

VISIONS of CAMBODIA

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THE 4TH MEKONG-REPUBLIC OF KOREA FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING

At the invitation of His Excellency Yun Byung-Se, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has led a delegation to attend the 4th Mekong-Republic of Korea (ROK) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which was held on 28-29 July 2014 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea.

At the meeting, the Mekong Region countries – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam – and the ROK adopted the Mekong-ROK Plan of Action, which presents concrete activities/programs to be implemented between the Mekong countries and the ROK over the next three years to realise the visions and objectives outlined in the Han-River Declaration of Establishing the Mekong – ROK Comprehensive Partnership for Mutual Prosperity.

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THE 20TH ASEAN-EU MINISTERIAL MEETING "TOWARDS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP"

At the invitation of Her Excellency Mrs Catherine Ashton, High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has led a delegation to attend the 20th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting, which was held on 23 July 2014 in Brussels, Belgium.

At the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister HOR Namhong welcomed the EU commitment to more than double its dedicated support for ASEAN's institutions building

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THE COUNTRY'S THIRD FLYOVER OPENS, MORE ARE COMING



Prime Minister Hun Sen (center) cuts the red ribbon to inaugurate the use of the third overpass in Phnom Penh.

Cambodia's third flyover or overpass, which took 20 months at a cost of 19 million U.S. dollars, was officially inaugurated in late July under the presidency of Prime Minister Hun Sen.

This butterfly-shaped flyover, located at the Stung Meanchey intersection in southwestern Phnom Penh, is aimed to contribute to solving the traffic congestion in the capital city

Prime Minister Hun Sen said at the inauguration ceremony that the overpass will not only reduce traffic congestion in the area, but also add beauty to the city's landscape.

"Phnom Penh capital city now has nearly 1.4 million people and about 300,000 cars and 1 million motorcycles."

The Premier also added that the new flyover, called Techno Flyover, will be built along the Russian Federation Blvd., at Tuol Kok traffic lights, with an estimated cost of about US\$14 million.

Phnom Penh has currently three flyovers – the Kbal Thnal Flyover, the January 7 Flyover and the freshly-inaugurated Stung Meanchey Flyover.



(Photo of the new Stung Meanchey Flyover)

According to Governor of Phnom Penh, the Techno flyover, an underpass and a pavement for pedestrians will be constructed in Phnom Penh to respond to the increasing traffic jams in the capital city.

The 5th overpass will be built at Hanoi Street traffic lights, while the underpass at Canadia traffic lights. For the pavement for pedestrians, it will be constructed along the riverside, from tourism information center near the Royal Palace to Preah Monivong Bridge (Chbar Ampov). ■

THE 4TH MEKONG.....



(Left to Right) Foreign Minister Hor Namhong, Laos's Foreign Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, ROK's Foreign Minister Yun Byung-Se, Thailand's Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Myanmar's Deputy Foreign Minister U Thant Kyaw and Vietnam's Pham Binh Minh at the 4th Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Seoul, South Korea, on July 29, 2014

The Mekong countries and the ROK agreed to focus their attention on strengthening the six cooperation sectors of priority, namely Infrastructure, Information Communication Technology, Green Growth, Water Resource Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Human Resource Development.

Cambodia highly appreciates the efforts of the Republic of Korea to increase the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund with the amount approximately of 2.4 million USD for the period from 2013 to 2015, to finance the various cooperation projects in these 6 priority areas.

Cambodia commends the works of the Mekong-ROK Business Forum as a regular mechanism for private and public partnerships of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation. Cambodia will host the 3rd Mekong-ROK Business Forum in 2015 in Cambodia.

As part of their efforts to contribute to the celebration of the Cultural Exchange Year 2014, under the slogan of the Mekong-ROK Exchange Year "Miracle of the Han River, Rise of the Mekong River", Cambodia and the Republic of Korea have organized in Phnom Penh a special cultural performance entitled "Hello Cambodia, enjoy K-Culture". This great event, which was crowned with success, brought the essence of the Korean culture and has contributed to enhancing friendship between the people of Korea and Cambodia.

