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April 11, 2002 (Selected Comments, Unofficial Translation)
**Intensive Cultivation, Land Management, Logging Ban,
Areas of Attention in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**



On April 22, 2002, taking part in the inaugural ceremony of the Temple of Ampil Saang and other achievements in the commune of Leaybo, Tramkak district, Takeo province, Samdech Hun Sen was cordially welcomed by people in the local community.

... We have to have a method in organizing and distributing the (rice) seed of a new species to the local areas so that we can swap later from using low-yield traditional rice seeds to high-yield seeds.

I would like to offer my sincere welcome to the new rice seeds/species that are being discovered. Just now HE Chan Sarun mentioned in his report that we have found a new rice species that is named 'Sen Pidod.'

I hope that Sen Pidod would increase its quantity from the current one ton to more and firstly it should serve the local market before export to foreign market is possible.

We also have to apply change in our way of producing from natural to goods-driven way.

... As land is a hot issue and is

an important element in the reform process with a nature of revolution, I would like to take this opportunity to make a few comments.

As the number of population increases there also needs to have more land for production. Extensive cultivation would bring about environmental degradation.

Our strategy here should aim at intensive farming. Take for example in Cambodia our pattern of thought is that for a family of five, they have to have at least five hectares of land for agricultural production.

This would lead to the clearance for more land, the result of which is the destroyed forest. Why? For the ten million people that we now have, we

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April 04, 2002 (Unofficial Translation)

**The 1.9 Kilometer Koh Kong Bridge — The Longest Bridge
So Far in Cambodia**

Today I have a great honor and pleasure to participate officially with HE Deputy Premier of Thailand Chavalit Yungchayut and the high-level delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand, and its Ambassador, in this auspicious inauguration of the Koh Kong Bridge.

The bridge runs over the channel of Koh Pao (Dangtung), which links O Smach district of Koh Kong to Mundul

Seima district heading to the border with Thailand. It is built by BOT investment system by Duty Free Shop Co. Ltd of Oknha Li Yong Pat.

The Koh Kong Bridge is the longest so far in Cambodia with the total length of 1.9 kilometers. It is the first bridge that runs over the sea channel and that is invested by the local and private company.

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April 22, 2002 (Selected Comments, Unofficial Translation)

When Peace Prevails, Development is Attained...

Inaugurating the Temple of Wat Ampil Saang, Tramkok District, Takeo

... I have listened carefully to the report of HE Kep Chutema, Governor of Takeo, in relation to this achievement. In fact the building has been in existence for a period of 100 years as of 2002. It was first built in 1902 and has evolved through so many events.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and my own behalf, may I take this occasion to express my sincere thanks to all those involved in the reconstruction of this temple after being ruined completely under the Pol Pot's genocide regime.

Having taken shape again, after 27 years, this temple testifies our pride as we have survived empty-handed. If we were to look back in the period of 27 years, since April 17, 1975, our people were in disastrous situation after Pol Pot

came to power.

City dwellers were evacuated to live in hardships causing death day after day. The Buddhist monks were disrobed and/or killed, while Buddhist temples were destroyed.

This was no exception to Wat Ampil Saang in which there

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have to have three million hectares of land for cultivation.

When our population reaches 20 millions, we should think of six millions hectares of land for cultivation as well. This means we have to clear three million more hectares. This would not be an appropriate and long-lasting strategy at all.

Therefore, we have to resort to intensive cultivation techniques. If previously one hectare of land is cultivated for five people, we now have to implement new techniques in form of supply of water, new rice species and intensive culture so that twice-a-year cultivation is possible with increment in yield as well.

If we were to depend only on extensive culture, we then would clear lots of forest and bring damage to the environment. Though new rice species is provided, water supply is still a decisive factor in rice cultivation. We could say in other words that water is key.

According to studies in many areas, I think that between now and 2015, we still have the ability to perform intensive cultivation on existing cultivating areas. But, due to our monotonous habit and way of working, extensive culture is seen widely practiced.

Another point I wish to mention here is that I would instruct the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as well as concerned institutions to come up with a clear and certain projection of land management, because it is a prime issue.

In absence of such a projection, in almost every where

there are practices of new land clearances, deforestation for farming.

