

NEWSLETTER
KAS
CAMBODIA OFFICE
35th EDITION
February 2012

Katharina Boheim
Maximilian Jürgens

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The following articles are a composition of last two weeks' (15.02.2013-28.02.2013) press releases in Cambodia. They give a review on current developments in the country.

Hun Sen's son and son-in-law preparing for elections



Source: The Phnom Penh Post¹

The Cambodian Peoples Party (CPP) named Hun Many, one of Prime Minister Hun Sen's sons and Dy Vichea, his son-in-law, as candidates for National Assembly seats, with regard to the upcoming election in July 2013.

Hun Many studied at the National Defense University in Washington D.C. and is the leader of the ruling CPP's Youth Movement ("Youth in the Cause of the Motherland"). He will run for a seat to represent Kampong Speu province in the fifth mandate of the government. Dy Vichea, who is

deputy director general of central security at the General Commissariat of the National Police and is married to Hun Sen's daughter Mana, will run for Svay Rieng province.

They were listed as part of a larger initiative to retire elderly members of the party who have grown unable to fulfill their obligation as lawmakers. In total, 30 per cent of the CPP's current lawmakers will be retired and replaced by younger candidates. In addition to Vichea and Many, sons of other CPP leaders were chosen for the upcoming election. Minister of Interior Sar Kheng's son, Sar Sokha, is expected to run as a lawmaker in Prey Veng, while second vice-chairman Say Chhum's son, Say Sam El, is up for a seat in Kampong Cham. The son of CPP Supreme Court President Dith Munthy will run in Kandal province, and the son of Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet Chief Sok An will run for election in Takeo province. Kem Sokha, head of the oppositional Human Rights Party, said, "Hun Sen is preparing to be succeeded by his sons".

Further reading:

Two close relatives of Hun Sen to run for election

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/two-close-relatives-of-hun-sen-to-run-for-election/1609238.html>

Hun Sen's son confirmed as candidate-10 lawmakers told to retire

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/hun-sens-son-confirmed-as-candidate-10-lawmakers-told-to-retire-11256/>

¹ http://www.phnompenhpost.com/images/stories/news/national/2013/130221/130221_04.jpg

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Two of PM's sons eye political office

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013022061482/National/two-of-pm-s-sons-eye-political-office.html>

It's going to be a family affair at the upcoming election

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013022161541/National/it-s-going-to-be-a-family-affair-at-the-upcoming-election.html>

Cambodia's strong ties with China



Source: CBC News²

On February 23rd Prime Minister Hun Sen said, that he will pay an official visit in order to meet the new Chinese leadership, President Xi Jing-ping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang, in April 2013. He made that announcement during the inauguration of a China-invested hydropower plant in Sre Ambel district in Southwestern Koh Kong province.

"In the forthcoming meetings with new Chinese leaders, there can be a talk to promote the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation between Cambodia and China", he said. "We will

intensify our bilateral cooperation in economics, trade, investment, and other fields, especially tourism." According to the National Bank of Cambodia, at least \$276 million flowed into Cambodia from China in the first nine months of 2012, more than a quarter of the total foreign direct investment in Cambodia. Furthermore there is a rise of 35 percent year-on-year of Chinese tourists (333,900) visiting Cambodia last year, based on the Cambodian tourism report. On February 28th Hun Sen met with a delegation of 100 Chinese businesspeople, from 52 Chinese companies, visiting Cambodia to explore investment opportunities. The premier encouraged the businesspeople to consider investing in manufacturing industries in Cambodia in order to export finished products to China. China has offered a 95-percent-tax exemption for Cambodia-made products. The delegation is going to visit special economic zones in Sihanoukville and the province of Siem Reap.

