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CAMBODIA-JAPAN BILATERAL RELATIONS

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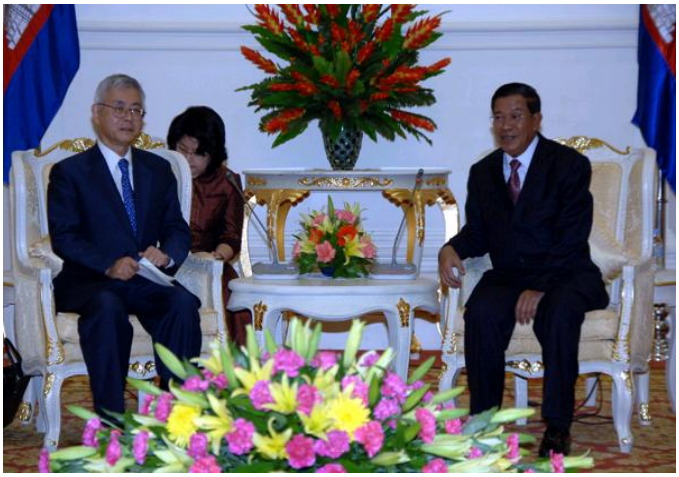
Prime Minister meets Chairman of NEDO's Company



On November 22, at the Peace Palace, Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen granted a courtesy call on from Mr Kazuo Furukawa, Chairman of the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO).

Mr. Kazuo Furukawa informed the Premier during the meeting that NEDO plans to establish power generation system using rice husk, adding that an MoU has just been signed between his company and H.E. Suy Sem, Minister of Energy, on the planned power generation. Furthermore, NEDO has a study plan on arsenic element in the water which affects people's health after using the water. The arsenic study will be conducted in Kampong Cham, Kandal and Prey Veng provinces.

In response, PM. Samdech Hun Sen welcomed the NEDO's interest in helping Cambodia as well as supported the company's renewable energy project and the research on arsenic.

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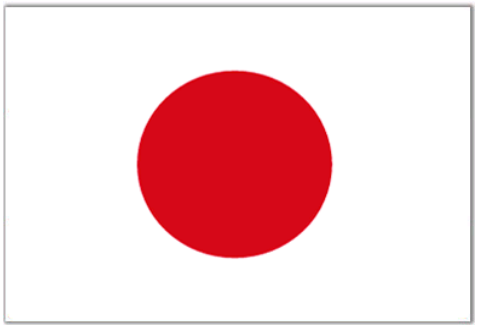
Japanese assistance for the ECCC



On November 21, the Japanese Embassy in Phnom Penh issued a press release confirming the sum of US$2,925,000 in contribution to the Extraordinary Chamber in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC).

In the press release, Japan underlined 3 important views. Firstly, the trials are the completing stage in the peace process for Cambodia and this will prevent such atrocity from happening in the future. Secondly, from the ECCC, the Khmer Rouge victims will obtain true justice contributing to national reconciliation. Thirdly, the ECCC will strengthen the rule of law in Cambodia.

Since the Establishment of the ECCC in 2003 until now, Japan has provided financial assistance over US$ 70.57 million.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATION & COOPERATION

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Premier presided over Inauguration of National Road (NR) 3

On November 14, Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen and H.E. Mr. Chang Ho-jin, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Cambodia, officially inaugurated the completion of NR. 3 from Phnom Penh to Kampot province. The Road spans 134.8 km rehabilitated with the cost amounting to US$ 41.5 million of which US$ 36.9 million is a soft loan from the Republic of

Korea and US$ 4.6 million come from the budget of the Government of Cambodia.

The Premier attached great importance of NR 3 as it will promote the flow of economic and trade exchanges in all sectors in this coastal area through Phnom Penh to Thailand, Vietnam and Laos as well.

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Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2012

On November 19, President of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, officially announced the end of the 19th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits and handover the responsibility to Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia who will chair the ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in 2012.

In his acceptance speech, PM. Samdech Hun Sen highlighted Cambodia's commitment in Building the ASEAN Community by 2015 attaching great importance on promoting Cooperation in ASEAN, carrying out concrete points reflected in the 3 foundations of the community building (Politic and Security, Economic and Socio-cultural), the realization of the Community in 2015 as well as the cooperation with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners to enhance regional integration.

In conclusion, Samdech Techo announced Cambodia's theme for ASEAN in 2012 "**ASEAN: One Community, One Destiny**." The theme reflects the will of the peoples of ASEAN to continue working together to build ASEAN Community with the vision of "**One Destiny**."

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Cambodia hosted 11th Meeting of Ottawa Convention

On November 27, PM. Samdech Hun Sen presided over the opening ceremony of the 11th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (11MSP), known as Ottawa Convention, which Cambodia ratified in 1999, to be held in Phnom Penh from November 27 to December 2.

Speaking before over 1000 foreign delegates from 120 countries and international organizations, the Premier stressed the importance of the privilege to host this significant event, recalling the

Cambodian female heroine named Kong Saroen who had led a group of mine clearance to remove landmines in the Eastern Part of the country.

With firm determination to achieve a mine-free country in 2020, the Premier said Cambodia has set mine clearance activities as a 9 Millennium Development Goals and called for the international community to continue technical and financial assistances to the Kingdom to reach this end.

