

Thailand to boost cooperation with Cambodia

Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont on Sunday held talks with his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen and pledged to strengthen ties as well as cooperating with Cambodia in every field.

Yongyuth Mayalarp, spokesman of the Thai government, told journalists that the prime minister informed Mr. Hun Sen about the political situation in Thailand and pledged that his interim government would continue the previous government's policy of economic cooperation with the Phnom Penh government.

Gen. Surayud pledged that his government would continue cooperation with Phnom Penh on responding to the challenge of avian influenza (bird flu), continue working together in the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and to continue negotiating regarding certain border areas which overlap between the two neighbour countries.

Hun Sen, according to Mr. Yongyuth, was willing to allow the Thai government to change working committee members responsible for solving the border problem as he was keen to explore for oil in the disputed area as global oil price kept on rising.

Gen. Surayud said that in his opinion the problem of overlapping border areas must be solved jointly by the two countries because it would benefit both countries. He said he had assigned Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram to act on behalf of the Thai government in meeting with appropriate Cambodian officials to find ways to resolve the issue.

Mr. Yongyuth said that the Cambodian premier proposed a meeting between Thai, Lao and Cambodian government leaders to be held on joint development of the so-called Emerald Triangle Cooperation Framework, designed for developing tourism resources and promote tourism among participating countries.

Mr. Hun Sen reportedly told Gen. Surayud that only ministerial meetings on the issue had been held in the past. The Thai leader promised to reopen the discussions in China.

Gen. Surayud, who yesterday made his first foreign visit to Laos since assuming the premiership two weeks ago, also met Cambodian Parliament President Heng Samrin and Senate Speaker Chea Sim, before returning home.

The Thai PM is scheduled to travel to China later this month to mark the 15th anniversary of relations between China and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Source : Government News (www.thaigov.go.th)
