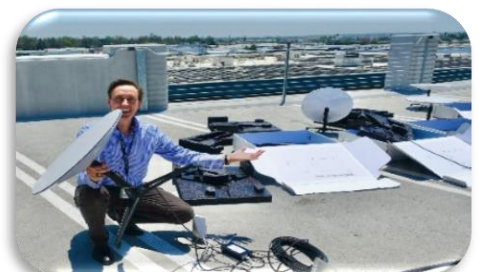


Highlight News / March 28/2023



- PM outlines new strategies for agriculture development
- Ministry focuses on IBEST concept to attract tourists
- New project aims to create resilient upland agriculture amid climate change
- Import sector further restricted in Myanmar
- Viet Nam's retail market proves attractive for foreign investors
- Elon Musk's Starlink wants to bring satellite internet to Vietnam



PM outlines new strategies for agriculture development



Cambodia News | 27 March, 2023

Keeping in mind the national policy 2022-2030, Prime Minister Hun Sen has outlined the government's new strategies for the development of the agriculture sector to create the fifth economic pole in the northeast part of the country. Addressing the closing ceremony for the annual meeting of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) at the ministry on Friday, Prime Minister Hun Sen said the MAFF has to invest in the development of pure seedlings of plants and varieties of animals that will respond to the market demands, resilient against the changing climates and black beetles and higher productive. To push further production of pure Phka Romduol seedlings at a quantity that can respond to the market demand—both domestic and overseas, Mr Hun Sen handed over 100 rice paddy seedling transplanting machines to communities. Phka Romduol won the World's Best Rice 2022 Award at World Rice Conference on November 17, 2022. "These machines have to be deployed at seedlings production regions only as this is a very important factor and so we have to push it," said Mr Hun Sen, adding that officials need to expedite the preparation and implement the plan for creating Cambodia's economic pole 4 in the northwest part of the country to be known as the 'fish-rice corridor'. The Premier said that the fourth economic pole that encompasses – Pursat, Battambang, Banteay

Meanchey and Pailin provinces – will be created to attract both local and foreign investors to develop producing, processing and exporting not only Cambodia's agricultural products and fishes, but also aquaculture and livestock to China and other international markets. While Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanouk and Siem Reap will remain as the first, second and third economic poles respectively, the fifth economic pole would be created in the northeast part of Cambodia which would cover Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri and Monduliri provinces. Prime Minister Hun Sen also asked the officials to accelerate the development of a plan to recruit and assign agriculture officials to provide technical support to farmers in each commune or quarter across the nation adequately without delay for the next government to include in its seventh legislature of the National Assembly. Further, the Premier said that the strategy has been being tested in ten communes of Choeung Prey district of Kampong Cham province, adding that prospective agriculture officials to be deployed at communes or quarters should be recruited among locals to gain from their knowledge and experience. "Those who are not from local provinces always ignore the province they are in charge of and so we need to pay higher attention to this point... I also suggest that provincial governors have to take care of those agriculture officials who will be sent out there. The farther they go, the more money they would be offered, but they have to cooperate with one another," said Mr Hun Sen. The Premier also said officials need to join

hands to implement the cashew policy to develop Cambodia as an empire of cashew, while MAFF and the Agricultural and Rural Development Bank (ARDB) are responsible for technical and financing issues and investment in opening overseas markets for cashew products will be under the Ministry of Commerce and economic diplomacy teams of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. “We do not just dream to become the empire, but actually Cambodia has the ability to be number one in exporting cashews to overseas markets,” said the Premier. “If we have good processing plants and proper financing, our products will be increased. But we have to work more as the task is not over with planting. Equally important is processing and then marketing the product. There is too much cashew in our country that people can eat until they die, while there are greater demands in the world markets,” Prime Minister Hun Sen said. The Premier also indicated that Cambodia’s cashew exports have recently reached 1.18 million tons to surpass Ivory Coast which has achieved 1.1 million tons, while the former’s areas of production have increased. While Vietnam and India are the biggest exporters of cashew nuts in the world, they import raw materials from other countries to process domestically. “So, we have to develop our processing, research and packaging capacity properly, but the concern is financing,” he said, adding that the government will release \$100 million for the development of rice markets. He also urged the Finance Ministry and the

