

Highlight News | May, 02/2019



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Despite higher yields, fish exports down



Cambodia News | April, 30/2019

Fishery yields increased in the first quarter of the year, but did result in higher exports, the latest report from the Ministry of Agriculture shows. From January to March, freshwater fish yields rose by 100 tonnes compared to 2018's first quarter, reaching 18,650 tonnes. Marine fish yields reached 2,630 tonnes, a 60-tonne increase. However, fresh fish exports declined by 150 tonnes, amounting to just 2,450 tonnes, while shipments of processed fish products shrank by 100 tonnes, reaching just 1,000 tonnes. Eng Chea San, director general of the fisheries administration, told Khmer Times on Monday that the drop in exports is the result of strong local demand as the country's population expands and foreign visitors pour in. "International arrivals keep increasing, which results on stronger demand for the product at home," he said. To develop the industry sustainably, Mr Chea San said the government aims to keep yields from growing in the future. He added that the government is now looking for development partners that can help Cambodia expand the aquaculture sector in order to meet local and international demand. Agriculture Minister Veng Sakhon said in January that the European Union and the United States have so far contributed roughly \$150 million to support the Kingdom's aquaculture sector. In January, the US announced the 'Commercialisation of Aquaculture for Sustainable

Trade' programme, a 17-million project that will run from 2019 to 2023 targeting five provinces. Fish is a vital food source in Cambodia, accounting for over 75 percent of the population's animal protein intake, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50599047/despise-higher-yields-fish-exports-down/>

Spike in Chinese tourist arrivals, but overall total dips



Laos News | May, 02/2019

The total number of domestic and foreign tourists declined slightly in the first three months of this year compared to the same period last year, but the number of Chinese visitors increased significantly. More than one million people vacationed in Laos in the first three months of this year, a dip of about 0.5 percent over last year, while the number of visitors from China increased by 16 percent, according to the Tourism Development Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism. Officials expect that more than 1 million Chinese out of a total of 4.5 million people will come to Laos during Visit Laos-China Year 2019. Visitors from Thailand, who make up the bulk of Laos' foreign tourists, dropped by 9 percent, Vietnamese visitors increased by 20 percent, and the number coming from the Republic of Korea sank by 32 percent. An official in charge who ask not to be named told Vientiane Times he believed visitor numbers were down overall because people were unsure of the quality of tourism services here. The cost of goods and accommodation in some popular provinces

was considered to be expensive, although this was something the authorities could not control, he added. Laos has many enticing tourism products but there are several annoyances, including poor road access to tourist sites, he said. He attributed the drop in Thai visitors to that country's own tourism campaign, with locals being encouraged to take holidays at home. He believed the number of visitors from China and Vietnam had increased because Laos had advertised events for Visit Laos-China Year. These countries share borders with Laos and many people there have been attracted by the tourism promotion and came to Laos to enjoy the colourful activities on offer this year. To reach the government's target of 4.5 million visitors during Visit Laos-China Year, the authorities have been advised to create Chinese language tourism pamphlets. These pamphlets should include suggestions for culturally sensitive travel in Laos, including the do's and don'ts when visiting temples and old palaces. Tour guides should also explain aspects of Lao culture to visitors, the official suggested. The government and individuals should cooperate in providing good quality service so that visitors get a good impression of Laos, he added. The authorities should improve services, make changes to the price of goods and accommodation if necessary, and add facilities and interesting activities at tourist sites. Some provinces have created new tourist sites to add to the attractions on offer.

Source: <https://aecnewstoday.com/2019/lao-morning-news-for-may-2-3/>

Xi holds talks with Lao president to promote ties



Laos News | May, 02/2019

BEIJING (Xinhua) -- General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese President, Xi Jinping held talks on Tuesday with Lao President Bounnhang Vorachit, who is also General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee. The two leaders agreed to forge ahead with efforts in building a community with a shared future for the two countries and work together to usher in a new era for bilateral ties. After the talks, the two leaders inked an action plan between the CPC and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party on building a community with a shared future for the two countries. Noting that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between China and Laos, Xi said as bilateral ties now stand at the best stage in history, China will work with Laos to take the opportunity of signing the action plan to jointly cultivate the bilateral relationship in the new era. Xi said China and Laos should take strengthening the leadership of the CPC and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party as guidance and grasp the correct direction of the development of bilateral ties in the new era. He said the two parties must strengthen their strategic self-confidence and sense of urgency, uphold party leadership and ensure the long-term stability of the two countries, so as to contribute to the development of the socialist cause. Noting the two sides should maintain close high-level exchanges, Xi said he would like to carry on the good tradition of conducting annual meetings with

