



31 July 2014 – Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen and Madame with people during the celebration of the inauguration ceremony of the Stoeng Meanjei Flyovers, Phnom Penh.

Stoeng Meanjei Overpasses Inaugurated

(31 July 2014 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Local Financial and Human Resource

My wife and I are so happy to be able to join all of you in this inauguration ceremony of the Stoeng Meanjei overpasses, the third site in the city where we build overpasses to improve traffic. I am so pleased to have been here in a space of one year in between - on 26 November 2013 to review the construction and today for the inauguration.

I was here that time to put into official use parts of the overpasses for the demand of traffic and that were not hindering the remaining construction. At the time, there was news that I already ran out of the country. Many of the press people here could have remembered that Hun Sen was standing right here. Today, with all of the Buddhist monks, followers, Excellencies, Ladies and our compatriots, we put into official use this major achievement.

HE Pa Socheatvong, mayor of Phnom Penh, just made his report on progress of the construction, investment capital and some technical aspects of the project. I would like to take this opportune moment to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to efforts made by the Phnom Penh Municipality, the three Khans and Sangkats (districts and communes) – Khan Meanjei, Khan Chamkar Mon and Khan Tuol Kork as far as this overpasses project is concerned. I wish to express my sincere thank to people living in this area for their endurance on difficulties caused by the construction over the past more than two years. However, after this ceremony is coming to closing the normal and better traffic life will resume.

I wish to relay same message to people in places where are constructions going on. They have concern and put up with disturbance caused in relation

(Continued on page 2)

National Fish Day in Kompong Chhnang

(01 July 2014 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Increase in Fish and Prawn Farming

I am so glad to be here once again on the National Fish Day - 1 July that we celebrate every year. Last year, I missed the celebration because it fell on the election campaign period as I made a solemn promise that within the specified period of one month of the campaign, I would not make any statement. It is in this respect that last year we celebrated the day in Kompong Thom and HE Yim Chhay Ly had to represent me there. This year, nothing prevents me from joining all of you in celebrating the National Fish Day here in the

reservoir of Kdol, village of Kraing Kantrol, Peam commune in the district of Samaki Meanjei of Kompong Chhnang province. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be able to pay a visit to our people and Buddhist monks in the province of Kompong Chhnang.

I am so happy that we have celebrated so far this important event 12 years already, starting with the first event in the commune of Krang Yov, Kandal province. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, HE Ouk Rabun, in his report

(Continued on page 4)

2014/8 National Disability Strategic Plan

(03 July 2014 — Prepared Text and Unofficial Selection and Translation of Comments)

... I am delighted to attend the launch of the “**National Disability Strategic Plan 2014-2018 and the celebration of the 5th Anniversary of the Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**”. This event offers us an opportunity to understand latest disability-related developments and review the progress to date to identify work to be done and shortages for the cause of ensuring the basic rights of persons with disabilities, creating more opportunities for them, facilitating their participation in socio-economic development without barriers and discrimination, and enabling them to live on equal footing and equal rights in the society.

This event indeed highlights

the strong political will and commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia to protect and promote the rights of the persons with disabilities, especially the right to life, the right to special protection, the right to work and the right to full participation in socio-economic development. Overall, Cambodia has always paid special attention to the disability sector, therefore, great achievement in this sector. There has been improvement to the share of persons with disabilities in both public and private sector; allocation of social land concession to per-

(Continued on page 7)

In This Issue

- Stoeng Meanjei Flyovers , P-1
- National Fish Day, P-1
- National Disability Plan, P-1

(Continued from page 1)

to construction of roads or bridges. Especially in dry season, detour of traffics from the construction site send dusts into their homes. Please be patient as the area will be a better place to live after the construction is over.

I thank those people, especially in this construction place, for keeping up with ongoing disturbance day and night and being patient with problems arising from the project implementation. I thank the Cambodian expatriate company (OCIC) for such devoted investment. I have here the engineering team whom I met some of them last year. For this project, we do not have foreign engineers or technical assistants. We have built three overpasses already.

We use the financial resource jointly provided by the Municipality of Phnom Penh and a local company together with local technical assistance. The Phnom Penh Municipality provides the technical inspection. This has showed that Cambodia has a capacity to handle a rather high-level expertise building. We have taken challenges in accordance to our ability. Some has asked me about the Peace Building at the Council of Ministers if we had used any foreign architects or experts. I told them it is purely Cambodian from architectural design to financial resources. No foreign expertise involved in the building of this one.

Our ancestors built Angkor Wat and thousands of temples in the past, why are we not able to build such a building. It is true that we do not have the ability yet to build some sophisticated buildings. It was all because we went through the regime of Pol Pot that brought to deaths many of our knowledgeable people. We are rebuilding them. We will go on with construction projects for

eventual improvement of traffic flow in Phnom Penh. When I put into official use the first overpass at Kbal Thnal, and also later at the inauguration of the overpass 7 January, I said that while we have one built, there will be two, three and on. That we are putting the third overpass complex into official use, it is true that we will have the fourth one as is proposed by Phnom Penh Mayor.

