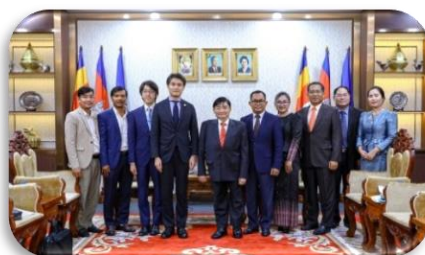


Highlight News / September 18/2023



- Cambodian Rice Federation reports record rice exports, on track to reach 1 million tonnes by 2025
- Labour Minister asks JICA to continue vocational technical training to boost Cambodia's economic growth to 7%
- Thailand and Laos explore new measures to attract more tourists
- Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade values cross US\$7 mln over past five months
- Lego plant in Vietnam to start launching products in H2 next year
- Automobile sales fall 9 per cent in August: VAMA



Cambodian Rice Federation reports record rice exports, on track to reach 1 million tonnes by 2025



Cambodia News | 17 September, 2023

Cambodia is poised to achieve its goal of exporting 1 million tonnes of rice annually by 2025, as indicated by the country's rice exports reaching over 400,000 tonnes in the first eight months of the year. This significant progress brings optimism for Cambodia's rice industry, with several factors contributing to the positive outlook. The Cambodian Ministry of Commerce informed that Indonesia plans to import 250,000 tonnes of rice from Cambodia each year. This development provides a boost to Cambodia's aspiration of reaching its export target by 2025. The government officials from both countries are set to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on rice trade, which will be implemented in 2024. This mutually beneficial agreement will pave the way for increased rice trade between Cambodia and Indonesia in the coming years. Furthermore, besides Indonesia, other countries such as the Philippines have expressed interest in importing rice from Cambodia. This diversification of potential rice markets adds to Cambodia's confidence in attaining their ambitious export goal. The Cambodian Rice Federation (CRF) reported that the country exported 401,699 tonnes of rice to 56 nations and territories during the period of January to August this year. This accounts for 58% of the 2023 annual export plan, highlighting the

substantial growth in Cambodia's rice trade. Speaking about Cambodia's export prospects, Pen Sovicheat, spokesperson at the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce, stated, "The growing demand for Cambodian rice from countries like Indonesia and the Philippines has given us confidence that we can ship 1 million tonnes of rice abroad by 2025." Sovicheat's statement reflects the positive outlook within the Cambodian government and industry professionals, as they anticipate a thriving rice trade in the years to come. Cambodia's commitment to expanding its rice export sector has significantly contributed to its recent success. Efforts such as improving productivity, investing in modernizing its agriculture infrastructure, and implementing quality control measures have enhanced the country's rice production capabilities. Additionally, Cambodia's unique geographical location, fertile land, and favorable climate provide a conducive environment for rice cultivation, making it an attractive source for importing countries. Cambodia's rice industry is on track to achieve its ambitious goal of exporting 1 million tonnes of rice annually by 2025. With Indonesia's commitment to importing a significant portion of Cambodia's rice, and other countries expressing interest in sourcing rice from Cambodia, the future looks promising. As the country continues to invest in its agriculture sector and build strong trade relationships, Cambodia is well-positioned to become a major player in the global rice market. "The growing demand for Cambodian rice from countries like Indonesia and the Philippines has

given us confidence that we can ship 1 million tonnes of rice abroad by 2025," said Pen Sovicheat, spokesperson at the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501361211/cambodian-rice-federation-reports-record-rice-exports-on-track-to-reach-1-million-tonnes-by-2025/>

Labour Minister asks JICA to continue vocational technical training to boost Cambodia's economic growth to 7%



Cambodia News | 17 September, 2023

Heng Sour, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training has requested the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Cambodia to continue developing human resources in technical and vocational training to increase the momentum of Cambodia's economic growth to 7%. Sour's request was made during a meeting with Sanui Kazumasa, President of JICA, at the Ministry of Labour on September 15, 2023. The Minister stressed that strengthening technical and vocational training is the key to attracting more investment to Cambodia, especially from Japanese investors, which can be considered a key point for Cambodia to boost its economic growth to around 7% in the future and achieve the vision of transforming "Cambodia into a high-income country by 2050." The Minister continued that technical and vocational training has played an important role in helping to achieve the Pentagon Strategic Policy: Phase 1 of the Royal

Government of Cambodia, the seventh mandate. Heng Sour proposed to JICA, which has been a key partner of Cambodia for a long time, to continue to develop human resources through technical and vocational training to increase the driving force of Cambodia's economic growth to reach 7% again. In response, Kazumasa agreed to carefully review the request of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and commended the efforts and the Royal Government of Cambodia's commitment to continue cooperating with JICA for the past 30 years. "In response to this cooperation, Japan plans to increase the number of JICA volunteers from 30 by 2023 to 60 next year," he said. However, the two sides agreed to continue to strengthen cooperation to help each other closer, while the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Government of Japan also raised the level of relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" in 2023. Dap-news

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501361304/labour-minister-asks-jica-to-continue-vocational-technical-training-to-boost-cambodias-economic-growth-to-7/>

Thailand and Laos explore new measures to attract more tourists



Laos News | 17 September, 2023

Thailand and Laos yesterday discussed measures to draw more tourists by connecting tourism routes and speeding up the construction of a second Thai-Lao friendship bridge in Pak Chom district of Loei. Loei

provincial governor Tawee Sempakdeekul, accompanied by his deputy Narong Jeenam, 28th military circle chief Maj Gen Prich Sukantasri and various officials, met Khamphan Sithidampha, the governor of Laos' Vientiane province at S Vangvieng Boutique Hotel yesterday. It was the 20th Thai-Lao border security meeting between Loei and Vientiane. Tourism promotion, cultural exchanges and economic, social and security cooperation were discussed. Following the Thai government's decision to approve a free-visa policy for Chinese visitors, Laos plans to elevate its Muen border town in Vientiane to accommodate the growing number of Chinese tourists travelling to Thailand who might also visit the neighbouring country. Mr Tawee said Muen town is not far from Pak Chom district in Laos and it can be a gateway to link popular attractions in both Loei and Vientiane, such as a tourism route between Chiang Khan and Pak Chom districts in Loei to Vang Vieng and Feuang districts in Vientiane. "We have a border checkpoint in Loei for tourists to cross from Pak Chom to Muen but Laos has only a temporary checkpoint. We will ask for cooperation from Laos to upgrade the checkpoint to be a permanent one by the end of this year," he said. Loei also plans to construct the second Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge in Pak Chom district. The project will boost tourism, trade, investment and logistics, he said. The first Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge in Loei connects Loei's Tha Li district and Kenethao City in Laos.

Source : <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2648313>

Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade values cross US\$7 mln over past five months



Myanmar News | 17 September, 2023

Myanmar conducted cross-border trade worth US\$7.865 million with neighbouring Bangladesh via Sittway and Maungtaw posts over the past five months of the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed. Export (\$6.89 million) outperformed imports (\$0.966 million) in Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade as of 8 September. Trade via Maungtaw is valued at \$5.287 million, while the value of trade via Sittway was estimated at \$1.61 million over the past five months. Myanmar carried out border trade worth \$0.58 million with Bangladesh via Maungtaw between 1 and 10 September. The Maungtaw border is aimed to reach a trade target of \$1.54 million for September. It achieved 37.73 per cent of the trade target in the first 10 days. Agricultural produce, fisheries and manufacturing goods are the main export items and no import is recorded. The goods are supplied to the Maungtaw border through the Sittway-Buthidaung-Maungtaw and Sittway-Angumaw-Maungtaw routes. Mostly, goods flowed into the border via the Sittway-Angumaw-Maungtaw route. They are shipped to Bangladesh via the Kanyinchaung Economic Zone. The Customs Department's statistics indicated that Myanmar's export to Bangladesh via the Sittway border was valued at \$0.034 million between 2 and

8 September. Tamarind, jujube, fresh ginger and plum jam were sent to Bangladesh. Although there is only 70 nautical miles distance between the two countries, the cargo vessels are operated depending on the weather conditions in monsoon season. — TWA/KK

Source : <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/myanmar-bangladesh-border-trade-values-cross-us7-mln-over-past-five-months/#article-title>

Lego plant in Vietnam to start launching products in H2 next year

 *Vietnam News | 16 September, 2023*

Hanoi (VNA) – The Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) has set a target to increase the cashless payment ratio in e-commerce, especially e-payments through payment intermediaries or applications, to 50% by 2025. As part of efforts to implement the national plan on e-commerce development, the ministry has set ambitious targets for non-cash payment in e-commerce activities. Another goal is to raise the ratio of payments conducted through payment intermediary service providers to 80% of non-cash payments in e-commerce activities by 2025. According to the Centre for Information and Digital Technology (CID) under the MoIT's E-commerce and Digital Economy Agency (iDEA), the centre has been and will continue to implement various solutions, and develop infrastructure facilities to promote non-cash payments, including the National E-commerce Payment System (Keypay). In addition, the centre

will also focus on researching and developing a secure payment system for e-commerce activities based on the commercial arbitration (ESCROW) method, toward protecting both consumers and sellers in non-cash payment transactions. To support all parties involved in secured online payment transactions, the centre planned to launch a system that will ensure transaction security in e-commerce activities, which aims to protect consumers' rights in the digital environment and safeguard the interests of all parties involved in online transactions. The ratio of e-payments via ESCRO is expected to rise, while the rate of cash-on-delivery (COD) payment is projected to decrease. Attention will be also paid to increasing reliability, thus promoting transactions; resolving disputes with a clear legal basis; and protecting the interests of both buyers and sellers. Transactions conducted without the involvement of intermediary payment service providers, such as bank transfers, cash deposits at service counters, and postal money transfers, currently make up a significant portion of non-cash payment transactions, the centre said. This poses potential risks for consumers during transactions because when the goods/services fail to meet requirements, sellers may not accept returns, and consumers may also be unable to complain or be protected in such transactions. The main reasons for this are the shopping habits of consumers who still use cash, the low trust of consumers in e-payment infrastructure supporting e-commerce activities, and the lack of consistent and coherent measures to protect

consumers and sellers in non-cash payment transactions./.

Source :

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/companies/lego-plant-in-vietnam-to-start-launching-products-in-h2-next-year-4654152.html>

Automobile sales fall 9 per cent in August: VAMA



Vietnam News | 16 September, 2023

HA NOI — Automobile sales in Việ Nam faced difficulties in August, after growing slightly in July despite a 50 per cent reduction of the registration fee, according a report of Vietnam Automobile Manufacturers Association (VAMA). The VAMA reported that its members sold 22,549 vehicles in August, down 9 per cent against the previous month and 27 per cent over the same frame last year. The breakdown of vehicle sales in August was as follows: 17,335 passenger cars, down 10 per cent; 5,036 commercial vehicles, down 5 per cent; and 169 special-use vehicles, up 14 per cent month-on-month. This indicates that the automotive market in Việ Nam has faced difficulties in maintaining stable sales, especially in the two key segments of passenger cars and commercial vehicles. In terms of vehicle origin, sales of domestically-assembled automobiles reached 13,118 units, down 3 per cent, while the number of imported completely built up (CBU) autos was 9,422, down 15 per cent month-on-month. In the first eight months of this year, VAMA members sold a total 184,554 vehicles of all kinds,

down 30 per cent against 2022. Of this amount, passenger cars experienced a 34 per cent decrease, while commercial vehicles and special-use vehicles dropped by 13 per cent and 61 per cent, respectively. Besides VAMA member units, the Vietnamese auto market also includes other automakers such as Audi, Jaguar Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Subaru, Volkswagen, and Volvo, but they do not disclose business results. Meanwhile, Thành Công Group (TC Group) announced its sales of 3,145 units in August, and 35,191 in the January-August period. Based on sales reports from VAMA and TC Group, 25,685 units were sold in August, lifting total sales in the first eight months to 219,745 units. Toyota led the market in August with 3,922 units, up 16.7 per cent from the previous month. It was followed by KIA, Huyndai, Mazda and Ford. According to industry insiders, the overall decline in sales is attributed to several factors, including economic difficulties and consumer spending constraints. Despite the Government support with a 50 per cent reduction in registration fees for domestically-manufactured and assembled vehicles, sales decreased. The decline in sales was also influenced by cultural factors. The seventh lunar month, which often falls at the end of August in the Gregorian calendar, is the month of the ghost in Vietnamese people's perception. This is traditionally considered a month of reduced spending. To stimulate the market, car manufacturers have been reducing prices and offering incentives across various product lines. For

example, B-segment car models such as Honda City, Hyundai Accent, and Toyota Vios have received incentives from the 50 per cent registration fee reduction, in addition to further support from manufacturers and distributors. Other models, such as the Honda CR-V and Subaru Outback, have also experienced price reductions and discounts. Luxury brands, such as Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen, have been offering discounts and incentives to attract buyers. While there are signs of hope for the future, with predictions of a potential improvement in the domestic auto market in September, industry insiders remain cautious about the overall situation. Purchasing power is not expected to increase significantly in the last months of the year due to economic factors. Obtaining the same sales volume in 2022 (400,000 vehicles per per year) is considered difficult, and increased inventory pressure may lead to production and business cuts, impacting employment and worker incomes. According to Nguyễn Trung Hiếu, a senior expert of VAMA, the market is facing challenges, and although there may be some improvements in the coming months, the overall outlook for the entire year of 2023 is unlikely to match the sales levels of 2022. The market's dynamics will depend on factors such as the expiration of certain policies and the introduction of new vehicles with attractive prices and incentives.

— VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1593839/automobile-sales-fall-9-per-cent-in-august-vama.html>
