

Highlight News / May 30/2023



- ‘Garment annual turnover \$3B, workers’ income above poverty line’
- Japan key partner in digital economy drive
- Korea to provide millions of dollars for rural development in southern Laos
- ASEAN delivers relief supplies to Myanmar to help victims of cyclone Mocha
- Air passenger volume soars during first five months
- CPI increases by 0.01% in May



'Garment annual turnover \$3B, workers' income above poverty line'



Cambodia News | 29 May, 2023

Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Saturday last week that the garment industry alone in Cambodia has provided more than \$3 billion in wages on an annual basis as a worker is paid on average \$200 or \$2,400 per year as they can generate approximately \$6.6 per day of their daily income. This, he said, has remained \$4.7 higher than the poverty line set globally at \$1.9. Addressing a mass gathering of 19,000 workers from 81 factories—13 garment and 68 non-garment factories operating at the Royal Group Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone (Phnom Penh SEZ), on the National Road 4 in Phnom Penh, Prime Minister Hun Sen told that there are over 1,326 garment factories in Cambodia that have employed about 0.84 million workers whom he asked to continue to maintain the solidarity between the two parties as a community that would provide benefits for all, but they have to take care of each other based on applicable laws and solve any conflicts peacefully. "This is a measurement of income you have earned and the amount of income you have generated from this industry is higher compared to what you made in the agriculture that you do with your parents, while some of the service sectors have also provided great income. Speaking so does not mean encouragement for abandonment of agriculture," said Mr Hun Sen. He went on to add based on the figures he had received from the

Minister of Commerce Pan Sorasak on Friday that Cambodia has exported goods to overseas markets approximately \$7.34 billion in the first four months of 2023 even though the exports have been slightly slower, but in April alone the country achieved over \$1.84 billion. The Premier said that the export figures have been compiled by a combination of exports from all sectors including government, agriculture and others that have been growing at a size that needs to be increased through further development in all sectors among which agriculture needs to be developed with processing industry with the existing domestic raw materials that would provide more added value to farmers' products. He also explained that if there is no employer, employees would face difficulties, which means that if no employer invests money to establish factories, employees would not have jobs, but if employers would just be owners of warehouses if there is no employees to work for them. "So, both factory owners and workers have lived together for their joint rice pots," said Mr Hun Sen. "Employers have to take care of the well-being and benefits of workers. Then they would have good health and work harder to increase outputs and profits for factories that would provide a part of benefits back to workers, while the tax revenue for the government for investment that is the public benefits would also increase. These are things that we will not forget," he said. Ith Samheng, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training, said Cambodia's labour market has been strong as its employment rate has stayed at 99.3 percent of the total labour

10.8 million population and the ministry has systematically registered 17,256 enterprises countrywide that have employed about 1.5 million workers including 227 garment factories in Phnom Penh. Samheng further pointed out that exports in garment industry have increased to \$13 billion in 2022 from \$227 million in 1997, while the number of garment workers has risen to 0.84 million—who have been able to earn \$217-\$259 wages—from 80,000 and 340,000 workers have been working in the 227 garment factories in Phnom Penh alone. Comparing wages in Cambodia with those in other countries, Samheng said that Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Laos and Myanmar have paid wages at \$138-\$198, \$36, \$76, \$71 and \$69 per month respectively. “Initially, these countries have set the wages higher than these points, but recently due to the fluctuation of the exchange rate between their local currencies and dollar, the amount of wage cash have decreased,” said Samheng.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501298082/garment-annual-turnover-3b-workers-income-above-poverty-line/>

Japan key partner in digital economy drive



Cambodia News | 29 May, 2023

Japan remains a key partner in Cambodia’s journey towards becoming a fully-digitalised economy, according to a prominent banker in the country. Chea Serey, Deputy Governor of National Bank of Cambodia made this remark during an interview with

Japanese media. She said Japanese cooperation is vital for Cambodia’s technological transformation, especially in the fintech sector. “Japan is very well advanced when it comes to technological innovation. Cambodia is a developing country and we definitely require new technologies to enable us to jump to the next level,” the top banker said. Serey said Japan will remain a key partner for Cambodia encompassing a myriad of spheres. “I definitely find more and more cooperation between the two countries in many spaces – whether it’s financial or AgriTech. This is also a big opportunity for Japanese companies to explore in terms of investment options.” She said Cambodia offers plenty of opportunities for exploration to Japanese companies. “Many innovative technologies can be tested in the Kingdom. The rules and regulations are business-friendly. Our approach is that we want to see what happens and then we regulate, rather than try to be perfect at the start by restricting innovative ideas that come in. “I hope this is something the Japanese government and Japanese companies consider in their decision and try to find out which destination to go to.” She hailed the role of Japanese technological firm Soramitsu for the successful launch of Bakong – a digital payment service initiated by National Bank of Cambodia, which allows customers to make cash transactions across or within member banks and financial institutions. “With the successful launch of Bakong, Soramitsu is propelled to find other projects in Southeast Asian countries and the Pacific region. So, Cambodia can

afford to take credit for that.” Alongside Soramitsu, many Japanese companies including Nippon Express (a globally-renowned logistics company) and Oji Group (a leading packaging firm) operate in the Kingdom. Many Japanese tech companies have also been involved in empowering tech education in Cambodia by teaming up with many universities and institutions. Takeshi Izuka, a Japanese entrepreneur and innovator empowering aspiring engineers in Southeast Asia, set up the Kirirom Institute of Technology in the year 2014, which has been delivering high-quality tech education to Cambodian youngsters.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501298087/japan-key-partner-in-digital-economy-drive/>