As we have now put into use this overpass complex at the Stoeng Meanjei intersection, I am sure that traffic will be better. People will have better days and goods transportation jammed because of traffic will be things in the past. Let me ask our people living in the area to extend their understanding a little more that, for the inauguration ceremony, the authority has had to close down traffic for the time being.

Everything Starts from Empty City

Our situation has changed completely. We have different sorts of hardship and facilities. When we started building the country after the liberation on 7 January 1979, the city of Phnom Penh was one with homes without dwellers and roads with no traffics. We did not hear then traffic accident. In some place, one can settle down in the road for a week without fear of traffic accident because there was no car. People could claim a few houses. I came and took over the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs (currently Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cult). I oversaw the area along the Mekong River starting from the area before the Royal Palace.

We gave home to every family in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They were scared to occupy those homes alone. Please note that we did not have running water, electricity, school or hospital. Phnom Penh was a ghost city. The Phnom Penh city that I knew

was not the same and fearful.

As I returned to Phnom Penh city, about ten years in between when I was in 1970 and 1979 that I came back, it was unrecognizable. My wife and I met again on 24 February 1979 after the separation on 20 June 1977 when I took to the resistant movement for national liberation. With the elder son in her arms, we sat in front of the house and there were nothing in the street. Then I have only one son. Now, I have seventeen grandchildren. We then had to fetch water from the river for our consumption. There were just a few cars.

We had Volga, Lada and Moskvich model vehicles. We treated like a Roll Royce, Mercedes or BMW. Car model does not concern me as long as it brings me to my office and takes me home safely.

In-depth Development of Phnom Penh City

As of now, there are more than one million people living in Phnom Penh. Coupled with those coming in for short-term or long-term stay and those who pass by through the city in one day, the figure rises to about two millions. We have now about 74 new satellite cities the Phnom Penh city has stretched from formerly 300 square kilometers to almost 700 square Kilometers. The development goes not only horizontally but also vertically.

With the said number of population, we also have over 300,000 vehicles and over one million motorcycles constantly trafficking in Phnom Penh. They have created a difficult situation as far as traffic is concerned. We have more problems to deal with. Aside from insufficient roads and spaces, there is also this problem of abiding by no traffic law and drunk driving. While in the bathroom, I heard the news on TV "there was a car that ran into the street divider." The TV

news presenter then said only after hitting the concrete divider of the street that the driver seemed to have recollected himself from drunkenness.

Aside from lacking roads and spaces and issue of growing number of transport means, there is this incident of drivers respect no traffic rules and drunk driving. The issue does not seem to go away despite how much we have said. The efficiency seems to be low. As far as road accidents that happened at night, there is a high percentage that drunk driving is the cause. I do not mean the victim is a drunkard. I am appealing to our people to at least respect their own lives and those of others and refrain from drunk driving. Some have even suggested that those shops or restaurants should be fined for allowing drunkards to take t the traffic. Doing that would have many shops in trouble.

Phnom Penh City Bus

The other day HE Pa Socheatvong came to see me to seek my advice on city bus issue. I brought up this issue with him that there had been news that so and so company started bus service on a trial basis. People were happily welcome the news and service. Then the company ceased their trial and stopped. I have advised to establish the internal revenue office of public transports (IROPT). Now that IROPT is functional, it has imported some 43 buses. We cannot afford to let so and so company to just try and then leave us without a viable bus service. Now that HE Pa Socheatvong is 57 years old, he has three more years before his retirement. As this use has started from the former mayor HE Kep Chuktema, I think he could try to make this a success in his career.

From its side, the Royal Gov-
(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

ernment provides support for the Phnom Penh Municipality to import free tax passenger buses. However, let me make it clear here that the tax exemption provided is for passenger buses and not for anyone to do so for Mercedes, Lexus, etc. There is a reserved capital now. We have, if we need, to apply this method of using income from other sources as subsidy for the loss of the operation. We already do that for electricity, when the price of oil went high, so that people can pay a lower price for their energy consumption. We have applied this method to ensure stable prices for energy and water consumption. As for public bus service, if it operates at loss, we could complement with income from the management of the Central market, for example. However, I warn IROPT, because of my expressed support and possible subsidy, not to just report losses for that favor.

I told him already when he came to my house the other day that it has to be the city bus service's policy to provide free service for disabled and Buddhist monks. As far as students are concerned, with their student-IDs presented, and their school is along the bus route, they also can use the service free of charge. Doing that we will be able to relieve traffic as parents would otherwise take their children to school themselves with own transport mean. This also ensures safety in commuting too. This is calling for a creation of policy logbook. We must make it a successful story. We are now waiting for the arrival of the imported buses.