NBC to work on financing capital issues. “I specify that we have to let the market decide as per the free market economy when we can do processing, farmers cannot be asked not to sell their products to this or that country,” he said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/1262572/pm-outlines-new-strategies-for-agriculture-development/>

Ministry focuses on IBEST concept to attract tourists



Cambodia News | 27 March, 2023

The Ministry of Tourism would adopt the IBEST concept to attract more international tourists to the country. Song Tong Hap, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Tourism, said in a workshop at the ministry recently that the IBEST concept includes service quality, environment, safety, technology, and the convenience of booking services. I, in the IBEST concept, stands for improving the service quality, implementation of a classification system in the tourism industry, quality standards and strengthening the skills of staff, he said. B represents booking, setting up and launching pre-booking options, while E stands for environment, environmental considerations, implementation of green standards and participation in various activities related to environmental protection in tourism. S comes from safety, safety considerations, public health, and continued implementation of tourism safety rules, the secretary of state said. T represents technology, the use of information technology said. “The IBEST concept is like a

roadmap for all tourism businesses to use as a basis for adapting their products and services in line with current needs and markets and to support the Visit Cambodia Year 2023 campaign,” Song Tong Hap said. He also made some recommendations, including the implementation of guidelines on outstanding tourism business in the campaign for Visit Cambodia Year 2023 in accordance with the concept of IBEST. He pointed out that tourism has been selected as the best business in the Cambodia Tourism Year 2023 campaign in line with the IBEST concept three times (first in May, second in October and third in December). “Another key element of the IBEST concept is technology, which streamlines operations using technology as a solution. Therefore, joining IBEST, we also use technology as a solution,” Song Tong Hap said. The participants can apply at <http://ibest.accommodationregistrar.net> and the website will be launched on April 1. He also requested the private sector to participate in the implementation of all rating systems and quality standards, tourism safety rules, minimum standard operating procedures (SOPs) along the new normal trajectory, and support campaigns launched by the ministry. The secretary urged the sector to improve the quality of its services in response to the latest tourism trends and in particular the addition of all additional guidelines, such as the Cambodia Quality Assessment Standards System for China Ready Accreditation, a system that ensures businesses are ready to welcome Chinese tourists. Besides, Song Tong Hap urged the sector to use technology as a

solution, mentioning the Khmer Tech Market, a program that can allow a meeting between the needs and delivery of different types of products. Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting Cambodia’s economy. In the pre-pandemic era, the country attracted 6.61 million international tourists in 2019, generating gross revenue of 4.92 billion U.S. dollars, according to the Ministry of Tourism. The Kingdom is projected to attract four million international tourists, including 800,000 to 1 million Chinese tourists this year. The country received 2.28 million international tourists in 2022, a 1,058% increase from the previous year. The tourism industry also generated 3.6 percent of Cambodia’s GDP last year with the sector earning \$1.41 billion in gross income.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501262731/ministry-focuses-on-ibest-concept-to-attract-tourists/>

New project aims to create resilient upland agriculture amid climate change



Laos News | 27 March, 2023

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), and World Vision on Friday launched an agriculture project that aims to offer alternatives for upland production systems in Laos in a fast-changing climate environment. The project has a budget of about US\$3,500,000, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and FAO, and will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and

