

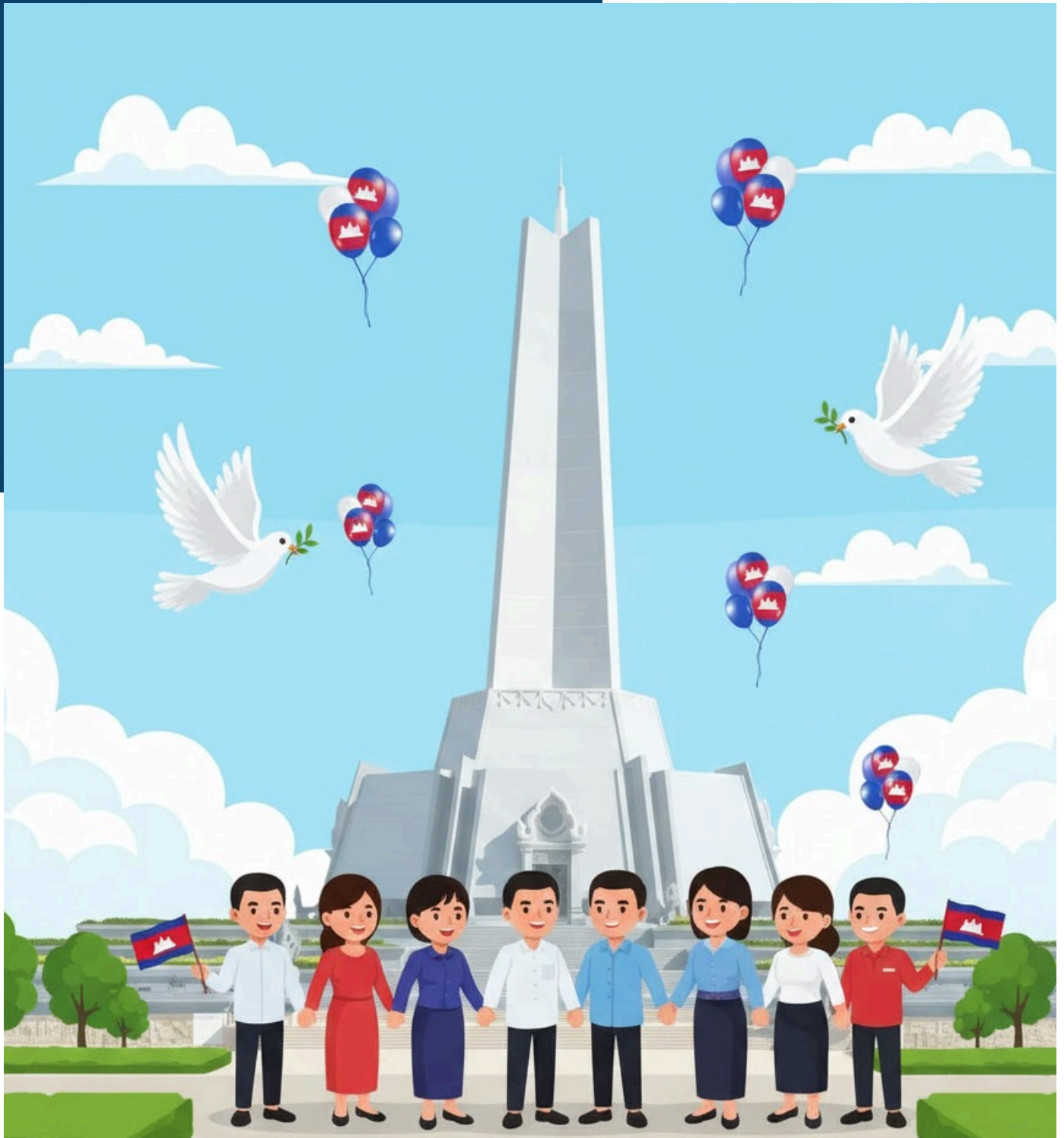
AI FORUM NEWSLETTER

[HTTPS://AIFORUM.MY.CANVA.SITE/LINKTREE](https://aiforum.my.canva.site/linktree)

