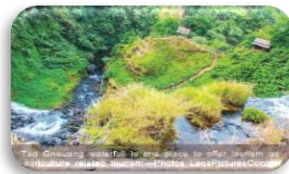


Highlight News / December 18/2020



- World Bank: Cambodia's economic growth projected to grow by four percent next year
- Wet season rice yield expected to reach 8.5 million tonnes this year
- Laos needs more agro-tourism
- Myanmar maize exports to Thailand take a hit due to COVID-19
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World Bank: Cambodia's economic growth projected to grow by four percent next year



Cambodia News | 17 December, 2020

Cambodia's economy is projected to contract by 2 percent in 2020, but is expected to bounce back and grow by 4 percent in 2021, according to *Restrained Recovery*, the World Bank's latest economic update for Cambodia, published Wednesday. With the easing of social distancing measures, domestic economic activity is gradually returning to normal. Consumption is being partly underpinned by unprecedented government intervention, while inflation remained subdued. FDI inflows to projects in non-garment industries and agriculture have been rising, likely attracted by Free Trade Agreements, according to the report. Although total manufacturing exports have been hit by the pandemic, exports of bicycles, electrical parts, and vehicle parts and accessories are rising, and exports of rice and other agricultural commodities have surged. Domestic tourists have supported a partial recovery of the travel and tourism industry. "Significant uncertainty remains to Cambodia's growth outlook. The most important policy goal must be to urgently regain jobs lost and suspended due to the pandemic," said Ms. Inguna Dobraja, World Bank Country Manager for Cambodia. "Looking ahead, it is essential that domestic and foreign investments are encouraged to take advantage of recent bilateral and regional free trade agreements.

This would be possible through prompt introduction of a competitive investment law and incentive schemes, together with moves to improve the ease of doing business." To help the country quickly recover from the pandemic, the report recommends boosting pro-poor and growth-enhancing public investment including cash-for-work projects, while promoting labor-intensive sectors to generate jobs by taking advantage of the quick recovery of domestic demand for consumer goods. It also notes the opportunities to facilitate an expansion of domestic and foreign investment arising from recent bilateral and regional free trade agreements, including the Cambodia-China Free Trade Agreement and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The report also points out the critical importance of developing a strong COVID-19 vaccine infrastructure, as well as closely monitoring economic vulnerabilities arising from the prolonged construction and property boom. The Cambodia Economic Update is a biannual report that provides up-to-date information on short- and medium-term macroeconomic developments in Cambodia. Chea Vannak – AKP

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50794321/world-bank-cambodias-economic-growth-projected-to-grow-by-four-percent-next-year/>

Wet season rice yield expected to reach 8.5 million tonnes this year



Cambodia News | 17 December, 2020

Despite recent flash flood threat, rainy-season rice production is expected to reach 8.5 million tonnes by this year, a 4 percent increase from 2019. Veng Sakhon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries shared the update following a recent monitoring discussion of rice yield data with line provincial departments. The average harvest is about 3,122 tonnes per hectare, which is an increase from about 3,095 tonnes per hectare last year – he added. According to the minister, about 89 percent or 57,557 hectares of the total rice paddies in the 19 provinces affected by the recent flash floods has been rehabilitated so far. The ministry has also handed out thousands of tonnes of rice seeds to farmers to cultivate on their rehabilitated paddies. Figures from the Cambodia Rice Federation shows that for the 11 months of 2020, Cambodian rice exports increased by nearly 17 percent with total volume of 601,045 tonnes, amounting to US\$415 million, a 12 percent increase year-on-year. During the same period, Cambodia also exported 481,200 tonnes of Cambodian aromatic and fragrant rice. Chea Vannak – AKP

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50794313/wet-season-rice-yield-expected-to-reach-8-5-million-tonnes-this-year/>

Laos needs more agro-tourism



Laos News | 18 December, 2020

Laos needs to develop more agricultural areas as education sites for tourists aims to increase interest in its tourism industry, tourism experts stated. This was also following Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry's Mr Linkham Duangsavanh, visiting recently to promote quality coffee production of the Bolaven Plateau coffee producers' cooperatives in Champassak province. The Deputy Minister appreciated tourism developers in Champassak province that more tourism activities which are related in the agricultural sector would increase both the communities' income as well as teaching culture and lifestyle of the locals. Mr Linkham also visited Tad Gneuang waterfall which is one place that offers tourists' a touch of nature, local food, organic coffee, and souvenirs which are related to agriculture production. The Deputy Minister was welcomed by Ms Sonethida Ou-naphom, Director of the waterfall tourist attraction. Ms Sonethida told Mr Linkham that her goal is focusing on tourism interacted in agricultural production as increasing on the government's strategy. Such as unique cuisine made from organic vegetables grown by local people for our tourist site. Tad Gneuang waterfall also has new activities to create a fun atmosphere as well as to preserve the beautiful culture and traditions of Laos with art and literature. At the time of the Covid-19 outbreak in many countries in the

