

# VISIONS of CAMBODIA

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## CAMBODIA AND CHINA HIGHLY VALUE STRONG DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS IN ALL SECTORS



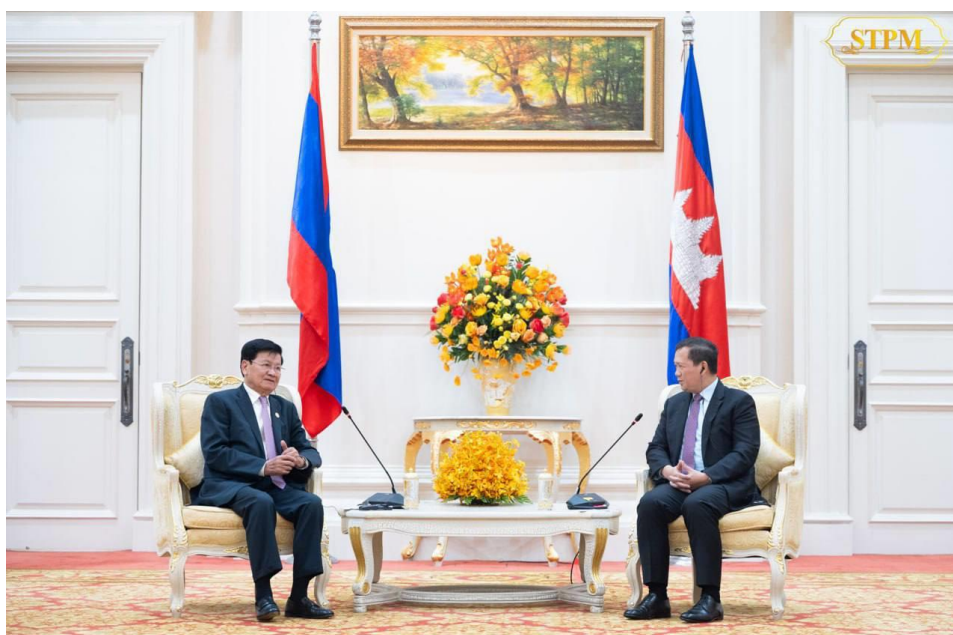
Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Sok Chenda Sophea had a productive bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart H.E. Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, during the latter's official visit to Cambodia.

In the bilateral discussion held here on April 21 afternoon, both sides highly valued the strong development of bilateral relations in all sectors under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation and the building of a high-quality, high-level, and high-standard Cambodia-China Community with a Shared Future, according to a statement released after bilateral discussion.

The two sides agreed on the importance of frequent and active exchanges of visits and engagements between their respective leaders, which demonstrates the robust political trust and the iron-clad friendship between the two countries, it added.

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## CAMBODIA, LAOS TO STRENGTHEN COMPREHENSIVE AND LONG-LASTING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



At the invitation of His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath NORODOM SIHAMONI, King of Cambodia, His Excellency Thongloun SISOUKITH, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, led a high-level delegation to pay a state visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia from 23 to 24 April 2024.

During the visit, His Excellency the President laid wreaths at the Independence Monument and the Royal Memorial Statue of His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah NORODOM SIHANOUK, Preah Borom Ratanak Kaudh, the late King Father of Cambodia. His Excellency the President had a royal audience with His Majesty at the Royal Palace and held separate meetings with Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN Sen, President of the Senate, Samdech Moha Rathsapheathika Thipadei KHUON Sudary, President of the National Assembly, and Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

His Excellency the President presented His Majesty with a photo of a pair of elephants, a male and a female, as a symbol of the long-standing fraternal relations and strong bonds of friendship between the two countries, which His Majesty gratefully accepted. The pair of elephants will be handed-over after completion of the necessary procedures.

Samdech Thipadei and His Excellency the President encouraged relevant authorities to continue strengthening bilateral cooperation in all fields including politics, border affairs, security and defense, economy, energy, and connectivity. The two leaders also discussed multilateral cooperation to ensure peace and prosperity for the two countries, contributing to harmony and development in the region.

His Excellency the President expressed deep appreciation for Cambodia's generosity in providing a contribution of USD 1 million to

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## CAMBODIA, LAOS TO STRENGTHEN COMPREHENSIVE AND ...

support the Lao chairmanship of ASEAN during the official visit of Samdech Thipadei to Lao PDR last month.

On security and defense, the two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation and joint efforts in security-related issues among relevant authorities in border areas, especially in preventing and combating transnational crime.

On border affairs, the two leaders highly valued the exchange of instruments of ratification and the signing of the minutes on the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Treaty on Delimitation of Borders between Cambodia and Laos during the official visit of Samdech Thipadei to Lao PDR. The two sides agreed to settle the remaining 14 percent of the border segments in a peaceful manner to build a frontier of peace, friendship, and cooperation.

On connectivity, both sides agreed to urge relevant authorities to expedite site selection for a bridge across the Ropou River in Cambodia and Selampao in Laos to facilitate

the movement of people, trade, investment and tourism between the two countries.