Korea to provide millions of dollars for rural development in southern Laos



Laos News | 29 May, 2023

Funding support totaling about US\$9.4 million from the Republic of Korea will be used to improve the living environment of rural people in three provinces of southern Laos, aiming to narrow the development gap between rural and urban populations. The project is targeting in 20 selected pilot villages in Champassak, Saravan and Xekong provinces through five subprojects aimed at improving farmers' incomes and six subprojects to improve the standard of living in the target villages. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on May 24 held

a ceremony to officially launch the project in Paksong district, Champasak province. Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Mr Kikeo Singnavong said the project to spur rural development is a blend of working plans between the five-subprojects and the six-subprojects, supported by about US\$9.4 million in development funding from the government of the Republic of Korea. The government of the Republic of Korea has agreed to continue to provide development funding following the success of two similar projects in Vientiane and Savannakhet provinces from 2014-2020, which benefited local people by improving their standard of living. Country Director of the KOICA Office in Laos, Ms Myung-Jin Kim, said the project was a follow up to the previous projects, which had been successfully implemented. The current project would use community-based development methods implemented through Village Development Committees. “KOICA will also provide funding of US\$3.3 million direct to these committees' bank accounts for the implementation of development activities in the 20 pilot villages,” she said. Representative official from the Korea Institute for Rural Development (President Dr Chung Ki Whan) also speaking at the project launch ceremony that the subprojects would be implemented through six pilot projects including the construction of 18 village halls, improving 17 village routes, improving the water supply system in three irrigation schemes, installation of four clean water systems, and the construction of nine village markets and 20 waste

treatment facilities. The Institute said their specialised committees would work closely with rural people in the development of livestock and crop farms. Goals would include an increase in the daily weight gain of cattle from 0.2kg to 0.3kg, construction of 323 rainproof greenhouses for 160 farmers so they could grow vegetables throughout the year, assisting 190 farmers to set up 204 hectares of commercial fruit farms, and the establishment of three coffee cultivation model farms to introduce standard coffee cultivation technologies to improve coffee productivity and quality with the aim of generating more income. The Institute will also support two vegetable cultivation cooperatives and Agricultural Processing Centres to reduce marketing costs and produce high quality vegetables for sale to consumers. Three coffee cooperatives will be set up to process coffee and develop brand and cooperative marketing. These cooperatives will also run a coffee-experiencing café to increase income by selling coffee directly to consumers. The Institute will also assist four rural tourism villages to boost tourism income of the village by constructing paths and parking lots, and planting flowers and trees to make these areas more attractive to tourists. The Institute will provide training at various levels as required. In the 20 pilot villages, training will be given to 11,000 farmers to support five income generation pilot projects, 3,600 farmers will learn about advanced farming technologies, and 320 village leaders and district government officials will learn about integrated rural development and

participatory rural development approach. Additionally, the Institute will invite 55 government officials and village leaders to Korea to study Korean rural development policies and policy programs. KOICA is also supporting the Lao government to establish the Southern Agricultural Training Center (ATC), which is set to open next month.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten101_Korea_to_y23.php

Anti-China Sentiment Surges in Myanmar With Wave of Protests and Attacks



Myanmar News | 30 May, 2023

A series of anti-China protests and attacks on junta troops guarding China-backed pipelines took place on the heels of Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang's visit to Naypyitaw earlier this month. Qin Gang held talks with junta boss Min Aung Hlaing on May 2, becoming the first top-level Chinese government official to meet with the regime leadership since the coup in 2021. A regime statement said that Qin Gang's visit not only displayed the friendship between Myanmar and China but also Beijing's support for the regime on the international stage. Qin Gang also paid a call on former military dictator Than Shwe the same day. Than Shwe expressed hope that Myanmar and China would retain their longstanding "pauk-phaw" friendship, strengthen friendly cooperation, and work for more fruitful outcomes of bilateral relations, according to state-owned China Radio International. The visit was followed by anti-