Bounnhang Xi also called on the two sides to deepen theoretical exchanges and strengthen exchanges between their cadres. China and Laos should accelerate the synergy of each other's development strategies, promote the construction of economic corridors, expand the radiation and demonstration effects of major projects such as the China-Laos railway, so as to contribute more to regional connectivity, common development and prosperity, Xi said. The two sides should also closely coordinate and cooperate within multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations, East Asian cooperation and the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, said the Chinese president. Bounnhang spoke highly of China's great achievements in Party and state building and hailed China's successful experience in poverty alleviation. He said it is an unshakable policy of Laos to develop its traditional friendship with China. Laos appreciates China's long-term support and will work with China to give further play to the leading role of the inter-party ties in the development of the state-to-state relationship, and maintain regular high-level meetings between the two parties. Regarding the Belt and Road initiative, Bounnhang said Laos will continue to accelerate cooperation in major projects, so as to further promote the prosperity of the two countries and the region. Concerning the action plan, Xi said this is the first time for China and Laos to sign a cooperation document on building a community with a shared future on the bilateral level, which will not only benefit the two parties, countries and peoples, but also serve as a significant exploration in advancing humanity. Bounnhang said the signing of the action plan will further promote the building of a community with a

shared future for humanity. The two leaders also watched the signing of a series of cooperation documents after the talks.

Source: http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Xi.php

Memories Group acquires three Yangon hotels



Myanmar News | April, 30/2019

Singapore-listed Memories Group has taken a 15.3 percent stake in Strand Hotel International, which, in turn, holds a 50pc stake in Myanmar Hotel International Company. The latter has long-term leasehold rights and the rights to develop, operate, and manage the Strand Hotel, Inya Lake Hotel and Hotel G Yangon. SHIL also holds an 80pc stake in Myanmar Cruise International Ltd, which owns a boat cruise in Myanmar. Memories Group, which is involved in tourism, entered into a share purchase agreement with Oakframe Investment and its holding company, Hong Kong-listed Sun Hung Kai & Co for the proposed acquisition. The transaction will be fully settled by the issuance of US\$3.19 million three-year unlisted convertible bonds at a coupon rate of 5 percent per annum to Oakframe. The bond conversion price of 18.5 US cents represents a 177.8pc premium over the weighted average price of Memories Group's shares at S\$0.09 each on April 24. Memories Group, the tourism arm of Yangon-listed First Myanmar Investment Limited and Singapore-listed Yoma Strategic Holdings, started trading on Singapore's stock exchange last January.

Since listing, it has actively been accumulating tourism-related assets in Myanmar. Last year, the company acquired development rights of Bo Ywe Island, Nga Mann Island and Kyun Pila Island, all located the Mergui Archipelago, as well as a 24-villa five-star hotel Awei Pila on the Kyun Pila Island. It also acquired Hotel Suggati, a 72-room three-star hotel in Mawlamyaing, Mon State, which opened in December. The company paid a total of US\$40.7 million for the acquisitions, which was funded in cash and shares. Memories Group's services currently cover seven of the country's major tourist attractions, including Bagan, Tanintharyi, Kayin, Yangon and Kayah. Myanmar received over 3.55 million foreign tourists last year, a 3.15pc increase over the 3.44 million in 2017, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Source: <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/memories-group-acquires-three-yangon-hotels.html>

Yangon's mass rapid transit to receive Japan aid



Myanmar News | April, 30/2019

The Japanese government will provide overseas development assistance for the Yangon Urban Mass Rapid Transit (YUMT) project, according to Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Maruyama. The Ministry of Transport and Communication (MOTC), with help from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), drafted the development plan for Yangon's urban transport from 2016 to 2035. The project, also known as Yangon 2040 plan, aims for

the expansion of the metropolitan and building infrastructures such as ring roads and railway network to address the city's population, which is expected to double by 2040. The YUMT project will be a part of the 2040 plan and is a collaborative effort between the Japanese government, JICA, MOTC, and the Yangon regional government. The mass rapid transit plan will construct a 27km railway on North-South Road connecting Dala township and Mingaladon township and 25km rail on East-West Road connecting Hlaing Thar Yar and Toekyaung Lay, according to MOTC. Initial feasibility study of YUMT project took place between August 2016 and August 2017. Currently, the ministry and JICA are conducting a feasibility study. This study is expected to complete in September, while the final report will be published at the end of this year. The Japanese government has provided an ODA loan with 0.01-percent interest rate and 40 years of repayment period for implementing this project. Ambassador Maruyama added that the investment cost of the project will be disclosed when the study is completed. YUMT is expected to address Yangon's traffic problems, commented transport minister U Thant Sin Maung.

