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NEC, EU AND JAPAN DISCUSS MATERIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VOTER'S REGISTRATION

A trilateral discussion on material assistance for new voter's registration between the National Election Committee (NEC), the European Union (EU) and Japan was held in Phnom Penh on 19 April.

The meeting was attended by NEC President H.E. Sik Bunhok, EU Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. George Edgar and Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. Yuji Kumamaru.

Continued on page (2)

EU CONSIDERS CONTRIBUTION TO TARGET OF EIGHT MILLION VISITORS TO CAMBODIA IN 2020

Cambodia is looking ahead to have one million skilled tourism service providers to handle targeted eight millions of visitors to the country by 2020.

Tourism Minister H.E. Thong Khon highlighted the outlook when receiving H.E. George Edgar, European Union Ambassador to Cambodia, lately at the ministry office here in Phnom Penh.

Continued on page (2)

SAMDECH TECO PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATES SUGAR MILL IN PRAEH VIHEAR PROVINCE



Cambodia's Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen cuts red ribbon to inaugurate a big sugar mill invested by Rui Feng Cambodia International Co., Ltd., a Chinese agro firm, in Poteap village, Preah Vihear province, on 19 April. AKP Photo

The US\$360 million sugar mill and biomass plant invested by Rui Feng Cambodia International Co., Ltd., a Chinese agro firm, were inaugurated on 19 April under the presidency of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

Located in Poteap village, Mlou Prey I commune, Chhep district, Preah Vihear province, the sugar mill and refinery and biomass plant are part of the total US\$1 billion investment plan.

The sugar mill is expected to produce some 360,000 tons of refined sugar annually for export, while the biomass plant is able to generate some 39 megawatts of electricity.

The company is planning to build an ethanol plant with the capacity of producing 50,000

tons a year for export to China and EU, and to construct a bio-fertilizer plant which can produce about 100,000 tons per year.

The company also wished to expand the sugarcane plantation area from the current 4,300 ha. For the initial phase, the company employs some 7,000 workers and the figure will rise to 21,000 workers.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen expressed his support to this investment project and pledged to further negotiate with China to open more markets for the company's products after successfully finding markets for Cambodian rice and other agricultural products.

The Cambodian premier also called on the company to expand its cultivation area by providing seeds and techniques for the farmers. ■

H.E. PRAK SOKHONN, CAMBODIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS HIS CHINESE COUNTERPART

Cambodia's Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Prak Sokhonn received the Chinese Foreign Minister H.E. Wang Yi for two-day official visit on 21-22 April, aiming at further tightening the excellent relations and deepening productive cooperation between Cambodia and China.

During the meeting, the two sides shared the same views on the excellent relation between Cambodia and China built by His Majesty the Late King with the former Chinese leaders dated back to a long time ago. This relation has been further strengthened and developed by Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and it was later upgraded to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation between the two countries in 2010, said Senior Minister Prak Sokhonn at the press conference.

"The two countries would work to strengthen trade and cooperation, working on everything from repairing ruined temples to education, tourism, health and mine clearance," he added. "Along with plans for high-level exchanges of visits, the two sides also discussed Mekong-Lancang cooperation and mutual support for international fora."

On the South China Sea, he stressed that

Cambodia and ASEAN Members States paid special attention to preserving regional peace, stability and security. He further said Cambodia supported the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) signed between ASEAN and China in Cambodia in 2002.

"Cambodia calls for the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct (COC) and always appeals to all claimant states to make efforts to resolve all disputes and territorial and maritime claims through consultations and peaceful means," he added.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that he was impressed with the rapid development of Cambodia and highly valued the friendship between China and Cambodia. He also stressed that the territory and maritime disputes should be solved by parties directly involved and through friendly consultations and talks in line with the international law and UNCLOS.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi was also received in a Royal Audience by His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni and paid courtesy call on Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Deputy Prime Minister Hor Namhong. ■

NEW COMMERCE MINISTER RECEIVES IFAD DELEGATION

Cambodia's newly appointed Minister of Commerce H.E. Pan Sorasak held talks here on Wednesday with a delegation of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) led by Ms. Hoonae Kim, Asia and Pacific Regional Director.