Forestry, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Ministry of Industry and Commerce, with technical support from World Vision, in Luang Prabang and Huaphan provinces until mid-2026. The inception meeting for the project was attended by the Director General of the Department of Agricultural Land Management at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr Nivong Sipaseuth, FAO Representative to Laos Mr Nasar Hayat, and officials from related entities. The project aims to protect about 4.5 million hectares of agricultural land, equal to 19 percent of Laos' total land area. Climate change is increasingly affecting Laos and its communities that rely on agriculture. Forecasted trends indicate a change in monsoon patterns, with shorter and more intense rainy seasons. This change is increasing climate hazards such as flooding and drought, causing more crop failures. Agriculturally reliant communities, such as those in the northern upland areas, are particularly vulnerable to these threats due to their reliance on rainfall and their low-yield, low-profit cultivation of relatively lower-value commodity crops such as rice and maize. The government, the United Nations and development partners are joining forces to address the increasing challenges posed by climate change and to build the resilience of upland farmers. The project will focus on building an enabling environment to promote and incentivise resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Laos, adopting resilient and sustainable land-use planning and value-chain networks in both provinces, and

deploying climate-smart technologies to improve livelihood practices and support the food security and nutrition of rural households. A major part of the project will be monitoring and evaluation, and sharing lessons learnt through national platforms. Mr Nasar said the project was highly relevant to Laos, because the majority of people rely on agriculture for their livelihood. Recent studies led by FAO indicate that Laos will experience more intense rainfall, leading to increased flooding, and a higher frequency of extended dry spells, leading to more drought. All of this will result in more crop failures, so resilience to climate change through this project means people can enjoy better yields, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life. The Climate Smart Agriculture project offers the hope of resilient agricultural systems and the possibility for upland farmers to be better equipped to face ongoing challenges, secure their livelihoods, have food available all year round with nutritious choices, and pass on a healthier and stronger future to the next generations.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent2023_New60.php

Import sector further restricted in

Myanmar



Myanmar News / 27 March, 2023

Myanmar's commerce ministry announced that it will no longer allow businesses to store imported goods in their warehouses while the processing of the import license is completed, citing the effect of the

delay on the quality of imported goods and in an attempt to regulate the markets better. Regulations and restrictions regarding trade, among others, were relaxed during the previous administration, but have been tightened up steadily by the post-coup administration. The recent readjustment of the laws related to over a thousand of types of goods, including meat, fish, electronics, cosmetics, construction materials and many more, is contained in a nearly 500-page document and requires that the whole import process must be approved and licensed first and foremost. This rule will also apply to companies operating within special economic zones. The requirements seem, however, to be temporary, as they will only last for six months. According to a popular electronics store in downtown Yangon, it is a huge hassle and will substantially increase costs. “So, basically, we cannot get this done in Yangon. We have to travel to Nay Pyi Taw, because all of the main offices are there and they are only allowing the whole thing to only be done in Nay Pyi Taw. You have to make a trip there to apply, either wait there or come back to Yangon and then go back again. There is an online process of sorts, but you’re not even guaranteed to get it. After the military takeover, there are so many documents you have to show, such as your export earnings,” said the owner, a Kyauktadar Township resident. “The general sentiment from the government is that they want to cut down on imports and rely more on locally made products. Maybe it is possible for some goods, but what about

electronics? What about medicine and other more complex consumer goods? Right now, all that is being achieved is that the price of imported goods are rising even further and the black market will get bigger than it already is,” said the shop owner.

Source : <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/import-sector-further-restricted-in-myanmar/>

Viet Nam's retail market proves attractive for foreign investors



Vietnam News | 27 March, 2023

HA NOI — Viet Nam is becoming an attractive retail market for companies all over the world with many regional and global FDI investors recently announcing plans to increase capital and expand distribution networks here. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Vietnamese retail market is worth US\$142 billion and is expected to increase nearly 2.5 times to \$350 billion by 2025. In January, total retail sales of consumer goods and services decreased by 6 per cent on-month to more than VNĐ481.8 trillion (US\$20.4 billion) due to weaker demand as many commodities were purchased ahead of the Lunar New Year. People spent more on festival activities post Tết, said the General Statistics Office. However, it still rose 13 per cent year-on-year. For the first two months of the year, the country's total retail sales of consumer goods and services advanced 13 per cent over the same period of 2022 to over VNĐ994.1 trillion. With stable and positive growth, the Vietnamese retail market has always been appreciated by foreign enterprises. Thailand's

