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PM says fall in Siem Reap's tourist numbers not a cause for concern



Cambodia News | 03 September, 2019

Prime Minister Hun Sen last week said that the recent drop in the number of tourists in Siem Reap, home of the famed Angkor Archaeological Park, should not be a cause for concern as it is the result of a government push to diversify the Kingdom's tourism offer. In a voice recording share with local media on Saturday, Mr Hun Sen urged journalist to "see the whole picture", noting that tourist arrivals for the country as a whole have increased. "There has been a small slowdown in the number of tourists to Siem Reap. This is because we now have many other tourism destinations," Mr Hun Sen said. "The decline of tourist arrivals in Siem Reap does not mean that fewer tourists visited Cambodia. Focusing on just one place creates a false picture of the situation of the tourism sector and the country's economy. This is not how it should be done. "The first thing we have to do is look at the figures for tourist arrivals for the whole country. The overall number of tourists coming to Cambodia has increased. For example, the number of tourists in Sihanoukville is on the rise. "We cannot look at just one tree; we have to look at the whole forest. We must focus on making Cambodia a more attractive destination," he said. Hun Sen stressed that Cambodia has been diversifying its tourism offer away from just the Angkor Archeological Complex and the coast. He said that alternative tourism sites are now becoming more

popular with international travellers, including Kampot, Kep, Koh Kong, Ratanakkiri and Mondulakiri provinces. "If the data for the whole country showed a decrease in tourist numbers then we would have a problem. It would be a wakeup call." Mr Hun Sen also suggested that the decline in tourist numbers to Siem Reap could be due to an economic slowdown in the region and the world causing people to travel less. According to a recent report from the Ministry of Tourism, tourist arrivals to Siem Reap from January to June decreased by 8 percent compared to the same period last year. About 1.2 million tourists visited the province during the first half of the year. However, Cambodia welcomed 3.3 million international holidaymakers during the same period, an 11.2 percent increase. Tourism Ministry spokesman Top Sopheak agreed with Mr Hun Sen's remarks. "We have seen a decline in the number of tourists visiting Siem Reap but the number of international travellers in the coastal areas and the Northeast has increased. "If the overall number of tourists coming to Cambodia had decreased, we would have a reason to worry. Fortunately, that's not the case," Mr Sopheak said. Last year, 6.2 million foreign holidaymakers visited the Kingdom, a 10.7 percent increase year-on-year. Cambodia is expected to attract 7 million foreign tourists in 2020, generating \$4.3 billion for the industry.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50639576/pm-says-fall-in-siem-reaps-tourist-numbers-not-a-cause-for-concern/>

Kingdom to become a key manufacturing base for US bike firm



Cambodia News / 03 September, 2019

American bicycle manufacturer Ken International said Cambodia will soon become one of its major assembling and manufacturing bases. According to an article in South China Morning Post last week, company CEO Arnold Kamler said that about 30 percent of Ken International's annual production will come from Cambodia once its new factory in the Kingdom opens. The company produces about 3 million bicycles a year. The bicycles assembled in Cambodia will be exported mainly to the United States and the European Union, Mr Kamler said. These are markets where the Kingdom enjoys tariff-free access. Ken International is now building a bicycle factory near Phnom Penh. The plant, which covers 40,000 square feet, is a joint investment with Shanghai General Sports and is slated for completion by the end of the year, according to South China Morning Post. An article on bike-eu.com noted that most of Cambodia's bike factories are located near the Vietnamese border and that Ken International's will be the first one in the southern part of the country. The same article said bicycles produced at the factory will be shipped abroad starting this month. To qualify for duty-free status in the EU, at least 40 percent of a bicycle's components must be produced in Cambodia, said Seang Thay, spokesman at the Ministry of Commerce. Last year, Commerce Minister Pan

Sorasak held a meeting with Robert Margevicius, executive vice president of Special Bicycle Components, who was in Cambodia representing US and Taiwanese bike producers. Mr Margevicius said Cambodia is the world's second-largest exporter of bicycles to the European Union, US, and Canada. "However, the Kingdom lacks the facilities needed for the manufacturing of bike parts and components, so it relies on imports," Mr Margevicius said, urging the ministry to support investments in the sector. The government recently said it is aiming to reduce imports by increasing the number of factories in Cambodia producing bicycle components, and added that the country is wide open to investments in this area. Last year, Cambodia exported 1.5 million bicycles to the EU, worth a combined \$331 million, according to a World Bank report released in May. In 2017, the Kingdom became the largest bicycle supplier to the EU market, overtaking Taiwan. Ministry of Commerce's Mr Thay said Cambodian now manufactures a few of the components used in bicycles but that it also imports them from Vietnam and Thailand, among other countries. According to Mr Thay, most bicycle manufacturers are located in the Tai Seng Bavet Special Economic Zone, less than 10 kilometres from the border with Vietnam. Three Taiwanese-owned bicycle manufacturer are operating in Cambodia – Atlantic Cycle (and its subsidiary A&J), Smart Tech (Cambodia), and Worldtec Cycles (Cambodia). Moreover, US-based Trek Bicycle announced last year that it has plans to move the production of at

least 200,000 bikes from China to Cambodia sometime this year. Trek and Ken's shifts in production bases are the result of the US-China trade conflict. Many analysts believe that Southeast Asian and South Asian countries – particularly Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia and Bangladesh – are benefiting from the ongoing trade conflict, with companies looking to move production to new destinations to avoid paying tariffs. As the latest move in the trade war, US this week imposed fresh tariffs on \$112 billion of Chinese imports such as shoes, nappies and food. The move is the first phase of US President Donald Trump's latest plan to enact 15 percent duties on \$300 billion of Chinese imports by the end of the year.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/639577/kingdom-to-become-a-key-manufacturing-base-for-us-bike-firm/>