For Better Traffic Movement and Healthcare

Having instructed these policies, I hope that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would not overstate them to be contradictory to the market

economy principles. We have followed their advice allowing private company to take the lead. However, it proves to be ineffective and unsuccessful here. The bus service came and went, the city got worse with traffic jam. Well, now that we are willing to choose some state's income loss, we will allow people to benefit from their use of public service in commuting. As we will have the Takhmao bridge ready soon, with regard to the Phnom Penh Municipality policy for transport, we will be able to improve traffic jam caused by trucks entering the city at night as those heavy trucks will be diverted to the southern aisle of Phnom Penh via the Takhmao bridge. It will relieve traffic jams at night in Phnom Penh too.

HE Pa Socheatvong has just requested to turn the space under the overpasses into place for leisure. I would advice to deal with the sewage system first if the city would like to go on that path. Secondly, we transform the area into place for exercise. I approve the request. People in the area of Stoeng Meanjei do not have to travel to the riverfront for exercise. As the floor underneath the overpasses tiled, I warn people from occupying it as their permanent residences. The fact that we have here the presence of HE Jean-François Cautain, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Kingdom of Cambodia I would remind that the practice of permanent occupation of public place based on this slogan "winning right to occupy, one gains land, losing it one get cash" would not be allowed. I would seek HE Jean-François Cautain to be our witness. You may take photos as archive. If anything happen otherwise later, we could use the material.

I would recommend the sewage cover not as long as the bridge area. I am talking of a

couple of hundred meters on either side. I would like to see green grass. As it is going to be a place where people come to exercise, I am sure HE Pung Khieu Se understands, they would seek for the smell of flowers not sewage. As we have many foreign ambassadors here I may remind that there had been incident in Cambodia that people occupies public place in two days and claimed they had occupied the place since 1989 or 1990. It is not difficult to tell the difference. If they had lived in one place about five years, you would notice they could have planted lemongrass, parsley, bananas, mango, etc. I just wished those who come to Cambodia to work with us understand Khmer.

The Techno Flyover and Underground Roads

I am taking this opportune moment today to declare that I have approved the construction of the fourteen million USD overpass at the intersection where the Cambodian Institute of Technology stands. The Oversea Cambodia Investment Company (OCIC) will take up the task of build this overpass. The fourth overpass also comprises of underground pass. The intersection has had traffic congestion for a long time now. People in the area of Tuol Kork of Phnom Penh are having a hard time with it. We have to get one overpass at a time. Some said when we just built the first overpass that we had talked too much about it. I responded because it was our first one that we had a pride about it. If we were to have more than a dozen or so, we would have no need to talk about it. It would have been part of our daily life already.

I have notice the development in Shanghai, when I was there for a meeting, travelling was mostly on flyovers. The young generation of Cambodia would handle that in the future. I also

note that the construction engineer companies seem to be in good business. There are high demands for construction. We even lack labor in this field. We have now some 74 satellite cities – three in Khan Chamkar Mon, 12 in Khan Meanjei, 20 in Khan Po Senjei, 15 in Khan Russei Keo, two in Khan Dangkao and two in Khan Tuol Kork. Among them, some 386 buildings are between five to forty floors.

We now have problem with parking space too. Some may scold Hun Sen for the death of their kids who die of traffic accidents. Some in the commune of Kraing Yov, Kandal province, came to me asking for my compensation for the death of their pigs. I asked them what happened. They said the trucks ran over their pigs. I asked them where the dead pigs were and they said they already cooked them. I asked whose trucks ran over their pigs as I thought they may have problem with trucks from my bodyguards or hydrologic department. They said it was the truck of rice merchants. They said it did not matter anymore whose trucks they were. It was because you built us good roads that those trucks ran in high speed and over their pigs.

I just warn you not to blame me for making you able to afford cars, motorcycles, etc. and good roads make them lethal accidents. I am sure our people are not that sort. As I said already, there were no cars or motorbikes in this area. In Phnom Penh now, only 50% of the motorbikes and cars go into traffic at the same time, we have problem.

Flood Time Warnings

I would like to take this opportune moment to speak to our people living along the rivers of Mekong and Tonle Sap and other tributaries to prepare for the coming seasonal flooding.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 1)

highlighted progress and challenges in relation to fisheries sector in Cambodia. With pride, I appreciate every effort made by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as well as the Fisheries Administration in implementing reform after the dismantling of and returning fishing lots to people. We have also made stringent efforts to help people with fish culture. HE Ouk Rabun already pointed out about increasing number of fish culturing and breeding ponds. We even have come to the ability to release lobster babies into the natural system as well as in rice fields, in addition to lobster farming in ponds.