Central Retail Corporation (CRC) has recently announced a capital increase of \$1.45 billion in Việt Nam. This is the largest investment ever announced by CRC with the goal of doubling the number of stores to 600 in 57 of 63 provinces. In 2023, the company spent more than VNĐ4.1 trillion in the market, focusing on developing essential foods businesses, stabilising prices, and restructuring electronic stores. Việt Nam is the market, besides Thailand, that brings the largest revenue for the group, about 21-22 per cent of total revenue. Last year, the number was 25 per cent, said Olivier Langlet, CEO of Central Retail Vietnam. One of the biggest Japanese retail companies, Aeon Co., Ltd is also accelerating the opening of shopping malls in the country to nearly three times to about 16 by 2025, focusing on the food segment. Last month, Aeon Mall in Huế City was constructed on an area of 8.62 hectares, with a total investment capital of about \$169 million. This is the biggest complex of trade centres and services in the region. FDI is one of the important elements to help Việt Nam transform itself into one of the most open economies in the region and grow quickly, according to a representative of HSBC Việt Nam. Currently, regional and global FDI investors or multinational corporations contribute to more than 80 per cent of total export turnover from Việt Nam and about 25 per cent of domestic investment value. Research from HSBC shows that, by 2030, the Vietnamese domestic consumer market will outstrip Thailand, the UK and Germany. “In 2023,

we will see some multinational corporations in Asia showing their interest in Việt Nam, engaging in retail, semiconductors, electronics, mobile components, plastic, renewable energy, and logistics industries. They are looking for ways to expand or make new investments in Việt Nam,” said the representative. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1502559/viet-nam-s-retail-market-proves-attractive-for-foreign-investors.html>

Elon Musk’s Starlink wants to bring satellite internet to Vietnam



Vietnam News | 27 March, 2023

Starlink has shown its willingness to cooperate with Vietnam and bring satellite internet services provided by the company owned by billionaire Elon Musk to Vietnam. A delegation of 52 US businesses is in Vietnam on a working visit led by the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC). This is the largest ever delegation of businesses coming to Vietnam to seek cooperation and business opportunities. One of the businesses is SpaceX, the company that specializes in providing satellite internet services, carrier rockets and spaceships founded by Elon Musk. At the meeting hosted by Deputy Minister of Information and Communications Phan Tam, SpaceX said the company wants to cooperate with Vietnam and the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC), especially in strengthening the digital connection capability. “SpaceX owns Starlink, a high-speed satellite Internet service with global coverage.

Satellite Internet technology is of great significance, especially for remote, isolated and island areas, where conventional fiber optic cables cannot reach. There are many services based on high-speed Internet that satellites can provide,” the representative of SpaceX said. When giving recommendations to Vietnam, SpaceX said the government needs to enhance the strategy on developing connectivity and digital technological infrastructure. “We will support Vietnamese and the government in strengthening internet connectivity,” the representative said. Elon Musk’s satellite internet services are operational in countries such as the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, the UK, Australia and most EU countries. In Asia, SpaceX provides Starlink in Japan and the Philippines. In Vietnam, Viettel, a big telecom carrier, once proposed trying satellite internet service with low-orbit satellite beams. The difficulty for domestic enterprises is their low capability when deploying low-orbit satellite beams, so they are likely to rely on foreign satellite systems. There is another problem about satellite internet service, the possible impact on traditional telecommunication services and national security. Vietnam needs to conduct research and experiments, as well as keep a close watch over international conferences on managing and licensing satellite services, and make detailed plans. Regarding the feasibility, the cost of internet service from low-orbit satellite beams is still much higher than fixed broadband internet service. However, if it is implemented in Vietnam, satellite internet service

will be the solution to the question of covering internet waves in the areas with unfavorable conditions such as mountains and islands. Also, the providing of satellite internet service with low-orbit satellite beams will also promote the development of maritime and aviation, the industries with great potentials, but still face limitations in telecommunications.

Source : <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/elon-musk-s-starlink-wants-to-bring-satellite-internet-to-vietnam-2124748.html>
