

CAMBODIA OUTLOOK

ISSUE 38: 11 - 20 AUGUST 2021



Royal Embassy of Cambodia accredited to the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Tajikistan

STATEMENT OF SPOKESPERSON OF THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA IN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

With reference to the article titled “China-funded dam in Cambodia a rights disaster”, rights group claims, written by Riyaz ul Khaliq and posted on Anadolu Agency’s website on 10 August 2021, the author should have told the other side of the story.

The report of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) on the construction of Lower Sesan II Hydropower Dam was misleading and biased, motivated by geopolitical considerations. The report was based on some NGOs’ reports, some opposition members’ interviews, a fraction of people living in the area and not representing the majority of the people.

Continued on page (2)

AMONG GLOBAL VACCINE LEADERS, CAMBODIA ON TRACK FOR MORE THAN 6% GROWTH NEXT YEAR

Cambodia is on track to achieve GDP growth of more than six percent next year thanks to its “well strategized and rapidly executed” vaccine rollout, according to an investment advisory firm.

“Phnom Penh ranks as one of the most vaccinated capital cities in the world, at around 99 percent of adults fully vaccinated,” according to a report released by Mekong Strategic Partners.

The report — “Vaccination Nation: Unmasking Cambodia’s Vaccination Success” — said the

Continued on page (3)

CAMBODIA DONATES CASH AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO MYANMAR



Workers produce facemasks at a factory in Phnom Penh's Dangkor district.

The Royal Government of Cambodia will donate US\$200,000 in cash and medical equipment to Myanmar to support the latter’s efforts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

The donation was made known in a letter dated Aug. 17 of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, to H.E. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“In the spirit of friendship and solidarity between our two countries, in addition to Cambodia’s pledge of US\$100,000 for the ASEAN humanitarian assistance to Myanmar through AHA Centre, I would like to donate US\$200,000 in cash from the Royal Government of Cambodia. We will also donate medical equipment which includes: 3 million Face Masks, 500,000 Rapid Tests, Personal Protection Equipment-PPE 2,000 sets, 100 united sets, 100 units of Oxygen Concentrator, 20 units of Ventilator Machine and 20 units

of Patient Monitor + Accessories [...], to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,” the Cambodian Premier wrote in the letter.

H.E. Mam Bunheng, Minister of Health and Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat COVID-19, will lead a delegation to deliver the above-mentioned donations by a special flight to be arranged to Nay Pyi Taw soon, he added.

“I am firmly convinced that with our joint efforts, we will overcome this global pandemic in one piece,” underlined Samdech Techo Hun Sen.

In November last year, the Cambodian government also donated two million masks and other medical equipment to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Myanmar.

Cambodia has so far donated necessary medical materials to some other countries in the region, including Laos, Timor-Leste, Nepal, and Vietnam to help combat the Covid-19. ■

STATEMENT OF SPOKESPERSON OF THE ...

The Royal Government of Cambodia always assesses all of its construction projects carefully to minimize their negative social and environmental impacts on people's rights and communities, especially the river ecosystems of the Lower Sesan II Dam. The government had already provided 7086.80ha of land to the people affected by the dam, while also building houses for them along with 63 reservoirs and 18 wells. Furthermore, the project had constructed 12 schools and 12 kindergartens, two commune halls, three pagodas, two police stations and one military police station to serve those impacted communities. Currently, the 400MW Lower Sesan II Hydropower Dam is benefitting Cambodia's economy and people through electricity supply expansion, designed in a way to produce clean energy in the long run.

Everyone knows that 10 years ago, only 26% of the whole population had access to electricity, Cambodia was among the lowest electrification rates in the world. Electricity costs, however, were among the highest. But so far about 98 percent of the villages in Cambodia have access to electricity. Rural electrification had seen remarkable progress after the government set a goal to electrify all of the 14,168 villages across the country by the end of 2020. The remaining two percent, or 237 villages, that have not been connected to the grid, are located in difficult areas.

The HRW should stop its smearing campaign against Cambodia. The people of Cambodia experienced enough sufferings and destruction caused by the outside interference in the past. Therefore, their economic and development rights should be respected. ■

BAKONG WELCOMES MAYBANK AS FIRST INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER PARTNER



Bakong now allows cross border transfers through a partnership with Malayan Banking Berhad, according to the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) announced on 11 August 2021.

The NBC reported last year that the country received some \$1.2 billion in remittances from international workers abroad with those in Malaysia accounting for 1.4 percent of the total number of transfers.

