

## **ASEAN economic ministers meet bloc's business leaders to boost cooperation**

SIEM REAP, Cambodia, Aug. 26 (Xinhua) -- The 10th dialogues between ASEAN Economic Ministers and ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was held here on Sunday afternoon to discuss and find ways to boost public-private sector partnerships in order to achieve the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015. Addressing the forum, Cambodian Minister of Commerce Cham Prasidh, chair of ASEAN in 2012, said that the consultations were important to listen to the preparations for the upcoming 2012 ASEN Business and Investment Summit slated for Nov. 16-18 in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Cambodia's influential tycoon Kith Meng, president of the Royal Group of Companies, who chaired the ABAC in 2012, said that the consultations were very useful for the private sector to raise opinions and recommendations to the heads of the governments in order to positively contribute to achieve an ASEAN Economic Community. The meeting was also attended by Lim Hong Hin, deputy secretary-general for the ASEAN Economic Community. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Nguon Meng Tech, director general of Cambodia's Chamber of Commerce, said that the ASEAN business leaders had asked the ASEAN economic ministers to consider issuing business cards for ASEAN businesspeople in order to facilitate them in traveling among ASEAN member states. "The card is similar in style to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation business traveler cards. The cardholders will enjoy visa free entry and expedited immigration clearance through designated special lanes at airports among ASEAN countries," he said. According to Nguon Meng Tech, Commerce Minister Cham Prasidh has promised to ratify the request in the 2012 ASEN Business and Investment Summit in November. The ABAC was established by the ASEAN leaders at the 7th ASEAN Summit in November 2001 in Brunei. Inaugurated at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia, in April 2003, ABAC acts as the primary vehicle for private sector feedback and guidance to boost ASEAN's efforts towards creating an integrated and competitive ASEAN economy. The ABAC consists of three business leaders from each member country. The meeting was held a day ahead of the 44th ASEAN Economic Ministers meeting and related meetings, which will run through Aug. 31.