



NEWSLETTER



KAS CAMBODIA OFFICE

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LENA RUGE

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The following articles are a composition of last two weeks' (01.01.2014–15.01.2014) press releases in Cambodia. They give a review on current developments in the country.

CNRP plans to launch “final campaign” in March



Source: Heng Chivoan,
www.phnompenhpost.com

January 14th 2014 in Phnom Penh Municipal Court. The party leader and his deputy were summoned to appear in court regarding their alleged incitement of striking garment workers to commit crimes. They declared that they supported the cause morally, but were never calling for violent actions. After the hearing they were allowed to leave the court room with no charges.

Among other options, the possibility of an economic boycott has been mentioned as one of the alternatives to launch in the beginning of March. Meanwhile opposition leader Sam Rainsy would like to see the armed forces rather to support the idea of the CNRP then to make use their weapons.

Even though the officials of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and of the CNRP are denying that they have negotiated on political issues and demands, political analyst, Kem Ley, and president of the Cambodian National Research Organisation (CNRO), Heang Rithy, stated on January 13th 2014 that the two parties participated in secret mediation talks. According to Kem Ley and Heang Rithy matters like reelections and resignation of Prime Minister Hun Sen were not on the agenda, but topics like dividing the commission chairmanships equally, a TV license for the CNRP or their demand for the deputy chair of the National Assembly.

During an official appointment in Kandal province on January 14th 2014 Prime Minister Hun Sen clarified that he will not give in the oppositions' demand to resign from office, explaining that he was legally elected.

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Further Reading:

“CNRP eyes March for ‘final’ push”:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cnrp-eyes-march-%E2%80%99final%E2%80%99-push>

„Political deal on horizon“:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/political-deal-horizon>

„Questioning draws rally“:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/questioning-draws-rally>

„I will not resign: premier“:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/i-will-not-resign-premier>

Sparks of national protests strike across national borders



Source: Photo supplied, www.phnompenhpost.com

On January 12th 2014 a mixed group of approximately 2000 people including Cambodian students, Cambodian women and Cambodian migrant workers living in South Korea gathered in front of the capital's City hall supporting the protests in their home country. They called for investigation regarding the use of armed forces during the garment strikes and claimed justice for the deadly shot protestors. Beyond that they were addressing CPP leader Hun Sen to step down.

Further protests were held at Cambodian embassies in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand and Indonesia as well as in Bangladesh, the U. K., Malaysia, the U. S., India, Germany and Turkey.

Further Reading:

“Cambodians and Koreans Join Protest in Seoul“:

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/cambodians-and-koreans-join-protest-in-seoul-50459/>

„Labour rallies move overseas“:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/labour-rallies-move-overseas>

Economic effects of garment strikes and political tensions estimated to be minor



Source: Tracey Shelton, www.phnompenhpost.com

Chief economist at the Business Research Institute (BRIC), Hiroshi Suzuki, does not fear any major effect on macroeconomic growth due to the garment strikes and political tensions. Other important sectors like tourism, agriculture and construction are steady. The tourism sector even benefits from an increasing number of visitors.

The garment sector itself is partially affected due to the temporarily closure of factories. This might also influence the volume of orders. On the other hand, U. S. and EU economy is recovering which may have a positive effect on Cambodia's economic sectors.

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Regarding the question whether Cambodia might lose its competitive advantage by raising the minimum wage, Hiroshi Suzuki explained that China and Thailand still have higher wages, but other competitors like Myanmar, Laos and Bangladesh have to be considered when thinking about raising the minimum wage up to 160 USD.

Further Reading:

"Garment Sector Economics":

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/garment-sector-economics>

Request for TV Channel rejected



Source: Im Sothearith / VOA Khmer, www.voacambodia.com

On January 2nd 2014 Mam Sonando, owner of Beehive Radio, sent a request for a relay station to broadcast deeper into provincial areas and to open a TV station to the Ministry of Information. Responding to the request on January 14th 2014 the Ministry refused the inquiry, explaining that there is a lack of space on the frequency spectrum. Mom Sonando answered quickly by writing a letter to Phnom Penh's Governor Pa Socheatvong asking for permission to hold public gatherings from the end of January at closed down Freedom Park.

Further Reading:

"Sonando Plans Protest After Relay Station, TV Channel Rejected":

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/sonando-plans-protest-after-relay-station-tv-channel-rejected-50582/>

Vietnamese Prime Minister visits Cambodia



Source: Stringer, www.phnompenhpost.com

On January 12th 2014 Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung arrived for his three-day state visit to strengthen the relations between Vietnam and Cambodia. Part of his agenda was the inauguration of the new Cho Ray Phnom Penh Hospital, which total costs amounted to 15 Million USD and was funded by Cho Ray Hospital (Ho Chi Minh City) and Sokimex, a Cambodian conglomerate. Furthermore, he attended the

groundbreaking ceremony for the Chrey Thom-Long Binh Bridge in Kandal Province, which was held by Prime Minister Hun Sen on January 14th 2014. Once it is built, the bridge will link the two countries. On this occasion Hun Sen stated clearly that he will not follow the opposition's call to resign from office.

Further Reading:

"Vietnamese Prime Minister Arrives for Three-Day State Visit":

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/vietnamese-prime-minister-arrives-for-three-day-state-visit-50453/>

"Hun Sen: "I will not resign":

<http://www.thecambodiaherald.com/cambodia/detail/1?page=11&token=Zjk3ZWVhYzBkNmZ>



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