So it is very important to draft out such land indication as to which part of the country could be used for expansion of cultivable land and which part should be left for forest conservation.

So far the Ministry of Agriculture has made great efforts to trim out from the concession area some arable land for cultivation. But we have to have a clear mapping of which area that our people could clear for

I wish to reiterate the Royal Government's absolute and committed prevention of state land from being grabbed by those powerful and resourceful people... If you were to pay no attention to this issue of land, a peasant revolution could be predictable... Let us now think after the fall of the Pol Pot regime, who possesses more land than whom? Now some people have hundreds or thousands of hectares. This is injustice...

cultivation purpose so that widespread and massive clearance of land could be prevented.

I wish to see this is clearly mapped out in each and every province – which part of land could be allowed for cultivation purpose or which part could be a reservation. I have also instructed to reserve certain area of land for investment and for future growth of population.

In some villages, where there are 100 families in 2002, but in 2003 the figure would rise to 103 or 105 families because of newly married couples. It is our people's tradition and habit that after getting married, the couple would be commencing their living in separation from

parental family, the practice in which parental family would provide them with land for cultivation as well as housing. So we have to see this in advance.

One other point that I wish to reiterate is the absolute and committed prevention of state land from being grabbed by those powerful and resourceful people. If we were to take no precaution, this disease would take a turn despite it has gone quiet for a while.

A few days ago in Memot of Kompong Cham, a relative of mine told me he has about 3000 hectares of land. I pondered in my head 'why did not I know of his parents inheriting him with so many hectares of land?' I told him in return that those lands are in the area of which I have instructed to give out to the people. Incident of similar pattern in Ratanakiri has just been resolved.

The local commune heads signed in repetitive recognition of ownership of the same land. This has brought about claims of ownership. So what to do is to buy the land from the buyers and return them to the local people.

I wish to give a prime warning, and I have said it once in 1999 in a seminar on food security at the Chamkar Doung Agricultural University. If you were to pay no attention to this issue of land, a peasant revolution could be predictable. Please do not get confused in this situation. Let's

see what is going on in Zimbabwe.

Land that is being infringed upon by the whites has now brought about serious conflict with the aborigines. We were to have the same problem, if we continue to act in collusion in land speculation.

This is a factor that brings about emigrants from the local community because they could not survive with the acts of land encroachment. I am to offer no support to the actions. Let us now think after the fall of the Pol Pot regime, who possesses more land than whom? Now some people have hundreds or thousands of hectares. This is injustice.

The land and fishing lot reform policy has already been implemented so I do not think the people would stage a revolution against the Royal Government but if there were to be it would be against those of you encroaching lands in those areas. This is an important issue because everyone would have nothing else to say or do if land were to have grabbed. The remaining option is to stage a revolution. If we were to improve our management of land, everywhere, there are still lands for people. The fact that there has been no more is because of the speculation.

Let me recall of the incident of Samlot in the 1950s. It was happening because In Tam lied to the people that the land would be taken for use to bring in development but in fact given to members of parliament and his followers. When our farmers in Samlot protested, serious problem took place. So we have to learn from this experience. As this is an important issue the

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Royal Government of Cambodia is adhering to a strict policy of reserve and demine land for the people for use both in cultivation and in settlement. I hope you our officials understand that as a Governor you would not want to work only for three or four years and lose your face or your career in the area.

Aside from land, logging is also an issue that deserve attention and as we approach the 2003 national elections, special attention has to be given in its regard. Why? As usual when the whole country is busy with the electoral campaign, forest crimes take place all the time. As the Royal Government's term has only one and a-half-year to go, I would hold the issue steadily and would not retreat at all. Forest reform has to continue. Negotiations have to continue. For those who could not take our terms, we have to take the forest concessions back.

After taking them back they would not be given to no one else but to be registered as protected forest under HE Minister Mok Mareth's environment control. It is the national resources, which have been left by our ancestors for thousands of years. We must not let them be devastated in such a short time.

