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## Cambodia, Vietnam to collaborate in smart cities



*Cambodia News | 01 August, 2019*

Cambodia and Vietnam have agreed to work together to develop smart cities. The Agence Kampuchea Presse reported that the issue was among the major topics discussed during a meeting between Pa Socheatevong, Phnom Penh Municipal Council president, and a visiting delegation from Vietnam headed by Nguyen Thi Le, deputy secretary of Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee. The report mentioned Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's commercial centre, and Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh as the focal points for cooperation. Mr Socheatevong was quoted as saying that Phnom Penh has developed tremendously, but that it faces traffic congestion and waste management problems that need to be addressed. Ho Chi Minh City is experiencing many of the same problems as it races ahead as Vietnam's most important commercial hub. The parties agreed that cooperation in smart city development will be critical in solving these issues. 'Smart city' is a sustainable development model that uses technology and data to make operations and life in an urban area better and more efficient. The goal is to solve many of the problems faced by cities, including traffic jams, pollution, and high crime rates. The report did not mention the details of the cooperation but said that both countries could benefit from the exchange of ideas, experience, and technology. The desire to create smart cities in

Cambodia is on the upswing after Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Battambang were included in the Asean Smart Cities Network (ASCN), a Japanese initiative that aims to support the creation of technologically advanced urban areas across Southeast Asia. Citing its progress and expansion, experts at a recent forum have also said that it is high time for Phnom Penh to develop into a smart city. In Vietnam, the drive to create smart cities is in full swing, with Ho Chi Minh City leading the way. In March, Ho Chi Minh City came up with a scheme to transform itself into a smart city by 2025, becoming the first city in Vietnam to do so. The cities of Hanoi and Danang and the provinces of Bac Ninh and Binh Duong followed with their own smart city development plans.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50629109/cambodia-vietnam-to-collaborate-in-smart-cities/>

## Vegetable shipping centre opens in Kandal



*Cambodia News | 01 August, 2019*

Kandal province on Monday inaugurated the "Vegetable Shipping Centre", a facility that boasts a food safety laboratory and that will supply the market with safe and quality agricultural goods. The centre, hailed as the first of its kind in Cambodia, has been built with funds donated by the government of Japan through its project 'Kusanone'. Japanese Ambassador Hidehisa Horinouchi said in a press release that the centre is a contribution from the government of Japan to provide safe and reliable

agricultural goods to Cambodian consumers. “This is Cambodia’s first shipping center. It has a small laboratory to check for pesticides to ensure the food that reaches the market is safe. “Our hope is that this shipping centre will help spread a culture of food safety and become a symbol of the friendship between the people of Japan and Cambodia,” he said. Presiding over the centre’s launch, Minister of Agriculture Veng Sakhon said the facility represents an important step in improving the quality of local agricultural goods. He thanked the government and people of Japan for their contributions in improving food safety in the Kingdom and highlighted that the Cambodian government is implementing a comprehensive programme of reform to modernise the country. He said Cambodia has enjoyed strong economic growth – averaging 7 percent – during the last 10 years, and said this growth allows farmers to adapt their production practices to serve their needs and the demands of the market. “Our agricultural community has become a major force that has made a positive difference in our society. “People are changing their eating habits and seeking out high-quality and safe food, especially vegetables and fruits. With the increase in tourist arrivals every year, the demand for healthy food continues to rise. Meeting these needs requires that all stakeholders work closely together,” the minister said. Mr Sakhon pointed out that the ministry has introduced a new set of standards for the local agriculture industry

called ‘CamGAP’, and added that a set of standards for growing organic produce will soon follow.

*Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50629110/vegetable-shipping-centre-opens-in-kandal/>*

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## Electronic system helps govt to boost revenue



*Laos News | 02 August, 2019*

Revenue earned from taxes increased by 20 percent in the first six months of this year compared to the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Finance. The increase followed the introduction of the new tax revenue management information system (TAXRIS) earlier this year. So far, the system is operating in 10 major towns in seven provinces of Laos. The finance ministry plans to expand the system to all provinces by 2020 as part of the government’s efforts to modernise the e-tax payment system and enhance transparency in the financial sector. Meanwhile, taxpayers will be encouraged to make payments through the TAXRIS and other banking systems to boost national revenue. To date, over 3,500 businesses have registered to pay taxes through the TAXRIS system, and the finance ministry has been urged to work in cooperation with local authorities to encourage more enterprises to do so. TAXRIS aims at modernising revenue management in line with government policy and international best

