

IN BRIEF

New words of warning

Travel warnings from Foreign Affairs Canada are now being issued with new terminology that clarifies and strengthens the alerts being communicated to Canadians considering travel to hazardous destinations.

The recent change eliminates the previous distinctions made between "Canadians" and "Canadian tourists" in favour of more categorical language that applies regardless of the reasons for travel.

"If the level of threat to a person's safety is high, Foreign Affairs Canada will now advise Canadians to avoid 'all travel' to that destination," explains Dan McTeague, who, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for Canadians abroad. "If the threat in a destination is not as great, the department will advise Canadians to avoid 'non-essential travel.'"

For example, if a nation is engaged in a war, a travel warning would likely state that "Foreign Affairs Canada advises against all travel to this country." For a nation recovering from civil unrest, the warning may read, "Foreign Affairs Canada advises against non-essential travel to this country."

There are nine levels of travel warnings issued by FAC for conditions such as armed conflicts, natural disasters and health emergencies.

"Travel warnings constitute the government's front-line advice to Canadians about what may be happening in a country that they are planning to visit or live in," says Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew.

The change aligns the terminology used in Canada's travel warnings with that used by other countries and government departments and responds to a request from the World Tourism Organization that authorities standardize the terms used in such warnings.

FAC travel reports for more than 200 destinations worldwide are available at www.voyage.gc.ca. The travel warnings and travel reports are part of the government's Travel Information Program, which provides official advice to Canadians living and travelling abroad.



photo: Chor Sokumbea

Volleyball champions

A group of disabled Canadian athletes who took part in Cambodia's first international sporting competition in more than 40 years achieved more than a first-place finish.

In a country devastated by conflict and landmines—some 70 percent of the players on Cambodia's disabled volleyball league are landmine survivors—the members of the Canadian Men's Standing Volleyball Team left a deep impression.

"The Canadian team was the hit of the tournament," says Donica Pottie, Canadian Ambassador to Cambodia, of the Asia-Oceania Volleyball Championships, which included Cambodia, Australia and Canada and were held at Phnom Penh Olympic Stadium in June.

The Canadians, ranked number one in the world, provided volleyball clinics and training sessions for the Cambodian

players. As the team had funds to send just five players and a coach to Phnom Penh, two Cambodian athletes were made honorary Canadians to join its ranks for the five-day tournament. The pair was chosen from a Cambodian league team renamed the Kampong Speu Canadians in honour of the visitors.

Seated with Cambodian officials and speaking at the event, Ms. Pottie felt the tournament was a diplomatic opening for Canada that proved inspirational. "It provided an occasion to stress Canada's support for mines action and our commitment to ensuring that human beings are able to live fully realized lives."

The Canadian team, buoyed by their adopted Cambodian members, also demonstrated some excellent playing, never dropping a single set. To see the Cambodia trip diary posted by Canadian team captain Neil Johnson, visit www.volleyball.ca and look under Team Canada – Disabled.

Diplomatic opening: The disabled Canadian Men's Standing Volleyball Team played a major part in the first international sporting competition in Cambodia in 40 years.

Mooncakes, eh!

To mark the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Canada, the two countries have produced the first-ever Canadian version of mooncakes.

The Canadian Embassy in China and Beijing's award-winning Fangshan restaurant have taken one of the finest traditions of the Chinese mid-autumn festival and combined it with the flavours most closely identified with Canada to offer smoked salmon, ice wine and maple syrup mooncakes.

The distinctive cakes bring together old and the new, east and west, imperial Chinese cuisine and contemporary Canadian flavours to celebrate Canada-China ties. A team of experts created and perfected the recipes and production techniques, enabling mooncake lovers in China to sample the Canadian flavours, chosen to represent all regions of the country.



photo: FAC

Mooncakes showcase Canada