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S'ville sandbox: Gov't to initiate quarantine-free tourism on November 30



Cambodia News | 27 October, 2021

In a bid to quickly reopen the country to international tourists, Cambodia will implement a sandbox scheme to allow quarantine-free visits for those who are fully-vaccinated to Sihanoukville, Koh Rong island and the Dara Sakor Resort in Koh Kong province from November 30. The quarantine free safe tourism package will apply to tourists who book to stay for at least five days at these holiday destinations, following which they will be allowed to travel anywhere in the country if they test negative for Covid-19. Ministry of Tourism spokesman Top Sopheak told Khmer Times yesterday that the Vaccination Tourism strategy is to attract international travellers to the Kingdom because they will no longer have to quarantine in hotels. "There are two options for these quarantine-free visits. One is that the foreign visitor must come on a group tour package to these destinations. The other is for families or small groups who are high-end tourists," he said. Sopheak noted that the visitors must fly directly to Sihanoukville and not through the Phnom Penh International Airport. He added that after the end of the five-day tour package, international travellers will be allowed to visit the rest of the country at the selected destinations after PCR testing clears them from Covid-19. Sopheak added that the scheme will be extended to Siem Reap in January.

Visitors on these vaccination tours are required to have a quick screening for Covid-19 upon arrival at the airport. If the results are negative, they can travel freely in the "safe tourism" destinations while strictly following health measures. Sopheak also said the ministry is looking into the possibility of allowing quarantine-free visits from Thailand which is offering this kind of tourism from November 1. This comes after Prime Minister Hun Sen on October 22 asked the ministry and Foreign Affairs Ministry to look into allowing air travellers from Thailand to enter Cambodia without having to undergo quarantine. "The ministry is working on it now to consider allowing Thais and foreign travellers in Thailand to fly into the country without quarantine," Sopheak said. Cambodia Association of Travel Agent president Chhay Sivlin told Khmer Times yesterday that the reopening of the selected destinations for vaccinated tourists is a first step to bringing the tourism sector back to life after being badly hit due to the pandemic for almost two years. She said during this period, many businesses have been affected due to the drop in tourists as the country tried to fight against the deadly virus. "I think after the announcement from the government, private and related tourism businesses will prepare to welcome back tourists. Businesses which still have not done so still have more than a month to prepare to receive foreign tourists," said Sivlin. Preah Sihanouk spokesman Kheang Phearom told Khmer Times yesterday that the sandbox initiative is a great pathway to reopening the country and restore the

national economy. "I am really pleased with the framework which was just released and provincial authorities will push harder to be ready to welcome back the foreign tourists," he said. "Officials will prepare and instruct all residents especially business owners to be well prepared by ensuring standard Covid-19 preventive guidelines are in place and we will strengthen the services to warmly welcome tourists," he added. Hor Boramy, the owner of Sweet Dream Koh Rong Hotel, said yesterday that he is really delighted that the framework is coming out and opening back for foreign tourists. "Since the Covid-19 outbreak and tourism sector has closed, we can't find any income and the business is not really good too. We receive only the local tourists," he said "The framework is going to start at the end of next month, so I am delighted and will get my hotel ready and prepared to safe SOP standards to welcome the tourists warmly," he added. Pheang Bun Kea, owner of CS Tour company operating in Preah Sihanouk province, said yesterday that he had to suspend business following the pandemic due to the lack of tourists. "I am really happy the Vaccination Tourism is going to revitalise the sector in coming days. I will reopen my business and gather all the former staff back to operate our tour services once again," he said. "Under this scheme, I will try to cooperate with foreign tour companies to service tourists when they come to the Kingdom," he added.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50959494/sville-sandbox-govt-to-initiate-quarantine-free-tourism-on-november-30/>

