

Highlight News May, 15/2020



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Thai checkpoint resumes for trade



Cambodia News | 14 May, 2020

Goods transportation at a Battambang checkpoint shared border with Thailand's Sakeo province has now resumed operations. In the light of COVID-19 the border closed, but it has resumed in the last two weeks with time restriction, according to Battambang provincial governor Nguon Ratanak. Although the border has just reopened, Ratanak said restriction will remain in place, leaving it opens from 7am to midnight. "They export pigs to Cambodia and we export agriculture products to Thailand," he said. Another international checkpoint shared between Cambodia's Battambang province and Thailand's Chonburi province is still open for goods transportation as normal. However it is not open to people.. The international border checkpoint in Battambang's Sampov Luon district, connecting Thailand's Sakeo province is an import border gate for trade between the countries. The Federation of Cassava in Battambang President Ny Khon said recently that up to 1 million tonnes of cassava are exported through the border every season. He noted cassava from Kompong Thom province is also transported through the border to enter Thailand. The Bangkok Post recently reported a figure from the Thai Foreign Trade Department as showing that Cambodia's cross-border trade with Thailand fell to \$1.5 million in the first quarter as the coronavirus hit the global economy and led to the closure of dozens of checkpoints. Keerati Rushchano, director general

of the department, said outstanding performance was seen in exports to Cambodia, which saw continued growth of 14.3 percent in the first three months of the year despite the potentially deadly virus. According to data from Thailand's Ministry of Commerce the bilateral trade between the Kingdoms in the first three months was valued at \$2.5 billion, a 31 percent hike over same period last year. During the period, Cambodia's total exports to Thailand reached \$612 million, a 115 percent increase, while Cambodia imported from Thailand \$1,891 million of goods, a 17 percent increase over the corresponding period last year.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50723015/thai-checkpoint-resumes-for-trade/>

Cambodia-Japan trade register more than \$586 million in Q1



Cambodia News | 14 May, 2020

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and Japan was valued at \$586.8 million in the first quarter of this year, a 5 percent increase compared to the same period last year, according to a report of Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO). From January to March 2020, Cambodia exported US\$475.1 million worth of goods to Japan, up 4.4 percent, while its imports were amounted to US\$111.7 million, a 7 percent increase. A report of the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce showed that the potential products for export from Cambodia to Japan are clothes, footwear, and electronics. Mr. Lim Heng, Vice President of Cambodia Chamber of Commerce,

said that the trade figures highlight the positive demand for Cambodia's products in foreign markets; particularly the strong activities of manufacturing in the country for exports. "The figure of bilateral trade of two countries reflects strong investment environment in Cambodia and it shows the active investments in manufacturing and processing locally for overseas exports are continuing," he underlined. Last year, the two-way trade between both nations rose by 13 percent to US\$2,292 million. Chea Vannak/AKP.

Source : : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50722980/cambodia-japan-trade-register-more-than-586-million-in-q1/>

Agriculture ministry, FAO, WFP ease COVID-19 food insecurity impacts



Laos News | 15 May, 2020

Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, the World Food Programme (WFP) are cooperating with the Lao Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to draft a response plan and provide direct assistance to farmers continuing to produce food for their communities. FAO, WFP now are completing an assessment of the COVID-19 impact on farmers and smallholders across Laos in supporting the ministry's assistance to farmers including the supply of seeds, home gardening kits, animal healthcare items and technical support. Speaking to the support, FAO Representative in the Lao PDR, Mr Nasar Hayat said the organisation was already implementing several

emergency projects to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the country's agricultural sector. "Through this support, we seek to improve nutrition, diversify incomes and restore the purchasing power of the most vulnerable families so that they can meet their critical needs without selling their assets," he said. With extensive expertise in strengthening communities' safety nets, food security, food safety and trade, FAO was pleased to offer its expertise to help the Lao government to safeguard the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable population groups, he added. In the absence of timely and effective policies, millions more people worldwide are likely to suffer hunger as a result of the COVID-19-triggered recession, FAO noted in its analysis published on its website on April 24. The economic impacts of COVID-19 will be felt more in the poor communities of the countries which depend on food imports, such as the Lao PDR. FAO analysis found that if GDP growth in the 101 net food-importing countries declines by 2 to 10 percent, hunger could affect an additional 14.4 million to 80.3 million people across these countries. This could lead to a longer-term setback to global Zero-Hunger efforts and a crisis with potentially severe consequences in the long run. Border closures, quarantines, and disruptions in markets, supply chains and trade, have disrupted people's access to sufficient, diverse and nutritious food, especially in

countries hit hard by the virus or already affected by high levels of food insecurity. Additionally, with the significant slowdown of the world's economies and the increasing rates of unemployment, the demand for food will decrease. In turn, prices will likely go down as well, thus reducing the sales and revenues of the agricultural sector. Globally, some 820 million people around the world are experiencing hunger – consuming an insufficient amount of calories for a healthy and active life. Hunger and chronic undernourishment are particularly damaging on children's growth and development; the effects are irreversible and carry long-term implications for future and sustainable development. The UN system has asked donors for US\$110 million under a consolidated UN humanitarian appeal of March 25 to fund the FAO emergency response to COVID-19 and facilitate its efforts to protect the food security of vulnerable rural populations worldwide. "Globally, there is enough food for everyone. Policymakers around the world must be careful to avoid the mistakes made during the 2007-2008 food crisis, and avoid turning this health crisis into a food crisis," the FAO Representative in Lao PDR said while noting there was adequate food supply so far with stable markets.