The agreement will allow Maybank clients to directly transfer funds to Bakong e-wallets through the MAE mobile application.

"I am confident that Bakong cross border payment and remittance between Cambodia and Malaysia would enable both countries to reach another level of financial cooperation in further leveraging the technology to benefit the people in both countries, especially the migrant workers who need to remit funds to support their family in a secure and cost-efficient manner," NBC Governor Chea Chanto said in a statement.

Transfers will be limited to \$2,500 daily. Maybank said that it would waive service fees until the end of this year to promote its use.

"The Maybank-Bakong Cross Border Funds Transfer will address long standing issues of high transfer fees and lengthy transaction time. It will certainly help lessen the burden of Cambodians working in Malaysia, and their families as they are able to receive the funds instantly and hassle-free," said Dato Mohd Hanif Suadi, chief executive officer for Maybank Cambodia. ■

HIGH-END LABELS COMING TO CAMBODIA

The world's most prestigious brands will be entering the market over the next 12 months as Blue Bell Group announced on 16 August that it has secured a landmark deal to manage one of the country's most-anticipated retail projects.

The group has partnerships with more than 150 high-end labels, including Jimmy Choo, Moschino, Versace and Christian Dior across 10 different Asian markets that now will include Cambodia.

"Phnom Penh is a booming Southeast Asian capital, so it was important that we enter here because we have been pioneering so many



different markets. It creates a unique opportunity for brands and retailers," said Pierre Balsan, Blue Bell's managing director.

Blue Bell Cambodia will help bring up to 40 prestigious brands to the Kingdom, driving what is said to be tens of millions of dollars in foreign direct investment to the Kingdom over the next two years. ■

CAMBODIA'S GOLD REFINERY REACHES 210KG

Gold refinery in Cambodia has reached 210kg since the first commercial gold operation officially launched in June this year, according to Ministry of Mines and Energy.

Renaissance Minerals Cambodia Limited, a subsidiary of Australia-listed Emerald Resources NL, has so far shipped the semi-final gold ore of 59kg abroad for purification.

The second shipment of another 100kg gold ore will happen soon, said Director General

of the General Department of Mineral Resources H.E. Yos Monirath, adding that the purified gold bar will be sold at the international markets.

The Cambodia's gold exploration located in the O' Kvau region of Keo Seima district in Mondulkiri province is expected to refine 3 tonnes of gold ore per year for the first eight years.

Cambodia expects to receive US\$40 million in royalties and taxes from the precious metal for the national budget. ■

IMF TO PROVIDE \$240M FOR CAMBODIA'S RECOVERY FROM COVID-19



The Board of Governors of the IMF has approved a general allocation of the largest Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) in history equivalent to US\$650 billion (about SDR 456 billion) in early August, to boost global liquidity. Cambodia will receive approximately \$24 million, according to a press release from Oxfam.

"New SDRs will help developing countries including Cambodia to cope with the impact of Covid-19 and restore its economy. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has made great effort to contain the virus transmission and supported vulnerable populations coping with their livelihood loss with its historic cash transfer programme that is built on its developing social registry system. More needed to be done, and we ask the RGC to continue working transparently and together with other civil society organizations to ensure that this additional debt-free financing is used to benefit all Cambodians affected by Covid-19, for example, prioritise it in universal health care and social protection investments that can reduce inequalities for a fairer and more

sustainable recovery from the pandemic," Ms. Solinn Lim, Cambodia Country Director of Oxfam.

"We commend the RGC for its efforts to ensure that vulnerable groups such as women and girls facing sexual and gender-based violence, pregnant women, children, people with disabilities, indigenous people and ethnic minorities, people living with HIV/AIDS, homeless persons, and migrant returnees, are beneficiaries of Covid-19 relief programme, and we encourage the RGC to take advantage of this SDR to further this support and make its pandemic intervention historically inclusive. Cambodian people especially the most vulnerable groups will remember this legacy," Ms. Solinn Lim underlined.

SDRs are a form of global currency that can be pumped into the global economy, with non-repayable allocations afforded to each International Monetary Fund (IMF) member country. They are not a loan that need to be repaid and their usage is decided by receiving countries.

