

All the News Without Fear or Favor

# The CAMBODIA DAILY

Volume 48 Issue 86

Monday, June 6, 2011

1,200 riel/30 cents

## Demonstrators Cheer as Saleh Leaves Yemen

BY ERNESTO LONDONO  
AND SUDARSAN RAGHAVAN  
THE WASHINGTON POST

CAIRO - Hours after Yemen's president flew to Saudi Arabia for treatment of wounds sustained in a rocket attack, thousands of demonstrators flocked to the streets of the capital yesterday to celebrate what they billed as the latest ouster of an Arab autocrat.

"The Yemeni people have been born again," cried Fatima Ahmad, who was among those who walked to Change Square in Sanaa, the capital, to celebrate President Ali Abdullah Saleh's departure.

Thousands waved flags, painted their faces with the colors of the national flag and exchanged congratulations in a city that had become a battleground in recent days.

"We have deported Ali," some chanted. "The people have toppled the regime."

Saleh transferred power temporarily to his vice president, Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, after boarding a flight to Saudi Arabia late on Saturday. He was wounded in a rocket attack on the presidential palace on Friday afternoon.

The vice president yesterday met with US Ambassador Gerald Feierstein, Yemen's news agency reported. The two discussed steps required to maintain a cease-fire between government forces and tribal militias.

They also spoke about Yemen's political opposition, known as the Joint Meeting Parties.

Yemeni officials have not called Saleh's departure an abdication from power, but analysts say the longtime leader, who had been a

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A farmer maneuvers a small boat loaded with vegetables yesterday at Boeng Tumpon lake in Phnom Penh. World Environment Day is celebrated on June 5 to raise awareness for environmental protection, according to the UN Environment Program.

Reuters

## Shukaku Plan Approved by Investment Board

BY HUL REAKSMEY  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The government's investment board appears to have approved a Chinese-linked firm's \$2.17 billion plan for Phnom Penh's Boeng Kak lake, moving forward a project that has forced thousands of poor families out of their homes.

As part of the process of removing residents to make way for the development, City Hall said Friday that later this month it would start measuring the existing plots occupied by families who have negotiated for new housing at the site of

the development as compensation for their displacement.

This marked the first written approval of on-site housing for the families.

Among the new business projects approved in April, the Cambodian Investment Board endorsed a plan by Shukaku Erdos Hongjun Property Development to construct a commercial center, a five-star hotel, office space, a school, a hospital and public infrastructure, according to information released by the Council for the Development of Cambodia.

The list makes no mention of where all that brick and mortar will go. A CDC official declined to comment yesterday. But the list mirrors what few details have emerged of the firm's secretive plans for the lake.

The firm was created in late 2010 by China's Erdos Hong Jun Investment Co and CPP Senator Lao Meng Khin's Shukaku Inc, which won a 99-year lease to the lake and its shores in 2007.

The plan follows a \$3 billion investment deal Prime Minister

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## Lens Sees Old Trauma in a Contemporary Life

BY MICHELLE VACHON  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

From the very start of Lida Chan's documentary film "Red Wedding," which had its premiere on Thursday in Phnom Penh, it is obvious that, although the Khmer Rouge ruled the country more than three decades ago, for Pen Sochan, this may have been yesterday.

Throughout the 58-minute film, she keeps repeating what happened to her over and over again—a symptom of trauma, according to psychologists—and keeps

asking who issued the orders and why.

Ms Sochan has filed a complaint with the Khmer Rouge tribunal on the grounds of forced marriage. As Ms Sochan explains in the film, until now she had not told anyone that she had been married on a dark night in 1978 and later raped by her husband on Khmer Rouge orders.

"I want to cut the parts of my body my husband touched at the time... I am dishonored," she says in the film.

The documentary follows Ms Sochan in her daily routine in a rural corner of Pursat province, recreating at a slow and deliberate pace the context of lives that are aligned with the harvest cycle.

Ms Sochan, who remarried after the Khmer Rouge defeat of 1979, is a widow doing whatever she can to support her youngest son, who is the last of her six children by her second husband and who still lives at home, she says.

As the beautiful images shot by

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## Life...

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co-director and cameraman Guillaume Suon unfold on the screen, the viewers follow Ms Sochan as she harvests rice or collects fruit to sell at the market, visits her two daughters—who work in garment factories—or breaks into a fit of laughter with a friend.

And throughout the film, Ms Sochan keeps talking about the time she was forced to marry.

She and a female friend also forced into a marriage by the Khmer Rouge recount how young men and women were called to a meeting and, as they were declared married, told to touch each other's fingertips—not even a full handshake—to show they were married. Couples were given three nights to consummate their union, with Khmer Rouge spies listening to make sure they did.

Ms Sochan says she does not really remember her husband's face, as it was dark at the marriage meeting and they did not really look at each other during those nights. But she remembers vividly that, since they had not done their marital duties in the time allowed, they were sent for re-education: Her husband was told to rape her,



Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center

Pen Sochan speaks of her forced marriage under the Khmer Rouge in Lida Chan's documentary 'Red Wedding.'

which he did, tying her hands and tearing her clothes off her body, she says.

Ms Sochan was about 15 years old at the time. She managed to run away in the last weeks of the Pol Pot regime at the end of 1978, escaping capture by the Khmer Rouge. She later heard that her husband had been killed.

In answer to Ms Sochan's question about why the Pol Pot administration married people, the filmmakers have included in the documentary Khmer Rouge propaganda showing people "happily" working in fields and a voice-over ex-

plaining that the Khmer population needed to grow.

In the film, Ms Sochan also asks former Khmer Rouge local officials, one of them a former district chief and now a commune chief, but none of them can give her an actual explanation.

The beauty of the images and quality of the film make it very well worth seeing. So much so that skeptics in the audience at the premiere were wondering whether some scenes had been staged.

Not so, Ms Chan said. While she and Ms Sochan had discussed the location, the scene in which

she tells her two daughters about being married and raped during the Khmer Rouge era was actually the first time she told them her secret, the 31-year-old filmmaker explained.

Since it is considered a dishonor for a woman not to be a virgin when she marries—no matter the circumstances—to consider telling her story so publicly took a great deal of courage, Ms Chan noted.

Some Khmer Rouge forced marriages turned out well, and some couples remain together even now.

However, Ms Sochan is one of 664 men and women admitted as civil parties at the Khmer Rouge tribunal in relation to forced marriage, according to the attorney Silke Studzinsky, who is representing civil parties at the tribunal as part of Germany's aid program.

Being an ordinary woman from the countryside, Ms Sochan is typical of civil parties, she said.

Because forced marriages and rapes were not initially included in the tribunal's investigations, having such crimes admitted took some work, Ms Studzinsky said.

"It still remains to be determined whether forced marriage will be legally qualified either as rape as a listed crime under crimes against humanity or only as other inhuman acts," she said.

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