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## Government set to slash holidays



The private sector has welcomed the government's move to reduce the number of public holidays in the Kingdom – known for having the most public holidays in the world – by seven days. However, the government had just added the “Day of Remembrance” on May 20, last year, which brings the country's total number of public holidays to 28 days. As Cambodia has labour potential, a reduction in the number of public holidays is key to promoting productivity and reducing production costs, said Eang Mong, the managing director of local cracker producer, Ly Ly Food Industry Co Ltd. “This is what we want and it is very helpful for us to increase productivity. We are producers . . . and a reduction in holidays will help boost our productivity to supply market demand and add more value to production,” he said. He said more public holidays will add more production costs which pose challenges for market competitiveness. “If production quantity drops, the more costs will rise and then we need to pay extra costs for workers on holiday to speed up production, which presents another cost.” “We have so many holidays, the government should deduct some that are unnecessary. It will be beneficial for all sectors but would not make workers very happy,” he said. Holidays around the world The Post previously reported that 2015 Indian media reports claimed that the Kingdom had the most public holidays at 21, while other reports suggested Sri Lanka held the top spot with 25. The average number of holidays for

countries in the G20 – the 20 nations that account for 80 per cent of world trade – is 12. As for Cambodia's neighbours, Thailand has 20 public holidays this year, while Vietnam has 12 and Laos has 10. Cambodia Association of Travel Agents president Chhay Sivlin said though the Kingdom's industry faced competitiveness and the high cost of production, more public holidays are not a good sign for economic growth. “Compared to Vietnam and Thailand – our neighbours who are competitive in business – we still have more holidays. How can we increase our productivity to compete with them? It is also a challenge to attract more investors to the country,” she said. Emerging Markets Consulting senior consultant Ngeth Chou said deducting the number of public holidays is something investors have long argued for, complaining about Cambodia's persistently high energy and logistics costs compared to other countries in the region. “The private sector has always asked for the policy from the government to help reduce the cost of production. We are the kingdom of intense labour, which has the potential to increase the scale of productivity.” “A reduction in the number of holidays will help increase the production chain. It is essential to reduce production costs and generate more money for the country,” he said. Minister of Industry and Handicraft Cham Prasidh said the sub-decree for deducting seven days will be issued at the end of this month in order to increase productivity and promote competitiveness, the Bangkok Post said. However, the ministry's spokesman Oum Sotha told The Post: “I haven't seen any new request from

the Ministry of [Industry and] Handicraft to [reduce] public holidays.”He said the National Committee for Organising National and International Festivals would be the authority in charge of the draft of the sub-decree, and not the ministry.

Source:<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/government-set-slash-holidays>

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## Citizens urged to not worry about Chinese investment



Government spokesman Phay Siphon yesterday called on the public to not worry about losing territorial sovereignty due to an influx of Chinese investment in the Kingdom. Mr Siphon said citizens have been concerned about losing Preah Sihanouk province amid increasing Chinese investment. “We have seen thousands of Chinese criminals arrested and deported – this is a show of our intent to manage the situation,” he said. “The Chinese brought money to invest in Cambodia. People in Kampong Som benefited from selling land to Chinese investors, but the Chinese do not own the land.” “Land will always belong to Khmer people that we can revoke at any time if investors break the law,” Mr Siphon added. “Our government does not allow anyone to be above the law.” Mr Siphon noted that Cambodia and China are friends and are working towards greater Asian competitiveness. He said that Preah Sihanouk is an area targeted for modern development and that young citizens should seek working opportunities

there. Additionally, Mr Siphon said that Cambodia is not involved in the trade war between the United States and China. “Cambodia is still friends with the US,” he said. “Our message to the public is that do not discriminate against other countries.” According to government data in 2018, from January to June, Chinese investment was worth \$5 billion, making China the biggest investor in the Kingdom. Chinese investors are involved in almost every economic sector, from energy to infrastructure, and from tourism to real estate and finance. China is also the number one nation when it comes to foreign tourist arrivals. During the first six months of last year, 931,763 Chinese tourists visited Cambodia. Ky Sereivuth, director of the Chinese Study Centre at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, yesterday said between 2012 to last year, Chinese investments grew an annual average of 27 percent, noting that Chinese imports have also grown 16 percent in the same period. “We trade with China because we receive increasing benefits,” Mr Sereivuth said.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50585850/citizens-urged-to-not-worry-about-chinese-investment/>

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## Lao government considers tax to protect environment



INDUSTRIES that produce pollution may have to pay more taxes now that the Lao government has embraced the National Green Growth

Strategy. Under the strategy, which Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith endorsed on January 30, the Ministry of Finance will impose taxes to discourage industries from producing pollution and harmful waste. At present, industries pay corporate tax, which is calculated at 24 per cent of a company's profit, as well as excise, value-added, and income tax. Tax officials cannot yet say what form this new tax would take. But what is clear to the media is that such a tax would be imposed to deter companies from producing pollution. In some countries, governments impose a carbon tax, which is levied on companies that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. However, many countries see this tax as reducing the competitiveness of their economies. In addition to the environmental protection tax, the finance ministry may also impose taxes in support of energy saving, efficient use of natural resources, and fairer distribution of wealth, in support of the new strategy. The government plans to implement the initiative from now until 2030. To promote green growth, the strategy advises the finance ministry to reduce taxes or offer tax exemptions to businesses that import modern and environmentally friendly technologies and machinery, so that Laos can reduce the amount of environmental damage.

Source: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/lao-government-considers-tax-protect-environment>

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## Pig, pork product imports remain suspended as swine fever continues to spread



Myanmar continues to restrict imports of pigs and pork products following an outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) in neighbouring China and other countries, according to the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. The department has temporarily suspended transport and trading of live pigs and pork products from China via the border, airports and ports since March. Last week, the Department of Civil Aviation also declared a ban on carrying and trading frozen pork, ham, sausages and other pork products at the Yangon International Airport. In its statement, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department advised local pig farmers and traders to clean and disinfect their farms and markets regularly and not to keep wild boars and domesticated pigs within the same compound. It also advised locals to make a report at the nearest general administration office or at the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department of any sudden deaths of wild boars or domesticated pigs. ASF is transmitted among pigs by direct contact with infected animals, their carcasses and bodily fluids or by consuming contaminated meat. Although scientists say that there are no health risks to humans, the disease can spread quickly among pigs and the financial impact to pig farmers and pork producers can be substantial. This is because once

the virus has been detected on a pig farm, the entire population must be culled, experts say. There is currently no vaccine or treatment for ASF. The virus first started spreading in China since August last year and has already reached more than 20 provinces, including Yunnan province, which shares a border with Myanmar. In January, China had already culled 916,000 pigs after around 100 outbreaks of ASF in the country, according to government reports. Around half the world's pigs can be found in China, valuing the industry at around US\$128 billion, according to Bloomberg last year. Despite the disease, pork prices in Myanmar remain stable, said U Maung Maung Lay, vice chair of Myanmar Pig Breeders and Producers Association. "So far, pork sales have been normal. As we do not import frozen pork, there has been no impact," he said. The retail price of pork is now around K10,000 per viss.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/pig-pork-product-imports-remain-suspended-swine-fever-continues-spread.html>

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## Myanmar's Agricultural Products Export Reaches Over 1 bln USD in Over 4 Months



Myanmar's export of agricultural products reached over 1.28 billion U.S. dollars as of Feb. 22 in present fiscal year 2018-2019 which started in October, according to the Commerce Ministry on Wednesday.

The figures showed an increase of 81.9 million U.S. dollars while compared with the same period in last fiscal year 2017-2018 when it showed 1.2 billion U.S. dollars. The country exports rice as the major agricultural product, pulses, corn, rubber, fruits and vegetables and others. Meanwhile, Myanmar President U Win Myint called for doubled efforts to increase agricultural products to boost the agricultural export in the international markets, on the occasion of Myanmar's Peasants Day on March 2. He also urged the farmers to strive for the national interest and all round development with increased momentum, noting that Myanmar is rich in land and water resources and has a good climate favorable for agriculture and livestock production. From October 2018 to Feb. 22 this year, the country earned over 6.3 billion U.S. dollars from the total export.

Source: <https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/myanmar-s-agricultural-products-export-reaches-over-1-bln-usd-over-4-months>

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## Around 130,000 Houses Left Untaxed in Mandalay



There are around 130,000 houses in the area where Mandalay City Development Committee's administration paying no property tax, according to a survey conducted by Mandalay City Development Committee started from July 6, 2018. "According to the data of MCDC's revenue department, there are

over 130,000 houses that have not pay property tax,” U Kyaw Zaw Aung, Member of MCDC, said. MCDC’s revenue department expect to collect K1.8 billion of property tax in six townships of Mandalay in 2018-2019 Fiscal Year and to double the amount in next fiscal year. “After finishing 98 percent of survey process, we have found around 260,000 houses which pay property tax,” he added. The survey was conducted in six townships in Mandalay under Mandalay City Development Committee’s administration to see various facts including how many houses pay property taxes or how many small scale business have business license.

Source:<https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/around-130000-houses-left-untaxed-mandalay>  
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