Water Getting Shallow, Less Fish but More People

Why do we celebrate the National Fish Day every year? Why do we have to raise fish at the same time? We have no other choice but to carry the two at the same time. As far as fish day is concerned we will not do it only on July 1 or in one place presided over by the Prime Minister. We must do it everywhere throughout the country. Our situation now is starkly different from that of 50 or 60 years ago. In those years, our natural water system was deep. That was good for more fish population and the number of people we had was small. As of the present time, we have come to a state that our natural water systems are getting shallow leading to less population of fish. Along with that, we have much more people to feed. That is the difference.

If we were to only depend on natural water systems – lakes or rivers, coupling with the fact that there are also increasing presence of illegal fishing and use of illegal fishing tools, we could not anticipate sufficient provision of fish for our booming population. These illegal

fishing activities are decreasing the number of fish in contrast to the growing human population. Fish consumption has been a long-standing people's source for protein intake. They consume a big amount of fish – either fresh, fermented in any forms or smoked, every year.

Fish Day on Any Day and Anywhere

We have come to challenges in both objective and subjective forms. Objectively, we need to draw a comparison of the present time to those of 30, 40 or 50 years before, when our natural water system were deep allowing for greater fish population. It is beyond our ability to manage and we cannot point finger at anyone when every year silt flown into the system and drops of inundated forest expedite shallow level of water. As for the reservoir of Kdol here, anyone of us could imagine how deep it was 30 years ago. Top soil and silt as well as leaves from trees and inundated forest all came into one place. People need top fertile soil for cultivation and doing that has led to more washing into the system.

Resting on top of one another, leaves from trees and inundated forest also create a situation of higher level of oxygen-consumed materials in the water that become residues. This causes lakes to be shallower too. Subjectively, when some individuals claimed land in the fishing lots, it creates challenging problems in both the Tonle Sap area and inundated forest. This is calling for people to be aware of their action and understand our effort to resolve this issue. Illegal fishing and using illegal tools to fish also contributes majorly for the loss of fish resource.

The objective aspect of the problem would require a great resource to deal with restoring rivers and lakes to its previous levels. In my native village, there used to be many lakes.

Now they are there no more. They have become people's dry season rice fields. Take for instance this reservoir, if measure are not taken for its protection, the dry season rice area on its rim would encroach. However, we must deal with subjective action regarding land claiming in fishing lots and illegal fishing, for instance. From the time of Minister Chhea Song to HE Chan Sarun and now Minister Ouk Rabun, agriculture, fisheries and forestry has made a long march and expanded gradually its scope of action. (To replace those lost in the natural system through objective and subjective factors) we must promote further farming of fish, lobsters, crab, frog, etc. anywhere possible.

Today, here, we release one million baby fishes and 100,000 baby lobsters. I hope people in this area would not catch them now. We should keep them together. We must wait for the one million baby fish to grow fully to give birth to more. The same is true for baby lobsters. We need to carry out this task together to increase fish and lobster population to couple with fish availability in the natural systems of the Tonle Sap lake, the Mekong River, etc. to meet our people's demand for protein. This has called for our celebration of the July 1 Fish Day. To expand ability to feed we need to do this on any day and anywhere.

I would take this opportunity once again to express my sincere appreciation and thanks for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as well as the Fisheries Administration for their collaborative efforts in managing and promoting fish farming of all sorts to serve the need for protein intake of our people. I also thank the sub-national authority where there are lakes and water reservoirs of any sort for their commitment and effort to take care of

them.

Seven Suggestions

I would like to take this opportune moment to seek your cooperation on certain points. Along with efforts made by local authorities, we should also collaborate for the sake of this common cause. As I said earlier on July 1, 2012 at the commune of Rokar Khnor, Kroj Chmar district of Kompong Cham province, I wish to recall seven suggestions I made then:

Firstly, *please do not use illegal fishing tools*. This has always happened. I noticed actions taken by authorities to combat this sort of violation. Frankly, I do not wish to see the police, local authority, military police and other competent forces to cause trouble to people in their illegal fishing. In order for such actions not to take place, I am calling our people to refrain themselves from using illegal fishing tools. I am begging you, not once but always, to use no such tools, such as to electrocute fish, as it would not only cause death to fish but also to human.

Secondly, *please do not fish in fish spawning season*. We are now in the spawning season, when fishing of all sorts is not allowed. This is not a new practice. It was here since the French colonial time. Fishing one in the spawning season, we also killed thousands of their babies. If we leave them alive, we will catch more of them when the cool breeze comes from the north. It would not be late even we wait until next year because for one mother fish we will get from four to five thousand of baby fishes. Well, according to expert, a mother fish of Chhpin (*hypsibarbus lagleri*) that weighs a Kilogram could spawn half-a-million baby fishes. The longer we leave them in the water the more fish we could anticipate from them.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Thirdly, *please do not clear inundated forest and replant them.* I wish to appeal in this point to our people living along the rivers of Tonle Sap, Mekong, Bassac as well as along the sea coast that clearing inundated forest, where fishes are spawning and taking shelter, would be disastrous for our country. Please do not violate or destroy them. We remove them, fish would not have place for reproduction. Please also help replant inundated forest in both fresh water and in coastal area.

