

# VISIONS of CAMBODIA

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## OUTCOMES OF THE BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN CAMBODIAN AND THAI PMS

Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet held a bilateral meeting with Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on 28 September at the Peace Palace.

Samdech Thipadei warmly welcomed the official visit of Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin and his delegations. Samdech Thipadei congratulated Srettha Thavisin on his recent appointment as Thai Prime Minister.

For his part, Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin thanked Samdech Thipadei for the warm welcome and hospitality, and also congratulated Samdech Thipadei on his recent appointment.

The meeting between the two leaders touched on comprehensive Cambodia-Thailand bilateral

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## UK PRIME MINISTER'S TRADE ENVOY VISITS CAMBODIA TO BOOST TRADE OPPORTUNITIES

The UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy, Heather Wheeler MP, concluded her visit to Cambodia on from 24 to 26 September 2023, reinforcing the United Kingdom's focus on intensifying bilateral trade, investment, and sustainable development in Cambodia. The visit also demonstrated the UK's confidence in Cambodia's new government, making her the first senior UK official to visit since Cambodia's 2023 general elections.

During her stay in Cambodia, she met with Cambodian Ministers and British and Cambodian businesses to explore opportunities to strengthen the commercial relationship and support Cambodia's sustainable development and transition from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

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## PRIME MINISTER'S ATTENDANCE AT UNGA78 FURTHER SOLIDIFIES CAMBODIA'S COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, led a high-level delegation to the General Debate of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York from 21 to 24 September 2023. Samdech Thipadei's attendance at the UNGA further solidified Cambodia's commitment to global peace and sustainable development with a vision for the future.

### 1. General Debate of the UNGA

- The theme of the debate was "Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all." More than 180 world leaders from six continents were scheduled to address critical global challenges during the week-long debate concluding on 26 September.
- In his statement, Samdech Thipadei underscored the prevailing concerns shared by Cambodia about growing global instability, geopolitical tensions, escalating

conflicts, and gaps in funding to address the lingering effects of Covid-19 while achieving the 2030 Agenda and climate change goals. He stressed the importance of restoring trust in strategic security among nations, upholding the rules-based global system, and fully respecting international laws and norms, including the UN Charter.

- Samdech Thipadei highlighted Cambodia's achievements, including enduring peace and stability, significant poverty reduction, robust economic growth, and equitable distribution of benefits. He also highlighted steady progress in democratic building as shown by free, fair, credible, just and inclusive general elections held in July, with 18 parties contesting and a record turnout of 84.59 percent. This demonstrates greater political maturity and enthusiasm among Cambodians in exercising their democratic rights.

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## PRIME MINISTER'S ATTENDANCE AT UNGA78 FURTHER SOLIDIFIES CAMBODIA'S ...

- The Prime Minister outlined Cambodia's strategic goals to become an upper-middle-income country by 2030, and a resilient, prosperous high-income nation by 2050. He reiterated Cambodia's commitment to the SDGs, including its own goal for a "Mine-Free Cambodia by 2050", and international peace and security through active contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.
- Finally, Samdech Thipadei emphasized the government's steadfast adherence to an independent and neutral foreign policy, based on the rule of law and the principles of the UN Charter. He firmly stated that CAMBODIA SHALL NOT AUTHORIZE ANY FOREIGN MILITARY BASED ON ITS TERRITORY, AS CLEARLY STATED IN ITS CONSTITUTION and that CAMBODIA WILL NOT ALLOW ANY COUNTRY NOR ANY GROUP TO USE ITS TERRITORY AGAINST ANOTHER COUNTRY.

### 2. Productive bilateral meetings

On the sidelines of the UNGA, Samdech Thipadei engaged in fruitful meetings with foreign dignitaries and business leaders.

- His discussion with Acting US Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland focused on bilateral cooperation, including a program to repatriate Cambodian nationals from the United States. According to Acting Deputy Secretary Nuland, the United States will resume USD 18 million in assistance to Cambodia through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The assistance was previously paused after the July elections.
- Addressing a USA-Cambodia Business Forum attended by some 80 American business leaders, Samdech Thipadei showcased the opportunities and economic potential of Cambodia, as well as government support for business in the Kingdom.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commended Cambodia's socio-economic policies, particularly the alignment of the Pentagonal Strategy with the SDGs. He expressed gratitude for the Kingdom's active role in the UN peacekeeping missions and reiterated the UN's continued support for

Cambodia's sustainable development. Samdech Thipadei reaffirmed Cambodia's commitment to building a society based on the rule of law in accordance with the Constitution. Cambodia's renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia demonstrated the government's goodwill and determination to promote and foster human rights.

