



Friday, 13 August 2010

Taiwan responds to PM's remarks



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:03 Cheang Sokha and Jake Schoneker

THE Taiwanese government has issued a statement emphasising its status as a "sovereign independent" nation following Prime Minister Hun Sen's remarks supporting Beijing's One-China policy.

In a speech at a development forum on Monday, Hun Sen said that provincial governors who permitted the establishment of Taiwanese government bureaus at the sub-national level would be "fired immediately".

He also told governors not to allow the display of Taiwanese flags or the celebration of Taiwanese ceremonies, warning there would be "disaster" if his instructions were disobeyed.

"We follow the One-China policy," he said. "Taiwan is just one province of the People's Republic of China."

It is our sincere hope that Cambodia will abandon its outdated ideology....

The policy claims that Taiwan is an inalienable part of mainland China and envisions its peaceful reunification under Beijing's sovereignty.

The premier's comments drew the ire of Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which said that Cambodia should adopt an "open and pragmatic" attitude towards trade with Taipei.

"It is our sincere hope that Cambodia will abandon its outdated ideology and adopt a more pragmatic and open attitude, and expand the mutually beneficial economic and trade exchanges of Taiwan in Cambodia," its statement said.

"Continuing these unfriendly remarks", would only make Taiwanese investors "hesitant" to invest in Cambodia.

Taiwan was the sixth-largest foreign investor in Cambodia, and trade between Taiwan and the Kingdom hit US\$336 million in 2009, the statement said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Koy Kuong could not be reached yesterday, but said earlier that although Cambodia had never recognised Taiwan as an independent nation, Hun Sen's remarks should not affect trade. "I don't think this will impact on Taiwanese businessmen in Cambodia - they can do business as usual," he said. "We are talking about politics here."

Chinese Embassy spokesman Qian Hai said on Monday that China "appreciated" Hun Sen's support on the Taiwanese issue, and that Beijing was not opposed to Taiwan's pursuing "private" business in Cambodia.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:58 pm

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Man About Town: 13 Aug 2010



via khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:03 Uong Ratana

Indigenous visitors celebrate their culture

Last Monday saw the arrival in Siem Reap of 336 indigenous people representing 30 groups from 15 Cambodian provinces, who gathered in town to celebrate International Day of the World's Indigenous

Peoples.

The celebration was aimed at recognising the desire of Cambodian indigenous peoples to exercise control over their ancestral lands, forests and other natural resources vital to their way of life.

Most of the activity took place at Banteay Kdei temple, where 20 stalls were set up to display indigenous artefacts, food and cultural items.

The biggest contingent was from Rattanakiri province, but people came from all over the Kingdom. For example, Son Kil, 35, travelled from Preah Sihanouk province, bringing fishing tools with him to represent 28 families of the S-och ethnic group.

He said he took part because he wanted to show his group's identity and to ask officials to grant the group some land in Prey Nup district.

Another hero

It seems Siem Reap is full of heroes these days. Following last week's item about the nomination of de-mining expert Aki Ra as a potential CNN Hero comes news that, in June, Ponheary Ly was nominated for the same honour.

Ponheary Ly was a tour guide at the Angkor temples until she set up the Ponheary Ly Foundation, which, among many other activities, buys educational supplies, shoes and uniforms for more than 2000 school kids.

The name game

The new area director of sales and marketing for Raffles Hotels in Cambodia is Peter Foster, but he has a name to live down.

In both Britain and Australia, the name Peter Foster is at first associated with a notorious Aussie conman who has the dubious distinction of having been boyfriend to topless pinup Samantha Fox, and of having been convicted on three continents.

The Raffles' Peter Foster said he has been the butt of countless jokes but simply tells people that he is the real Peter Foster.

Meanwhile, Robert Hauck, general manager of Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, assures 7Days that the Raffles Peter Foster is "not the criminal".

School heads change

Sala Bai Hotel & Restaurant School is seeing big management changes, with Mr and Mrs Dethomas taking the positions of director, and marketing and communication manager respectively from August 23.

Caroline Jouve, fundraising and communication manager, will also end her contract on that date, while Miss Sam-Oeun finished her contract as director on August 6.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:57 pm

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Dust settles on KRT verdict



Photo by: Heng Chivoan

S-21 prison survivors Bou Meng, Chum Mey and Vann Nath hold newly published copies of the Duch verdict.



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:03 Veng Rachana and James O'Toole

SIMPLE summaries of the Khmer Rouge tribunal's first verdict are 36 pages long. The full-length judgment, bound with a blue cover and pictures of the court, stretches to 450 pages, its proportions practically those of a phone book.

In crafting their ruling, judges at the United Nations-backed court had to take account of both Cambodian and international law, relying on precedent ranging from French criminal courts to international war crimes tribunals for Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslavia.

The judges ultimately found Tuol Sleng prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, guilty of crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, sentencing him to 30 years in prison.

With credit for time served, Duch stands to spend only 19 more years behind bars, a term that many victims say is unacceptably brief. Tasked with explaining a controversial decision of considerable length and complexity, employees of the Khmer Rouge tribunal took to the streets of Phnom Penh yesterday to distribute copies of the verdict and discuss its contents with victims and local residents.

At a community meeting yesterday morning in Dangkor district's Prey Sar commune, just a few hundred metres from the former site of the S-24 Khmer Rouge prison, a few dozen local residents joined commune chief Khat Sokhay and members of the court's public affairs section to receive copies of the judgment.

After brief opening remarks from court spokesman Reach Sambath, Prey Sar resident Duch Sey, 60, broke in with an expression of the frustration that many said they felt in the aftermath of the judgment.

"On the day of the verdict, Duch looked so cruel - he had killed so many people, but he was smiling," said Duch Sey, who noted the unfortunate irony of her surname as she railed against the Khmer Rouge jailer.

"I'm not satisfied with a 30-year sentence," she said.

Khat Sokhay said most residents in his commune shared Duch Sey's opinion, judging the sentence "too little" for a man who admitted "only 30 percent of his guilt".

