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PHNOM PENH-BAVET EXPRESSWAY SET TO BREAK GROUND IN JUNE

The second expressway connecting Phnom Penh capital to Bavet city of Svay Rieng province, at the border with Vietnam, is set to break ground in June, said H.E. Sun Chanthol, Senior Minister and Minister of Public Works and Transport.

At the inauguration ceremony of a Motor Vehicle Inspection Centre (Samrong Andeth Branch) in Phnom Penh on 21 April, H.E. Senior Minister said the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony will be presided over by Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

The construction firm is China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) which also built the first Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway.

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ALL FREE FOR TICKETS, ACCOMMODATION AND BROADCASTING RIGHTS FOR SEA GAMES-ASEAN PARA GAMES IN CAMBODIA

The Cambodian SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games Organising Committees (CAMSOC-CAMAPGOC) have pleurably announced to provide free entry for the spectators, free accommodation and food for delegates, and free broadcasting rights for media partners.

The fee removal was made under the instruction of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

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FOOD DIPLOMACY, A SOFT POWER TO BOOST COMMERCE AND TOURISM



Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Prak Sokhonn has spoken highly of food diplomacy, stressing that it is a 'soft power' that Cambodia could utilise to promote commerce, culture, tourism, exports and bolster culinary proficiency.

The DPM made the remarks while presiding over the "Progress Meeting of Economic Diplomacy Working Group for the First Quarter of 2023 and Consultative Meeting for the Selection of Khmer Food to Welcome Foreign Guests", organised here on April 25 in a hybrid format by the Economic Diplomacy Coordinating Group (EDCG), according to a press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC).

The Cambodian top diplomate highly commended the cooperation and support from relevant ministries and the private sector in the implementation of the Economic Diplomacy Strategy 2021-2023, and expressed his support for the initiative of selecting Khmer dishes to welcome foreign guests, which required inputs from relevant stakeholders in

both public and private sectors to preserve national identity and to guarantee a high standard of tastes and ingredients in Khmer food in the hope to promote Khmer cuisine and to further raise national prestige on the international stage.

Approximately 200 participants were present at the meeting, including senior officials, heads of Cambodian Missions abroad, and diplomatic officials of the MFAIC, as well as representatives from Cambodian Hotel Association, Cambodian Restaurant Association, among others.

The core objective of this meeting was to review the achievements of the Economic Diplomacy working group in the first quarter of 2023 and to provide a platform for relevant ministries and the private sector to discuss and provide inputs on the selection and standardisation of Khmer cuisines in respect of menus, ingredients, tastes, presentation, and quality at hotels and restaurants.

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PHNOM PENH-BAVET EXPRESSWAY SET TO ...

Stretching for estimated 135 kilometres long, the Phnom Penh-Bavet Expressway is designed to boost connectivity with Vietnam and spur economic ties between both countries' border provinces, with a special focus on export growth.

The ministry has stated previously that the expressway is planned to be 25.5 metres wide with two lanes in each direction.

Starting from the capital's third ring road, the expressway will pass through Kandal, Prey Veng

and Svay Rieng provinces and end at Bavet city.

The USD1.9-billion-worth expressway of over 190 kilometres long connecting the capital of Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville's deep-sea port, by crossing the provinces of Kandal, Kampong Speu, and Koh Kong, has been already put into operation.

ALL FREE FOR TICKETS, ACCOMMODATION ...

On April 18, H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Permanent Vice Chairman of CAMSOC-CAMAPGOC sent an official letter to the president of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of the Southeast Asian Games Federation to inform him about the removal of accommodation (full board) fees for the 11 participating NOCs of the 32nd SEA Games.

"Under the wise and respectable guidance of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, CAMSOC will no longer charge any food and accommodation fees to the Participating NOCs of the 32nd SEA Games," read the letter.

"In other words, all eleven participating NOCs will not be subjected to any pertaining to food, accommodation, and transportation costs," it added.

However, H.E. Dr. Thong Khon underlined, all rules and regulations regarding quotas and duration of stay would remain in place.

