

VISIONS of CAMBODIA

ISSUE 108: 16-31 January 2023

PM URGES MEDIA TO JOINTLY BROADCAST 100-DAY COUNTDOWN TOWARD SEA GAMES 2023

Prime Minister of Cambodia has called on all media outlets to actively participate in promoting the 100-day countdown toward the SEA Games-ASEAN Para Games 2023 in Cambodia.

The Prime Minister, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen made the call in his 5th gathering with more than 4,000 journalists at Koh Pich Convention and Exhibition Centre in Phnom Penh last weekend.

"All media, please join the campaign to promote the 100-day countdown toward the 32nd SEA Games 2023 in Cambodia to remind the people, both inside and outside the country [of the regional sport event], to inspire the athletes to train hard to get more medals in the upcoming competitions, and to encourage our youth and people to support and love sports under the slogan 'Sports: Live in Peace', 'A person plays a sport', 'Cambodia reduces traffic accidents' and 'Clean Cambodia',".

Samdech Techo Hun Sen also instructed the competent authorities and relevant institutions to take any measures to ensure safety, social security and public order to maintain honour and dignity of Cambodia on the international stage as the host of the regional games for the first time.

The Cambodian SEA Games Organising Committee (CAMSOC) will mark the 100-day countdown toward the SEA Games-ASEAN Para Games 2023 on 25 January 2023.

Besides the 100 days countdown, the committee will also celebrate the royal sports fire ceremony, fire procession and the 11 participating countries' SEA Games Mission Heads Meeting.

The 32nd SEA Games will be opened officially on May 5 and closed on 17 May 2023, while the 12th ASEAN Para Games will take place from 3 to 9 June 2023.

CAMBODIA, MALDIVES COMMITTED TO BOOSTING BILATERAL TRADE EXCHANGE



The Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Maldives have been committed to expanding their bilateral trade exchange through boosting the import from and export to each other, especially to serve the tourism sector.

At a joint press conference with H.E. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Republic of Maldives, following their bilateral talks in Malé, the capital city of Maldives on 16 January 2023, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, said canned fish can be the first product Maldives can export to Cambodia as the Kingdom needs a lot of canned fish each year, particularly as a relief for flood victims.

On the other hands, he continued, the Cambodian potential products that can be exported to Maldives could be milled rice which crowned the world's best rice for five years, cashew nuts, banana, mangoes and so on which will serve not only the local people, but also foreign tourists.

For his part, H.E. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih expressed Maldives' intention to improve its relations with Cambodia, which is a leading exporter of high-quality rice and other agricultural crops such as corn, pepper and cassava, as well as fruits.

Both sides also discussed the import of clothes, wood products, travel goods from Cambodia and tinned fish and other canned food from Maldives, he added.

For tourism sector, Cambodia and Maldives agreed on visa exemption for their people for a period of 30 days. Samdech Techo Hun Sen suggested a joint tourism package and One Visa, Two Countries to boost the two nations' tourism.

Concerning the education sector, Samdech Techo Hun Sen thanked Maldives for providing scholarships for Cambodian students, training on diving skill for Cambodian swimmers, and on hospitality for 20 Cambodian trainees, and announced to grant 10 scholarships to Maldivian students to pursue their higher education in Cambodia.

Besides, the Cambodian Prime Minister suggested both sides to consider the possibility of expanding their cooperation in the field of culture.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen has been on a three-day official visit in Maldives since Jan. 15, at the invitation of H.E. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

CAMBODIA COMMITTED TO BECOME KEY CASHEW PRODUCER AND SUPPLIER

Cambodia is committed to turn itself into a major producer and supplier of cashew product in the local, regional and global markets.

To do so, a draft National Policy on Cashew Nuts 2022-2027 has been elaborated and was approved by the cabinet ministers in a plenary session held at the Peace Palace on 13 January 2023 under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, according to H.E. Phay Siphon, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister and Head of the Royal Government Spokesperson Unit.

Cashew is an agro-industrial crop and one of the 12 priority crops whose production and competitiveness are the main focus of the Royal Government.

The draft National Policy on Cashew Nuts 2022-2027 has a vision to develop cashew production, processing and market to be inclusively competitive, ensuring sustainability and economic diversification, through enhancing production output with competitive quality, promoting industrialisation to increase the added value of harvesting and processing by 25 percent by 2027 and at least 50 percent by 2032, and booting exports via market



diversification, export-related cross-sectoral linkages, trade facilitation, cost reduction, and competitive advantage promotion.