The new SDRs will become effective on August 23, 2021. They are distributed based on a country's quota/share in the IMF. The US\$650 billion SDR issuance will deliver almost US\$400 billion in added reserves to the world's richest economies, US\$230 billion to middle-income countries, and US\$21 billion to low-income countries. ■

AMONG GLOBAL VACCINE LEADERS, CAMBODIA...

rollout had been "remarkable, dramatically outperforming many developed and developing nations." As well as the rollout being 8 months ahead of schedule and up to 12 months before neighbouring countries, "Cambodia is now one of the first countries in the world to be rolling out booster shots and vaccinating children," it said.

"Economic evidence is clear that high vaccination rates improve economic outcomes as well as health outcomes." The report said Cambodia was on track to have 80 percent of adults fully vaccinated by Aug. 31 — similar to current levels in advanced countries including Singapore and higher than those in Japan, Australia and South Korea.

The report also noted Cambodia's policy of acquiring vaccines "by any means possible" including donations via COVAX, direct bilateral donations, and direct purchases.

After a problematic start, strong programme management has featured a "clear and simple ring-fenced distribution plan based on location, rather than more complicated age tiering." Programme management has included focusing on garment factories to protect jobs and worker health and using the military to support vaccine distribution and delivery.

"First and foremost, the vaccination programme is about improving the health outcomes for the people of Cambodia. On

NEW PORT IN KEP SET FOR COMPLETION THIS YEAR



Kep Provincial Administration announced that the Koh Tonsay Tourist Port, which costs around \$1.2 million, is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

According to Kep provincial governor, Mr. Som Piseth, said that the port is to expand the tourism and economic potential of Kep province through bilateral waterways with countries in the region and the port may service international traffic in the future.

He added that Koh Tonsay Tourist Port is capable of accommodating ships with a capacity of less than 300 passengers and other cargoes of about 15 tonnes.

He said that besides constructing Koh Tonsay Tourist Port, Kep Provincial Administration is implementing a project to build a new transport port at Ses Sar (White Horse) Island, which is planned to cost nearly \$2 million and can accommodate cargo ships carrying around 1,000 tonnes.

Mr. Piseth added that in addition to these two ports, the administration also plans to build another new port on Koh Tonsay (Rabbit Island) through funding from the Asian Development Bank to expand tourism to the 12 islands of Kep. ■

this count, the government is succeeding. Fewer lockdowns and other restrictions will also improve the quality of life of Cambodians more generally."

"Less interruptions on manufacturing operations, and turnaround in domestic demand particularly for services, will support economic growth and encourage further foreign direct investment," it said.

Mekong Strategic Partners was jointly founded by John McKinley, former head of Greater Mekong Region strategy at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, and former ANZ-Royal Bank chief executive Stephen Higgins. The firm has offices in Phnom Penh and Bangkok. ■

Tourist Attractions

• Capacity City • Cultural Area



Kingdom of Cambodia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

Capital City Phnom Penh & Surroundings



Oudong Mountain

Oudong Mountain used to be a royal residence and Cambodia's capital from 1618 to 1866. Today, Oudong has become a highly sacred place after the relic of Preah Serei Roek Theat (ashes of Buddha) was moved here from Phnom Penh.



Tonle Bati

On the way to Tonle Bati, you can find two Angkorian era temples including Ta Prohm and Yeay Peau which were built by King Jayavarman VII in the late 12th century in the same period that Angkor Thom and the Bayon temple were constructed.



Wat Phnom

Wat Phnom was built in 1373 and stands 27 meters above the ground and is the central point of the capital. The site may give you a feeling that you're in a medieval place and the interior has a central altar complex with a large bronze seated Buddha surrounded by other statues and items of devotion and worship.



Independence Monument

This monument was built in 1958 to mark Cambodia's independence from France in 1953. The monument is the centre of national ceremonies where soldiers march before the stupa to commemorate service men and women who gave their lives for the country.

Cultural Area



Angkor Wat Temple

Siem Reap Province

The Angkor Wat Temple is the most famous of all Angkorian temples. Back in the 12th century it was built by King Suryavarman II which took an estimated 30 years to build. It was initially dedicated to the Hindu god, Vishnu but was later dedicated to Buddhism and this temple is the only one of the Angkorian temples to remain in religious use throughout the centuries. Angkor Wat became heritage of humanity and was listed as a World Wonder in 1992.



Bayon Temple

Siem Reap Province

The Bayon Temple is a richly decorated Khmer temple built in the late 12th century. Bayon's most distinctive feature is the multitude of serene and massive stone faces on the many towers that jut from the upper terrace and cluster around its center park.