UN court spokesman Lars Olsen told the gathering that an array of mitigating factors had played a role in Duch's abbreviated sentence, including his cooperation, his limited expressions of remorse and the unlawful detention he served at a Cambodian military court following his arrest in 1999.

The tribunal has printed 5,000 copies of the full-length judgment along with 17,000 copies of the judgment summary to be distributed in schools and communities throughout the country. Reach Sambath said last week that the printing would allow "Cambodian people and students to learn and to understand about the reason that the court sentenced Duch to 35 years in prison".

Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia, said the written judgment had important "symbolic" value and would be a useful resource in academic and legal settings. However, he said he doubted that most victims or ordinary Cambodians would take the time to go through it in detail.

"Most of the people don't care much, and also they don't have to understand all

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those legal proceedings, so all they care about is the final judgment,” Youk Chhang said.

Immediately following last month’s verdict, some of the few survivors of Tuol Sleng, a facility in which nearly all of the roughly 16,000 inmates were eventually executed, were furious with the sentence. Bou Meng, 69, called it “a slap in the face”, and 79-year-old Chum Mey said it was “not justice”.

At Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum yesterday, however, it appeared their views had softened. Appearing alongside fellow survivor Vann Nath at a ceremony to receive bound copies of the verdict from court officials, the men expressed appreciation for the work of the court.

“Case 001 is finished, and I will continue to follow Case 002 until the end,” Chum Mey told Olsen.

Youk Chhang said the Duch verdict was “a difficult lesson, as expected, and I think that it’s going to take time, energy and effort for people to really accept it”. The three Tuol Sleng survivors, at least, said they had made some progress towards this end.

“This verdict is not 100 percent fair, but it is acceptable,” Bou Meng said.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:54 pm

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State urges vigilance on banned pig imports



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:03 Kim Samath and Vong Sokheng

THE Ministry of Agriculture yesterday called on border authorities and low-level officials to remain vigilant in preventing the importation of potentially diseased pigs from Thailand and Vietnam.

Kao Phal, head of the Agriculture Ministry’s Department of Animal Health, said that despite a ban imposed last week on pig imports from Thailand and Vietnam, villagers have continued to illegally transport pigs across the border on motorbikes.

He warned that placing imported pigs in pens with local pigs could lead to the spread of porcine reproductive respiratory syndrome, commonly called blue ear.

“People must be responsible for their own actions,” he said.

He also advised farmers to notify veterinarians if they noticed any suspicious symptoms among their pigs or individuals exposed to the animals.

Ly Sovann, deputy director of communicable disease control at the Ministry of Health, said Tuesday that the ministry had deployed more than 1,200 health officials across the country to help monitor the spread of the disease in the event of human infection.

“So far, we have no reports of the spread of blue-ear disease from pigs to humans, but we have ordered our officials to be cautious in monitoring the issue,” he said.

But Dr Lotfi Allal, a representative of the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation, said yesterday that blue-ear disease could not be contracted by humans.

Regardless, he said, people still “should not eat meat from affected animals”.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:52 pm

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Youth employment falling



Photo by: Tracey Shelton

An employee works in the Injae Garment Factory in Phnom Penh. Laid-off garment workers are finding it difficult to break back into the industry, according to a new report from the International Labour Organisation.



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:03
Cameron Wells

YOUTH unemployment rates in Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia are expected to rise to as high as 14.8 percent by the end of the year, according to a new report released by the International Labour Organisation.

The report, released today, states that global unemployment among people aged 15-24 is expected to reach 13.1 percent by the end of the year. It stood at 13 percent at the end of 2009, when 81 million young people were out of work, a rise of 7.8 million since 2007.

The report also says that young people working in low-paid sectors of Cambodian industry were finding it hard to break back into the sector after losing their jobs because of the global financial downturn.

"If a worker in a low-income country loses a job in the formal sector - such as the garment worker in Cambodia - there is little chance of finding new work in the same sector as it continues to shrink," the report reads.

Tun Sophom, national coordinator at the ILO, said that the Kingdom's unemployment rate may be higher than the figure mentioned in the report.

"We still need updated data on national youth unemployment," he said. "The seasonal farmers, they sometimes work for three months and are unemployed for the rest of the year. But that is counted as employment."

He said the lack of jobs for Cambodian youths can largely be contributed to a struggling economy and more youths entering a market that cannot sustain employment growth.

"Acknowledging the economic crisis last year, there were a lot of job losses and a lot of problems with young people entering the markets," he said.

"Hundreds of young people enter the workforce every day. They are trying to get good and decent jobs, but they still face challenges."

The ILO report follows a Labour Ministry report released Tuesday, which stated that youth unemployment levels were "becoming critical" and pointed to foreign labour markets as "a cornerstone for alleviation of unemployment, income enhancement and poverty reduction".

The Labour Ministry report also stated that economic growth and employment in Cambodia had become "narrowly concentrated in the agricultural, garment, construction and tourism sectors".

Sam Rainsy Party spokesman Yim Sovann said youths continually look to overseas employment because of a lack of proper training and opportunities in Cambodia.

"Every year around 200,000 to 300,000 youths go abroad to look for jobs," he said.

"The government should promote proper training. They should provide the youth

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with professional training, and research the market and what people need to develop the economic sector.”

He said that foreign investment was the key to developing sustainable employment for youth workers in Cambodia. “Competition in Cambodia is very bad; gas [petrol] and electricity rates in Cambodia are the highest in Asia,” he said.

“There needs to be a good environment for investors. Good investors from developed countries don’t want to invest in Cambodia [because] of government bureaucracy and corruption.”

He said: “We need to reform our economic policies.”

Officials from the Ministry of Labour could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:51 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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Suspect links leafletter to Sam Rainsy Party



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:03 Meas Sokchea

POLICE say a motorbike-taxi driver arrested in connection with the scattering of antigovernment leaflets in Phnom Penh on Wednesday has linked a second suspect to the Sam Rainsy Party, drawing denials from opposition officials.

Phnom Penh Municipal police chief Touch Naruth said yesterday that the man, arrested on Wednesday morning, told police that he gave a lift to a woman who scattered the leaflets near Wat Phnom at around 4am. Afterwards, the man reportedly gave her a ride to the SRP’s headquarters on Sothearos Boulevard.

