

## **Cambodia Builds New Museum in Preah Vihear Province**

PREAH VIHEAR, Cambodia, February 5, 2010 (PQRU) – H.E. Dr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers said on last Friday the government has built another museum to preserve its cultural heritages as well as to attract more tourists to the area.

The eco-global Samdech Techo Hun Sen museum has been constructed on the 200 hectares of land since May last year and will take months to complete.

The museum's master plan—which located in Sraem village, Kantout commune in Chamksan district, Preah Vihear province—was jointly designed by UNESCO's and Cambodian experts, said Dr. Sok An, who toured this official visit the museum late Friday.

“The establishment of this museum shows the country's sustainable development in this area and it is fully conformed with the cultural and technical works,” said Dr. Sok An. The display of the Khmer archeological artifacts and preserving the Khmer empire during the pre-and post Angkorian times are also on the museum's agendas. ‘The museum's exhibitions also show the culture of the Khmer minority, Kuoy, who pioneered in making metal weapons of arrows used during the Khmer empire at the time’, he also said.

“The museum's activities will also show the Kuoy minority who had greatly contributed to the production of metal weapons during the Khmer Empire. There are 275 temples found in the province of Preah Vihear alone. We will also make orchid gardens where we will grow herbal plants to produce traditional medicines, he said. These ingredients will enable us to attract more tourists to visit this area,” he added.

The museum also displays the photographs, which were produced by a Cambodian photographer Moeun Nheam.

Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Sok An is pleased with photograph products, which were taken at the temples: Sambo Prey Kuk in Kampong Thom province, where more than 100 temples built in the 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century were discovered. The Koh Ker temple and its seven-story main tower were built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Jayavaraman IV, now covered by jungle. Other pictures, which are being displayed in the museum, are Kampong Preah temple built during Zhenda era in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Another picture shows Banteay Srey temple, which was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a magnificent twilight scene of the temple at sunrise.

“Let us produce such photographs as many as more than 100 so that some of which could be displayed overseas and sold to tourists who visit this area here,” said Dr. Sok An.

His Excellency Dr. Sok An also visited a Cambodian military command in the province, where he was pleased with the achievement made by the Royal Cambodia Armed Force.

“I used to see the pictures about the development here but now I see them all with my own eyes,” he said before he headed off to pay a visit to a new religious shrine, which was built by the local authorities.

The symbol of the shrine depicted a famous Khmer military commander, Ta Dy, riding horse as he used arrows to disperse enemies from the land of Khmer Empire at the time.

Cambodia's government has been largely investing in building more physical infrastructures in the province in recent years. More roads have been paved in the remote areas for linking them to the provincial town as well as to the Temple of Preah Vihear.

The province's name "Preah Vihear" has been well known to the outside world, thanks to the Khmer ancestors who built the 900-year-old Temple of Preah Vihear and the province has been named after it.

His Excellency Sok An himself, who successfully lobbied the international community in supporting the Temple of Preah Vihear be listed with the UNESCO as World Heritage Site in 2008, reiterated that the Thai's claim area near the Temple is baseless given, The Hague's International Court of Justice (ICJ) used the "Annex 1 map" to render its judgment on 15 June 1962 that: the Temple of Preah Vihear is situated in territory under the sovereignty of Cambodia.

The court also found that "Thailand is under an obligation to withdraw any military or police forces, or other guards or keepers, stationed by her at the Temple, or in its vicinity on Cambodian territory; and that "Thailand is under an obligation to restore to Cambodia any objects of the kind specified in the Cambodia's fifth submission which may, since the date of the occupation of the Temple by Thailand in 1954, have been removed from the Temple or the Temple area by the Thai authorities".

**(Press and Quick Reaction Unit)**