Laos, Hungary to mutually waive visas for diplomats



Laos News / 04 September, 2019

Laos and Hungary will waive the visa requirement for each other's diplomatic or service passport holders as of September 9, allowing passport holders from either country to stay in the host country for a period of 90 days without a visa. The move complies with an agreement signed by Laos and Hungary on March 11. Passport holders in this category may not extend their stay beyond the permitted time period of 90 days, but may enter the country again after remaining outside for three months. To be eligible for the visa waiver, diplomatic and service passports must be valid for at least six

months from the date the holder leaves his or her country. Under the agreement, the citizens of either party-country, whether members of an embassy or consulate, or representatives of an international organisation located in either party-country, must apply for an appropriate form of visa. The passport holder's spouse and children, who should also hold a valid passport, must do the same. Laos has entered into unilateral and bilateral visa exemption agreements with 47 countries in Asia, Europe and the Americas, including Hungary. Laos and the majority of its party-countries have agreed on 30 days as the time period that their citizens can stay in the host country without a visa. Hungary, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Peru, and Pakistan are the party-countries with which Laos has agreed that 90 days shall be the time period during which diplomatic and service passport holders may remain in the host country without a visa.

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

Sector Working Group On Agriculture And Rural Development Meets



Laos News / 03 September, 2019

(KPL) The meeting of the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development (SWG-ARD) was held on Sep 3 in Vientiane. The meeting was co-chaired by Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Phouang Parisack Pravongviengkham, Ambassador of France to the Lao PDR Florence Jeanblanc-Risler, and Representative of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization to the Lao PDR Nasar Hayat. The SWG-ARD supports the coordination and implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan

(NSEDP) and achievement of the SDGs relevant to the sector. The meeting took stock of the significant implementation of sector-related actions under the SWG-ARD and emerging issues such as the fall armyworm and the African Swine Fever in the Lao PDR. Participants also discussed the forthcoming agriculture census, which will contribute to the formulation of the next 5 - year agriculture and forestry development plan. "Policy and management responses to support small holders to tackle the imminent threats of biosecurity issues such as the fall armyworm and the African swine fever and to mitigate their negative impacts on rural livelihoods were urgently needed," said Dr. Phouang Parisack. "It is high time to transform agriculture from subsistence activity to the driver of economic growth and FAO stands ready to support the government and people of the Lao PDR in achieving this," said Ms. Florence Jeanblanc-Risler. Participants from various government departments including high-level steering committees, members of SWG-ARD, development partners, several representatives from Laos Farmer Networks and International Civil Society Organization, attended the meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to the SWG-ARD secretariat and all stakeholders to report the significant implementation of sector-related actions as well as exchange ideas on conducting the agriculture census, which will be the basis for making informed and evidence-based decisions to address challenges related to food, agriculture, climate change and economic growth.

Source : <http://kpl.gov.la/En/Detail.aspx?id=47907>

More Chinese tourists visit Myanmar



Myanmar News | 03 September, 2019

More Chinese tourists visited Myanmar after Myanmar eased visa restrictions and new flight schedules between towns in China and Yangon are introduced recently, according to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population. The arrival of Chinese tourists within seven months in 2019 is increased to 151 per cent compared with last year's arrival. The arrival of tourists from South Korea is increased to 80 per cent and the arrival of tourists from Japan is increased to 20 per cent compared with last year's arrival. Hainan Airlines, Sichuan Airlines, China Eastern Airlines, Xiamen Airlines and Spring Airlines introduced flights between Chongqing, Chengdu, Hohhot, Wuhan, Shanghai and Xiamen in China and Yangon in Myanmar from January to June. Myanmar Airways International (MAI) is flying from Yangon to Hangzhou once a week, from Mandalay to Hangzhou twice a week, from Mandalay to Nanchang three times a week and from Mandalay to Hefei three times a week at the present. Mandalay-Fuzhou flight is a fifth flight schedule between Myanmar and China. The arrival of tourists within seven months in 2019 is over 380,000 Chinese tourists, over 69,000 Japanese tourists and over 67,000 South Korean tourists. Myanmar is planning to grant visa on arrival to tourists from Italy, Spain, Australia, Switzerland, Germany

and Russia on October 1 with one year trial period to increase the tourist arrival, announced Ministry of Hotel and Tourism.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/more-chinese-tourists-visit-myanmar>

