

Chinese Ambassador praises mature China-Cambodia ties

People's Daily

Chinese President Xi Jinping's upcoming state visit to Cambodia, as the first visit of a top leader of China and the CPC in 4 years, will surely begin a new chapter of bilateral friendship, Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Xiong Bo wrote in a signed article published on People's Daily on Wednesday, one day ahead of Xi's trip.

The article, under the title of "China-Cambodia Friendship Blossoms in Khmer's Land", praised the time-honored friendship between Chinese and Cambodians, saying that the maturing relations are marked by deepened trust and frequent high-level exchanges.

Xi's visit to the Southeast Asian country, coming not long after Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni's state visit to China this June, will elevate high-level exchanges between the two countries to a new high, the article concluded.

As Cambodia's largest trade partner and source country of foreign investment, China is of vital importance to its social and economic development, the diplomat commented.

Citing the gains from China-Cambodia economic and trade cooperation, he illustrated that their two-way trade increased 18 percent year-on-year to \$4.43 billion in 2015, while accumulated investment from China to Cambodia exceeded \$12 billion dollars.

China and Cambodia are also presented with tremendous cooperation space and potential in dovetailing the "Belt and Road" initiative proposed by President Xi with the latter's Rectangular Strategy, an economic policy for sake of growth, employment, equity and efficiency, the article added.

Bilateral people-to-people exchanges are increasingly intensified as well, Xiong wrote in the article, citing the evidences of nearly 800,000 Chinese tourists to Cambodia in 2015, more bilateral exchanges of art troupes, overseas students and personnel training, as well as "Mandarin fever" and popularity of Confucius institutes and Classrooms in Cambodia.

Dozens of Chinese cities have direct flights to cities in Cambodia and there are 35 daily flights between the countries, he added.

What's more, China and Cambodia are ramping up their collaboration in international and regional affairs, Xiong pointed out.

"Based on a high-level political consensus, the two countries will safeguard China-ASEAN relations and regional peace as well as stability by rendering understanding and support to each other on issues concerning respective core interests and major concerns," read the article.

As a traditional friend of Cambodia, China supports its neighbor to maintain national independence, sovereignty and ability to follow a development path suitable to its own national conditions, Xiong underlined China's policy towards Cambodia.

Since the 1990s, China has assisted Cambodia in completing over 2,600 kilometers in new roads, 413,000 acres of farmland irrigation and 4,998 kilometers of power lines.

Xiong believes that China-Cambodia ties are filled with rare opportunities. Xi's visit this time will surely inject a powerful impetus into their bilateral comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership, bring tangible benefits to both peoples and make crucial contributions to regional peace, stability and development.