

# 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, GERMANY BOOST COLLABORATION ON DECENTRALIZATION & DECONCENTRATION

Cambodia and Germany have pledged to continue boosting collaboration on decentralisation and deconcentration in Cambodia.

The pledge was made in a recent meeting between Samdech Kralahom Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and H.E. Christian Berger, German Ambassador to Cambodia at the ministry, Phnom Penh.

Samdech Kralahom Sar Kheng spoke highly of the contribution of Germany to Cambodia's decentralisation and deconcentration reform process by far, thanking the country also for the continuing support.

*Continued on page (2)*

## PHNOM PENH LAUNCHED UPDATED IMPLEMENTATION OF UNFCCC

The Ministry of Environment has launched a report of Cambodia's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (Cambodia's Updated NDC) to implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), early this week under presidency of H.E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment.

The report of Cambodia's Updated NDC illustrates Cambodia's commitment in contribution to addressing climate change in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted in December 2015.

*Continued on page (3)*

## COVID-19 VACCINATION CAMPAIGN BEGINS



Cambodia's Lt. Gen. Hun Manet, a son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, received a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 10 February 2021.

Cambodia started its vaccination programme against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) at four hospitals in Phnom Penh on 10 February 2021.

The first batch (600,000) of China-donated one million doses of Sinopharm arrived in Phnom Penh on 7 February 2021. Some, 300,000 doses of which are for the Ministry of Health and the rest of 300,000 doses for the Ministry of National Defense.

During the first two days, some 780 people, of them 240 women, have voluntarily received their first doses of Sinopharm vaccine.

Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen sent a message to his compatriots after his eldest son, H.E. General Hun Manet, was vaccinated.

"Finally, Cambodia began officially the vaccination programme for its people. This is the result of fruitful cooperation between Cambodia and China, the iron-clad friends," wrote the Premier on his official Facebook page.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Party, State, army, and people of China, especially H.E. President Xi Jinping for the generous support for the Cambodian people," he added.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen continued that his son was the first volunteer to get the vaccine instead of him who could not do so due to the age factor. "This reflects our responsibility before our compatriots," he underlined.

A large number of Cambodians, or up to 98 percent, living in developed countries have not yet been vaccinated because there is no vaccine; even though the country has money, it cannot access the vaccine due to the lack of production, the Prime Minister explained.

*Continued on page (2)*

## CAMBODIA, GERMANY BOOST ...



The deputy prime minister informed the German diplomat that up to now, the Royal Government of Cambodia finished its 10-year

national plan (phase I) and is preparing the next 10-year national plan (phase II) for decentralization and deconcentration reform.

He also shared the government's key reform results stressing that from 2021 onward, Cambodia will focus on broader delegation of authority and resources to the sub-national administrations. ■

## CAMBODIA, SOUTH KOREA ANNOUNCE CONCLUSION OF FTA NEGOTIATIONS



The Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Korea have officially announced the conclusion of the negotiations for the Cambodia-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA), after four rounds of talks starting July last year.

The announcement was made on 3 February 2021, under the presidency of H.E. Pan Sorasak, Cambodian Minister of Commerce and H.E. Ms. Yoo Myung-hee, Trade Minister of the Republic of Korea via Video Conference, with the participation of official delegations and distinguished guests from the public and private sectors from both sides.

According to a press release of the Ministry of Commerce, the CKFTA aims to further strengthen economic partnership and further liberalise bilateral trade between the two economies in a mutually beneficial manner by creating more economic and social benefits for the peoples and businesses of both countries. Furthermore, both countries believe that this important bilateral agreement can facilitate a swift economic recovery for the two countries during and after Covid-19 pandemic.

This bilateral FTA covers Trade in Goods including Standards, Technical Regulations and

Conformity Assessment Procedures, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures along with Trade Remedies, Rules of Origin, Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation, Economic Cooperation, Transparency, Dispute Settlement, Exceptions, Institutional Arrangements and Final Provisions.

The CKFTA will further expand the market liberalisation between the two countries beyond the existing ASEAN-Korea FTA and the recently signed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). In particular, it will enhance Cambodian exports to the Republic of Korea including, but not limited to, garments and textiles, footwear, travel bags, spare parts, electronic equipment, rubber, and agricultural products. As for the Republic of Korea, this FTA will further improve its exports to Cambodia including, but not limited to, automobiles, electronics, appliances, beverages, pharmaceuticals, and plastic products.

After this official announcement on the conclusion of the negotiations of this FTA, both countries will prepare to complete all necessary domestic procedures toward the signing of this agreement tentatively in middle of 2021.

