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## BRI boosting ties with China, Hunan rep says



*Cambodia News | 20 November, 2019*

Companies from the Chinese province of Hunan met yesterday with local firms and public officials at an event aimed to boost trade between Cambodia and China. Hundreds of company representatives from Hunan, in Central China, attended the Hunan Investment Promotion and Machinery Expo yesterday. The delegation was led by Du Jiahao, Secretary of the Community Party Committee of Hunan. Speaking at the event, Cambodian Minister of Public Works and Transport Sun Chanthol said that the event was the perfect forum to connect businesses from Hunan and Cambodia, share information and seek investment opportunities. "Peace, political and macroeconomic stability has helped build a strong relation between Cambodia and China. This relation was strengthened even further with the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative by China in 2013. The project has contributed enormously to the development of the Cambodian economy in recent years," Mr Chanthol said. He said China has become a major partner to Cambodia on trade, investment, and tourism since the launch of BRI. Mr Chanthol pointed out that China was responsible for about 70 percent of all foreign direct investment flowing into the country last year. "This is the result of the cooperation between the leaders of our countries," Mr Chanthol said. By last year, China had provided \$2.8 billion worth of soft loans to Cambodia to build infrastructure, particularly roads, bridges, and ports, he

said. "The Belt and Road Initiative and the establishment of the Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank, of which Cambodia is also a founding member, have also supported the development of hydroelectric dams, ports, and special economic zones in Cambodia," the Cambodian minister noted. Mr Du also highlighted the role the BRI has been playing in the promotion of cooperation between Cambodia and China and in enhancing the flow of investment from Hunan to the Kingdom. He said there are 37 companies from Hunan investing in Cambodia, accounting for a total capital investment of about \$500 million. More than 30,000 people from Hunan are working in Cambodia. Mr Du noted that Hunan companies attending yesterday's event were mostly interested in investments in manufacturing, agriculture and tourism. Wang Wentian, Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia, said the event will encourage more Chinese investors to consider Cambodia. "The event today is the result of cooperation between the two countries and serves as an important platform to encourage Chinese enterprises from Hunan to cooperate with Cambodia," Mr Wang said. "I firmly believe that, because of this event, more investors from China will consider Cambodia as an investment destination." The expo ended with a signing ceremony for several memoranda of understanding to boost cooperation between the government and the private sector. Bilateral trade between Cambodia and China last year totalled \$6.6 billion, up from \$5.5 billion in 2017.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50661446/bri-boosting-ties-with-china-hunan-rep-says/>

## World Bank report warns of need for diversification and skills development



Cambodia News | 20 November, 2019

The World Bank yesterday launched a new report highlighting the success of Cambodia's economic development and issued comprehensive policy reform recommendations in order to sustain that growth. Attending the launch were representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, as well as the Asian Development Bank and numerous luminaries from the Cambodian business community. "Cambodia's Future Jobs: Linking to the Economy of Tomorrow" lavished praise on the Kingdom for its strong annual GDP growth, but issued stark warnings of problems to come should Cambodia rest on its laurels. The report congratulated Cambodia for the high labour force participation rate of 80 percent of all working-age Cambodians, although it notes that 94 percent of all jobs are low-skilled occupations. Managers and professionals, it asserts, account for less than 5 percent of Cambodian jobs. Inguna Dobraja, country manager for the World Bank in Cambodia, said in her opening speech that "between 2010 and 2015, the number of wage jobs increased by 12 percent per year, and one-third of all wage jobs are in foreign-owned companies." Ms Dobraja was quick to note that external economic forces need to be taken into account. "However, as successful as the employment development model has been in delivering more and better jobs – and without a doubt, it has been very successful – it is now time to reflect on how to sustain these things in the changing global

economy. "We worked closely with three ministries, the private sector, civil society, and international development partners," explains Wendy Cunningham, who – along with Claire Hollweg – is one of the authors of the report. Ms Cunningham, who works as the World Bank's lead economist in East Asia and the Pacific, explained that four key shifts were going to impact Cambodia's job market, notably the growing middle class, international trading patterns, increasingly knowledge-intensive jobs, and automation. When asked if the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training agreed with the findings of the report, spokesperson Heng Sour claimed that it did. As such, Ms Cunningham and Ms Hollweg's study produced seven job-specific policies that align with existing governmental frameworks on education and employment. Firstly, the much-touted need for diversification once again reared its head – with the report citing the majority of jobs in Cambodia belonging to low-value segments of global value chains. There is a need, the report finds, to move into new exporting products and move up existing value chains such as garments manufacturing. Other policies included addressing the cost and bureaucracy involved with setting up a business in the Kingdom, noting that many small and medium businesses here do not grow as well as comparable countries in the same length of time. Recognising the volume and value of household enterprises – which account for 17 percent of all jobs – the report suggests enhancing productivity to allow them to create better jobs. This, it suggests, can be linked to digital literacy. There was a clear need to build links between foreign direct investment-funded firms and domestic input-