Cambodia exported 1,204 tonnes of agricultural products to South Korea



Cambodia News | 27 October, 2021

A total 1,204 tonnes of agricultural products were exported to the Republic of Korea in the first nine months of this year, a 106 percent increase compared to a year before. Data shared by Veng Sakhon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries showed that in 2019, Cambodia shipped some 6,000 tonnes of agricultural products to this East Asian country, but only 584 tonnes in 2020. During the first three quarters of this year, the major agricultural product exported were natural rubber and fresh mangoes – about 950 tonnes and 124 tonnes respectively – followed by palm sugar, 29 tonnes and corn, 21 tonnes. Cambodia is expected to see shipment of agricultural produce and other products to South Korea increase as the two countries penned officially today their bilateral free trade agreement. Chea Vannak – AKP

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50959981/cambodia-exported-1204-tonnes-of-agricultural-products-to-south-korea/>

Asean, dialogue partners discuss response to Covid, reopening for tourism



Laos News | 28 October, 2021

Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (Asean) and their dialogue partners have agreed to deepen cooperation to combat Covid-19, discussed

reopening for tourism, and vowed to broaden cooperation in various fields. The leaders are convening for the 38th and 39th Asean Summits and related meetings which are taking place online under the chairmanship of Brunei as the Asean Chair for 2021. At the 24th Asean-Japan Summit on October 27, Asean leaders welcomed and praised Japan's contribution of one million dollars to the Asean Covid-19 response fund and 50 million dollars to the Asean Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. Japan has also provided medical equipment and Covid-19 vaccines to Asean member countries. Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, who together with Somdech Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei co-chaired the meeting, promised that Japan would provide further assistance to help Asean overcome the pandemic as well as assistance for post-pandemic economic recovery. Japan also plans to provide further cooperation on regional economic integration, digital transformation, human resource development and innovation development. The meeting highly valued the cooperation between Asean and Japan. Asean leaders thanked Japan for its contribution to the building of the Asean community, particularly assistance with human resource development and implementation of the Asean connectivity master plan 2025 and the fourth Asean connectivity initiative. On the same day, Asean leaders and their

Australian counterparts convened for the first Asean-Australia Summit. Delivering the Asean Common Statement, Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh of Laos - the coordinating country between Asean and Australia - expressed satisfaction with Asean-Australia relations in past years. Asean leaders observed that Australia had extended assistance in various fields, including education, regional integration, Asean connectivity, narrowing the development gap and support for Asean's response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Asean leaders welcomed Australia's contribution of one million Australian dollars to the Asean Covid-19 response fund, another one million dollars to the Asean all-round recovery plan, and 21 million dollars to the Asean Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. The meeting committed that both sides would continue to cooperate in priority areas such as public health including Covid-19, regional economic integration through digital transformation, education, Asean connectivity, sustainable development, and the development of smart cities in Asean countries. Asean and Australian leaders agreed in principle to elevate Asean-Australia relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership. At the Asean+Three (China, Japan and Republic of Korea) Summit held on the same day, leaders spoke highly of the fruitful cooperation between their countries over past years. They also expressed pleasure over

their fruitful cooperation in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The leaders agreed to deepen cooperation for economic recovery including cooperation on finance, digital economies, green development, transport, connectivity, Asean smart city networks, food security, and poverty reduction. Convening the 16th East Asia Summit, the leaders committed further cooperation to combat Covid-19 along with enhanced joint efforts for post-pandemic economic recovery. The leaders agreed to increase cooperation on sustainable development with a focus on promoting multilateral cooperation, strengthening regional economic integration, digital transformation, and connectivity, as well as reopening travel for the purposes of tourism, trade and investment.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Asean211.php