"This decision and leadership by Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen further affirm the Kingdom of Cambodia's commitment to hosting our regional sports family and international guests in neighbourly environment of solidarity and friendship," he continued.

Free tickets reservation for SEA Games 2023 will be available on App of Cambodia 2023 in the near future as well.

As of 27 April, only 9 days left for the Kingdom of Cambodia to host the 32nd SEA Games and 38 days to go for the 12th ASEAN Para Games, under the motto of "Sports: Live in Peace".

A total of 12,404 sport delegates have registered for the SEA Games-ASEAN Para Games 2023 in Cambodia.

CAMBODIA NEEDS USD30 BILLION FOR 150 PRIORITISED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



Cambodia has sought partners to raise about USD30 billion of investment funds to implement 150 hard and soft infrastructure projects that the government has classified as priorities to place in the Comprehensive Intermodal Comprehensive Master Plan (CIT-MP) for the next ten years, said a release by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT).

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FOOD DIPLOMACY, ...

Following this meeting, H.E. Dr. Nimh Khemara, Secretary of State and Head of the Economic Diplomacy Coordinating Group, hosted a dinner event for all participants to experience the flavours and to appreciatively comprehend the ingredients and culinary techniques of Khmer cuisine.

SIX CAMBODIAN STUDENTS IN SUDAN ARE IN SAFE PLACE, SAYS FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

The six Cambodian students stranded in Sudan are currently in a safe place to wait for the evacuation, confirmed H.E. An Sokkhoeurn, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on 25 April 2023.

According to the spokesperson, the six students, including two women, have been studying at a university in Khartoum, Sudan. Following the bloody clashes which erupted in the capital city on April 15, 2023, the university has gathered all (multinational) students to stay at a safe place in the university.

Through coordination with the Malaysian Embassy and regular contact with the Cambodian Embassy in Cairo, Egypt, the six Cambodian students are staying with Malaysian students to await the immediate evacuation from Sudan.

As of the night of April 24, 2023, the Malaysian side has been coordinating with the relevant parties to decide on the means of transportation for their departure from Sudan as soon as possible.

CAMBODIA SIGNS MOU FOR TIMOR-LESTE'S MEMBERSHIP IN WTO

Cambodia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to announce that the bilateral negotiation between the Kingdom and Timor-Leste counterpart has been completed to pave way for the latter to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), said a release by the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) on 21 April.

The MoU was signed by H.E. Long Keovichet, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the WTO and H.E. Maria de Lurdes Martins de Sousa BESSA, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the WTO and Other International Organisations in Geneva city of Switzerland.

"The deal is to announce the completion of bilateral negotiation on [the former's] promise to open markets for goods and services ... of the latter," the release pointed out, adding that the signing ceremony was presided over by H.E. Joaquim Amaral, Timor-Leste's incumbent Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs and Lead of WTO Membership Negotiation and H.E. Rui MACIEIRA, Portuguese Ambassador and Leader of Working Party on the Accession of Timor-Leste to WTO.

"The principle provided by the government to complete the bilateral negotiation reflects the strong commitment of our leaders in supporting Timor-Leste to achieve its vision regarding regional and global integration," said H.E. Long Keovichet, adding that the top leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) approved the country's membership in the association.

Timor-Leste's membership in the regional association was approved in principle during the ASEAN Summit under Cambodia's chairmanship regarding the Kingdom's support in the regional framework, while in the global framework, Cambodia has just completed the bilateral negotiation to continue to negotiate with other members.

After other members complete their respective bilateral negotiations with Timor-Leste, it would be most likely for the country's application for membership in WTO to be approved officially during the 13th Ministerial Conference to be held in the United Arab Emirates in February 2024, the release said.

SIEM REAP-ANGKOR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO OFFICIALLY OPEN IN OCTOBER 2023



Cambodia's new international airport in Siem Reap cultural province will be ready for official inauguration in October 2023.

The update was shared in a meeting between H.E. Tekreth Samrach, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State at the Office of the Council of Ministers, and

Mr. Zou Yuhui, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yunnan Air investment Cambodia Airport management (YACA) on 20 April 2023.

