

Highlight News / July 12, 2021



- Tourism industry gloom continues as overseas arrivals drop 92.2 percent
- Cambodia earns \$6 billion from exports in five months
- Laos, Thailand to cooperate on migrant workers' issues
- Strong domestic demand drives chickpea price up
- Myanmar pharmaceutical imports top \$303.53 mln in seven months
- Vietnam Among ASEAN Top 3 for Business Expansion Destinations
- Vietnam's economy to surpass Singapore's by 2030: DBS Bank



ADVISORY INSTITUTE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT BY TCC (AITI)



Tourism industry gloom continues as overseas arrivals drop 92.2 percent



Cambodia News | 09 July, 2021

The number of foreigners who arrived in Cambodia January-May has been reported by the Ministry of Tourism as 91,596, a plunge of more than 92 percent from the same period in 2020. Thai visitors topped the list at 46,395 arrivals, followed by 27,693 Chinese. Most of the visitors were tourists, businesspersons or investors. Everyone flying into Cambodia currently has to quarantine for two weeks and produce a negative PCR Coronavirus test at the start and the end of the 14-day period. In hopes of reviving the ailing tourism industry, the ministries of health and tourism are working on a plan to allow fully vaccinated tourists to visit the Kingdom, possibly as early as October. The industry itself is pushing the government to allow trials similar to the Phuket Sandpit experiment in Thailand, where tourists are allowed to visit the island without having to go into quarantine. Suggested locations include Siem Reap, for visitors to Angkor Wat, or Phnom Penh, which is now fully vaccinated. Foreign visits to the Kingdom reached 1.3 million foreigners in 2020, 80 percent lower than 2019.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50890843/tourism-industry-gloom-continues-as-overseas-arrivals-drop-92-2-percent/>

Cambodia earns \$6 billion from exports in five months



Cambodia News | 05 July, 2021

Cambodia exported nearly \$6 billion worth of goods in the first five months of this year, an increase of 1.6% compared to the same period last year. This was disclosed in the Ministry of Economy and Finance socio-economic trends recent report where it also said that in the first five months, exports reached \$5,982 million (20.8% of GDP), an increase of 1.6% over the same period last year, due to the increase in exports of bicycles and other goods. It said that imports of goods (excluding gold) reached \$8,664 million (equivalent to 30.2% of GDP), an increase of 17% over the same period last year due to the increase in imports of fabrics, construction materials, fuel and other goods. "The Cambodian economy is still affected by the Covid-19 crisis, especially the February 20 community event, which has dragged on to the present day and put pressure on key indicators of economic growth," the report said. The report also said that as of May 2021, that there has been a decline in the exports of garments, the number of national and international tourists, activities in the construction sector and foreign investment. However, exports of garments and other goods such as bicycles, electronic components, wood products and other agricultural products continued to grow well, it said. The report emphasises that overall, the Cambodian economy is expected to grow positively in 2021 due to the

recovery of the global economic situation and the economy of Cambodia's trading partners, the increase in demand for agricultural products and the possibility of diversion orders and garment factories from Myanmar to Cambodia.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50890953/cambodia-earns-6-billion-from-exports-in-five-months/>

Laos, Thailand to cooperate on migrant workers' issues



Laos News | 12 July, 2021

The Lao and Thai authorities agreed to continue their efforts to resolve labour-related issues to ensure safe labour migration. This should include workers get access to permanent employment and being entitled to sound and just welfare measures in Thailand amid the spread of Covid-19. At a time when Thailand is fighting a tough battle against Covid-19 and new variants of the virus, both countries will review their labour policy to provide help to Lao workers, including those affected by the closure of factories due to the economic downturn brought on by the pandemic. Thai authorities have also agreed to gather detailed information on migrant workers who left their jobs in Thailand as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Most of these workers had jobs in the industrial and services sectors. The migrant workers will have to sign up online and be registered by an employer before mid-September in order to receive a work permit that will be valid until February 2023.

