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CAMBODIA, AUSTRALIA TO STRENGTHEN DEFENCE COOPERATION

The Kingdom of Cambodia and Australia have lauded their good bilateral cooperation and pledged to further strengthen it, especially in the field of national defence.

The commitment was underlined during a meeting between Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, and his Australian counterpart, H.E. Richard Marles, on the sidelines of the 19th Asia Security Summit (IISS Shangri-La Dialogue 2022) held in Singapore on 11-12 June 2022.

Samdech Tea Banh took the opportunity to express his gratitude to Australia for its assistance in developing the White Paper on National Defence and enhancing the skills of the Cambodian armed forces.

As the Chair of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) in 2022, Samdech Tea Banh invited H.E. Richard Marles to attend the ADMM Plus, scheduled for November.

For his part, H.E. Richard Marles congratulated Cambodia on hosting the ADMM and other related meetings, which will allow him to visit Cambodia again.

Apart from the Australian defence minister, Samdech Tea Banh also held talks with his Singaporean, Chinese, Filipino counterparts, etc. and Ms. Christine Cipolla, Regional Director of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for Asia and the Pacific.

CAMBODIAN PM ASKS SAC TO RECONSIDER DEATH SENTENCE



Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Chair of ASEAN, has expressed his concern over the death sentences carried out by the State Administrative Council (SAC) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, asking SAC to reconsider and refrain from them.

The death sentences and reported planned execution of a number anti-SAC individuals have attracted great concern among ASEAN Member States, as well as ASEAN external partners, said Samdech Techo Hun Sen in a message dated 10 June 2022 to H.E. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the SAC. "Cambodia believes that this planned execution, if indeed carried out, will trigger very strong and widespread negative reaction from international community. This will also have a devastating effect on ASEAN and Cambodia's efforts, as the Chair of ASEAN, to support Myanmar to return to normalcy and find a peaceful solution to current crisis through an inclusive process of dialogue, in line with the ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus," he stressed.

"Therefore, with deep concern and sincere desire to help Myanmar achieve peace and national reconciliation, I would like to earnestly request you and the SAC to reconsider the sentences and refrain from carrying out the death sentences given to those anti-SAC individuals," the Cambodian Prime Minister added.

"I have no doubt you are very well aware that today our region is at the centre of major powers' geostrategies, while the competition and rivalries among them are escalating," he said. "In light of this development, a lot of attention is now focused on developments in ASEAN and its credibility and effectiveness as a people-centered regional family. The development in Myanmar is under the spot-light and much observed by people around the globe." Samdech Techo Prime Minister also took the opportunity to reiterate the commitment of Cambodia to assist Myanmar's return to normalcy and restore Myanmar full participation in the ASEAN Community building process.

CHINESE-BACKED MEKONG-LANGKANG PROJECTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO ADDRESSING DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS IN CAMBODIA

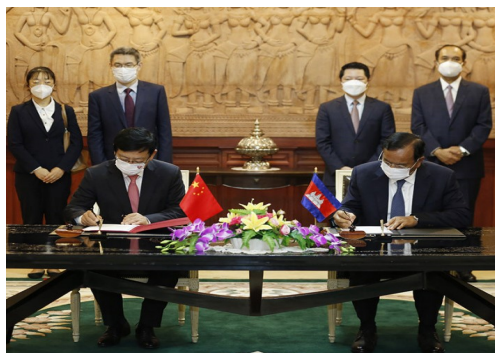
The Mekong-Lancang new projects supported by the Chinese government will contribute to addressing the developmental needs in Cambodia, said H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The Cambodian DPM made the remark at the signing ceremony for the Agreement on the Cooperation Projects of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Special Fund 2022, joined by H.E. Wang Wentian,

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CHINESE-BACKED MEKONG-LANGCANG PROJECTS...



Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia, and representatives from projects implementing agencies and institutions, at the ministry on 13 June 2022.

Since its launch in 2016, this Special Fund has delivered tangible outcomes and contributed to enhancing the socio-economic development of the Mekong-Lancang countries, H.E. Prak Sokhonn said.

The Special Fund has further narrowed our development gaps through integrated and interconnected development, and have strengthened our capacity to better respond to the needs of our peoples, he added.

This year, Cambodia has received an additional 13 new projects with a total budget of more than US\$4 million.

"These new projects will further contribute to addressing the developmental needs in Cambodia in the field of rural development, water resources, agriculture, environment, capacity building, and cultural heritage," the Cambodian top diplomat said.

Through this MLC Special Fund, he pointed out, Cambodia has benefited from 80 concrete projects that have tremendous positive impacts on the lives of the people through resilient and robust economic and social development, as well as contribute to enhancing the livelihood of the people across the sub-region.

H.E. Prak Sokhonn also reaffirmed Cambodia's commitment to work closely with China and all Mekong countries to further enhance the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation to a new height so as to build a more open and inclusive community of shared future of peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

The Mekong-Lancang Cooperation is a multilateral platform established in 2016 for cooperation between the riparian states of the Lancang River and Mekong River.