“He confessed that he drove the scatterer to the Sam Rainsy Party. This is his answer, and we are continuing the investigation to find out about this suspicion,” Touch Naruth said.

He also said police were sceptical about the man’s claims that he did not know the woman when he gave her a lift.

“If they do not know each other why did they have appointment at 4:30am to scatter leaflets,” he said.

The leaflets, around 100 of which were distributed around Wat Phnom, contained strong anti-Vietnamese rhetoric, accusing the ruling Cambodian People’s Party of “selling the nation” to Vietnam.

Touch Naruth said the leaflets should be outlawed because they did not offer constructive criticism but instead “defamed” senior officials including Prime Minister Hun Sen.

SRP spokesman Yim Sovann said the allegation that his party was involved in the leafletting was “laughable”, since the SRP had plenty of legal platforms for criticising the government.

“There is no reason for the SRP to create leaflets like this. It is laughable that they accused us, and it is not reasonable,” Yim Sovann said.

“Do not be interested in this. If the government has acted wrong, throw it away.”

Chan Soveth, a senior monitor at the local rights group Adhoc, said that since the leaflets had not affected the King’s reputation or otherwise incited unrest, the authorities should educate the suspect and release him. “If this scattering of leaflets has not seriously affected the prime minister’s reputation and not damaged national security, they should release him,” Chan Soveth said.

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Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:49 pm

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NGO abuse claim probed



*Photo by: Sovan Philong
Khim Khon, 50, from Preah Vihear province, says her 13-year-old daughter was raped by a security guard working for an NGO.*



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 Vong Sokheng

A LOCAL rights group yesterday announced it had launched an investigation into complaints by villagers in Preah Vihear province, who have accused a local NGO of ongoing human rights violations, including land-grabbing, rape, violence and intimidation.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Chan Soveth, a senior monitor for Adhoc, said officials last month began investigating an NGO identified as the Drugs and AIDS Research and Prevention Organisation, after receiving complaints from eight people claiming to represent 57 families from two villages in Choam Khsan district.

Chan Soveth said Adhoc officials had so far been unable to verify claims that DARPO officials had raped and beaten villagers.

"However we found this NGO was illegal, in that it used social land concessions the wrong way, and used incorrect procedures, such as extorting money from people while distributing plots of land to villagers," he said.

He said the land was supposed to have been distributed to villagers free of charge.

Por Mok, a 74-year-old village representative, said yesterday that in 2007, DARPO officials confiscated more than 100 hectares of land that residents of Sa Em and Kantout villages had been farming since 2005.

"When this NGO came in 2007, it claimed that it had received more than 500 hectares of land concessions from the government and then grabbed all the land from my family," he said.

Khim Khon, a 50-year-old village representative, said that last year she had been threatened and beaten by a group of unidentified men after complaining that her daughter, then 13 years old, was raped by a security guard working for the DARPO.

"My daughter was raped, and when I filed a complaint to the NGO, they put me in handcuffs and held me overnight at the NGO's security house," she said.

"Both I and my daughter were beaten with an electrical wire and ordered to drop the case."

Pen Loem, president of DARPO, yesterday denied all allegations against the NGO. He said the government had granted DARPO a 556 hectare social land concession in 2007 that was to be used to help "vulnerable poor people".

"I distributed plots of land to about 2,000 families, and I devoted my personal property of over US\$500,000 to build a school, a health centre and wells for them," he said.

Chan Soveth said Adhoc would continue investigations into the complaints.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:47 pm

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Vietnamese woman and man jailed over coffee-shop brothel



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 Chrann Chamroeun

PHNOM Penh Municipal Court yesterday sentenced a Vietnamese man and woman were jailed after being found guilty of procuring prostitution for a brothel they ran out of a coffee shop in Daun Penh district.

Un Samnang, 23, and Chang Ty Hok, 53, were arrested at their coffee shop in Chaktomuk commune in October last year, where police discovered 25 Vietnamese prostitutes.

Presiding Judge Sous Sam Ath sentenced Un Samnang to 10 years in prison and Chang Ty Hok to five years.

Defence Lawyer Nach Try declined to comment after yesterday's hearing, but Kim Ly La, a lawyer who represented six of the Vietnamese prostitutes, applauded the decision.

"It is acceptable and just for my clients, who did not ask for any compensation from the two accused because they voluntarily worked as prostitutes, and have agreed to return to Vietnam," she said.

Both defendants denied the allegations in a hearing held August 2. Un Samnang, who also holds a Cambodian identification card, told the court that although he had accepted US\$80 to allow the coffee shop's proprietors to rent the facility under his name, he was not involved in the sale of sex. An elderly Khmer Krom woman named Ky Nang was responsible for the criminal activity, he said.

But Sous Sam Ath rejected the testimony, saying that investigators could not find anyone by that name.

Chang Ty Hok testified during the hearing that she had worked only as a cleaner at the coffee shop, a claim that the judge said was "not credible".

'Illegal' migrant

In a separate case yesterday, the Municipal Court sentenced a Nigerian man to a total of six years in prison after finding him guilty of robbery, drug possession, damaging police property and living in Cambodia illegally.

Charles Uy, 27, was arrested from his rented house in Meanchey district in March after a complaint was filed against him by three other Nigerian men. Uy said during his trial on August 2 that the complaint had been filed in revenge after he warned the men about fighting in his house the previous evening.

Judge Sous Sam Ath also ordered Uy to pay 1.5 million riels (US\$358) in compensation to the three men, and ordered him to be deported following his release from prison.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:39 pm

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Soldiers, villagers to reach land armistice



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 Thet Sambath

OFFICIALS in Battambang province's Samlot district said yesterday that they would meet with local military officers to negotiate a temporary solution to a land dispute that has reportedly seen soldiers beat and shoot at villagers in recent months.

"We've decided to ask the military to allow people to farm the land because farming season is almost over and their disagreement can be solved later," said In Savrith, Samlot deputy district governor.

Officers from Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Military Region 5 say 21 families have laid illegal claim to forested land.

However, In Savrith said that officials saw "no trees on the disputed land", and that the villagers had obviously farmed it for several years.