Fourthly, *please help protect preserved fisheries areas.* You may need to inform about people or officials that are abusing the law in relation to the preservation of fisheries areas. The report of HE Ouk Rabun, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries already hit this point. Our people are also aware, am sure, of the final fishing lots reform on March 8, 2012, after the first phase reform in 2000 that chopped out 56% of the fishing lots for people. I have utilized what I called my definite measures on March 8, 2012, to eliminate fishing lots created by the Royal Decree of Preah Baat Sisowath in 1908, from 104 years ago, that divided the fishing areas into private management lots for control by fishing merchants.

Chopping out, eliminating boundary and returning the fishing areas to the community and people to conduct legal fishing activities has brought our people so much benefits. There used to be conflicts between fishing lots owners and/or managers with individual fishermen. Those who earned the right to manage and control the lots would prevent people from crossing their area either by rowing or machined boats. Some had gone extra length to arrest people who row or fish in their areas. We decided,

against those facts, to eliminate the fishing lots. However, we still keep some 97,500 hectares or 10.23% of the whole fishing area as preserved fisheries location.

May I advise the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Fisheries Administration, in cooperation with concerned ministries and sub-national level institutions, to advance on mounting boundary poles to define location of preservation and build solid guarding tower. They must take effective actions to take care of preserved area of fisheries by creating a regular mechanism to monitor the area. As of now, people are not clear as to where the boundary of the preserved location starts and stops.

At the same time, I am asking for consideration and attention paid to issue of siltation in the fisheries preserved area. As the news goes, we have this problem of sediment in one of the preserved location in Battambang province. We also had incident that some 90 tons of fishes died in Kompong Thom province. We must find a solution for sediment in the Tonle Chhmar area, in particular, and for the whole fisheries preserved area too.

Fifthly, *please do not use rivers/streams for worthless purpose.* There have been actions so far to make worthless use of rivers/streams in contrary to family-based activities. Filling rivers/streams for growing lotus or building light construction of any sorts are unconstructive causes to our efforts too. Growing lotus could leave sediment that leads to shallower lake too.

Sixthly, *there should not be conflict between fishermen and dry-season rice farmers and boundary disputes among communes, districts and provinces.* Please note the fact that people from other place or commune can fish too. Let us

live. Fishermen wish to drain out water from the reservoir to catch fish while those dry season rice farmers need to preserve water for their rice. This happened in Kompong Chhnang and in Kandal province. They sought my help.

Seventhly, *please join together to promote July-1 National Fish Day.* It is important that we have to promote fish farming and culture, while taking care of large fish species and other endangered ones. We have done quite a great deal in this front as thousands upon thousands of baby fishes and lobsters, and other aquatic animals are bred and given to people for their household farming and released into the natural water system.

I seem to have spoken too much. By the way, as it is now time for our people to start with cultivation, I am pleased to notice that where there is sufficient water, green rice either from sowing or transplanting is in sight. In just weeks, we have grown rice on over 800,000 hectares over planned 2.4 million hectares of rainy season rice. While promoting cultivation, I would urge your attention on the weather condition as there has a prediction that there would be a short dry period in this rainy season. People should take care of their rice field levees.

Cambodian Politics - Two Possible Developments

Yesterday I brought it up straightforward with the Foreign Minister of Japan that Cambodia would have two developments. Firstly, *the CNRP will join the National Assembly's process through a rational negotiation.* In that case, they should not act themselves as those of the mafia to press for outcome. That is the best possible development and the door is still open for negotiation. However, they should not bring up this issue of two-

third majority. I told the Foreign Minister of Japan that going for a two-third majority paradigm is tantamount to ending democracy in Cambodia. A two-third majority formerly specified in the Constitution had brought about stalemate in the formation of the Royal Government.

Now, to go for a two-third majority decision in the establishment of the National Election Committee, as they proposed, any obstruction (to the elections) would halt the process of democracy in Cambodia. I am making it clear here that I will not accept your push for two-third majority. There should just be conciliation among political parties with seats in the National Assembly. There could be a consensus already. However, we cannot bring an agreement by political parties in the National Assembly's permanent commission for HM the King's attention. There must be a vote by the National Assembly. It has to be an absolute majority.

They make it a condition that they will not join the process if they do not get the two-third majority formula. Nothing we can do to that. Every time they do not get what they wanted, they threaten with demonstration. I have warned other parties not to stage any counter protest. Now I cannot (because other sides also demand for their right to express their will). It is the people's will to have us continuing to lead the country. They cried out it is the people's will they do not join the National Assembly.

We also can say it is the people's will for us to continue leadership of the country. Why only you have people's mandate? We have more voters. You should listen to our voice too. They call themselves elected candidates for the National Assembly. Does this not mean that they have recog-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

nized it? They recognized the electoral results, as we can see it, but they do not join the National Assembly.

