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## Ticket sales at Angkor complex are down as Coronavirus frightens off large numbers of overseas tourists



*Cambodia News | 4 February, 2020*

Angkor Archaeological Park earned almost \$10.5 million in revenue from ticket sales in January this year, nearly a 15 percent decrease compared with the same time last year, figures from Angkor Enterprise report. In its latest report, the state-run Angkor Enterprises, the company that manages ticket sales at the temple complex, said the number of tickets sold at the park saw nearly an 18 percent decrease from January 2019. A total of 222,560 foreign tourists bought passes to the country's most famous tourist attraction in Siem Reap province. Although it did not disclose the reason behind the decline of tourist arrivals, it is believed to have been affected by fear of the Coronavirus, which has now killed 362 people and infected more than 17,300 globally as of Monday. The development of the outbreak is rising rapidly and the infection rate has shown no signs of slowing down, a situation that has now been declared as a global emergency by the World Health Organisation last week. Vongsey Visoth, secretary of state at the Finance Ministry, last week said that Cambodia's economic growth is going to experience a slowdown because of the impact of the outbreak on the tourism sector. "The outbreak of SARS that took place between 2002 and 2003 seriously affected global tourism," Vongsey said. "Now the Coronavirus is affecting China, where

one-third of our tourists come from, it will inevitably effect Cambodia." The outbreak of the virus came amid China's busiest travel season, with more than 7 million people estimated to have made plans to travel abroad during the Chinese lunar New Year. "We currently do not have any flights from Wuhan until the Chinese government announces otherwise," Sin Chansereyvutha, spokesman for the State Secretariat of Civil Aviation, said. "There are no direct flights from Wuhan to Cambodia, but for other Chinese destinations, flights are still available," Sin pointed out. Flights to and from China "have been reduced to about 40 to 50 percent because of concerned tourists not booking as many flights", he added. According to the Ministry of Tourism, the Kingdom welcomed 6.6 million foreign tourists, a 6.6 percent increase on last year. Of that number, Chinese tourists made up the most, with a total of more than 2.3 million – up nearly 17 percent from the previous year. Chuk Chumnor, spokesman for the Ministry of Tourism, also said last week that there is global concern about the impact the virus could have on the tourism industry. "Chinese nationals are a big portion of the world's holidaymakers and with the government's ban amid the outbreak, it is going to badly affect the global tourism sector," he said. However, Chuk pointed out that the ministry is working with the private sector and setting out necessary measures to maintain stability during the Coronavirus crisis. "This will include encouraging domestic tourist movements with special offers," he added.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50686837/ticket-sales-at-angkor-complex-are-down-as-coronavirus-frightens-off-large-numbers-of-overseas-tourists>

## Pilot project to boost e-commerce for Kingdom's SMEs



*Cambodia News | 4 February, 2020*

The Ministry of Commerce has launched Go4eCam, a pilot project that aims to realise the benefit of e-commerce for the nation's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a sector that is currently playing an important role in the country's economic growth. The project costs approximately \$2.5 million for three months and is slated to begin implementation in the middle of this month. It is jointly piloted and funded by international development partners and the government and is called the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), a multi-donor trust fund that provides financial and technical support to build trade capacity in all 48 least-developed countries, a list that includes Cambodia, and is a major fund supporter of the project. Providing approximately \$1.5 million in grant aid to the project, with the remaining contribution from the UN Development Programme and the Cambodian government. Speaking at the launch in Phnom Penh last Friday, Pan Sorasak, Minister Commerce Ministry said the project is a new initiative, aimed at benefiting the Kingdom's SME sector, enabling it to catch up with global markets and a wider range of consumers through the use of technology. "Helping them to

engage with an e-commerce platform, this, of course, will increase sales and allow for business expansion that will also lead to job creation," Pan said. He also noted that the project is part of the Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) 2019-2023, in what the minister claimed will allow the Kingdom to transform to a digital economy and to become a country that will be driven by the 4.0 revolution. "The Go4eCAM project is launching at the right time, coinciding with the approval of e-commerce law. The project will provide many other benefits, including increasing productivity, innovation, business expansion and job creation in Cambodia," Pan explained. Cambodia has more than 500,000 SMEs, of which 150,000 process raw agricultural material to food products, according to the Federation of Associations of Small and Medium Enterprises of Cambodia, which estimated only 10 percent export of raw agricultural businesses export to foreign markets.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50686950/pilot-project-to-boost-e-commerce-for-kingdoms-smes>

## China coronavirus outbreak yet to impact Lao exporters



*Laos News | 4 February, 2020*

Lao exports to China continue to flow as normal despite China being in the midst of the current coronavirus outbreak. Laos has not received any impact reports yet from exporters since the start of the virus outbreak, according to the Import and Export Department of the Ministry of Industry and