... I have declared already that I would trade my political life in the forest reform issue. As in February 1999, some people could not imagine believing we could shut down the forest and logging anarchy at all. But now we have done so with great success, despite there still are few small illegal logging. As I have declared we are to use all means to protect our forest... ■

April 08, 2002 (Selected and Unofficial Translation)

If Re-elected, Previously Asphalted Roads Would Be Re-Asphalted Completely
Groundbreaking of Bridge Prek Te and Bridge Prek Chlong in Kratie District, Kratie Province

... Today I have a great pleasure for being able to return to Kratie province once again after my trip to Chlong to observe the groundbreaking of three bridges and a number of roads, and again in Boh Leav in September the previous year to bring in emergency relief for flood victims.

Together with all of you here today we will celebrate two important events. Firstly, we will celebrate the groundbreaking of Spien (bridge) Prek Te of 150 meters in Boh Leav commune in Kratie district and Spien Prek Chlong of 120 meters in Chlong district. Secondly, we will escort the remains of my venerable instructor Kim Chreng from his old to his new resting place.

... I remember that I used to swim across Prek Chlong twice in 1970. Firstly I swam across the part in Prek Anhchanh of Snuol district on my way to 5000 mountains. Secondly, I swam across the canal at night on the same day when the bridge at Prek Chlong was bombed to pieces.

This remembrance makes me determined to build the bridges of Prek Te and Prek Chlong. Cambodia is a country with a great number of lakes and canals and the omission of which would cause problems in water current and watery resources. So the best option that remains is to build bridges in replacement of ferriboats.

... Once we finished the construction of the Prek Te Bridge and the Prek Chlong Bridge, the Kratie town would be well connected to Chlong, and from Chlong to Kroch Chmar dis-

trict of Kompong Cham during the rainy season, and all the way to Tonle Bet in the dry season. It is a sort of financial management and allocation skill of the current Royal Government in solving issues of communications and transportation, as they have been defined to be the most important factors for the economic growth and poverty reduction.

Though I used to mention of frog-leap strategy, the distance that the frog has taken so far has been quite a distance. I am sure that the economists would agree with me that if infrastructure, especially roads and bridges, were not in place, people would not be liberated from poverty and difficulties at all.

As HE Governor Loy Sophat mentioned in his report that each individual spent Riel 760,000 per year for taking ferry across the canals. This amount of money is about US \$ 200.

... I have no belief at all that a country could save its people from hardship by only 25 Kg of rice when they faced with flood situation. Therefore the strategy that focuses on the construction of roads and bridges is but a locomotive of the economic growth.

I think the financial distribution has been rightly targeted. Of course investment would bring out something, but we have to prioritize what should be first to achieve and what should come later.

Take for example if HE Governor requests for his office building, his request would be turned down as we have to

think first of relieving the difficulties of our people due to the absence of roads and bridges.

... The district of Chlong would then be the focal point of three angles. First, there is a road that links Kratie to Chlong. Second, there is another road that links from Kroch Chmar to Chlong. The third road is also linking Kratie to Tambe.

I have nurtured my wish to asphalt the road 73 that is connected to the national road 7. But as for when this idea could be realized we have to wait and see. My strategy and vision is that if I were to be re-elected in the next election I would try to have all the asphalted roads under the Sangkum Reasnyum led by HM the King before 1970 to be re-asphalted by 2005...

I may have said something that goes beyond my current term of leadership because the election could be taking place in July 2003. So if our people were to wish for roads and bridges, their votes would be a determinative factor.

... The road from Piem Te to the round-about and from there to Kratie town is about 6.5 kilometers. If we were to have bitumen road, it would be a great chance as this region has also been included in the tourist plan of the country.

This road would have to be built as it has been placed in the package of strategic objectives already. Once we have this bridge finished, the road from Kratie to Stoengtrem and from Stoengtrem to the

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border with Laos would commence for the Chinese experts have been doing a feasibility study in great speed.

As for the other side of the river, Prek Prosop, I heard that there would need about five more bridges. I think we should leave this request at HE Yim Chaily and Ngy Chanphal's hands for the moment for continuing negotiation in search of financing. As on that side there has connection with France and the Asian Development Bank, the negotiation continues as we also have no money left.

The people in Kratie would soon have three options in their trips to Phnom Penh.

First they could travel from Kratie town to Chlong district and from there to Tambe, to Tbong Khmum of Kompong Cham and take the Kizuna Bridge to Phnom Penh.

Second they could travel from Kratie to Snuol, to Memot and Tbong Khmum of Kompong Cham and take the Kizuna Bridge to Phnom Penh.

