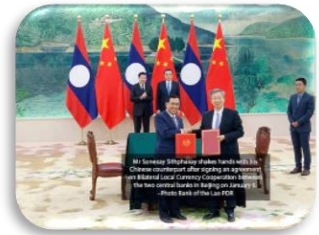


Highlight News | January 13/2020



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- Nation to host crucial Asean tourism forum in year 2021
- Laos, China initiate direct currency exchange
- Tourism project licences revoked to make way for special economic zone
- Development of Dawei SEZ makes progress
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Real estate market 'stable' for 2020



Cambodia News | 13 January, 2020

Real estate, one of the Kingdom's economic backbones in terms of economic growth, is predicted to continue to be healthy this year and one of the few sectors that business insiders consider to be a good trend for investors. James Hodge, CBRE Cambodia director, said the market shows signs of resiliency this year despite some risks and headwinds. "The market appears to be maturing and developing in a positive direction," he told Khmer Times. Affordable residential development, hospitality and higher quality commercial developments will likely be the focus for 2020, Hodge noted. According to CBRE's Third-Quarter 2019 Phnom Penh Market Update, nine new off-plan condominium launches, accounting for a combined 5,140 units, were announced for the capital during the that quarter of last year. The new project launches are concentrated on the Chamkarmon and Chroy Changvar districts, which account for 44 percent and 40 percent of newly launched units, respectively. The majority of new launches were positioned in the mid-range segment, which constituted about 52 percent (about 2,700 units) of all launches. High-end and affordable segments, on the other hand, represented 32 percent and 16 percent, respectively. Kim Heang, Regional operating principle of KW Cambodia, told Khmer Times on Friday last week that the real estate market will remain healthy this year, while he said land prices will probably remain stable. "It seems not possible for land prices to go up this year, because they have had a year-on-year increase since

2012 until 2019. So, I think the land price will likely be stable," he said. He noted that the high-end segment with prices selling up to \$100,000 for the condominium residential market and borey developments or flat houses, will be tough. "The demand for affordable residences is on the rise, while the number of middle-income people is growing so the affordable homes maybe the choice for them," he said. He added developers should look at the affordable residential developments with prices ranging to from \$40,000 to \$70,000 per unit for a condominium, while a borey development should sell \$50,000 to \$60,000 per unit at most.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50679140/real-estate-market-stable-for-2020>

Nation to host crucial Asean tourism forum in year 2021



Cambodia News | 13 January, 2020

Cambodia will host a week-long regional tourism forum in January 2021 where leaders in the business, key experts and private sector interest groups will gather to discuss its development. Themed "Community of Peace and a Shared Future", the 39th Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) is scheduled to run from Jan 17 to 23 in Phnom Penh, according to a Ministry of Tourism's announcement yesterday. The detailed agenda has not been announced but, according to the ministry's spokesman Top Sopheak, the ministry is working to draft the main elements. The Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) is a cooperative regional effort to promote members as one tourist destination. The annual event involves all the tourism industry sectors of the 10

member states of Asean: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The forum will include an exhibition on tourism products and services, technical meetings of Asean tourism officials, Asean tourism ministerial meetings and art performances, Sopheak said, adding that the Asean tourism meeting will include three invited nations: China, South Korea and Japan. Cambodia, through the ATF, will be able to attract more investors to buy into the tourism sector and to showcase potential products and services to attract more foreign visitors to Cambodia. Sopheak said: "What is important in the forum is we can improve tourism cooperation with regional countries to improve the sector. When having such a regional and international event in the country, it is a good opportunity for foreign investors to seek investment opportunities in the tourism sector of our country." The ATF allows international buyers to make good contacts. Hosting is rotated among members. It was established in 1981. This year is its 39th anniversary, held in Brunei from Jan 12 to 16.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50679156/nation-to-host-crucial-asean-tourism-forum-in-year-2001>

Nation to host crucial Asean tourism forum in year 2021



Laos News / 13 January, 2020

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Laos, China initiate direct currency exchange



Laos News / 13 January, 2020

Laos and China have agreed to facilitate the direct exchange of the Lao kip (LAK) and the Chinese yuan (CNY) instead of having to make conversions through other currencies as was done previously. Governor of the Bank of the Lao PDR, Mr Sonexay Sithphaxay, and Governor of the People's Bank of China, Mr Yi Gang, signed the Agreement on Bilateral Local Currency Cooperation between the two central banks on January 6 in Beijing, China. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang witnessed the signing of the agreement. The event took place during an official visit by Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and his delegation to China from January 5 to 9. According to a media release posted on the website of the Bank of the Lao PDR, under the currency cooperation agreement, Lao and Chinese

central banks agreed to enhance cooperation and advance settlements and payments for trade and investment between residents of the two countries in LAK and CNY under the provision of legislation between the two countries. The two central banks agreed to encourage commercial banks in the two nations to enhance cooperation and facilitate the exchange of LAK and CNY between residents of the two countries. A statement from the Chinese central bank said the Laos-China monetary agreement would strengthen monetary and financial cooperation between the two countries. The main aim of the agreement is to boost the use of local currencies and facilitate trade and investment, according to the statement, which was quoted in a Xinhua report on Friday. China is the largest foreign investor in Laos. The value of trade between the two nations has seen rapid increase over the past few years and is expected to increase further when the Laos-China railway comes into service in 2021. A senior official from the Bank of the Lao PDR told Vientiane Times on Friday that the new agreement between the Lao and Chinese central banks would provide significant support for trade and investment between the two countries. "Trade transaction costs between the two countries will be lower," he said, adding that in the past traders had to convert their money into US dollars before exchanging it for Lao

kip or Chinese yuan. Analysts say Laos may benefit from the Laos-China monetary cooperation, adding that diversification of the currency exchange policy would drive down demand for US dollars, which Laos must currently use to import goods. At present, Laos is having difficulty maintaining a stable rate of exchange between the kip and the US dollar and between the kip and the Thai baht. The value of the baht and US dollar has surged in the past few months. The Bank of the Lao PDR has been working to maintain exchange rates as part of efforts to create a favourable business environment. The central bank made a commitment to the National Assembly that fluctuations in the value of the kip would be maintained within a 5 percent range.

Source : http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Laos_China_8.php

Development of Dawei SEZ makes progress

 *Myanmar News | 10 January, 2020*

In a January 9 statement, the Dawei SEZ Management Committee said changes have been made to the contractual arrangements with Italian-Thai Development Company Ltd (ITD) for the development of initial industrial estate in Tanintharyi Region. According to contract amendment, ITD and other investors must compensate and resettle villagers

affected by industrial zone project. It must also adhere to international standards on the environment. The Thai government has agreed to provide a loan for the construction of a two-lane highway which will connect Dawei SEZ to the Myanmar-Thailand border, paving the way for further construction to take place. Further details are being discussed to amend the land lease contract as well as development of a liquefied natural gas and power plant project, the statement said.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/development-dawei-sez-makes-progress.html>

Car sales in Vietnam up 12% y/y in 2019

 *Vietnam News | 12 January, 2020*

Vietnam's car market grew at a moderate pace in 2019, with 322,322 units sold, up 12% against last year, according to a report by the Vietnam Automobile Manufacturers Association (VAMA). Taking into account the number of car sales from non-VAMA members, a total of 399,890 units were sold in 2019, the record figure number of Vietnam's car market to date. Upon breaking down, 237,221 were passenger cars, up 20% year-on-year; while 79,911 were commercial vehicles, down 5.6%; and 5,190 special-purpose vehicles, down 27%. Sales of domestically assembled cars reached 189,450 units

in 2019, down 12% year-on-year, while 132,872 imported completely-built-units (CBUs) were sold in the period, jumping 82%. In December, car sales reached 33,159 units up 11% month-on-month and down 3% against December 2018, including 24,823 passenger cars, up 11% month-on-month; 7,959 commercial cars, up 10.5%; and 377 special-purpose vehicles, up 14%. The sales volume of locally assembled cars in December was reported at 19,700 units, up 19% month-on-month, and 13,459 imported cars were sold, up 1.6%. VAMA suggested 2019 was a difficult year for Vietnam's auto market, but also marked positive performances of most local car producers. In 2019, Ford Vietnam reported sales volume of 32,175, up 31% year-on-year, in which the number in December was 3,095, up 17% month-on-month.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/economy/car-sales-in-vietnam-up-12-yy-in-2019-408725.vov>

Hanoi retail market in Q4/2019: New shopping center enters market



Vietnam News | 12 January, 2020

Hanoi's retail market in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2019 witness the opening of a new shopping center – Aeon Mall – which supplies 74,000 square meters (sq.m) in Ha Dong district, JLL has said in a recent report. The shopping center, which is the fifth of its kind in Vietnam, introduced new brands to Hanoi

such as Koi Thé and Digiking. The excitement toward new brands and the new project have helped Aeon Mall Ha Dong attract an impressive number of customers since the opening in late November. With Aeon Mall, the total supply of retail market in Hanoi reached approximately 1.2 millions sq.m in Q4/2019. Of the total, shopping centers dominate the supply, while department stores and prime retail spaces did not record any significant growth. Despite the new supply, occupancy rate posted an increase during the quarter. The rate reached almost 91% in Q4. Aeon Mall Ha Dong alone recorded small vacant which was about 5%, indicating an effective leasing strategy. Little vacant space was recorded at some Vincom shopping centers, except for Vincom Pham Ngoc Thach which was under renovation for re-opening in February 2020. Rental, meanwhile, kept unchanged during the quarter. The average rent stayed at the same level compared to that in the previous quarter, at US\$29.3/sq.m/month, an increase of 1.6% on-year. Aeon Mall Ha Dong, despite of position in an outer district, was still able to set an asking price that was approximately on par with the general market, proving the appeal of the Aeon Mall chains to consumers and tenants, JLL said in the report. The world's leading services firm forecast the market would welcome new supply, mainly from two mega malls of Vingroup in Smart City and Ocean Park townships on the outskirts of the

city. This is also a new trend in the market in which shopping centers are located in impressive areas outside the city center. Those shopping centers usually provide a variety of entertainment and lifestyle activities such as gym, kid playgrounds, instead of purely for shopping. In addition, new brands, including Uniqlo, are expected to enter Hanoi market in 2020. This brand is expected to open its first store in Hanoi in Spring 2020, after the successful opening of the first in HCM City in December 2019, showed the report.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/economy/hanoi-retail-market-in-q42019-new-shopping-center-enters-market-408727.vov>
