

VISIONS of CAMBODIA

ISSUE 156: 01 – 15 May 2025

CAMBODIA, INDONESIA TO FURTHER BOOST BILATERAL COOPERATION

Cambodian Senate President Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and Indonesian President H.E. Prabowo Subianto have expressed satisfaction with the good relationship between the two countries and vowed to further strengthen their cooperation both in the bilateral and ASEAN frameworks.

The statement was shared by H.E. Chea Thirith, Spokesperson for the Cambodian Senate, following a bilateral meeting between the two leaders on May 5 in Jakarta, during Samdech Techo Hun Sen's three-day working visit to Indonesia.

The Cambodian Senate President expressed hope for increased

Continued on page (2)

CAMBODIAN SENATE PRESIDENT BEGINS THREE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO TIMOR-LESTE

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, kicked off his three-day official visit to Timor-Leste, at the invitation of H.E. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen and his high-level delegation arrived at Presidente Nicolau Lobato International Airport in Dili on May 7 afternoon, upon successfully concluding his three-day working visit to Indonesia.

They were warmly welcomed by H.E. President José Ramos-Horta, who then personally drove Samdech Techo Hun Sen from the airport to his hotel.

Continued on page (2)

CAMBODIA CELEBRATES 72ND BIRTHDAY CEREMONY OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING



The 72nd birthday ceremony of His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia, is held on May 14.

His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni was born on May 14, 1953 in Phnom Penh. He went to study in Prague, Czechoslovakia at the age of 9 years old. He got a Master's Degree from the Musical Art Academy of Prague in 1975. He was formerly a professor of classical dance and artistic pedagogy at the Marius Petipa Conservatory, the Gabriel Fauré Conservatory, and the W.A. Mozart Conservatory in Paris.

Before being crowned King of Cambodia, he served as Cambodia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1992 to 1993 and as the Ambassador of Cambodia to UNESCO

from 1993 to 2004. On October 14 2004, he was elected unanimously by the members of the Throne Council as King of Cambodia to succeed his father, who decided to retire.

Generally, during the ceremony, His Majesty the King visits a province where Buddhist monks chant religious scriptures and offer prayers for good health. In return, the monarch presents offerings, including a donation for the development of the pagoda.

After the ceremony, the monarch provides donations including rice, mosquito nets, blankets, scarves, T-shirts, sarongs, pants and some money to needy villagers.

The civil servants, workers and employees annually have a day off on May 14.

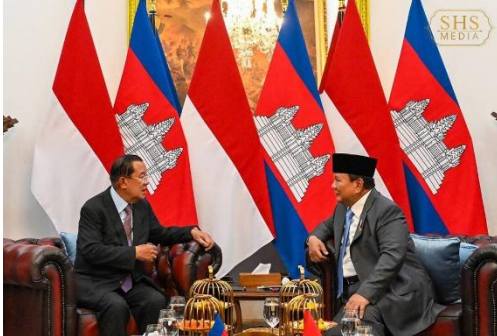
TECHO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON TRACK TO OPEN IN JULY

The first phase of the Techo International Airport, a US\$1.5 billion project, is nearing completion as the developer accelerates final construction tasks in preparation for its scheduled opening on July 10.

H.E. Sinn Chanserey Vutha, Secretary of State and Spokesperson for the State Secretariat of Civil Aviation (SSCA), provided the update on 13 May 2025, noting that the

Continued on page (3)

CAMBODIA, INDONESIA TO FURTHER BOOST BILATERAL ...



collaboration in areas such as trade, tourism, and air connectivity. Meanwhile, President Prabowo proposed advancing cooperation through a memorandum of understanding on fisheries and energy.

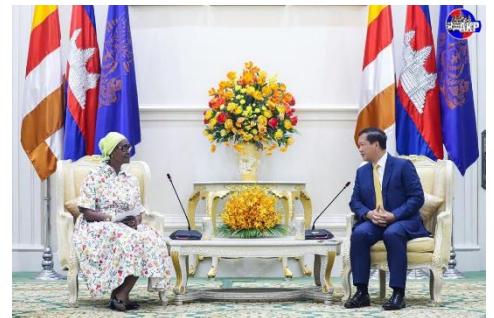
On air connectivity, it was noted that AirAsia Cambodia is currently operating flights to Bali, while an Indonesian airline is exploring the possibility of launching a direct route to Siem Reap province.