Vong Sokcheavavy
Say Vithya Arthur
Sar Sorpheavathana



Friday, January 2, 2026
ISSUE NO. 60



Prompt: Cambodia marks Peace Day on 29 December, honoring the 1998 Win-Win Policy that ended conflict and ushered in lasting peace, unity, and national gratitude

Photo Credit: ChatGPT

01/10

1. AI powered 2025's economy. So why are only robots smiling?

ការជំរុញសេដ្ឋកិច្ចក្នុងឆ្នាំ២០២៥ លើបញ្ញាសិប្បនិម្មិត (AI)។ ដូច្នេះហេតុអ្វីបានជាមនុស្សយន្តមានតែញញឹម?

Source: [Khmer Times](#)



In 2025, AI is driving record-high stock markets through major tech firms, but this growth masks deep economic uncertainty and inequality. AI-led investment fuels optimism and fear of missing out in financial markets, while everyday challenges like housing stress, low job mobility, and unfair income distribution persist. As a result, AI is boosting capital and productivity at the top, yet widening the gap between financial success and real economic wellbeing.

Reference:

ABC. (2026, January 1). AI powered 2025's economy. So why are only robots smiling?. *Khmer Times*.
<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501819062/ai-powered-2025s-economy-so-why-are-only-robots-smiling/>

2. AI-powered startups see rapid increase in revenue

ក្រុមហ៊ុនចាប់ផ្តើមអាជីវកម្មដែលដំណើរការដោយបញ្ញាសិប្បនិម្មិត (AI) ឃើញការកើនឡើងយ៉ាងឆាប់រហ័សនៃប្រាក់ចំណូល

Source: [Khmer Times](#)

Source: iStoke



Cambodia's AI-powered startups are experiencing rapid growth, with revenues rising 86% between early 2024 and 2025, reflecting strong AI adoption in the country's expanding digital economy. High daily use of AI tools, especially chatbots, shows growing consumer reliance on AI for faster decisions, personalised services, and efficiency. While AI is boosting startup revenues and positioning Cambodia as a rising "next-wave" ASEAN market, sustaining this momentum will depend on building trust, managing regulation, and ensuring secure, transparent AI use.

Reference:

Ravindran, S. (2025, December 30). AI-powered startups see rapid increase in revenue. *Khmer Times*.
<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501817370/ai-powered-startups-see-rapid-increase-in-revenue/>

3. Behind Taiwan's AI-driven economic boom, ordinary people see little gain

នៅពីក្រោយការរីកចម្រើនសេដ្ឋកិច្ចដែលជំរុញដោយបញ្ញាសិប្បនិម្មិតរបស់តៃវ៉ាន់
ប្រជាជនទទួលបានប្រាក់ចំណេញតិចតួច

Source: [XinhuaNet](#)



Source: iStoke

Taiwan's AI-driven economic boom has lifted headline growth and exports, but its benefits are highly concentrated in the AI and high-tech sector, leaving most workers behind. While AI-related industries fuel strong GDP and export figures, wages for ordinary people stagnate, traditional industries shed jobs, and living costs rise. This highlights a key AI-era challenge: AI can accelerate economic growth, but without redistribution and structural reform, it deepens income inequality and social frustration rather than improving everyday livelihoods.

Reference:

Xinhua. (2026, January 1). Behind Taiwan's AI-driven economic boom, ordinary people see little gain. *XinhuaNet*.
<https://english.news.cn/20260101/bb1738af1c7846548e0024a4d5b47e9c/c.html>

4. Streaming vendors see cost control and AI deployment as dual priorities for 2026

អ្នកលក់ស្ត្រីមមើលឃើញការគ្រប់គ្រងថ្លៃដើម និងការដាក់ពង្រាយបញ្ញាសិប្បនិម្មិត
(AI) ជាអាទិភាពពីរសម្រាប់ឆ្នាំ ២០២៦

Source: [NewscastStudio](#)



Source: iStoke

As streaming enters 2026, vendors see AI deployment and cost control as inseparable priorities. AI is shifting from experimentation to practical use automating tasks like content tagging, personalization, ad insertion, and workflow optimization to cut costs while maintaining quality. However, industry leaders caution that AI is not a cure-all, as it still underperforms in many real-world scenarios, pushing companies to focus on ROI-driven, selective AI adoption rather than hype-led investment.