practices of accountability and transparency. The finance ministry has taken the advice of experts from the European Union (EU), World Bank and other organisations to modernise public finance management. The ministry has also introduced a single-window customs system to facilitate import and export procedures to help improve the overall business environment. Importers and exporters can pay tariffs, taxes, service charges and any other fees through the Lao National Single Window (LNSW) at border crossings where goods are transitted. The LNSW has been integrated with the electronic customs declaration system, known as ASYCUDA, and the Smart Tax system. The LNSW is also designed to link to the industry and commerce, public works and transport, and agriculture and forestry sectors. These electronic systems are being implemented at the first Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge in Vientiane with plans for installation at other international border crossings in 2020. Thanks to these electronic systems, income amassed at the first Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge increased by 10.25 percent in the first six months of this year compared to the same period in 2018. In 2019, the government plans to collect 26.3 trillion kip in revenue, of which domestic revenue is expected to reach 24.24 trillion kip with expenditure set at 33.39 trillion kip. In the first six months of this year, revenue collection was expected to reach 12.96 trillion kip, equal to 49.2

percent of the target for the whole year. Although the government is encountering challenges in gathering sufficient revenue, the introduction of electronic systems and the increase in tax payments will help to plug financial leaks and eliminate corruption by officials.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten\\_Electronic\\_175.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Electronic_175.php)

## Rising food prices hit low income earners



Laos News | 01 August, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Many people, especially those on low incomes, look set to suffer as food prices continue to spiral. They say that rising food prices are driving up the cost of living, which means they have to eat less or change their lifestyle to match the current economic circumstances. Speaking during a recent interview session with the KPL News Agency, a student at the National University of Laos said she was one of many people affected by the increase in food prices because her income did not change. "But I am an average income earner so the impact of higher prices is minimal," she said. Another student pointed out that low income earners would feel the full brunt of the price hikes, saying that the same amount of money they had at their disposal would not cover the cost of higher priced food. "This will mean that they have less money to save," he added. Data from the Lao National Statistics Bureau shows that the price of food rose by 3.20 percent in June compared to the

same period last year, making it one of the driving forces of inflation. The June Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is posted on the Bureau's website, indicates that the price of rice increased by 12 percent in June compared to the same period last year, while the price of fish and pork rose by 3.1 percent. However, the latest CPI release indicates that inflation growth was 2.48 percent in June, down from 2.54 percent in May. The Bureau said multiple factors were at play in driving inflation in June. The depreciating value of the kip against the Thai baht and US dollar was part of the reason for higher food prices. The price of imported goods increased by 1.60 percent compared to the same period last year, the Bureau noted in its monthly inflation monitoring report. The National University of Laos' Economics and Business Management Faculty, Associate Professor Dr Phouphet Kyophilavong, said there were several reasons for the higher food prices, adding that one of the big challenges for Laos was low productivity. He said the government was aware of the need to boost productivity and diversify the economy, adding that effective implementation of this policy would reduce the threat of inflation in the long run. "The government has issued a decree aimed at improving the business climate so that businesses will find it easy to operate. This will help to reduce the price of goods in Laos," he said in an interview with KPL.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/rising-food-prices-hit-low-income-earners-101263>

## FDI jumps 77pc to US\$2.3 billion in first half of 2019



Myanmar News | 01 August, 2019

Government-approved foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country stood at US\$2.3 billion in the first-half of 2019, a 77 percent improvement from the same period last year when approved FDI came in at US\$1.3 billion. According to statistics from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Singapore was the top investor with US\$1.3 billion and 13 approved projects, China came second with US\$330 million and over 60 approved projects. By industry, transport and communications received the most investments of US\$1 billion, manufacturing saw US\$800 million investments while services received US\$160 million. Another US\$130 million of approved investments went to the hotel and tourism as well as livestock and fisheries industries. The World Bank in its latest report on Myanmar noted that FDI commitments have picked up slightly in the first-half of 2018-19 compared with the same period of last year but remains lower by a third when compared with the annual FDI commitments for 2017/2018. The World Bank sees the country's growth in the medium-term to be supported by a gradual rebound in infrastructure investment and higher productivity in sectors of the economy that the government has liberalised. Among them, wholesale and retail distributive trades as well as banking and financial services including insurance will see growth. It

expects implementation of large infrastructure projects to pick up, including construction in economic corridors, together with implementation of energy and transport projects. The growth momentum in the manufacturing sector will also continue. Yangon Region chief minister U Phyo Min Thein said at a meeting of the Yangon Region Investment Committee last week that the garment industry has become the focus of investors recently with textile and accessories manufacturing investments in Yangon. He said that the garment industry has seen attracting investments in value-added activities besides just cut-make-pack manufacturing. "The industry has grown, attracted FDI and there are job opportunities," U Phyo Min Thein said. Myanmar has recently ramped up activities to lure FDI by organising investment promotion forums in Yangon Region, Tanintharyi Region (in October), Rakhine State and Chin State. "We're working with the Union government to attract more FDI, that's a priority," U Phyo Min Thein said.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/fdi-jumps-77pc-us23-billion-first-half-2019.html>

