or tout phony investment opportunities to cheat targets around the world.

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Scam centers in Cambodia are estimated to have about 200,000 workers including 1,000 South Koreans, according to South Korean officials.

Last month, 64 South Koreans who had been detained by Cambodian police were repatriated on a chartered flight.

Around 50 of them were **arrested** shortly after arrival on charges of involvement in online fraud activities.