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CAMBODIA'S LARGEST COPPER STATUE, "PREAH THONG NEANG NEAK" INAUGURATED

"Preah Thong Neang Neak" statue, which symbolises the birth of Khmer land, culture, traditions and civilisation, was officially inaugurated on 16 April 2022.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the presidency of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and his spouse Samdech Kittiprittundit Bun Rany Hun Sen.

"Preah Thong Neang Neak" statue of 21 metres tall on a throne of 6.34 metres high is the largest copper statue in Cambodia.

Located at the Preah Thong Neang Neak roundabout in Koki village, Bit Trang commune, Prey Nup district, Preah Sihanouk province, the giant statue weighs in total 60 tonnes and faces Ream Beach.

"Preah Thong Neang Neak" statue is among the four icons of Preah Sihanouk province. The other three are Golden Lions at the city centre; Preah Uma-Mahesor statue at the Preah Uma-Mahesor roundabout in Thmar Thom village, Ream commune, Prey Nup district; and three-faced Siha Reach statue in Sihanoukville's commune 1.

The statues have been becoming the province's tourist attractions and a prime spot for taking pictures for local people and national and international visitors.



CAMBODIA, INDIA COMMITTED TO BOOSTING COOPERATION ON ECONOMY, TRADE, TOURISM, AND CULTURE



Cambodia and India have been committed to further promoting the relationship between their legislative bodies and the bilateral cooperation on economy, trade, tourism and culture.

The commitment was made by Cambodian National Assembly (NA) President Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, and visiting H.E. Om Birla, Speaker of Lok Sabha (Lower House) of the Republic of India, during their bilateral meeting at the NA Palace in Phnom Penh on 22 April 2022.

Samdech Heng Samrin spoke highly of the visit of H.E. Om Birla, stressing that it reflects the continued strengthening and expansion of the ties of friendship, solidarity and cooperation between both countries.

The Cambodian NA president briefed his guest on peace, security and political and macroeconomic stability as well as the good cooperation with other countries in the region and the world and the country's measures for post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery.

Samdech Heng Samrin invited the Indian parliament to attend the 43rd AIPA (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly) General Assembly to be hosted by the Cambodian NA in November 2022, as an observer.

He asked the Indian side to speed up the establishment of a free trade agreement between Cambodia and India, continue to support Cambodian human resource training and cooperate in cultural heritage preservation and restoration.

For his part, H.E. Om Birla shared the same ideas with Samdech Heng Samrin over the good relations and cooperation between the two nations, underlining that India highly values the relationship with Cambodia. He also invited Samdech Heng Samrin to pay a visit to India to participate in an ASEAN-India Forum and to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Cambodia-India diplomatic ties. The invitation was accepted by the Cambodian NA president.

H.E. Om Birla arrived in Phnom Penh on 21 April 2022 for a four-day official and friendly visit in Cambodia. Besides Samdech Heng Samrin, the Lok Sabha speaker also paid a courtesy call on Samdech Vibol Sena Pheakdei Say Chhum, President of the Senate on 22 April 2022. He will be granted a royal audience by His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia and visit Angkor temples before concluding his visit in Cambodia.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHASE IV OF PHNOM PENH FLOOD PROTECTION AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT INAUGURATED

Various achievements of the project for flood protection and draining improvement in Phnom Penh capital city-Phase IV was put into official use on 20 April 2022.

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Mr. Karimata Atsushi, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Japan in Cambodia, presided over the inauguration ceremony held in Sangkat Sras Chak, Khan Daun Penh.

Funded by Japan's grant aid of US\$30 million, the project includes the installation of sewerage networks in Khan Tuol Kork and Khan Daun Penh, the construction of underground water reservoir and pumping station at the garden in front of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), the installation of automatic mechanical bars to collect garbage and two mobile pumping trucks.

Speaking on the occasion, the Cambodian Premier expressed his gratitude to Japan for its key contribution to the peace-seeking process, reconstruction and development of Cambodia.



The 36-month phase IV was broken ground on Mar. 4, 2019 under the presidency of Samdech Techo Hun Sen and former Japanese Ambassador H.E. Hidehisa Horinouchi.

The first three phases of the project, starting from 2002 to 2015, were also funded by Japan's grant aid.

