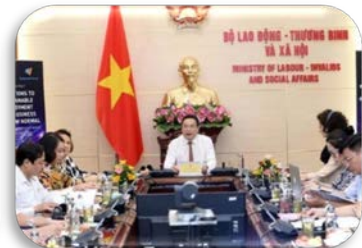




- Government to boost new tourism development zones
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- Ministry of Labor Orders Employers to Pay Wages Despite Pandemic
- Three Asean countries offer to buy Myanmar rice
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Government to boost new tourism development zones



Cambodia News | 04 June, 2020

The government is speeding up the tourism development plan for the country's west, northwest provinces and around the Tonle Sap River, according to the Ministry of Tourism. The ministry said a discussion about a tourism road map book in the region was made during a meeting on Tuesday in Banteay Meanchey province with participants from all levels of relevant parties. Nine provinces in the country's west and northwest, including Preah Vihear, Oddar Meanchey, Banteay Meanchey, Pailin and the provinces around Tonle Sap river (Kampong Thom, Seim Reap, Battambang, Pousat and Kampong Chnang). "This guide book will boost the provinces of Banteay Meanchey and Oddar Meanchey to develop new potential for tourism with the concepts of white gold [agriculture-based tourism] and green gold [eco-tourism]," the Ministry said. Fisheries, bird conservation areas, floating villages and connected road infrastructures around make it most attractive for the provinces around Tonle Sap. The road map book will help to strengthen and widen cooperation and relations among the provinces in the west, northwest and around Tonle Sap to gain more potential in attracting tourists, according to the ministry. Top Sopheak, the ministry's spokesman, said that a draft of the guide book was already finished but still needed the approval the minister. Chhay Sivlin, president of the

Cambodia Association of Travel Agents, welcomed the plan, saying that the region will provide great potential for tourism investment as well. "We have the great Tonle Sap river which has heritage value not only food security with its tourism sites," he said, adding that with the mixed resources including mountains, water and cultural sites, the region will become the country's new eco and cultural tourism destination. "So this is the new attraction place if the government makes a good plan because it also attracts more people to invest in that region's tourism," she said. Sivlin said that currently Cambodia's tourism sector has a lack of infrastructure connections and services are still limited. "Yes, it is part of the country's tourism diversification because we have difference attractions in each province and we have unique products but we have left it undeveloped so we need to create more tourism destinations to receive more tourists and provide quality services," she said. The ministry's planning department for tourism development is now cooperating with other relevant departments to research and collect data for the tourism development road map for the region. "It is important to contribute to the conservation of culture, the historical nature and protect against the Kingdom's climate change," the ministry said. "The tourism development road map will provide new opportunities and prosperity for the country's tourism sector that will be a benefit for tourists and investors." Beaches, Islands and Angkor Wat are the Kingdom's main tourism hub currently but the

government is diversifying into more eco-tourism. Cambodia welcomed 6.61 million international tourists in 2019. The data shows that local tourists amounted to 11.3 million while Cambodians travelling outbound numbered 2.04 million, according to the Ministry of Tourism's figures

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50730097/government-to-boost-new-tourism-development-zones/>

Cambodia exports 1.4 Million tonnes of agricultural products in first five months



Cambodia News | 04 June, 2020

Cambodia exported a total of 1.4 million tonnes of non-rice agricultural products to foreign markets during the first five months of this year, despite the global COVID-19 crisis. Report from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries shows that the exported non-rice agricultural products included cassava, cashew nuts, corn, banana, mangos, pepper, and so on. In breaking down, some 996,290 tonnes of cassava slices were exported from January to May, up 9.7 percent compared to the same period last year. Export of cashew nuts rose by over 25 percent to 190,141 tonnes, while that of banana reached 121,415 tonnes or a 172 percent increase. The report also stated that the export of fresh mangos and pepper saw an increase of 50 percent and 22.6 percent to 44,099 tonnes and 2,527 tonnes, respectively. Exports of cassava flour and corn, on the other hand, declined dramatically,

by 97 percent and 29 percent to 10,272 tonnes and 35,636 tonnes, respectively. At the same time, 356,097 tonnes of rice were shipped to international markets, up 42 percent in the first five months of this year. Chea Vannak

