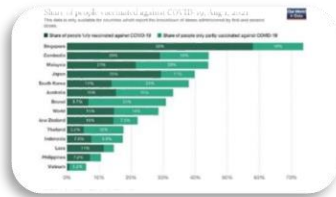


Highlight News / August 06/2021



- Gov't is heeding private sector's calls for adjustment to business visitors' compulsory quarantine
- Cambodia vaccine rate among highest in region as global recovery splits into two blocs
- NA's extraordinary session opens for national agenda debate
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Gov't is heeding private sector's calls for adjustment to business visitors' compulsory quarantine



Cambodia News | 05 August, 2021

The Cambodian government is looking seriously at adjusting compulsory quarantine to facilitate visits by investors, businesspeople and employers as a means of revitalising the economy. The move is being considered after the private sector raised concerns about compulsory quarantine for non-residents, business owners, employers and employees travelling into Cambodia. The discussion on the matter was held during a government-private forum on law and tax governance held virtually Tuesday. The discussion was chaired by Aun Pornmonirath, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance and co-chair of the government-private sector working group on law, tax and governance (government side) and by Arnaud Darc, co-chair of the government-private working group on law, tax and governance (private sector side). During the meeting, the deputy prime minister encouraged members of the working group and sub-committee on entry gate and quarantine management to continue to cooperate closely with the private sector to take a flexible approach when dealing with the issues raised. He sees such flexibility in dealing with quarantine, its duration and the setting of suitable, properly prepared and protocol adherent hotels for stays as a means of facilitating investor visits. He added that the

prioritisation of such measures would ensure “a good environment for the private sector in revising the economy post-Covid-19”. Lim Heng, vice president of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce noted that the government has started to ease burdens related to quarantine for investors and businesspeople entering Cambodia. He added that an additional reduction of requirements will boost confidence among investors and businesspeople coming to Cambodia. “Some owners of big investment projects only need a short stay in Cambodia for signing contracts or other work. Dealing with this point will contribute to keeping investment flow [positive] in Cambodia both during and post-pandemic,” Heng said. On July 22, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Combatting COVID-19 decided to allow passengers, both national and foreign, traveling to Cambodia by air to book hotels themselves for Covid-19 quarantine practice. Passengers interested in making hotel reservations directly can do so via sokhahotels.com.kh/phnompenh or courtyardphnompenh.com two days before their departure for the Kingdom.

Booking this way relieves visitors of the need to render a \$2,000 deposit for Covid-19 services during quarantine. Pommonirath, calling the proposed measures a “new normal”, praised the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce in its efforts coordinating the private sector and partnering with the government in contributing to the revitalisation of the economy in the post-pandemic era.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50908912/govt-is-heeding-private-sectors-calls-for-adjustment-to-business-visitors-compulsory-quarantine/>

Cambodia vaccine rate among highest in region as global recovery splits into two blocs



Cambodia News | 05 August, 2021

Cambodia has one of the highest rates of COVID-19 vaccination among economies in the East Asia and Pacific region, according to Britain’s Global Change Data Lab. The group’s web publication Our World in Data shows that 29 percent of all Cambodians were fully vaccinated as of Sunday — the same share as Japan and second only to Singapore (58 percent) in the absence of Chinese data. Among other Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) economies, Malaysia ranked third at 21 percent followed by Australia and New Zealand at 15 percent — the same as the world average — and South Korea at 14 percent. Apart from Laos, where 11 percent of the population has first and second shots,

the rates of vaccination in other RCEP countries were all below 10 percent. In an update to its World Economic Outlook last week, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said global economic prospects were diverging in line with access to vaccines. “Vaccine access is the principal fault line along which the global recovery splits into two blocs: those that can look forward to further normalisation of activity later this year (almost all advanced economies) and those that will still contend with prospects of resurgent infections and rising COVID death tolls,” the update said. The IMF downgraded its growth forecast for emerging and developing economies in Asia to 7.5 percent this year, down 1.1 percentage points from its outlook in April. The lower forecast for the region mainly reflects expectations for a slow recovery in confidence in India after a severe COVID-19 outbreak between March and May. “Similar dynamics are at work in the ASEAN-5 group (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam), where recent infection waves are causing a drag on activity,” the IMF said. The five main Southeast Asian economies are now projected to grow by a combined 4.3 percent this year, down 0.6 of a percentage point from the earlier forecast. China’s projection was revised down 0.3 of a percentage point to 8.1 percent to reflect a “scaling back of public investment and overall fiscal support.” The IMF forecast Japan’s growth at 2.8 percent, down half a percentage point from the April projection amid rising COVID cases. But “Japan is anticipated to see a stronger rebound in the second

half of 2021, as vaccination proceeds and the economy fully reopens,” the IMF said. Sao Da – AKP

