

Highlight News / April 26, 2021



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ADVISORY INSTITUTE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT BY TCC (AITI)

Phnom Penh lockdown remains in place despite gov't lifting travel ban



Cambodia News | 25 April, 2021

Phnom Penh Governor Khuong Sreng said today that the lockdown in the capital remains in place to curb the COVID-19 community outbreak, noting law enforcement officers must continue strengthening restrictions. His clarification is made today as people in Phnom Penh and Kandal province's Takhmao City are wondering if they can resume travel after the government today lifted the interprovincial travel ban and reopened shuttered tourism resorts throughout the country. The government on April 14 announced that Phnom Penh and Takhmao City have been placed under lockdown for 14 days starting on April 15 until April 28. During the lockdown, all citizens are not allowed to travel outside their homes except for emergency purposes.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50845141/phnom-penh-lockdown-remains-in-place-despite-govt-lifting-travel-ban/>

Cambodia, Asia-Pacific regional countries foster agricultural collaboration



Cambodia News | 25 April, 2021

Cambodia and other countries in Asia-Pacific region have convened a virtual meeting to further foster the collaboration on agriculture, especially on the insurance of sustainable food security in the region. The ministerial meeting on Food System for 2030

taking place yesterday under the theme on "Building Back Better", was coordinated by Mrs Mari Pangestu, World Bank's managing director for development policy and partnerships. Veng Sakhon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and his counterparts from Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste, as well as representatives from FAO, ASEAN secretariat and national and international organisations joined the platform. Sakhon underlined some challenges in Cambodia's agriculture including the low productivity of agriculture and the lack of markets. Amid the COVID-19 crisis, continued Sakhon, the ministry is working hard to timely promote the productivity of quality rice, as well as horticultural and industrial crops through agricultural diversification. It also strengthens crop sanitation and phytosanitary, develops all forms of aquaculture for farmers, and boosts the investment and beyond. The minister briefed the participants on the ministry's plan on food production in line to the agricultural sector master plan 2030 and policy in response to the COVID-19 crisis. He also spoke highly of the projects being implemented to respond to the COVID-19 threat under Cambodia's agricultural diversification framework supported by World Bank. Lim Nary – AKP

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50844871/cambodia-asia-pacific-regional-countries-foster-agricultural-collaboration/>

Lao, Chinese PMs hold talks on bilateral ties



Laos News | 26 April, 2021

Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh and his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang on Friday agreed during telephone talks to work together to further cement the six-decade bilateral ties between the two neighbours. Laos and China this year celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties and Laos-China Friendship Year 2021. The talks between the two premiers aimed to further enhance the Laos-China comprehensive strategic partnership in the spirit of the four goods - good neighbours, friends, comrades and partners as well as a community with a shared future. Through Premier Li, the Lao prime minister, on behalf of the government and people of Laos, expressed heartfelt gratitude to China for extending assistance to Laos in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, including the provision of more than a million doses of vaccine. Mr Phankham congratulated China on the great achievements the country has made in poverty alleviation. He also conveyed warm greetings from Party Secretary General Thongloun Sisoulith, through Premier Li, to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee, Xi Jinping. Mr Phankham informed Premier Li that Secretary General Thongloun would be pleased to visit China at an appropriate time in response to an invitation from

General Secretary Xi. For his part, Premier Li congratulated Mr Phankham on his appointment as the prime minister of Laos. He promised to work with Mr Phankham to deepen bilateral ties, combat Covid-19, and promote bilateral cooperation for tangible results. The two premiers said they highly valued the traditional friendly relations and comprehensive strategic partnership in the spirit of the four goods between the two Parties, states and peoples. They praised the fruitful achievements of bilateral cooperation, notably in infrastructure development as part of the China-initiated Belt and Road Initiative. These include an expressway linking Vientiane to Boten in Luang Namtha province, on the border with China. The first section of the expressway, linking Vientiane and Vangvieng district in Vientiane province, is open to traffic. Meanwhile, construction of the Laos-China railway is slated for completion at the end of this year.

Source: https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Lao_chinese_78.php

Food commodities including instant coffee temporarily banned on Myanmar-Thailand border



Myanmar News | 24 April, 2021

Myanmar's Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce has notified that four food commodities are temporarily restricted for import via the Myanmar-Thailand border starting from 1 May,

Myawady Trade Zone reported. The restricted items include various beverages, coffee mix and tea mix, instant coffee, and condensed milk and evaporated milk. However, they can be imported through maritime trade. Traders stressed that it would add more extra transport costs. Moreover, it causes price hikes in the retail market at present. The value of Myanmar's bilateral trade with the neighbouring country Thailand through the land border has registered a decrease of US\$370.79 million between 1 October and 2 April of the current financial year 2020-2021 as against a year-ago period the statistics issued by the Ministry of Commerce indicated. The ministry reported that exports surpassed imports in trade with Thailand this year, with exports reaching over \$1.3 billion and imports valued at over \$589.7 million, totalling \$1.9 billion. Myawady border performed the best among seven border points between Myanmar and Thailand, having a trade value of \$729.46 million. During the corresponding period of the past FY2019-2020, Myanmar-Thailand border trade touched a high of \$2.28 billion. During the last FY, Myanmar has increasingly exported corns to Thailand through the Myawady border. Myanmar's corn exports to Thailand significantly soared to over 1.2 million tonnes through border posts between Myanmar and Thailand during October and May period in the FY2019-2020, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce. At present, Myanmar exports the corn to Thailand through Myawady and Tachilek land border. About 5,000-6,000 tonnes of corn are daily