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50730202/cambodia-exports-1-4-million-tonnes-of-agricultural-products-in-first-five-months/>

Ministry of Labor Orders Employers to Pay Wages Despite Pandemic



Laos News | 04 June, 2020

The Lao Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has instructed employers to ensure workers are fairly compensated despite an economic downturn due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Director-General of the Department of Labor Management, Mr. Phongxaysack Intharath, spoke at a press briefing on Tuesday explaining the steps taken by the Ministry of Labor in assuring payment of employees, and social insurance payouts. In response to the economic downturn, the ministry has issued specific instructions for employers. Businesses that suspended operations in April, in line with Prime Ministerial Order No. 6 (lockdown), must pay their employees the normal wage if they have not done so. Businesses experiencing serious financial difficulties must pay their employees at least 50 percent of their ordinary wage. Meanwhile, day laborers who earn less than the minimum wage rate set by the government should be paid at least 50 percent of the amount they typically earn, or approximately LAK

550,000. Members of the Social Insurance scheme who were retrenched from 1 May onward will receive full unemployment benefits under the scheme. The ministry has asked employers to respect the Law on Labor and comply with all relevant regulations and employment contracts. Both employers and employees have the right to bring their case before the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare for consideration if they are unable to settle a dispute internally. The Lao Government issued a Decree on the Settlement of Labor Dispute on 28 February 2018. The unemployment rate in Laos is said to have surged from the average of 2 percent to 25 percent, according to the Vientiane Times, and the government has been advised to recommend laborers begin working in agricultural activities to support themselves and their families.

Source : <https://laotiantimes.com/2020/06/04/ministry-of-labor-orders-employers-to-pay-wages-despite-pandemic/>

Three Asean countries offer to buy Myanmar rice



Myanmar News | 04 June, 2020

Three Asean heavyweights - Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines - have offered to buy rice produced in Myanmar, U Khin Maung Lwin, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, told The Myanmar Times. The Philippines and Malaysia have offered to purchase 300,000 tonnes and 50,000 tonnes of rice from Myanmar, respectively, while Indonesia has yet to confirm the quantity it wants.

The Philippines is already an existing rice export market for Myanmar, having already bought 60,000 tonnes of rice this year with a further 10,000 tonnes en route. Due to COVID-19, the Asean countries are beefing up their rice reserves, which presents an opportunity for Myanmar to negotiate long term export contracts with them, U Khin Maung Lwin said. "Currently, international rice prices are surging now so we will need to negotiate for favourable terms," he said. He added that Myanmar must weigh international demand for rice against its own needs. "Demand is rising in the rice market but we also need to consider domestic food security. On the other hand, if there is too much supply inside the country, prices may plunge," he said. The Ministry of Commerce suspended rice export licenses in April but resumed in May and has since allowed 150,000 tonnes to be exported. It has so far built up an export reserve equivalent to 10 percent of total exports, and purchased 50,000 tonnes for domestic reserves. Myanmar expects to export 2.5 million tonnes of rice in fiscal 2019-20 and earned more than US\$542 million from the export of 1.8 million tonnes of rice up until May 15. Around 14 percent of the exports were conducted at the border while more than 85pc was shipped out.

Source: <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/three-asean-countries-offer-buy-myanmar-rice.html>

**Over 8.7 bln loans granted
to COVID-19 affected
businesses in 5th batch**

*Myanmar News | 04 June, 2020*

The Economic Remedy Committee for Businesses affected by COVID-19 has granted a fifth batch loan of Ks 8.7335 billion to 290 businesses affected by COVID-19, according to its statement. The committee scrutinizes businesses in accord with banking procedures and will not grant loans to a business which is facing lawsuit opened by a bank. The committee is scrutinizing the remaining applications. According to the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, it will grant loan to the CMP, hotels and tourism and SMEs which are mostly affected by the COVID-19, at an interest rate of one per cent, from a preliminary fund of Ks 100 billion. The COVID-19 fund is set up at Myanma Economic Bank with the contribution of Ks 100 billion—Ks 50 billion from the State's revolving fund and Ks 50 billion from social security fund. The committee will review the interest rate and the loan term. In addition, the ministry has postponed the deadline for the payment of income tax and commercial tax to 30 September.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-collaborate-singapore-advance-infrastructure-projects.html>