Third they may also travel by water in the Mekong. There would also be a fourth option if we were to have an airport built in Kratie.

... As for the Prek Te and Prek Chlong Bridges we would have to equip with solar energized electricity and I wish to see our people travel to and from day and night.

I also approve a request to have a fountain with Naga statue built on the side of the provincial headquarter. May I request that youngsters

enjoy the place in peace without causing any fights. I have seen reports of youngsters putting up fights or racing their motor bikes in high speed...

I would warn the Governors of the province, the district, police heads and military chiefs that they should leave their positions if they take no notice of what these youngsters have done. Why should they be afraid of them? If Hun Sen's nephew could be jailed why should you be afraid of those kids for being affiliated with this or that person? As for the ferry service before the bridge is completed, General Kong Ieng provides the service for free.

... I have a good remembrance of the Venerable Kim Chreng's sympathy that he had reserved for me during the five-year period of my life that I stayed with him away from home. He then had no position in the Neakavoan pagoda.

He had offered an advice, which I remember very well, to another monk from the residence next to his that "if one wants to be trusted, one has to perform well enough to the admiration of those who provide trust."

It is special for me to have learned that one could not force anyone else to believe that one is like this or that while one did not perform well up to the confidence of others.

I was very sorry that I was not able to be present when he felt very ill because it was the time when the Khmer Rouge opened assaults in Battambang, Sisophon and other places. Venerable Kim Chreng, my mentor, was brought by helicopter to

April 10, 2002 (Selective and Unofficial Translation)
Inaugurating the Primary School "Men Sarun" in Srok Kanhchreach of Prey Veng Province

... Today I am very pleased to return to the Kanhchreach district once again after my last visit on September 18, 2000 in the wake of flood disaster to offer emergency relief to our people here.

In 1992 I also was here with HE Sin Song and Madame when he offered to build a four-room school building. My presence today makes it in all three times already that I have come to this place.

I am coming today, together with Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Oknha, to bring you all a new achievement.

May I take this opportunity to first thank Oknha Men Sarun and other generous fellows for their valuable contributions in the construction of such an achievement – the school building.

According to the report by HE Governor Chuong Sivuth, this school is one of the oldest as it was first built in 1925. It has gone through various hardships and regimes.

According to some historical

Phnom Penh to be hospitalized in Calmet Hospital, where he later passed away.

Though I had too much work that I could not be present during his last minute and cremation, I have nurtured my will to keep him in my heart and today is the last day that I am as his student come to escort his remains to rest in a new resting place.

If he were to have yet reincar-

notes, between 1955 and 1965, the school collapsed and was rebuilt by the contribution then made by our people and monks.

The venerable Nut Nguon of Preah Sre pagoda in the commune of Kanhchreach was leader in rebuilding the school to its functional condition. But again under the regime of Pol Pot it was destroyed completely.

In 1979 the school was again reconstructed step by step with the contribution made by the schoolchildren parents and old-age people in the area.

As we could see now there left in front of us a building built in 1991 for our people here by the late HE Sin Song. Today we have more constructions in place contributed by Oknha Men Sarun, the Social Fund, and the Ministry of Rural Development – all of which should be able to serve the need of our people here for many years to come.

I am very pleased to see that our people have learned to share one another's resources,

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nated, he could be proud to have seen that his student has contributed to the liberation of the country from the genocide, searched for and achieved peace, and realized various achievements in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

One has to be grateful to one's mentor like a saying that goes "a mentor of one day is but a mentor of one whole life..." ■

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 which is also a long tradition of our people, to initiate achievements such as school buildings, clinics, water canals, etc. in their communities.

If we leave it all depending on the national budget, we would be still far away from the ability that we have realized thousands of school buildings – using both national budget and other contributions.

A point of concern for this area is that it suffered consecutive flooding following by drought in 2000 and 2001, and is dragged on to 2002 without any advance rain at all. Some rice fields have turned to be very dry that it could easily burn.

This situation brought about severe deterioration of animal's health, which would make them unable to cope with ploughing when rain finally comes.

I would like to reserve my appreciation for the authority, the armed forces as well as the working team sent from the central level (of the Party) together with members of the Senate and Parliament to actively help resolve the needs in this area. Poverty has not got wing to fly away.