"I hope this land will be offered to the people," he said.

On July 1, around 10 soldiers opened fire on 60 farmers who were planting corn in the area.

Although none of the farmers were hit by bullets, two were later injured when soldiers reportedly beat people who refused to stop farming.

Tuy Bunly, deputy commander of Military Region 5, said: "I oppose only forest land. If the villagers have land they have farmed for a long time, let them continue."

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:34 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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Littering law cleans up



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 Chhay Channyda

CITY Hall has collected more than 9 million riels (US\$2,148) in fines since a crackdown on littering began in May, an official said yesterday.

Chiek Ang, director of the municipal Environment Department, said most of the fees, collected between May 1 and July 31, had been paid by people caught littering in marketplaces.

"Now we see markets are clean without rubbish on the walkways," but it would take some time for many people to get used to using the rubbish bins that municipal officials had ordered installed around markets in the capital, he said.

"We want to change the habits of residents who used to litter to use trash bins," he said. "We have to educate people more."

Phnom Penh Governor Kep Chuktema in April authorised police to collect fines of 10,000 riels from people caught littering in public, beginning May 1.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:33 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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Six women rescued from prostitution



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 Kim Yuthana

SIX Cambodian women trafficked to Thailand under the pretext of receiving legitimate jobs and later forced into prostitution were rescued last week in a raid on a karaoke parlour in Thailand's Trat province.

Ly Sotheary, executive director of the Healthcare Centre for Children in Koh Kong province, said the six victims – including one minor – were being sheltered at the Ban Krettrakam Girl's Shelter in Nonthaburi province. She said the women were being cared for by employees of the Labour Rights Promotion Network, a Thailand-based organisation.

A seventh trafficking victim escaped the karaoke parlour last month, she said, and provided information that led to the raid, which took place on August 5. The raid resulted in the arrests of 21 people, including the victims, other Cambodian prostitutes, customers and two brothel owners.

Thai police eventually released everyone except a Thai man and a Cambodian woman, who owned and ran the karaoke parlour.

The pair have been remanded in custody while awaiting charges in Trat province, which is adjacent to Koh Kong province.

Ly Sotheary said the six Cambodian women would remain in Thailand to provide evidence in the case against the two brothel owners.

The women were "cheated", she said, after they were promised jobs as maids or in garment factories, fisheries or restaurants.

She said that representatives from HCC would visit the six victims in the coming weeks and observe the trial if the suspects were charged.

Speaking under the condition of anonymity, a 30-year-old prostitute who worked at the karaoke bar in Trat province and returned to Cambodia last week said that she felt sorry for the victims, especially the underage girl.

"I was very embarrassed when we were arrested, but I really pity the true victims," she said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Koy Kuong said that he was unaware of the case. Bun Leut, Koh Kong provincial governor, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:32 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)

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SRP calls for border intervention



Photo by: Heng Chivoan

Hong Sokhour, treasurer of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party, sets up a video conference with party President Sam Rainsy at party headquarters yesterday. The politician is in self-exile abroad after receiving a two-year jail term in January.



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 Meas Sokchea

OPPOSITION leader Sam Rainsy yesterday praised the government's call for an

international solution to Cambodia's border dispute with Thailand, but called for the government to devote similar attention to Vietnamese border issues.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Hun Sen wrote a letter to the United Nations Security Council, a day after his Thai counterpart reportedly threatened to use military force to settle the standoff.

In a speech on Monday, Hun Sen called for international adjudication of the dispute, saying the existing bilateral mechanisms had failed.

Speaking by video-link from Paris, Sam Rainsy told reporters gathered at the party's Phnom Penh headquarters yesterday that he was "very happy" the government had called for a multilateral solution to the dispute with Thailand.

"I requested this a long time ago. I congratulate the government for doing as the SRP has requested," he said.

"But I also would like to remark that if we request the international community to help intervene, we should request the international community to help with the Cambodia-Vietnam border as well."

Sam Rainsy is living in self-imposed exile after receiving a two-year prison sentence in January for his role in the removal of wooden demarcation posts along the Vietnamese border in October.

Sam Rainsy also said yesterday that maps published on his website show that the poles he uprooted were not border markers, and called for the release of two villagers also convicted and jailed over the incident.

Va Kimhong, the government's senior minister in charge of border affairs, said the poles were border markers and accused Sam Rainsy of "falsifying public documents and spreading disinformation" in making the maps public.

He said Cambodia and Vietnam were not involved in a border dispute, and that there was therefore no need for international intervention.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:31 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)

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Police Blotter: 13 Aug 2010



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:00 Tang Khyhay

BOASTING THUG NABBED, FACES MURDER COUNT

An 18-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing a man in Phnom Penh's Tuol Kork district, confessing to police that he had been involved in many other crimes before. The murder occurred last Friday at a park just west of the Royal University of Phnom Penh, following an argument between the suspect and the victim. The accused later confessed to police that he and his two friends had committed "many other crimes", such as theft.

KOH SANTEPHEAP

BREAKFAST DINER GETS UNWELCOME TAKEAWAY

A 20-year-old woman was arrested and charged with stealing a motorbike near Kratie town market on Tuesday. The owner of the motorbike said she parked the bike behind the market while she was having breakfast, and upon completion of her meal realised the bike had been pinched. Following a complaint to police, the suspect was arrested in Chhlong district, and she immediately confessed to the crime. She was subsequently sent to the provincial police station for further questioning.

KOH SANTEPHEAP

STEPDAUGHTER RAPE OFFENCES ALLEGED

A man has been arrested after being accused of raping his stepdaughter repeatedly

over a 10-day period in Kampong Chhnang's Kampong Tralach district. The victim's mother said that while she was conducting business in Pailin province, her husband had raped her daughter no fewer than eight times since August 1. When she filed a complaint on Tuesday, the husband had already fled the house. Police said they were still investigating the case, and that the suspect was still at large.

KOH SANTEPHEAP

TIPSY MOTO DRIVER HITS PARKED VEHICLE

An innocent bystander was seriously injured when a drunken motorbike driver crashed into a parked moto in Kampot province's Kampong Trach district on Tuesday. A witness said that the drunken driver was speeding before crashing into another moto that was parked along the roadside. Police sent the driver and the victim to hospital with serious injuries. Both motorbikes were kept at the police station.