Reference:

NCS Staff. (2026, January 1). Streaming vendors see cost control and AI deployment as dual priorities for 2026. *NewscastStudio*.
<https://www.newscaststudio.com/2026/01/01/streaming-vendors-see-cost-control-and-ai-deployment-as-dual-priorities-for-2026/>

5. Hong Kong government launches HK\$500,000 AI integration programme for local schools

រដ្ឋាភិបាលហុងកុងដាក់ឱ្យដំណើរការកម្មវិធីសមាហរណកម្មបញ្ញាសិប្បនិម្មិត (AI) ដែលមានតម្លៃ ៥០០,០០០ ដុល្លារហុងកុងសម្រាប់សាលារៀនក្នុងស្រុក

Source: [YoungPost Club](#)

Hong Kong has launched a three-year AI integration programme that provides HK\$500,000 per school to help public schools adopt AI tools across multiple subjects, marking a major push for AI-driven education reform. By funding AI software, equipment, and classroom use, the Hong Kong government aims to strengthen digital literacy early and prepare students for an AI-centered economy, signalling a strategic shift from pilot projects to system-wide AI adoption in education.



Source: iStoke

Reference:

South China Morning Post. (2026, January 1). Hong Kong government launches HK\$500,000 AI integration programme for local schools. *Young Post Club*. <https://www.youngpostclub.com/spark/news/hong-kong/education/article/3338400/hong-kong-government-launches-hk500000-ai-integration-programme-local-schools>

6. Investors predict AI is coming for labor in 2026

វិនិយោគិនព្យាករណ៍ថាបញ្ញាសិប្បនិម្មិត (AI) នឹងមកដល់សម្រាប់កម្លាំងពលកម្មនៅឆ្នាំ ២០២៦

Source: [Techcrunch](#)



Source: iStoke

Investors expect 2026 to be a turning point where AI begins directly displacing labor, not just boosting productivity. Studies already show a significant share of jobs can be automated, and companies are shifting budgets from hiring toward AI systems and autonomous agents. While some argue AI will augment workers, many investors believe it will drive layoffs, reshape roles, and increasingly be cited—rightly or wrongly—as the justification for workforce reductions.

Reference:

Szkutak, R. (2025, December 31). Investors predict AI is coming for labor in 2026. *Techcrunch*. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/12/31/investors-predict-ai-is-coming-for-labor-in-2026/>

PUBLICATIONS

AIF Insights No. 35 (2025) | From Medicine to Meaning: A Buddhist Journey through Being, Knowing, and Acting in AI

Source: [AI Forum](#)

Reference:

Chhem, K. R. (2025, October 10). *From Medicine to Meaning: A Buddhist Journey through Being, Knowing, and Acting in AI*. AI Forum. <https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/?publication=aif-insights-no-35-2025-from-medicine-to-meaning-a-buddhist-journey-through-being-knowing-and-acting-in-ai>

From Medicine to Meaning: A Buddhist Journey through Being, Knowing, and Acting in AI explores how Buddhist philosophy reframes the discourse on artificial intelligence through an ontology of interdependence, an epistemology of the Middle Way, and an ethics of compassion. Moving beyond Western notions of autonomy and binary logic, the essay situates AI within a relational framework grounded in dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda) and non-self (anattā). It argues that intelligence should be understood not as independent agency but as a process arising from interconnected causes and conditions. Drawing on the Four Brahmavihāras—loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity—the paper proposes a model of “compassionate design” where moral intention replaces mechanical compliance. The author’s intellectual evolution from medicine to education and history mirrors a shift from empirical control to contemplative wisdom. Ultimately, the essay contends that the true innovation in AI lies not in computation but in consciousness—inviting humanity to design intelligent systems guided by mindfulness, wisdom, and compassion.

