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How do you spend your challenging summer having brutal heat and substantial rainfall damages, not just Covid-19?

Since Cambodia TV has broadcasted Japanese rainstorms, my counterpart has contacted me concerned.

A business trip overseas started again, and the Japanese foreign minister visited ASEAN countries, including Cambodia. JICA experts, including me, who have temporarily come home from countries they are working for, have just started preparing for August or September's returning.

Since evacuating Cambodia in April, I have been working from home. Web meetings and Telegram, the popular SNS in Cambodia, enable me to keep in touch with my counterpart to manage the project's progress.



Meeting with Mr. Phibal, Deputy Director General of MPWT

By the way, have you ever heard about "Webinars"? I have recently learned that it is a compound of web and seminar. During working at home, I watched the webinar "COVID-19 Implication on Water Management in Megacities," MLIT's suggestion. Panelists are policymakers and water experts of megacities worldwide: Beijing, Guangzhou, Jakarta, Karachi, Lagos, Mumbai, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Teheran, and Wuhan.

The event presents the current water crisis related to the health and economic risks associated with COVID-19. Invited speakers shared their experiences to find solutions for water management. Panelists appear with

the flat-panel display, and viewers can answer the questionnaire occasionally delivered and make questions with text.

You can find various webinars like this when you search on the internet.

While I needed considerable concentration to listen to the different kinds of English this time, I could get knowledge from home and enjoy the international conference atmosphere. If you are interested, I recommend you to try it.

We could not get benefits from things like webinars in the world of 20 years ago. We will have more options for tools and approaches for international cooperation.

But, be that as it may, on-site activity is essential to JICA experts, and I hope I can re-enter Cambodia as soon as possible.

While I have never visited Southeast Asia or lived overseas, I have enjoyed everyday life in Cambodia. Now let me report my impression of Cambodia after spending about a year and recent "refuge" life in Japan.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Cambodia does not have many heinous crimes, but snatchers happen often. People say taking out your wallet in public or operating your smartphone on the street is not advisable. I have had an experience my smartphone was targeted, and I have heard people around me have met muggers sometimes. I lost my wariness while spending months in Japan, and I should be cautious when I return to Cambodia.

TRANSPORTATION: TUK-TUK AND MOTORCYCLE

A tuk-tuk is a standard three-wheel cab in Southeast Asia. I've heard tuk-tuk drivers used to rip off or take a long way around, but today, a functional mobile app has solved these problems. When you input your departure and destination, the tuk-tuk hanging around will pick you up.

My workplace, the Ministry of public works and transport, is about 3km from my house and costs about 0.1 USD by tuk-tuk. Though recently in Japan, we got to have mobile apps or other options except the traditional taxi, I sometimes feel how convenient it would be if we had a tuk-tuk in Japan.

By the way, I have had some "enjoyable" happenings about tuk-tuk such as:

- Tuk-tuk drivers often make elementary mistakes in the direction, which is apparent even I, a new resident, can be aware of it.
- A driver tried to enter the royal palace and was stopped by a security guard in a hurry.
- Drove a long way round and returned to the starting point in the end. Though the mobile app works with the navigation system, I've heard many people are not good at reading maps in developing countries. If your driver is in trouble, lead them by saying ត្រឹមត្រូវ (right) or ឆ្គង (left.)

When we use tuk-tuk, we should be cautious about snatching by the tuk-tuk running side by side. JICA guides not using a tuk-tuk to and from the airport.

Motorcycles and scooters are also indispensable for transportation in Southeast Asia. Motorcycles and scooters are also essential for transport in Southeast Asia. Since more than two people usually ride on one, I got to feel even uncomfortable if I saw riding alone. Sometimes, I see motorcycles carrying a car's windshield or something massive, which I don't know. Such a scene makes me surprised to learn a significant possibility the motorbikes have and realize how I am fixed on the Japanese idea. Again, JICA expert like me is banned from driving motorcycles or riding as a passenger.

WI-FI

In Cambodia, most restaurants and cafes offer free Wi-Fi. While I'm not sure about their security, it's helpful and easy to forget to top up my SIM card. The convenience of Wi-Fi is higher than in Japan.

People with rich experiences of living abroad often say that I am lucky because my first overseas post is in a city area. Since joining JS, I have lived in five places: Tokyo, Kobe, Fukui, Sendai, and Phnom Penh. Wherever I live, I feel, "To every bird, his own nest is beautiful."

I hope the situation improves and you can visit Cambodia as soon as possible.