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Unsure China Steps Onto the Global Stage

BY MICHAEL WINES
AND EDWARD WONG
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BEIJING - Let the rest of the world dither over whether this week's economic summit meeting in London will save the planet from economic collapse.

China arrives at the meeting with a sense of momentum, riding a wave of nationalism and boasting an economy that, more than any other, is surfing the trough of a crippling recession. While other major economies shrink this year, China's is expected by some economists to pass Japan's as the world's second-largest, if it has not already.

The most talked-about new book here, "China is Unhappy," combines hypernationalism with biting criticism of Western mismanagement and of China's reluctance to grasp its place in history.

China's normally faceless Vice President Xi Jinping achieved cult status in late February after

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Former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary appears Thursday at his second bail hearing at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. He exited the courtroom after two hours, telling the court he was feeling unwell.

ECCC Impugned for Graft at Bail Hearing

BY DOUGLAS GILLISON
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Defense lawyers for former Khmer Rouge Foreign Minister Ieng Sary on Thursday sought to argue that matters of corruption and official antagonism could end the court's existence and therefore could require their client's release but the arguments were quickly silenced by the pretrial judges.

Defense lawyer Michael Karnavas cited remarks by Prime Minister Hun Sen, who said Tuesday that he would prefer that the Khmer Rouge tribunal fail rather than widen its investigations as UN prosecutors are seeking, as well as a recent report by German lawmakers who cited a UN officer as claiming that the tribunal's Director of Administration Sean Visoth had

been identified in a UN review of kickback allegations.

Ieng Sary, who was found too ill to attend a bail hearing in February, appeared in the courtroom Thursday but left after two hours, claiming he was unwell. Defense lawyers said he had permitted them to continue arguing in his absence.

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Phnom Penh Air Dangerously Polluted: Study

BY BETHANY LINDSAY
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A light breeze is all it took to stir up the dust lying in the gutters of Phnom Penh's Monivong Boulevard on Wednesday and send it flying into the eyes and nasal passages of passersby.

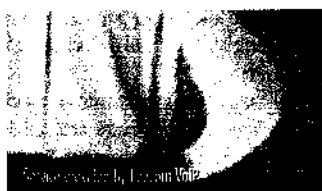
This area, near the intersection with Russian Boulevard in the heart of the city, was used as a

monitoring station for a 2006 Japanese study of air pollution in Phnom Penh. And in a startling conclusion to their measurement of the total concentration of suspended particles in the air, the Kanazawa University researchers found that Phnom Penh's airborne concentration of PAHs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, was six times higher than that of Bang-

kok, a city once notorious for its smog.

The pollution, the paper concluded, could be traced back to a variety of sources, including diesel smoke from vehicles and generators, kerosene lighting and biomass fuels used for cooking. The study also found that particulate concentrations in Phnom Penh

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NATIONAL

Alleged Pedophile Released on Bail; Charges May Be Dropped

BY PRAK CHAN THUL
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Preah Sihanouk Provincial Court released on bail 64-year-old French national Jean Claude Fournier, accused of sexually abusing two sisters aged eight and 13, and may drop the sexual assault charges against him, Investigating Judge Kim Eng said.

"[An] indecent act is a misdemeanor case, and the victims testified that he didn't touch anything," Kim Eng said, explaining his reason for granting bail. "We may drop the charge in the future," he added.

Kim Eng accused a child protection NGO that cared for the two victims of prompting them in what to

say in court Wednesday in order to implicate Fournier, who was arrested Feb 26.

"It is not appropriate," Kim Eng said, adding that at the end of the questioning session Wednesday, an NGO worker who brought the young girls to the court demonstrated to them the alleged sexual abuse acts on a toy in order to tell them what to say to the judge.

Kim Eng added that the medical examination had also shown that the two sisters were not sexually abused.

Samleang Seila, country director of the anti-pedophile NGO Action Pour Les Enfants, identified the organization that cared for the children as World Hope

International.

"The court turned the accusations [back] on the child protection NGO," Samleang Seila said, adding that World Hope International did not prompt the victims into accusing Fournier.

"We have no grudge against any foreigner. We protect all children," he said.

