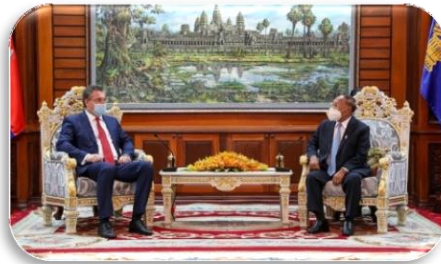




- Khmer Enterprise and CMA enter into partnership to boosting access to financial service for SMEs
- Czech Republic to boost trade cooperation with Cambodia
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Khmer Enterprise and CMA enter into partnership to boosting access to financial service for SMEs



Cambodia News | 30 November, 2021

Khmer Enterprise (KE), a unit under the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Cambodia Microfinance Association has entered into a cooperation agreement on promoting access to finance for entrepreneurs and SMEs in the ecosystem of Cambodia. The MoU on the cooperation was signed by Chhieng Vanmunin, CEO of Khmer Enterprise (KE), and Phal Vandy, Executive Director of Cambodia Microfinance Association (CMA) on November 26, according to a press release issued yesterday. KE and CMA signed the MOU to create a collaboration framework for both parties to improve access to financial services and co-organise programs/events such as pitching events, trade fairs, business matching and networking, entrepreneur cultural promotion, workshops, seminar conference and trainings for the development of Cambodia's SMEs and startups. The cooperation is also aimed at providing access to financial information, including fees, rates, understanding risks, and available financial instruments to startups and SMEs in the Cambodian ecosystem, said Vanmunin. "The Royal Government of Cambodia has many policies to initiate additional funds in the financial system and to relax compulsory criteria for financial institutions. However, it is ultimately up to the financial institutions to pass down

those benefits to SMEs and startups in Cambodia," he said. Cambodia's fast-growing economy means SMEs and startups have become increasingly important in providing jobs and boosting economic growth, said CMA's Executive Director Phal Vandy, adding that having contributed to poverty alleviation in recent decades, the microfinance sector in Cambodia has been evolving from serving only the poor to providing people with all financial needs. "The microfinance sector has been working closely with the government to support SMEs. CMA has played crucial roles in recent initiatives of SME Bank and Credit Guarantee Corporation of Cambodia, both of which are aimed solely at boosting the SMEs." Vandy said. Heng Sokkong, secretary of state of the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation, said that the number of registered SMEs is on the rise as a result of the range of benefits related to financial access by the government was launched. Currently, approximately 43,276 small and medium enterprises registered at the ministry have created 435,905 jobs respectively, he said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50979560/khmer-enterprise-and-cma-enter-into-partnership-to-boosting-access-to-financial-service-for-smes/>

Czech Republic to boost trade cooperation with Cambodia



Cambodia News | 30 November, 2021

The Czech Republic will continue to promote the cooperation with Cambodia in the areas of trade,

investment and tourism. The commitment was emphasised by Martini Vavra, newly appointed Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Cambodia, while paying a courtesy call on Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly (NA) at the NA Palace here yesterday. The Ambassador pledged to encourage more Czech investors to do business in Cambodia when the COVID-19 pandemic eases. Ambassador Vavra recalled Czech Republic's bilateral assistance for Cambodia's health and education sectors, affirming that Czech Republic will continue to provide humanitarian assistance, especially scholarships for Cambodian students and civil servants to pursue their studies in the country. Samrin expressed warm welcome to Vavra's diplomatic mission in Cambodia and spoke highly of the good relationship and cooperation between both nations. The NA president also thanked the Czech Republic for its assistance to Cambodia so far, and expressed the NA's support and readiness to cooperate with the Ambassador for the success of his mission in the Kingdom. The Czech Republic has also written off a large number of debts while the rest were converted into development aid for the construction of schools and the social sector. Discussion on Cambodia's debt began in 2008 when a Czech Republic delegation visiting the Kingdom said the European country would forgive more than \$3 million owed by the government. The discussion was followed up in 2014 during a meeting between then Czech Ambassador Vitezslav Grepl and National Assembly President Heng Samrin, with the

former saying that the Czech Republic would cancel over \$3.6 million of outstanding public debt owed by the Cambodian government since the 1980s. At the time, Jan Kohout, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, said Cambodia had borrowed more than \$3 million in 1983, 1984 and 1986 to build textile and food-processing plants.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/979557/czech-republic-to-boost-trade-cooperation-with-cambodia/>

