

Highlight News / July 18/2023



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Cambodia hopes RCEP, bilateral FTAs to boost exports of garment, footwear, travel goods



Cambodia News | 17 July, 2023

Cambodia has pinned hopes on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement and bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to boost its exports of garment, footwear and travel (GFT) goods. Cambodian Footwear Association president Ly Khun Thai said the Southeast Asian country has seen a significant rise in the exports of shoes to China and South Korea since the RCEP and Cambodia's bilateral FTAs with China and South Korea entered into force last year. "There are many countries under the RCEP agreement. With preferential tariffs, we expect to receive more purchase orders for our GFT products from those RCEP member countries," he told a local TV channel on Friday. The current major markets for Cambodia's GFT goods are Europe, the United States and Canada. His comments came after the kingdom recorded a drop by almost a fifth in the export of GFT products during the first half of 2023. The country exported GFT goods worth 5.26 billion U.S. dollars from January to June this year, down 18.7 percent from 6.47 billion dollars in the same period last year, according to the General Department of Customs and Excise's report. The GFT goods industry is the largest foreign exchange earner for Cambodia. The sector consists of roughly 1,100 factories and branches, employing about

750,000 workers, mostly female. Cambodian Ministry of Commerce's undersecretary of state and spokesman Penn Sovicheat said the RCEP and Cambodia's bilateral FTAs with China and South Korea are key contributors to boosting the country's exports. "These free trade deals have given and will continue to give a boost to our export growth in the long term," he told Xinhua on Sunday. Sovicheat reiterated that these trade pacts will help Cambodia graduate from its least-developed country status by 2027, achieve its ambitious goals of becoming an upper-middle-income country in 2030 and a high-income nation by 2050. The RCEP comprises 15 Asia-Pacific countries, including the 10 ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, and their five trading partners, namely China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Xinhua

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501325280/cambodia-hopes-rcep-bilateral-ftas-to-boost-exports-of-garment-footwear-travel-goods/>

Cambodia FDI registered capital at \$45 billion



Cambodia News | 17 July, 2023

The registered capital of foreign direct investments (FDI) in Cambodia reached \$45.8 billion as of the first quarter of 2023. National Bank of Cambodia's report showed that the main sources of capital were from China, South Korea, Singapore, Japan,

Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and the United Kingdom. The FDI inflows covered major sectors such as finance, manufacturing, real estate, hotels and resorts, agriculture, hydropower and construction. Among FDI, China topped the list with 83.5 trillion riels (approximately \$20.59 billion, or 45 percent of the total registered capital). Manufacturing sector shared 31.6 percent of Chinese investment's registered capital in hydropower, financial service and real estate. Heng Sokkung, Secretary of State and spokesman at the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation, attributed the Chinese investment growth to the close relations between both governments and the bilateral free trade agreement. "Cambodia and China have a good relationship in economy, politics and trade. These factors have built confidence in Chinese to increase investment in Cambodia, topping the number one in the FDI list," Sokkung told Khmer Times. Cambodia welcomes investment from all countries in line with the Industrial Development Program policy, he said. Under the new investment law, Cambodia is expected to attract more FDIs in future, Sokkung said. The Cambodia-China Free Trade Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which Cambodia and China are members, took effect on January 1, 2022. Lim Heng, vice-president of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce, attributed the investment registration to the potential investment under the new law, free trade agreements, mega-regional pact, and trade preferences. "The new investment law, with free

trade preferences – Cambodia-China FTA are factors that attracted investment from China to Cambodia and encourage these investments and turn the sector toward exports," Heng said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501324951/cambodia-fdi-registered-capital-at-45-billion/>

Tourism ministry gears up for influx of Chinese visitors



Laos News | 17 July, 2023

The government is organising a raft of activities and improving facilities and services in preparation for the expected arrival of a large number of Chinese tourists from 2023 to 2025. The Chinese constitute one of the largest groups of visitors to Laos, with their numbers soaring since the Chinese government authorised outbound travel for tour groups in January. The flood of Chinese visitors follows their absence throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, when travel outside the country was banned. In anticipation of increasing numbers of Chinese tour groups, the government is improving road links between train stations, tourist attractions, and arterial roads. It is expected that most Chinese tourists will arrive by train. Access roads to tourist sites are also being upgraded, and signs in Lao, Chinese and English are being installed to indicate the various attractions close to the Laos-China Railway. The government will also give priority to airlines wanting to schedule flights between Laos and China and is working to improve tourism products and modernise tourism operations to suit the Chinese market,

according to the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism. The ministry will focus on places known to be popular among Chinese tourists and provide more information about them in the Chinese language, such as the history and rules for visitors. Restaurant menus will also be updated to include Chinese. The government also plans to make a video in Chinese detailing Laos' major attractions and provide Chinese language training for tour guides, all with the aim of making visitors feel welcome and encouraging them to return. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, more than one million Chinese visited Laos, accounting for about 20 percent of all tourist arrivals, but last year only about 45,000 Chinese tourists came to Laos. In the first four months of this year, about 1.6 million domestic and foreign tourists took trips in Laos, with the figure being a marked increase over the number of tourists recorded in the same period of 2022. More than 485,000 of this number were Lao nationals, while more than 1.1 million visitors came from other countries. The largest number came from Thailand with 430,979, followed by 224,461 from Vietnam and 223,350 from China, Minister of Planning and Investment Mr Khamjane Vongphosy told the National Assembly recently.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Tourism136.php

