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## Food tourism key to boosting national economy: experts



*Cambodia News | 22 August, 2019*

Tourism industry insiders and high-ranking officials gathered yesterday at Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel to discuss the role of gastronomy in attracting more tourists to the Kingdom. Speaking at the 'First International Conference on Cambodian Gastronomy and Food Tourism' yesterday, Tourism Minister Thong Khon said gastronomy is a crucial aspect of tourists' experiences. "Food and gastronomy are key elements when it comes to attracting visitors," the minister said at the event, which was organised in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The minister praised Cambodia's rich food tradition. "Food in Cambodia has a central role during cultural, traditional, and religious ceremonies. "Different dishes acquire different meanings – some Cambodian dishes represent peace, while others embody ideas like solidarity and harmony," he said. Minister Khon said the conference aims to find ways of promoting the Kingdom's culinary offer and use gastronomy to bolster national identity. Xu Jing, UNWTO director for Asia-Pacific, highlighted the role of gastronomy in boosting tourism around the world, while also noting tourism's importance in strengthening economic growth. "Tourism is an important driver of economic growth that helps in the fight against poverty," he said. By organising the conference, Cambodia has joined a global

movement to connect gastronomy and the tourism industry, Mr Xu said. Gavin Bell, team leader of the Tourism Commercial Capacity Building Programme in Cambodia, said food tourism is a growing industry around the world. "The world is increasingly open and becoming globalised. Tourists seek experiences based on local identity and culture. It is one of the most dynamic segments within the tourism market," he said. He noted that a recent survey by Adventure Travel Trade has found that approximately 25 percent of tourists' travel budget is spent on food. The same survey finds that 81 percent of tourists learn about local culinary traditions when they visit a destination while 81 percent of all tourists believe food and drink help in understanding the local culture. Mr Bell said building experiential food tourism offers based on local food traditions and integrating them into the national tourism landscape fosters economic development. He said linking food and tourism will help rebrand Cambodia as more than just a temple destination. Renowned chef and president of the Cambodia Tourism Federation Luu Meng also spoke at the event, noting the growing importance of gastronomy in the global tourism industry. "For gastronomy to reach its full potential, large investments are required to improve the quality of services. We must also focus on offering unique products and improving the skills of our professionals," he said. Mr Meng said the food and beverage industry in the Kingdom faces several challenges, including a lack of processing facilities and market research, as well as insufficient sanitary

and hygiene standards. “We need investments in technology and education to improve the sector’s profitability,” he said, adding that compliance with international standards will create more demand for Cambodian food products abroad. “To this end, the government is encouraging investment in agri-processing zones through public-private partnerships,” he said, noting that governmental efforts in this area have vastly improved the country’s product offer and reduce Cambodia’s reliance on imports. According to the Ministry of Tourism, last year the Kingdom welcomed about 6.2 million tourists, an increase of 10.7 percent year-on-year. The tourism industry generated \$4.3 billion in revenue, contributing 12.7 percent of GDP.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50635865/food-tourism-key-to-boosting-national-economy-experts/>

## Container traffic at capital’s port up 30 pct



*Cambodia News | 22 August, 2019*

State-owned Phnom Penh Autonomous Port saw a significant rise in container traffic during the first seven months of the year. From January to July, the port handled 150,419 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), a 29.5 hike compared to the same seven-month period last year, according to its latest unaudited report filed to the Cambodia Securities Exchange. The publicly listed firm noted that 1,332 cargo ships passed through the port during the seven months, a 12.8 percent hike. The amount of

fuel oil and gas shipped through the port rose to 2.2 million tonnes, a 25 percent year-on-year increase. The report also shows a significant increase in the number of foreign tourists passing through the port. More than 27,600 foreign tourists boarded or disembarked vessels at PPAP, up 29.7 percent from the same period last year. PPAP is one of five companies publicly traded in the Kingdom. Last year, the company’s net profit margin rose by more than 39 percent. The 17th edition of Asean Ports & Shipping, the biggest event for the shipping industry in Southeast Asia, will be held at Phnom Penh’s NagaWorld Hotel on September 10-12.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50635864/container-traffic-at-capitals-port-up-30-pct/>

