



- Minister of Tourism says virus will be as bad, if not worse, than SARs was for industry
- MOT unveils their plan to encourage domestic travel
- Lao agribusiness sector to raise challenges at business forum
- Tourism Malaysia strengthens ties with Laos to boost arrivals
- Auto industry seeks easing of duties on car components
- Exchange rate hits Myanmar bean market
- \$564 million poured in **Đà Nẵng** Hi-tech Park
- Vietnam exports processed chicken to Russia



Minister of Tourism says virus will be as bad, if not worse, than SARs was for industry



Cambodia News | 9 March, 2020

Minister of Tourism, Thong Khon, has drawn comparisons between the current COVID-19 outbreak to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARs) pandemic that occurred in 2003 and devastated the tourism industry in Asia. “Cambodia experienced a dramatic decline in foreign tourist arrivals during the 2003 SARs outbreak and we are seeing a similar reaction with the current COVID-19 virus,” he said. The ministry has predicted that that Cambodia will experience a reduction of one million tourists this year, resulting in a 10 percent loss of revenue for the sector. Cambodia welcomed 6.6 million tourists in 2019, a 7 percent increase from the year before. The sector generated approximately \$5 billion and accounted for 12 percent of the country’s GDP. The ministry also said that the Kingdom faces added external pressures due to the China and US trade war and an overall global economic slowdown that may also contribute to the reduction. “In 2003, with the SARS outbreak, the tourism sector was badly hurt, although this time we are working with the private sector to set out necessary measures to maintain the stability of the sector during this crisis. Measures include the encouragement of domestic tourists through special offers,” Chuk Chumnor, the Ministry of Tourism spokesman recently told Khmer Times. He added the virus has caused concern

throughout the global tourism sector, citing a downturn in Chinese tourists as a major factor. “Chinese nationals make up a large number of international travellers, so the government’s banning of many outbound tours has seriously affected the world’s tourism industry,” Chumnor said. A report by the Asian Development Bank, outlining the economic impact of COVID-19, backs this concern up, stating, “Tourism arrivals in many developing Asian economies are expected to decline sharply, as a result of numerous travel bans as well as precautionary behaviour.” “A major difference between this [COVID-19] outbreak and the SARs outbreak is that the Chinese economy is much larger and more integrated with other Asian countries. Therefore, travel restrictions may result in an even greater economic impact than before,” Yasuyuki Sawada, ADB chief economist explained. The report outlined one estimate where the cost of the virus could run from between \$77 billion to \$347 billion, representing 0.1 percent to 0.4 percent of global GDP.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50699503/minister-of-tourism-says-virus-will-be-as-bad-if-not-worse-than-sars-was-for-industry>

MOT unveils their plan to encourage domestic travel



Cambodia News | 9 March, 2020

The Ministry of Tourism is planning to establish a new affordable tour package scheme to counter the slowing down of domestic tourism figures amidst the

ongoing COVID-19 situation. To continue encouraging internal travel, a tour package with a saving of between 20 to 30 percent on comparable independent travel will soon be on offer. Top Sopheak, spokesman for the MOT, revealed that the ministry is currently working with hospitality outfits within the private sector, including hotels, resorts, restaurants, tour operators and transport companies, to facilitate the initiative. “The development of the affordable tour package aims to promote sustainable and responsible domestic tourist growth. We want to encourage Cambodians to visit at least one tourism destination a year [such as Siem Reap] and newly established tourism destinations,” he explained. If successful, the scheme’s revenues will contribute to the finances of the entire tourism industry and have a positive effect on the fortunes of the national economy. The packages will also endeavour to link tourism activities to environmental and cultural education plus promote humanitarian activities within local communities. Currently, the COVID-19 outbreak has cost over 3,000 lives worldwide, predominantly in China, and there is no indication that the virus will stop spreading imminently. The final cost to Cambodia’s tourism industry has yet to be calculated, but experts are warning that last year’s figures of 6.6 million international visitors (which generated \$5 billion for the economy) and 11.5 million domestic tourists will be significantly reduced.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50699506/mot-unveils-their-plan-to-encourage-domestic-travel>