On energy cooperation, Cambodia expressed appreciation to Laos for supplying electricity to Cambodia, contributing to its socio-economic development. The two sides encouraged Cambodian and Lao authorities to effectively implement agreements and memoranda of understanding related to energy cooperation including a new agreement on energy cooperation between the two governments, memoranda of understanding on green power purchases and a feasibility study for a transmission line to Cambodia, which were signed during Samdech Thipadei's visit to Lao PDR.

In addition to the state visit, His Excellency Thongloun SISOULITH attended the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Cambodian People's Party and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party.

His Excellency the President expressed sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements accorded to him and his delegation during the visit to Cambodia.

## CAMBODIA AND CHINA HIGHLY VALUE ...

Enhancement of the Diamond Cooperation Framework, people-to-people exchanges, and the joint development of "Industrial and Technological Corridor" and "Fish and Rice Corridor", as well as the cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, energy, economy, and trade were among the topics discussed.

In addition to the bilateral cooperation, the two Foreign Ministers also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concerns.

## CAMBODIA-EU PARTNERSHIP TO BE STRENGTHENED IN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK

Cambodia and the European Union have organised in Brussels, Belgium the plenary meeting of the 12th Cambodia-European Union Joint Committee, which is a biannual dialogue mechanism.

H.E. MEAS Kim Heng, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia (MFAIC), and Mrs. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director of the European External Action Service, co-chaired the plenary meeting on April 25, said a press release of the MFAIC.

The meeting was attended by key line-ministries/institutions of Cambodia and the EU's representatives from relevant directorate general of the European Commission, it added.

During the meeting, the source pointed out, the co-chairs of the three sub-groups on (1) development cooperation, (2) trade and investment, and (3) institution building, administrative reform, legal and judicial reform, governance and human rights, briefed the meeting of the outcomes of their respective sub-groups.

## CAMBODIA TO BUILD FUNAN TECO CANAL



Cambodia will not hesitate to build Funan Techo Canal to boost the national development, said President of the Cambodian Senate Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the Cambodian Oknha Association's first conference held here at the Garden City Hotel on 26 April 2024, Samdech Techo Hun Sen said that Cambodia will definitely construct the Funan Techo canal to provide great benefits for the nation and the people, even though some milieus oppose the project.

Funan Techo Canal project is the first historic project in Cambodia's waterway transport sector to connect the Mekong River system and the sea.

According to the project's feasibility study, the US\$1.7 billion Funan Techo Canal project, which will be broken ground for construction at the end of 2024, is 180 kilometres long and 100 metres wide upstream and 80 metres downstream with two navigation lanes. The construction would take around four years to complete and cost some US\$1.7 billion.

The canal will link Prek Takeo of Mekong River to the sea in Kep province crossing four provinces: Kandal, Takeo, Kampot and Kep with a total of 1.6 million people living on either side of the waterway.

## THE STATE OF PRESS FREEDOM IN CAMBODIA IS LAUNCHED, SHOWING BETTER INDEX OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE KINGDOM



The Ministry of Information launched on 30 April a report on the State of Press Freedom in Cambodia, showing better index of the freedom of expression in the Kingdom.

A total of 341 journalists in the 25 capital and provinces have participated in the survey, 6.5 percent of them are women.

According to the survey results, 79.8 percent of the 341 respondents rated the press freedom in Cambodia “very good” while 95 percent agreed that the diversity of the media in Cambodia today is contributing to the promotion of press freedom and the freedom of expression in the country.

About 79.8 percent of the total surveyed journalists claimed to have the full freedom to pursue a career as journalists, with convenient and safe space to gather information from various sources for their writing, production and reporting.

Almost of the survey respondents endorsed the importance of adhering to the professional ethics of journalism.

The report was launched to mark the World Press Freedom Day (May 3), said Minister of Information H.E. Neth Pheaktra.

“The launch of this report reflects the Ministry of Information’s commitment to improving and strengthening the media sector in Cambodia,” he said.

The report will be a vital document for all actors, operators, and stakeholders in the

media industry in Cambodia to serve their respective missions and activities, contributing to the promotion of media as the fourth estate that supports and actively participates in the sustainable development, and safeguarding peace in Cambodia, H.E. Minister stressed.

The ministry’s data showed that 3,201 press cards were issued in 2023. Among the registered journalists, 269 were women, accounting for 8.7 percent of the total number of journalists and 113 were foreign journalists.

Mr. Leang Delux, Publisher of Thmey Thmey Digital News, said Cambodia has a broad press freedom space including favourable modalities for establishing media outlets, the freedom of expression on social media and public networking space, the wide flow of information from the government to the people and vice versa.

“The space or freedom of the press in Cambodia is however disturbed by a few undesirables that are undermining the value of press freedom,” the report quoted Mr. Leang Delux as saying.