Calls to speed up link to Laos-China line



Laos News | 1 December, 2021

The government is being advised to speed up the development of a rail network linking Thailand's rail system with the Laos-China Railway, which connects Kunming in China's Yunnan province with Vientiane -- the capital of Laos. Danucha Pichayanan, secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), said the government needs to accelerate conducting an agreement with its Lao and Chinese counterparts to build a seamless linkage between Thailand's rail system and the Laos-China Railway. The Laos-China railway is the first railway project built with Chinese investment, jointly operated by China and Laos and directly connected to China's railway network. The railway is a docking project between the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and Laos' strategy to convert itself from a landlocked country to a land-linked hub. The electrified passenger and cargo

railway is built with the full application of Chinese management and technical standards. The construction of the project started in December 2016 and is scheduled to be completed and open to traffic on Dec 3, 2021. The economic and trade impact of the Laos-China Railway is expected to be substantial. The cost of shipments from Vientiane to Kunming in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan will be cut by 40-50% or US\$30 per tonne, along with a 20-40% cost reduction on domestic routes, according to a World Bank report "From landlocked to land-linked: unlocking the potential of Lao-China rail connectivity". Exports from Laos to China were worth \$1.7 billion in 2019 and could expand by about 20% per year, a report by UN Comtrade has said. The governments of Laos and China have also signed an agreement for China to import more goods from Laos, especially agricultural products such as corn, bananas, cassava and beans, beef and other products, by shipping to Yunnan. The rail link will also attract more investments from China and other countries, mainly in agriculture, livestock and mining. China is by far the top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Laos, accounting for 87.7% of cumulative FDI flows into the country or \$967.7 million as of the end of 2020. Investors from Thailand and Vietnam were second and third with shares of 4.9% and 2.5%, respectively. More investments from China will be drawn to sites in Laos along the rail line, particularly in special economic zones (SEZs), for products to be manufactured in Laos and sent to China for export

via the rail network that now stretches from China to Europe. Thailand's leading industrial estate developer, Amata Corporation, has won approval from Vientiane to develop a large-scale SEZ in northern Laos. Laos-China railway will also increase the number of tourists, especially from China, as it will significantly reduce travel time. Prior to the pandemic, Laos was attracting between 800,000 and one million tourists a year from China, and the figure is projected to expand by 40-50% once international travel resumes, said Soulivath Souvannachoumklam, director-general of the External Finance and Debt Management Department at the Ministry of Finance. Currently, logistics and travel between Thailand and Laos are facilitated via the one-metre gauge track rail linking Thailand's Nong Khai and Tha Na Laeng station in Vientiane. Thailand's Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (Neda) has already supported the construction of a one-metre gauge track of 5.35 kilometres in length linking Tha Na Laeng station to northern Vientiane. The project is 70% complete. However, there is still a missing link between the existing rail system and the Laos-China Railway which is located in southern Vientiane. Mr Danucha proposed the Thai government speed up a tripartite agreement to develop seamless logistics infrastructure between Thailand and the China-Laos Railway, saying Thailand is also developing connectivity to the flagship Eastern Economic Corridor and related projects such as inland container depots or dry

ports. "Thailand may lose an opportunity to boost trade, investment and tourism if the country ignores speeding up forming an agreement with China and Laos," he said. "Better or seamless rail linkage will enhance economic opportunity and expansion of trade, investment and tourism between Thailand, Laos and China."

Source :

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2224707/calls-to-speed-up-link-to-laos-china-line>

Fresh sesame supply brings down price



Myanmar News | 30 November, 2021

The supply of newly harvested sesame seeds cut the prices to K220,000 per three-basket bag in November-end, which is a sharp decrease of K20,000 per bag as against the price registered in early November. The price of black sesame seeds stood only K145,000 per three-basket bag in July, whereas it increased up to K240,000 in early November. Then, fresh sesame supply reduces the price to K220,000 per bag, Soe Win Myint pulses depot in Mandalay stated. Both raw sesame seeds and value-added sesame seeds are conveyed to China. When the COVID-19 cases fall and transportation barriers are eased, the sesame market will raise its head again for sure, a depot owner from Bayinthaung wholesale market said. Normally, Myanmar exports about 80 per cent of sesame production to foreign markets. Normally, Myanmar's sesame is shipped to China, the