Lao agribusiness sector to raise challenges at business forum



Laos News | 9 March, 2020

Lao agribusiness representatives have held talks with officials of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) to try to find solutions to various challenges and barriers. Companies from different fields are also looking to the 2020 Lao Business Forum (LBF), to be held in the near future, as a golden opportunity to use the business platform to inform the government about the problems they face. Friday’s consultation meeting, which was chaired by the LNCCI’s General Secretary, Mr Phouxay Thepphavong, discussed the problems faced by businesses in the agriculture sector in the run up to the Lao Business Forum. Mr Phouxay informed business operators about the achievements of a recent LBF meeting and called on firms representing the agriculture sector to specify the challenges they face in their operations. Participants spent almost an hour explaining their problems, which will be summarised by the LBF Secretariat so they can be presented to government leaders at this year’s business forum. Over the past few years, industry representatives have said the unresolved issues include the burdensome amount

of paperwork required to import raw materials and export finished goods. The government is working with the ministries involved to improve the business environment in Laos and to seek solutions to unresolved issues and remove unnecessary barriers. Most of the people living in rural areas are dependent on agriculture for their food and income, and the number of people working in agriculture across the country is high. Agribusinesses also contribute to economic growth year-on-year. The government has made the development of agriculture a key priority to fulfil the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030. In 2018, Laos' biggest export crop was bananas, worth US\$209 million and accounting for 30 percent of all agricultural exports. This was followed by coffee exports worth US\$70 million and dried cassava worth US\$24 million, according to a report from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-agribusiness-sector-raise-challenges-business-forum-115299>

Tourism Malaysia strengthens ties with Laos to boost arrivals



Laos News | 9 March, 2020

In a bid to intensify promotions to the Asean market, Tourism Malaysia on Wednesday launched the “Malaysia Tourism Seminar and B2B Session” as part of the Malaysia Golden Month Holiday

Campaign to promote Malaysia, at the Landmark Hotel in Vientiane. Tourism Malaysia led the delegation consisting of AirAsia, product owners namely Vouk Hotel Management, Sunway Lost World and Sunway Lagoon; as well as travel agencies from Columbia Leisure and Asia Delights to represent the Malaysian tourism industry. More than 100 local delegates from travel agents, associations and members of the media from Vientiane showed support and attended the session. Also attending the event were Malaysian Ambassador to Laos, Mr Mohd Aini Bin Atan, Director of the International Promotion Division (Asean) of Tourism Malaysia, Mr Noran Ujang, and representatives of travel agencies. Mr Noran welcomed guests at the launch event and personally thanked the travel agents and media for their dedicated efforts and constant support in promoting Malaysia in Laos. “I am pleased to see the support from the Vientiane industry players and hope that this will further strengthen the ties between Laos and Malaysia, especially amid the COVID-19 outbreak which threatens the global tourism industry,” he said. As part of the quick win strategy, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tourism Malaysia had identified Asean countries as the key market to reduce losses due to the debilitating effects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry. The event served as a platform for networking and collaboration especially for package development

and promotional efforts in conjunction with the Visit Malaysia 2020 (VM2020) campaign. Aside from boosting arrivals from Laos, the programme was also initiated to strengthen cooperation between Laos and Malaysia, as both countries have a long-standing relationship as close Asean countries. From January to September 2019, Malaysia received 20,959 tourists from Laos, reflecting a significant increase of 13.8 percent compared to the same period in 2018. Malaysia hopes to welcome a total of 30 million tourist arrivals, and RM100 billion in tourist receipts for VM2020.

Source:<http://annx.asianews.network/content/tourism-malaysia-strengthens-ties-laos-boost-arrivals-115300>

Auto industry seeks easing of duties on car components



Myanmar News | 9 March, 2020

A request from the local automotive industry for duties on cars assembled in the country to be reduced has been presented to Yangon Region's chief minister, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry says. The duties imposed on components for semi-knocked down (SKD) and completely knocked down (CKD) vehicles assembled in Myanmar is the same as that imposed on completely built up vehicles imported into the country, keeping prices of locally assembled from falling, representatives of auto manufacturers told Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein during a

meeting that took place on February 25. "We have considered reducing duties on auto parts for SKD cars. We should promote SKD auto manufacturing so that the country can move up the value chain into CKD. High duties on SKD cars may hinder the sector from developing. So, we have requested the chief minister help to reduce the duties and has said he will bring the matter up to the union government," said a senior officer of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry on March 7. Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein had said on December 29 that Yangon would allow the registration of K10million worth of vehicles assembled in Myanmar. Permits for the imports of vehicles to be registered in Yangon had been suspended since April 1, 2016. On another issue faced by the automotive sector, the Ministry of Commerce said on March 8 that it will be allowing the renewal of vehicle import permits that are set to expire this month. "We're discussing the renewal of the imports permits that expire in March as the imports of right-hand drive cars will no longer be allowed in the future, but we have yet to make a decision on the validity periods of the permits period," said an official from the Ministry of Commerce. Since 2018, only imports of left-hand drive vehicles into Myanmar have been allowed, resulting in importers taking in vehicles from the Western countries only. "It's great news that the import permits will be renewed. Following the instruction to import left-hand drive cars only, we are mostly importing from the US, Dubai, Germany, and Canada. It takes about three months to ship the cars

to Myanmar, so it's necessary to increase the duration of import permits," U Aung Soe, a vehicle importer, said on March 8.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/auto-industry-seeks-easing-duties-car-components.html>