At the same time, the cabinet meeting also approved the draft law on public financial system to establish a basic and necessary legal framework for the implementation of performance budgeting; the draft law on clean water management to ensure quality, safety, sustainability and affordability; and the draft policy on land management and use for the development of Preah Sihanouk province into a multi-purpose Special Economic Zone 2022-2038.

CHAMPEI SAR 70, A NEW RICE VARIETY NAMED AFTER CAMBODIA-AUSTRALIA'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP

Champe Sar 70 is a new variety of rice named in late 2022 by Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Cambodia and Australia.

Champe Sar 70 was bred by the Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) from Phka Rumduol with CNI9024.

According to the Australian Embassy in Cambodia, Champei Sar 70 was developed when Cambodia needed a new premium rice variety that farmers could harvest in short periods twice a year.

It is a new rice variety supported by the Australian Government and is now being used to produce genetically pure seeds to supply local communities, the source added



CHAMPEI SAR 70, ...

"Last year, Australia and Cambodia marked 70 years of diplomatic relations—the new rice was officially released by the National Varietal Release Committee after 9 years of hard work, including many tests and trials," the embassy underlined.

Champe Sar 70 can give a yield of 4.3 tonnes per hectare on average. The 7.7 mm long and 2.06 mm wide grain with a strong aroma can be highly priced in the national and international markets.

HALO TRUST APPRECIATED FOR CONTRIBUTION TO CAMBODIAN MINE ACTION

Cambodia has lauded HALO Trust Cambodia for its active contribution to humanitarian mine action in past 30 years ago.

The appreciation was made by H.E. Ly Thuch, Senior Minister and First Vice President of Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) in a meeting of SDC Project Steering Committee here in Siem Reap province on 16 January 2023.

H.E. Ly Thuch thanked the Governments and peoples of Switzerland, Germany, U.S., UK, and Ireland as well as the U.S. Humanitarian Demining Research and Development (HD R&D) Programme for their support for mine clearance in Cambodia through HALO Trust.

The SDC Project Steering Committee Meeting also received the participation of H.E. Stefan Messerer, German Ambassador to Cambodia, H.E. Dominic Williams, UK Ambassador to Cambodia, Mr. Markus Buerli, Director of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC), H.E. Ms. Buth Rothna, Representative of HD R&D, and Mr. Miles Hawthorn, Director of HALO Trust in Cambodia.

Since 1991, HALO Trust Cambodia has cleared about 425 square kilometres of landmine and UXO-contaminated area, destroying some 527,000 landmines and UXOs and providing safe land for one million people.

HALO Trust employs around 1,130 Cambodian staff, 40 percent of them are women. HALO Trust employs around 1,130 Cambodian staff, 40 percent of them are women.

TWO MEKONG GIANT CATFISH AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER ENDANGERED FISH RELEASED INTO NATURE



Two critically endangered Mekong giant catfish and thousands of other endangered and ecologically important fish were released at the junction of the Tonle Sap and Mekong Rivers to spotlight the plight of a species whose populations have decreased up to 99 percent in recent decades.

According to a recent joint press release, Scientists hope it will lead to more concerted and coordinated conservation action, including greater outreach to communities living along the Tonle Sap and Mekong rivers.

H.E. Has Sareth, the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; H.E. Neth Pheaktra, the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Environment; Hanh Nguyen, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Acting Mission Director; and Dr. Zeb Hogan of the USAID-funded Wonders of the Mekong project presided over the release ceremony near the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. Also present was Mrs. Cheng Mouychhen, the fish farmer who reared the released Mekong giant catfish in her ponds. The catfish, weighed about 100 pounds (between 45-50 kilogrammes) and measured over five feet (1.6 metres). Among the other fish released were giant barb, a critically endangered carp species known as the "National Fish of Cambodia," and striped catfish,

and striped catfish, a highly migratory fish that was once a staple food in the region but has seen sharp declines and is now classified as endangered.

"It is essential that we work together to save and conserve ecologically important and critically endangered fish species, like the Mekong giant catfish, in order to keep the Mekong River healthy. This will conserve natural ecosystems to support communities, wildlife, and economic activity across Cambodia," said Nguyen.

"The addition of these fish, together with parallel efforts to protect wild fish and their habitats, represent a significant contribution to the persistence of these species in the wild," said Dr. Hogan.