The two leaders also praised the growing military cooperation between their countries and discussed joint efforts to combat cross-border crimes, online scams, and drug trafficking.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen conveyed an invitation from His Majesty the King of Cambodia for President Prabowo to visit the Kingdom, noting the tradition of visits by Indonesian presidents to Cambodia. President Prabowo expressed his appreciation and accepted the invitation, stating he would visit at an appropriate time.

The high-level Cambodian delegation, led by Samdech Techo Hun Sen, arrived in Jakarta on May 5 for a working visit until May 7. The delegation is scheduled to continue their visit to Timor-Leste from May 7 to 9.

UN SENIOR OFFICIAL PRAISES CAMBODIA FOR REMARKABLE PROGRESS IN HIV/AIDS RESPONSE



The Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UNAIDS, Ms. Winnie Byanyima, has praised Cambodia for its remarkable achievements in combating HIV/AIDS.

The commendation was made during her courtesy call on Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh on 13 May.

On the occasion, Ms. Byanyima highlighted Cambodia's significant progress toward the global 95-95-95 targets—achieving scores of 92-100-98, respectively. These targets refer to: 95% of people living with HIV knowing their status; 95% of those diagnosed receiving antiretroviral treatment; and 95% of those on treatment achieving viral suppression. She also noted a marked decline in new HIV infections in the country.

Ms. Byanyima emphasised that Cambodia's success not only contributes to reducing domestic HIV transmission but also plays an important role in advancing regional and global efforts to end the epidemic.

She further commended Cambodia for launching an ambitious strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS and reaffirmed UNAIDS' continued support.

CAMBODIAN SENATE PRESIDENT BEGINS THREE-DAY ...



According to the schedule, during his stay in Timor-Leste, Samdech Techo Hun Sen met separately with H.E. President José Ramos Horta, H.E. Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, and H.E. Ms. Maria Fernanda Lay, Speaker of the National Parliament.

The Cambodian Senate President also addressed a special session of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste and deliver a lecture titled "Hun Sen's Lessons: From Genocide and Poverty toward Freedom and Prosperity" at the Presidential Palace. The event was attended

by members of parliament, government officials, diplomats, students, and representatives of civil society.

In recognition of his significant contributions in supporting Timor-Leste over the past two decades, particularly its journey toward ASEAN membership, Samdech Techo Hun Sen was awarded the Grand Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste, the country's highest honour.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen was accompanied by H.E. Ouch Borith, First Vice President of the Senate, members of the Senate and National Assembly, and other senior legislative leaders, as well as officials from various ministries and institutions.

Continued on page (3)

UN SENIOR OFFICIAL PRAISES CAMBODIA FOR REMARKABLE ...

The United Nations, she said, remains committed to partnering with Cambodia to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In response, Samdech Thipadei expressed gratitude to the United Nations for its contributions to Cambodia's socio-economic development and acknowledged UNAIDS for its active role in supporting the country's fight against HIV/AIDS.

He reiterated the Royal Government of Cambodia's strong commitment to ending

HIV/AIDS through the implementation of comprehensive policies and strategic plans. Recently, Cambodia introduced the National Policy to End HIV/AIDS and the Sustainable AIDS Programme 2023–2028, among other initiatives.

The Prime Minister stressed that the government continues to prioritise strengthening the health sector, particularly through improving citizens' well-being and building the capacity of health professionals.

UK, US TOP APRIL ANGKOR TICKET SALES, WHILE CHINESE DROP NEARLY 15%

Angkor Enterprise has released its latest report, indicating a notable shift in the composition of international tourists visiting the iconic Angkor Archaeological Park complex.

While the total number of foreign visitors rose just slightly from 73,845 in April 2024 to 76,279 in April 2025, a 3.30% increase, the UK and US posted some of the most significant increases among the guests from 169 countries that the park welcomed. Ticket revenue in April reached \$3,490,088.

"Tourists from the UK surged by 17.88%, reaching 7,586 visitors compared to 6,433 in the same month last year. Meanwhile, American tourists increased by 13.09%, climbing to 6,685 from 5,910," said the report.

This placed the two nations as the top two sources of international guests, accounting for over 22% of foreign visitors.

However, not all countries followed the same trend. Visitors from China, previously a dominant market, dropped sharply. Chinese arrivals plummeted by 13.59%, from 6,057 to 5,236 — a loss of 821 tourists.

Other countries showing strong growth include Poland (+22.25%), the Netherlands (+14.73%), and Germany (+7.72%), reinforcing a

trend of rising European interest in Cambodian heritage tourism.

