



- International tourism up but fears for the future
- Ministry moves to implement draft policy for cashew nut production
- Bananas remain a large slice of Laos' export pie
- Ministry imposes new charges on goods transitting through Laos
- Myanmar govt reveals 58 national development projects in project bank
- Myanmar continues dried fish exports to Bangladesh
- Foreign investment falls 23.6 percent in first two months
- Agro-forestry-fishery sector runs trade surplus in two months



International tourism up but fears for the future



Cambodia News | 27 February, 2020

Cambodia earned around \$4.91 billion, up 12.4 percent year-on-year from international tourism receipts last year, with 6.61 million international visitors, according to the latest report from the Ministry of Tourism. Last year, the number of domestic tourists visiting Cambodia was up 11.3 million domestic tourists, up 2.3 percent year-on-year. The report said that tourism sector contributed 12.1 percent directly to gross domestic product (GDP). Tourism directly employed up to 630,000 people. China was at the top of the international arrivals in Cambodia last year, up to 2.361million, followed by Vietnam 908,803, Thailand 363,951, Laos 363,951, South Korea 254,874, the US 248,863, Japan 207,636, Malaysia 203,008, France 164,117 and the UK 163,177. The ministry said that it forecast the number of international tourists will reach 7 million in 2020. However, because the outbreak of COVID-19, the prediction could change dramatically. At present, in Siem Reap alone, the number of international tourists decreased about 60 percent so far this year. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism said at a meeting yesterday it wanted to boost the number of tourists visiting Siem Reap and other potential tourism destinations. The government as well as the ministry of tourism, is creating policies to boost the number of domestic tourists. He said the ministry will host many events to attract more local

tourists. He added that domestic tourists referred to Cambodians and foreigners who work and live in Cambodia. "From the figure we recorded last week, domestic tourists travelling the country increased more than 10 percent. The number of local and foreign tourists is also increasing," he said. "We will release a report weekly on the number of tourists," Thong added. "To attract more tourists to Siem Reap, the ministry will host more than 20 events, collaborating with relevant stakeholders. The event can be workshops, seminars, expos, international meetings or conferences, tourism events, sports and cultural events," said Thong. He added the ministry will facilitate travelling for all tourists by road to visit Angkor Wat, in Siem Reap. At the same time, all authorities are to ensure the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 infection to the country and to attract the tourists at the same time. "At present, it is an opportunity for all sectors to strengthen the quality of services and local authorities at all levels will have to improve and develop infrastructure, road repairs, roadside lighting, decorations, waste management and hygiene," he added. "Siem Reap destination saw a 60 percent drop in the number of tourists but we recorded 4,000 tourists visiting Angkor Wat per day and mostly they were tourists from America and Europe," Thong added He expects the number of local tourists will increase from 10 to 15 percent, while, the the number of international tourists will drop around 10 to 15 percent. Chuk Chumno, director of the Tourism Product Development

Department said Cambodia has about 600 resorts and tourism sites to welcome tourists across the country and another 4,000 potential tourism destinations. "According to this figure, we have enough places to welcome both local and international tourists," Chuk said. Prime Minister Hun Sen announced this week that all registered hotels and guesthouses in Siem Reap will be exempt from all taxes from February until May this year. The measure is to facilitate businesses that are losing visitors because of COVID-19, which has seriously damaged the tourism sector in Siem Reap. The government has decided to increase the number of days that visitors can enter Angkor Archaeological Park with entrance passes.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50695677/international-tourism-up-but-fears-for-the-future>

Ministry moves to implement draft policy for cashew nut production



Cambodia News | 28 February, 2020

The Ministry of Commerce has formed a working group to draft a strategic policy on cashew nut development in Cambodia. Chaired by Chan Rasy, under-secretary of state of the Ministry of Commerce, the newly-formed group will conduct studies and collect information related to the cashew nut production chain. The collected information will be input for drafting the strategic policy for the crop in Cambodia, according to a statement signed by Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, on Tuesday. After compiling the information, the draft policy will

be submitted to government for checks and approval, before being implemented as the national policy on cashew nut development in Cambodia. The group will also be organising workshops, seminars and preparing business-match events in the cashew nut and farming industry. The draft policy has been commissioned because the Kingdom's cashew nut production has notably increased over the past few years. However, because of a lack of domestic processing, raw nuts are still mainly for export. Cambodia exported 202,318 tonnes of cashew nuts last year to foreign markets, up nearly 100 per cent from 101,973 tonnes in 2018, according to data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. According to the Ministry, cashew nuts were exported to a total of seven countries – Vietnam, Russia, South Korea, China, Myanmar, Peru and Saudi Arabia. Khan Samban, director of the agro-industry department for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, said that officials from the department will join with the Ministry of Commerce to draft the new national policy. "We are working to boost the production of cashews in the country, so working with the Ministry of Commerce, officials at the Agriculture Ministry will contribute with technical knowledge," Khan said. The current price of raw cashew nuts is \$1.25 to \$1.5 per kilogramme, depending on the quality of the nut, with cashew nut production still expected to experience good growth in 2020, Khan added. According, to the Ministry of Agriculture, more than 500,000 hectares

of cashew nut trees are planned for planting, up from the current 150,000 hectares.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50695612/ministry-moves-to-implement-draft-policy-for-cashew-nut-production>