Republic of Korea, Japan, Singapore, European Union countries and China Taipei (Taiwan). The EU markets prefer to purchase organic-farming sesame seeds from Myanmar. Japan prefers Myanmar black sesame seeds, cultivated under good agricultural practices (GAP), and purchases them after a quality assessment. At present, the country is relying solely on the Chinese market and facing a hurdle to place the sesame on other foreign countries. Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil pot of Myanmar, is the main producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions. Of the cooking oil crops grown in Myanmar, the acreage under sesame seed is the highest, accounting for 51.3 per cent of the overall oil crop plantation. About 600,000-800,000 tonnes of sesame seeds are yearly produced. — KK/GNLM

Source : <https://www.gnln.com.mm/fresh-sesame-supply-brings-down-price/>

Vietnam sees 40% rise in int'l tourist arrivals in Nov



Vietnam News | 30 November, 2021

HCMC – More than 15,000 international tourists visited Vietnam this month, up 42.4% month-on-month, after the country launched a pilot program to welcome back international travelers, according to data of the General Statistics Office of Vietnam. Under the pilot program, the Government allowed five localities—Kien Giang Province's Phu

Quoc, Khanh Hoa, Quang Nam, Danang and Quang Ninh—to welcome international tourists through package tours via charter and commercial flights to designated locations. In the January-November period this year, the number of international visitors to Vietnam reached 140,100 arrivals, declining over 96% year-on-year due to the impact of the pandemic. Of them, the number of air travelers that accounted for nearly 69% of total international visitors fell nearly 97%, while that of road travelers that made up some 30% of the total plunged around 93%. Nguyen Trung Khanh, head of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), said a recent event welcoming the first group of international tourists to Vietnam marked a new step in the country's efforts to revive the tourism industry and paved the way for the country's reopening plan in the new normal. Further, to increase the effectiveness of the local tourism sector's "Live fully in Vietnam campaign", VNAT has implemented various measures to promote tourism through video clips, photos, articles posted on media channels and social media platforms at home and abroad.

Source : <https://english.thesaigontimes.vn/vietnam-sees-40-rise-in-intl-tourist-arrivals-in-nov/>

CPI increases by just 1.84 per cent in 11 months



Vietnam News | 30 November, 2021

HA NOI — CPI increased by just 1.84 per cent in 11 months of 2021 from the same period last year, making it the smallest increase since 2016,

according to the General Statistics Office (GSO). The main contributor to an increased CPI was rising petrol prices. Since November 2020, petrol prices increased by 30.32 per cent, which resulted in an increase of 1.09 per cent in CPI. In addition, gas price has been on the rise. Since November 2020, it has increased by 25.34 per cent and contributed to a 0.37 per cent increase in CPI. Rice price has increased in anticipation of the upcoming Tet holiday and higher demand due to stockpiling during the recent lockdown. Construction materials including cement, steel and sand have also been reported to have seen an uptick in price. Educational services in November have increased by 2.44 per cent year-on-year. However, this has been expected as the new government-mandated pricing started earlier this year. Gold price increased by 2.65 per cent. On the other hand, foodstuff prices decreased by 0.52 per cent in November, notably pork (-9.62 per cent) and chicken (-0.51 per cent). Government support packages, which included discounts on electricity bills for residents under lockdown, were implemented during the second quarter of the year. Price for airline tickets decreased by 21.39 per cent year-on-year and tour packages by 2.42 per cent. According to the GSO, inflation in November has seen an increase of 0.11 per cent from the previous month, bringing the year's average so far to a 0.82 per cent increase year-on-year, the lowest inflation

recorded since 2011. Nguyen Bích Lâm, former head of the GSO, said price for petrol, rice and foodstuff will likely rise from now until the Tet holiday. As people tend to fix up their homes before Tet, construction materials will also be in high demand and likely see an increase in price, driving CPI slightly up. However, this year's CPI will likely top around 2 per cent, much lower than the 4 per cent target. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1088337/cpi-increases-by-just-184-per-cent-in-11-months.html>