supplying firms, with particular attention to the garments and manufacturing sectors. It also highlights the need for reforms within the education system to match skills with the needs of the private sector. Both traditional education and vocational training systems need to be realigned to meet the demands of the market, the report states, going on to explain policymakers and educators should work closely with the private sector to establish this. Lastly, the seventh policy pertains to macroeconomic stability and warns of US dollar fluctuations that could mean lasting impacts for Cambodia's economy.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50661464/world-bank-report-warns-of-need-for-diversification-and-skills-development/>

## Ministry cracks down on illegal immigration



Laos News | 21 November, 2019

Over 3,000 people of 79 nationalities were prevented from entering Laos this year and more than 1,000 people were permanently barred from entry, according to the Minister of Public Security, Lieutenant General Vilay Lakhamfong. Speaking at the National Assembly last week, he said 3,342 people had been stopped from entering the country and 1,409 people of 17 nationalities were permanently forbidden to enter Laos. Over the past year, the Ministry of Public Security has been paying close attention to monitoring and registering foreigners, in a bid to control immigration. This year

9,852,571 people of 166 nationalities entered Laos, with Chinese topping the list at 807,737. In the other direction, records show that 10,149,008 people of 103 nationalities departed Laos. Immigration officials found 24 people using fake passports. A total of 4,200 Lao nationals living overseas were repatriated, including victims of human trafficking. The ministry deported 1,400 foreigners to their countries of origin following illegal business operations, mostly concerning telecommunication fraud and the use of gaming machines. The ministry identified 982 cases of telecommunication fraud involving 6,500 violators. In addition, authorities detected 39 cases of human trafficking involving 63 suspects and 64 victims. Twenty-one of the cases went to trial. Other violations included 101 illegal marriages between Lao nationals and foreigners. The eighth session of the 8th legislature of the National Assembly, which opened on November 7, is underway to debate issues of national importance including the approval of draft and amended laws, with the sitting scheduled to end on December 6. Assembly members will next debate a draft Law on Cinema and a draft Law on Gender Equality. Draft amendments to six laws already promulgated will also be debated. These comprise the Law on Bankruptcy, Law on Hygiene, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion,

Law on Insurance, Law on Securities, Law on Sports and Gymnastics, and the Law on Investment Promotion.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten\\_Ministry.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Ministry.php)

## Japan's Kumamoto Bets on Laos for Tourism Boost



Laos News / 20 November, 2019

The Japanese city of Kumamoto has said it will increase its promotional efforts for new routes that connect the city and Laos amid a drop in the number of passengers who use the city's airport. Japan's Civil Aviation Bureau gave the green light in October for Lao Airlines to launch two new routes connecting the Lao capital of Vientiane and the resort town of Luang Prabang with Kumamoto. New routes will be launched on March 18, 2020. During an interview with local press, an unnamed city official stressed the importance of the new routes to Laos, adding that the city would try its best to attract more visitors to and from Laos. A total of 7,161 people used the city airport in September, a 41.7 percent drop from the same month last year. The official cited the stalled relationship between Japan and South Korea and the ongoing protest in Hong Kong as the main reasons that might have contributed to the decrease. The number of passengers who used routes to South Korean decreased by 24.2 percent from June to September, while that for Hong Kong dropped 19.8

percent during the same period, according to the city.

Source : <https://laotiantimes.com/2019/11/20/japans-kumamoto-bets-on-laos-for-tourism-boost/>

## Construction Ministry continues implementing low-cost, staff rental housing projects



Myanmar News / 20 November, 2019

The Ministry of Construction will continue implementing low-cost housing projects near Thilawa Industrial Zone in Thanlyin Township, Hlinethaya Township (Kyansitmin) and Dagon Seikkan Township (Yoma) and staff rental housing projects in Nay Pyi Taw within the current fiscal year (2019-2020). Nearly 7,300 housing units for civil servants were built in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay in three years from 2016-2017 FY to 2018-2019 FY, and most of them were in Mandalay. The Urban and Housing Development Department under the Ministry of Construction is implementing staff rental housing projects in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay with Union funds. It is also implementing staff rental housing projects in regions and states with their own funds, according to the findings of the Joint Public Accounts Committee. In three years, 520 staff housing units were built in Kachin State, 318 in Kayah State, 150 in Kayin State, 162 in Chin

