



The Royal Embassy of Cambodia  
to United States of America & Mexico

# ព្រឹត្តិប័ត្រព័ត៌មាន

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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### **The National Assembly Approved Cabinet Reshuffle Proposal**



Seventy (70) out of 107 lawmakers present at a parliamentary session held here this morning under the chairmanship of Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly (NA), voted for the cabinet reshuffle proposed by Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

According to the approved cabinet reshuffle, current Permanent Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Keat Chhon, and Senior Minister and Minister of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction H.E. Im Chhun Lim will retire at their own request, but the latter was elected as a member of Constitutional Council.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Hor Namhong will

retire from his post as Minister. He will be replaced by current Minister of Posts and Telecommunications H.E. Prak Sokhonn who will be promoted to be a Senior Minister.

H.E. Aun Porn Moniroth, Minister of Economy and Finance, will also become a Senior Minister in addition to his current post; while H.E. Tram Iv Tek, Minister of Public Works and Transport, will take over H.E. Prak Sokhonn's post at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications; and H.E. Sun Chanthol, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce, will replace H.E. Tram Iv Tek.

H.E. Chea Sophara, current Minister of Rural Development, will be become the Minister of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction; and H.E. Ouk Rabun, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, will replace H.E. Chea Sophara.

H.E. Veng Sakhon, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology will oversee the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery; H.E. Pan Sorasak, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Commerce will be promoted to be the Minister; and H.E. Him Chhem, Senior Minister in charge of Special Missions, will replace H.E. Min Khin as Minister of Cults and

Religion, who will become Senior Minister in charge of Special Missions.

### **Confiscated Timber Will Use to Build Schools**

On April 01, 2016 - Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen has ordered to use some 30,000-40,000 cubic meters of seized illegal timber to build schools in the country.

This was made known here yesterday afternoon while the premier was presiding over the closing ceremony of the annual meeting on education, youth, and sports.

H.E. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, said about 4,000 school buildings constructed ten years ago need urgent renovation.

In response to this concern, Samdech Techo Hun Sen urged the Ministry of Justice to speed up the legal procedure against illegal logging cases in order to hand over confiscated illicit timber to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to build schools, houses for teachers, tables and chairs for pupils, etc.

For the lack of teachers at rural schools, Samdech Techo Hun Sen asked the

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to examine the possibility to help them in house renting as well as other incentives for them.

**PM Holds Get-together with 3,400 Athletes and Coaches**



April 05, 2016 – Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, yesterday evening held a get-together with and hosted a solidarity dinner for some 3,400 athletes and coaches across the country, at Koh Pich Convention and Exhibition Center, Phnom Penh.

On the occasion, Samdech Techo Hun Sen continued to encourage all athletes to further enhance and improve their capacity for the SEA Games in 2023 to be hosted by Cambodia.

“I don’t want to talk about the technical issue, but about the athletes’ spirit that we must not admit defeating. It doesn’t matter whether the country is small or big, rich or poor, the most important is that its athletes have to stand up and compete with their counterparts from other countries with equity and equal rights,” said the Cambodian premier.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen said 2023 is not long, therefore we all have to work hard toward a successful future. No political purpose in sports, we thus need to join hands to bring about pride, solidarity and honour to our nation, he underlined.

H.E. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism and President of the National Olympic

Committee of Cambodia, said only 7 years left towards the SEA Games 2023.

The SEA Games in 2017 will take place in Malaysia, in 2019 in the Philippines, and in 2021 in Vietnam, then in Cambodia in 2023, he said.

**Cambodian PM Appeals to New Cabinet Ministers to Enhance Work Performance**



April 05, 2016 – Cambodia’s Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen has called on his new cabinet ministers to increase their work efficiency, after the National Assembly approved the proposed cabinet reshuffle yesterday.

The cabinet reshuffle aims for work effectiveness, reaffirmed the Cambodian premier while presiding over this morning the inauguration ceremony of the new office building of Phnom Penh Municipal Hall.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen also rejected some comments criticizing him of violating ministers’ function, explaining that he has never done so, but some ministers have violated his duty.

“Some ministers requested me to promote his/her official to the rank of Under Secretary of State of their respective ministries even though this is under my responsibility as it is a political post,” he underlined.

According to Samdech Techo Hun Sen, the ministers have the right to propose the appointment of officials at the ranks

of director general, director of department.

**Cambodia Spends Over US\$400 Million for Mine Clearance During Past 24 Years**

Since 1992, more than US\$400 million have been spent for mine clearance in Cambodia, H.E. Prum Sophakmongkol, Secretary General of Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), was quoted as saying by a local media at the celebration of International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action held in Phnom Penh early this week.