Currently, there are more than 2,000 registered traditional and new media outlets in Cambodia, including 933 websites and online TVs, 447 newspapers, 194 magazines, 21 bulletins, 52 press associations, 113 printing houses, 22 book publishers, 27 foreign new agencies and representative offices, 2 advertising agencies, 283 FM radio stations, 1 AM radio station, 19 main TV stations and 165 relay stations, 12 digital TV stations, 44 cable TV stations in Phnom Penh and provinces, 143 analog TV stations, 8 OTT (Over The Top) and 2 satellite TV stations.

Meanwhile, the ministry has continued its census campaign to register media organisations and provides press identification cards to journalists in order to maintain the order in this sector.

## CAMBODIA-EU PARTNERSHIP TO ...

According to the press release, the plenary meeting proceeded in an amicable environment and concluded by identifying some key recommendations and actions for both sides to expand their cooperation in new priority areas, particularly green growth and digital technology.

Both sides also expressed their steadfast commitment to strengthen the Cambodia-EU partnership both in the bilateral and multilateral framework.

## CAMBODIA TO HAVE FIVE MORE VEHICLE ASSEMBLY FACTORIES

Five automobile manufacturers have been reportedly in the process of building production facilities in Cambodia, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The five car companies, including HGB Motors Assembly, EM Automotive, GTV Motor, Toyota, and China Matrix Technology, are structuring their production in preparation for opening their assembly plants in Cambodia, H.E. Mrs. Cham Nimul, Minister of Commerce, said in the 1<sup>st</sup> Auto Show 2024 held here on 27 April.

Toyota will officially launch the operation of its assembly factory located in the Royal Group Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone this week.

“The Auto Show not only showcases the innovations and modernity of automobiles, but also reflects the rapid growth of the automotive sector in the fast-growing market in Cambodia,” she said.

The minister encouraged businesses and investment partners to consider expanding their business ventures and establishing production bases in Cambodia to benefit from

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## CAMBODIA'S GARMENT, FOOTWEAR, TRAVEL GOODS EXPORT JUMPS 20 PERCENT IN Q1



Cambodia exported US\$2,941 million worth of garment, footwear and travel products to international markets in the first quarter (Q1) of 2024, up 20 percent from US\$2,449 million in the same period last year, said a report from the General Department of Customs and Excise.

From January to March, the export of apparel and textiles was valued at US\$2,167 million, a year-on-year increase by 23 percent from US\$1,759 million, it added.

Footwear export earned US\$346.3 million, up 6.9 percent from US\$323.7 million, while travel goods export bagged in US\$427.9 million, up 16.6 percent from US\$366.7 million, the source pointed out.

## CAMBODIA'S TRADE WITH EU UP 5.4 PERCENT IN Q1

Cambodia's trade with the European Union (EU) rose by 5.4 percent to US\$1,074 million in the first three months of this year, a report of the General Department of Customs and Excise showed.

From January to March, the Kingdom exported US\$903 million worth of goods to the EU, up 11.9 percent from the US\$807 million in the same period last year, it pointed out.

Imports from the EU decreased by 19.4 percent to US\$171.4 million, the report added.

Cambodian Footwear Association President Mr. Ly Khun Thai said that peace, political stability and open economy policy along with the government's support to investors have attracted new investment, new garment factories, creating jobs for local people and contributing to boosting the national economic growth.

"In the earlier period of this year, Cambodia's textile and garment industry has been doing well compared to the same period in the previous year as factories have geared up their productions amid growing purchase orders from foreign buyers," he said.

The United States and the European Union are Cambodia's largest export markets for textiles, garments, footwear and travel goods.

The garment, textile, footwear and travel goods industry are the biggest foreign exchange earner for the Southeast Asian country. The sector currently consists of roughly 1,300 factories and branches, employing nearly 900,000 workers, mostly female.

According to the same source, Germany and Spain were Cambodia's biggest trade partners in the EU with bilateral trade volume of US\$226 million and US\$212 million, respectively.

Cambodia mainly exports textiles, footwear, bicycles, foodstuffs, milled rice, and other agricultural products to the EU under the trade preference, Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme.

The EU has reiterated its commitment to support Cambodia's graduation from the least developed country (LDC) status, saying that it is ready to talk with the Cambodian side on the

## CAMBODIA TO HAVE FIVE MORE ...



ASEAN Plus trade agreements, trade preferences, national trade and investment facilitation framework; as well as investing in car factories, especially EVs, to supply the domestic market and for export.

The new factories will bring the total vehicle assembly plants in Cambodia to nine. Other operational vehicle assembly factories include Hyundai in Koh Kong province, SsangYong in Svay Rieng province, FORD in Pursat province, and Isuzu in Kampong Speu province.

new trade scheme, Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+).

The Cambodia-EU total trade was worth US\$4.61 billion in 2023, a drop by nearly five percent from US\$4.85 billion in 2022, said the Ministry of Commerce.

Of the figure, Cambodia exported US\$3.66 billion worth of goods to the EU, a 9 percent year-on-year decrease from US\$4.04 billion.