Meanwhile, Ms. Helen Clark, the Administrator of the UNDP, highly praised country's impressive achievement in decreasing number of mined-victims from 4,320 in 1996 to 286 in 2010, highlighting further that this valuable experience has been shared with other countries in the region.

According to H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhon, Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, who chairs this 11th meeting of Ottawa Convention, said that Cambodia's decision to host this meeting demonstrated the high level of the Government's political commitment to the Ottawa Convention, underline further that the world free of landmines has always been Cambodia's irreversible position and we will redouble our efforts along with other stakeholders to reach this goal in the future.

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National Police Forces prepare for ASEAN Summits

GENERAL COMMISSARIAT OF NATIONAL POLICE

In preparation of hosting ASEAN in 2012, security measures has been reviewed and enhanced. The National Police force is engaging with private security guards in its efforts to prepare for the historical event.

Mr. Sok Phal, Deputy National Police chief, said on November 21 that National Police provides training to private security guards in an effort to engage the private sector in ensuring public order which would help Cambodia to host the next year's ASEAN Summit.

Mr. Noun Ngork, Director of the anti-terrorism department, said that for the first stage of 5 days period, we trained 70 private security guards on how to enhance cooperation between security guards and police, strategies for ensuring security, as well as workshops on laws and tactical exercises.

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NATIONAL POLICY & SOCIETY

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National Budget for 2012 approved

The National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia

On November 24, the National Assembly of Cambodia approved a draft law on finance for 2012 of about US$2.6 billion, up 9% compared to the previous year, by 86 votes of 86 lawmakers who were present in the meeting. The 2012 budget law is allocated in following sectors:

- Security and National Defense: US$350 million;
- Social Affairs: US$608 million;
- Education: US$251 million;
- Health: US$198 million
- Agriculture: US$ 27 million; and
- Rural Development: US$24 million.

This law also allows the Government to borrow over US$1 billion from foreign partners. Furthermore, based on this budget the Government will be able to retain annual economic growth of 7% and reduces the poverty rate by 1% onward annually as well as to further improve various sectors such as social welfare, education, health and gender equality; promote the rice production and export; and rehabilitate the flood-damaged infrastructure.

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Prime Minister calls for rice reform

On November 24, speaking in the 16th Forum of Government and Private Sectors, Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen called for rice reform to help the Kingdom meets its milled-rice export goal by urging the ministers to simplify exporting process and to open a " one-stop window" to facilitate this process. At the same time, he also informed the forum that major importer from Japan had expressed concern about the time and difficulty required to gain exportation clearance.

PM. Samdech Hun Sen further stressed that the cooperation between parties concerned in rice sector would bring stability to the market or else we cannot respond to the large orders of rice that we hoped to achieve, adding that the farmers must play a key part in the scale of economy to help the Government reaches the goal of 1million tonne of rice export by 2015.

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Kingdom plans flood relief spending

On November 15, during the meeting at the CDC, H.E. Mr. Keat Chhon, Finance Minister, said that nearly US$200 million will be planned to reconstruct the priority areas destroyed by the worst flooding occurred in September and October.

The Finance Minister said that the Government had reserved US$ 54 million from the 2011 National budget to rehabilitate the infrastructure, whereas in 2012, US$ 90 million will be allocated for this priority sector. Meanwhile, the Government is seeking to secure another US$ 55 million with the World Bank.

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ECONOMY, TRADE & INVESTMENT

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Manulife to launch operations in Kingdom

The Canadian-based Manulife Financial, the first of the life-insurance firm, is to be operated in Cambodia. The Firm's representative, Mr. David Wong, said on November 16 that his company will invest at least US$ 7 million and the company has in principle obtained permission from the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Meanwhile, Mr. David Carter, CEO at Infinity Insurance said that currently very few Cambodian people hold life-insurance. He is confident of the good opportunity in the domestic market.

Currently, 4 foreign firms have shown interest in life insurance investment in Cambodia such as Indonesian insurer PT Asuransi, Hong Kong-based Asia Insurance as well as two Thai firms, the Bangkok Life Insurance and Bangkok Insurance Public which finalized a joint venture agreement with Ministry of Economic and Finance in which the Government of Cambodia will hold 51% of the investment.

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Garment exports jump 30%

According to the Ministry of Commerce, the Kingdom's textile exports jump more than 30% year-on-year through October reaching US$ 3.47 billion.

Mr. Kong Putheara, Director of the Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce, said that, facing economic slowdown, low pricing of our exports help keep the Kingdom's industry afloat. He also attributed the export growth to the new markets in the region such as China.

The data of the Ministry of Commerce shows that from January to October, 2011, Garment exports to the U.S rose about 16% to $1.74, while shipments to the EU surged 59% to $1.03 billion.

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Cambodia to celebrate Sea Festival in December 31

According to H.E. Mr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, Cambodia will celebrate, for the first time, the Sea Festival on December 31, 2011 in conjunction with the Universal New Year Day adding that the festival will be presided over by Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen.

The event will be jointly organized by the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture and the Preah Sihanouk Ville Provincial Authority. Since Cambodia's beach has joined the Club of the most beautiful beach in the world, this is an excellent opportunity to promote the coastal area as a potential tourist destination.

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