The giant catfish have all but disappeared from rivers outside Cambodia. Today, the Southeast Asian country is widely recognised as being the best hope for the persistence and recovery of the species, as well as other Mekong giants like the giant carp, giant freshwater stingray, wallago catfish, and seven-striped barb.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), through the Cambodian Fisheries Administration (FiA) and the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute (IFReDI), collaborate with Wonders of the Mekong to tag and release many endangered fish. "We want to encourage policies that enable this important resource to thrive in the wild," said H.E. Has Sareth, Secretary of State.

Mrs. Mouychheng, representing the deep commitment of local communities, said "I am happy that my family can contribute to endangered fish conservation. This is what my husband wished before he passed away, to release these fishes back into the Mekong River.

ROYAL GROUP TO BUILD US\$300 MILLION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON PREAH SIHANOUK PROVINCE'S KOH RONG ISLAND

The Royal Group Koh Rong Development Company, a subsidiary of the Royal Group Co., Ltd., will build an international airport on Koh Rong city, Preah Sihanouk province and the construction would take five years to complete.

The State Secretariat of Civil Aviation and the company signed a Memorandum of Agreement and Acceptance of Koh Rong International Eco-Tourism Airport Master Plan in Phnom Penh on 18 January 2023. H.E. Dr. Mao Havannall, Minister in charge of the State Secretariat of Civil Aviation and Neak Oknha Kith Meng, Chairman of the Royal Group Koh Rong Development Company were the signatories.

The construction of Koh Rong International Eco-Tourism Airport (Category 4C) on Koh Rong development area would cost some US\$300 million and be completed within a period of five years.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, H.E. Dr. Mao Havannall said that the development project is under the framework of a multi-purpose joint venture for the whole Koh Rong city, which is a private sector investment and is similar to the investment of Union Development Company (UDG) in Dara Sakor area (100 percent private investment).

"This project is in line with the vision, plan, policy and strategic direction of the Royal Government of Cambodia," he said.

On 28 February 2008, the Royal Group Co., Ltd. signed a Koh Rong lease agreement with the Council for the Development of Cambodia representing the Royal Government of Cambodia to develop the island city as a business development area and eco-tourism resort, including airport infrastructure.

OVER 61,400 LANDMINES AND UXOS DESTROYED BY CMAC IN 2022



Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) destroyed 61,477 landmines and UXOs in 2022.

The update was shared on 11 January 2023 by H.E. Heng Ratana, Director General of CMAC, highlighting that the move has freed additional 194 square kilometres of land from landmines and UXOs, about 91.4 percent against the annual planning.

Cambodian Mine Action Centre also set out a direction to clear between 268 to 300 square kilometres of land from mines and UXOs in 2023.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has set an ambitious goal to become a mine-free country by 2025.

CAMBODIA REGISTERS NEARLY 200 NEW INDUSTRIAL FACTORIES IN 2022

The Ministry of Industry, Technology, Science, and Innovation has registered 186 new factories in 2022, bringing the total number of active factories in Cambodia to 1,982.

The 1,982 factories had a total asset-investment value of US\$16,690 million, up from US\$13,811 million in 2021, according to the ministry's report.

In 2022, 83 factories were closed, down from 143 a year earlier, the same source added.

H.E. Heng Sokkhung, the ministry's Secretary of State and Spokesperson, said on 17 January 2023 that the effective control of the Royal Government of Cambodia's Covid-19 pandemic is the key to building confidence among investors in the country.

"In Cambodia, we see that we can manage and live better with Covid-19, allowing us to resume all socio-economic activities. For instance, the factories in 2022 have seen the increase in both the number and investment value," he said.

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS TO CAMBODIA JUMP TO 2.28 MILLION IN 2022

The number of foreign tourists to Cambodia in 2022 rose by 1,059 percent to 2.28 million, the Ministry of Tourism's report showed on 17 January 2023.

The ministry tracked the movement of domestic tourists to 13.93 million last year, a year-on-year increase of 199 percent, it pointed out.

Of the figure, 1.88 million domestic foreign tourists toured the country last year, a 572 percent increase over a year before, read the report.

The ministry also reported that there were 10,938 flight movements in the country, up from 2,139 flights recorded in 2021, of which 8,740 flight were handled by the Phnom Penh International Airport, 1,738 flights by Siem Reap International Airport, and 640 others by Preah Sihanouk International Airport.

Cambodia has expected to welcome around 2 million international tourists in 2022, with the hope that the number of international tourists will return to the pre-COVID-19 level of 7 million in 2026 or 2027.

Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting the Cambodian economy. For the pre-pandemic era, the Kingdom welcomed 6.6 million international tourists in 2019, generating US\$4.92 billion in revenue.