## Vientiane City Bus Moves Toward Cashless Payment



*Laos News | 22 August, 2019*

Vientiane Capital State Bus Enterprise (VSCBE,) which operates Vientiane City Bus Service, is implementing a cashless electronic payment system for some of its routes in the capital. Passengers on the Airport line and ITECC line are now able to pay for their journey via the LDB trust service, a QR code payment system developed by Lao Development Bank. Payments can also be made with VISA, MasterCard, UnionPay and JCB, according to images of the service revealed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Laos. If it is successful, other banks will join the movement to provide the cashless payment services for the bus

users, said JICA. JICA has closely worked with the country's Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Department of Public Works and Transport and Vientiane Capital to enhance the capacity of VSCBE as well as to promote public bus ridership in Vientiane. In particular, they focused on improving the corporate management system, bus operation service and transportation policy on public bus service. VSCBE currently operates 14 city routes, of which 11 are urban, as well as six provincial routes and four international routes to Thailand. As of June 2017, the total number of employees and workers of VCSBE stood at 242, and 133 of them were drivers.

Source : <https://laotiantimes.com/2019/08/22/vientiane-city-bus-moves-toward-cashless-payment/>

## Industry ministry orders suspension of plastic waste recycling plants



*Laos News | 22 August, 2019*

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - The Ministry of Industry and Commerce will no longer issue operating licences to manufacturing plants that use plastic waste as a raw material, as part of efforts to improve standards in the processing industry. Minister of Industry and Commerce Ms Khemmani Pholsena signed a ministerial order on July 30 authorising industry officials nationwide to temporarily freeze the issuing of business operation licences to these manufacturing plants. This ministerial decision will not affect the operations of those plants that have already received permission to carry out this type of business and they may

continue to operate as normal. But plants that cause environmental damage must be ready for inspection by industry officials. Factories that harm the environment will receive a warning and be advised to improve their manufacturing processes. Businesses that fail to improve their processing methods in line with industry standards will be ordered to close, according to the ministerial order, which is seen as an attempt by the ministry to protect the environment and improve the operations of plastic waste recycling plants. The ministerial order, which is posted on the Lao National Gazette, does not say when the ministry will resume the issuing of operating licences to enterprises whose manufacturing plants use plastic waste as a raw material. One of the key messages contained in the order is that businesses that already have a registration certificate, tax ID, investment permission and factory construction permission, can continue to build a manufacturing plant but cannot go into production until receiving permission to operate. Companies that have received investment permission but have not yet been authorised to build a factory are advised to suspend their operations until a new notice is issued, according to the order. Manufacturing plants that do not have the proper legal documents are advised to stop their operations immediately, the order states. The industry minister suspended the issuing of operating licences to these plants amid concerns over their impact on the environment and the sustainability of their operations. The government has adopted the

National Green Growth Strategy, which highlights the need to protect the environment. In this regard, manufacturing plants that are deemed to produce pollution will be discouraged from operating.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/industry-ministry-orders-suspension-plastic-waste-recycling-plants-102439>

## Around Ks32 billion profit budgeted for electricity sector



*Myanmar News | 22 August, 2019*

The government will generate a profit of around Ks 32 billion in 2019-2020 fiscal year as the electricity bill is increased, according to the Public Account Committee's report. The Public Account Committee submitted its findings and remarks on the Union Budget Bill for 2019-2020 FY at the session of the Union Parliament on August 21. Aung Min, Chair of the Public Account Committee said: "Since July 1, the ministry has increased the electricity bill. The State-owned economic entities under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy have submitted a budgeted profit of Ks 735 billion. Normally, the profit seems to be linked to a hike in electricity bill. So the ministry describe its profits differently. The ministry is the combination of electricity and energy. The electricity sector suffers losses every year until 2018-19 FY. The government has to incur the losses of the electricity sector." "As a matter of fact, the energy sector alone generates the profits. Take a look at the profit and loss of the energy sector, the sector is

expected to earn Ks 703 billion or around 96 per cent of the total profit, in 2019-2020 FY. After the hike in electricity bill on July 1, the people become aware of the fact that they should conserve energy more. In addition, the budgeted electricity bills for the departments including the central organizations and the Union Ministries were reduced by Ks 30.305 billion for 2019-2020 FY," he added. It is found that the government ministries calculated the increased budgets for electricity as the Joint Bill Committee designated the increased electricity bills under the National Planning Bill for 2019-2020 FY. The budgeted electricity bills are very high even though it should be two or threefold-increase. The committee suggested that the same rates should be fixed.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/around-ks32-billion-profit-budgeted-for-electricity-sector>

