



- Thailand's Big C opens first supermarket in Cambodia
- Experts urge investment in warehouses and factories
- BCEL, EV Lao to produce smart card for electric vehicle charging payments
- Laos seeks ways to bolster tourism industry
- Car makers up local production despite challenges
- MNA receives new ATR plane
- Rice export volume up but value falls
- Hanoi most attractive to foreign investors in nine months



## Thailand's Big C opens first supermarket in Cambodia



*Cambodia News | 8 October, 2019*

The Thai retailing giant Big C has opened its first supermarket in Cambodia. Big C Poipet had its soft opening on Saturday, the company announced on its Facebook page. "A soft opening for the Poipet Hypermarket was held under our vision to be the leading Thai retailer with customers at heart," the announcement read. The soft opening comes just eight months after the Council for the Development of Cambodia approved the project. Poipet's newest shopping destination sits on more than two hectares of land in Kbal Spean I village. It is not known when the grand opening will be held. The event elicited a great deal of excitement, with people from all walks of life crowding the supermarket. The opening made Cambodia the fourth country to host a Big C branch. In addition to Thailand, Big C already has a presence in Vietnam and Laos. Big C focuses on mid-to-low income customers with a wide selection of goods at affordable prices. It was earlier reported that Big C invested \$6.8 million in the project, which is now the most high-profile shopping destination in that part of the Kingdom. The new supermarket is expected to help bring more jobs and progress to the border city. The company said earlier in its application with the CDC that the project will create more than 1,200 jobs. Poipet, a city of more than 200,000 people on the Thai-Cambodian border, is an important trading hub. Lately, the city, which is part of Banteay

Meanchey province, is getting more attention from investors in Thailand, China, and other countries. The city is host to a growing number of casinos, hotels, commercial centres, and residential developments. The Cambodian government and private partners are also working to build the city's first commercial airport.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50648873/thailands-big-c-opens-first-supermarket-in-cambodia/>

## Experts urge investment in warehouses and factories



*Cambodia News | 8 October, 2019*

Real estate and other property experts are calling for more investments in Cambodia's hospitality sector, warehousing and factory renting services because of high demand but in short supply. Sear Rithy, chairman of WorldBridge Group and a prominent property developer, said many investors are flocking to the real estate sector at the expense of hospitality and warehousing. Speaking during the fifth property show organised by realestate.com.kh last Friday, Mr Rithy urged investors to invest in hotels in particular because they have a high-profit margin compared with condominiums. "If you build a condo with 90 units, you may not sell it. However, if you build and invest in a hotel with 90 rooms, you can make more money because the tourism and services sector in Cambodia is experiencing healthy growth," Mr Rithy said. "On top of that, if your condo is neither creative nor big, it will difficult to compete with rivals," Mr

Rithy added. "Second, there is also a lack of investment in the industry sector, particularly warehousing and factories. "As I have a lot of experiences in the logistics sector, I recommend that if you have resources, you should build a warehouse or factory outside the city for rental so you will make a profit." Cheng Kheng, chairman of Cambodia Properties Ltd (CPL), agreed that there is a high demand for warehousing and factories because of economic growth and there is demand for warehousing to stock merchandise. He said that now very few investors are considering investing in warehousing and factories. "Nowadays, we see demand for factories and warehousing, particularly from Chinese investors as they shift production from China to Cambodia," Mr Kheng added. He said all existing warehouses or factories are fully rented. "The government is asking all new investors to build factories in the suburbs where the price of land is good," he added.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50648875/experts-urge-investment-in-warehouses-and-factories/>

