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Outcomes of the 17th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue -ACD



Press Release/22 January

On 21st January 2021, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn participated in the 17th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue-ACD, which was chaired by His Excellency Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

Under the theme “The New Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism”, ACD Member States recognized the urgent necessity in addressing the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed to collectively address its adverse socio-economic impacts including the tourism sector through a multifaceted approach.

During the meeting, the DPM shared with the meeting Cambodia’s steadfast commitment to roll out an effective national vaccination plan for her people and the country’s comprehensive tourism recovery plan which purports to not only ensure a safe and speedy recovery of this important growth engine of the Kingdom but also to responsibly and actively contribute to the recovery of tourism and other sectors in the whole region.

He reaffirmed the shared commitment of all Member States to continue advancing the ACD as a key multilateral platform to promote dialogue and interdependence in all areas of cooperation. ●

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Cambodia Set to Have Trade, Labour Courts by End of 2021



Phnom Penh Post/24 January

Minister of Justice has directed the formation of two committees to begin the process of establishing separate courts for commercial and labour disputes.

According to two decision letters issued on January 21, the committees are comprised of 20 members from the justice ministry, the Supreme Council of Magistracy, government delegates, the heads of the Phnom Penh Municipal Court and Appeal Court, and some other relevant officials.

To prepare for the establishment of the commercial and labour courts, these two committee members have been asked to prepare documentation and legal briefs to determine each court's relationship to the lower courts and the higher courts, including the Appeal Court and Supreme Court.

The committees also have to conduct a study to determine the appropriate locations for these courts as well as examine any necessary changes to trade procedures and regulations.

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ASEAN and Geneva Demining Organisations Sign MOU



Khmer Times/29 January

The ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) in Phnom Penh has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to assist national mine action authorities in the ASEAN region.

The executive director of ARMAC highlighted that ARMAC's existence to support the ASEAN member states in the area of mine action aligns with GICHD's expertise in and perpetual support to mine action in ASEAN.

ARMAC has been working closely with Switzerland-based GICHD organising training in the Southeast Asia region including Operational Efficiency in Mine Action in Cambodia in 2019.

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Kingdom Expects 20M Doses of COVID Vaccine

Phnom Penh Post/27 January

The Kingdom will acquire up to 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, including 11 million coming through donations by Cambodia's development partners.

Cambodia anticipates receiving seven million doses donated through the World Health Organisation's (WHO) COVAX initiative. In February, vaccines produced by Chinese firm Sinopharm are due to begin arriving in the country, and vaccinations will proceed immediately.

The Finance Secretary of State noted that Australia had recently committed to provide a grant of A\$35 million (US\$28 million) for the purchase of three million doses through either WHO or UNICEF.

The Chinese government recently promised that it would donate one million doses, with the first 300,000 scheduled to arrive next month. Cambodia may also use grants provided by China to purchase additional doses from their suppliers.

He said the Kingdom's national budget includes provisions for vaccine purchases, and \$57 million has been donated by the general public to acquire more.

He added that the government would divide vaccine rollouts into two phases, starting first in Phnom Penh and then across the country. In the capital, the Ministry of Health will register those who will be vaccinated using the ministry's mobile app. A separate vaccination platform for the whole country is under construction. •

EU's Development Cooperation Strategy with Cambodia 2021-2027 Focuses on Three Priority Areas



Khmer Times/31 January

The European Union (EU)'s Development Cooperation Strategy with Cambodia 2021-2027 focuses on three priorities namely: 1) Economic Growth and Job Creation; 2) Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, with a strong focus on Fisheries; and 3) Governance and the Rule of Law.

The meeting between Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Carmen Moreno EU Ambassador to Cambodia centered on consultations regarding the EU's development cooperation strategy with Cambodia for the cycle 2021-2027.

The Ambassador also reflected on a number of achievements made under Cambodia-EU development cooperation; among which is the Bakheng Water Supply Project, which is funded by grant aid from the EU and the French Development Agency (AFD), and loans from the European Investment Bank and will create around 16,000 jobs and supply clean water to the people most in need.