During the past 24 years, he pointed out, over 1,000 square kilometers of land area have been cleared from landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), or one third of the total mine affected area in Cambodia, using some 5,000 deminers from Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), HALO Trust and other humanitarian mine clearance organisations.

As a result, the number of casualties reduced sharply from more than 4,000 in 1996 to 111 people in 2015, added H.E. Prum Sophakmongkol, explaining that this significant drop in the number of victims is thanks not only to mine clearance efforts, but also to raising mine awareness.



Cambodia is committed to be free from landmines by 2025 and the country needs around US\$360 million to clear 1,640 square kilometers of mine affected area.

## ***Cambodia, UN Discuss Consolidation of Relations***

April 07, 2016 – Cambodia and the United Nations have agreed to further enhance the relations between Cambodia and the UN and between ASEAN and the UN.

The commitment was made known here on April 6 during a meeting between Cambodian Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Ung Sean and visiting H.E. Miroslav Jenca, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations for Political Affairs.

In the meeting, the two sides discussed the cooperation between Cambodia and the UN, the election process in Cambodia in 2017 and 2018, and regional issues including North Korea's nuke program and the South China Sea issue, Mr. Chan Ratana, Director of Foreign Affairs Ministry's International Organisations Department, told reporters upon the meeting.

H.E. Miroslav Jenca thanked Cambodia for sending troops to join UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and for asking North Korea to suspend nuke program and return to the six-party talks and regarding the South China Sea issue, he added that he wished to see peace and security be maintained.

For the commune/Sangkat council election in 2017 and the general election in 2018, H.E. Miroslav Jenca expressed his strong hope that the election process will be conducted peacefully.

## ***UN To Help NEC in Next Election Process***

April 08, 2016 – The United Nations (UN) has pledged to assist and cooperate with the National Election Committee (NEC) of Cambodia in

organizing the upcoming elections in 2017-2018.

The commitment was made known here early this week during the meeting between H.E. Sik Bunhok, President of NEC; Mr. Miroslav Jenca, Assistant UN Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and Mr. Shin Umezu, UN Political Affairs Officer for Asia and the Pacific.

According to a NEC's press release, the meeting was aimed to seek understanding on the progress of election reform in Cambodia, and to strengthen the cooperation between NEC and UN.

H.E. Miroslav Jenca appreciated NEC for its cooperation with relevant partners such as EU, Japan and UNOP, and expressed his strong hope that the elections in 2017 and 2018 will be conducted smoothly and peacefully.

In reply, H.E. Sik Bunhok thanked and welcomed the UN's commitment to help and cooperate with Cambodia in the upcoming election process, affirming that NEC will do its utmost to organize a just, free and fair election.

## ***Khmer Traditional New Year***

Each year the Cambodian people will celebrate the Khmer Year from Apr. 13 to 16, their traditional New Year.



This year on Apr. 13 at 08:00 pm, it marks the end of Buddhist year 2559 BE (Buddhist Era – based on the Lunar Calendar) and the start of New Year 2560, the year of Monkey. The New Year's angel of this year is Mondea

Devy, the fourth daughter of Kabel Moha Prum.

Cambodia's traditional New Year, "Chaul Chhnam Thmei" generally falls in around mid April or the Chet, the fifth month of the Cambodian lunar calendar during which peasants are relieved of their farm work after the dry-season rice harvest.

Three days before new year's eve, houses and pagodas are decorated with flowers, fresh, plastic or paper, with multiform lamps, candles, colored papers, incense sticks and small paddy or rice mounds (formerly built of sand as a symbol of good harvest) which later will be carried to pagodas as an offering to monks.

On New Year eve, an exorcist rite is held to pray for the happiness and prosperity in the coming year. Everything is well arranged in advance in each family so that people can be free from kitchen work during the festive days.

During the New Year festival which lasts generally for three days (but this year, four days), Cambodians especially the aged, go to pagodas, where usually traditional music is played by an orchestra called "Pinpeat", to make offerings to monks and pray for the souls of their ancestors.



Young people are the most to enjoy the New Year festival. They dance day and night the Roam Vong (the most popular dance in Cambodia), or join in different games such as "Chol Chhoung" (knotted scarf throwing – participants group, themselves in two – one male and one

female – members of each group, standing in a line take turn to throw the knotted scarf to the other side. Those who fail to catch the scarf have to sing a song), “Angkunh” (nut-throwing similar to the billiard game but on the ground instead of the table)

Nowadays, several traditional games such as gushing colored water at passer-by as a wish for luck, or bamboo canoe race, etc. are no longer seen in the country excluding few northwestern areas such as Siem Reap, Battambang, but other entertainments such as artistic performances, film shows, circus, etc.