## BCEL, EV Lao to produce smart card for electric vehicle charging payments



Laos News | 8 October, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Banque pour le Commerce Extérieur Lao Public (BCEL) and the EV Lao Co., Ltd. are partnering in the production of a smart card for the payment of charging costs for

electric vehicles. A Memorandum of Understanding on the project was signed in Vientiane last week by the General Managing Director Mr Phoukhong Chanthachack and President of EV Lao Co., Ltd. Mr Bounleuth Luangpraseuth, in the presence of BCEL and company staff. BCEL began offering fee and bill payment services in 2009 and now partners with more than 50 entities to facilitate payments for goods and services by the general public. Among these are the payment of utility bills, taxes, customs duty, cable rental, fuel, loans, and border passes used to cross the Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge in Vientiane. The system enables payments through ATMs, BCEL One, I-Bank and other bank services and involves the largest number of users making payments electronically throughout the country, Mr Phoukhong said. He hoped this partnership would lead to the creation of more such facilities for the bank's customers and increase the number of service users. The proposed smart card for the payment of charging costs for electric vehicles would link BCEL's smart card system and EV Lao Co., Ltd.'s EVBox charging system. In addition, EV Lao Co., Ltd. and Electricite du Laos (EDL) are partnering in a pilot project that will see the installation of 20 charging stations for electric vehicles in Vientiane, Mr Bounleuth said. The project also plans to install 100 electric vehicle chargers in Vientiane and along arterial roads around the country, which would all link to the Even system that EV Lao Co., Ltd. is installing at EDL to ensure vehicle safety. This partnership is viewed as a social and environmental contribution on

the part of BCEL and EV Lao Co., Ltd. The pilot project being set up by EDL and the EV Lao Co., Ltd. is part of efforts to promote the use of electric vehicles in Laos and support the government's move to minimise the use of fossil fuels. Laos imports a large volume of fuel annually which has caused a huge trade deficit over the years, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mines. The proposed pilot project on the use of electric vehicles will help to lower fuel consumption. Laos is promoting the use of clean energy in the transport sector as part of measures to translate the government's policy into an action plan until 2025, and a strategy for 2030.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/bcel-ev-lao-produce-smart-card-electric-vehicle-charging-payments-105755>

## Laos seeks ways to bolster tourism industry



*Laos News | 8 October, 2019*

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - The public and private sectors will team up to tackle issues plaguing the tourism sector as part of the government's efforts to bolster the contribution of the service sector to economic growth. The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) on Friday arranged a special meeting to brainstorm ways to promote the tourism industry. The consultation meeting on tourism, attended by the public and private sectors, was co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Mr Savankhone Razmouny, and the LNCCI's Vice Executive

President Mr Daovone Phachanthavong. The meeting was an open platform for both the public and private sectors to discuss tourism-related issues as well as to seek effective solutions to boost tourism-related businesses. In his opening remarks Mr Daovone Phachanthavong said the gathering was exclusive as the public and private sectors would discuss issues being faced by the tourism sector. "We often hear recent reports from the public sector that the number of foreign tourists is increasing, but private businesses engaged in tourism are seeing a drop in foreign travellers in several major tourism provinces," he said. Mr Daovone said the meeting would address these obstacles and brainstorm new ways to attract tourists and boost incomes in the service sector, especially for the tourism industry. Representatives of service sector firms such as travel agents, hotels and restaurants took part in the meeting. Mr Savankhone said both sides were responsible for translating the government's policy on tourism promotion into a magnetic device to attract more foreign tourists. "Significantly, the LNCCI plays a key role in contributing to national economic development. The service sector was boosted by the chamber until it became one of the outstanding drivers of the country's economic growth," he said. The deputy minister said the number of world travellers will increase in the next decade as the Asean region is part of this growth and, accordingly, Laos' tourism development roadmap will be back on track for responsible, sustainable and inclusive

growth. "Promoting and resolving tourism issues will require special and active collaboration between all parties concerned. The public sector is willing to support the private sector in tackling issues when needed," Mr Savankhone said. During the meeting, several interesting presentations were made in relation to the smart packaging and promotion of tourism, and local businesspeople shared their experiences concerning current tourism trends in Laos. They also informed the public sector that the government could help in the removal of obstacles within this strategic sector. The number of tourist arrivals in the first half of 2019 exceeded 2.2 million, an increase of 5 percent compared to the same period last year, according to statistics published by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/laos-seeks-ways-bolster-tourism-industry-105757>