Every one of us has to make our own effort. The Royal Government or the generous fellows could build you schools, hospitals, roads and water canals only with the contribution by our people in project implementing places.

Take for example the construction report indicated that despite a huge donation for the construction; the local people also contributed a sum of 10 million Riels. This proves that

our people see it necessary to help oneself.

On behalf of our people and country, yesterday I hosted Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India who is the second Prime Minister of India to visit Cambodia since the first visit in 1954 by Pundit Neru.

The Cambodia-India dialogue has brought to light the importance of our bilateral relations. His trip to Cambodia has been mainly to express his thanks to the Royal Government of Cambodia, I myself also included, for the initiative made in February 2000 during my visit to India to establish a new mechanism for the region - i.e. ASEAN-India.

Normally we have the ASEAN+3 summit. The three (countries) are China, South Korea and Japan.

The ASEAN+1 forum has been the ASEAN + China, the ASEAN + South Korea and ASEAN + Japan. As in 2002 Cambodia will host the ASEAN Summit and ASEAN + 3 with three other meetings – ASEAN + India, the Summit of the Head of States and Governments of the countries along the Mekong River (China, Burma, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam) and the Senior Meeting of ASEAN Trade.

With regard to our requests, India has positively responded to the renovation of Ta Prom temple in Siemreap. Yesterday we have agreed for ten experts

from India to come to Cambodia concerning the above matter.

HE Prime Minister of India also declared that India offers 10,000 tons of rice for the relief efforts of the Cambodian flood victims.

In four days from now we will have a new Devada for whom the Buddhist followers in our country will be hosting him with flowers, incense sticks and candles.

We hope that new Devada will bring us rain, not too much and not too little so that our farmers would be able to draw on good cultivation.

The Cambodia-India dialogue has brought to light the importance of our bilateral relations. HE Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's trip to Cambodia has been mainly to express his thanks to the Royal Government of Cambodia,... for the initiative made in February 2000 ... to establish a new mechanism for the region -- i.e. ASEAN-India... With regard to our requests, India has positively responded to the renovation of Ta Prom temple in Siemreap... and donated 10,000 tons of rice for the relief efforts of the Cambodian flood victims...

Let me take this opportunity to place an order that no shooting is allowed in the course of the Khmer New Year as it has been four years already – 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 that the celebration extends to throughout Cambodia in peace. Our people could travel from one side of the country to another to see each other. So no shooting is allowed at all in welcoming the Devada. The welcoming pattern should be the traditional music, flowers as well as fruits. Let me warn that drivers of all types of vehicles should maintain a con-

trollable speed and we also should refrain from splashing water on one another. You may agree with me also that we have to refrain from quarrels when dancing, etc. ...

I am glad to see that we have about ten thousand people coming today to this event. May I inform HE Governor Chuong Sivuth I wish to stand to inaugurate only this school and I would not accept your request for me to inaugurate ten other achievements. Let them be inaugurated by others or I would be blamed for having done so alone. I would not want to act on others' behalf because our people would know already what I have been doing.

(The Cambodian) people know well and will make judgement who is who, and who is doing what? I was the one who had contributed to the fall of Pol Pot, I was the one who prevented the return of Pol Pot to power, I was one of the signatories of the Paris Peace Agreement, and I have initiated the win-win policy to bring peace to Cambodia. Who then kept the Khmer Rouge in the United Nations? No one could cover the sun with his/her own hand.

Some people are annoyed of my presence to inaugurate new achievements. They said Hun Sen claimed he is the one who made all the achievements. It is not so. Like the Kizuna Bridge, Japan offers to Cambodia and Hun Sen was invited to the groundbreaking and inauguration ceremonies only. It is our people who use the bridge. So people have to thank the Japanese people and Government and not Hun Sen ... ■

April 01, 2002 (Selective and Unofficial Translation)

Inaugurating Achievements in Wat Samraong, Samraong Commune, Banteay Meas District, Kompot province,

... I have a great pleasure to be able to return once again to Banteay Meas district. According to the record of former Governor of Kompot province and people's representative of Kompot province, HE Saom Chen, I have come to the district five times already. I was here firstly in 1986, secondly in 1992, thirdly in 1997, fourthly in 2000, and again today. It seems like Hun Sen has yet to come to Banteay Meas, but I have in fact been here five times already.