According to a news release of the Ministry of Commerce, the meeting touched upon numerous topics, especially the design of a new project to be implemented by the Ministry of Commerce and financed by IFAD.

The new project, Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders (AIMS), is scheduled to become effective in 2017, said the news release, adding that the budget of the project will be in the region of US\$36 million.

AIMS is aiming at supporting a number of viable value chains (VCs) to achieve

sustainable long term competitiveness and self-sufficiency, it underlined.

AIMS support will be done through two mechanisms, including the Value Chain Innovation Fund: Providing partial grant to smallholders in priority VCs to improve productivity and market access, and Financial Service Provider Partnerships: Cooperate with MFIs and banking institutions to provide viable financial package to larger business holders to sustainable long term competitiveness and self-sufficiency, said the news release.

The project will be implemented by the Directorate General for Domestic Trade with project management support by Department of International Cooperation. ■

TRADE UNION LAW APPROVED BY LEGISLATIVE BODY

The National Assembly (NA) and Senate of Cambodia have recently approved the draft Trade Union Law.

The draft law, consisting of 17 chapters with 100 articles, was approved by 69 lawmakers present at the 6th NA session of the fifth legislature on April 4, 2016, and then by 40 senators at the 8th plenary session of the third legislature of Senate on 12 April, 2016.

The Trade Union Law, drafted by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, aims to provide rights and freedom of vocational organizations to workers, employees and employers in the country. It covers all enterprises, institutions and individuals that are under the provisions of the Labor Law, as well as air and marine staff.

Currently, there are about 3,300 trade unions in Cambodia. ■

EU CONSIDERS

The country is optimistic about the eight million visitors, thanks to the tourism policy of green and clean cities as well as visit destinations and quality hospitality.

H.E. Thong Khon shared the policy with the EU ambassador who is willing to support the efforts to meet the mentioned objectives.

Promoting green environment and cities' cleanliness is also a priority of the EU in Cambodia and the purpose of the meeting between the two officials. ■

NEC, EU AND JAPAN

According to the president of NEC, Japan will help Cambodia with big machines whereas EU will provide materials like computers, cameras and fingerprint machines.

The official registration will take place as soon as NEC gets all necessary materials because this is a computerized registration, he added.

H.E. Sik Bunhok went on to say that the three parties agreed to hold a meeting between their technical teams every month and that between their leaders every two months.

In November last year, NEC conducted the two-week-long computerized voter registration testing in 43 villages of 25 communes/Sangkat selected to represent the 25 provinces and municipality across Cambodia.

Cambodia has about 9.6 million eligible voters. ■

PHNOM PENH SEZ PLC. LAUNCHES ITS IPO

After receiving the approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission of Cambodia (SECC), the Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Plc. launched on 20 April its initial public offering (IPO) at the Cambodian Stock Exchange (CSX).

Under this procedure, Phnom Penh SEZ Plc. will list in the CSX for trading next June.

Some 11.6 million shares, or 20 percent of its enlarged issued share, may be ready to list on the CSX in June, said Mr. Hiroshi Uematsu, CEO of Phnom Penh SEZ Plc.

The current Phnom Penh SEZ Plc.'s IPO issue price is ranging from US\$0.70 to US\$1 per new share, he added.

With this, Phnom Penh SEZ Plc. aimed to raise some US\$8.1 million and US\$11.6 million in what will be the country's fourth IPO, underlined Mr. Hiroshi Uematsu.

Phnom Penh SEZ is Cambodia's leading industrial park. With 76 companies operating in the zone today and market conditions favorable, the company is on track to build on its past performance and offer its partners and shareholders growth and a successful partnership.



In particular, its planned expansion in Poipet, near the Thai border, is aiming at providing fertile manufacturing ground to a range of companies in need of a widely available young workforce.

Beside Phnom Penh SEZ, TY Fashion (Cambodia) Plc. is also a new private company that has already got the approval from SECC.

CSX is now operating with three listed companies, including the state-owned Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, Grand Twins International (GTI), a China's Taiwanese-owned textile and footwear factory, and the state-owned Phnom Penh Autonomous Port.