Total FDI at hotel and tourism sector in Yangon hits over 230 m USD



Myanmar News | 03 September, 2019

From May to August this year, the Yangon Region Tourism Working Committee granted the permits for the construction of 21 hotels and guesthouses with the total investments of 238.29 million US dollars, according to a statement by the Committee. During four months, the region tourism working committee issued 33 hotel licenses, one temporary hotel license, eight guesthouse licenses, licenses for the construction of 18 hotels with 2,136 rooms, licenses for the construction of three guesthouses, 276 inbound tour licenses, 121 outbound tour licenses and 218 tour guide licenses. The total investments hit Ks119,624 million and 238.29 million US dollars and created 2,691 new jobs. At the press conference in Yangon Region Government Office on August 30, Yangon Region Kayin Ethnic Affairs Minister Naw Pan Thinzar Myo, vice-chair of the Yangon Region Tourism Working Committee said: "We need a team to check whether or not the permit holders implement the works and follow the rules and laws in order to ensure rule of law. We have a plan to urge

the union-level body to increase the number of staff as the number of staff is not sufficient." Yangon accounts for around 70 per cent of the total investments in the hotel and tourism sector, she added. In late August, the regional tourism work committee allowed a total investment of Ks26,674 million in investment which created 335 jobs.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/total-fdi-at-hotel-and-tourism-sector-in-yangon-hits-over-230-m-usd>

Retail sales up 11.5 percent in January-August



Vietnam News | 03 September, 2019

Hanoi (VNS/VNA) - Vietnam's total revenues for retail trade and services reached an estimated 3.21 quadrillion VND (137.4 billion USD) in the first eight months of 2019, up 11.5 percent year on year, the General Statistics Office (GSO) has announced. This positive growth proved the rising demand of local people, GSO statisticians have said, adding that if the price factor was excluded, purchasing power in the first seven months increased by 9.03 percent, higher than the 8.9 percent recorded in the same period of last year. Retail sales of goods during the period were estimated at 2.44 quadrillion VND (104.9 billion USD), surging 12.5 percent year on year or accounting for 76 percent of the total revenue. Among all sectors, purchases of educational and cultural products grew by 14 percent year on year, followed by food and foodstuff (13.6 percent), home

appliances (11 percent) and textiles and apparel (10.5 percent) and transportation (8.5 percent). The localities with the highest purchasing power growth rates included Quang Ninh (20 percent); Binh Duong (18 percent); Thanh Hoa (15 percent); Hai Phong (14.7 percent) beside to Nghe An and Binh Dinh (14 percent) and Da Nang (13.5 percent). Meanwhile, two economic hubs of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi lagged behind with respective growths of 13.3 percent and 13 percent. According to GSO, revenue from accommodation and catering services rose 10 percent year-on-year to nearly 386 trillion VND (16.56 billion USD), making up 12 percent of the total revenue. During the same period, travel service revenues totalled 29.7 trillion VND (more than 1.27 billion USD), with Binh Dinh province witnessing the largest increase at 19 percent, followed by Thanh Hoa and Khanh Hoa at 15 percent and 14.5 percent respectively and HCM City at 13 percent. Revenues of other services were estimated at 355 trillion VND (15.27 billion USD), 7 percent higher than the same period last year. According to the Vietnam Institute for Trade Research, the goods retail market is seeing an increase at mini marts and convenience stores. The institute forecast that convenience stores would see double-digit growth in the next three years and reach 37.4 percent growth in 2021. Under the domestic trade development strategy, total sales of goods and services would grow by 13 percent each year through 2020 and by 14 percent per year in the 2021-25 period. The Foreign Investment Agency's

statistics showed the wholesale and retail sector ranked third in attracting foreign direct investment in January-August period with total registered capital of 1.2 billion USD, accounting for 5.2 percent of the country's total FDI. - VNS/VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/retail-sales-up-115-percent-in-januaryaugust/159849.vnp>

Vietnam's export turnover up 7.3 percent in eight months



Vietnam News | 03 September, 2019

Hanoi (VNA) - Vietnam's export turnover hit nearly 170 billion USD in the last eight months, a year on year increase of 7.3 percent, according to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT). Thanks to contributions of the group of mobile phone and accessories, the country enjoyed a trade surplus of 1.7 billion USD in August, which brought the trade surplus for January-August to 3.4 billion USD. The US remains Vietnam's biggest importer, buying 38.6 billion USD worth of goods, up 25.3 percent year on year. It was followed by the EU, China and ASEAN with 27.7 billion USD, 23.8 billion USD, and 17.3 billion USD, respectively. In the eight months, the country spent 166.58 billion USD on imports, up 8.5 percent from the same period last year. Experts said enterprises need to tap incentives from free trade agreements Vietnam has signed and pay attention to ensuring regulations related to origin of goods to enjoy tariff preferences. The MoIT asked its import-

export department to build import and export scenarios for markets and sectors, thus devising proper measures to promote exports.-VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnams-export-turnover-up-73-percent-in-eight-months/159828.vnp>