Commerce. In December, the value of exports from Laos to China hit US\$175 million, making the northern neighbour Laos' top export market, while it is expected that the value of exports in January will not decrease. Official estimates for 2019 put total exports to China at US\$1,510 million with imports reaching US\$985 million. Laos' main exports to China are ore sand, rubber and rubber products, copper and copper products, bananas, maize and fertilisers. In turn, Laos imports electrical appliances, vehicles and spare parts, mechanical and electronic equipment, and steel. China is now the biggest foreign investor in Laos and the country's second-largest trading partner. In 2016, Laos exported about US\$1,133 million worth of goods to China, which rose to US\$1,233 million in 2017. In 2018, Laos planned to earn US\$1,478 million from exports to China but achieved only US\$1,406 million, and expected to spend US\$945 million on imports but the final figure was US\$1,381 million. An increasing number of Chinese investors in Laos and cooperation projects by both governments has been a major reason for increased imports from China in recent years. The China-Laos railway, the launch of Laos' first satellite, hydropower development and other projects funded by China have helped to promote connectivity between the two nations. The government is optimistic that exports to China will rise this year, given increasing trade and economic cooperation. Agriculture is seen as an important sector to bolster Lao exports to China, especially bananas, rubber, fertilisers, cassava and sweetcorn.

China approved a rice import quota of 50,000 tonnes along with accepting other industrial goods as part of efforts to bolster bilateral trade. Lao Airlines has suspended charter flights to five cities in China after Chinese authorities prohibited its citizens from leaving the country in an attempt to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Charter flights from Vientiane to Changzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai, and from Luang Prabang to Shanghai and Jinghong have all been suspended.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/china-coronavirus-outbreak-yet-impact-lao-exporters-113161>

## Luang Prabang city sets example in business climate improvement



*Laos News | 4 February, 2020*

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Luang Prabang city authorities have taken the lead in overhauling the process to authorise the operation of a business after the government ordered state agencies to improve the business climate throughout the country. The city's Industry and Commerce Office on Monday issued an announcement outlining the new process that Lao and foreign businesses must follow in order to set up operations. According to the announcement, there are now only three stages to starting a business in Laos, namely obtaining an enterprise registration certificate, getting an enterprise stamp, and registering for social insurance. No individual or organisation is allowed to require any additional stages in the process, the announcement stresses. The announcement states

that after receiving a completed set of application forms, authorities must issue an enterprise registration certificate or enterprise identification card (ID) to a business operator within 10 days. This reduction in the time taken to issue an enterprise registration certificate in the city complies with the government's order to improve coordination between the state agencies involved in improving the business climate. With regard to the issuing of a permit for a business to use its stamp, the authorities should not take more than five days to consider the request, and not spend more than two days considering the issuance of a company's social insurance registration. The government has initiated a policy to improve the business climate countrywide, believing that cutting red tape will boost domestic and foreign investment as well as job and income creation. In recent years, many state organisations have been unable to implement strong and concrete measures to simplify the process of granting a business licence. The initiative taken by Luang Prabang city to reform enterprise registration provides a good example for other state bodies to follow. Enterprise registration officials said recently the government was improving a mechanism that enabled officials to register a business online, adding that this would help to improve the business climate. However, in addition to obtaining an enterprise registration certificate, business operators must get a permit to operate a business from the relevant authorities. For example, a company that makes explosive materials must get

permission from the National Defence sector. The government has drawn up a list, called the "negative" list, which requires a company to request permission to operate a business. Companies which operate a type of business listed in the "open" category, such as a retail shop, will find it easier to start a business.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/luang-prabang-city-sets-example-business-climate-improvement-113159>

## Prices, sales of watermelons plunge dramatically in Myanmar



*Myanmar News | 4 February, 2020*

Traders are reporting that Myanmar's watermelon crop, which is largely dependent on the China market, is currently experiencing a major downturn. Traders in the Muse border trade area in Shan State prices for watermelon have dropped by around 50 percent while sales have declined by as much as 99 pc. Normally, in Muse at this time of year some 600 to 700 merchants from China come every day. On December 2, only 55 merchants came over to buy local produce and not all of them were interested in watermelons," said U Sai Khin Maung, owner of Khwar Nyo Trading Co Ltd in Muse. "We have no buyers for watermelon and prices are down around 50 pc to 70pc. There were some sales for high-quality melons and absolutely none for lower quality fruit," U Sai Khin Maung said. He added that normally around 12,000 tonnes of watermelon are sold to