Lancang is part of the Mekong that flows through China. Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand are five downstream countries of the Mekong River.

"THE TASTE OF ANGKOR" COOKBOOK WINS TWO GOURMAND WORLD COOKBOOK AWARDS 2022

"The Taste of Angkor" Cookbook was proudly presented at the Umea Food Symposium in Sweden on 2-5 June 2022, and won two Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2022, according to Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Prak Sokhonn.

The two awards are Best Asian Cuisine Book and Heads of State/Food (Foreword by H.E. Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn), he pointed out.

At the same event, he added, another Khmer cookbook "The Culinary Art of Cambodia" also won the Special Award of the Jury.

"The Taste of Angkor" has been prepared and published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of its cultural diplomacy. The cookbook, which was unveiled on 18 January 2021 by H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Prak Sokhonn, contains a selection of 38 recipes of Khmer dishes and



desserts. Easy-to-follow detailed instructions, encompassing ingredient substitutions of Khmer ingredients that may be hard to source abroad, were the highlight of this artistic culinary book. "The Taste of Angkor" was also distinguished as the "Best Asian Cookbook" at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2021.

JAPAN'S JDS PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTES TO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA

Japan-sponsored scholarship – JDS – has been significantly contributing to Human Resource Development in Cambodia through the provision of scholarship to 522 Cambodian officials from various ministries so far. H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, made the comments on 13 June 2022 during the signing ceremony of the Exchange of Notes and Related Documents on the Extension of Japanese Grant Aid for the implementation of "Human Resources Development Scholarship" Project with Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. Mikami Masahiro.

Under the grant assistance of JPY 363,000,000 (approximately US\$3,360,000), 26 Cambodian government officials, consisting of 24 Master's and 2 Doctorate Degree candidates, will be offered scholarship to continue their study at various prestigious universities in Japan.

Speaking at the ceremony, H.E. Prak Sokhonn expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Japan for not only providing JDS and other scholarships to Cambodia, but also Official Development Assistance (ODA) to support Cambodia's socio-economic development.

"I am also very grateful for Japan's continued ODA to Cambodia and the assistance to support the Royal Government of Cambodia's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

Despite the pandemic, the amicable ties and multifaceted cooperation between Cambodia and Japan is enduring and continue to thrive, thanks to our two countries' strong commitment to further developing the bilateral relations, he added.

Since it was introduced to Cambodia in 2000, the project for Human Resource Development Scholarship has been significantly contributing to Human Resource Development in Cambodia through the provision of scholarship to 522 Cambodian officials from various ministries thus far, of which 27 fellows are officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, according to H.E. Prak Sokhonn. A total of 439 officials have returned to Cambodia and some of them hold various leadership and key positions at their respective institutions, said the Cambodian top diplomat.

SPOKESPERSON OF JUSTICE MINISTRY: 5TH COMMUNE/SANGKAT COUNCIL ELECTION ON DEMOCRATIC WAY



Generally, the 5th Mandate Commune/Sangkat Council Election held on 05 June 2022 is in a multiparty liberal democratic way, H.E. Chin Malin, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Justice said on 05 June 2022.

“Many political parties have partaken in the election and their respective political activists have conducted their activities freely in accordance with the laws and election-related procedures,” he underlined.

H.E. Chin Malin reiterated that those who have faced legal actions are not because they are political activists or opposition activists, but because they have violated the laws and the electoral regulations.

Under the law enforcement mechanism, the spokesperson explained, when there are any acts violating the law, they have to face legal actions without any excuse even now we are on the election process.

A total of 17 political parties – Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), Candlelight Party (CP), FUNCINPEC Party, Khmer National United Party (KNUP),

Cambodia National Love Party (CNLP), Cambodian Nationality Party (CNP), Cambodian Youth Party (CYP), Cambodia Reform Party (CRP), Khmer Will Party (KWP), Kampucheaniyeum Party (KP), Grassroots Democratic Party (GDP), Ekpeap Cheat Khmer Party (ECKP), Beehive Social Democratic Party (BSDP), Cambodia Indigenous People’s Democracy Party (CIPDP), Khmer National United Party (KNUP), Reaksmey Khemara Party, and Khmer Economic Development Party (KEDP) – competed for the 1,652 communes/Sangkat throughout Cambodia. More than 9.2 million people have been registered for the Commune/Sangkat Council Election held under the observation of some 75,000 local and international observers.

Besides, there were 775 local journalists and 39 foreign journalists registered to cover this local election, according to the National Election Committee (NEC).

The previous Commune/Sangkat Council Election was held on June 4, 2017 in 22,148 polling stations across the country with the participation of 12 political parties. Some 7.04 million or 89.52 percent of the total eligible voters of 7,865,033 turned out to the polls. In that election, CPP won a landslide victory by obtaining 1,156 communes/Sangkat, while the dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) got 489 communes/Sangkat, and Khmer National United Party (KNUP), a commune.