- Samdech Thipadei's meeting with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong identified areas of cooperation to support Cambodia's socio-economic development, including education, training, trade, and investment. Minister Wong assured the Prime Minister of continued support and collaboration from the Australian government.
- Timor-Leste President José Ramos Horta requested Cambodia's continued experience-sharing and support in becoming the Eleventh Member of ASEAN. Both leaders discussed expanding bilateral cooperation in tourism, agriculture and people-to-people connectivity.
- In a meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Samdech Thipadei stressed the benefits of finalizing the bilateral investment treaty between Cambodia and India. They discussed partnerships and potential cooperation in security, defense, tourism, and culture with a focus on innovative conservation projects, leveraging the deep historical ties binding Cambodia and India.
- Samdech Thipadei also met Global President of Emerging Markets Nick Lagunowich at Pfizer Inc, who conveyed the pharmaceutical company's intention to bolster Cambodia's public health system. The Prime Minister welcomed the initiative, encouraging Pfizer to explore investment and business opportunities in Cambodia and sustain dialogues with key stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Health.

## OUTCOMES OF THE BILATERAL ...



cooperation in key areas, including trade, investment, tourism, education, vocational training, diplomacy, business relations, people-to-people ties, connectivity between the two countries by air, rail, and road, digital economy and green economy, immigration-related work to cross-border security, and online security.

Taking this occasion, the two leaders also advised the relevant ministries and institutions of both countries to continue to discuss and cooperate for mutual benefits.

Both leaders praised each other and firmly believed that Cambodia-Thailand cooperation would be improved and strengthened.

Lastly, Samdech Thipadei invited his Thai counterpart and the high-level delegation to the official luncheon and wished them great success in their official visit to Cambodia and safe repatriation.

## ASEAN-CAMBODIA BUSINESS SUMMIT HELD IN PHNOM PENH

The two-day ASEAN-Cambodian Business Summit 2023, where business and political leaders come together to explore the opportunities and challenges of further economic integration, kicked off at Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra on 28 September 2023.

In her opening remarks under the session "Connectivity & Growth in the Mekong Region within ASEAN", H.E. Cham Nimul, Minister of Commerce, highlighted the importance of the

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## UK PRIME MINISTER'S TRADE ENVOY VISITS CAMBODIA TO ...



"It is fantastic to return to my new role as Prime Minister's Trade Envoy, to strengthen the bilateral trade and investment relationship with Cambodia," said Ms. Heather Wheeler.

This year is an exciting year for UK-Cambodia trade and investment as the two countries celebrate 70 years of diplomatic relations, she added.

Ms. Heather Wheeler met with the Minister of Commerce, Her Excellency Cham Nimul, and reiterated the UK's commitment to enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation.

"They discussed progress on UK-Cambodia Joint Trade and Investment Forum including positive development in establishing a Legal Purchase Age for Alcohol and the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme. Ms. Heather Wheeler highlighted the UK's expansion in the education and financial services sector.

The UK sees huge potential to deploy green investment and encourage Cambodian exports,

under the UK's Developing Country Trading Scheme (DCTS), to increase Cambodia's competitiveness and increase income for Cambodians.

She also joined the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport in presiding over the launch ceremony of the first-ever UK university branch campus in Cambodia, De Montfort University, a truly historic moment and a sign of the UK's ongoing commitment to Cambodia.

The good relations between the two countries will contribute to the trade sector as Cambodia already benefits from the UK's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) which grants exports tariff-free and quota-free access to the UK market, said Mr. Lim Heng, vice-president of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce.

Cambodia-UK trade in 2022 had recovered to its pre-pandemic levels of over USD 1 billion. Cambodian exports to the UK are predominantly made up of garments, footwear, and bicycles.