What I am most excited about today is that my presence is unlike to those previously done, or in 2000 as that time I came to observe the difficult living conditions caused by flooding. My presence here today is to participate with our Buddhist monks and people, especially generous fellows from Japan in the inauguration of various achievements realized by the local people and contribution from abroad, especially from Japan.

May I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the venerable monks and our Buddhist followers as well as parishioners for such a splendid contribution and effort in matching the development in the secular world and the Buddhist world.

... I thank the World Food Program for its contribution to the renovation of the school building here and the generous fellows from Japan, who through the Second Hand Association and SVA, have built Cambodians here these school buildings. It is another generous offer made in addition to those offered by the Japanese Government and people,

through the non-governmental organizations and volunteer associations.

... The achievement that we are going to inaugurate later is part of our efforts to make an approach to rural area to reduce poverty of the Cambodian people. Facing with consecutive floodings in 2000 and 2001, the local authorities have been making efforts for the sake of people's livelihood. As of this year, advance rain is late in many parts making our dry season-rice cultivation unproductive and grass could not grow leading to famine for animals.

... April 4 is my birthday and I have become 52 years now. In fact my right birth date is August 5, 1952. But I was registered to get born on April 4, 1951 – or the fifteen day of the moon, the month of Sraap and the year of Dragon. It was on a Tuesday. According to belief passed on from generation to generation, those who get born this day could be stubborn. Well I am stubborn but in a sense that I fought the Khmer Rouge till it fell apart politically and militarily, and peace prevails in the whole country.

... Talking about requests for road let me take this opportunity to inform our people who have been waiting for road 33 and 31. The two roads have been proposed for assistance from the World Bank and it is now in the process of bidding. Normally the procedure could take a long time. But it is normal for an institution like that.

... The same is also true for ADB and other foreign donors. So I am seeking your

understanding that we do not have enough of our own fund to do them all at once. Our ability would only be to fill some of those small potholes. But what we need here is a strong bitumen road. So we have to start first by renovating the National Road 3 from here (Banteay Meas of Kompot) to Phnom Penh, while leaving roads 33 and 31 in the package that we seek funding from the World Bank.

... In a separate event, the road from the provincial town to Tropeang Ampeo, which also include a bridge across a sea channel, I have already asked for loan of US\$ 30 million from the Republic of Korea. This part of the road would link with the World Bank-loan part between the National Road 4 and Tropeang Ampeo. This road will serve as a link to Phnom Penh. So as you can see this project is a big one...

... As we are close to the Khmer New Year, I pray the new Devada brings just enough rainwater to Kompot as we have to produce salt here. In 2000 and 2001, we have dual problems – scarce of rice and salt. What I am most concerned here is that our people could not find good price for salt in the fish season.

... Personally I also have 14 school buildings with 62 classrooms already built. As there are some requests here let me inform that I am offering to build two school buildings – one building of five classrooms for the Damnak Troyoeung Primary School and one more with five classrooms for the Primary School of Wat Ang Khang Tbong... ■

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were then no monks and no religion. On the other hand, today we have this temple to be inaugurated and so do various other achievements – such as school buildings also in the vicinity of the pagoda. It is the collaboration between the Buddhist and Secular worlds.

May I take this opportunity to say a few things of my observations about the Khmer New Year that we celebrated eight days before. The Devada – old and new ones – have already shifted turn in supervising the world.

The transfer of duty between them has gone smoothly ever since 1970. We may say it is the first New Year that we have received the new Devada without fear and it could be said it is the fourth year that the people of Cambodia enjoy New Year in full peace after our country being fragmented by war since 1970. In my New Year message I have drawn our people's attention on this matter.

We have in fact enjoyed the New Years without internal rifts and divisions in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 – or four consecutive years already. Since 1970, Cambodia suffered internal divisions because of wars.

On March 18, 1970 there was a military coup that ousted the Head of State Samdech Sihanouk. Armed conflicts started with our people demanding the return of Samdech Sihanouk and condemning the illegal military coup of Lon Nol. From then on, New Years were always celebrated in fear.