PUBLICATIONS

AIF Insights No. 36
(2025) | Khmer
Gatilok and
Relational Ethics: A
Cultural Lens for AI
Morality

Source: [AI Forum](#)

Reference:
Chhem, K. R. (2025, October 31). *Khmer Gatilok and Relational Ethics: A Cultural Lens for AI Morality*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/publications/aif-insights-no-36-2025-khmer-gatilok-and-relational-ethics-a-cultural-lens-for-ai-morality/>

This essay examines the Khmer ethical system of Gatilok as a culturally grounded framework for AI ethics. Unlike Western approaches that prioritize universal principles, Gatilok emphasizes relational, situational, and long-term moral reasoning rooted in Theravāda Buddhist concepts such as intention (cetanā), karma (kamma), and social harmony (sampheap). Through stories, proverbs, and oral traditions, Gatilok teaches that ethical behavior depends on context, relationships, and the consequences of actions over time. Applying these insights to AI governance highlights the importance of relational accountability, participatory oversight, culturally sensitive datasets, and long-term impact assessments. By integrating Gatilok into AI design and policy, this perspective encourages ethically aware, contextually appropriate, and culturally responsive AI systems that respect local values and foster social cohesion.

The Khmer Path Beyond AI explores how a mistranslation of “artificial intelligence” in Cambodia opened a deeper conversation about the difference between intelligence and wisdom. The article argues that while modern AI focuses on computation and efficiency, Khmer Buddhist thought offers a path that centers mindfulness, discernment, and compassion. It suggests that Cambodia’s philosophical heritage can inspire a shift from building smart machines to cultivating wise technologies grounded in ethical awareness and human flourishing.

Reference:
Chhem, K. R. (2025, November 11). *Artificial Wisdom: The Khmer Path Beyond AI*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/publications/aif-insights-no-37-2025-artificial-wisdom-the-khmer-path-beyond-ai/>

AIF Insights No. 37
(2025) | Artificial
Wisdom: The Khmer
Path Beyond AI

Source: [AI Forum](#)

PUBLICATIONS

AIF Insights No. 38 (2025) | Science as Shield: How Small States Survive Through Cyber, AI, Math, and Physics

Source: [AI Forum](#)

Reference:

Chhem, K. R. (2025, December 17). *Science as Shield: How Small States Survive Through Cyber, AI, Math, and Physics*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/publications/aif-insights-no-38-2025-science-as-shield-how-small-states-survive-through-cyber-ai-math-and-physics/>

This article argues that for small states, survival in an era shaped by great power rivalry, war economy dynamics, and artificial intelligence depends on scientific depth rather than size or rhetoric. It contends that mathematics, physics, and cyber capability form the core pillars of industrial capacity, technological sovereignty, and national security. Drawing on earlier Cambodian policy papers and contemporary global trends, the analysis shows how neglecting these foundations leads to structural dependence, strategic vulnerability, and silent erosion of sovereignty, especially as AI amplifies existing scientific inequalities. The article concludes that science is no longer a long-term development goal but an immediate strategic necessity, and that for small states, building robust scientific ecosystems is the decisive condition for autonomy and survival in the modern international system.

This paper examines how Gatilok parables, a classical Khmer moral tradition, can inform contemporary debates on AI ethics and governance. Drawing on six well known stories, it treats these parables as moral case studies rather than folklore, highlighting themes of authority without wisdom, silenced questioning, and ethical failure rooted in unchecked desire. The analysis shows clear parallels between these narratives and modern AI systems that rely on institutional prestige, technical opacity, and voluntary ethics frameworks without enforcement. By reframing AI governance through Gatilok's ethical grammar, the paper argues for designs that make power accountable, systems contestable, and moral insight visible, especially for societies in the Global South that often receive AI technologies developed elsewhere. It concludes that ethical AI requires not only technical safeguards but also moral architectures that encourage listening, restraint, and responsibility.