CAMBODIA, LAOS TO CONTINUE BOOSTING COOPERATION



The Kingdom of Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) will continue to further tighten their friendship and cooperation. The remark was made in a meeting on 20 April 2022 between Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Samdech Kralahom Sar Kheng and H.E. Buakeo Phumvongsay, newly appointed Ambassador of Lao PDR to Cambodia.

The two sides highly valued the bilateral cooperation between Cambodia and Lao PDR, particularly between the Cambodian Ministry of Interior and the Lao Ministry of Public Security in maintaining security along the common border, despite the COVID-19 crisis.

Samdech Sar Kheng was convinced that both sides will continue to carry out the already-signed agreements for the mutual interest of the two countries.

H.E. Buakeo Phumvongsay expressed his gratitude to the Royal Government of Cambodia for its support for the Lao PDR's efforts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, and pledged to further foster the relationship and cooperation between both neighbouring nations.

CAMBODIAN PM CALLS FOR NON-VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNE/SANGKAT COUNCIL ELECTION IN JUNE

Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen on 20 April 2022 appealed for non-violence, both physical and verbal, during the Commune/Sangkat Council Election in June.

The Prime Minister also called on the competent authorities at all levels to maintain neutrality for all political parties to compete in the forthcoming local election.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen made the appeals while presiding over the inauguration ceremony of the achievements of the project for flood protection and draining improvement in Phnom Penh capital city-Phase IV.

"All competent authorities need to be neutral to all political parties participating in the upcoming Commune/Sangkat Council Election; and to ensure a peaceful and non-violent election process," he underlined.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen, President of the ruling Cambodian People's Party, will not join the election campaign to begin on May 21, 2022 as he will leave for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The 5th Commune/Sangkat Council Election will be held on June 5, 2022 with the participation of 17 political parties.

FAO TO FURTHER PROMOTE CAMBODIA'S GENDER EQUALITY IN WORKFORCE

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations is committed to help promote Cambodia's gender equality in the workforce.

The commitment was made by Ms. Rebekah Bell, the new Representative of FAO in Cambodia in a meeting with H.E. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs here in Phnom Penh early this week.

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CAMBODIA PUSHING AUTOMOTIVE AND ELECTRONICS SECTORS

The Royal Government of Cambodia identifies the automotive and electronics sectors as potential priority sectors for promoting Cambodia's participation in the global value chain.

H.E. Aun Pornmoniroth, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance and Chairman of the Economic and Financial Policy Committee, chaired a meeting on the preparation of a roadmap for the development and attraction of automotive and electronic investment.

The meeting, held virtually on 19 April 2022, was attended by inter-ministerial working groups and development partners.

Two documents have been prepared outlining the government's long-term vision, in particular the initiatives for the development of the automotive and electronics sectors.

The first one is the "Roadmap for the Development and Attraction of Automotive Investment", aiming to develop and to link the Cambodian automotive sector to regional and global value chains, and in particular to transform Cambodia into an automotive component production hub as well as to promote the production of more complex and value-added automotive components.



The second is the "Roadmap for the Development and Attraction of Investment in the Electronics Sector" aiming at transforming Cambodia into a highly integrated electronics manufacturing centre that manufactures a wide range of electronic components, semi-finished components and finished products to serve the regional and global export markets.

H.E. Aun Pornmoniroth requested relevant ministries and institutions to continue to cooperate with development partners and to revise the draft roadmap in accordance with the spirit of the meeting before submitting it for approval from the government.

CAMBODIA HOSTS 8TH ACCWG-PHE

Cambodia has hosted the 8th Meeting of the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE).

The meeting took place on April 20 2022 via videoconference under the chairmanship of H.E. Mrs. Eat Sophea, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting Leader (ASEAN SOM Leader) of Cambodia.

ASEAN SOM officials, senior officials of the ASEAN Secretariat, SOM officials of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA), ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR), and so on joined the virtual meeting.

The meeting focused mainly on the progress and forward strategic directions and actions for regional public health.



ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies, ASEAN Plus Three Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies, ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework were also on the agenda of the meeting.

The meeting also discussed the establishment of ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination System.

FAO TO FURTHER PROMOTE...

Ms. Rebekah Bell spoke highly of the good collaboration between Cambodia and FAO in all sectors, including gender equality mainstreaming.

The FAO representative affirmed that the organisation will continue assisting the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Women's Affairs to further promote more women in Cambodia's workforce.

She also pledged to help further improve the people's living conditions through training provision to families' members, especially to women on skills in agriculture, nutrition, digital technology, and beyond.