As for the establishment of a TV station, I asked them to write a letter requesting for it. They said they would not do that. If ever they create a TV station, they will have to do it independently and not under the Press Law. It is up to you. You may go and set up a state in the moon. Every TV works under the law set out by the Ministry of Information. We allow no secession in Cambodia. Samdech Heng Samrin made it clear that the door is open for negotiation based on what (the two sides have) agreed upon. We would not accept your backtracking and swapping negotiators, while new subjects brought in.

I do not seem to have concern anymore now. As I said in 2003 to Nhek Bunchhay that there is this soldiers-to-soldier term "if it is too difficult, no need to talk to." My concern now focuses on people's agricultural cultivation, national security, maintaining macro-economy, making sure there is money for monthly salary of the armed forces, renovation of roads, water canals, etc. Guarantee that thing goes the normal way it should. They want to amend the Constitution, but they do not join the National Assembly. In 2011 or 2012, when the National Assembly needed to adopt the budget law, their members resigned to leave the National Assembly short of quorum.

Secondly, *everything goes the normal way they should until the next elections in 2018*. There is nothing else. I told the Japanese (Foreign Minister) that whether there will or will not be foreign assistance, the CPP-led Royal Government of Cambodia will continue its reform. We may have some reforms in relation to registra-

tion deadline. If you do not join us, we will still go with the reform. For example, according to the current law on elections, the specified period reserved for sorting out electoral complaint is short. We may make it longer. The procedure of registration is also something we can change in the electoral law. When we do not have a new law, the current law will continue to be in place. They do not join the National Assembly to get things done but pressure their will with threat.

Moving the date set for the general elections to a few months earlier is what we can do without having to alter the Constitution. We just need to amend the election law. The change of the electoral date from July to February or March, for example, can be done. In 2018, it will be up to them to join or not to join the election. There will be many political parties. There is one now led by Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranaridh that is ready to contest. Today we are here to release baby fishes and lobsters, not for the above concerns. Have the governors reviewed the status of the salary for officials, armed forces in the province? As of now, we do not have a forty-day month anymore. I would urge all ministers to look after this issue. We cannot afford to neglect it at all.

It is my conviction that our main concern rests mainly on whether we are going to have good crops, the production lines go well, any fund for roads renovation, water canals, etc. Some even bloated that we (the Royal Government) are running out of cash since April. I just wanted to brief them that Cambodia never begs foreign assistance to pay staff salary. We have never done that in our existence. There would be no country to give such money. Some, calling themselves independent

(Continued from page 3)

According to Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology, flash and seasonal flooding is coming for there have been so much rain in upper Mekong area – Nam Mun, Nam Chhit, Surin, Buriram, Sisaket, Mohanakor, etc. As of this morning, the level of water in the Mekong at the Stoeng Treng station is 10 meters while the warning level is 10.7 meters. The forecast for tomorrow is it will reach 10.65 meters, and the day after tomorrow, it would reach 10.85 meters and 21.95 meters for the day after.

The local authorities along the flood-affected areas must be prepared to evacuate people in case of necessity. As we have here HE Nhem Vanda, First Vice President of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), my instruction is to remind the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology to issue a warning for people on flood level in a number of places such as the Sen river of Kompong Thom, and various other tributaries. HM the King and Samdech the Queen Mother have paid great attention to this issue. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the first appeal is for our people to take own

analysts, figure out that the Cambodian economy will weaken. Well, there is this world cup soccer to watch. There is nothing abnormal about it. Last night was the match between France and Nigeria. Well, there is no contradiction between they do not join the National Assembly and follow the world cup event.

Well it is their rights to say whatever they want to but today I also have something to respond. It is my right too. If you join the National Assembly, I am also happy for you. If you do not join the National Assembly, I set sail for

precautionary measures with regard to the weather in addition to the news people get from radio and TV stations.

Let us all do everything to evade eventual dangers and accidents. With the media nowadays, we can provide them with so much information in a timely manner. As many have their Facebook and/or Twitter accounts, information can also reach them and their family fast...☐

have new laws to replace it. In that case no need to talk much for the elections in 2018. It will happen on the fourth week of July.

Taking Imperative Measures to Protect Children

I also wish to bring up this issue here with MSAVYR concerning the punishments that occurred frequently lately on children. In Banteay Mean-jei province, a Buddhist poured boiled water over a nine-year old kid as a form of punishment. Some asked to possess children from the orphanages to be part of their families. Under their cares, they could not go to school or worked as coolies. There have been various issues concerned. I see this as a form of exploitation and it must be prevented from happening.