AIF Insights No. 39 (2025) | Gatilok Ethics for AI

Source: [AI Forum](#)

Chhem, K. R. (2025, December 22). *Gatilok Ethics for AI*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/archives/publications/aif-insights-no-39-2025-gatilok-ethics-for-ai>

PUBLICATIONS 2026

AIF Insights No. 1 (2026) | TRUE INTELLECTUALS vs PSEUDO- INTELLECTUALS

Source: [AI Forum](#)

Reference:

AI Forum Cambodia. (2025, January 1). *TRUE INTELLECTUALS vs PSEUDO-INTELLECTUALS*. AI Forum. <https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/archives/publications/aif-insights-no-1-2026-true-intellectuals-vs-pseudo-intellectuals>

This public guide by AI Forum Cambodia explains the difference between true intellectuals and pseudo intellectuals in the age of generative AI, where fluent writing has become easy but genuine thinking remains rare. It argues that machines can produce text, but only humans can produce understanding, judgment, and responsibility. Pseudo intellectuals rely on AI, jargon, and smooth language to appear knowledgeable, while avoiding uncertainty and accountability. True intellectuals, by contrast, use AI as a tool to support deeper thinking, accept limits to their knowledge, and write to clarify and benefit society rather than to impress or dominate. The guide is written for the public, educators, and policymakers as a simple framework to protect education, public debate, and ethical governance in an era where words are abundant but meaning is not.

News References

1. ABC. (2026, January 1). AI powered 2025's economy. So why are only robots smiling?. *Khmer Times*. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501819062/ai-powered-2025s-economy-so-why-are-only-robots-smiling/>
2. Ravindran, S. (2025, December 30). AI-powered startups see rapid increase in revenue. *Khmer Times*. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501817370/ai-powered-startups-see-rapid-increase-in-revenue/>
3. Xinhua. (2026, January 1). Behind Taiwan's AI-driven economic boom, ordinary people see little gain. *XinhuaNet*. <https://english.news.cn/20260101/bb1738af1c7846548e0024a4d5b47e9c/c.html>
4. NCS Staff. (2026, January 1). Streaming vendors see cost control and AI deployment as dual priorities for 2026. *NewscastStudio*. <https://www.newscaststudio.com/2026/01/01/streaming-vendors-see-cost-control-and-ai-deployment-as-dual-priorities-for-2026/>
5. South China Morning Post. (2026, January 1). Hong Kong government launches HK\$500,000 AI integration programme for local schools. *YoungPost Club*. <https://www.youngpostclub.com/spark/news/hong-kong/education/article/3338400/hong-kong-government-launches-hk500000-ai-integration-programme-local-schools>
6. Szkutak, R. (2025, December 31). Investors predict AI is coming for labor in 2026. *Techcrunch*. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/12/31/investors-predict-ai-is-coming-for-labor-in-2026/>

Publications References

1. Chhem, K. R. (2025, October 10). *From Medicine to Meaning: A Buddhist Journey through Being, Knowing, and Acting in AI*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/?publication=aif-insights-no-35-2025-from-medicine-to-meaning-a-buddhist-journey-through-being-knowing-and-acting-in-ai>
2. Chhem, K. R. (2025, October 31). *Khmer Gatilok and Relational Ethics: A Cultural Lens for AI Morality*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/publications/aif-insights-no-36-2025-khmer-gatilok-and-relational-ethics-a-cultural-lens-for-ai-morality/>
3. Chhem, K. R. (2025, November 11). *Artificial Wisdom: The Khmer Path Beyond AI*. AI Forum. <https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/publications/aif-insights-no-37-2025-artificial-wisdom-the-khmer-path-beyond-ai/>
4. Chhem, K. R. (2025, December 17). *Science as Shield: How Small States Survive Through Cyber, AI, Math, and Physics*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/publications/aif-insights-no-38-2025-science-as-shield-how-small-states-survive-through-cyber-ai-math-and-physics/>
5. Chhem, K. R. (2025, December 22). *Gatilok Ethics for AI*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/archives/publications/aif-insights-no-39-2025-gatilok-ethics-for-ai>
6. AI Forum Cambodia. (2025, January 1). *TRUE INTELLECTUALS vs PSEUDO-INTELLECTUALS*. AI Forum.
<https://www.aiforumcambodia.org/archives/publications/aif-insights-no-1-2026-true-intellectuals-vs-pseudo-intellectuals>