Lao labour authorities and their Thai counterparts discussed these issues during a virtual conference on labour management. They also considered ways to resolve the problem of undocumented workforce, including focusing on helping illegal workers wanting to return home or assisting those who wish to continue working in Thailand legally. The Director General of the Department of Labour Skill Development and Employment under the Lao Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ms Anousone Khamsingsavath, said that the Lao side proposed to Thai officials that undocumented migrant workers from Laos should be allowed to work legally for about two years till the crisis caused by Covid-19 eases. She said the Lao authorities also proposed to their Thai counterparts that they should upgrade the nationality status of Lao workers in Thailand, including the provision of benefits as stipulated in social security regulations. The Lao workers should also be able to access free vaccines in Thailand and Thai authority should ensure employers take responsibility for sending back workers who have been repatriated, she said. "Every year, we have held a meeting with Thai official's in-charge of labour management to solve the problem of undocumented workforce by focusing on helping illegal workers who want to return home or continue to work in Thailand legally," she said. According to recent reports in the Thai media, the Thai government has begun

screening migrant workers in areas at risk, resulting in some employers moving illegal migrant workers out of certain areas to avoid breaking the law. Thailand has about 2.2 million registered migrant workers, mainly from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, but many others work informally in sectors such as fishing, farming, construction and industries.

Source: https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Laosthai_133.php

Strong domestic demand drives chickpea price up



Myanmar News | 10 July, 2021

The price of chickpea is in the bull market on the back of strong domestic demand in July and the price surged to K100,000 per bag, according to Bayintraung Wholesale Market. At present, the price moved in the range of K92,000-100,000 per bag depending on the different varieties, whereas the chickpea was priced at K93,000 per bag in the maximum last month. The chickpea growers are fetching a good price amidst the low production this year. At present, the domestic bean market is positively related to the law of supply and demand. "The prices usually fluctuate depending on supply and demand. When the peas are loaded on the ship, the prices also climb up," said a trader from Mandalay who shared his opinion. Myanmar exported chickpeas to India, Pakistan, UAE, Turkey and other foreign markets last year. The chickpeas are cultivated in Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Sagaing

and Ayeyawady regions and Nay Pyi Taw. There are 890,000 acres of chickpeas across the country. The peas are cultivated in October and November and they are harvested in the January-April period. More than 23,675 tonnes of chickpeas were exported to foreign markets between 1 October and 25 June of the current financial year 2020-2021, with an estimated value of US\$13.9 million, the Commerce Ministry's data indicated. – KK/GNLM

Source: <https://www.gnlnm.com.mm/strong-domestic-demand-drives-chickpea-price-up/>

Myanmar pharmaceutical imports top \$303.53 mln in seven months



Myanmar News | 11 July, 2021

The import value of Myanmar pharmaceutical products was estimated at US\$303.53 million in the seven months (Oct-Apr) of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to Myanmar Customs Department. Myanmar imports 90 per cent of medicine and medical products through foreign markets, the Myanmar Chamber of Commerce for Pharmaceutical & Medical Device (MCCPMD) stated. India is the main supplier for Myanmar. Also, it is imported by Bangladesh, China, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, China (Taipei), Thailand, US and Viet Nam. Trade has returned to normalcy after panic buying during the coronavirus pandemic. Most commonly prescribed drugs are available in the market. Only some are out of stock for now. At present, pharmaceutical import is regularly flowing.