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50908833/>

cambodia-vaccine-rate-among-highest-in-region-as-global-recovery-splits-into-two-blocs/

NA’s extraordinary session opens for national agenda debate



Laos News | 06 August, 2021

The first extraordinary session of the National Assembly (NA)’s ninth legislature kicked off on Thursday to debate measures to address financial and economic difficulties and suppress the use of narcotic drugs. It comes after the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party Central Committee in March this year resolved to identify solutions to tackle financial and economic difficulties and the problems surrounding drug abuse, classifying them as national agendas for urgent consideration. NA President Dr Xaysomphone Phomvihane delivered the opening remarks and then gave the floor for debate of the two national agendas. Presenting drafts of the national agendas to the NA, Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh said the government had set a target to implement the national agendas within two and a half years or by the end of 2023. “Then, we will evaluate the implementation (of the agendas) and outline future directions,” PM Phankham said. Also present at the opening session were President Thongloun Sisoulith and government cabinet members. The premier pledged that the

government would be decisive, transparent and professional in implementing the agendas and addressing the said issues. He explained that decision-making bodies and law enforcement agencies must be decisive when addressing the issues and strictly enforce the relevant measures. Importantly, action to implement the national agendas, including the adoption of relevant measures, must be transparent. “People can be involved in the implementation process, follow up and monitor the progress made,” PM Phankham said. “Transparency reflects the loyalty and sincerity of the government and the relevant sectors.” The head of government outlined five core actions to address financial and economic difficulties as follows: Promote production to reduce imports and boost exports to strengthen revenue collection Promote frugality, prevent extravagance, and ensure efficient state investment and spending along with efficient payment of domestic and foreign debts Stabilise the kip Increase efficiency of the rule of law In addition, six core actions have been named to address drug abuse and trade as follows: Raise public awareness of the dangers of the drugs along with disseminating the Party and state’s guidelines and policies Formulate and amend laws as well as regulations concerning narcotic drugs Improve organisational structure and upgrade the capability of law enforcement agencies Increase effectiveness of implementation management and supervision Improve capability in identifying solutions to the drug issue Increase international cooperation. Financial

and economic difficulties and the drug problem have become increasingly challenging in recent years. In light of these issues, the Party and government regard solutions to tackle these problems as “a corrective duty, obligation and responsibility of the whole of society,” the premier said. The government is also scheduled to present draft amendments to five laws to the NA for debate and approval, which will support the implementation of the national agendas. Amendments have been made to laws on tax, value added tax, income tax, excise tax, and drugs. During the NA session, lawmakers will hear the government’s report on the Covid-19 outbreak and measures imposed by the government to curb the spread of the virus and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Dr Xaysomphone called for all lawmakers to exert full responsibility for proper debate and consideration in order to shape the comprehensive content of all documents presented.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_NA152.php

Onion market remains sluggish due to lack of foreign demand



Myanmar News | 05 August, 2021

The prices of onions sharply dropped owing to the closure of the western border following the coronavirus impacts. Additionally, the sluggish trade amid the current political conditions and shutdown of the restaurants, hotels, factories and donation events exacerbate the onion market. The onion market

remains inactive as the foreign demand has dried up, stated onion traders. The price stays on the low side. The price of onions stood at K500-700 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) in the retail market, whereas the onions fetched K200-250 per viss in the wholesale market, said a grower from Ba Yint Naung wholesale market. The closure of border posts resulted in the drastic price drop during the COVID-19 pandemic, making the growers suffer loss. To tackle this problem, the Ministry of Commerce is implementing to set the basis price, according to the meeting result of the leading group on the protection of the farmer rights and enhancement of their benefits. The onion growers have been facing extreme losses on a downward trend due to the lack of foreign demand. They cannot cover the cultivation cost as well as afford the harvesting cost for now. Consequently, the prolonged price declines led some growers in Magway Region to leave their onions unharvested last year as they cannot cover the labour wages and transportation charges. In early 2020, the onion fetched K1,200-1,300 per viss. Then, the price drastically fell in the COVID-19 crisis and the growers cannot even cover the input cost. At present, the price slightly rose in the retail market, said a trader. The prices of onions sharply dropped owing to the closure of the western border following the coronavirus impacts. Additionally, the sluggish trade amid the current political conditions and shutdown of the restaurants, hotels, factories and donation events exacerbate the onion market. Earlier, onions were highly demanded by