I am calling for immediate action and care provided for children in orphanages as we have almost all provincial governors present here. If our ability to provide care could not reach a broader side, I would seek firm protection in the orphanages. It was in such concern that we had formulated a law to prevent transnational adoption. Even though it is at national adoption level, We need to take preventive measure. Some may have adopted children for future crimes like sexual misconduct or their organs access. It is a wild and complicated world...☐

(Continued from page 1)

sons with disabilities for housing construction and family-based farming; provision of public education, healthcare, physical rehabilitation service and vocational training; development of Braille and sign language; construction of wheelchair ramps for buildings, especially the establishment of national-level and institutional-level mechanisms, such as the National Disability Action Council and the Disability Fund, to coordinate and promote disability work.

The *National Disability Strategic Plan 2014-2018* is the necessary foundation and backbone for improving the living standard and promoting the rights of the persons with disabilities in Cambodia which is a major contribution to the enforcement of the law on protection and promotion of the rights of the persons with disabilities, the implementation of the convention on the Asia and Pacific Decade of Person with Disabilities 2013-2022, *the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real"* and the **Rectangular Strategy – Phase III** of the Royal Government of Cambodia. In sum, the national disability strategic plan consists of ten goals viz. poverty reduction for persons of disabilities; provision of equal and quality and equitable healthcare, including occupational, physical and mental rehabilitation; provision of judicial service; elimination of discrimination, mistreatment and exploitation; provision of education; their freedom to expression and access to information; their participation in politics and development; facilitation of their use of public transport and communication means; assurance of gender equity and empowerment of women and children; and strengthening and expansion of international cooperation.

Indeed, the National Disability Strategic Plan 2014-2018 out-

lines vision to enhance life quality of persons with disabilities and their families and enable them to participate on equal footing in a society which promotes rights and dignity, justice services and independent living; is free from torturing, mistreatment, exploitation and violence; provides emergency relief assistance when needed; and incorporates disability into all sectoral development. Overall, through this vision, we are fully aware that persons with disabilities must receive special attention and treatment since their physical and mental capacities are different from normal people. Persons and children with disabilities must be included in all development activities. We must also change social attitude toward and views on persons with disabilities by acknowledging their actions and take into account their voice to promote inclusive socio-economic development.

I am strongly convinced that this national disability strategic plan is a dynamic policy tool helping address disability issues. In addition, this work requires regular monitoring, evaluation and improvement to respond to the constantly evolving circumstance. In this spirit, I strongly believe that we will implement this national disability strategic plan successfully and effectively to move toward a barrier-free society which provides opportunities to persons with disabilities.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to commend highly the Disability Action Council, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, related ministries/institutions, land authorities, development partners, NGOs and persons with disabilities for contributing to the preparation of this historic strategy. I also commend highly the achievement as well as pro-

grams to date aimed to prevent disabilities such as vaccination, disability prevention treatment, medical treatment, physical therapy, physical rehabilitation, elimination of polio from birth, mine clearance, implementation and dissemination of the Law on Land Traffic, suppression of violent acts and integration of persons with disabilities into the society. These achievements highlight our concerted effort to prevent disabilities and support and encourage persons with disabilities aimed to restore their occupational capacity and incorporate disabilities into all socio-economic activities to ensure their full contribution to the society.

In general, disability exists in all countries and is the global concern that must be addressed. Nowadays, there are around one billion persons with disabilities in the world, amongst them, 200 million are facing hardships. In particular, there are around 650 million persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, which is equivalent to 15% of the regional population, requiring immediate response. There is a projection that disabilities will become a grave concern in the coming years due to the global increase in disabilities caused by chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart attack, stroke and so on. This requires our attention on seeking immediate response including the enhancement of social welfare, physical and mental rehabilitation, vaccination, increase in public awareness on the causes of disabilities etc. In addition, we must keep in mind that Cambodians are vulnerable to disabilities, due to landmines and UXOs, traffic accidents, occupational accidents and diseases.

Indeed, we have continuously striven to enhance the welfare of Cambodians with disabilities. Moreover, in addressing disabilities, Cambodia ratified

the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities on December 20, 2012 which later came into force on January 19, 2013. Besides, we are proud that the Kingdom of Cambodia was the first member state of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) that adopted the **Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific 2013-2022** that provides the first set of regionally agreed disability-inclusive development goals and acts as a roadmap for enhancing the living standard and promoting the rights of around 650 million persons with disabilities in the Asia Pacific and put in into implementation on May 29, 2013. Furthermore, Cambodia has also ratified several conventions including the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction, the implementation of **Biwako** Decade Framework for Action and **Biwako** Plus Five. In sum, Cambodia has been actively contributed to the international community's effort to address challenges related to disability issues and persons with disabilities.