Cambodia qualifies for comprehensive preferences under the UK's recently launched DCTS – this gives Cambodia duty-free, quota-free access to the UK market for 99 percent of product lines.

## INDIA BACKS CAMBODIA WITH ECOTOURISM MOBILE APP

Cambodia and India have pledged to enhance further cooperation on tourism development with the goal of stimulating mutual tourist movement.

The commitment was made in a meeting between H.E. Sok Soken, Minister of Tourism, and H.E. Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to Cambodia on 22 September 2023.

In the meeting, H.E. Sok Soken thanked the Indian government for its support for Cambodia's tourism development projects, including the

three Quick Impact Projects on Developing Mobile Application to Promote Eco-Tourism Communities, Enhancing Eco-Tourism Activities in Phat Sanday Eco-Tourism Community in Kampong Thom Province, and Promoting and Developing Boeung Sne Eco-Tourism Community.

They also agreed to promote direct flights between Phnom Penh and New Delhi via Cambodia Angkor Air in order to attract more tourists between the two countries.

Last year, Cambodia welcomed 34,016 Indian tourists, up from 840 recorded in 2021, according to the Ministry of Tourism's report.

## ASEAN-CAMBODIA BUSINESS SUMMIT...

Mekong region, especially in the field of trade, investment, and the efforts of countries in the region to promote physical and people-to-people connectivity in order to accelerate and support sustainable and environmental economic growth.

She also underscored Cambodia's effort to promote connectivity through establishing infrastructure, digitalization development, and effort with ASEAN member states to implement the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.

In addition, H.E. Cham Nimul has mentioned that the Royal Government of Cambodia paid high attention to promoting the participation of the private sector in economic activities in order to take advantage of free trade agreements and also highlighted the mechanism of establishing Public-Private Partnerships, especially in the arrangement of Government-Private Sector Forums during the end of 2023.

Last but not least, she encouraged businessmen, investors, and members of the EU-ASEAN Business Council to consider investing in Cambodia's potential sectors, including agro-processing industries, tourism services, and increasing the import of Cambodia's potential goods such as textile, footwear, traveling goods, and manufacturing products, etc.

Organised by EuroCham and its partners, the ASEAN-Cambodian Business Summit 2023 brings a good mix of practitioners and experts to provide many great knowledge and practical insight and provide an excellent opportunity to exchange and explore trade and investment potential of Cambodia and the region.

During the summit, EuroCham Cambodia also released its 2024 White Book, a comprehensive list of policy recommendations covering 12 sectors, as well as its 2023 Business Confidence Survey, a detailed survey among business leaders in Cambodia. The recommendations were to urge the new government of Cambodia to facilitate the emergence of new service exports, including in areas such as human resources, accounting, medical, dentistry, and IT, by pushing for the implementation of service liberalisation commitments among RCEP signatories.

# KOH KER LISTED AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Koh Ker Temple in Preah Vihear province was listed as a UNESCO's World Heritage Site during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 17 September, after the Royal Government of Cambodia formally submitted its request for the registration since January 2021.

Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in a message to his compatriots, extended his congratulations on this great achievement which is another national prestige on the international scene.

The Prime Minister also thanked all stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts for their tireless efforts in making the listing of Koh Ker Temple as a World Heritage Site a reality.

Koh Ker or Chok Gargyar, as it is known in Old Khmer inscriptions, is a 10th-century temple complex and former capital of the Khmer Empire, situated in Preah Vihear, a northern part of Cambodia.

The densely forested site containing a total of 169 archaeological remains, including 76 temples, as well as civil structures, ponds, dykes, and ancient roads, is located centrally between three other Cambodian World Heritage Sites - Preah Vihear, Angkor, and Sambor Prei Kuk.

Cambodia has so far registered Angkor Archaeological Site, Preah Reach Troap Dance (Royal Ballet); Lakhon Sbek Thom (big shadow puppet); the 11th-century Preah Vihear Temple; Teanh Prot (tug-of-war), a popular recreational game; Chapei Dang Veng (a Cambodian two-stringed, long-necked guitar); Sambor Prei Kuk temple complex; Lkhon Khol Wat Svay; and Kun Lbokator on the World Heritage List.

