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Cambodia hydro dam powers up

Chinese-built project is ensuring stable electricity at a cheaper price and alleviating poverty

By XINHUA

Cambodia's largest hydro-power project has begun producing electricity, as the country tries to increase its energy capacity and jump-start industrial expansion.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Dec 17 inaugurated the 400-megawatt Lower Sesan II hydropower dam in the northeastern province of Stung Treng. The dam is Cambodia's largest and the seventh built by China in the Southeast Asian country.

Constructed over four years at a cost of nearly \$800 million, the project is a joint venture between China's Huaneng Hydrolancang International Energy with a 51 percent stake, Cambodia's Royal Group with 39 percent and Vietnam's EVN International with 10 percent. Ownership will be handed over to the local government after 40 years.

"It will contribute to ensuring the energy security, lowering the price of electricity, and reducing poverty in Cambodia," the prime minister said.

He said the project supplies electricity not only to Stung Treng province, but also to other provinces and the capital Phnom Penh.

"With this dam project, the electricity supply in Cambodia has increased to 2,648 MW now, up from 150 MW 20 years ago," he said.

Between them, the seven Chinese-



A bird's-eye view of Cambodia's largest hydropower project, built by China. The 400-megawatt Lower Sesan II hydropower dam in the northeastern province of Stung Treng is now operational. XINHUA

built dams can produce 1,328 MW of power, or 50.1 percent of the country's total capacity.

Hun Sen also expressed his profound gratitude to the government of China for encouraging Chinese enterprises to invest in Cambodia.

Meanwhile, he praised the dam developer for its proper resettlement and compensation for affected residents.

Fan Qixiang, vice-president of China Huaneng Group, the parent company of Huaneng Hydrolan-

cang International Energy, said the achievement was born of excellent cooperation between Cambodia and China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"The dam will help relieve electricity shortages, lower the price of electricity, and contribute to socioeconomic development in Cambodia," he said. "The project is a fine example of cooperation in the energy sector between Cambodia and China."

Fan said the company would give top priority to the dam's safety so as

to produce clean and stable electric power for Cambodia, and he was confident that the project would further deepen the relations between the two countries.

The Lower Sesan II dam, 56.5 meters tall, covers a 36,000-hectare plot.

Suy Sem, Cambodia's minister of mines and energy, said the project is a concessional contract of a 45-year build-operate-transfer agreement, of which five years are for construction and 40 years are for operations.

He said the dam is estimated to produce 1.97 billion kilowatt-hours per year. According to the minister, Cambodia currently has 2,141 km of a 230-kilovolt national transmission line, along with 33 substations, which directly supply electricity to Phnom Penh and 19 of the kingdom's 24 other provinces.

To date, the Cambodian government has expanded electricity to 12,305 villages nationwide, he said, adding that 72 percent of the country's households have access to the electricity.

"The development of the Lower Sesan II hydropower project provides a lot of advantages to Cambodia through creating jobs, generating tax revenue, increasing our energy independence, reducing reliance on oil-fueled power plants, and alleviating poverty," Suy Sem said.

Ki Mon, 58, a resident of Sesan district of Stung Treng province, said she was very pleased to see the dam development in her district. She said that previously, the residents in Stung Treng province relied on electricity imported from neighboring Laos.

"Currently, we have better living conditions because we have reliable electricity, national and gravel roads, health centers and schools," she told Xinhua News Agency, referring to the infrastructure development projects that the Lower Sesan II hydropower company had built for the resettled villagers.

Betting big on foldable screens

Manufacturers hope their flexible display technologies will reinvigorate the smartphone market

By FAN FEIFEI
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Smartphone makers are betting big on foldable screens that fit into a pocket, to revive a market mired in an innovation lull and a sales slump.

Samsung Electronics revealed its much-anticipated foldable phone, which is a tablet when it is fully opened and becomes a smartphone when closed, at the company's annual developers' conference in San Francisco in November.

It uses a new display technology called Infinity Flex Display that allows users to open and close the device a countless number of times without degradation.

Koh Dong-jin, president of IT & Mobile Communications at Samsung Electronics, said the company will release the foldable phone within the first half of 2019, and the first batch to be delivered will have at least 1 million units. The company is set to produce more if the new product is well received in the market.

"We have been living in a world where the size of a screen could only be as large as the device itself," said Justin Denison, Samsung's senior vice-president of mobile product marketing. "We have just entered a new dimension."

According to IDC, a global market consultancy focusing on technology, smartphone makers shipped 355.2

million units during the third quarter of 2018, down 6 percent year-on-year, the fourth consecutive quarter of year-on-year declines for the global smartphone market.

Samsung had a challenging quarter with shipments down 13.4 percent to 72.2 million units. The market leader continues to feel pressure from all directions, especially with Huawei Technologies inching closer to the top after its second consecutive quarter as the No 2.

The South Korean technology giant is not the only phone maker working on foldable devices. Royole Corp, a panel manufacturer based in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong province, has announced its

first foldable smartphone, FlexPai, which features a 7.8-inch AMOLED display with a resolution of 1920 x 1440 pixels and an aspect ratio of 4:3.

The smartphone manufacturer claims that users can bend its foldable display more than 200,000 times without the screen breaking. Royole is hoping to sell early versions of its FlexPai foldable-screen phone for \$1,300 to \$1,500 once it launches in the United States.

Industry insiders say foldable smartphones will be the development direction in the next 10 years. Huawei reportedly plans to release a foldable handset in 2019.

Lenovo Group and Xiaomi Corp have also started their own proto-

types, and LG Group is also working on flexible OLED displays and TVs that roll up into a box.

Huawei has said its first foldable smartphone will work in 5G networks, and this handset will likely resemble the Huawei Mate 20X. Oppo Electronics Corp will show off its foldable phone at the Mobile World Congress in 2019 to be held in Barcelona near the end of February.

BOE Technology Group, a Beijing-based supplier of display products and solutions, commenced mass production of sixth-generation flexible AMOLED display screens at its facility in Chengdu, Southwest China's Sichuan province, in October 2017.