Source : http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Agriculture_92.php

Govt to create agri and rural jobs to support farmers under CERP



Myanmar News | 14 May, 2020

Jobs in agriculture and construction will be made available to the unemployed under the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) announced on May 13. "Jobs will be provided by the Agriculture, Irrigation and Rural Development Department under a Cash for Work program for the grassroots to earn some income," said U Myo Tint Tun, permanent secretary of MoALI. "The program is being implemented in line with the CERP. It is also intended to create agricultural job opportunities as well as support farmers by providing inputs for cultivation and financing. This will also ensure production does not decline during COVID-19," U Myo Tint Tun added. To yield jobs, MoALI will harness a total of 400,000 acres of farmland on which it will work under a joint venture with the Myanmar Rice Federation to produce seeds for planting. This will take up half the land. The remaining half will be used for the growing and harvesting of crops. Funds are expected to come from the government budget as well as international financing. The land will mainly be used to cultivate monsoon rice, U Myo Tint Tun said. Work will include planting, tilling, administering fertilisers and pesticides, irrigation, harvesting, processing and

packaging. This also aligns with the CERP, under which the government has pledged to support farmers with small-scale farming and seed production. This plan is estimated to produce jobs for at least 800,000 people, who will be needed to work on 400,000 acres of farmland, said U Tun Wai, a farmer with over 50 years of experience in Pinyin township. “The job nature necessitates at least two people per acre to work for four months so the total requirement should be around 800,000 workers. This guess is based on my working experience as a farmer,” he said. Meanwhile, the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department will also create jobs by starting several irrigation improvement projects. Those interested are also invited to apply for work across five irrigation improvement projects, which will be carried out in Bago, Mandalay, Sagaing and Nay Pyi Taw. The Rural Development Department will also start implementing road and bridge construction work in rural villages. More details are expected. The World Bank has said that it will provide an International Development Assistance loan of US\$200 million for the Myanmar: National Food and Agriculture Systems Project.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/govt-create-agri-and-rural-jobs-support-farmers-under-cerp.html>

Vietnam seeks to export fresh fruits, vegetables to Thailand



Vietnam News | 14 May, 2020

Hanoi (VNA) – Vietnamese fruit and vegetable exporters are seeking to make inroads into Thailand amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Vietnam Fruit & Vegetable Association (VinaFruit), exports to the US, Thailand and Africa saw positive signs last year. Vietnam exported 74.94 million USD worth of fruits and vegetables to Thailand in 2019, up 66.3 percent compared to the previous year. Secretary General of VinaFruit Dang Phuc Nguyen suggested that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should negotiate with the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to balance trade for fruits and vegetables because Vietnam has long been running a trade deficit for farm produce from Thailand. The ministry should ask Thailand to expand the list of fruits for importing from Vietnam, he recommended. Businesses are advised to study the market thoroughly while proactively seeking customers and expanding trade links. According to the Vietnamese Trade Office in Thailand, Thailand spends over 1 billion USD annually to import fresh fruits and 600 million USD to buy vegetables. In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand is the biggest importer of farm produce, especially Vietnamese fresh fruits and vegetables. “We should consider Thailand a trade partner instead of a competitive opponent,” said Vietnamese Trade Counsellor in

Thailand Tran Thi Thanh My. Vietnam has exported a large amount of farm produce to the market, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, she said. She cited statistics from Thai Customs as saying that Vietnam makes up 90 percent of Thailand's dragon fruit imports. So far, Thailand has only allowed imports of Vietnamese dragon fruit, mango, longan, and lychee. There are still enormous opportunities for Vietnam to increase exports of other farm produce, she added. Meanwhile, Vice President of Thailand's Central Retail Paul Le said Vietnam has a lot of tasty fruits. The company wants to boost imports of Vietnamese fresh fruits and vegetables, especially lychees. The Vietnamese goods week is held in Thailand annually to help Vietnamese firms to study the market and local customers' demand, he said. He added that the large overseas Vietnamese community in Thailand is also an advantage Vietnam can use to penetrate the market./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-seeks-to-export-fresh-fruits-vegetables-to-thailand/173292.vnp>

Bac Giang ranks ninth in FDI attraction



Vietnam News | 14 May, 2020

Bac Giang (VNA) – The northern province of Bac Giang ranked ninth among localities nationwide in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the first months of this year. According to Deputy Director of the provincial Department of Planning and Investment Nguyen Cuong, Bac Giang approved investment intention and licensed 13 FDI projects

with total capital of nearly 229 million USD. In addition, 12 existing FDI projects raised their investment capital by a combined more than 209 million USD. The total volume of FDI inflow so far this year was equivalent to 94.8 percent of the figure in the same period last year. The new projects included, the province is home to 464 FDI projects with total capital of over 6.12 billion USD. Apart from foreign investment, Bac Giang also attracted 34 domestic projects worth more than 3.5 trillion VND (149 million USD) in the past four months. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the index of industrial production in the first four months of this year of Bac Giang increased by 7.7 percent. However, this is the lowest growth rate for many years. The provincial administration will continue with measures to tackle difficulties for production and business, particularly enterprises' access to credit and problems in taxation, trade and electronic payment. Local departments, agencies and authorities are required to coordinate closely in improving the business and investment environment and the Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI)/.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/bac-giang-ranks-ninth-in-fdi-attraction/173320.vnp>