Further reading:

Cambodian PM to visit China in April to strengthen bilateral ties

<http://english.cntv.cn/20130223/104010.shtml>

Hun Sen Says Chinese Companies Not Favoured, Just First Served

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/hun-sen-says-chinese-companies-not-favored-just-first-served-11585/>

Cambodian PM greets large group of Chinese businesspeople

<http://www.nzweek.com/world/cambodian-pm-greets-large-group-of-chinese-businesspeople-51866/>

² <http://www.cbc.ca/gfx/images/news/photos/2010/03/05/China-cambodia-306-RTXS28M.jpg>

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EU offers support for 2013 elections, not sending observers

After the country's last national elections, in 2008, the EU concluded that Cambodia had failed to meet international standards, and in October the European Commission said Cambodia's electoral system still had "major flaws". In a meeting with Prime Minister Hun Sen on February 18th, EU Ambassador Jean-Francois Cautain offered his support for the national elections in July but made no mention of the E.U. sending observers to the polls. Alain Vandersmissen, charge d'affairs of the EU's mission in Cambodia, said the EU would not send observers to the legislative elections first of all because they would have not been asked to do so by the Cambodian authorities. Though the EU would provide technical assistance to the National Elections Committee.

Opposition leader Sam Rainsy appealed to possible observers to stay away, since recommendations on the electoral system from U.N. human rights envoy Surya Subedi had not been heeded by the government. He prompted international organizations, friendly countries and non-complacent non-government organizations not to send electoral observers. Otherwise could some "ill-informed observers risk validating the charade."

NEC Secretary General Tep Nytha said it would be too early to say if any international monitors would be present, though he appealed to the international NGO's to join the election. Government official Tith Sothea dismissed Sam Rainsy's remarks. He said, the remarks of a convict couldn't cover up the democratic reality in Cambodia.

Further reading:

Hun Sen and EU Ambassador Talk Elections, Land Reform

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/hun-sen-and-eu-ambassador-talk-elections-land-reform-11009/>

Rainsy Tells Election Observers to Stay Away

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/rainsy-tells-election-observers-to-stay-away-11547/>

Government official dismisses Sam Rainsy remarks

<http://www.thecambodiaherald.com/cambodia/detail/1?page=11&token=ODI3ODcxM2Q1Mzk>

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Thai border deaths rise in 2012



Source: Cambodia Herald³

In 2012 forty-five Cambodians were shot dead while illegally logging rosewood in Thai territory. This number has therefore increased threefold since 2011, when fifteen people were killed. Senior military officials of Cambodia and Thailand discussed this situation in February. The Cambodian delegation urged their Thai counterparts to take legal action on illegal wood loggers instead of shooting them. Thai authorities on the opposite side refer to their soldiers acting in self defence. Now, Cambodia is making efforts to restrict people from illegally crossing the

border for rosewood logging, as the armed forces along the border are ordered to monitor their people. Adding to the number of killed people, 264 Cambodians were arrested by Thai authorities for illegal logging. As the resources in the border area begin to disappear by over-logging, the livelihoods of people are treated. So poverty seems to be the driving forces for life risking illegal logging. Especially some ringleaders seem easily to convince Cambodian people to enter Thai territory for rosewood logging as they pay between US \$ 200 and US \$ 1.000 for the wood.

Furthermore the Cambodia-Thai border conflict in the region between Preah Vihear Temple and Pailin province is still on going. Prime Minister Hun Sen has urged the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces along the border side to be on high alert as International Court of Justice (ICJ) prepares to give its verdict over the Preah Vihear Temple in mid-April. He fears Thais may use force in case the ICJ judges in favour of Cambodia, though the bilateral relations warmed considerably since the election of Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in 2011.

Further reading:

Shooting deaths by Thai troops leap in 2012

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013022661611/National/shooting-deaths-by-thai-troops-at-border-leap-in-2012.html>

Hun Sen Warns Thais May Use Force Over Preah Vihear

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/hun-sen-warns-thais-may-use-force-over-preah-vihear-11512/>

Thailand Denies Hun Sen's Claims of Rising Border Tensions

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/thailand-denies-hun-sens-claims-of-rising-border-tensions-11588/>

Thai minister sees no disadvantage in talks with Tea Banh

<http://www.thecambodiaherald.com/cambodia/detail/1?page=11&token=NzNhYzA4ZDBmM2U>

³ http://www.thecambodiaherald.com/images/upload/cambodia/NzNhYzA4ZDBmM2U/322_225/PreahVihearTemple.jpg?1361930937