

TROUBLESOME PREAH VIHEAR TEMPLE



arouse with new strength.

Recent listing of the Preah Vihear temple as a UNESCO World Heritage Site has again stirred Thailand Cambodian relations. Both countries have been disputing over this area for long time. The problem seemed to be solved in 1962 by the International Court of Justice in The Hague that decided that the temple belonged to Cambodia. Nevertheless, after the listing of the temple, the dispute

Both sides deployed their troops in the area and new negotiations have begun. Some reports suggest Cambodians plan to build a wall to isolate Thais from the disputed temple. Cambodians hope the UNESCO Heritage Site will trigger a tourism boom in the region that is known as the last region occupied by Khmer Rouge fighters. Cambodian officials want to attract private investors, who would invest in the development of the tourism infrastructure at the site of Preah Vihear temple. They want to improve the accessibility of the site by building a cable car and improving the existing roads.

People within the region hope a number of tourists will come and spend their money in here. Locals are planning to set up new businesses like restaurants or broaden the existing accommodation offer.

The problematic political situation, however, makes them worried. Talks between Cambodia and Thailand take place. Nevertheless, some sources claim the recent civil disorders in Bangkok have forced Thailand to postpone the talks. The next meeting of the Thai-Cambodian Joint Border Committee was scheduled to take place in early October.

Until the territorial dispute is solved and the troops withdrawn from the region, the tourism potential of the new World Heritage Site may not be fully exploited. Until then owners of small businesses will not risk making investments in new operations and the economy will miss this opportunity to develop.

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