In terms of future direction, as the Mekong Countries move toward the ASEAN Community, Cambodia very much welcomes assistance to the Mekong Countries in enhancing its soft and hard infrastructure to contribute to ASEAN Connectivity. In this regard, Cambodia is pleased to join with the Mekong countries to launch the research process for establishing and managing the Mekong Transportation Institute.

For Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund, Cambodia proposes two initiatives for its consideration: 1) a project proposal on the capacity building for young entrepreneurs, in particular in the area of ICT; 2) a project proposal on the water resources management and sustainable development of the Mekong River linking with Catchment of the Tonle Sap Great Lake.

Deputy Prime Minister Hor Namhong expressed his thank to the Government and People of the Republic of Korea for their continued and valuable financial support to Cambodia through the provision of Grant Aid with the amount of 21 million USD in 2014. Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) from the Republic of Korea, totally around 81.82 million USD in 2013, have also brought in much more benefits in term of job creation and transfer of technologies and know-how, which have helped Cambodia to improve its productivity and increase its competitiveness in the international market. ■

LARGEST PORT REPORTS 18 PERCENT CARGO SHIPMENT GROWTH

The Sihanoukville Autonomous Port (SAP), Cambodia's largest shipping facility, has seen an 18- percent increase in cargo shipments in the first half of 2014, data from the port showed.

About 1.79 million tons of goods had been transported through the port during the January-June period this year, up 18 percent from 1.51 million tons over the same period last year, the data said.

Cargos imported into Cambodia included garment raw materials, autos, construction materials, machinery, petroleum, and daily consuming products, while items exported from Cambodia were apparel, shoes, and agricultural products.

According to the data, the country had imported 575,600 tons of petroleum through the port during the first half of this year, up 13 percent over the same period last year.

Apart from an impressive increase in the exports of garments and footwear, on the import side, there was a surge in construction materials and petroleum.

The country exported apparel and shoes worth 2.92 billion U.S. dollars during the first six months of this year, up 16 percent over the same period last year, according to the latest data from the Ministry of Commerce. ■

THE 20TH ASEAN-EU

and for ASEAN Community-building goals to €170 million for the period 2014-2020 and the increase of EU financial support to Mekong Countries from € 607 million (2007-2013) to €1705 million for the time frame 2014-2020 to help close development gap within the ASEAN region."

"I wish to emphasize that intra-regional connectivity within ASEAN and extra-regional connectivity to Europe have been one of ASEAN's top priorities. Connectivity is extremely important to speed up ASEAN regional integration towards the building of an ASEAN Community, as well as to connect ASEAN Community to other parts of the world," he said.

"With a view to achieving a safe, secure and sustainable ASEAN Single Aviation Market, the EU should maintain the support in this regard given the increasing transport links between ASEAN and Europe. Air linkages is one of the important part of the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity as it help promoting tourism and people-to-people contact," he stressed.

"As ASEAN is moving closer toward a single market and production base under the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, connectivity would be much more important to EU to get wider access to ASEAN with a total population of more than 600 million people as a promising destination for investment and trade opportunities between ASEAN and EU, given the fact that the EU is ASEAN's 3rd largest trading partner and ASEAN's largest source of Foreign Direct Investment," he further added.

The Co-Chair's Statement was issued at the end of the ASEAN-EU Meeting. It pointed out that the Minister also agreed to step up cooperation to enhance connectivity between the two regions and support the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC).

The Ministers also agreed to work towards the upgrading of the partnership to a strategic one and tasked their senior officials to develop a roadmap for this goal.

The Ministers took stock of developments in both regions since their last meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, in April 2012. ASEAN congratulated the EU on its enlargement to include Croatia in July 2013 and on the progress achieved to consolidate economic growth. The EU welcomed the outcome of the 24th ASEAN Summit in May 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

The EU reiterated its support for ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture in East Asia. The EU appreciated ASEAN's role as the driving force for, and its important contribution to, promoting dialogue and cooperation for peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to intensify EU-ASEAN cooperation in the fight against terrorism and organised crime, notably illicit drug production, trafficking and use; trafficking in human beings; cybercrime; as well as in the mitigation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks. To support this work, they also noted the possible development of an Action Plan on Transnational Crime.

On climate change, the Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) applicable to all Parties and expressed their determination to adopt the said document at the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21), which will be held in December 2015 in Paris, France.

The Ministers agreed that the 21st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting would be held in ASEAN in 2016. ■

PRIME MINISTER URGES FOR CITY BUS SERVICE EXPANSION



Speaking at a recent official inauguration of Stung Meanchey Overpass, Prime Minister Hun Sen said the city bus service project has to be successful, and if no private company is interested in the project, we have to establish a transport authority under the state responsibility.

Earlier, Phnom Penh Governor Pa Socheatevong informed at a meeting on the presentation of Municipal Public Works and Transport Department on City Bus Line that 40 more public buses will be put into service to serve the public transportation.

The 40 buses will be used on two new lines – from Psar Chass (Old Market) to Takhmao, and from Psar Chass to Choam Chao – in addition to the first line operated on Preah Monivong Boulevard with ten buses, said the Governor.

He further underlined that the public bus service is very important in reducing traffic congestion and transportation costs as well as in keeping friendly environment.

Cambodia's bus system is already in place in the city, but presently has only one line that has been serving 36 stops along Monivong Boulevard since February.

The work of installing the bus stops for the two new lines will start in August before launching its operation on September 1.

As part of the expanded service, the current line along Monivong will also grow by terminating in Nirotth commune in Chbar Ampov district instead of at Chbar Ampov Market, where it ends now.

According to the City Hall, students and the elderly will be given 50 percent discounts on ticket prices, which will vary per line. The fee will range from 1,500 to 1,600 riel [about \$0.37 to \$0.40] for retail tickets, and there would also be discounts for those who needed to use multiple lines.

City Hall has been running the current fleet of buses since April—two months after services began—when the Chinese firm given the operating contract pulled out after being refused tax breaks for its metered-taxi business. ■

FIRST DIRECT INTERNATIONAL ROUTE TO PREAH SIHANOUK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Skywings Asia Airlines with 142 passengers on-board launched seasonal flight services connecting Seoul of South Korea and Sihanoukville, Cambodia's main beach resort destination, according to a press release of Cambodia Airports.

Flight ZA2369 operated on a 180-seat Airbus 320 landed at Preah Sihanouk International Airport on July 29, it said.

The new service will run from July through August. South Korean nationals made up 11.6 percent of total tourist arrivals to Cambodia in the first five months of the year.

"The launch of Skywings Asia airlines' international charters from Seoul to Sihanoukville is a move in the right direction towards developing the Cambodian coastal city into a destination in its own right," said Marketing and Sales Director of Cambodia Airports.

"The first flights during this summer season are a way for us to test the market. We are considering having daily flights in the coming Winter season 2014-2015," said CEO of Skywings Asia Airlines.

Passenger traffic at Preah Sihanouk International Airport has experienced significant growth although the number is modest. From January to June 2014, the total number of passengers has increased by 146 percent to 20,400 passengers. ■

FISH PRODUCTIVITY AND EXPORTS

According to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the country's fish harvest in 2013 increased to 718,000 tonnes up by 36,000 tonnes in 2012 as proof that Cambodia's fishing industry was in good shape.

Cambodia is the fourth largest fish resource in Asia. This sector could generate more than \$450 million into the

economy annually, which could add up economic growth to more than 10 per cent if it is properly and more strictly managed, a report from Cambodia's Fish Action Coalition.

Cambodia exported a total of 8,300 tonnes, which includes 5,500 tonnes of fresh fish and 2,800 tonnes of processed fish products, in the first six months of 2014, according to figures from the Ministry.

The fishing season in Cambodia starts from October and runs to May. Cambodia exports fish to Hong Kong, China and other ASEAN countries. ■

DUTCH RICE TRADER IN MILLING VENTURE IN CAMBODIA



Dutch rice trader Alesie Food Holland BV has set up milling venture with a local company in Cambodia to produce parboiled rice for export, an industry source says.

Oryza.com reported recently that an agreement with Signatures of Asia Co Ltd was signed in June and that the joint venture was called Asia Parboiled Rice Producers Co Ltd.

"Cambodia is not a big player," Alesie Food managing director Bart Rouwers was quoted as saying, adding that the EU imported only 600,000 tonnes a year compared with global trade of 35 million tonnes.

"But Cambodia will become more important," he reportedly said, noting that its duty-free access meant it was more competitive with exporters such as those from Latin America.

"Guyana and Surinam normally exported 50 percent of their production to the EU. Now it is only 10 percent. The rest of the market share was lost to Cambodia," Rouwers said.

The Dutch company currently produces parboiled rice in Guyana and Thailand. Apart from Suriname, it also has operations in Argentina, India, Pakistan, Uruguay and Vietnam. ■

23 PERCENT GROWTH FOR LENDING IN FIRST HALF

Cambodia's 35 Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) had reported a 23-percent increase in loan disbursements in the first six months of 2014, according to official data from the Cambodian Microfinance Association (CMA) in late July.

The MFIs had lent a total of 1.63 billion U.S. dollars to customers by the end of June this year, up 23 percent from 1.32 billion dollars at the end of last year, the data said.

Some 1.65 million customers have borrowed money from the MFIs, it said. On the deposit side, during the January-June period, the customers' deposits at MFIs went up by 47 percent to 654 million dollars, it said, adding that about 1 million people have deposited money at MFIs.

CMA's President Bun Mony said the increase in MFIs was attributed to better economic situation and progress in micro, small and medium businesses.

Cambodia sees microfinance institutions as a key player in helping the government reduce poverty in rural areas and the sector has been well developed in recent years. ■

TOURISTS TO CAMBODIA'S PREAH VIHEAR HERITAGE SITE UP 53 PERCENT IN FIRST QUARTER

Cambodia's world heritage Preah Vihear temple, which was listed on 7 July 2008, greeted 63,610 local and foreign visitors in the first half of 2014, up 53 percent over the same period last year, a report from the Preah Vihear provincial tourism department showed.

The temple welcomed about 56,870 local visitors and 6,740 foreigners during the January-June period this year, up 56 percent and 28 percent respectively, compared with the same period last year, the report said.

Situated on the edge of a plateau that dominates the plain of Cambodia, the Temple of Preah Vihear is dedicated to Shiva. The Temple is composed of a series of sanctuaries linked by a system of pavements and staircases over an 800 metre long axis and dates back to the first half of the 11th century AD. Nevertheless, its complex history can be traced to the 9th century, when the hermitage was founded. This site is particularly well preserved, mainly due to its remote location. The site is exceptional for the quality of its architecture, which is adapted to the natural environment and the religious function of the temple, as well as for the exceptional quality of its carved stone ornamentation. ■



CAMBODIA HOSTS TRADITIONAL WEDDING FAIR

A Cambodian traditional wedding exhibition kicked off recently, aiming to maintain and enhance Khmer culture and civilization.

The three-day fair, which was co-organized the event by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, brought together 67 exhibitors who were doing businesses in cosmetics, dress-style designs, furniture, hotels, decorative ornaments, catering service, fruits, flowers, photographing and souvenir.

The event is being held at the Diamond Island Exhibition Center in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

According to the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts Phoeung Sakona, the fair aimed to maintain and promote the customs and traditions of Khmer wedding, and it is also to show Khmer's beautiful culture and civilization.

Wedding ceremony is very meaningful for each of individual's life who follows their tradition and the laws of the country. The ceremony is carefully dealt with concerning to choosing the date which is believed to bring luck and harmony for the people's lives and



starting a new families. Some families do not allow their children to marry in the rain season and some delay it for two years after the engagement ceremony because of the fortune telling.

The reason people do not get married in the rain season is that there are a lot of rains that make it difficult for the wedding reception, procession, and other ceremonies. It is also difficult for the guests travelling to wedding party and it is when farmers are busy with their fields.

According to the Khmer tradition, it allows people to marry only in a period of six months in a year but not the other six. But for engagement ceremony and matching the natural chemistry between son and daughter, they could be performed in any month.

For the above months, there are only 7 days of each month that are good days. They should not perform on their birthday, religious day, lunar or solar eclipse, and during Khmer New Year. ■