## Car makers up local production despite challenges



*Myanmar News | 8 October, 2019*

Car makers in Myanmar have been increasing production of locally assembled automobiles in response to higher demand. Suzuki Myanmar Motor Co Ltd this year produced 15,000 vehicles compared to 12,000 in 2018, representing a 25 percent increase in year-on-year production, the company said. "We are more producing more brand new motors based on our factory capacity in Thilawa this year and now command 60 percent of the market for new cars in Myanmar," said Keiichi

Asano, Managing Director of the Suzuki Myanmar. Suzuki Myanmar opened its factory in Yangon's South Dagon township in May 2013, where it began by assembling Suzuki Carry trucks. Over the years, it also began producing the Suzuki Ertiga and Suzuki Ciaz and moved its factory to Thilawa Special Economic Zone to accommodate higher production volumes. Priced at around K27 million, the Ertiga is now the best-selling car for Suzuki in Myanmar. Its other models, which include the Ciaz, GLX and GL are priced between K20 million and K27 million before registration fees and taxes. But Fitch Solutions warned in a report dated October 4 that the sector's potential for growth may be hampered by Myanmar's underdeveloped banking system. Poor consumer access to credit, it said would be an "ongoing barrier to greater vehicle ownership." The research firm added that Myanmar's limited road network coverage will deter potential consumers from purchasing more vehicles. "We forecast Myanmar's vehicle ownership rate to reach just 26.5 vehicles per 1000 of the population by the end 2019, much lower than Thailand, which will surpass 290 vehicles per 1000 of its population over the same period," it said. Nevertheless, Mr Asano said that the firm expects to increase production in the future as market demand and competition from other car makers increases. In 2018, more than 18000 new vehicles were sold in Myanmar, which is 2.1 times

more than the previous year's, according to available data. By 2020, automakers estimate that the number of vehicles driven in Myanmar will exceed 2 million. Toyota Motor Corporation (Toyota) is already establishing its first vehicle production company in Thilawa SEZ, where it will produce the Toyota Hilux from February 2021 onwards. Toyota currently sells the Hilux, Vios, Rush, and other vehicles in Myanmar by relying on imports. Its new US\$53 million facility will allow it to assemble around 2500 Hilux vehicles using the semi knock-down method.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/car-makers-local-production-despite-challenges.html>

### MNA receives new ATR plane



*Myanmar News | 8 October, 2019*

State owned Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) is received a new ATR 72-600 series plane hired from ATR Company from France, sources said. The MNA has ten ATR 72-600 series planes and one ATR 72-500 series plane and the new plane will be added in domestic and overseas flights. The plane flew from Toulouse, France and spent three nights in airports in Greece, UAE and India before flying to Yangon, said a pilot from the MNA. The airline signed an agreement with the French aircraft manufacturing company to buy six new ATR 72-600 series aircrafts from it and the company provided to open a major maintenance facility, recognized by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), at Yangon

International Airport. The cost of large-scale maintenance, including 8-year checks, amounts to more than US\$700,000 for a 2007 model ATR aircraft and over \$400,000 for a 2010 model in Singapore. The large-scale maintenance in Malaysia will cost over US\$500,000 for a 2012 model ATR aircraft. However it will be cost over US\$100,000 in Myanmar for large-scale maintenance.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/mna-receives-new-atr-plane>

### Rice export volume up but value falls



*Vietnam News | 8 October, 2019*

HÀ NOI – Viet Nam enjoyed growth in its rice export volume but saw value fall in the first nine months of the year, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). The ministry said the total rice export volume and value in the first nine months of this year reached 5.2 million tonnes and \$2.24 billion, respectively. The figures represented a rise of 5.9 per cent in volume and a drop of 9.8 per cent in value compared to the same period in 2018. Of which, Viet Nam shipped abroad 586,000 tonnes of rice in September for \$251 million. The Philippines was the top market for Vietnamese rice in the first eight months of this year, consuming 1.76 million tonnes worth \$720 million, 2.9 times higher in volume and 2.6 times in value over the same period last year. Strong growth was also seen in other markets, including Australia (75 per cent), Ivory Coast (nearly 35 per cent) and Hong Kong (nearly 35 per cent). The average rice price in the first eight months fell