During the high season in December 2024, Angkor Archaeological Park experienced a significant surge in international tourism, with a total of 125,349 foreign visitors purchasing Angkor tickets, representing a 27.48% increase compared to December 2023.

The US led the surge with 13,709 tourists, a 30.88% increase, followed by China with 12,217 visitors and France with 10,077.

Other notable increases came from South Korea (+31.16%), the UK (+28.12%), and India (+41.85%), reflecting a strong rebound in global travel interest.

Despite some fluctuations, the Angkor complex remains a global magnet for travellers, with the latest numbers showing promising signs of diversification in tourist sources.

Between January 1 and May 13, 2025, 500,731 foreign tourists purchased passes to visit the Angkor Archaeological Park, according to Angkor Enterprise.

TECHO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ...



remaining works primarily involve interior decoration, signage installation, and so on.

A final evaluation meeting is expected to take place in late May or early June 2025 to review and assess progress and readiness ahead of the airport's launch, he said.

"The construction is nearly complete. If there are no changes, the Techo International Airport (TIA/KTI) is expected to begin operations on July 10, 2025, as scheduled," H.E. Sinn Chanserey Vutha confirmed.

Located approximately 20 kilometres south of Phnom Penh, spanning parts of Kandal and Takeo provinces, the airport covers 2,600 hectares. The first phase is designed to accommodate more than 15 million passengers annually.

The Cambodian government holds a 10 percent stake in the airport through the SSICA, while the remaining 90 percent is held by local conglomerate Overseas Cambodian Investment Corporation (OCIC).

According to the SSICA, Phnom Penh International Airport, currently operated by Cambodia Airports, will officially cease operations at midnight on July 9, 2025, with all flights and services transitioning to Techo International Airport.

Korean Air would be the last flight to the Phnom Penh International Airport before it permanently closes on July 10.

CHAMBOK WATERFALL: A HIDDEN GEM OF ECOTOURISM IN KAMPONG SPEU



Chambok Waterfall, located in the heart of Kampong Speu province, is gaining popularity as a picturesque and serene ecotourism destination that continues to attract both local and international tourists.

Situated in Chambok commune, Phnom Sruoch district, approximately 110 kilometres from Phnom Penh capital city and bordering the Kirirom National Park, the natural waterfall is known for its untouched beauty. Surrounded by dense bamboo forests that provide cool shade along the trail, the area offers an immersive experience for nature lovers.

The journey to the site includes a 10-kilometre drive from the entrance of Kirirom National Park, followed by a short hike through the forest—an experience enriched by the sounds of wildlife and the scent of wildflowers.

What sets Chambok Waterfall apart is its pristine, undeveloped environment, which preserves the natural charm and authenticity that appeal to eco-conscious travelers. The local ecotourism community also provides food and accommodation services for visitors, enhancing the overall experience while supporting sustainable tourism.

According to Mr. Ros Sok, Director of the Kampong Speu Provincial Department of Tourism, recent infrastructure improvements—such as the construction of two new bridges and concrete paving along National Road 46—have significantly improved access to the area. These developments not only facilitate easier travel for tourists but also help local farmers transport agricultural products to market.

With over 1,000 farming households in Chambok commune, the region is emerging as a hub for nature-based tourism, anchored by both Kirirom National Park and Chambok Waterfall. The new infrastructure is also expected to improve access to schools and hospitals for local communities.

Officials anticipate that continued development of road and bridge networks will enhance the area’s appeal, transforming it into a key destination for ecotourism in Cambodia.

CAMBODIA’S EXPORTS REACH US\$9.13 BILLION IN IN JANUARY-APRIL PERIOD

Cambodia exported goods worth US\$9.13 billion in the first four months of 2025, marking a 14 percent increase compared to the same period last year, according to a report from the General Department of Customs and Excise.

Key export items included garments, footwear, travel goods, bicycles, car tyres, solar panels, and various agricultural products such as rice, rubber, cassava, bananas, mangoes, and longans.

The country’s top five export destinations during this period were the United States, Vietnam, Japan, China, and Canada, the report noted.

On the import side, Cambodia brought in goods valued at US\$10.36 billion from January to April 2025, representing a 19.7 percent year-on-year increase. Major imported items included petroleum, raw materials for the garment, footwear, and travel goods sectors, vehicles, machinery, electronic appliances, and consumer products.

H.E. Penn Sovicheat, Secretary of State and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce, attributed the export growth to rising global demand and the government’s proactive trade facilitation policies. He highlighted how Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with China, South Korea, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have expanded market access for Cambodian products by reducing tariffs and trade barriers, enhancing their global competitiveness.