The year 2002 is probably the
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 best year in the last 32 years of our country's history. It should be noted that this year our people's game practice in enjoying New Year has recorded a positive change as it reduced acts of splashing water disorderly at one another, traffic accidents because of drunkards and all sorts of violence.

It is worth noticing as well that there have been traditional performances in making merit and doing away the devil.

Take for instance the Trot dance that is going from house to house which is similar to Mong Say in the Chinese New Year.

I hope that this trend would continue to grow in the following years. I also am happy to see that our commune councils could take the New Year celebration this year as their prime victorious duty.

One day after the Khmer New Year I went by helicopter to spend a night in Sihanoukville. I noticed that some land had already been ploughed, especially some parts of Kandal and Kompong Speu. Our people may have celebrated New Year during nighttime and ploughed during daytime. Some parts have also been laid with composts. This clearly reveals our people's efforts and responsibility.

I am very glad to observe the move. As reported by HE Governor Kep Chutema of the 13,000 hectares of land facing drought, I am glad to notice interventions taken by the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Disaster Management Committee and the Bodyguard Unit.

I wish to mention two important points on what makes us organize peacefully the Khmer New Year this year. There have been many intertwined factors, which also include the positive response of our people to Royal Government's recommendations and instructions with regard to the New Year celebration.

Also contributing to the development were instructions by our Buddhist monks and parents. The intertwined peace and development that has enabled our people to enjoy New Year in peace is a relationship that can be compared to a knot of two strings – "as long as peace prevails, development

When peace and development intertwine, they enable our people to enjoy New Year peacefully. They are relationship that can be compared to a knot of two strings – "as long as peace prevails, development can be attained" and "as long as development is attained, peace can be guaranteed."

can be attained" and "as long as development is attained, peace can be guaranteed."

Judging from previous experiences like prior to and during the period of the genocide, we had no time to construct our country. On the other hand if our country were to be tormented by poverty, stability could not be maintained. Peace and stability could not survive in poverty. With peace in the country we now can build schools, pagodas, water reservoirs, roads, and others to respond to the need of our people.

... In just four years, we have expedited the socio-economic development as well as the economic growth. Two key elements in this achievement

are political and macro-economic stability.

Take political stability for instance no crisis in the Government structure as well as the commune councils that were established in last February have happened. As HE Governor Kep Chutema said that the 100 commune councils of Takeo province have taken their positions and so do the 1621 communes throughout the country.

The country structure starting from the commune to the national level has suffered no crisis. Though some political parties encountered difficulties, still it is welcome that they decided to leave their differences till after the Khmer New Year, which in fact contributed to the political stability of the country.

I wish they resolved their differences peacefully refraining from destabilizing the political stability or the Government, the National Assembly, or the Senate structures.

... Taking the macro-economic stability into concern, it is worth mentioning that this point is very important because we would not achieve macro-economic stability if we were to experience no economic growth. This could happen thanks to the art of financial management and control with regard to income and expenses.

In 1999, our economic growth was recorded at 6%, in 2000 and 2001, despite consecutive floods, at 5.4% and 5.3% respectively. At the same time

we have been able to stabilize the market prices as well as the exchange rate during the Khmer New Year. This situation has taken a better turn if we compare to the previous years.

... Taking this opportunity I would seek understanding from our people who have, in a number of regions, been waiting for roads and bridges to be rebuilt or built. Today I wish to inform that the national road 2 and 3 are in facts to be rebuilt by loans from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. As for the national budget, the Royal Government has set aside a certain part for the renovation of roads in the city in preparation for the coming regional and international events and a certain amount for rural infrastructure.

Like in Siemreap we have to invest in infrastructure so as to serve the need for tourist development. While we are waiting for the ADB and WB for their loan to rebuild the national roads 2 and 3, the Governor of Takeo should also take care of potholes keeping them from deteriorating further. This is an instruction to all provincial governors.

... Also important to mention here, the Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, and the local authorities at all levels should spend their time and efforts, keeping an eye on the rainy season rice cultivation as they have already started, while taking care of dry season rice grown in shallow lakes... May I take this opportunity to express my greatest thanks to the armed forces, the local authorities and all institutions for the efforts they placed in safeguarding and providing security for our people to enjoy the Khmer New Year...■

(Continued from page 1)

The investment is yielded by the implementation of partnership between state and private and is an important model of participation by local private company in national construction and development in general and in the development of infrastructure in particular.