Bangladesh and India. The trade with Bangladesh and India has been halted to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Having said that, the price remained low. The onion growers, as well as traders, have been experiencing market fallouts due to the COVID-19 impacts last year, said the onion wholesale dealer from Mandalay. Next, Bangladesh's demand for Myanmar's onions coupled with high demand in the local market hiked up prices, soaring up to K4,000 per viss on 15 November 2019, according to the Mandalay commodity depot. The high demand by foreign markets and a remarkable price rise prompted the growers to expand the onion cultivation in 2020. Unfortunately, the market is getting worse amidst the COVID-19 negative consequences. The prices of domestic onions exceeded K3,000 per viss in 2015, 2018, and 2019. The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State. — Ko Htet/GNLM

Source: <https://gnlm.com.mm/onion-market-remains-sluggish-due-to-lack-of-foreign-demand/>

Indonesia, Vietnam enjoy robust export growth despite COVID-19 threat



Vietnam News | 05 August, 2021

VOV.VN - Vietnamese export turnover to Indonesia during the first half of the year increased by 47.2% to US\$1.92 billion against the same period from last year, according to statistics compiled by the General

Department of Vietnam Customs. These figures were released amid the majority of Vietnamese industrial product groups achieving a high growth rate as a contributory factor to a sharp increase in export turnover throughout the reviewed period. Furthermore, the strongest growth rates of local items have been recorded in the commodity groups of electronic computers with 167.3%, plastic raw materials at 95.1%, as well as iron and steel with 93.6%. Most notably, the total export value of these three commodity groups reached US\$665.46 million, accounting for 34.6% of the total export value throughout the reviewed period. In return, the nation mainly imported coal and vegetable oil from the Indonesian market with turnover reaching a figure of US\$894.12 million, accounting for 24.7% of the total import value from Indonesia. Prominent Vietnamese imports from Indonesia during six-month period surged by 47.4% to US\$3.61 billion against the same period last year.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/en/economy/indonesia-vietnam-enjoy-robust-export-growth-despite-covid-19-threat-880054.vov>

Agro-forestry-fishery exports up 27% in Jan-Jul



Vietnam News | 05 August, 2021

HCMC - Vietnam's agro-forestry-fishery export revenue between January and July reached US\$28.6 billion, up some 27% year-on-year, according to data of the Ministry of Agriculture and

Rural Development. Of the seven-month export value, agricultural products accounted for over US\$12.2 billion, up 15% year-on-year, whereas the figures for forestry and fisheries were US\$10.2 billion, surging by 54%, and over US\$4.9 billion, up 12%, respectively. In July, the country exported US\$4.2 billion worth of agro-forestry-fishery products, up 26.7% year-on-year, but down 9.5% month-on-month. The export value of the main agricultural products amounted to US\$1.8 billion, while forestry and seafood exports earned over US\$1.4 billion and US\$800 million, respectively. Last month, numerous products such as rubber, cassava, cashew nuts, pepper, vegetables, fruits, shrimp, tra fish and woodwork enjoyed higher export values than the same period last year, with rubber exports rising by 33.6% in volume and 73.6% in value. During the seven-month period, the United States was Vietnam's largest buyer of agro-forestry-fishery products, with a value of over US\$8.2 billion, followed by China with US\$5.5 billion and Japan with US\$1.9 billion. The data also indicated that Vietnam's import bill regarding these products over the past seven months soared by 42.8% year-on-year to US\$24.7 billion. Thus, the sector enjoyed a trade surplus of US\$3.9 billion, down 25.8% year-on-year, the local media reported. To ramp up agro-forestry-fishery exports in the rest of the year, the ministry would continue to boost access to other markets and

provide local exporters with information about free trade agreements and policies for export, said Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Phung Duc Tien. Apart from removing technical and trade barriers facing Vietnamese farm produce, the ministry will closely work with Vietnam trade offices in foreign countries and territories to help local firms export goods to the European Union, Britain, China and Japan.

Source: <https://english.thesaigontimes.vn/83551/agro-forestry-fishery-exports-up-27-in-jan-jul.html>