KAMPUCHEA THMEY

DRUNKEN STUDENT MEETS FILTHY DEMISE

A drunken student died after he plunged his motorbike into a sewage canal in Phnom Penh's Sen Sok district on Tuesday. A witness who saw the crash said the student was drunk and exceeding the speed limit, when he lost control and drove the bike into a canal. Police sent the student's body and his motorbike to the grieving family.

NOKOR WAT

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:29 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)

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Ministry backs church's actions



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:02 David Boyle

A CHURCH-RUN rescue centre that has been accused of effectively kidnapping children acted within Cambodian law when restricting parental visitations, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth has confirmed.

In July, the Citipointe Church, based in Brisbane, threatened to sue Australian filmmaker James Ricketson for defamation and slander due to his repeated accusations that its SHE Rescue Centre in Phnom Penh had illegally taken custody of an impoverished woman's children.

Ricketson has said that the church illegally restricted the impoverished woman's visitation to as little as two hours per fortnight against her will. He also rejects the church's claim that it took custody of the children because they were at risk of being trafficked.

"What legal authority did Citipointe have, in July 2008, to remove the two children in question from their mothers care?" he said in a recent email.

But in a letter to the Post dated Tuesday, Khuon Ranin, a Ministry of Social Affairs undersecretary of state, wrote that although the church had commenced operations years before signing an agreement with the ministry, a separate agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cleared Citipointe Church of any wrongdoing.

"For the SHE rescue project, bringing children under control and protection before signing an agreement is possible because the organisation has been registered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, already," the letter said.

The woman at the centre of the dispute has confirmed that the church had restricted her visitation rights since July 2008, when she voluntarily submitted two of her children into their care.

"Only after I rented a house could I see my children once every two weeks and

sometimes only for 10 minutes," she said earlier this year.

But Khun Ranin said in the letter that the SHE Rescue Centre was well within its rights to restrict visitation rights to as little as two times per year.

"Practically, the ministry has prepared a grading policy which marks permission for two or more visits per year as a good grade," the letter said.

It also stated that the SHE Rescue Centre could take custody of children on the grounds that they were at threat of being trafficked or because their parents were too poor to support them.

"After questioning [the SHE Rescue centre] the ministry believes [name excluded] must have been in any of the above targeted groups," it said.

Citipointe were unavailable for comment yesterday, and Ricketson said by email yesterday that he did not have time to draft a response.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:27 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)



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Vendors questioned about land dispute



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 Tep Nimol

FOUR vendors at Prey Lvea market, located in Takeo province's Prey Kabas district, appeared in court yesterday for questioning after a complaint from a district official, who accused the vendors of operating illegally on his land.

Tong Bunly, head of the Prey Kabas district Animal Health Care Office, filed a complaint on August 2 after the vendors refused to vacate an 8.5-by-19-metre plot of land he claims to have owned since 1996.

But the four vendors - Sok Aing, Sou Lay, In Khan and Eng Chenda - say the land belongs to the state.

In Khan's daughter, May Srey Sokheoun, appeared in her mother's place at court yesterday, along with the other three vendors.

She said they had told the investigating judge that they built their stalls at Prey Lvea market in 1979, and that Tong Bunly had built his house in 2008 on state land.

"We were afraid that they would try to intimidate or arrest us, so we brought a petition with thumbprints from about 100 vendors who vow to oppose any attempts to arrest us," she said. The vendors were all allowed to return home after the hearing, she said.

Tong Bunly reiterated his claim to the land yesterday. "I have tried to tell those vendors to move off my land many times, but they refuse. That is why I've sued them," he said.

But, Ith Sa, Prey Kabas district governor, was sceptical of Tong Bunly's claims. "Presumably, the disputed land is not private property. So let the court deal with this case through legal procedures," he said.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:26 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)



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Titanium-mining group keeps company data under

wraps



Photo by: David Boyle

An aerial view of protected forest in Koh Kong province that Wildlife Alliance says could be threatened by nearby titanium mining.



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 David Boyle

The head of United Khmer Group yesterday declined to disclose the names of "public" investors in a titanium mine he has said contains US\$35 billion to \$135 billion worth of deposits and refused to confirm the sums they had invested.

On Monday Chea Chet said public traders with more than 42 years of experience would provide the expertise to process ilmenite, an iron-titanium oxide used to produce titanium slag, at a 20,400 hectare site in Koh Kong province and ensure environmental protection procedures were implemented to safeguard the surrounding forests.

"These people, they are public traders. They come from offshore, they invest a lot of money and they already have a plan," he said.

"So no matter what [opponents of the mine] try to do, it's not going to stop our company or our government because we've prepared for the benefit and we prepare for the [environmental] effects."

Yesterday Chea Chet also rebutted recent claims by officials and conservationists that his company had yet to commence exploration of the site, saying they had already started drilling but declined to produce a copy of the feasibility study.

"We've taken only 10 metres - it requires special tools like the other forms of mining; this one is only the surface, zero metres to 10 metres deep, so it is not that difficult," he said yesterday, though he declined to confirm the precise location of the site.

But the conservation organisation Wildlife Alliance has provided a map which purportedly shows that the location of the concession precisely matches the coordinates of an earlier mining concession, one explored by the company Omsaura.

Omsaura's feasibility study, conducted in June 2005, concluded that significantly lower amounts of ilmenite were likely to be found than United Khmer Group have claimed - just under 2.5 million as opposed to Chea Chet's figure of 120 million tonnes.

Sowanna Gauntlett, country director of Wildlife Alliance, said yesterday that since 2002, eight companies had come to make studies of the site, but that none had commenced exploitation of the site. Gauntlett called for United Khmer Group to publish its findings.

"Right now, we finally discovered this is only an exploration permit.

"There are no findings yet, and if the company does have findings, then why don't they publish it," she said.

"And if they have big plans for that area, we need to be informed because we have big projects in eco-tourism and REDD sinks."