Source: <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/yangons-mass-rapid-transit-receive-japan-aid.html>

Yangon to raise K40 billion for compensation by selling land



Myanmar News | May, 02/2019

The Yangon government has to sell land so that it can pay farmers K40 billion (US\$26.30 million) in compensation for their land, said Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. But the chief minister said that the land will be sold only to buyers who will use it for businesses, and it will not allow buying for speculation. "We heard that some didn't want compensation, but just the land. Billions of kyat had to be invested in ditches, road repairs and bridges by the hluttaw. Without this investment, the land would not be worth much," he said. If farmers regain the land on which basic improvements have been made by the government, it would be disservice to the state and public, U Phyo Min Thein said. He said compensation will be paid according to the market price when the land was confiscated, and farmers can buy the land at the market price if they want to live on land where improvements have been made. A committee has been formed to sell the land in the region, and a list of the land to be sold and the terms of the sales will be issued soon. He said those who buy a plot of land are allowed to build affordable housing, businesses and factories on them but are not allowed to resell them. The President's Office announced in June a review of confiscated farms and other land. It said land that had been relinquished would be returned to the original owners as soon as possible, while land that had not been relinquished would immediately undergo a review.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/yangons-mass-rapid-transit-receive-japan-aid.html>

High supply gives Việt Nam's poultry firms chance to reach export markets



Vietnam News | May, 02/2019

HÀ NỘI — Việt Nam's poultry producers have a big opportunity to export their products thanks to high supply levels, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Nguyễn Thanh Sơn, chairman of the Việt Nam Poultry Association, said Việt Nam's signing of several free trade agreements has created chances for local firms to approach new markets with great potential. To compete in export markets, Nguyễn Quốc Toàn, acting director of the MARD's Agro Processing and Market Development Agency, said local enterprises should identify target markets and consumer tastes of potential import countries to ensure they introduce products that meet demand. For instance, firms should boost exports of chicken breast because the product is favoured by consumers in export markets, while chicken thighs and wings are popular in the domestic market. Target markets of Vietnamese firms for chicken meat exports include Japan, China and the Philippines. Potential markets include Saudi Arabia, South Africa and United Arab Emirates (UAE), according to Toàn. Meanwhile, firms should focus on exporting poultry eggs to traditional markets in Northeast and Southeast Asia. Despite plentiful supply and high import demand, exporting poultry products is not easy because of technical barriers and strict food safety and hygiene controls in import countries, Phạm Văn Đông, Head of the

Department of Animal Health told Sài Gòn Giải Phóng (Liberated Sài Gòn) newspaper. He said the ministry has spent two years negotiating with Japanese authorities about exporting Vietnamese chicken meat to Japan. At present, although they have received approval from Japanese authorities, each batch of poultry products from Việt Nam has to be kept at a Japanese veterinary agency to check for pathogens and antibiotic residues. Therefore, if firms want to promote exports, they must invest in closed-loop production or apply modern processing technology, he said. In addition, they should strictly control diseases and avoid the use of antibiotics and banned substances in farming. If there is an outbreak of a disease, export of poultry products could be halted and firms would lose market share, he said. Nguyễn Xuân Dương, acting director general of the MARD's Husbandry Department, said that in order to have safe and modern livestock production, the industry should gradually reduce small-scale animal husbandry facilities and increase large livestock farms. The ministry should encourage building VietGAP breeding facilities to establish safe farms and create favourable conditions for the local husbandry industry to move towards international integration and exporting poultry products, he said. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nguyễn Xuân Cường has proposed the State create favourable conditions for enterprises that export poultry products to expand production and receive quality certificates. These steps would help

the enterprises approach demanding markets around the world. Dương said poultry farming has recently seen a shift from small-scale farming to intensive farming. Productivity and profits are both increasing, turning poultry farming from a secondary occupation into a main job in agricultural production in some places. In recent years, the number of poultry has increased by an average of more than 6 per cent annually. By 2018, output exceeded 1.1 million tonnes of poultry meat and 11 billion eggs. At present, farmers across the country are raising around 409 million poultry animals, of which chickens account for 77.5 per cent. Cities and provinces that have shown strong development in poultry production include Hà Nội, Ninh Bình, Quảng Ninh, Bình Dương and Đồng Nai. There are currently two main models of farming: intensive farming and household-farming. Intensive farming has been developing rapidly with 10,000-12,000 farms, mainly in the Red River Delta, the Southeast region and the Mekong Delta. For decades, the domestic husbandry industry has produced poultry products mainly for the local market, according to the ministry. However, as supply has increased, the industry has begun to consider export markets. In the past three years, some firms have started exporting poultry products to other countries. Export value of poultry products has shown rapid growth. Poultry exports exceeded US\$3 million in 2016, climbed to \$5.6 million in 2017 and reached more than \$18 million in 2018. Poultry products produced in Việt

Nam include fresh duck eggs, salted duck eggs, processed chicken meat, canned quail eggs, egg powder and braised black-bone silky chickens. Every year, the country exports between 1.25 million and 1.5 million breeding poultry and around 10-15 million salted duck eggs. Export of chicken meat started in September 2017 and reached nearly 8,000 tonnes of processed chicken meat in 2018. — VNS

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/519312/high-supply-gives-viet-nams-poultry-firms-chance-to-reach-export-markets.html#XoW3uohd6GtFO2H2.97>