Exchange rate hits Myanmar bean market



Myanmar News | 9 March, 2020

The strengthening of the kyat against the US dollar and Chinese yuan has begun to have a negative impact on Myanmar's beans and pulses, merchants in Mandalay say. The rise in the kyats value of the past several weeks means Myanmar's goods have become more expensive for foreign buyers while at the same time earning local producers less in terms of kyat. The prices local beans and pulses have declined by anywhere from K2,000 to K10,000 per three-basket bag, a local unit of measure, and local sellers are especially feeling the effects of the yuan's weakening, said U Moe, a bean merchant at Mandalay wholesale centre. The exchange rate for 1 yuan has fallen from K206.39 on February 7 to just K199.83 on March 8, a decline of 3.17 percent. "We are losing about K3 million for every K100 million in sales," U Moe said. The price of black gram, locally called matpe, has declined about K10,000 from K90,000 to K80,000, while the green gram has decline K6,000 from K119,000 to K113,000, and green pea about K8,000 from K65,000 to K57,000. As of Sunday, the kyat was trading at K1,385.45 against the US dollar, up from K1,438.969 just last

February 7. Last Thursday, the Central Bank of Myanmar purchased US\$3 million dollars at a rate of K1,398.6 per US dollar as part of efforts to stabilise the exchange rate.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/exchange-rate-hits-local-bean-market.html>

\$564 million poured in Đà Nẵng Hi-tech Park



Vietnam News | 9 March, 2020

Having launched as a hub for green and hi-tech investment in 2013, the Đà Nẵng Hi-Tech Park has lured 18 investment projects, of which nine foreign direct investment (FDI), with total US\$564 million. Six projects including four FDI and two domestic investors were already put into operation. Head of the Hi-Tech park and the Industrial Zones management board, Phạm Trường Sơn said the Hi-Tech Park was designed as one of three major national multi-functional hi-tech park in the country after HCM City and Hà Nội. He said four FDI enterprises – Tokyo Keiki Precision Technology Inc and Niwa Foundry from Japan; Dentium company from Korea and Universal Alloy Corporation from the US – had poured \$260 million for manufacturing product for exports and domestic market. Two domestic investors – Long Hậu company and the Biễn Đông electric automation technology company with an investment of \$100 million – all started operating their projects from 2018. According to the management board, UAC will manufacture over 4,000 different aerospace parts at Đà Nẵng-based

Sunshine Aerospace components manufacturer plant in supplying for Boeing, Airbus, Embraer, Bombardier, and it will export these parts to North America, Europe and Asia in the near future. UAC, who invested \$170 million for its factory at the park, had completed construction and begun production from late 2019, Sơn said. He said the park would present five investment licences worth \$148 million to investors, and four other feasibility studies projects with an estimate of \$275 million in the first quarter of 2020. Up-to-date, the Đà Nẵng Hi-Tech Park and six other Industrial Zones (IZs) have drawn 505 projects worth \$2.6 billion. These projects earned revenue of VNĐ35.6 trillion (\$1.5 billion) in 2019, contributing \$213 million to the local budget. The city has called for investment from Silicon Valley and the US in health care, hi-tech industries, Artificial Intelligence, education, real estate and automation at Đà Nẵng Hi-tech Park and IZs. — VNS

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/653256/564-million-poured-in-da-nang-hi-tech-park.html>

Vietnam exports processed chicken to Russia



Vietnam News | 9 March, 2019

A chicken processing factory in Chuong My district, Hanoi, has become the first business in Vietnam to be licensed to export processed chicken products to Russia. The Department of Animal Health under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on March 8 said the Russian animal and phytosanitary quarantine agency had sent an official notice to the

department, allowing imports of Vietnamese processed chicken products from C.P Vietnam Corporation. To make inroads into the selective market, Vietnamese firms need to meet strict standards on raising, slaughtering and processing, as well as ensuring biological and food safety, disease-free products, and traceability. Businesses must also meet other criteria and technical barriers from Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Now that Vietnam is allowed to export processed chicken to Russia means the country could also export to other EAEU members, including Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Source: <https://english.vov.vn/economy/vietnam-exports-processed-chicken-to-russia-411093.vov>