

Highlight News / June 29, 2021



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ADVISORY INSTITUTE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT BY TCC (AITI)

Cambodia's airports ready for tourists, air bridges, travel bubbles by 'end of 2021'



Cambodia News | 28 June, 2021

Cambodia's tourism industry is anticipating the return of travellers by the end of this year with a focus on traditional regional markets, particularly those from China, Korea, Japan, Thailand and Singapore, according to Alain Brun, the chief executive officer of Cambodia Airports. Government meetings with the tourism industry indicate stakeholders are eyeing an earnest re-opening by the fourth quarter, according to Brun. The government has set an ambitious goal to vaccinate 10 million by January and already more than 32 percent of its target group has been inoculated, making it among the most highly immunised populations in the Asia-Pacific region. Tourism accounts for some 32.7 percent of the Kingdom's gross domestic product. "Some recovery could take place by this year-end [but] even [then], we would still be far from pre-Covid levels of traffic at airports. For this to happen, we must maintain momentum in vaccine jabs to ease cross border travels and quarantine measures for fully vaccinated visitors," Brun told Khmer Times. France's VINCI Airports owns 70 percent of Cambodia Airports and Muhibbah Masteron Cambodia owns the remainder. The firm operates three international airports: in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville. During the initial stages, the Kingdom will eye bilateral agreements with

traditional partners, such as China and Thailand. The government is closely studying the possibility of travel bubbles and green air corridors with countries that have put in place stringent measures to fight Covid-19, according to Brun. "We are closely studying the Phuket model in Thailand to learn from its experience. It is indeed an island, but Cambodia will be an island itself because most of the adult population will be vaccinated soon and the levels of inoculation will likely be better than in Phuket," said Brun. "The travel industry is 100 percent in favour of travel bubbles and we should find a balance between public health safety and implementing green air corridors between countries that have strictly monitored the Covid-19 situation, which is the case with Cambodia," he added. The Thai government is set to waive quarantine requirements for vaccinated foreign visitors beginning next October and Phuket will be a testing ground beginning on July 1. The model may be implemented in tourism-dependent Siem Reap town, which was recently awarded Trip Advisor's "World's Top Luxury Tour Award". "We plan to heavily promote Siem Reap as travel begins to resume. It is not the first time that Trip Advisor has recognised Siem Reap but the award comes at an opportune time because countries are prioritising vaccination campaigns and people are getting ready to travel," said Brun. Cambodia Airports has been subsisting through the pandemic because of business travel and air cargo traffic. Brun said that air freight levels at Phnom Penh International Airport in June were only 15 percent

below 2019 levels, indicating that the economic global recovery is under way.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50882517/airports-ready-for-passengers-air-bridges-travel-bubbles/>

Cambodia implements strategy towards a circular economy



Cambodia News | 28 June, 2021

Cambodia implements strategy towards a circular economy so that Cambodia can have a green, clean and secure future. With financial support from Sweden, Japan and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the National Council for Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Environment today launched the implementation of the National Strategic Plan and Action Plan for a circular economy and a forum to promote private sector participation in the transition towards a circular economy. Say Sam AI, the Chairman of the National Council for Sustainable Development and Minister of Environment, said that the strategy and action plan for circular economy aims to create a win-win solution to the current challenges. He said that this strategy aims to eliminate wastage of resources throughout the economic cycle and to maintain the cost of materials for as long as possible instead of wasting and disposing of them. "The effective implementation of the circular economy strategy will ensure that all of us in the Kingdom of Cambodia can have a green, clean and secure future," said Sam AI.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50882745/cambodia-implements-strategy-towards-a-circular-economy/>

Vietnam, Laos sign pacts to boost cooperative ties



Laos News | 28 June, 2021

HANOI, June 28 (Xinhua) -- Vietnam and Laos signed a series of agreements on Monday to strengthen their "friendly and cooperative ties" following talks between their top leaders, Vietnam News Agency reported. The pacts were signed after a meeting between visiting General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) Central Committee and Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith, and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong. Among those signed were the agreements on the Vietnam-Laos cooperation strategy for 2021-2030 and on their bilateral collaboration for 2021-2025. Several pacts in the fields of investment, business, information, culture and tourism were also inked. Thongloun arrived in Vietnam earlier on Monday with a high-ranking delegation for a two-day visit to the country, which is his first overseas trip as general secretary of the LPRP Central Committee and Lao president for the 2021-2026 term. Enditem

Source:http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-06/28/c_1310032347.htm

Agro exports surge to \$3.88 bln as of 18 June



Myanmar News | 28 June, 2021

The agricultural exports spiked to US\$3.88 billion over the past eight and a half months of the current financial year 2020-2021, despite the downward trend in other export groups amid the tightened coronavirus containment measures in the border areas and increase in container shipping cost. The figures reflect a significant rise of \$923.9 million this FY. The agro exports topped \$2.95 billion in the corresponding period of the 2019-2020 FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce. The agricultural exports unexpectedly surge regardless of the impact of the coronavirus on foreign demand for other export groups such as fishery, livestock, mineral, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods. In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed the best, accounting for 37 per cent of overall exports. The chief items of export in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses and beans and maize. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Myanmar agro products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Sometimes, the export market remains uncertain due to unsteady global demand. The country requires specific export plans for each agro product, as they

are currently exported to external markets based upon supply and demand. The G to G pact also ensures the strong market for the farmers. Contract farming systems, involvement of region and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups, are required in order to meet production targets, the Agriculture Department stated. The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions. – KK/GNLM