CSX, a joint venture investment by the Royal Government of Cambodia with 55 percent of the shares and the Korean Exchange holding 45 percent, was launched in July 2011. ■

CAMBODIA TO HOST THE 32ND SEA GAMES IN DECEMBER 2023

Cambodia is scheduled to host the 32nd Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) from 1 to 15 December, 2023, said a press release of the Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Office of the Council of Ministers issued after the weekly cabinet meeting held on 22 April under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

This regional competition would take place in Phnom Penh capital city and in some provinces including Kampot, Kep, Takeo, Siem Reap, Battambang and Kampong Cham, it added.

The two-week-long event is expected to attract about 10,000 delegates, of them 7,000 are athletes, pointed out the press release.

The draft master plan toward hosting the 32nd SEA Games in 2023 was approved by the cabinet meeting on 22 April in order to make Cambodia ready for this biennial multi-sport event. The Kingdom is planning to win at least 30 percent or one third of the total gold medals of 300.

Meanwhile, the cabinet meeting also approved the 16-chapter-and-89-article draft law on juvenile justice elaborated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to protect the rights and interests of juveniles, and the request to submit the Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Government of Hungary on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments to the legislative body for ratification. ■

U.S PROVIDES US\$20 MILLION FOR CAMBODIA'S PREY LANG PRESERVATION

The U.S. government has decided to extend some US\$20 million to Cambodia for the protection and preservation of Prey Lang Forest, according to the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh.

"The U.S. government is providing US\$20 million to protect and conserve Cambodia's rich natural assets and unique biodiversity," said the Embassy on 21 April.

The grant is given through Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project (SFB) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), implemented by Winrock International, it added.

USAID and its partners work closely with national and local authorities and communities to help mark protected areas, patrol community forests, and educate the public about the importance of conserving forest resources, it underlined.

Prey Lang Forest is one of world's top ten biodiversity hotspots with almost 1,000 species of flora and fauna.

It is a magnificent example of a lowland evergreen forest in the Indo-Burma region. Recorded species include 530 botanicals, 60 mammals, 266 birds, and 67 amphibians and reptiles.

Situated to the west of the Mekong River in north-central Cambodia and stretching across four provinces: Kratie, Kampong Thom, Stung Treng and Preah Vihear, Prey Lang landscape lies within three watersheds: the Stung Sen, Stung Chinit and Siem Bok. It traverses the hydrological divide between the Tonle Sap and Mekong Basins.

The forest is a watershed for the Tonle Sap Lake, upon which millions of Cambodians and a significant proportion of the national economy depend.

In addition, more than 250,000 people live in 340 villages in close proximity to, and within the Prey Lang Forest, many of whom rely directly on the forest landscape for their livelihoods. ■

CAMBODIA AIRPORTS HANDLE OVER 2 MILLION PASSENGERS IN Q1

Cambodia Airports handled more than 2 million passengers and 20,000 flights movements in the first quarter of 2016, an increase of 4.9 percent and 6.6 percent respectively compared to the same period in 2015, pointed out a recent news release of Cambodia Airports, the developer and operators of Cambodia's international airports.

Cargo tonnage increased by 18.4 percent to 10,477 tons from January to March 2016, it underlined.

According to the news release, Phnom Penh International Airport received more than 863,000 passengers from January to March 2016, an increase of 10.1 percent, while Siem Reap International Airport handled in excess of 1 million passengers, up 1.3 percent compared to the first quarter of 2015. Passenger traffic at Sihanouk International Airport decreased 1.6 percent to 30,187 passengers due to fewer international flights.

During that period, it added, Phnom Penh International Airport handled more than 8,500 domestic and international flight movements, growing 13.6 percent, while Siem Reap handled more than 11,100, up 0.9 percent. Flight movements in Sihanouk International Airport grew at 33.8 percent in the first quarter of 2016 to 522 due to higher domestic flight frequencies.

Cargo tonnage in Phnom Penh Cargo Terminal grew by 17.3 percent, while Siem Reap Airport Cargo Terminal saw 141.8 percent more cargo compared to 2015, said the news release.