In the country-side, long-handle guitar singers are often invited to sing in praise of legendary or real heroes or heroines, or of revolutionary exploits. People would gather either in pagodas to worship, or in public parks to contemplate the natural beauty.

In urban centers, people, in their Sunday best, stroll around public gardens, and in parks, visit splendid sites and historical monuments or see expositions.

In the past three or four decades, Cambodian, urban people and countrymen alike, liked picnicking or visiting ancient temples, including Angkor Wat, during the New Year holidays.

### ***Cambodian Premier Summarises Last Year's Achievements***

April 11, 2016 – Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has summarised the country's key achievements in the past year.

Last year, the Royal Government of Cambodia did its best to overcome all obstacles and challenges, both inside and outside the country, to develop a

political system that can maintain peace, political stability, security and social order in the country, said the premier in his five-page message to his compatriots on the occasion of the Khmer Traditional New Year (Year of Monkey) to be held this week.

According to the premier, the income per capita reached US\$1,238 in 2015, up from US\$1,136 a year earlier, while the poverty rate decreased from 47.8 percent in 2007 to 14 percent in 2014 and further went down in the following years.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen also highlighted achievements in various areas, especially education, physical infrastructure construction, power generation, industrial development, agricultural production, clean water supply and sanitation, construction, tourism, and public financial management.

All achievements obtained by the royal government in the past are thanked to the right policy with the support from all members of the legislative and executive bodies, civil servants at all levels, armed forces and all citizens despite the difference in their political tendencies, origins, religious beliefs and social roles, as well as with support from the friendly countries and international communities.

In this new year, the royal government will make a further effort to maintain peace, political stability, security and social order; to protect the constitution and all attainments obtained by the royal government and its citizens; and to prevent all acts aiming at creating chaos, social instability in the country; as well as to continue promoting reform in all domains as stated in the Rectangular Strategy-Phase III with a strong commitment to enhance good governance of all ministries and institutions, both at national and sub-national levels, and to provide public

services with effectiveness, transparency, quality, timeliness so as to gain trust from the citizens.

### ***PM Expresses Appreciation for Angkor Sankranta***

April 18, 2016 – Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen this morning expressed his appreciation for the successful organisation of the annual Angkor Sankranta.



“Angkor Sankranta, organised in Siem Reap province, not only provided joys to our people, but also made international visitors know Cambodia better. Our unique tradition, custom, culture and civilization made the younger generation and the world know and appreciate our ‘Kingdom of Wonder’,” the premier underlined on his Facebook page.



Besides, Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen reminded the younger generation of their obligation to maintain peace in order to build a prosperous future for the Cambodian nation.

In his opening speech at Angkor Sankranta Concert held in Siem Reap on April 16 under the theme “Cambodia, My Motherland”, H.E. Thong Khon,

Minister of Tourism, highlighted the success of Angkor Sankranta, stressing that it is a Mega Cultural Tourism Event in Cambodia.

According to the preliminary estimation, the Angkor Sankranta 2016 attracted some 1.3 million local and foreign visitors, up about 25-30 percent compared to the previous year, he said.



This year's Angkor Sankranta, the fourth of its kind, took place from April 13 to 16, 2016. Different interesting programs were held at Angkor Wat Temple, Bayon Temple, Terrace of the Elephants, the Pub Street, and Angkor-Gyeongju exhibition center.

Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and his spouse Samdech Kittiprittbandit Bun Rany Hun Sen presided over the official opening ceremony of Angkor Sankranta 2016 and attended many different activities.

Angkor Sankranta is organized each year to celebrate the Khmer Traditional New Year in Siem Reap province, home to the famous Angkor temples. It is aimed to show off the solidarity of the Cambodian family as a whole and to contribute to maintaining Cambodian tradition, culture and custom.

### **Trade Union Law Approved by Legislative Body**

April 19, 2016 – The National Assembly (NA) and Senate of Cambodia have recently approved the draft Trade Union Law.

The draft law, consisting of 17 chapters with 100 articles, was approved by 69 lawmakers present at the 6th NA session of the fifth legislature on April 4, 2016, and then by 40 senators at the 8th plenary session of the third legislature of Senate on April 12, 2016.

The Trade Union Law, drafted by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, aims to provide rights and freedom of vocational organizations to workers, employees and employers in the country. It covers all enterprises, institutions and individuals that are under the provisions of the Labor Law, as well as air and marine staff.

Currently, there are about 3,300 trade unions in Cambodia.