CAMBODIA'S TRADE VALUED AT OVER US\$13 BILLION IN FIRST QUARTER

The total trade volume between Cambodia and its partners reached US\$13.162 billion in the first quarter of this year, up 9.1 percent compared to the same period last year.

Figures from the General Department of Customs and Excise at the Ministry of Economy and Finance showed that Cambodia exported US\$5.716 billion worth of products to foreign markets, a year-on-year increase of 25.7 percent.

At the same time, the Kingdom's imports saw a decrease by 0.9 percent to US\$7.445 billion.

The U.S. is the biggest market for Cambodia's exports during the said period, amounting to US\$2.150 billion, up 43.7 percent, following by Vietnam, Thailand, and China with US\$758.8 million, US\$248.5 million, and US\$333.5 billion, respectively.

On the other hand, Cambodia imported US\$2.551 billion worth of goods and raw materials from China, a 30.1 percent increase compared to the first three months of 2021.

CAMBODIA EXPORTS OVER 61,800 TONNES OF RUBBER LATEX IN Q1

A total of 61,839 tonnes of rubber latex were exported in the first three months of this year, up 783 tonnes or 1 percent compared to the same period in 2021, pointed out the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

CAMBODIA EXPORTS OVER 61,800 TONNES...



At the same time, it added, Cambodia exported 836 cubic metres of rubber wood, a year-on-year increase of 3.47 percent.

The rubber latex and wood exports from January to March 2022 generated in total over US\$99 million, said MAFF.

A tonne of rubber latex was priced at US\$1,594 on average in the first quarter, a decrease of US\$42 or 0.3 percent.

Currently, Cambodia has a total of 404,044 hectares of rubber plantations, of which 310,193 hectares or 77 percent can be harvested.

In 2021, the Kingdom shipped more than US\$611 million worth of rubber latex and wood to foreign markets, mainly Vietnam, Malaysia, China and Singapore.

CAMBODIA'S AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS NET US\$1.12 BILLION IN FIRST QUARTER

Cambodia earned more than US\$1,123 million from agricultural exports in the first three months of this year, a 10.6 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Figures from the General Department of Customs and Excise at the Ministry of Economy and Finance showed that the paddy rice export was amounted to US\$298.9 million, down 5.4 percent, while that of milled rice to US\$105.1 million, down 4.3 percent.

The rubber export was valued at US\$103.2 million, up 10.9 percent while other agricultural product export earned US\$616.3 million, a year-on-year increase of 24 percent.

STEVE, THE LUCKY ROYAL TURTLE



Steve, a one-year-old Southern river terrapin, was the only egg among 71 eggs that hatched at the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Centre (KKRCC) back in 2021, according to the Wonder of the Mekong.

Steve was named after Dr. Steven G. Platt, an American herpetologist, in honour of Platt's research work. Dr. Platt was the first to record the Cambodian Royal Turtle, the Southern river terrapin, in the Sre Ambel stream system in Sre Ambel district, Koh Kong province in 1999.

Mr. Som Sitha, Project Manager of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), stated that "Steve was considered to be the lucky one out of seventy-one Royal Turtle eggs. The eggs were the first ever laid in captivity at the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Centre."

Mr. Som Sitha explained that the poor hatching result was potentially caused by the age of the female turtle (barely mature) or lack of nutrition. He confirmed that high levels of protein and calcium are necessary to produce healthy eggs and proper embryo development.

Hatching turtle eggs is a somewhat new experience for the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Centre. However, Mr. Som Sitha said that since Steve hatched, there has been quite a bit of promise for more hatchlings. So far this year, the centre has received nine new nests that hold a total of 80 eggs.

"We have noticed that the eggs have good hard shells and up to 50 percent of them show signs of embryo development. The centre hopes that the turtle eggs will successfully hatch soon," he added.

The Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Centre was established in 2016 by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in collaboration with the Fisheries Administration, the Mandai Nature of Singapore, and funds received from various institutions including the European Union under the Anti-wildlife trafficking Partnership Project, the US Forest Service, the Rainforest Trust, the Turtle Survival Alliance, and other private donors.

Currently, there are a total of 154 Royal Turtles in the Reptile Conservation Centre.

Designated as Cambodia's National Reptile, the Royal Turtle, known as Southern River Terrapin (*Batagur affinis*), is one of the world's 25 most threatened freshwater turtles and tortoises, listed on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List as Critically Endangered.