Agricultural export tops \$132.9 mln as of 15 Oct



Myanmar News | 27 October, 2021

THE value of agricultural exports has registered US\$132.9 million in 15 days of the current mini-budget period (October 2021-March 2022), as per the statistic of the Ministry of Commerce. The figures reflect an increase of \$45 million. The agro exports topped \$87.5 million in the corresponding period of the 2020-2021FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce. The

agricultural exports jumped to \$4.6 billion in the financial year 2020-2021, despite the downward trend in other export groups. The agricultural exports surged even though the main trade partner China shut down all the borders in the wake of the COVID-19 surge in Myanmar. The coronavirus pandemic impacted the foreign demand for other export groups; agricultural products, fishery, livestock, mineral, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods. In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed the best, accounting for 37 percent 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 a strong market for the farmers. Contract farming systems, involvement of regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups, are required 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.gnln.com.mm/agricultural-export-tops-132-9-mln-as-of-15-oct/>

HCM City restaurants busy preparing to reopen



Vietnam News | 27 October, 2021

HCM CITY – No air-conditioners and no alcoholic drinks are among the COVID-19 prevention regulations that eateries in HCM City need to meet to be able to receive dine-in customers. Phạm Khánh Phong Lan, head of the HCM City Food Safety Management Board, explained that alcohol would not be allowed because it would cause customers to stay back longer, increasing the risk of infection. But notably, there will be no stipulation on the maximum number of customers at a same venue. With the city announcing the conditions, many restaurants are scrambling to get ready for the reopening after a long period of closure. Trần Quốc Thịnh, a restaurant owner in Phú Nhuận District, said in the past few days he has got his staff back to work, and they are busy cleaning, rearranging tables and chairs and preparing raw materials. But many others are not prepared to reopen because the two-metre social distancing requirement would not be

practicable. Trần Minh Vỹ, the owner of an eatery in Tân Phú District, has no plans of reopening yet and wants to wait for more details from authorities before making a decision. Since the city authorities have said customers must comply with the 5k message of the Ministry of Health, including social distance, he has interpreted it to mean customers must sit at least two metres apart. Shortage of workers is also a reason why many restaurants are unable to reopen. The department said the closure of businesses for nearly four months had caused food and beverage sales to fall by 620 per cent in the first eight months of the year to VNĐ32 trillion. Many had to close for good, which also affected the real estate rental market, it added. – VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1067159/hcm-city-restaurants-busy-preparing-to-reopen.html>

Vietnam remains attractive investment destination: Report



Vietnam News | 27 October, 2021

Singapore (VNA) – Vietnam is still seen as an attractive destination and the problems of 2021 do not mean that foreign investors will turn away, according to a recent report by Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA). Entitled “From Crisis to Endemic: Stumbling or Pressing Ahead?” the report examined the economies of Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Thailand, which together account for over 70 percent of overall ASEAN gross domestic product (GDP). In 2020, Vietnam was held up as a

model for its ability to curb the initial COVID-19 outbreak, with discipline and social support for strong measures, resulting in low, near-zero numbers, it said. However, this has changed in 2021, when the country has experienced a surge of cases since 27 April, driven by the Delta variant, and the situation could not return to the previous low levels of infection. The extensive lockdowns to prevent the spread of the coronavirus have disrupted not only local consumption but also impacting the manufacturing and supply chain activities to export markets. The pandemic impacts were especially felt by manufacturers of garments and electronics, noted the report. At the macro-level, however, the Vietnamese economy showed considerable resilience. Even amidst the 2021 pandemic situation, trade numbers have remained strong with Vietnam's total trade value of goods up 33.5 percent year-on-year in the first five months of 2021. This is supported by strong economic recoveries in major markets, especially the US and China, according to the report. The report said challenges and impacts experienced by businesses operations and supply chains in 2021 could impact the future. Nevertheless, economists forecast Vietnam should still attract some 30 billion USD in foreign direct investment (FDI) this year, or a 2 percent rise, year on year. At a conference to announce the reports, experts held that the investment environment of Vietnam in the long term is prominent compared to other ASEAN major economies thanks to the political stability. Vietnamese attraction also comes from the country's

special policies to facilitate production and technology development, they said./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-remains-attractive-investment-destination-report/211468.vnp>