### **PM Inaugurates Sugar Mill in Preah Vihear Province**



April 19, 2016 – The US\$360 million sugar mill and biomass plant invested by Rui Feng Cambodia International Co., Ltd., a Chinese agro firm, were inaugurated this morning under the presidency of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

Located in Poteap village, Mlou Prey I commune, Chhep district, Preah Vihear province, the sugar mill and refinery and biomass plant are part of the total US\$1 billion investment plan.

The sugar mill is expected to produce some 360,000 tons of refined sugar annually for export, while the biomass plant is able to generate some 39 megawatts of electricity.

The company is planning to build an ethanol plant with the capacity of producing 50,000 tons a year for export to China and EU, and to construct a bio-fertilizer plant which can produce about 100,000 tons per year.

The company also wished to expand the sugarcane plantation area from the current 4,300 ha. For the initial phase, the company employs some 7,000 workers and the figure will rise to 21,000 workers.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen expressed his support to this investment project and pledged to further negotiate with China to open more markets for the company's products after successfully finding markets for Cambodian rice and other agricultural products.

The Cambodian premier also called on the company to expand its cultivation area by providing seeds and techniques for the farmers.

### **U.S Provides US\$20 Million for Cambodia's Prey Lang Preservation**

April 21, 2016 – The U.S. government has decided to extend some US\$20 million to Cambodia for the protection and preservation of Prey Lang Forest, according to the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh.

“The U.S. government is providing US\$20 million to protect and conserve Cambodia's rich natural assets and unique biodiversity,” said the Embassy in a Facebook post early this week.

The grant is given through Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project (SFB) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), implemented by Winrock International, it added.

USAID and its partners work closely with national and local authorities and communities to help mark protected

areas, patrol community forests, and educate the public about the importance of conserving forest resources, it underlined.

Prey Lang Forest is one of world's top ten biodiversity hotspots with almost 1,000 species of flora and fauna. It is a magnificent example of a lowland evergreen forest in the Indo-Burma region. Recorded species include 530 botanicals, 60 mammals, 266 birds, and 67 amphibians and reptiles.

Situated to the west of the Mekong River in north-central Cambodia and stretching across four provinces: Kratie, Kampong Thom, Stung Treng and Preah Vihear, Prey Lang landscape lies within three watersheds: the Stung Sen, Stung Chinit and Siem Bok. It traverses the hydrological divide between the Tonle Sap and Mekong Basins.

The forest is a watershed for the Tonle Sap Lake, upon which millions of Cambodians and a significant proportion of the national economy depend. In addition, more than 250,000 people live in 340 villages in close proximity to, and within the Prey Lang Forest, many of whom rely directly on the forest landscape for their livelihoods.

***PM Holds a Get-together with 3,500 Workers***

April 24, 2016 – Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, held here this morning at Koh Pich Convention and Exhibition Center a get-together with some 3,500 workers, on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of International Labour Day (May 1).

On his official Facebook page, the Cambodian premier expressed his delight to meet with the workers, saying that it is an annual meeting held

after the Khmer Traditional New Year with joys, in peace and development, and to examine what has been achieved so far.



Samdech Techo Hun Sen also expressed his gratitude to all his compatriots for their contribution to maintaining peace and wished them good luck in the new year.

According to H.E. Ith Samheng, Minister of Labor and Vocational Training, there are currently 8,197 registered enterprises in Cambodia, employing a total of over 1 million workers. Of the figure, he added, some 1,088 are garment and footwear factories with 710,000 workers

***GDCE Collects Some US\$472 Million in Q1***



April 22, 2016 – The General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia (GDCE) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance collected a total of US\$472 million as state revenue in the first quarter of this year, up some

30 percent compared to the same period last year.

The figures were shared here at a recent monthly meeting chaired by H.E. Dr. Kun Nhim, Director General of GDCE.

This amount of income accounted for about 28.7 percent of the total budget plan for 2016.

Last year, GDCE collected some 5,455 billion Riel or roughly US\$1,58 billion as state revenue, an increase by 17.4 percent compared with 2014.

***Cambodian Commerce Minister Highlights TPP Agreement***

April 27, 2016 – Cambodian Minister of Commerce H.E. Pan Sorasak yesterday laid stress on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, which has some impact on Cambodia Intellectual Property (IP) system.

TPP establishes strong protections for patents, trademarks, and copyrights, underlined H.E. Minister while presiding over the celebration of the World Intellectual Property Day under the theme “Digital Creativity: Culture Reimagined.”

Therefore, he added, Cambodia needs to observe closely on the TPP development and ensure our trading catch up the trend.

TPP agreement is a comprehensive regional agreement initiated by the U.S to promote economic integration to liberalize trade and investment, bring economic growth and social benefits, create new opportunities for workers and businesses, contribute to raising living standards, benefit consumers, reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth.