

Highlight News | January 24/2020



- Growing the agricultural sector
- Japanese firms asked to invest in nation's clean water supplies
- New data indicates positive tourism growth
- Millet grains pile up to export to Thailand
- FDI inflow in **Đà Nẵng** hits nearly \$700m in 2019
- Pressure mounts to control inflation in 2020

Growing the agricultural sector



Cambodia News | 23 January, 2020

A three-year project known as FoodSTEM to train a new generation of entrepreneurs in sustainable agriculture and food engineering kicked off its first workshop yesterday. It is led by the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC), with four major Cambodian Universities – the ITC itself, the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), the Royal University of Law and Economics (Rule) in Phnom Penh and the University of Battambang. The project is also supported by three European Union institutes: Montpellier SupAgro, Toulouse INP and the University of Liege. The idea is to ensure there will be enough food to feed Cambodia's growing population using a variety of disciplines and cutting-edge skills. During the first workshop, the above stakeholders were consulted on the training and equipment needs of the project, with particular emphasis on the difficulties encountered by the entrepreneurs to create activities in the agri-food sector and on specific areas to focus on in terms of training and equipment. The consultation workshop was co-organised with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie as part of the C-NEUF "Espace Techno Incubation", a three-year programme aimed at providing technical support to the pre-incubation of projects with student entrepreneurs in promising sectors in Cambodia such as digitalisation, mechatronics (which combines electronics with mechanical engineering) and robotics, energy

sources, agriculture and agri-food – a \$7.8 trillion industry for feeding the planet – and developing culture and entrepreneurial practice. Om Romny, director general of the ITC, said that the workshop we are doing with EU and local experts is to sit down and talk and find the solutions to push the agricultural sector, especially on food processing and packaging and urge local producers to contribute to the economy. Om said that the role of the university is to transfer the technology to support the agri-processing or food processing sector of the country. "We just provide the technology, but the main role comes from the government and relevant ministries to set up clear policies and synchronise the system between the universities and the private sector's small and medium-sized enterprises," Om said. "If the SMEs [small and medium enterprises] want to invest in food processing, they will need the resources to support them, so they need to know the laws and regulations to run a processing factory and, at the same time, they need to understand the techniques and technology, so our job is to help them" he added. Om said that food processing requires set standards, tasty goods and attractive packaging with experts working with the university share their knowledge. The university can provide certain skills, knowledge and know-how. "However, to get a processed food available in the market, the relevant ministries must be involved," he added. "We have enough human resources in agro-processing, but we have to work with relevant stakeholders. We want to build trust with every

stakeholder so everyone contributes together,” Om said. The Cambodian food market consists mainly of products imported from neighbouring countries. Locally, food processing is carried out by informal family microenterprises lacking entrepreneurial skills and access to finance, with inadequate infrastructure and limited knowledge in terms of quality, safety or respect for the environment. That is why we need to strengthen training at different university levels, from the technician level to the master level in order to allow the emergence of a new generation of fully qualified entrepreneurs. FoodSTEM has a multidisciplinary and innovative approach both through the content offered and through learning methods: e-learning courses and well-equipped laboratories open to students. These courses will focus on entrepreneurship, product development, design of sustainable production units and supply chain management . Last December, Cambodia’s Prime Minister Hun Sen called for more investment in agriculture processing and the technology industry in the Kingdom. He said about 70 percent of leftover paddy was sold to Vietnam and Thailand absorbed 30 percent. “Previously, we were lacking silos, warehouses and rice millings. Therefore, our choice is to sell paddy to neighbouring countries,” he said. “Now, we are attracting investors to the processing industry in Cambodia. We want foreign friends to invest in the agro-processing industry in Cambodia... SMEs must conduct processing both locally and internationally. We have many potential agriculture products. We

want investment in the technological side of the industry. Although we have many labour-intensive industries such as garments, we cannot stand still, so we have to attract high technology and high added-value industry to the Kingdom.”

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50682509/growing-the-agricultural-sector>

Japanese firms asked to invest in nation’s clean water supplies



Cambodia News | 23 January, 2020

Japanese firms have been asked to invest in building clean water facilities and supplying clean water-related equipment to Cambodia in line with government sanitation policy. The call was made as the Cambodian government battles to connect potable water distribution to all urban areas nationwide by 2025 and all rural areas by 2030. Minister of Industry and Handicraft Cham Prasidh made the request at the Cambodia-Japan Water Supply and Sewage Seminar 2020 held yesterday at Sunway Hotel in Phnom Penh. The ministry is encouraging both domestic and foreign investors, particularly the Japanese, to invest in Cambodia’s water supplies so Cambodian people can have access to sustainable clean water to drink as soon as possible, Cham said. “We want to have Japanese investors to invest in the clean water sector wholesale because it is suitable for Japanese investor interest. They will not need to install

pipelines to each household. They can just build main pipelines to private clean water retailers,” Cham said. The one-day seminar was organised with the participation of local private clean water distributors and dozens of Japanese firms involved in water supplies and water supply-related equipment. Currently, more than 80 percent of urban areas nationwide have access to clean water, which is provided by state-run water supply authorities and private clean water distributors who are granted licences to operate in areas not connected to the water clean-water pipelines. As planned, by 2025, all urban areas across the country should have to access to clean water. Un Yuthy, president of the Cambodia Water Supply Association, currently has 200 private clean water supplier. He, said more investment in water suppliers increases the capacity of supplying clean water to people, particularly people in rural areas. “Demand for clean water consumption has significantly increased. We need more investment in clean water supplies. The existing private clean-water suppliers cannot expand more because they are small-scale enterprises,” Un said. Access to clean water is easy in the capital and big provincial cities, but it is only in limited and random supply in some urban areas, Un said. Mikami Masahiro, the Japanese ambassador to Cambodia, said in his opening remark at the event that the Japanese government has helped Cambodia in increasing clean water production for years, particularly in Phnom Penh. More clean water plant projects provided by the Japanese

government in Cambodia are under construction in Siem Reap, Kompong Thom, and Pursat provinces, Masahiro said. Currently, there are eleven state-owned water supplier authorities and another 258 private clean water suppliers that have received licences from the ministry. About 30 million cubic metres of clean water are used every day in Cambodia, according to Cham.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50682452-japanese-firms-asked-to-invest-in-nations-clean-water-supplies>

New data indicates positive tourism growth



Laos News | 24 January, 2020

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism has unveiled the latest tourism figures, which indicate a big jump in visitor arrivals in 2019. Data provided by the ministry’s Tourism Development Department show that tourist arrivals exceeded 4.7 million last year, an increase of 14.44 percent on 2018. The number of visitors from China increased by 26.92 percent compared to 2018. Visitors from Thailand, who make up the majority of holiday-makers in Laos, rose by 11.94 percent, while the number from Vietnam increased by 6.60 percent. Director General of the Tourism Marketing Department, Mr Soun Manivong, told Vientiane Times the surge in visitors was largely due to the Visit Laos-China Year campaign, held in cooperation with China to encourage more people from the northern neighbour to explore Laos. The government is introducing new policies to ease the way for visitors, notably by

improving procedures at border crossings, Mr Soun said. During the past year individual provinces organised a raft of events aimed at visitors and took steps to improve services. In popular Vangvieng district, Vientiane province, a concerted effort was made to improve quality and service standards, and regulate the prices charged for food and accommodation. The fees charged at various tourist attractions were also reviewed. In Luang Prabang, some restaurants added Chinese dishes to their menus and Chinese language signs were installed at popular tourist sites. In Luang Namtha province – the entry point for many visitors from China - authorities improved services at the border crossing and officials provided information and suggestions to Chinese visitors. Officials are currently calculating the revenue generated by tourism in 2019 and will report on it soon, Mr Soun said. This year the government will target domestic tourism and encourage more Lao people to travel within the country. This initiative is part of the national socio-economic development plan for 2020. The government hopes to attract about 4.7 million foreign visitors and generate more than US\$900 million in revenue from tourism. Officials will meet to discuss ways to encourage Lao people to take holidays locally and will hold talks with business operators about preparing amenities for visitors, Mr Soun said. As of 2018, Laos had 670 hotels, 2,432 guesthouses and resorts, 2,646 restaurants and 305 entertainment venues, according to the Tourism Development Department. There are numerous officially designated tourist attractions including 1,318 nature-

based sites, 596 places of cultural interest, and 294 places of historical significance

Source : http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_New_17.php

Millet grains pile up to export to Thailand



Myanmar News | 23 January, 2020

Myawady – Millet grains are piling up while waiting for export to Thailand, according to millet exporters in Myawady border. Although millet grains exporters have tax exemption from February 1 to August 31 to export to Thailand according to the mutual agreement, they cannot export to Thailand after at the end of August as Thailand government raised tax on millet grain export to protect the nation interest of its citizens. Exporters sent millet grains to Thailand in that period, they lost their profits as the trucks loaded with millet grains cannot cross Gyaing (Kyonedo) bridge due to the increase of water level in Gyaing River and they faced difficulties on the way. The exporters are preparing to export millet grains on February 1, said exporter Myat Tun Naing. The exporters cannot export to China as the Chinese government raised tax to protect the interest of its millet farmers. The export amount is reached to ten per cent of total import and export of Myawady border trade in this year. Although Thailand exported its products loaded with over 500 trucks to Myanmar

daily, Myanmar hasn't raised tax to protect its citizen interest.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/myanmar-signs-new-contract-to-export-rice-to-china>

FDI inflow in Đà Nẵng hits nearly \$700m in 2019



Vietnam News | 23 January, 2020

HÀ NỘI Foreign investors pumped nearly US\$700 million into the central coastal city of Đà Nẵng in 2019, according to the municipal Department of Planning and Investment. Of the total, about \$440 million was invested in 132 newly-licensed projects during the year, eight times higher than one year ago, while \$120 million was added to 16 operating projects, 63 times higher than 2018's figure. During the year, foreign investors also spent \$135.3 million on capital contribution and share purchase in domestic enterprises, nearly triple that of 2018. In addition to foreign-invested projects, the city last year also granted in principle approval for nine domestically-financed projects, worth VNĐ8.82 trillion. That brought the number of projects in the locality up to a value of more than VNĐ104 trillion. The positive figures were attributable to local authorities' great efforts in accelerating administrative reforms to better facilitate domestic and foreign investors, the department's director Trần Phước Sơn told online newspaper enternews.vn. This year, the city will concentrate on developing

technical infrastructure of industrial zones and clusters and fostering investment promotion targeting foreign businesses who will invest in the city's key sectors, such as IT and supporting industries, Sơn said. In order to continue luring investment, the city will deploy a number of key projects such as an overall development plan for Đà Nẵng Hi-Tech Park; one-stop shop model for the preparation, licencing and management of investment projects outside industrial parks and hi-tech zones and the improvement of hi-tech innovative features and hi-tech start-ups, the online newspaper nhandan.com.vn cited vice chairman of the municipal People's Committee, Hồ Kỳ Minh, as saying. The city also focuses on promoting activities and events which effectively approach strategic investors in key markets, such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the US and Europe, he told the newspaper. Lê Trí Hải, Vice Chairman of the Đà Nẵng Young Entrepreneurs' Association said in order to improve the investment environment and enhance investment attraction, Đà Nẵng needed to accelerate investment procedures, develop environmental impact assessments and issue investment guidelines. — VNS.

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/571472/fdi-inflow-in-da-nang-hits-nearly-700m-in-2019.html>

Pressure mounts to control inflation in 2020



Vietnam News | 23 January, 2020

Hanoi (VNA) - Managing prices and inflation would be more complex and difficult this year, experts have said. The fluctuating price of pork last year had significant impacts on the market, as the price plummeted in the first half of the year then soared in the second half. The pork price dropped from 46,000-50,000 VND (2-2.2 USD) per kilogramme to a record low of 28,000 - 32,000 VND (1.21-1.38 VND) per kilogramme in the first six months of last year. After that, the price increased gradually from July and soared from October with an increase of about 60 – 80 percent compared to September and 60 – 95 percent compared to the beginning of last year. Prices of pork products are currently very high with the live pig price ranging between 80,000 - 90,000 VND per kilogramme and pork at 160,000 - 180,000 VND per kilogramme. After the shock of the pork price increasing by more than 50 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, curbing inflation below 4 percent this year was no longer certain when the consumer price index (CPI) of last December increased by 5.23 percent year-on-year, the highest level in the last nine years, Nguyen Duc Do, deputy director of the Institute of Economics - Finance, told Kinh te & Do thi (Economic and Urban Affairs). The expert said if pork prices fell sharply around Tet

(Lunar New Year), average inflation might be only at 3 percent this year. However, if pork prices remained at their current high levels in the first quarter, average inflation could be about 3.5 percent. In a worst-case scenario where African swine fever doesn't end in the first half of this year and inflation over the same period last year only starts to decline from the middle of this year, keeping inflation below 4 percent would be relatively difficult, he said. Assuming other factors affecting inflation such as oil prices, exchange rates, medical services and education did not change significantly, Do predicted that inflation would increase by 3.5 percent on average this year. As the price of some commodities such as petrol might rise due to world economic and political instability, experts said inflation would be complicated and unpredictable. A representative from the Ministry of Finance's Price Management Department stated that the price of some items might see an upward trend. Specifically, gasoline prices might increase slightly. The price of pork, due to the impact of African swine fever, was still a complex matter. The domestic pork supply is declining, and breeding has not been effective, therefore, the price was expected to continue to increase in the first months of this year, the representative said. At the same time, health service prices were expected to be affected by the adjustment of management cost and basic salary. The price in education services

also looks set to continue to increase this year. Regarding electricity prices, although is no plan for an increase this year, the demand for electricity was still high for production and consumption, which would increase CPI. In addition, the prices of food, beverages and garments might increase at the beginning and end of the year due to shopping needs during the holidays. To achieve the National Assembly's goal of keeping inflation under 4 percent this year, the department said price management and inflation control this year must be implemented prudently, flexibly and proactively. The Ministry of Finance would continue to work with relevant agencies to control market prices, especially during Tet and the first months of the year.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/millet-grains-pile-up-to-export-to-thailand>