Samleang Seila said that the children had told World Hope International that Fournier had sexually abused them many times in the past year.

A World Hope International staffer who brought the children to the court Wednesday said on condition of anonymity Thursday that Judge Kim Eng was intimi-

"The court turned the accusations [back] on the child protection NGO."

—SAMLEANG SEILA,
COUNTRY DIRECTOR,
ACTION POUR LES ENFANTS

dating to the children when he questioned them.

"His characteristics were like a threat to the children," the staffer said.

Kim Eng defended his techniques for questioning the girls, saying that they were "in accordance with the law."

Polluted...

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reached as high as 240 micrograms per cubic meter, compared to Bangkok's highs of 144 micrograms per cubic meter, as measured by a Thai team in 2008. The majority of those particulates could be traced back to dust.

As surprising as they may be, the Japanese team's results could also be a reflection of what Bangkok has done in recent years to address its own air pollution problems, and by extension, what Cambodia's growing cities need to do.

According to reports from the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, more than one million citizens in Bangkok suffered from illnesses related to air pollution in the mid-1990s.

In response, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration adopted a slew of new measures to monitor and control air pollution.

To begin with, the city's pollution control department targeted emissions from cars and motorcycles. They set up checkpoints throughout Bangkok to test emissions from vehicles, making sure that they corresponded to guidelines for carbon monoxide content and carbon particles in black smoke.

Traffic authorities also closed some streets to single-occupant automobiles and even designated a series of vehicle-free streets. The city also expanded its public transit system and added to its green spaces.

Although particles of dust might seem like nothing more than a dirty annoyance, they can pick up hitchhikers like bacteria and poisonous chemicals as they travel from the ground into the air and around the city. The dust itself can also irritate the sensitive lining of the lungs and throat. And some of the toxins measured in a Japanese study on Phnom Penh's air quality can also cause cancer after long periods of exposure.

Meanwhile, dust was reduced by paving the shoulders of roads and regularly washing down streets during the dry season. Stronger controls were enforced on construction sites; orders were made for tarps to cover loose soil on the ground and in haulage trucks, and vehicles' tires were hosed off before they entered the streets.

The result of all these initiatives, which were topped off with a public awareness campaign about air pollution, was a 47 percent decrease in the concentration of all airborne particulates during the decade beginning in 1997, according to statistics from Bangkok's pollution control department.

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Phnom Penh's air quality can also cause cancer after long periods of exposure, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services. Rats and other lab animals have developed lung cancer from breathing in the chemicals, stomach cancer after eating food tainted with them and skin cancer when the toxins were rubbed on their bodies.

Authorities in Bangkok cited human health as the driving force behind the push to improve their city's air quality, but it's difficult to discern what Cambodia's government is doing to improve the quality of the air in Phnom Penh.

Although Cambodia's Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources places the responsibility for pollution monitoring squarely with the Ministry of Environment, it appears to contain nothing that guarantees regular monitoring.

The government has issued a sub-decree entitled "The Control of Air Pollution and Noise Disturbance" outlining carbon emis-

sions standards for vehicles and other sources of pollution, and acceptable ambient levels for a variety of hazardous chemicals.

However, the sub-decree does not spell out how those standards will be enforced. The sub-decree dictates only that "The Ministry of Environment shall regularly control and monitor the situation of the air quality in order to take measures to prevent and reduce air pollution."

Minister of the Environment Mok Mareth could not be reached for comment. Khieu Muth, secretary of state for the Ministry of Environment, declined to answer questions about what the ministry is doing to monitor and control air pollution.

In a presentation made in May, Kok Sothea, an environmental scientist at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, said that the ministry has in fact established four monitoring stations in Phnom Penh to measure carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide levels, but not lead and other poisonous metals.

But data from those stations is not easily available, and it is not accessible to the public online as it is in Bangkok.

Kok Sothea also doubted the validity of the results of the Japanese studies. Although his own research points to an increase in Phnom Penh's air pollution in recent years, Kok Sothea said he wants to conduct further studies to verify the Japanese researchers' findings once he secures the necessary funding.

"The concentration is very high," Kok Sothea said. "If you compare with Bangkok, Bangkok has a lot of vehicles."