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Cambodia, Hungary Conclude First Session of Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation



Khmer Times/22 January

The First ever Session of Cambodia-Hungary Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation was wrapped up after two days of discussion.

Secretary of State at the Ministry of Commerce said the two sides agreed to expand cooperation in potential areas including trade and economy; agriculture, food security and forestry; water resources management; education, youth and sports; culture; tourism; industry, technology and innovation; and civil aviation.

In term of trade and economy, both sides have shown a strong will to implement the existing agreement on the promotion and protection of investment between Cambodia and Hungary, which entered into force in August 2017, and welcomed the participation of stimulus agencies, including the Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency to facilitate and attract Hungarian investors to Cambodia, as well as to learn more about Cambodia's potential products for export to the Hungarian market.

For agriculture, food security and forestry, the two sides have exchanged the discussion on long-term cooperation in exchange of knowledge and experience in animal husbandry and high-efficiency farming.

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Cambodia Ratifies UN Nuclear Ban Treaty

Khmer Times/24 January

The United Nations says Cambodia ratified a treaty banning nuclear weapons, becoming the 52nd party to take the step.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons took effect having reached 50 ratifications by last October. It considers the development, manufacture, possession and use of nuclear weapons to be violations of international law.

Ministers and ambassadors from around 20 countries joined an online gathering to mark the treaty coming into force.

The five major nuclear powers as well as Japan and NATO members that rely on the US nuclear umbrella have not joined the treaty.

But governments and international NGOs that have been promoting the treaty hope more nations will join. They vow to boost the number of ratifications to 100 in the coming years. •

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ASEAN and Geneva Demining...

The two organisations promote explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) in the region while emphasising the exchange of good practices as well as integrated approaches in the region.

Ambassador Stefano Toscano, director of GICHD, said the MoU is a new milestone that will further contribute to continued collaboration in achieving our common goals and objectives.

“It will help formalise and strengthen GICHD-ARMAC’s partnership in encompassing a number of areas of activity that the GICHD is committed to supporting: promoting the use of international mine action standards and good practices in mine action; supporting national authorities in drafting and adopting national mine action standards; supporting the national training centres in developing their capacities and curriculums; capacity development activities in information management for mine action, explosive ordnance risk education and in integrating the gender and diversity perspective in programmes and training courses; and other general support to mine action authorities and centres, such as development of national strategies, programmes and work plans,” he said

Both ARMAC and GICHD have also worked closely on Gender Equality and Empowerment in Mine Action in Laos, Risk Management in Mine Action in Thailand which both happened in 2019 and last year the Quality Management in Mine Action which was done virtually. •

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Cambodia Set to Have Trade...

The committees must determine the appropriate scope of each court’s jurisdiction regarding commercial or labour conflicts and they must organise a process of staffing for each court and prepare funds for getting this all underway along with any other duties as directed by the minister.

The decision letters grant the two committees the authority to invite specialists from the ministries, national and international institutions and the private sector for consultations when necessary. •

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Cambodia, Hungary Conclude...

On the education, youth and sport sector, both sides agreed to promote more cooperation on scholarship programme and Vocational Education and Training 4.0.

From 2017 to 2020, the bilateral trade between Cambodia and Hungary reached a total amount of \$16 million. •

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EU’s Development Cooperation...

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the ASEAN Regional Integration Cooperation in particular the development gap within ASEAN countries including the support of the EU to Cambodia’s efforts to integrate into the regional market and value chains, migrant workers, the European market access for Cambodian rice, tourism industry, private sector engagement, skills and social protection, bilateral investment promotion, and the strategies for which both sides agreed on the need to adapt and enhance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minister also extended appreciation to the EU for the latter’s development assistance to Cambodia, which has been implemented both bilaterally and jointly with European countries and has contributed significantly to Cambodia’s socio-economic development over the last two and a half decades. He welcomes this initial consultation to improve and refine EU development activities and looks forward to the conclusion of the EU’s development cooperation strategy with Cambodia for the cycle 2021-2027.

Between 2014 and 2020, EU provided the financing of \$1.4 billion (including \$1.1 billion grant-aid and \$300 million soft loan) to support the European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2020, and about 410 million Euros to support the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2020. •