world, it is an opportunity for local tourists to help the development of tourism in the country, especially the waterfalls. Therefore, the site is offering more local food to attract more domestic visitors, Ms Sonethida added. The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism explained recently that Laos' natural, cultural, historical and agricultural attractions and their potential for the development of tourism. It also aims to improve the standards of tourism personnel to ensure greater efficiency, as well as attract more investment in tourism development. Laos still looks at agro-tourism not as an investment, but such developments in the agriculture sector could benefit with areas for the education of tourists. According to the ministry, Laos has vast potential for the development of tourist attractions and offers incentives to boost investment in the sectors. Investors are welcome to develop and operate tourist sites in line with the country's laws. There are at least 1,000 sites that have not been developed or opened for service as the necessary facilities and infrastructure to access them is not in place.

Source: https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContenten_Laos246.php

Myanmar maize exports to Thailand take a hit due to COVID-19



Myanmar News | 16 October, 2020

As the melon harvest season approaches, the Shan State government has been asked to negotiate with China's Yunnan Province to prevent delays caused

by the inspection of trucks and travel restrictions, according to a local fruit trader. Myanmar traders export and sell watermelons and muskmelons from October to April at Wanding Fruit Square in China. Right now, the transactions are made via phone, but the traders can't sell their products without face-to-face meetings. "Although it is not a problem when trade volume is low, it would spell big trouble when the trade volume increases and the market turns bearish," U Sai Myint Bo, head of the Muse Fruit Brokerage House, said. Before COVID-19, 200 to 700 trucks crossed the border daily, but that number is expected to drop to 200 to 300 trucks a day this season. He urged the state government to negotiate with Yunnan to allow two to five agents from the Muse township trading zone to temporarily work at the fruit market in Yunnan. Also, fruit trucks should get priority for inspection, as they carry perishable goods, he said. - Translated.

Source : <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/shan-traders-seek-help-melon-season-nears.html>

Central bank responds to US labelling Vietnam as currency manipulator



Vietnam News | 01 October, 2020

Vietnam's monetary policies in the past have only served to contain inflation and ensure macroeconomic stability. It does not seek unfair

trade advantages, the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) said in a statement Thursday. The statement was responding to the U.S. Treasury labeling Vietnam and Switzerland as currency manipulators in a report released Wednesday. Countries must at least have a \$20 billion bilateral trade surplus with the U.S., foreign currency intervention exceeding 2 percent of GDP and a global current account surplus exceeding 2 percent of GDP to be labeled a manipulator. The U.S. Treasury's report shows that Vietnam has exceeded these criteria. Vietnam, which has seen increased foreign investment by companies seeking to avoid U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods, saw intervention of more than 5 percent of its GDP, the report said. At least part of Vietnam's intervention was aimed at pushing down the dong for a trade advantage, it added. The SBV countered that the trade surplus Vietnam has recorded with the U.S. is the result of a series of factors, and the central bank's purchase of foreign currency seeks to ensure national financial security as the country's foreign reserves is at a low level compared other countries in the region. Vietnam highly regards its trade relationship with the U.S. and will continue to work with U.S. authorities to ensure a "harmonious and fair" trade relationship, it added. In its report the U.S. Treasury also added Taiwan, Thailand and India to its currency manipulation monitoring list. Others

remaining on the list are China, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Italy, Singapore and Malaysia.

Source : <https://vietreader.com/business/27250-vietnam-rejects-currency-manipulator-label.html>

Apple to move iPad, MacBook assembly lines to Vietnam



Vietnam News | 15 October, 2020

VOV.VN - Electronics manufacturer Foxconn of Taiwan (China) has initiated plans to move part of their assembly line for iPad and MacBook products from China to Vietnam following a request made by tech giant Apple. The new production lines in the country are expected to come into operation during the first half of next year, according to Reuters. Meanwhile, Bloomberg confirmed that Apple's assembly partners have been striving to ramp up their iPhone production capacity in India, whilst companies that assemble the AirPods have added some new assembly lines in Vietnam. Foxconn recently unveiled plans to expand production in Vietnam with an investment of approximately US\$270 million. According to website phonearena.com, this latest shift in production lines will serve to help Apple diversify their production away from China, therefore reducing the negative impact caused by the ongoing trade tensions between China and the United States. Firms located in Taiwan (China) such as Foxconn also remain concerned about the trade war and are devising

ways in which to move production out of China and into locations such as Vietnam, Mexico, and India. At present, a number of AirPods are already manufactured locally, with next year set to see third-generation AirPods made in the country before being released during the first half of the year, the website revealed.

Source: <https://vov.vn/en/economy/apple-to-move-ipad-macbook-assembly-lines-to-vietnam-824736.vov>