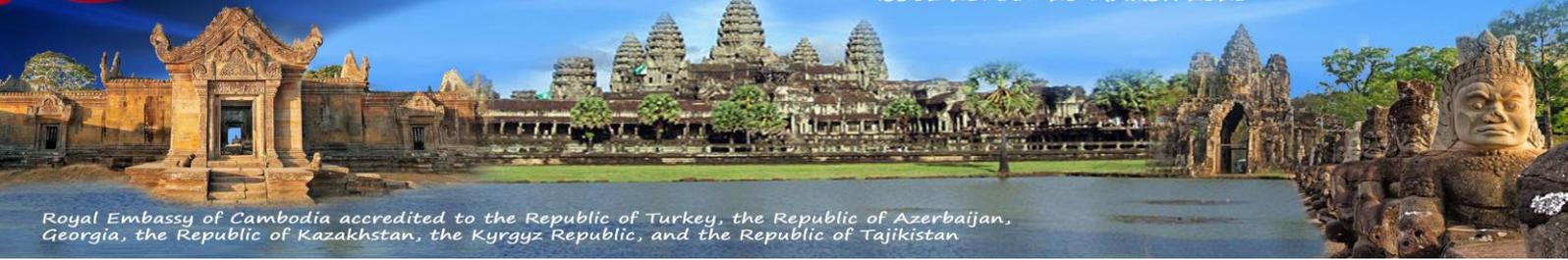




CAMBODIA OUTLOOK

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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

CAMBODIA PURCHASES 1.5 MILLION DOSES OF SINOVAC VACCINES

Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen said Cambodia has purchased 1.5 million doses of Sinovac vaccines.

According to his voice message released to the public on 19 March 2021, the Sinovac vaccines will arrive in Cambodia on 26 March 2021 to join the 600,000 doses of Sinopharm donated by China and the 324,000 doses of AstraZeneca granted through the COVAX mechanism.

Moreover, the remaining China-donated Sinopharm vaccines of 400,000 doses is expected to arrive here before the Khmer New Year in April, he underlined.

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ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR 2021 PROJECTS 4% GDP GROWTH

The Kingdom is forecast to register gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 4 percent, a sharp reversal of 2020's contraction of 3.1 percent, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has said in its macroeconomic situation report.

After registering 7.1 percent GDP growth in 2019, the Kingdom is forecast to reach GDP growth of 6.9 percent by 2024.

The industrial sector is poised to fuel the bulk of that growth, followed by services, real estate and business and agriculture.

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CAMBODIA: NO COUNTRY CONSIDERED SAFE IF OTHERS ARE NOT



Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Prak Sokhonn, held a videoconference with H.E. Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary-General of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) on 16 March 2021.

“No country can be considered safe if other countries are not. The vaccine is the only solution for global normalisation,” stressed Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Prak Sokhonn.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister made the remark while holding talks via videoconference on 16 March 2021 with H.E. Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary-General of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's (MFA-IC) press release, during the meeting, H.E. Prak Sokhonn informed the OIF secretary-general that the first doses of vaccines, obtained within the COVAX framework and from the donation of the Chinese government, allowed the first vaccinations of the Cambodian population,

and more vaccines are expected to arrive in Cambodia in a few weeks.

For her part, H.E. Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo highly valued Cambodia's effective management of the pandemic. She recalled the resolution adopted unanimously by the OIF's members in November 2020, aimed at obtaining international solidarity and equitable sharing of vaccines, within the framework of COVAX and with the European Union.

The Cambodian top diplomat voiced his full support to this proposal, underlining, “OIF must mark its presence in the Asia-Pacific region where Cambodia actively promotes the use of French language and the values of the Francophonie. This multilateral vaccination campaign will find a favorable echo in the 13th ASEM Summit organized by Cambodia at the end of 2021 and whose theme will be Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth.” ■

THAILAND DONATES US\$100,000 FOR COVID-19 QUARANTINE CENTRES OF MIGRANT WORKERS



The Royal Thai Embassy to Cambodia handed over US\$100,000 donation cheque from the Royal Thai Government to the Royal Government of Cambodia on 19 March 2021.