Myanmar exports over 420KT of beans, pulses



Myanmar News | 17 July, 2023

YANGON (XINHUA) – Myanmar exported 424,187 tonnes of beans and pulses worth USD333 million in the first quarter of the current 2023-2024 fiscal year, according to the figures released by the Ministry of Commerce on Saturday. From April 1 to June 30 this year, Myanmar traded 369,237 tonnes of beans and pulses through sea routes and shipped 54,950 tonnes of beans and pulses through land borders, the ministry said. Myanmar's exports of beans and pulses dwindled in the first quarter of 2023-24 fiscal year compared with the corresponding period of the previous year. Myanmar shipped 489,985 tonnes of beans and pulses in the first quarter of 2022-2023 fiscal year, according to the ministry statistics. Beans and pulses are Myanmar's second-most cultivated crops after rice and account for 33 per cent of the Southeast Asian country's total agricultural production. Myanmar exports beans and pulses to China, India and the European countries.

Source : <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/myanmar-exports-over-420kt-of-beans-pulses/>

Vietnam eyes sustainable development for coconut industry



Vietnam News | 17 July, 2023

Coconut industry is playing a very important role in the socio-economic development of Vietnam and should be considered an indispensable part of the country's development strategies. They include a loose linkage in the value chain and low processing capacity, he went on. Dung pointed out that an imbalance in the supply of material for processing

and capital shortage for upgrading technology is the biggest limitation. Thus, it is necessary to devise a project on turning coconuts into Vietnam's main industrial crops by 2030. Vietnam has more than 188,000 hectares under coconut, accounting for 1.67% of that of the world, according to the Institute of Agricultural Planning and Economics. Coconut trees are a source of income for about 389,530 farmer households and export value of coconut and coconut products has reached over 900 million USD. Vietnam is in the fourth place in the world in terms of cococut value. Currently, there are about 854 enterprises that specialise in producing and processing coconut products, along with over 90 companies exporting coconut products. They create jobs for more than 15,000 employees. Huynh Quang Duc, Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ben Tre province, which has the largest coconut area in the country, said that coconut trees play an important role in the socio-economic life of the province. More than 70% of its population relies on coconut growing for their livelihood and the province has more than 163,000 households engaged in coconut farming. The production value of coconut products accounts for 20.69% of the province's total industrial production value; making up 42.51% of its total export turnover and creating jobs for tens of thousands of workers. Ben Tre now has 78,000ha under coconut cultivation. Its coconut products have present in nearly 100 countries and territories and access choosy markets such as Europe, US and the

Midde East. In recent years, the province has issued many resolutions and plans to create favourable conditions for the coconut industry to develop in a stable, sustainable and effective manner. Particularly, the 11th tenure of the provincial Party Committee has issued Resolution No. 07 on building concentrated production areas associated with developing the value chain of key product groups, thereby enhancing the development of the coconut industry as well as the position and image of Ben Tre coconut trees at home and abroad.

Source : <https://en.nhandan.vn/vietnam-eyes-sustainable-development-for-coconut-industry-post127536.html>

Domestic retailers on path to recovery



Vietnam News | 17 July, 2023

Hanoi (VNA) – Analysts believed that profits of almost domestic retailers hit their lowest point in the first half of this year, and the businesses are on the path to recovery. SSI Securities Joint Stock Company forecast that the companies will see a return to profit growth in the fourth quarter and in 2024 thanks to the acceleration of disbursement of consumer loans and improvements in macro-economic conditions. Long-term prospects of Vietnamese retailers will depend on their transition from traditional to modern commerce as well as their capital mobilisation plans, the firm said. In fact, in the first six months, retailers encountered various difficulties, yet experts believed that they have gone through the hardest period. Total revenue from retail

sales of consumer goods and services increased 10.9% year-on-year in the first six months of this year to more than 3.01 quadrillion VND (127 billion USD), according to the General Statistics Office (GSO). According to a survey conducted by Infocus, consumer confidence in Vietnam dropped to 54 points in June 2023 from 63 points in July 2022. The 2023 PwC Consumer Insights Survey in Vietnam also revealed that Vietnamese consumers have drastically adjusted their spending habits with 62% “holding back” on non-essential spending amid the globally rising cost of living. However, VNDIRECT Securities Corporation said that the market is recovering with rosy signs for the second half, noting its hope that new orders from major markets will rise in the remaining months, and that the trend of declining lending rates will continue to boost consumption. VNDIRECT also held that the consumption of electronics, particularly home appliances, will experience the strongest growth in the time ahead. Furthermore, the value-added tax (VAT) has been reduced from 10% to 8% for various essential items such as dry food, beverages, confectionery, and household utensils, which is expected to bring about dual benefits as consumers can access items with lower prices, and businesses enjoy additional revenue./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/domestic-retailers-on-path-to-recovery/259465.vnp>
