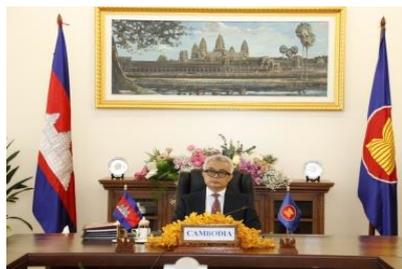




Cambodia in 37th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits



Press Release/13 November

On behalf of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, His Excellency Dr. Aun Ponnmoniroth, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance, led Cambodian delegation to attend the 37th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits which were held under the theme “Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN” from 12-15 November 2020.

The Minister attended a number of meetings and the main outcomes and highlights are as follows:

The leaders agreed on the need to facilitate essential business travel and people movement among and between ASEAN Member States through the adoption of the Declaration on an ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework.



The Leaders announced the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies (RRMS) for public Health Emergencies and encouraged contributions to the RRMS from ASEAN Member States, external partners and interested donors.

The Leaders reiterated the importance of continued upholding inclusive and rule based multilateral trading system. In this regard, they announced the completion of the substantial negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and signed the agreement on 15 November 2020.

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ASEAN Foreign Ministers Highlight Regional Cooperation Virtually



Khmer Times/13 November

ASEAN foreign ministers have reiterated the importance of continuing regional efforts to improve community building and uphold multilateralism and ASEAN centrality.

The comments were made during the combined ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the 22nd ASEAN-Political-Security Community Council Meeting and the 28th ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting held virtually earlier in November.

Cambodia's Secretary of State and ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting Leader Eat Sophea attended the meeting on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister Prak Sokhonn.

The meeting was held ahead of the 37th ASEAN Summit which is being held from 12-15 November.

The meeting outlined the continued efforts to achieve ASEAN community building and upholding multilateralism and ASEAN centrality amid geopolitical rivalries and the promotion of rule-based regional order with ASEAN-centred regional architecture.

A common view was held that the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, scheduled to be held on the side-lines of the 37th ASEAN Summit, is a testimony to ASEAN's strong commitment to promoting multilateralism and collective approaches.

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BAKC Represents Poor in Nearly 5,000 Cases

Phnom Penh Post/11 November

As of November, the Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia (BAKC) has provided legal representation in nearly 5,000 cases for poor people at the Phnom Penh municipal and provincial courts, an increase of nearly 30% compared to the same period last year.

BAKC president said the bar had stand-by delegates at courts in four regions of the capital and provinces across the country. BAKC delegates focused on suspects accused of criminal offences.

The BAKC assigns lawyers to people in need free-of-charge and the Ministry of Justice pays a fee to help the volunteer defence lawyers represent the accused.

According to a one-year work progress report of the BAKC's 12th mandate, 253 volunteer lawyers had defended cases for poor people across the country.

In the second quarter of this year, the BAKC provided legal representation in 2,566 cases for 4,000 poor clients (291 females), 826 of whom were minors. The BAKC also provided legal consultation in 226 cases for poor clients.

Each office of BAKC delegates working with poorer clients uploads case data to a system which can be accessed at the BAKC head office. The capacity of the data system enabled the BAKC to know which lawyers were assigned to cases and view how the case proceeds. ●

Fourth Round Of South Korea FTA Opens

Phnom Penh Post/18 November

Cambodia and South Korea on has recently kicked off the fourth round of negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), which is expected to boost bilateral trade and investment once it enters into force.

The first round was held in July, the second was held from August 31 to September 2, and the third ended on October 8.

The two sides are determined to conclude FTA talks by the end of this year. The latest round would focus on general rules, rules of country,

The Kingdom expects the FTA to buoy exports of processed agricultural products, live animals, textiles, garments and miscellaneous components to the South Korean market.

Exports to South Korea mostly comprise of clothes, footwear, travel goods, beverages, components for electronic equipment, rubber, pharmaceuticals and agricultural products. ●



Cambodia to Be Entitled to Duty-Free and Quota-Free Access on Exports to UK

Phnom Penh Post/19 November

The Kingdom's main garment industry body has voiced sheer elation over an expected influx of Cambodian products into the UK market once the former EU member state's new Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) comes into force on 1st January.

Citing the "Part of Brexit transition: new rules for 2021" report published by the UK's Department for International Trade on 10 November, Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC) said eligible developing countries would be able to receive trade preferences through the UK's GSP scheme.

The new scheme will initially provide trade preferences to the same countries as the EU's GSP, and will comprise three frameworks – the Least Developed Countries Framework, the General Framework and the Enhanced Framework.

Cambodia, being classified by the UN as a Least Developed Country, falls into the Least Developed Countries Framework.

Cambodia will therefore be entitled to duty-free and quota-free access on exports to the UK of all goods, except arms and ammunition. This is equivalent to a complete EBA [Everything But Arms] scheme under the EU's GSP.