However, the prices of pharmaceuticals were up by 5 to 10 per cent owing to the dollar gains. The COVID-19 related medical devices including surgical masks and pulse oximeters are highly demanded in the country amid the COVID-19 surging cases. The Ministry of Commerce has cut the red tape for imports of some pharmaceuticals which have been earlier imported. — KK/GNLM

Source: <https://www.gnlnm.com.mm/myanmar-pharmaceutical-imports-top-303-53-mln-in-seven-months/>

Vietnam Among ASEAN Top 3 for Business Expansion Destinations



Vietnam News | 10 July, 2021

Vietnam is among the top expansion destinations for ASEAN companies looking for growth opportunities in the 10-nation bloc, according to a survey commissioned by Standard Chartered released on Thursday. Among ASEAN countries, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam are the most attractive destination for companies to expand production and business, according to a recent survey by Standard Chartered Bank. The survey's results showed that most of enterprises in the ASEAN are focusing on business opportunities in the region, expecting strong growth in the next 12 months. Singapore became the most attractive expansion destination with 80 percent of surveyed firms saying they are centering their production and business expansion in the country, followed by Thailand with 60 percent, and Vietnam with 50 percent, cited VnExpress. Many

firms have opted for Singapore to erect headquarters, sales and marketing offices, R&D centers or innovation centers at regional level. ASEAN companies are also found to be highly optimistic about intra-regional growth over the next 12 months. The majority of ASEAN companies focusing on intra-regional opportunities expect robust business growth in the region over the next 12 months, as seen in 99 percent of respondents expecting growth in production and 96 percent anticipating growth in revenue. Access to the large and growing ASEAN consumer market (69 percent), access to a global market enabled by a network of Free Trade Agreements (59 percent) and availability of abundant and skilled workforce (49 percent) were among the most important drivers for expansion across the region, according to senior executives of the surveyed ASEAN companies, reported VNA. In addition, with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) expected to attract more investments into ASEAN, all respondents said that they are planning to increase their investments over the next 3-5 years. Meanwhile, the top three risks in the region are identified as the Covid-19 pandemic or other health crises, geopolitical uncertainty and trade conflicts and the slow revival of the economy and the drop in consumer spending. Furthermore, according to the respondents, biggest challenges in the next 6-12 months include changing business models to adapt to actual situations of each field of production and business, building relations with suppliers and

adapting to logistics requirements of supply chains, and fully understanding national regulations on payment methods and infrastructure, according to VnExpress. To drive resilient and rebalanced growth in ASEAN and to mitigate these risks and challenges, the surveyed executives identified entering new partnerships/joint ventures to increase market presence, driving sustainability and ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) initiatives and executing digital transformation programmes as the most important areas for their companies to focus on. Michele Wee, CEO of Standard Chartered Vietnam, said Vietnam continues to offer appealing business and investment opportunities given its strong fundamentals – robust economic growth, a sizeable domestic market, low labour costs, an abundant workforce, free trade agreements, and strategic location. She said as an international bank with 117 years of history in Vietnam, Standard Chartered has deep local knowledge to support internationalising companies' cross-border growth aspiration and provide them with the right solutions that meet their financing and operational needs, cited VNA.

Source: <https://vietnamtimes.org.vn/vietnam-among-asean-top-3-for-business-expansion-destinations-33738.html>

Vietnam's economy to surpass Singapore's by 2030: DBS Bank



Vietnam News | 11 July, 2021

NDO/VNA – Vietnam's economy is expected to grow by between 6-6.5 percent over the next decade, and at this pace, it will surpass Singapore by 2030, DBS Bank experts have said. Last year, Vietnam's economy was worth US\$ 343 billion while Singapore's was US\$ 337.5 billion, and Malaysia's hit US\$ 336.3 billion. This ranks Vietnam the 40th largest economy globally and fourth in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In their latest forecast, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Vietnam is on track to outpace both Malaysia and Singapore this year. Despite two waves of COVID-19 in the first half of this year heavily impacting industrial hubs, Vietnam still posted gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.64%. Its export revenue rose 28.4% percent compared to the same period last year. Although GDP expanded slower than expected, it was still much higher than the 1.82% recorded in the same period last year. This suggests that policies, strategies and directives aimed at both controlling the pandemic and ensuring socio-economic development have been effective.

Source: <https://en.nhandan.vn/business/item/10128302-vietnam%E2%80%99s-economy-to-surpass-singapore-s-by-2030-dbs-bank.html>