Bananas remain a large slice of Laos' export pie



Laos News | 28 February, 2020

Bananas continue to be a top earner among all agricultural products, earning revenue for local development, despite the government banning the creation of more plantations. The export value of bananas to neighbouring countries, mainly China and Thailand, last year increased to about US\$198 million, which is higher than in previous years, according to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. In 2017, Laos earned US\$167.9 million from banana exports which dipped to US\$112 million in 2018, ranking fourth in terms of revenue among all agricultural exports after wood pulp and waste paper, buffalo and cattle, and rubber goods. Other major agricultural export earners are include cassava, raw coffee, rubber, maize and rice. The export value of bananas increased as various plantations operating under the contract farming system became ready for harvesting. The number of investors and banana plantations decreased after the government enforced a ban on granting land for new plantations and shut down companies that had violated regulations. During 2016-17, a total of 117 companies invested in banana plantations covering

26,177 hectares across Laos, although this subsequently dropped to 90 companies and 20,408 hectares. The agriculture strategy until 2025 states that bananas are a top agricultural export earner, create job opportunities, and generate income for local people so they can rise above poverty. But some plantations harmed the environment because of a lack of management by the government, incomplete land allocation, and lax business registration. For this reason, traders and investors were encouraged to enter into contracts with farming families to grow the crop. But regulations have not been enforced, especially those relating to enterprises, investment promotion, chemical management, plant protection, consumer protection and environmental protection. In 2014, the Prime Minister's Office instructed the governors of northern provinces to ban individuals and companies from leasing or obtaining concessions for rice fields in irrigated areas for banana plantations. In 2015, the Prime Minister's Office issued an additional notice on the use of herbicides, pesticides and other chemicals on banana plantations. In 2016, the Prime Minister's Office issued a further notice aimed at resolving environmental issues and the impact of banana plantations. Following these three notices, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry appointed technical teams and experts from the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute to conduct inspections of banana plantations in the northern provinces of Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Bokeo, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang and Xayaboury.

The study showed that banana farming by ethnic groups is a long-standing practice. They traditionally use banana leaves to make “mark beng” (handmade pyramids of banana leaves decorated with flowers) for religious rituals and to wrap confections, while the stems and branches can be used to make animal feed and the bananas eaten or sold. The three notices led many banana growers to believe the government had banned the cultivation of bananas, but in fact the ban only concerned bananas grown in rice fields. Banana plantations should follow good agricultural practices in line with the government’s clean, green and sustainable policies. Growers should use herbicides and pesticides of a particular standard and not use chemicals that the government has banned, especially Paraquat and DDT.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/bananas-remain-large-slice-laos%E2%80%99-export-pie-114628>

Ministry imposes new charges on goods transitting through Laos



Laos News / 28 February, 2020

The Ministry of Finance will impose a new charge on so-called transit goods next month as the government seeks ways to benefit from Laos’ transformation from landlocked to a land bridge. The Lao National Gazette website last week published the amended Ministerial Decision on Transit Goods Charges, making this government regulation effective in the middle of next month. Under this amended ministerial decision, goods which

businesses import for export purposes will be subject to the new rates. According to the new ministerial decision, which Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mr Somdy Duangdy signed on January 10, any business that imports goods for export purposes is liable for the new fee. The rate differs depending on the type of product and the quantity. For example, the transit fee charged on one litre of whisky, wine or other alcoholic beverage is US\$1. A business that imports petrol, oil or lubricant for export purposes will be charged a transit fee of US\$0.25 per litre. The fee for a four-wheel vehicle with an engine size larger than 3,000cc is US\$1,500 per unit. Animals such as buffalo, cows, horses and sheep which enter Laos for export will also be subject to a transit fee. The details of these fees can be found at <https://laoofficialgazette.gov.la>. Goods which are imported for export purposes will not be allowed to be distributed in Laos, according to the new ministerial decision. Tax officials were not immediately available for comment on the revision of the ministerial decision on transit goods fees. However, according to this government regulation, the transit fee is part of the government’s efforts to overcome Laos’ landlocked status and turn the country into a land link. Laos’ strong economic growth and the need for expansion of the government’s revenue base are also reasons for the amendment of the ministerial decision. The

government has invested a large amount of public money in the construction of railways, roads and bridges to connect to neighbouring countries in order to transform Laos from being a landlocked country into a land bridge. One of these mega investment projects is the Laos-China railway, which will be part of the Kunming-Singapore railway in the future. The railway running through Laos is scheduled for completion at the end of 2021. Government officials believe that Laos has huge potential to serve as a logistics hub, through which business operators can bring in goods and ship them to other countries in the region. The Ministry of Finance has been actively creating new revenue streams by revising the tax laws and introducing new mechanisms to boost revenue collection. This is in line with the government's increasing need for revenue for public expenditure and development projects.