## Skilled Myanmar workers to be allowed up to five-year work in Japan



Myanmar News | 01 August, 2019

Under a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) between Myanmar and Japan signed on March 28 this year, skilled Myanmar workers will be allowed to stay in Japan for five years to work for 14 sectors. The businesses they have to

work are related to healthcare workers, building, cleaning and management, machines and parts, industrial equipment, electricity supply, electronics and information, construction, ship-building and machinery, car servicing and maintenance, aviation, hotel service, agriculture, fishery, livestock breeding, food and beverage and food service. Those who have completed work proficiency courses conducted by related departments from Japan, passed Japanese language tests and completed technical worker course level 2 will be permitted to work in Japan as skilled workers. Skilled workers for hotel service industry will be invited first. Japanese officials will come to Myanmar to conduct exams for them in October this year. Both countries have agreed on prescribed standards for overseas employment agencies. Those employment agencies that have registered at the Labour Department need to follow the prescribed rules and standards in sending skilled workers to Japan.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/skilled-myanmar-workers-to-be-allowed-up-to-five-year-work-in-japan>

## 79,300 new businesses set up in seven months



Vietnam News | 01 August, 2019

The country had 79,300 newly-established businesses with a combined registered capital of 999.4 trillion VND (42.97 billion USD) in January – July, representing year-on-year increases of 4.6 percent and 29.6 percent, respectively. The average registered capital of each newly-established firm



was 12.6 billion VND, up 23.9 percent, the highest level in recent years. As many as 24,300 businesses resumed operation, up 29.9 percent against the same period last year. In the economic sector, 1,100 businesses were established in agriculture, forestry and aquaculture, 21,600 in industry and construction, and 56,600 in services, accounting for 1.4 percent, 27.2 percent and 71.4 percent respectively of the total newly-established firms. Major economic regions reported an increasing number of newly-established businesses such as the Red River Delta (7.2 percent), the north-central and central coastal region (6.8 percent), and the Central Highlands (10.3 percent).-VNA.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/79300-new-businesses-set-up-in-seven-months/157104.vnp>

## Proposal to legalise 30-day visa exemption for foreigners entering Phú Quốc Island



Vietnam News | 01 August, 2019

HA NOI – The Ministry of Public Security is proposing to pass a regulation that allows visa exemptions for foreigners entering Phú Quốc Island, Kiên Giang Province with a 30-day stay period. This proposal is in the draft Law on foreigners' entry into, exit from, transit through and residence in Việt Nam (Law No 47), which will be sent to the Government before being submitted to the National Assembly for

approval at the 8th session in October. At the end of 2013, the then Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng issued a number of specific mechanisms and policies to develop Phú Quốc Island. One of which is visa exemptions for foreigners entering the island with a temporary stay of no more than 30 days. This rule has been applied for five years but has not been legalised so far. The ministry said it should be supplemented to the amended Law No 47 to provide legal basis for continuing to apply this mechanism. The draft law also proposes to remove the regulation that compels the following entry date to be at least 30 days from the previous exit for unilateral visa exemption. The existing regulation aims to restrain foreigners exploiting this rule to work in Việt Nam without complying with the Labour Law. However, many tourism businesses have said the rule has caused difficulties for foreign tourists entering Việt Nam on unilateral visa waiving mechanism. Another issue mentioned by the draft law is foreigners taking advantage of the regulations that grant visas and temporary residence cards for a maximum of five years for foreigners with investment certificates of contributing capital to enterprises in Việt Nam. A number of foreigners have contributed little money in micro businesses such as barber shops and food shops to get five-year visas. Therefore, the ministry has proposed to issue visas with a term of not more than 12 months for foreign investors with small

investment capital. Meanwhile, investors with large investment capital may be granted visas of no more than 10 years. In addition, the draft law also amends the visa exemption provisions for foreigners entering border-gate economic zones or special administrative economic units. According to a report of the General Department of Tourism, more than 2.2 million visitors came to Phú Quốc Island in the first half of this year, up nearly 36 per cent year-on-year and equivalent to 52.7 per cent of its yearly plan. Of which, foreign tourists reached 400,000 people, up 35.5 per cent year-on-year. – VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/523475/proposal-to-legalise-30-day-visa-exemption-for-foreigners-entering-phu-quoc-island.html>  
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