Source: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/agro-exports-surge-to-3-88-bln-as-of-18-june/#article-title>

Vietnam, Laos enjoy flourishing trade ties



Vietnam News | 28 June, 2021

Hanoi (VNA) – The special Vietnam - Laos friendship has been growing unceasingly across the board in the recent past, including in trade, which has been developing in an increasingly substantive manner. Vietnam's Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) reported that bilateral trade has posted stable growth between 2016 and 2020, reaching the target of over 1 billion USD per year. Export and import have stayed relatively balanced, with goods traded between the two countries diversified. Trading activities encountered certain difficulties in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have bounced back strongly since the beginning of 2021. By the end of May, trade turnover between

Vietnam and Laos reached 570.7 million USD, up 39.3 percent year on year and 16.7 percent from the same period of 2019, before the pandemic broke out. That included 280.3 million USD worth of Vietnamese exports and 290.4 million USD of imports from Laos, respectively rising 23.5 percent and 58.9 percent from a year earlier, statistics show. The figures were attributed to the political resolve of the countries' senior leaders and drastic moves by authorised agencies to address obstacles and assist their businesses to quickly adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts forecast the trade revenue will continue increasing in June but at a slower pace as the pandemic has yet to be completely under control in both countries. At a recent working session, Vietnamese Minister of Industry and Trade Nguyen Hong Dien and Lao Ambassador Sengphet Hounboungnuang discussed measures for strengthening cooperation in trade, industry, and energy, believed to provide an important basis for further enhancing bilateral multifaceted ties in the time to come. To optimise development chances and overcome difficulties, especially the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts, the MoIT has recommended enterprises of Vietnam proactively tap into advantages to boost exports to Laos. Given the sound political and diplomatic relations with Vietnam, the Lao Government has also supported strongly and created optimal conditions for Vietnamese firms to invest and do business in the country. The eight pairs of international border gates, seven pairs of main border gates, and 18 pairs of

auxiliary ones between the two nations have helped guarantee smooth bilateral economic activities, labour export, as well as travel. Trade between Vietnam and Laos has also benefited much from zero-percent tariffs for most of their commodities under the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement, the bilateral trade agreement, and the bilateral border trade deal, according to the MoIT. The ministry also suggested Vietnamese firms make use of the wave of Vietnamese investment in Laos to step up shipments to this market, noting that Vietnam is currently the third largest investor in Laos, which in turn ranks first among foreign investment destinations of Vietnamese companies. Major investments have been poured into the energy, banking, industrial tree cultivation, and apparel production industries. Laos is also calling for more foreign investment in infrastructure development, crop production, and animal husbandry. Thanks to this investment wave, businesses of Vietnam has opportunities to boost the export of such items as steel, transport vehicles and spare parts, machinery, equipment, fertiliser, and animal feed, the MoIT noted, adding that it has been working closely with relevant agencies to keep smooth and fruitful bilateral trading activities so as to contribute to overall Vietnam - Laos trade growth./.

Source: <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-laos-enjoy-flourishing-trade-ties/203731.vnp>

Vietnam wood exports to rise to new record level



Vietnam News | 28 June, 2021

HCM City (VNS/VNA) - Wood products exports are expected to rise to a record 15-16 billion USD this year despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. They were worth 12.5 billion USD last year. According to the General Department for Agricultural Products Processing and Market Development, in the first five months they were worth 6.6 billion USD, up 61.3 percent year-on-year. Most companies have received orders for until the end of 2021, and they are 30 percent higher than in 2020. The US is the largest market, accounting for 60.4 percent of all exports, followed by China with 9.9 percent, Japan with 9.5 percent, and the Republic of Korea with 5.7 percent. Vietnam's wood products have achieved a solid foothold in many markets around the world, highly appreciated for their design and technology. With the disruption of the supply chain due to the pandemic, the world's leading distributors tend to diversify and seek safer sources, and Vietnam needs to make use of this opportunity, analysts said. But the Ministry of Industry and Trade also warned that the rapid growth in exports comes with a concomitant risk of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy threats. Vietnam's wood industry is affected by trade tensions between major countries. It has already faced anti-dumping lawsuits from the US and the Republic of Korea, especially for plywood-related commercial fraud and tax evasion.

But plywood is not the only item facing a threat, the Ministry of Industry and Trade said. Recently the US Trade Representative accused the Vietnamese timber industry of using illegal wood, and the risk of resultant trade restrictions is very high. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has issued a decision on geographic origins and timber species risk categories. This plays an important role in controlling the legality of imported timber. According to the foreign trade defence handling division at the Ministry of Industry and Trade's department of trade defence, Vietnam has faced a total of 199 cases so far, and in the last five years there have been 97 commercial defense investigations. The most problematic markets are the US, India, Turkey, Australia, Canada, the EU and the Philippines, it said. In 2020 alone, Vietnam faced a total of 37 cases related to tax evasion on plywood products and anti-dumping related to MDF wood. To avoid anti-dumping and anti-tax evasion investigations, businesses need to have knowledge of trade defence and understand the true nature of this tool to make the right responses. When exporting to a certain market, they should have information from importers, and as soon as information about anti-dumping investigations is known, businesses must respond. The ministry has said it will issue warnings to support businesses. It is also necessary to control exports to that market to ensure the lowest tax rate. The Ministry of Industry and Trade also said the wood industry faces a severe shortage of human resources, especially tech-savvy workers while

vocational training schools and universities find it very difficult to attract students./.

Source: <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-wood-exports-to-rise-to-new-record-level/203750.vnp>