China protests in parts of Myanmar, with demonstrators calling on Beijing to stop supporting the regime. Two days after Qin Gang's visit, residents of Sagaing Region's Letpadaung, the site of a China-backed copper mine, burned a Chinese flag in protest against Beijing's engagement with the regime. Locals in Sagaing Region's Yinmabin and Salingyi staged a similar protest on May 9, accusing China of complicity in atrocities against civilians committed by Myanmar's military regime. Protests spread overseas with Myanmar expats demonstrating outside the Chinese Embassy in London on May 10. They held banners with the messages "China is helping the military violate our human rights", "Myanmar's junta is a terrorist organization", "Stop backing terrorists", "China, get out of Burma", "China, leave Burma alone", and "Burmese resources are not for Chinese consumption". Last week, the anti-China demonstrations spread to San Francisco in the US, and Sagaing, Magwe, Yangon and Mandalay, where protesters burned Chinese flags and pictures of junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and the Chinese foreign minister. They also held banners reading "China: Stop Killing Myanmar People by Supporting Fascist Criminals", "China: Respect Myanmar People's Voice", and "Stop Supporting Fascist Criminals". The General Strike Coordination Body (GSCB), a network of anti-regime forces, also sent an open letter to Chinese communities around the world, asking China's government to stop supporting the regime and show sympathy for Myanmar's people. "As long

as the Chinese government continues to support the regime and stand by it publicly, we will continue to organize anti-China protests, not only in Myanmar but also in foreign countries together with Myanmar expats there. We will step up our protests," Rose, a GSCB member, told The Irrawaddy. Since the foreign minister's visit, there have been three attacks on junta troops guarding China-backed oil and gas pipelines. On May 7, Natogyi Guerilla Force attacked junta troops guarding an offtake station for oil and gas pipelines in Natogyi Township in Mandalay's Myingyan District. Resistance groups also attacked troops guarding pipelines in Mandalay's Kyaukpadaung and Taungtha townships on May 21 and 22, respectively. Despite the protests, China is stepping up its engagement with the regime. Last week, Myanmar hosted an expo for Chinese goods in Naypyitaw with 300 merchants in attendance.

Source : <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/anti-china-sentiment-surges-in-myanmar-with-wave-of-protests-and-attacks.html>

Air passenger volume soars during first five months



Vietnam News | 29 May, 2023

HA NOI — Airports in Viet Nam served up to 45.5 million passengers in the first five months of this year, an increase of 37.8 per cent compared to the same period last year, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Viet Nam (CAAV). Of the figure, there were 12 million foreigners and 33.4 million local passengers, marking a year-on-year rise of 679.6

and 33.4 per cent, respectively. In May alone, airports across the country served 9 million passengers, up 3.2 per cent from the previous month. Between January and May, Vietnamese airlines carried 22.4 million people, a year-on-year increase of 36.9 per cent. Of the total, there were 16.7 million domestic passengers, up 5.7 per cent from 2022. The volume of foreign passengers reached 5.7 million, an increase of 5,525.1 per cent higher than from the corresponding period last year. The sudden rise in the number of passengers after more than two years of travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an improvement in the business results of domestic airlines. National flag carrier Vietnam Airlines saw revenue doubling year-on-year to VNĐ23.5 trillion (about US\$1 billion) in the first quarter of this year. It still reported an after-tax loss of VNĐ37.3 billion in the period, but it is a significant improvement compared to a loss of nearly VNĐ2.69 trillion in the same period last year. The airline has restored its entire domestic flight network and resumed 90 per cent of the international routes compared to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, during the first three months of 2023, air carrier Vietjet posted revenue of VNĐ12.88 trillion and after-tax profit of VNĐ168 billion, increasing by 286 and 320 per cent year-on-year, respectively. Ancillary revenue, in particular, was reported at VNĐ4.31 trillion, accounting for more than 33 per cent of the total revenue. The company's consolidated revenue and after-tax profit were

almost VNĐ12.9 trillion and VNĐ173 billion, respectively. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1544347/air-passenger-volume-soars-during-first-five-months.html>

CPI increases by 0.01% in May



Vietnam News | 29 May, 2023

Hanoi (VNA) – The General Statistics Office (GSO) on May 29 announced that the May consumer price index (CPI) increased by 0.01% month-on-month mostly due to increases in prices of food, electricity, and water. The May CPI increased by 0.4% compared to December 2022 and 2.43% from the same period last year. The average CPI of the first five months of this year rose by 3.55% over the same period last year. The year-on-year rise in CPI from the beginning of this year tends to slow down gradually with 4.89% in January, 4.31% in February, 3.35% in March, 2.81% in April 2.43% in May, the GSO pointed out. Factors that pushed the CPI up in the first five months of this year include the increased prices of education, housing and construction materials, culture/entertainment, and tourism because of increasing demand after the COVID-19 pandemic was put under control. In addition, prices of food items hiked by 3.8%, mainly due to higher consumer demand during holidays and festivals. Meanwhile, factors that pulled the CPI down during the period included the falling prices of fuels and postal and telecommunications products. According to the General Statistics Office, core inflation in May increased by 0.27% over the previous month and by

4.54% over the same period last year. The average core inflation of the first five months of this year rose by 4.83% year-on-year, higher than the CPI growth rate (3.55%).

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/cpi-increases-by-001-in-may/253788.vnp>