As a result of this commitment, governmental ministries/institutions employed 2,460 persons with disabilities as of 2013. In addition, persons with disabilities have been given priority in the selection of beneficiaries of social land concession by providing them lands for housing construction and family-based farming at Taken Koh Sla Center, 317 Development Area for Persons with Disabilities in Kulen, Siem Reap and Phnom Chhat, Banteay Meanchey along the provision of occupational rehabilitation service at their communities, physical treatment

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

and rehabilitation, vocational training and development of Braille and sign language that have been incorporated into academic curriculum and media to keep persons with disabilities updated with latest news. Furthermore, children with disabilities also have access to education without discrimination; wheelchair ramps have been built in a number of educational establishments; and deaf and blind children living in designated centers and schools will receive support till they have finished higher education ... I would like to provide some recommendations ... as follows:

First, all ministries/institutions and authorities at all levels must start developing detailed an action-plan and prioritize specific disability-related measures to be included in their respective work plans to help strengthen and expand disability prevention measures and create more opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Second, ministerial/institutional disability action working groups and capital/provincial disability action councils are obligated to coordinate information exchange and integrate the **National Strategic Plan on Disability 2014-2018** into policy programs of respective ministries and institutions. In parallel, there must be regular progress report, mid-term and final review of the implementation of the **National Strategic Plan on Disability 2014-2018** to ensure the enhanced livelihoods of persons with disabilities.

Third, ministries/institutions must benchmark their existing policies and strategies against the national strategic plan on disability to measure progress, identify work to be done and align with the national strategic plan on disability. All ministries/institutions and stake-

holders must submit annual progress report on disability work to the disability action council for consolidation.

Fourth, promoting the preparation of regulations for implementing the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including Sub-decrees, inter-ministerial decision/Prakas and ministerial Prakas to ensure timely and effective implementation of the aforesaid law. In this regard, I believe the law and its related regulations will contribute to transforming the nature of the service for persons with disabilities from previously considered humanitarian work to a systematic social insurance scheme, which, in turn, can help strengthen their ownership spirit and promote the capabilities of persons with disabilities and their integration into the society.

Fifth, I wish to remind ministries/institutions and the private sector to comply with the requirement of recruiting persons with disabilities at least 2% of the total recruitment for governmental ministries/institutions and at least 1% for the private sector within three years. In this regard, the Disability Action Council must further promote the implementation of the quota of persons with disabilities in the private sector and regular update the share of persons with disabilities in both public and private sector. Ministries/institutions and legal entities must continue implementing and coordinating this work to ensure persons with disabilities can fully participate in all ministries/institutions and organizations.

With connection to the above spirit, I would like to appeal to Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives from ministries/institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, NGOs, and pri-

ivate sector to continue your attention on the disability issues, the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and incorporation of disability into all levels of development work to build an inclusive society and make the right real. Besides, looking ahead, we have to keep in mind that the implementation of **National Strategic Plan on Disability 2014-2018** requires program-based approach, strategic coordination and prioritization of disability actions. Therefore, the Disability Action Council must develop programs and strategic coordination mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of the **National Strategic Plan on Disability 2014-2018** ...■

Selected Extempore Comments

Issue of 2% Obligatory Recruitment of Disables in Public Work

As far as this matter of disables recruited for work in public institutions, I would urge the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (MSAVYR) to discuss with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) on this. We have 190,000 government employees and 110,000 of them are teachers. (With regard to recruiting 2% of their staff from disables and 1% in private workplace) 2% of the 110,000 number is worth re-considering. I urge the MSAVRY to bring this issue up with MEYS. Imagine if some disables have had to stand teaching. For other job functions, they would find something to fit them. They have their problems. One of my friends got amputated and is standing teaching with one leg. We do not want to see this.

So far, we have already treated it as exceptional for the Ministry of Royal Palace. Please work out between the two ministries. We cannot afford to give a figure but we could not

realize it. In some schools, disable people have been recruited to teach Braille of course. However, it was mainly for the blind and deaf. We should think about this matter more seriously. Having said that does not mean that every ministry could ask to be relieved. We also do not want unrealistic figure. What I am talking today is more of a concern that I have for them to work as teachers. MEYS also has a small office staff. I would ask specifically, how many percent would MEYS go for providing jobs for disables?

Concerning the Release of Thai Veera Somkwamkid

I do not wish to talk about politics today. I talked a lot already last week. However, there have been comments by radios and TVs that the release of Veera is a trading move for so and so number of Cambodian (illegal immigrants). There was no trading and the Thai side had it correctly – it was not a trading matter. From the Cambodian side, we released Veera and he was already in Bangkok. Some comments in the media could be annoying. The release is unconditional, I reaffirm. There would not be any condition for the release.

No New Laws, Existing Ones Are Good

I have said this in Kompong Chhnang. I do not wish to reiterate. However, there have been some comments about legitimacy of Cambodia. Where does it lie? It lies in the fact that there is approval from HM the King. The case of Thailand has proved it. With approval of HM the King of Thailand, General Prayuth Chan O Cha can do the job of running the country. I just wish to stress that as long as there are no new laws to replace, everything will go according to the existing laws. Everything will be as they are. With regard to the election law, if we do not

(Continued on page 6)