According to the commission, the construction of the Siem Reap International Airport is now 92 percent complete and will be opened for flight validation in mid-May 2023.

The airport is located in Tayek commune, Sotr Nikum district, about 51 kilometres from Siem Reap provincial city and 40 kilometres from Angkor Wat Temple.

The construction of the airport began in March 2020 and the USD 880-million worth airport is a 4E class that can handle long-haul aircrafts.

CAMBODIA NEEDS USD30 BILLION ...

The senior official, who is in charge of communications and technology for MPWT said that the 150 infrastructure development projects that have been included in the CIT-MP were selected out of the 332 projects worth a total of about USD48.6 billion of the intermodal transportation connectivity and logistics system master plan that covers seven master plans.

H.E. Heang Sotheayuth, Director General of Technology and Public Relations of MPWT, stated that the prioritised infrastructure development projects for the period from 2022-2030 would cover all main aspects of the transportation and logistics such as roads, rails, waterways, airways, ports, logistics and interactive transportation.

"We have classified projects of the master plan and we have found that some of them are most prioritised and much interested by prospective investment partners we have talked to, while some are less prioritised. They have expressed their respective investment abilities at different scopes, which does not mean the number of projects has been reduced," said H.E. Heang Sotheayuth.

H.E. Heang Sotheayuth sent on to add that a committee in charge of CIT-MP have still kept the rest of the projects valid, but he did not have any updates on any possible actions on those projects. "Normally, when having a master plan, we develop action plans and look for investment partners and so the projects that have not had investing partners are just put aside," he said.

H.E. Heang Sotheayuth, who is also MPWT's spokesman, said the logistics committee have classified the projects into different categories as some would be invested with loans, while some would be invested by public-private partnership agreements or the national budgets. "The master plan has been finalised as a strategy for economic development," the release said.

CAMBODIA TO ATTRACT APPROXIMATELY 4 MILLION INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS THIS YEAR



Cambodia is expected to attract 4 million international tourists in 2023, including 1 million Chinese tourists.

The target was shared in a meeting between Mr. Shi Zhongjun, Secretary General of ASEAN-China Centre (ACC) in a meeting with H.E. Tith Chantha, Permanent Secretary of State at the Ministry of Tourism here in Phnom Penh recently.

BOK L'HONG OF CAMBODIA, A BEST SALAD IN THE WORLD

Bok l'hong, Green Papaya Salad, of Cambodia has earned a place in the Best Salads in the World by the TasteAtlas, an encyclopedia of flavours, a world atlas of traditional dishes, local ingredients, and authentic restaurants.

Bok l'hong ranked 28th with a score of 4.2 among the 50 best salads in the world, according to the same source.

Bok l'hong, meaning pounded papaya in Khmer, is a Cambodian take on the green papaya salad that is widely consumed throughout Southeast Asia, said the TasteAtlas.

According to the TasteAtlas, unlike the Thai version that uses thin strips of papaya and typically requires the fruit to be pounded with other ingredients, the traditional Cambodian version, similar to the Laotian and the Vietnamese versions, uses shredded papaya instead, and it does not involve fruit pounding.

Mr. Shi Zhongjun pledged to foster the cooperation on tourism sector with Cambodia to attract more both national tourists, and tourists from the third countries.

ACC will organise joint activities for ASEAN-China, especially with Cambodia such as Cambodia-China tourism destination promotion exhibition and tourism skill training support for Khmer and Chinese languages guides.

Mr. Shi Zhongjun hoped to also promote exchanges of visit between Cambodian and Chinese journalists, push for direct flights, boost the flow of tourists and investors to Cambodia, and increase of tourism products for foreign tourists.

H.E. Tith Chantha welcomed the cooperation with ACC and took stock of good cooperation between Cambodia and ACC by far.

He informed Mr. Shi Zhongjun that Cambodia received over 13 million national and international tourists during this year's Khmer New Year celebrations, adding that the flow of tourists reflected the country's peace, stability, public order and effective containment of COVID-19.