Reduced Emissions From Deforestation permits allow heavily polluting companies in developed countries to offset atmospheric carbon emissions by paying for the protection of forests, which process the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide and turn it into oxygen.

Gauntlett has previously said that the 144,000-hectare area of protected forest, worth between US\$48 and \$85 million, according to preliminary studies, would be

doomed by the construction of a nearby mine.

Chea Chet's estimation of the value of the deposits, which he puts at between \$700 and \$2,500 per tonne once processed into titanium slag, does not factor in capital expenditure required to process ore.

The highest price for titanium slag in China last month was US\$670 per tonne.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:25 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)

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Life goes on despite KR tribunal



*Photo by: Sovann Philong
Business as usual – on July 27,
people cycle past the notorious S-21 site in Phnom Penh, just a day
after the Khmer Rouge tribunal
announced Duch's sentence.*



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 Benny Widyono

Analysis

Benny Widyono

The conviction, on July 26, of Kaing Guek Eav, or "Duch", the former prison chief of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, drew international media attention to Cambodia, at least for one news cycle. The verdict of the United Nations-sponsored tribunal was important in that, for the first time, a key Khmer Rouge official was held accountable for the unspeakable crimes of the regime. The press highlighted the outcry that the "real" sentence, 19 years in jail, was too lenient.

International coverage of the Duch verdict eclipses two issues. First, the international community is ambivalent about the tribunal. Many consider it deeply flawed by interference by the Cambodian government. Others, especially in the West, insist that the tribunal must continue, as if this were the only road to justice and reconciliation in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia. Nothing is farther from the truth.

Given the trial's 30-year delay, Cambodia has since returned to stability and won the confidence of both donor and business communities.

Cambodia's growth rate over 10 years stands at 7 percent to 13 percent. This is the result of a rise in tourism and private investment, but also because of the generous inflow of foreign aid, since 1993, when a new Cambodian government was formed after United Nations-sponsored elections.

Given Cambodia's expanding population today, most know very little about and have no experience of the Khmer Rouge era. Recent surveys indicate that Cambodians are paying little attention to the tribunal. The youth of Cambodia, like their peers in Hong Kong, Shanghai and elsewhere are more focused on building the future.

A less evident problem is that the past role of international actors in the Cambodian tragedy has been whitewashed. Almost in unison, they now assert that the Vietnamese liberation of Cambodia from Khmer Rouge rule, in January 1979, was followed by "10 years of civil war". What they fail to report is that this civil war was largely brought on by what happened in faraway New York, where, incredibly enough, spearheaded by the United States and China, the UN continued to recognise the ousted Khmer Rouge as the legitimate government of Cambodia, rather than the new People's Republic of Kampuchea, which soon gained control over 90 percent of the country. The alleged reason was that Vietnam had invaded Cambodia, but the

obvious truth was that Vietnam was on the wrong side.

Opposing this UN decision to maintain Khmer Rouge representation were the Soviet bloc, India and a number of others, who were easily outvoted.

This stalemate continued for 11 years during which the Khmer Rouge flag continued to fly over Manhattan. To disguise this outrage, the Khmer Rouge was draped in sheep's clothing, as a "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK)", with two non-communist factions, the Royalist FUNCINPEC and a pro-American group, the KPNLF.

In the field, this CGDK received ample aid from its Western backers, fuelling and prolonging the "civil war" referred to by the international press today. With the end of the cold war, in 1991, the Paris Peace Agreements were signed, and the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia brought the stalemate to an end by organising elections that established a new legitimate coalition government in Cambodia.

Having succeeded in seating the Khmer Rouge in the UN General Assembly for 11 more years, obviously the West was not in a big hurry to put the Khmer Rouge on trial. It is ironic that the international press and Western academics, almost in unison, now insist that the KR trials must continue, and that the Cambodian government should not protect anyone from the tribunal.

If the international tribunal were to end tomorrow, Cambodia would continue on its path to progress and reconciliation, aided by private investment and generous donors, whose efforts continue to lift Cambodia from poverty. This, understandably, is the subject that concerns Cambodians today.

Benny Widyono, from Indonesia, was governor of Siem Reap Province in Cambodia under the United Nations Transitional Authority, 1992-1993, and the secretary general's political representative to Cambodia from 1994 to 1997. He is the author of *Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge and the United Nations*, published in 2008.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:23 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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The state of the nation's banking



Photo by: Heng Chivoan

Han Peng Kwang, senior vice president of Malaysia-based HwangDBS Commercial Bank Plc, discusses Cambodia's competitive and crowded banking sector.

via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 Nguon Sovan



CEO TALK

Han Peng Kwang

via Khmer NZ

Malaysia-based HwangDBS Commercial Bank Plc launched in Cambodia one year ago. Its country head, Han Peng Kwang, sat down with the Post to discuss its burgeoning business and the state of the Kingdom's banking industry.

Your bank has been in the Kingdom for a year. How has business been?
HwangDBS Commercial Bank opened its doors amid the global financial crisis. Though it was certainly challenging, we have had some opportunities, allowing us to record a

considerably lower-than-expected pre-tax loss of US\$0.77 million with total operating revenue of \$0.44 million [last year].

Naturally, we started with building up our deposits by offering attractive rates. As at 31 July 2010, our total deposits stand at \$19.3 million and outstanding loans at \$3.8 million.

As a newer entrant to the market, how will HwangDBS build its customer base?

I believe that there is tremendous room for growth given that the Cambodian economy is still young, and there is a large percentage of the local population that are still wary of banks or have limited access to such facilities. Most banks are located in urban cities, whilst over 80 percent of the population lives in the countryside.

What are some of the opportunities and challenges the bank sees in the Cambodian banking industry at the moment?

The main challenge for us is our network. We have only one outlet at the moment.

The other major challenge is competition, given that there are currently 28 banks in Cambodia competing for the same piece of the pie.

HwangDBS CB differentiates itself through our service and our commitment to provide convenient, fast and efficient banking services to our customers.

If our customers are not able to come to us, we will go to them. To address the challenge of network and reach we are planning to open another two branches in Phnom Penh by end of this year and to look into the possibility of joining an ATM network with other banks.