Rice exports grow in both volume and value

*Vietnam News | 04 June, 2020*

Vietnam's trade turnover is likely to have reached US\$196.84 billion in the first five months, down 2.8% year-on-year. Vietnam reported an estimated trade

deficit of US\$900 million in May, causing its the trade surplus to narrow to US\$1.9 billion in the January – May period, the General Statistics Office (GSO) has said in a monthly report. On breaking down, the domestic sector is estimated to post a trade deficit of US\$8.6 billion in the five-month period while foreign-invested firms recorded a trade surplus of US\$10.5 billion. Domestic companies' exports are estimated to have expanded 10.4% year-on-year to US\$33.3 billion during the period, accounting for 33.5% of the country's exports. Meanwhile, FDI firms reaped US\$66.06 billion from overseas shipments, down 6.9% and accounting for 66.5% of the total. In May, Vietnam exported goods worth an estimated US\$18.5 billion, up 5.2% inter-monthly, while imports are estimated to have increased by 4.7% to US\$19.4 billion. The complicated progression of the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam's major markets continued to exert negative impacts on the country's trading activities, noted the GSO. Overall, Vietnam's trade turnover is likely to have slipped 2.8% year-on-year to reach US\$196.84 billion in the January – May period, of which its export value could amount to US\$99.36 billion, down 1.7% year-on-year, and imports are estimated at US\$97.48 billion, down 3.8%. Among Vietnam's key export staples, phones and parts are predicted to earn the largest export turnover during the January-May period at US\$18 billion, down 8.8% year-on-year and accounting for 18.11% of Vietnam's total exports. In addition, electronic products, computers and components earned an estimated US\$15.3 billion, up 22.1% year-

on-year; garments (US\$10.4 billion and -14.5%); equipment and parts (US\$8.5 billion and +25%); footwear (US\$6.8 billion and -4.8%); wood and wooden products (US\$4 billion, unchanged from the value recorded in the same period last year); transportation vehicles (US\$3.1 billion and -12.2%); fishery (US\$2.8 billion and -10.3%), among others. In the January – May period, the US remained Vietnam's biggest export market, spending US\$24.6 billion on Vietnamese goods, up 8.2% year-on-year, followed by China (US\$16.3 billion, up 20.1%), and the EU (US\$12.9 billion, down 12%). Meanwhile, China continued to be Vietnam's largest supplier, selling US\$28.9 billion worth of goods to Vietnam, down 3% year-on-year. South Korea claimed the second place by exporting US\$17.3 billion worth of goods to Vietnam, down 9.5% year-on-year, followed by ASEAN countries with US\$11.8 billion, down 14.1%.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rice-exports-grow-in-both-volume-and-value/174357.vnp>

Over five million employees lose jobs due to COVID-19



Vietnam News | 04 June, 2020

Multiple businesses in Vietnam suspended or scaled down their operations, and over five million employees nationwide lost their jobs in the first five months of 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, Deputy Minister of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs Le Van Thanh said during a teleconference on June 3. Some 86% of firms in the

local market were particularly hit, with their employees, mainly active in the processing, retail, logistics, transport, lodging, food service and tourism fields, being laid off or furloughed. A survey showed that from January to April, active workers accounted for 75.4% of people of working age, the lowest in 10 years. Stating that in May, the number of employees returning to work rose by 70,000-80,000, the deputy minister stressed that firms still saw challenges due to stagnant export markets. Addressing the event, Nguyen Thi Quyen, deputy director of the Department of Employment under the ministry, said that during the five-month period, over 430,000 people applied for unemployment allowances, which skyrocketed by 128% year-on-year. From now until the end of the year, if the virus shows signs of easing, the local labor market might see 70,000-80,000 employees lose their jobs each month, Quyen said. If COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, takes a turn for the worse, 80,000-90,000 workers will be unemployed each month. In the worst-case scenario, up to 100,000 employees will lose their jobs. Given the scenario, the Department of Employment has mapped out various solutions to support employers and employees and avoid unexpected layoffs. The Government is also mooting spending VND3-5 trillion from the Unemployment Insurance Fund to retrain laborers to improve their skills and change their jobs, Thanh noted.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/society/over-five-million-employees-lose-jobs-due-to-covid19-414512.vov>