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS INCREASE 191% IN JANUARY-APRIL PERIOD

The number of international tourists has seen a sharp increase by 191 percent to 241,485 in the January-April period this year, a positive sign for the tourism recovery since Cambodia announced to fully reopen the country in November last year.

Data from the Ministry of Tourism showed that in the first four months of this year, Vietnamese tourists topped the Kingdom’s tourism market list with 74,643 visitors, followed by Thai tourists with 50,279.

Chinese tourists ranked third with 15,403, while the American tourists increased to 13,278.

Cambodia has relaxed entry rules to facilitate the travel and boost tourism, investment and trade since 17 March 2022.

Fully vaccinated arrivals are not subject to any quarantine, but those who have not fully been inoculated must be in a 7-day quarantine at the location designated by the Ministry of Health or competent authorities.

Meanwhile, the Cambodian outbound tourists were recorded at 54,933, up 688 percent compared to the same period in 2021.

Cambodia’s high vaccination rate allowed the country to fully resume its socio-economic activities.

UPPER CAMBODIAN MEKONG RIVER SYSTEM, ...

According to the Wonders of the Mekong project, a recent study supported by project recently documented a decline in the abundance and size of the striped catfish by analysing information from long-term fish catch and larval monitoring in the Tonle Sap and Mekong rivers in Cambodia over the last two decades.

The annual total catch decreased from 236,952 kg during the 2000-2001 fishing season to 7,293 kg during the 2017-2018 fishing season. In addition, mean body length decreased from 31 cm in 2001 to 13 cm in 2019. Striped catfish larval abundance also declined over this period, and flooding was found to be related to striped catfish abundance.

This study underscores that effective fisheries management and conservation actions are needed to maintain migratory corridors, spawning grounds, water flow, and fish larvae drift in the Mekong River, to conserve the wild striped catfish population in the Lower Mekong Basin.

UPPER CAMBODIAN MEKONG RIVER SYSTEM, A WORLD’S LAST REMAINING HABITAT FOR WILD POPULATION OF STRIPED CATFISH



The upper Cambodian Mekong River system is likely one of the world’s last remaining habitats for the wild population of the striped catfish (*Pangasianodon hypophthalmus*), underlined the Wonder of the Mekong project.

The striped catfish is a flagship catfish species in the Mekong River and supports a commercially important fishery, the source added.

Although the striped catfish has been assessed as “Endangered” by the IUCN Red List, its population status in the Cambodian Mekong system is not well understood, it pointed out.

NESTS AND CHICKS OF ENDANGERED BIRD SPECIES IN PREY LANG EXTENDED LANDSCAPE INCREASE

USAID Greening Prey Lang's bird nest protection programme conducted in the Prey Lang Extended Landscape has seen an increase in nests and chicks of endangered bird species.

According to USAID Greening Prey Lang, between June 2021 and May 2022, a total of 174 nests and 292 chicks of endangered bird species were monitored in Preah Vihear province under the programme. These numbers are higher than last year, which had 127 nests and 232 chicks monitored.

The programme recruited 72 local villagers to safeguard nesting birds and their chicks from threats during the breeding season. Species protected include Giant Ibis, White-shoulder Ibis, Sarus Crane, Lesser Adjutant, Woolly-necked Stork, and Red-headed Vulture.

USAID Greening Prey Lang pays community members a daily rate for each nest they protect. Depending on the bird species, the monitoring period takes up to three months, beginning with finding active nests with eggs and ending when the chicks have successfully fledged.



Numerous studies have shown the bird nest programme to be very effective. By engaging local communities in conservation, the programme not only improves biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health, but it also improves community livelihoods and strengthens inclusive and effective landscape governance.

7 RED-HEADED AND 2 WHITE-RUMPED VULTURES FOUND IN SREPOK WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Seven red-headed vultures and 2 white-rumped vultures have been discovered in the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary in Mondulkiri province, the Provincial Environment Department said.

This is the first time that researchers from the department with the support of WWF have spotted white-rumped vultures after a two-year absence, the same source said, adding that they had previously seen only red-headed vultures there.

A nationwide census, conducted in 2021 at four vulture restaurants – Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary of Stung Treng, Chheb Wildlife Sanctuary of Preah Vihear, Sambo Wildlife Sanctuary of Kratie, and Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary of Mondulkiri – showed that Cambodia had 121 vultures, including 20 Red-headed vultures, 66 White-rumped vultures, and 35 Slender-billed vultures.

Cambodia vulture censuses are undertaken on March 10, June 10, June 20, September 20, and December 20 each year.

All vulture species in the Kingdom are protected under the Cambodian law. The Royal Government has banned the veterinary sale and use of diclofenac (whilst harmless to cattle and other



livestock, results in death of vultures if they feed on a carcass of an animal previously treated with this drug) in the country in order to safeguard the remaining Cambodian vulture population.