Source : http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Ministry_42.php

Myanmar govt reveals 58 national development projects in project bank



Myanmar News | 27 February, 2020

The government revealed 58 national development projects during the launch of its online project bank website yesterday. Announced last year, the Myanmar Project Bank is an interactive web-based platform designed to highlight investment projects in

line with the implementation of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) for 2018-2030. It can be found on The 58 infrastructure development projects include road, railway, port, airport, electricity, urban development, industrial estate development as well as agricultural development projects. The loftiest project is the Yangon Central Station, which involves an investment of more than US\$2.1 billion. The project bank represents “an online one-stop-shop, where all information on projects designed to implement the MSDP can be easily accessed with a single click,” according to the website. It also establishes a reliable and transparent system which links major investment projects with appropriate sources of finance including Public – Private – Partnerships and provides more opportunities for the private sector to contribute to national development. All the projects are strategic in nature and align with the MSDP.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-govt-reveals-58-national-development-projects-project-bank.html>

Myanmar continues dried fish exports to Bangladesh



Myanmar News | 27 February, 2020

Myanmar is continued to export many kinds of dried fish to Bangladesh through Maungdaw border trade center. It exported 210 tons of dried fish worth over US\$131,000 during January and it is the third largest

export via Maungdaw border trade center. Myanmar exported 268 tons of dried fish worth about US\$192,000 in December, according to Office of the Director of Maungdaw border trade center. Myanmar earned over US\$1.4 million from export products including dried fish export during December and earned over US\$1.538 million in January. It exported onion, carp fish, dried fish, betel nuts, chick peas, ginger and plum jam and its main export is onions. Myanmar traded US\$6.707 million worth of products via Maungdaw border trade center from October 1 to February 14 and it is US\$3 million more in compared with the same period in last fiscal year.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/myanmar-continues-dried-fish-exports-to-bangladesh>

Foreign investment falls 23.6 percent in first two months



Vietnam News | 27 February, 2020

Hanoi (VNA) – The inflow of foreign investment into Vietnam experienced a year-on-year drop of 23.6 percent in the first two months of the year to 6.47 billion USD, according to a report from the Ministry of Industry and Trade's Foreign Trade Agency. Disbursement of foreign capital declined 5 percent to 2.45 billion USD in the period. As many as 500 new projects received investment licenses, with total registered capital of 5 billion USD, doubling the amount recorded the same time last year.

Singapore's Delta Offshore Energy Pte Ltd Co was the largest investor with its liquefied natural gas-fired (LNG) power plant valued at 4 billion USD in the Mekong Delta province of Bac Lieu. There were 151 projects registering to adjust their capital. Total additional capital fell nearly 25 percent to 638.1 million USD. Capital contributions and share purchases by foreign investors fell substantially by 84 percent to 827.3 million USD. From January-February, most foreign capital was injected into 18 sectors. Power production attracted the largest amount of investment with 3.89 billion USD, followed by the processing and manufacturing sector (1.76 billion USD), wholesale and retail sales (195 million USD), and technology and science (180 million USD). Up to 73 countries and territories have invested in Vietnam in the first two months of 2020. The largest investors included Singapore (4.12 billion USD), China (720.4 million USD), and the Republic of Korea (425.4 million USD)/.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/foreign-investment-falls-23-6-percent-in-first-two-months/169297.vnp>

Agro-forestry-fishery sector runs trade surplus in two months



Vietnam News | 27 February, 2019

Hanoi (VNA) – The agro-forestry-fishery sector recorded a trade surplus of over 1 billion USD in the first two months of 2020, a year-on-year rise of 18.4 percent. In January-February, the country's total

export turnover of agro-forestry-aquatic products was estimated at 5.34 billion USD, down 2.8 percent against the same period last year, while the import turnover fell 6.7 percent to 4.3 billion USD. Declines were seen in tra fish (27 percent), cashew nuts (17 percent), rubber (16 percent), and fruits and vegetables (12 percent). The four main export markets for Vietnam's agro-forestry-fishery sector are China, the US, the European Union, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) said it has coordinated with relevant ministries and localities to carry out trade promotion activities in new markets and attempted to boost domestic sales. The General Statistics Office said the agro-forestry-fishery sector expanded 2.01 percent in 2019, contributing 4.6 percent to the year's gross domestic production growth. Meanwhile, the MARD estimated agro-forestry-aquatic product exports for 2020 at 41.3 billion USD, rising 3.2 percent year on year./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/agro-forestry-fishery-sector-runs-trade-surplus-in-two-months/169295.vnp>