This momentous achievement fulfils the ambitions, which was initiated by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia during the state visit of H.E. MOON Jae-In, President of the Republic of Korea to Cambodia in March 2019. Following the instruction from both Leaders, the Joint Feasibility Study of this bilateral free trade agreement was officially launched in Busan, Republic of Korea on 25 November 2019.

## COVID-19 VACCIN...

Recently, Samdech Techo Hun Sen stressed that vaccination is a key strategic solution to protect people's life, promote the economic recovery, and improve people's living standard.

The vaccination campaign will continue until no vaccine left, in four hospitals in Phnom Penh, including Calmette Hospital for senior ministers, ministers, and secretaries of state; Ang Duong Hospital for under secretaries of state; Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital for municipal and provincial governors; and the National Pediatric Hospital for journalists.

The vaccine administration for armed forces is at Preah Ket Mealea Hospital in Phnom Penh.

The vaccination against COVID-19 in Cambodia is on voluntary basis and for those aged between 18 to 59 years old.

In addition, the Kingdom of Cambodia has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for China-made Sinovac vaccine against COVID-19 and the AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine developed by the University of Oxford on 12 February 2021. ■



CKFTA is the second free trade agreement for Cambodia made bilaterally with its main potential trade countries. The first Kingdom's bilateral FTA is with China which was signed last October.

The bilateral trade between Cambodia and South Korea was valued at US\$884 million as of December 2020, a year-on-year decrease of 14 percent, according to figures from the Korean International Trade Association.

Last year, Cambodia exported US\$317 million worth of products to South Korea, a decline of 18 percent compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom imported US\$567 million worth of goods from South Korea, sliding down 5 percent. ■

## ASEAN COMMITS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM IN THE REGION

ASEAN is committed to boost sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism in the region.

The commitment was made in the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers organized on 4 February 2021 via videoconference under the theme "Unity for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Recovery".

H.E. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, led the Cambodian delegation attending the discussion from Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra here in Phnom Penh.

ASEAN tourism delegations also endorsed the Phnom Penh Joint Declaration on a more Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient ASEAN Tourism initiated by Cambodia.

The Phnom Penh Declaration focuses on restoring the region's tourism by tackling COVID-19 fallouts, job generation, and promotion of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSME) promotion.

It also looks into the support of vulnerable groups and the development of digital tourism skills. ■

## CAMBODIA'S EXPORT TO U.S. REMAINS STRONG IN 2020



US\$343 million worth of products from the U.S., down 33 percent.

Bilateral trade between the two countries reached all-time high of US\$6,921 million, a year-on-year increase of 17.8 percent, according to the report.

Cambodia's major exported products are garments, footwear and travel products, while its main imported products are vehicles, animal feed and machinery.

The Kingdom's strong export to the U.S. in 2020 was backed by the export of non-garment products. The non-garment products are bicycle, furniture, and electronic components. ■

Cambodia's export to the U.S. in 2020 remained strong despite the COVID-19 crisis. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau showed that last year, Cambodia exported US\$6,577 million worth of goods to the world largest economy, up 22.8 percent compared to 2019.

The data added that Cambodia imported

## FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 2020: CAMBODIA EARNED OVER US\$25 MILLION FROM NATURAL TOURISM SERVICES

During the first nine months of 2020, Cambodia earned some US\$25.21 million from natural tourism services. The figure was shared by H.E. Neth Pheaktra, Spokesperson and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Environment recently.

H.E. Neth Pheaktra continued that during the period, some 536,545 tourists including 7,385 foreigners visited Cambodia's 22 communities in 12 protected areas of 8 provinces.

In 2020, the number of local and foreign visitors in Cambodia's natural tourism regions administrated by the ministry increased

remarkably compared with the previous year, the spokesperson pointed out.

He added that in 2019, there were 402,293 tourists resulting in US\$18.90 million income.

According to H.E. Neth Pheaktra, there are currently 22 natural tourism communities covering 35,003 hectares of land surface at the 12 protected areas in the provinces of Rattanakiri, Kampong Speu, Pursat, Preah Vihear, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Koh Kong and Kampot. ■

## PHNOM PENH ...

It also shows the government's ambition to bring down approximately 64.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to 41.7 percent of carbon dioxide, per year by 2030.

Addressing the session, H.E. Say Samal underlined Cambodia's stand to support multilateral activities in response to climate change, stressing that the report is a commitment to achieve a national social outlook on lower gas emissions, climate resilience and sustainable development.