sent to Thailand through Myawady, while Tachilek border does not regularly export. Myanmar is allowed for corn export between 1 February and 31 August with Form-D, under zero tariff. Thailand imposed 73 per cent of tax on corn import to protect the rights of their growers if the corns are imported during the corn season of Thailand, according to the notification of the World Trade Organization regarding corn import of Thailand, said a corn exporter. Myanmar intends to reach an export target of one million tonnes of corn to Thailand this year, Myanmar Corn Industrial Association stated.

Additionally, exports of natural gas from the Taninthayi Region has contributed to the enormous increase in border trade with Thailand in the previous years. This year, gas exports via the Hteekhee border drastically fell. There are seven border posts between Myanmar and Thailand, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Htikhee, Myeik, Mawtaung and Meisei. Except for Tachilek and Myawady, the remaining border posts showed a decrease in the trade this FY. Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country. — HH/GNLM

Source: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/food-commodities-including-instant-coffee-temporarily-banned-on-myanmar-thailand-border/>

Vietnam credit growth expands by 3.34% by mid-April



Vietnam News | 24 April, 2021

HÀ NỘI — The State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) will keep a proactive and flexible monetary policy based on market developments and forecasts for the macro-economy, SBV Deputy Governor Đào Minh Tú told a meeting on Thursday. This monetary policy is meant to control this year's inflation within the targeted ceiling of about 4 per cent, support macroeconomic stabilisation, assist economic recovery, ensure liquidity, maintain stability in the monetary and forex markets, and create conditions to reduce capital expenses for people, businesses, and the economy as a whole, the official said. The SBV will maintain a close watch on domestic and foreign macro-economic and monetary changes, foreign exchange rate developments, as well as foreign currency demand and supply to set appropriate exchange rates, he noted, adding that it will carry out measures and policy tools to stabilise exchange rates and the forex market to help ensure macro-economic stability. Credit provision will be boosted, especially for priority fields to match economic restructuring and help fuel growth and stabilise the macroeconomy. Tu also stressed the need to tighten control over credit for high-risk areas like real estate, transport projects in build-operate-

transfer (BOT) and build-transfer (BT) formats, and securities while at the same time adopting solutions to tackle difficulties facing those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. The central bank will order credit institutions to facilitate people and enterprises' access to credit to help minimise loan-sharking, he said. Phạm Thanh Hà, Director of the SBV's Monetary Policy Department, reported a credit growth rate of 3.34 per cent as of April 16, compared to the end of 2020, pointing out that the credit growth has begun stagnating as credit has increased by just 0.41 per cent in half a month though the rise was 0.76 per cent in January, eased slightly to 0.66 per cent in February due to the COVID-19 resurgence, and surged by 2.93 per cent in March. The SBV said that since the beginning of the year, it has flexibly and synchronously used monetary policy tools to ensure liquidity for the banking system, stabilise the monetary market, and help reduce input cost for credit organisations, easing the pressure on deposit and lending interest rates. — VNS

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/931549/central-bank-to-keep-proactive-flexible-monetary-policy.html>

Vietnam an attractive destination for North European firms: ScandAsia



Vietnam News | 24 April, 2021

High economic growth and strong investment in infrastructure are among the reasons for Northern European businessmen to consider when choosing to invest in Vietnam, according to an article recently

published on the site ScandAsia, which covers Nordic news and business promotion in Asia. The article said Swedish exports to Vietnam have increased by almost 6% by 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Emil Akander, Business Sweden's acting country manager in Vietnam, was cited as saying the growing export was thanks to several factors, particularly the rapid increase of the Vietnamese middle class's purchasing power. He explained that 30 million Vietnamese will belong to the country's middle class by 2025, which is almost a doubling since 2012. The official said at the same time, Vietnam sees major investments being made in infrastructure and health care. Airports and the subway in the country's two biggest hubs Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are being expanded, new hospitals built, and major investments made in new energy. These sectors are strengths of Swedish firms, he added. Johan Fredriksson, country analyst at the Swedish Export Credit Agency (EKN), noted Vietnam was one of a handful of countries whose economies grew even during the pandemic year of 2020. And according to forecasts from the World Bank and IMF, continued growth is expected at around 6%-7% per year, he noted. Today, several conglomerates and large industrial companies from Sweden, including H&M, ABB, Tetrapak, Sandvik, SKF, and Ericsson, are operating in Vietnam. According to him, the door is also open for small- and medium-sized companies. He highlighted opportunities for the groups to establish themselves in the country as subcontractors

Source: <https://vov.vn/en/economy/vietnam-an-attractive-destination-for-north-european-firms-scandasia-852649.vov>