China daily, but now the total hasn't even hit 120 tonnes. To assist farmers, the Yangon Region government recently helped to arrange sales of watermelon at the Myanmar Ethnic Culture Festival and Danyingone Wholesale Market in Yangon, said U Naing Win, chair of the Melon Growers, Producers and Exporters Group. "Local watermelon crops are usually much higher than domestic demand, so farmers are facing difficulties. They can barely earn enough to cover their transportation costs," said U Naing Win. Watermelon prices have dropped from between K5,000 to K3,000 to between K3,000 to K1,500. Agronomist are advising farmer to control the harvesting of their crops, but it can only delay around 10 days and after that farmers face damage to the crops," said U Naing Win. The Melon Growers, Producers and Exporters Group is urging local buyers to help farmers by buying more of the crop.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/prices-sales-watermelons-plunge-dramatically-myanmar.html>

### Footwear industry likely to hit goals this year



*Vietnam News | 4 February, 2020*

HA NOI — The domestic leather and footwear industry was in good shape to reach its goals this year, according to Phan Thi Thanh Xuân, vice chairwoman and general secretary of the Viet Nam Leather and Footwear Association (Lefaso). The industry's industrial production index in 2020 would

increase by about 11 per cent and the localisation rate of products would hit 60 per cent, she said. The industry's footwear and bag export value was forecast to reach US\$24 billion this year, gaining 10 per cent compared to 2019. Xuân said this year, the US-China trade war as well as trade conflicts between the US and other trade partners such as Europe and India would likely decrease, while the global economy would gradually recover. Besides that, orders for footwear and bag would continue shifting from China to Viet Nam to take advantage of preferential tariffs from free trade agreements, she said. Therefore, Lefaso forecast that the demand for local footwear products in Viet Nam's main export markets would increase this year. Foreign direct investment (FDI) enterprises would continue to expand production, helping the footwear industry maintain export growth. According experts, the domestic leather and footwear industry had many opportunities to expand into new export markets. However, businesses needed to target value-added products and high-end brands for higher profits. In addition to opportunities, free trade agreements would create many challenges for domestic footwear enterprises, so they needed to renew technology, improve production capacity, develop export markets and improve competitiveness. According to the association, the industry must develop its support industries and raw materials, and increase labour productivity. It should also encourage investment to develop footwear production in central and southern provinces. The association also said

the biggest difficulty facing the leather and footwear industry was quality human resources. Businesses must retrain most of their staff who had not been trained at vocational schools. In terms of exports, the industry last year gained stable growth and maintained competitiveness in traditional markets. The top five markets accounted for over 82 per cent of total national footwear export value, including the US, the European Union, China, Japan and South Korea. Xuân said total export value of footwear and bags reached \$22 billion last year, including \$15.1 billion, or 75.8 per cent, from FDI enterprises. The gap in export value between FDI and domestic enterprises has been narrowed. Domestic enterprises accounted for 19.7 per cent of the nation's footwear and bag export value in 2017, and that figure surged to 24.2 per cent in 2019. This confirmed the recovery of domestic footwear enterprises. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/591790/footwear-industry-likely-to-hit-goals-this-year.html>

## Bà Rịa-Vung Tàu

### lures \$174m investment



*Vietnam News | 4 February, 2020*

BA RIA-VUNG TÀU — The People's Committee of Bà Rịa-Vung Tàu province on Monday granted licences to five new and capital-added projects worth a combined US\$174 million during a meeting with more than 300 representatives from associations, economic organisations and investors. In his speech, People's Committee Chairman Nguyen Van

Tho praised the effective contribution of domestic and foreign investors to the province's socio-economic development. Last year, the province attracted 108 new projects, including 49 foreign-invested ones valued at about \$623 million, and 59 domestically-financed ones capitalised at VND13.13 trillion (\$566 million), Tho said. During the year, it also allowed 40 existing projects to increase investment capital by \$524 million, he added. Currently, the locality is home to 960 projects including 390 foreign-invested with a combined investment capital of \$40.5 billion. Over the years, Bà Rịa-Vung Tàu had lured domestic and foreign investors, according to Nguyen Công Vinh, director of the provincial Department of Planning and Investment. He outlined seaports, tourism and petroleum as areas that received the most attention from investors. In the future, the province would concentrate on attracting investment projects that used advanced and modern technologies and employed highly skilled workers, he said, adding that it would continue to improve the investment environment with a focus on accelerating administrative reforms and improving infrastructure. Speeding up investment promotions, improving the quality of personnel and resolving difficulties for investors would also be included, Vinh said. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/591796/ba-ria-vung-tau-lures-174m-investment.html>