According to H.E. Vann Monyneath, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the National Council for Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Environment, Cambodia submitted its first report of Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC Secretariat in 2015, and the report of its Updated NDC on Dec. 31, 2020. ■

## ASEAN APPEALS TO MYANMAR TO CONTINUE DIALOGUE, RECONCILIATION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 1 February 2021 issued a statement calling on all concerned parties in Myanmar to continue "dialogue, reconciliation and the return to normalcy".

The following is the ASEAN Chairman's Statement on the Developments in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar:

"ASEAN Member States have been closely following the current developments in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

We recall the purposes and the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, including, the adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We reiterate that the political stability in ASEAN Member States is essential to achieving a peaceful, stable and prosperous ASEAN Community.

We encourage the pursuance of dialogue, reconciliation and the return to normalcy in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar."

In the early morning of 1 February 2021, Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint as well as other senior figures from the ruling party have been detained by the military. The Myanmar President's Office declared a state of emergency for one year. ■

# **"Norodom Sihanouk & Zhou EnLai — An Extraordinary Friendship on The Fringes of The Cold War " to be Printed Soon**

A foreigner scholar closed to the Royal Palace will print a book on "Norodom Sihanouk & Zhou EnLai — An Extraordinary Friendship on The Fringes of The Cold War " soon.

Dr. Julio A. Jeldres, currently Counsellor to the Cabinet of His Majesty the King of Cambodia with the protocol rank of Minister of State said he will print this book in English in late February or early March.

"The book's galleys are currently being proofread the manuscript A4 about 120 pages before printing. It will be about 250 pages, and will be available soon," said Dr. Julio A. Jeldres.

The book is a unique study of the relationship between the Late King Father Norodom Sihanouk and Former Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. This book took more than ten years to research and write, he pointed out.

The book is providing a unique relationship between their friendship that endured the rigors of the Cold War, the Great Proletarian Chinese Cultural Revolution and laid the foundations for the close friendship existing between Cambodia and China today, he added.

Late King Father Norodom Sihanouk was a visionary and he saw in the 1950s that China would one day become a powerful state again both economically and politically. At the time China was ostracized by the West, which only recognized Taiwan, he underlined.

The book author said he was still a student in Chile in 1970, when he became fascinated by the fact that a Communist country welcomed with open arms the former King of Cambodia and allowed him to establish himself in the most prestigious location of Beijing to lead a government and national front of resistance to the leaders of the coup d'etat of March 18, 1970. Premier Zhou Enlai was instrumental in convincing Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders to extend support to his friend Sihanouk at a time when what had been peaceful Cambodia was engulfed by the war ravaging neighboring Vietnam. Furthermore, Zhou Enlai tried very hard to convince Henry Kissinger to seek a solution to the Cambodian problem that included Sihanouk in a leadership role because he feared that the Khmers Rouges were far too extreme and were going to lead Cambodia through a path to Communism for which Cambodia was not prepared.

The King Father was the sole Cambodian leader that has had a close relationship with successive Chinese leaders from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping thus laying the foundation for the close relationship existing between the two countries, he stressed.

Dr. Julio A. Jeldres has recent publication on Cambodia Relations with Vietnam: Historical Mistrust and Vulnerability, Journal of Greater Mekong Studies (JGMS) Vol. 2, Issue 1, February 2020, CICP, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He is also a book review: Monarchical Manipulation in Cambodia: France, Japan, and the Sihanouk Crusade for Independence, by Geoffrey C. Gunn, Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2018, 509 pages, French History, Volume 34, Issue 1, March 2020, Pages 122–123, Oxford University Press.

## **Cambodia to Request UNESCO for Listing of Phnom Tbeng as Natural World Heritage Site**

Cambodia has prepared necessary documents to inscribe Phnom Tbeng, a natural mountain in the province of Preah Vihear, on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The information was shared by H.E. Neth Pheaktra, Secretary of State and Spokesperson at the Ministry of Environment, during a recent visit to Phnom Tbeng, Phnom Tnot-Phnom Pok and the Kulen Prohm Tep Wildlife Sanctuary in Preah Vihear province.

Phnom Tbeng is one of three natural heritage sites, including Prek Kampi, Prek Prasop Wildlife Sanctuary and Thmat Peuy Community Natural Protected Area, which the Ministry of Environment has prepared to apply for listing as UNESCO natural world heritage sites, he added.

Phnom Tbeng has rich forests, which are dense and semi-dense forests, and of great importance for protecting wildlife, providing ecosystem services and securing freshwater for communities living in the region. Several endangered mammal species and key species of woods and medicinal plants exist in this area, besides typical landscapes with beautiful waterfalls.