GMAC is working with the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce and its UK counterpart to shed light on some of the potential changes in administrative procedures applicable to certain areas, providing "proofs of origin" as an example. ●

Eco-Tourism Gets Boost



Phnom Penh Post/18 November

The Ministry of Environment is working to spur local economic development by organising small-scale tourism products in communities to provide new jobs and boost local incomes.

The ministry hopes the idea will reduce dependence on forest harvesting and help protect the environment.

22 ecotourism communities currently managed by the ministry cover an area of 35,003ha in 12 protected areas in eight provinces.

In addition to these eco-tourism sites, there are many new ecotourism resorts that are attracting tourists, such as the Roleak Kang Choeung (Phnom Khnong Phsar) eco-tourism community in Kampong Speu province's Oral district; the Phat Sanday floating communities in Kampong Thom province; the Teuk Chob Khnar Po Ecotourism Community in Siem Reap; and the Boeung Sneh area in Prey Veng.

Environment ministry said ecotourism in protected areas had brought in millions of dollars into local economies. It's also promoting the potential of ecotourism that Cambodia has for local and foreign tourists. ●

COVID-19 Not Hurting Kampot Pepper Exports



Khmer Times/13 November

COVID-19 has not affected Kampot pepper's foreign markets and its exports are expected to remain strong next year, said Kampot Pepper Promotion Association (KPPA) President.

The Kampot pepper's high quality and potential yield yearly is around 70 to 80 tonnes. Most is exported to foreign markets, including the EU, the US, Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong.

Kampot pepper has been a certified Cambodian geographical indication (GI) product since 2016. This is a prestigious European Union designation affirming that its origin is crucial to its quality. It has three varieties – black, red and white – selling for about \$15, \$25 and \$28 per kg respectively and each with its own unique taste.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, in the first nine months of this year, Cambodia exported 4,121.95 tonnes of pepper, an increase of 123.76% on the same period last year.

Cambodian pepper has been exported to 21 countries and territories, including Japan, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Switzerland, Vietnam, the US, Russia, Britain, India, Belarus, Korea, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Sweden, Singapore, Australia and Taiwan. ●

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Cambodia in 37th ASEAN Summit...

On regional and international issues, the Leaders exchanged views on the issues of Rakhine State, the irregular movement of people in the region, climate change, Korean Peninsula and South China Sea.

Adding on the above points, Cambodia commended the development of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025), focusing on narrowing the development gap within ASEAN. In promoting trade and investment facilitation, he reiterated the need to address both tariff and non-tariff barriers, develop digital infrastructure, and further liberalize services and investment. On climate-related disasters, Cambodia urged ASEAN to constantly strengthen its capacity to respond to natural disaster through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), which has played a crucial role in coordinating ASEAN's collective response to disasters.

To clear up doubts which have been made up frequently by various sources, alleging that Cambodia has entered into agreement to host foreign military base, Cambodia reaffirmed that she is committed to firmly honour the Constitution of the Kingdom and adherence to independence and neutrality in national defence and sovereignty, by absolutely not allowing the presence of any foreign military in her territory.

The 37th ASEAN Summit adopted the following documents:

- 1) Ha Noi Declaration on the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Version;
- 2) ASEAN Declaration on the Establishment of a Framework for ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement;
- 3) Ha Noi Declaration on the Adoption of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025);
- 4) IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025)
- 5) Narrative of ASEAN Identity;
- 6) Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Toward Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community; and
- 7) ASEAN Declaration on Digital Tourism

The first ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit was also held to promote women's voice, leadership and their participation in post COVID-19 recovery efforts and in building a cohesive, dynamic, sustainable and inclusive ASEAN Community. The Summit was attended by Leaders of ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Women Leaders representatives, Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, Vice-President of World Bank and United Nations representative. ●

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ASEAN Foreign Ministers...

Ministers also said the region's COVID-19 response was "cohesive and responsive" in the face of the current turbulence caused by the pandemic and economic crisis as well as climate-related disasters.

This was highlighted in particular through the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and the ASEAN Secretariat efforts to expedite the repatriation process and to ensure the safe resettlement and sustainable development in the Rakhine State.

The meeting also highlighted the active role played by the ASEAN Secretariat in promoting ASEAN's visible role in supporting Myanmar in this endeavour.

Concerning the South China Sea, the ministers reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability and prosperity.

They also stressed ASEAN's commitments to working with China towards the conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

During the meeting, Cambodian SOM leader expressed the important role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) in the humanitarian security aspect of the region. She informed the meeting of Cambodia's plan to organise a gathering of the friends of ARMAC to raise the profile of the centre and galvanise further support in its noble mission to address landmines and explosive remnants of war in the region and beyond.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting was first established in 1967 and has been responsible for political-security cooperation and external relations in ASEAN. Cambodia joined ASEAN in 1999 as the organisation's tenth member. ●