13.8 per cent year on year to \$435 per tonne. White rice led the way in the period, accounting for 47 per cent of total revenue, followed by Jasmine rice with 39.8 per cent. According to the Agro Processing and Market Development Authority (AgroTrade) under the MARD, the Philippine Government planned to diversify non-tariff measures to adjust rice import activities. At the same time, the Philippine Department of Agriculture has also proposed the application of a defence tariff on imported rice at between 30-65 per cent, which may affect Viet Nam's rice exports to the market in the future. However, positive signals were seen in the Japanese market, which is considering switching rice imports from the US to signature countries of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, including Viet Nam. Meanwhile, Singapore has also shown more interest in rice from Southeast Asian countries such as Viet Nam. To deal with the situation, the ministry said in the long term Viet Nam planned to move away from rice cultivation to focus on other crops which are more efficient. It would also look to expand export markets in Africa and the Middle East as well as regional markets like Indonesia and the Philippines.

— VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/536522/rice-export-volume-up-but-value-falls.html#m6XyQo0ATOuAqIYj.97>

## Viet Nam trying to get US export licence for avocados



*Vietnam News | 8 October, 2019*

HÀ NOI – Viet Nam is in the process of getting a licence to export avocado to the US, according to the Viet Nam Trade Office in the US. The Viet Nam Trade Office's branch in San Francisco (US) said avocados are mainly sold at big supermarkets with large volumes, so they must meet the high requirements of the US market. Avocado distribution companies must be responsible for controlling the stages of a supply chain, from production to distribution, while exporters need to have sufficient quality certificates. To enter the US market, avocados must meet the minimum requirements of the regulations on maturity, colour and weight. Avocados must be intact, clean and without insects. Therefore, small-scale exporters often face many difficulties in accessing this market due to lack of experience or linkage with supply chains. In addition, the process of transporting avocados from farms to the market is a huge challenge. It said Viet Nam currently has many avocado varieties with harvest time across almost the whole year. However, the value of Vietnamese avocado is still low due to limitations in production, including limitations of applying science and technology for production, fragmented production scale, and lack of branding and geographical indications. Therefore, to export

avocado to the US, Viet Nam must require exporters ensure they have quality certificates, establish trust with partners in the supply chain by strong commitment on quality and information transparency in implementing export contracts. If Viet Nam's farmers have qualified production as well as suitable investment and market approaches for avocados, they can gain high turnover from exporting this kind of fruit to a difficult market like the US, the office said. According to a US survey on avocado consumption, the US in 2018 spent US\$2.35 billion to import 1.04 million tonnes of avocados. About 51 per cent of households in the US consume avocados with average spending of \$24.5 each year, the office reported. Avocado trees are planted in certain geographical regions. China and Thailand are major exporters of agricultural products but avocado trees are not suitable for planting. Avocado trees are popular in Viet Nam and it has the potential to supply this kind of fruit to the US. Before that, Viet Nam spent 10 years to get a licence for exporting mangoes to the US, reported Vietnam News Agency. Avocado growing countries include Mexico, Indonesia, Spain, Brazil, Peru, Chile, South Africa and some other South American countries. In Viet Nam, avocado trees are now grown in many provinces and cities, but concentrated in the Central Highlands region with a total area of 8,000 ha. Dak Lak Province is the largest producer in Viet Nam with a total area of over

4,300 ha. Following are Dak Nong with an area of nearly 2,600 ha, Lam Dong and Gia Lai provinces. In recent years, the Central Highlands avocados have been available in markets and supermarkets in Viet Nam and also exported to China. – VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/536540/vietnam-trying-to-get-us-export-licence-for-avocados.html#GO48zrRXQqiBzJqc.97>