The Kingdom also has interest rates that are generally much higher than most of the rest of the world. Does this effect your operations? What are the interest rates the bank offers in term of loan and deposit?

This is the cost of doing business in a developing country. To be competitive, we have to structure our products competitively by identifying the needs. Whilst the deposit rates are high, the loan rates are even higher. Currently our deposit rate for our Savings account is 1 percent per annum.

Our fixed deposit rates range from 1.75 percent to 3.25 percent depending on the tenure.

Having said that, high rates are a norm, but you can see that the rates have also been falling compared to a few months ago. I believe they will continue to fall gradually in the next three to five years as the economy develops, locals become more affluent and the market efficiency improves along with the development of a sustainable credit market.

Domestic savings will also need to improve as Cambodia is currently an exception to the rule where Asian economies are often characterized by high domestic savings. By increasing the money supply in the banking system, the interest rates or the cost of borrowing should fall.

Coming from Malaysia, what have you observed regarding Cambodian perceptions of borrowing and depositing money compared to Malaysia?

There is definitely a big difference, both in terms of the perception and habits. Malaysia has been privileged to have experienced peace, which allowed their economy to develop and prosper. The banking system is fairly developed, and almost every Malaysian has at least one or more bank account. There is no fear of a bank going bankrupt or closing.

What about the sector in Cambodia?

The banking sector in Cambodia is still fairly young.

Many Cambodians still harbour distrust towards banks after a few closed and many lost their life savings in the late 1990s. As such, money is still kept in homes, where it is unsafe.

The younger generation is more receptive towards the idea of putting money in banks and is starting to see the benefits and convenience of doing so.

As more gain employment, they will eventually open a bank account, start saving, own a credit card and apply for loans to purchase a motorbike, car and even a house. In term of borrowings, we noted that more and more Cambodians now

understand the benefits of borrowing.

Cambodia now has a huge number of commercial banks (28) and will reach 30 by the end of this year as CIMB and Bank of China set up shop.

The National Bank of Cambodia in late 2008 regulated the commercial banks to triple its registered capital to \$37.5 million by the end of this year, what is your opinion on this issue?

This is natural for a developing economy as the government understands the importance of attracting foreign capital investment. What will happen eventually is that the banking sector will consolidate. The strong will become stronger, and the weaker banks will eventually be absorbed or will eventually close.

On our part, HwangDBS CB will be increasing the number of bank branches over the next three years, and at the same time we will be increasing our paid-up capital to \$37.5 million from \$30 million before the end of this year.

All these, I believe, [are] strong proof of our commitment to doing business in Cambodia.

Interview by Nguon Sovan

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:21 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

3 comments: [Links to this post](#)

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CDC inks good investment month



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 Chun Sophal

THE Council for the Development of Cambodia approved US\$300 million worth of investments in July, nearly double its total investments approved in June, according to a CDC report obtained yesterday.

Fifteen large investment projects were given the green light, with 10 projects worth \$278 million approved in the agricultural sector, and another five investments worth \$20 million rubber-stamped for the industrial sector.

The government approved 63 investment projects worth \$1.377 billion in the first seven months of the year, whereas an equal number of projects worth \$1.473 billion were granted the go-ahead during the first seven months of 2009, figures show.

The CDC approved investment by 13 companies from eight countries during July, according to its report, and cleared four Chinese companies to launch investment projects in the Kingdom.

Sugarcane attracted particularly large investment, with China's Yellow Field International Limited and Great Field International planning to invest \$74.6 million and \$66.4 million respectively to grow sugarcane and other crops.

Meanwhile, United States-based Horizon Agriculture Development Co and Singapore and Malaysia's Mondul Agri Resources Company plan to invest \$28.8 million and \$30 million respectively to grow rubber trees.

However, former Asian Development Bank senior country economist Eric Sidgwick warned that it was important to focus on the overall trend with regard to the CDC's investment figures, as they tend to vary from month to month.

"Investments in a small economy like Cambodia are lumpy, and figures for one month do not necessarily entail any change in the underlying trend," he said earlier this year.

CDC Deputy Secretary General Duy Thov said an increasing number of foreign companies were interested in investing in Cambodia's agricultural and product-

processing sectors.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:17 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)

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Hotels open despite economy



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 Soeun Say

TWENTY new hotels in Cambodia have been granted licences during the first six months of the year, a figure that Tourism Ministry officials called a "strong sign for the tourism sector" yesterday.

The new hotels will join another 110 that received licences during the period, the ministry's Tourism Industry Department Director Prak Chan Dara said yesterday.

"The number of tourists increases every year - that's why we need the hotels," as gradual economic recovery has spurred growth in tourist arrivals, he said.

"We hope the number of new hotels will continue to grow in the second half of the year," he said.

Aside from the opening of hotels amid poor domestic economic conditions, he said, there was ample evidence of the tourism industry's long-term growth.

"Despite the world economic crisis, tourists are still coming," he said. "The number of tourists is increasing every year - that's why I decided to open."

Figures obtained by the Post earlier this week show that 455 hotels are licensed to operate in the Kingdom, and they are required to renew their licences every two years.

Ratanakkiri Tourism Department director Nget Pitou said the province had seen three new hotels and seven guesthouses during the first half of the year.

The province now has seven hotels and 21 guesthouses, but needs more, he said.

"It is not enough for tourists, and we have no facilities for big events," he said. "We need more hotels and guesthouses in Ratanakkiri."

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:16 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

No comments: [Links to this post](#)

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Titanium-mining figures much too good to be true



via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:01 Steve Finch

THE prospect of Cambodia developing its biggest mine to date - the United Khmer Group titanium concession in Koh Kong province - promises considerable economic potential. Unfortunately, the project quite simply does not add up.

CEO Chea Chet's assertion that the mine could generate revenues of up to

US\$2,500 per tonne of slag is frankly absurd. To begin with, titanium slag has been fetching less than a third of this price all year in a market that at the beginning of 2010 was considered overheated due to high Chinese demand.

Last month delivered titanium slag from Hebei province, the highest-value in China at the time, fetched a top price of 4,600 yuan, or \$670 per tonne, which includes government tax. The actual revenue generated for the mining firm itself would therefore have been even lower.