The handover ceremony was held here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFA-IC), between H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of MFA-IC, and H.E. Panyarak Poolthup, Thai Ambassador to Cambodia.

According to an MFA-IC's press release, the donation aims to support essential needs of

Cambodian migrant workers at all COVID-19 quarantine centres along Cambodia-Thailand border.

The Government and people of the Kingdom of Cambodia sincerely appreciate the Royal Thai Government and the people of Thailand for their continued assistance in the effort to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in Cambodia as well as in facilitating Cambodian workers who are working and residing in Thailand, said the press release.

This generous donation does not only reflect kind humanitarian gesture but also the growing spirit of traditional friendship, strong solidarity and good neighborliness between the two countries, stressed the same source. ■

CAMBODIA PURCHASES 1.5 MILLION ...

The Premier stated that since the launch of the vaccination campaign on Feb. 10, 2021, more than 300,000 people have been vaccinated, of them some 198,400 were civilians and 109,700 were the armed personnel and policemen.

Cambodia has issued an Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for China-made Sinovac vaccine against COVID-19 on Feb. 12, 2021. It is among the three vaccines authorized to be administered to people. The other two are Sinopharm and AstraZeneca. ■

ECONOMIC FORECAST...

The overall industrial sector is forecast to grow by 5.9 percent because of increased garment exports but will be held back by low capital investment in construction. The sector's growth retracted by 1.2 percent in 2020.

The garment segment is forecast to grow by 4.6 percent and construction by 2.9 percent. Both the garment and construction industrial sub-sectors retracted last year. In 2020, the garment industry shrunk by 6.4 percent with the construction segment contracting by 2.4 percent last year.

The ministry projected that the garment sector will grow by 4.6 percent in 2021 versus its 6.6 percent pre-pandemic growth due to an anticipated slow recovery in external demand.

To address these difficulties, the ministry has offered three solutions including increasing productivity, reducing costs associated with electricity, transportation and logistics and the promotion of trade.

The services sector is forecast to grow by 3.4 percent led by the transportation and communications segment. That segment is projected to grow by 4.5 percent.

The hotel and restaurant segment are forecast to grow by 0.3 percent. It retracted a staggering 36 percent last year.

The 2021 projection sees the wholesale and retail trade services segment growing by 3.2 percent, with the agriculture sector projected to grow by 1.3 percent with crop production contributing 1.6 percent to that increase. ■

MINISTRY AND MICROSOFT AGREE TO PROMOTE DIGITAL USAGE IN CAMBODIA



Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPTC) and Microsoft in Asia Pacific have agreed to enhance the digital usage in Cambodia, as the Royal Government is transforming itself into an e-government.

The two sides signed virtually a memorandum of understanding on the cooperation on human development and promotion of digital usage in Cambodia by Cambodian Minister of MPTC H.E. Chea Vandeth and Ms. Cairine Haslam, CFO, Singapore and South East Asia New Markets at Microsoft, on 16 March 2021.

The MoU aims to promote digital transformation through cooperation on human resource development,

research and development innovation and entrepreneurship in the field of information and communication technology, as well as cooperation in policy making and development planning for digital government, according to the ministry's press release.

The integration of ICT knowledge into secondary, general and higher education curricular is an important factor in promoting the capture of digital technology in Cambodia, H.E. Chea Vandeth said. "MPTC encourages students to consider choosing to study digital technology, or even if they are studying other skills, to have a basic knowledge of digital and communication and information technology in order to be ready to participate in digital economic and social development and the arrival of the fourth industrial revolution."

The MPTC will work with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to develop a digital master plan to promote digital literacy in both secondary and tertiary education. ■

UNDP ASSISTS CAMBODIA IN PROCURING ANTI-COVID-19 EQUIPMENT



In partnership with World Bank (WB) and World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Cambodia supported the Ministry of Health in procuring necessary anti-COVID-19 equipment.

According to UNDP Cambodia, the procured equipment includes 60 ambulances, 50 ventilators, and other emergency medical items.

The necessary equipment will help the Royal Government of Cambodia scale-up their COVID-19 response and recover better from the pandemic, it underlined.

Besides the health sector, UNDP is supporting Cambodia in other development areas such as environmental protection, climate change, good governance, mine clearance and so on. ■

JAPAN SUPPORTS THREE MORE PROJECTS IN CAMBODIA

The Government of Japan has agreed to provide US\$574,230 in total to support three projects in Cambodia, under the framework, the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (“KUSANONE” Grant).

The grant contracts were signed separately on 19 March 2021 between Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. Mikami Masahiro, and representatives of the recipient institutions.

According to a press release of the Embassy of Japan in Phnom Penh, some US\$217,845 of the total fund will be used to construct Koun Damrei irrigation facility in Stung Trang commune, Sala Krao district, Pailin province; US\$169,720 to strengthen cashew nut value chain in Kampong Thom province; and the rest US\$186,665 for road improvement in Romduol district, Svay Rieng province.

The assistance is based on the commitment of co-chair’s statement of 13th Mekong-Japan foreign minister’s meeting on 9 July, 2020 which says “Implementing approximately

US\$91 million worth Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Project in FY 2020 as KUSANONE Mekong SDGs initiative, aimed at supporting the social and economic development of local communities and villages across the Mekong region”.

Japan’s “KUSANONE” Projects started in Cambodia in 1991 in order to support Cambodia’s reconstruction and development at the grassroots level. The assistance aims to protect those who are vulnerable due to various factors such as poverty and/or misfortunes that directly threaten their lives, livelihood, and dignity, as well as to promote self-reliance of local communities.

Since 1991, the Government of Japan has provided over US\$64 million for mainly local authorities and non-governmental organisations to implement 650 KUSANONE projects throughout Cambodia. ■

AD-HOC COMMISSION FOR NATIONWIDE VACCINATION FORMED

The Royal Government has established an ad-hoc commission to manage the vaccination against the COVID-19 pandemic across the country.

According to the Royal Government’s decision released on 17 March 2021, the 47-member commission is headed by H.E. Dr. Or Vandine, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Health, along with eight vice chairmen from the Ministries of Health; Education, Youth and Sports; Labour and Vocational Training; Post and Telecommunications; Interior; and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF).

Managing and leading COVID-19 vaccination throughout the country, preparing nationwide vaccination plan, and training medical team for vaccination work are among the key duties of the ad-hoc commission.

Ministries and institutions as well as the provinces and capital are also instructed to form each an ad-hoc sub-commission in charge of registering the volunteers to get vaccinated against COVID-19 under their jurisdiction. ■

CAMBODIA’S EXPORT TO VIETNAM INCREASES BY 14.8% IN 2020

Cambodia’s total exports to Vietnam rose by 14.8 percent in 2020 to US\$385 million, despite restrictions at the border to contain the COVID-19 spread.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce shows that the country’s imports from Vietnam decreased by 3.1 percent to US\$2,633 million last year.

Cambodia’s main products exported to Vietnam are mostly raw agricultural products – rice, cashew nut, rubber while the imported products are steel, petrol, garment and textile, leather and footwear. ■

CAMBODIA’S EXPORT TO SOUTH KOREA CONTINUES TO INCREASE

The export of Cambodia to South Korea has been recovering since early 2021 as the export amount keeps increasing for two months in a row.

Data from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA) shows that from January to February this year, Cambodia exported US\$64 million worth of goods to South Korea,

up 2.9 percent compared to the same period last year.

Cambodia’s major products exported to South Korea are clothes, footwear, travel goods, beverages, and components for electronic equipment, rubber, pharmaceuticals and agricultural products, while its main imports from the country include vehicles, electronics, kitchen appliances, beverages, pharmaceuticals

and plastic products.

Cambodia and the Republic of Korea have announced to complete their negotiations for a bilateral free trade agreement in February 2021. The trade pact, expected to be penned within the first semester this year, will boost the bilateral trade between the two countries. ■

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