This has taken shape at the time that the Government is actively pushing forwards reforms in all fields, speeding up socio-economic integration into the world as well as the region aimed at expediting the country's development like other developed nations in the world.

At the same time the bridge has a profound significance in closely linking and further strengthening the bond of relations between Cambodia and Thailand, as this would add on to the contribution to the socio-economic development, peace, political stability in the region and poverty reduction of the Cambodian people.

Internal wars in the past two decades have isolated various parts of Cambodia from one another, especially Koh Kong province, which seems to have lost from the main current of the national economy.

In fact, Koh Kong is a great island of economy with abundance of sea fish resources, forest, minerals, and is an economic and commercial exit to outside of Cambodia.

In addition to this Koh Kong is a region with tourist potential that is yet to be explored and made used. Previously this place is linked only by air and water, which makes the construction of bridges and roads profoundly significant for such

a sacred place to be accessible with other parts of Cambodia on land.

Koh Kong is simultaneously contributing to the support of the economic growth and poverty reduction as it facilitates transportation from Thailand along the national road 48, which is under renovation, to Phnom Penh and other areas of Cambodia, connecting with the national road 4 at Chamka Luong, Sre Ambel.

Furthermore this bridge is also sitting on the regional road link within the framework of the Mekong Sub-region, which is the closest link between Thailand and Vietnam via Cambodia's national road 48, national road 4, national road 3 and national road 33.

Having seen that the connection of this part with other parts of Cambodia would yield major significance, the Royal Government has also striven to keep the priority to restore and reconstruct the national road 48 that is almost completely destroyed.

May I take this opportunity to express my profound thanks to the Royal Government of Thailand for its heartfelt offer to provide grant in part with the Cambodian Government's budget making it possible for the restoration and reconstruction of the road, the construction of which about 70% has been realized.

As far as the national road 4 is concerned the Royal Government has offered in concession to a private company to provide care and maintenance and I have seen that the process of reconstruction has made progress and almost completed. With regard to the national road 3 from Veal Rin to

Kompot and the national road 33, the Royal Government has sought for loan from the World Bank and financing from South Korea. Therefore the vision to link countries in the region within the framework of the Mekong Sub-region, especially between Thailand and Cambodia and Vietnam via physical infrastructure would be realized in the near future.

What we also have to achieve soon is the handling of problems concerning influx of goods and border crossing passengers with Vietnam and Thailand so that we could attain maximum economic gain from the integration.

Spien Koh Kong is an infrastructure of strategic transportation that is aimed at serving and promoting commercial, agricultural, industrial and tourist sectors through the linkage of the north-western part to other parts of Cambodia and with Thai and Vietnam economic relations.

We are proud that the bridge completed in the time when we have peace and political stability thanks to the implementation of our win-win policy. Political stability, peace and complete security are the environment conducive for private investment in all fields.

My understanding is that this region has the most favorable conditions as it never faces with flood that is regular predator to other parts of Cambodia every year and causing damages to infrastructure, public and people properties.

May I take this opportunity to appeal to national and foreign investors to think about investing in the region, processing for export is also included.

I would guarantee cooperation and support of the Royal Government according to the principles and spirit of the new draft law on investment that has just been submitted for approval by the legislative body.

Once again, on behalf of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia and on my own behalf, may I express my profound thanks to the Royal Government of Thailand for the contribution of grant aid to the restoration and reconstruction of the national road 48 and to the Duty Free Shop Co. Ltd of Oknha Li Yong Pat for investing a great amount of capital in the construction of the bridge over this long sea channel. The company has also actively promoted developments in all sectors in Koh Kong province.

On this occasion I also wish to thank the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and other financial countries and institutions for active contribution in the restoration and construction of infrastructure in Cambodia for the sake of development and poverty reduction.

May I offer my appreciation and continued encouragement to leaders and staff of the Ministry of Public Works and Transports, the local authority and concerned institutions and our people for their efforts made for a successful implementation of the strategic plan for infrastructure development.

I wish to appeal to all our people to recognize and support the "BOT" investment system. Especially companies with heavy load of transportation should actively contribute to the collaborative spirit in sustaining maintenance for a long time to come. ■