State, 1,262 in Sagaing Region, 252 in Taninthayi Region, 672 in Bago Region, 552 in Magway Region, 1,530 in Mandalay Region, 252 in Mon State, 666 in Rakhine State, 732 in Shan State and 224 in Ayeyawady Region. The department sold 8,416 units to service personnel and low-income people in large cities including Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw from 2017 to 2019. Installment plans with low interest rate are also available. Union Minister for Construction Han Zaw said housing loans are being provided for buyers who met JICA and ODA loan criteria.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/construction-ministry-continues-implementing-low-cost-staff-rental-housing-projects>

## Project to bring changes to Sittwe's waterfront by next year



Myanmar News | 20 November, 2019

A mixed development waterfront project on along the Kaladan River in Sittwe, Rakhine is now 90 percent done and is expected to be complete by the middle of next year, Steve Park, CEO of Korean developer BXT International Co, told Myanmar Times. The remaining work involves the completion of roads, drains and power grids at the project site, said U Aung Kyaw Zan, Rakhine State minister for Electricity, Industry and

Transportation. "All the necessary environmental and social impact assessments have been prepared," he added. The Sittwe Waterfront project, which will comprise government offices, an industrial zone, hotels and shop houses, is being developed in three phases on 36 hectares of land near the Sittwe Myoma Market and port. The industrial zone will comprise can factories, cold storages facilities and logistics and transportation companies. There is no restriction on building designs as well. Phase 3 of the project will involve the development of shop house units in cooperation with a US firm. Once official approval is received from the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC), a total of 70 will be built, Mr Park said. "We are making arrangements to start in the beginning of 2020. We will apply for approval from MIC in coming days as well," he said, adding that many investors are interested in the shop houses, which will be complete within one year. The shop houses will come with three-storeys, with shops permitted to open on the ground floor while the two higher levels are for residential purposes. As Rakhine State is one of the least developed states in the country, the government has provided seven years of tax exemption on the development of the project. Despite its remoteness and poverty, "Sittwe is very safe. Although there are problems in Rakhine State, this place is very beautiful and deserves investments," Mr Park said. The

government will hold a 30pc stake in the project while the remaining stake will be held by BXT. Land sales were first launched in November 2018 and 20pc of the land has already been sold, said Mr Park. As it involves government cooperation, a 60-year land grant was given to the project. Buyers can sign an agreement with the government and BXT after making a 20pc downpayment, and for those who can pay up in full within two years, BXT will accept installment payments without interest.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/project-bring-changes-sittwes-waterfront-next-year.html>

## Vietnam's export of squid, octopus to US surges in 2019



*Vietnam News | 20 November, 2019*

Vietnam's export of squid and octopus to the US market saw a strong rise of 63.7 percent in the first nine months of 2019 to reach 11.4 million USD, according to the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP). Main export items were dried squid, marinated squid, frozen squid, frozen whole octopus and frozen processed octopus. The US is now the sixth largest importer of Vietnam's squid and octopus, accounting for 2.7 percent of the Southeast Asian country's total export of those products. As the US-China trade tension escalates, the US raises tariffs on some Chinese squid and octopus products by 30 percent, which

has brought opportunities for similar products of Vietnam.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/economy/vietnams-export-of-squid-octopus-to-us-surges-in-2019-406397.vov>

## Foreign investors permitted to hold 34 percent stake at Vietnamese airlines



*Vietnam News | 20 November, 2019*

The limit for foreign investors' ownership in Vietnamese air transport businesses will be increased to 34 percent from the current level of 30 percent, according to the Prime Minister's decree signed recently. Decree 89/2019/ND-CP, revised from Decree 92/2016/ND-CP issued in 2016, includes regulations relating to conditional business lines in the fields of air transport and general aviation activities. The decree also requires air transport businesses to have at least one Vietnamese individual or a Vietnamese legal entity holding the largest portion of charter capital. In case the Vietnamese legal entity has foreign capital, the foreign capital shall not exceed 49 percent of the legal entity's charter capital. According to the Ministry of Transport, which drafted the decree, the foreign investors' new ownership cap does not only ensure the attraction of foreign investment capital into enterprises but also the interests of domestic investors. With the goal of reducing and simplifying

business conditions and creating favourable conditions for investors to access the aviation market, the new decree regulates that an air transport business operating 10 aircraft or fewer will need to have a minimum capital, including ownership capital and loan, of 300 billion VND (12.9 million USD). Businesses operating from 11 to 30 aircraft will need minimum capital of 600 billion VND, while those with more than 30 aircraft will be 700 billion VND. In terms of airport service, the minimum capital for businesses is 100 billion VND, in which the foreign investor's ownership will not exceed 30 percent of the charter capital. The decree will come into effect on January 1, 2020.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/economy/foreign-investors-permitted-to-hold-34-percent-stake-at-vietnamese-airlines-406400.vov>

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