Since May, prices in China – the main foreign investor in the Koh Kong mine – have fallen as Chinese manufacturers have used up stockpiles of the raw material. This does not necessarily impact the United Khmer Group mine, as it will not start production until mid-2011 at the earliest, but considering the highest prices in the market today, the mine is worth more like \$36 billion at the absolute maximum. According to Robert Porter, general manager of investor relations and corporate affairs at Australian miner Iluka, the value is even lower at \$21.6 billion. He should know – Iluka is the second-largest producer of titanium minerals on the planet. Why then is United Khmer Group inflating the value of the mine so drastically?

Even if the concession were only to produce revenues at the lower, more realistic end of these estimates, it would represent a significant natural resource for Cambodia – under current legislation the Kingdom would generate tax worth 30 percent of total profits. But then, the resource has to be handled correctly by the government and all stakeholders if it is to realise its true economic potential, and here there are further concerns.

To begin with, the concession appears to be more than twice the legally permitted limit at more than 20,000 hectares. More importantly, environmental concerns should be appropriately considered, a point that has already caused behind-the-scenes disagreement within the government. That the mine appears to lie within a protected forest area is just one concern.

Just 10 kilometres away from the edge of the concession, Chi Pat is set to be the country's foremost eco-tourism site when a high-end lodge currently under construction is completed in partnership with Wildlife Alliance. The key will therefore be making sure both projects can live together without the mine degrading the local environment to such an extent that the area is no longer attractive to the expected surge in tourists.

As we have seen in the case of neighbouring Laos, which generates 15 percent of its GDP from mining, extractive industries can play a major role in developing economies. But the Cambodian government needs to guarantee that mining plays a positive role for everyone concerned.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:15 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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Amateur golf open proves a real hit



Photo Supplied

Emmett "Hefner" McHenry arrives in style for the opening of the Angkor Amateur Open at Angkor Golf Resort in Siem Reap.

via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:00 Peter Olszewski



SUNDAY saw the completion of the Angkor Amateur Open golf tournament, which proved to be a lively mix of sporting expertise and socialising. There was a bright lights, big city aspect to the tourney with several Cambodian dignitaries playing, attracting television cameras and crews.

Last year's Division C winner, Sokha Angkor Resort general manager Emmett McHenry, took the social aspect to a flamboyant degree by emulating Playboy founder Hugh Hefner and arriving at the course on day one bedecked in raiment that might possibly pass as a dressing gown, and together with a gaggle of golfers, spilled from the hotel's large and ostentatious limousine.

Earlier in the week, McHenry had taken the over-long limousine for a test run to see whether it could in fact navigate the numerous bends and corners on the road leading to the Angkor Golf Resort, the venue for the tournament.

The three-day event attracted a field of 48 golfers from Thailand, Malaysia, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap to compete in four separate handicap divisions.

Phnom Penh's Lesley Saunderson triumphed in the Ladies Division with a blistering second round providing a 10-stroke win over her nearest rival, Kanyakorn Powers of Thailand.

A very keenly contested Division C, which comprised most of the field, saw HE Bin Chhin take the honours from local golfer Chea Sopheak. Last year's winner, the usually competitive Emmett McHenry, saw his game fall into a heap, possibly due to the exertions of arriving by limousine.

Division B's Sunday play saw overnight leader Brendan O'driscoll fall away badly with his second round, allowing a superb rally from HE Chhay Seng Our to claim top spot with one of the best rounds of the day. Richard Erlebach continued his impressive form to take the runner-up spot, after the O'driscoll capitulation.

Another strong turnout of quality golfers for Division A saw Scott Puzey come from behind with a scintillating even par 72 to win this year's Open.

Saturday's round one leader, Robin Briars from Thailand, slumped to a disappointing seven over par on his second round, allowing Puzey to claim top prize.

In the nett division, local talent Ly Hong continued his rich form by claiming the runner-up spot behind Thailand's Nick Toon.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:14 pm

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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Dirty laundry finally gets aired



*Photo by: Nicky Hosford
Huang Cuen Long is pictured with
son Kenzie, lucky owner of a
supply of clean nappies.*

via Khmer NZ

Friday, 13 August 2010 15:00 Nicky Hosford



It's news of absolutely no significance on a global scale, and even on a Cambodian scale it's inconsequential. But to Siem Reap residents sans washing machine it's a big deal - the arrival of the first Western-style, laundromat-style clothes washing service.

On the surface, washing clothes in Siem Reap can seem a doddle. Just chuck the washing into a bag and send it off to a local cleaner for a small fee.

The downside is that the clothes are scrubbed by hand in cold water and dried in the sun.

While at first that may seem charmingly ethnic, it has its downsides. Hand scrubbing quickly disintegrates items such as shirts and other items, which are often scrubbed

right down to their stitches. Cold water means that bedding is never really hygienically clean, and sun drying means dust gathers on the garments.

The only alternative is to send washing to five-star hotels for exorbitant fees. But with the opening of 3 Hours Laundry, a young Indonesian entrepreneur is now providing a valuable improvement on the current system.

Huang Cuen Long had a problem with the dust in his clothes, as he's allergic to it. He was already looking for business opportunities in Siem Reap and the itching helped him to settle on opening his own laundrette here, using frontloading washing machines and tumble dryers, instead of top-loaders or the deadly scrubbing brush.

Hot water means cleaner and presumably more hygienic clothes, and drying in a machine means colours will no longer fade so fast, or clothes moulder, under the sun's ultraviolet rays. Finally, the use of fabric softener ensures clothes will come up soft and sweet-smelling.

I did one wash there, and the mud stains that are usually left by my own top-loading machine were gone. I had a pair of actually white, white trousers again. The use of fabric softener was noticeable, and everything came back soft and fragrant, like fresh laundry used to be.

There is a special rate for the month of August, and Huang will soon be running a collection and delivery service for Siem Reap's laundry needs. The laundry is on the road to Psar Krom - take the middle road at the junction between Sivutha Boulevard and the road to Chong Kneas, then continue for 300 metres.

Posted by CAAI News Media at 11:11 pm

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