

# VISIONS of CAMBODIA

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## CAMBODIA PREMIER ATTENDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEKONG-LANCANG COOPERATION MEETING

The 1st Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Leaders' Meeting (LMC) successfully concluded in Sanya city, China's Hainan province, on 23 March, 2016, under the theme "Shared River-Shared Future".

Cambodia welcomes China's decision to discharge water from Jinghong Hydropower station in Yunan province to downstream countries for emergency use from March 15 to April 10. The act is seen as a goodwill gesture from China to help downstream countries to deal with drought.

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## FRANCE PLANS 154 MILLION EURO IN CAMBODIA'S AID PROGRAM FOR 2016-2017

The French government has planned 154 million EUR in aid program for Cambodia for 2016-2017, thus confirming France's position as a key partner for Cambodia's sustainable economic and social development.

This funding was made known during an information session about the recent evolutions of French cooperation activities in Cambodia organized by the French Embassy on 23 March on the occasion of the upcoming departure of Cambodia's new Ambassador to France, H.E. Chem Widhya.

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## ANGKOR WAT CROWNED TOP ASIAN DESTINATION



Angkor Wat Temple located in Siem Reap

TripAdvisor, a travel-planning website, has ranked Siem Reap as the top destination in Asia and fifth best travel destination worldwide in its annual Traveller's Choice Destination awards, experts said on 23 March, 2016.

Ang Kim Eang, president of the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents, said the publicity generated by the top-position ranking on the popular internet site could encourage more international tourists to visit Cambodia to see the Angkor Wat temple complex in Siem Reap.

"I hope that other online travel advisers or TV channels will give [Angkor Wat] the same rating and that the masterpiece of the Khmer Empire will get more and more famous around the world, not just in the Asia-Pacific [region]," he said.

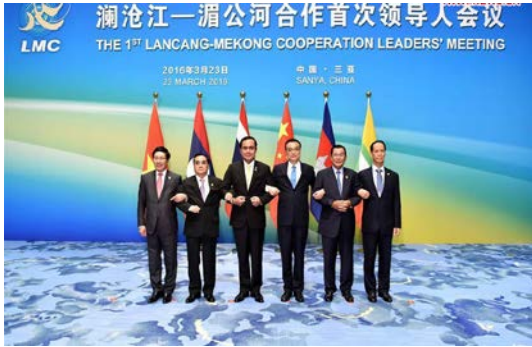
Thy Khieu, head of the Siem Reap-based Angkor Tourism Guide Association, said TripAdvisor's selection of Siem Reap as the top tourist destination in Asia affirms the positive experience that tourists have when visiting the city and its Angkor-era temples.

"If our service was very bad, if we were not friendly and if we did not do a good job then TripAdvisor could not give us a good rating," he said. "But people in this country are very friendly, warm and welcoming, and the service is all good in Cambodia."

Khieu also said he hopes the ranking will not only attract more travellers, but also encourage them to plan longer trips.

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## CAMBODIA PREMIER ATTENDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ...



“The discharge of water into Mekong River proves again the good cooperation on water resource management between the Mekong countries and China, which is an important part of the Mekong-Lancang River cooperation mechanism,” said a press release from Cambodia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Cambodia will host such important meeting in 2018, said Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

According to the National Television of Cambodia (TVK)’s special report, Samdech Techo Hun Sen spoke highly of the 1st Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Leaders’ Meeting, saying that it reflected the process of positive progress of the sub-regional cooperation, both in scope and depth, between the six countries, and their strong determination for a common prosperity.

This is a valuable and most appropriate platform to contribute to the construction of a strong

sub-region through the promotion of political and security cooperation, economic growth and sustainable development, and socio-cultural and people-to-people exchange, which will serve the interests of the people in the Mekong-Lancang sub-region, he stressed.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen voiced his support to hold the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Leaders’ Meeting every two years and proposed to host the 2nd meeting in 2018. His proposition was supported by other five participating countries.

The 1st Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Leaders’ Meeting was co-chaired by Chinese Premier H.E. Li Keqiang and Thai Prime Minister H.E. Prayuth Chan-ocha, with Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Lao Prime Minister H.E. Thongsing Thammavong, Vice President of Myanmar H.E. Sai Mauk Kham, and Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Pham Binh Minh in attendance.

On the occasion, the leaders adopted the Sanya Declaration of the 1st Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Leaders’ Meeting, the Joint Statement on Production Capacity Cooperation among Mekong-Lancang Countries, and the Early Harvest Projects for Mekong-Lancang Cooperation, which will foster the Mekong-Lancang cooperation. ■

## FRANCE PLANS 154 MILLION EURO ....

According to the French Embassy’s news release, France is financing projects in the fields of agriculture and rural development (rehabilitation of 50,000 hectares of irrigated areas), rural and urban infrastructures (improvement of 1,200 kilometers of rural roads, construction of Chroy Changvar and Niroth water treatment facilities, rehabilitation of the Central Market of Phnom Penh, construction of 3 power lines to improve the national network) and access to financing in rural areas (programs supporting rural electrification as well as better access to water and sanitation, green microfinance and support to the Rural Development Bank of Cambodia).

France also contributes to the development and the improvement of Cambodia’s human resources by supporting not only higher education and academic research, but also vocational training (in the garment and tourism industries). 7,000 students are currently enrolled in high-quality

curricula in law, economics, engineering and health sciences, while around 500 Cambodians are studying in French universities, 100 of them thanks to a scholarship funded by France and its French-speaking partners (European Union and the Francophone University Agency).

Besides, France continues to focus on 2 specific areas in its cooperation activities, i.e. culture and heritage, and the training of Cambodian “blue helmets”. The preservation and the rehabilitation of Angkor heritage continues to receive support from France (restoration of Mebon Temple currently underway following the restoration of Baphuon Temple completed in 2011, co-chairmanship of the International Coordination Committee for Angkor). France also supports the preparation of Cambodian soldiers dispatched to UN peacekeeping operations through specific language and practical trainings. ■

## ANGKOR WAT ...

“We want tourists to stay and visit Cambodia for 10 days at least, and to not only visit Siem Reap and Angkor Wat, but to also go to Battambang, Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, and so on,” he said.

TripAdvisor’s Traveller’s Choice awards, released on 22 March, are determined using an algorithm that takes into account the quantity and quality of reviews and ratings on TripAdvisor for hotels, restaurants and attractions in destinations worldwide, gathered over a 12-month period, as well as traveller booking interest.

Siem Reap ranked first among destinations in Asia, with Hanoi and Ubud, Bali, named as runners-up. ■

## CAMBODIAN PM SENDS CONDOLENCE MESSAGE TO BELGIAN COUNTERPART

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has expressed his deepest condolences over the recent terrorist blasts in Belgium.

“I am deeply shocked by the recent terrorist blasts, which hit Zaventem Airport and Maelbeek metro station in Belgium on 22 March, 2016. I strongly denounced this barbaric act of terror and violence, which claimed the life of more than 30 and seriously injured many others,” said on 23 March Samdech Techo Hun Sen in his condolence message to his Belgian counterpart H.E. Charles Michel.

“On this very sad moment, on behalf of the Royal Government and People of Cambodia, I would like to convey, through Your Excellency, to the bereaved families and the Government of Belgium our deepest sympathy and profound condolences for the loss of innocent lives in the inhumane attacks,” added the Cambodian premier.

At least 34 people were killed and 180 others injured after explosions at Zaventem Airport and Maelbeek metro in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, on 22 March, 2016. ■



## CAMBODIAN COMMERCE MINISTER RECEIVES AN IFAD DELEGATION



Cambodia's Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce H.E. Sun Chanthol received on 22 March a visiting IFAD delegation led by Mr. Nigel Smith, Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders (AIMS) Design team leader.

According to the Ministry of Commerce's news release, the IFAD delegation briefed H.E. Senior Minister on some of its recent operations in Cambodia as well as on the AIMS project that identifies opportunities in the country.

The AIMS purpose is to focus on products such as buffalo, poultry, longan, mango, pepper, cassava, rice and silk, it pointed out.

The delegation sought the cooperation of the Ministry of Commerce as a key ministry and agency that can be involved in different aspects of project implementation related to policy, particularly on the procurement, underlined the press release.

For his part, it added, H.E. Sun Chanthol expressed his support and cooperation with IFAD on the project and suggested that IFAD works closely with the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Private Sector Development and the Department of International Cooperation, and General Department of Trade Promotion. ■

## 2016-2017: CAMBODIA ENJOYS 7 PERCENT ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Cambodian economy this year and next year will remain strong, enjoying 7 per cent growth, said H.E. Vongsey Vissoth, Secretary of State for Economy and Finance in his report on 2016-2017 economic and public financial situation to a recent Economic and Financial Policy Committee (EFPC) Meeting.

Cambodia is expected to score economic growth of 7.1 per cent in 2016 and 6.9 per cent in 2017 thanks to the increase in industrial field, mainly garment and local production sectors, he pointed out.

The inflation rate would be at a manageable level – 1.9 per cent and 3.3 per cent, respectively – and the average exchange rate would stabilise at around 4,050 Riel to a U.S. dollar, he added.

According to H.E. Vongsey Vissoth, last year Cambodia achieved an economic growth of around 7 per cent even though the country's agriculture and tourism fields saw a low increase.

He also laid stress on the significant contribution of garment and local production sectors including food, beverages, tobacco, electricity, electronic spare parts and so on in boosting the economic growth. ■

## CRF TO SPEED UP REGISTRATION OF CAMBODIAN RICE TRADEMARK

The Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF) has been speeding up the preparation of necessary documents required for registration of a trademark for Cambodian rice at the Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Moul Sarith, CRF Secretary General, told local media.

CRF has set the fragrant rice species such as Romduol, Malis and Somaly for the trademark registration, he said, adding that Malis or Jasmine rice will be the first to be

registered and the registration will be officially announced in May 2016.

This is a strategy to boost the export of Cambodian rice as well as to disseminate Cambodian fragrant rice to the world market, Mr. Moul Sarith underlined.

The total amount of Cambodian milled rice export reached some 538,396 tons last year, up 39 per cent from 387,061 tons in 2014.

## CAMBODIA'S MODERN CEMENT PLANT TO EMERGE BY 2018 IN KAMPOT PROVINCE

Cambodia's biggest cement plant will emerge in Kampot province's Banteay Meas district in 2018, with a total investment capital of some US\$262 million.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of this cement plant was held on 21 March under the presidency of Samdech Vibol Sena Pheakdei Say Chhum, President of the Senate, Kampot Provincial Governor H.E. Khoy Khun Hour, and Oknha Leang Khun, Shareholder of Chip Mong Insee Cement Corporation.

Speaking on the occasion, Oknha Leang Khun said this investment is a joint-venture between Chip Mong Group and Thailand's Siam City Cement Public Company Limited.

Once the construction completed, the plant will be capable of producing some 5,000 tons of cement a day, and provide some 500 direct jobs and other 5,000 indirect jobs to local people, he added.

According to Kampot provincial governor, there are now five cement factories in Kampot, of which three have been operating with a total production of approximately 3,710,000 tons of cement a year, while two others are under construction.

Samdech Vibol Sena Pheakdei Say Chhum said the plant will contribute to the country's economic development, as well as the improvement of people's living standards.

This achievement showed the country's rapid development in all sectors, and the efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia in bringing about peace, political stability and socio-economic development to the country, underlined the senate president. ■





# 2015: PREAH SIHANOUK PROVINCE EARNS 25 BILLION RIEL FROM TOURISM



Preah Sihanouk coastal province, some 230 kilometres southwest of Phnom Penh capital, received about 1,518,874 tourists in 2015, up 14.39 percent compared with the same period of 2014, generating a total income of some 25 billion Riel (roughly US\$6.25 million) for the national budget.

The figure was revealed by H.E. Sam Sam Ath, Acting Governor of Preah Sihanouk province, in a recent meeting with the Commission on Economy, Finance, Banking and Audit of the National Assembly.

Besides, the tax income also saw an increase last year, he said, adding that the provincial Customs and Excise Department collected almost 127 billion Riel (nearly US\$32 million) as tax income, up 29.28 per cent over a year earlier.

Meanwhile, the province has cracked down on smuggled goods, earning over 4 billion Riel (US\$1 million), an increase by 12.04 per cent compared with the previous year, pointed out H.E. Sam Sam Ath.