## Airline increases flights to Mandalay, Shan



*Myanmar News | 22 August, 2019*

Yangon-based Air Kanbawza, part of the Kanbawza Group of Companies that includes Kanbawza Bank, has increased flights to Mandalay Region, and Lashio and Heho in Shan State in response to attacks last week by ethnic armed groups. The attacks have cut off many people in Shan, including foreign tourists. An official of the airline confirmed the increase in frequency for the flights, adding that it

was in response to demand. The official said flights have been added on the Mandalay, Lashio and Heho routes. “The fighting has made it difficult for people and goods to move to and from Lashio,” the official said, adding that the additional flights were started last Saturday and are expected to continue until Sunday. Since the attacks on August 15, land transportation of goods and people has been difficult and, according to travel agencies, tours of Thibaw and Nawngcho in Shan State for foreign tourists have been cancelled. The clashes stranded 57 tourists in Lashio, Thibaw and Nawngcho townships, but they have since been flown by Air Kanbawza to Yangon and Mandalay, according to the Lashio Directorate of Hotels and Tourism. Air Kanbawza provides flights to Mandalay, Myitkyina, Nyaung-U, Kalay, Heho, Lashio, Tachileik, Myeik, Kawthoung, Thandwe, Sittwe and Nay Pyi Taw.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/airline-increases-flights-mandalay-shan.html>

## Viet Nam emerges as attractive destination for Australian investors



*Vietnam News | 22 August, 2019*

SYDNEY — Viet Nam has emerged as an attractive destination for international investors including those from Australia, thanks to its cheap labour, young population, high education standards, and government policies which offer tax breaks and other incentives for foreign firms. An article published in the Australian Financial Review said the Southeast

Asian country, best known to Australians as a laid-back holiday destination, is now on the radar for big businesses, attracted by these advantages. Wes Maas, a former South Sydney rugby league player who founded NSW-based construction materials, equipment and services company Maas Group, first saw the potential in Viet Nam several years ago, the article said. From buying equipment from Viet Nam, he opened a plant, valued at A\$315 million (US\$220 million) in the country's south last month, recruiting 320 staff including 45 engineers. Maas told the Australian Financial Review that the biggest attraction was finding a skilled workforce to pre-build, prepare and manufacture the underground mining equipment it exports out of Việ̣t Nam around the world. Another Australian firm – SunRice Group – also acquired a Vietnamese processing mill in the country's south last year and has established breeding programmes and works with local farmers to introduce more sustainable and advanced growing practices, according to the article. The company said its 260,000 tonne mill in Viet Nam now plays a key role in the company's plans to increase global demand for its branded rice product. Australian logistics giant Linfox also inaugurated a \$23-million warehouse project earlier this year in the northern province of Bặ́c Ninh after entering the market for 13 years. Statistics from the Ministry of Planning and Investment's Foreign Investment Agency showed that Australian businesses had pumped more than \$124 million into Việ̣t Nam in the

first seven months of 2019. That helped Australia rank 15th among 99 countries and territories investing in the country. As of July 2019, Viet Nam was home to 465 Australia-financed projects with capital totalling more than \$1.89 billion. According to ANZ, Viet Nam accounts for 0.1 per cent of total Australian investment abroad. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/524365/vietnam-emerges-as-attractive-destination-for-australian-investors.html#rjCe58aCupjXdZSE.97>

## Dong Nai works to create breakthrough in FDI attraction



*Vietnam News | 22 August, 2019*

Dong Nai (VNA) – The southern province of Dong Nai is completing its transport infrastructure and boosting administrative reform to improve local business climate as a measure to luring more foreign investors. Currently, a series of key transport projects are underway in the locality, including the Long Thanh international airport, and the Dau Giay – Phan Thiet and Ben Luc – Long Thanh highways. According to Ho Van Ha, Director of the provincial Planning and Investment, the province houses 35 industrial parks (IPs), of which 32 have been put into operation with occupation rate reaching 78.5 percent. Dong Nai is home to 1,804 foreign-invested projects worth nearly 33 billion USD from 45 countries and territories, with the Republic of Korea, Taiwan (China) and Japan the top investors. Ha said Dong Nai prioritises high-tech and environmentally

friendly projects, while rejecting labour-intensive and low-tech ones. The inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Dong Nai topped 1.14 billion USD in the first seven months, or 114 percent of the 2019 target. Statistics from the provincial management board of IPs showed a high FDI disbursement rate during the period at 107 percent, with 800 million USD disbursed. The total FDI attraction and disbursement are projected to hit 2 billion USD and 1.5 billion USD for the entire year, respectively.-VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/dong-nai-works-to-create-breakthrough-in-fdi-attraction/158279.vnp>