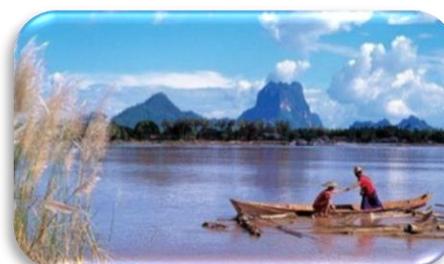


Highlight News / November 24/2023



- WB approves \$163M for safe water supply and sanitation in Cambodia
- National Road 5 to facilitate goods transport and enhance connectivity
- Booming Sectors, Looming Debts: Laos Nears Halfway Point of Socio-Economic Development Plan
- Octane prices see slight increase on 22 Nov
- Kayin State witnesses 100% surge in visitor arrivals, hotel revenue in 9 months
- Vietnam's online shopper number surges with increasing purchase value
- Fruit, veggie exports soar to all-time high



WB approves \$163M for safe water supply and sanitation in Cambodia



Cambodia News | 23 November, 2023

The World Bank Tuesday approved a \$163 million project to support Cambodia's efforts to strengthen water supply and sanitation services in four provinces, benefiting over 175,000 people. While Cambodia has made substantial progress on increasing access to improved water supply and sanitation, further efforts are needed to achieve the country's targets and meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 of clean water and sanitation for all by 2030. In 2022, less than a third of Cambodians had access to a safely managed water supply, and just over a third used safely managed sanitation. "Access to safe water supply and sanitation is a fundamental human right," said Maryam Salim, World Bank Country Manager for Cambodia. She went on add, "This support will help the government build a strong foundation for making these essential services available to all Cambodians and will bring rapid benefits to women and people in poor and rural areas, which are currently particularly underserved." The six-year Water Supply and Sanitation Acceleration Project will support government actions to increase access to safe water supply and sanitation, improve the operation and maintenance of existing systems, and ensure the sustainability of services. The project includes an activity to maximise finance for development, working with the private operators that provide over

half of all piped water connections in Cambodia to mobilise another \$17.6 million in private funding to expand water supply services. "The water sector is a priority area for resilient and sustainable development and for enhancing the economy," said Hem Vandy, Minister of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation. "This project will help the government implement its vision and overall development strategy, and we are committed to ensuring sustainable growth in the sector and to achieving SDG 6." "The Royal Government of Cambodia pays great attention to wastewater and faecal sludge management, thus investments in sanitation systems under the project are instrumental for the sustainability of sanitation services which will bring positive transformation to the sector," said Peng Ponea, Minister of Public Works and Transport. The Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation will implement water supply activities and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport will implement urban sanitation activities under the project. The targeted provinces are Battambang, Pursat, Mondul Kiri and Kandal.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501396471/wb-approves-163m-for-safe-water-supply-and-sanitation-in-cambodia/>

National Road 5 to facilitate goods transport and enhance connectivity



Cambodia News | 23 November, 2023

Two key road sections of the National Road 5 linking Phnom Penh and Battambang province will play an

important role in facilitating travel flows, goods transportation and enhancement of regional connectivity. Built with a concessional loan of \$691 million from the Japanese government through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the 366-km asphalt road is a strategic route linking the capital from Prek Kdam area to Banteay Meanchey province, shared border with Thailand. Starting from the Prek Kdam area, northern part of Phnom Penh, the road runs through five provinces of Kandal, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey. The road section between Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces was officially opened earlier this year. Prime Minister Hun Manet and Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia Ueno Atsushi presided over the inauguration ceremony on Wednesday in Kampong Chhnang province, attended by thousands of local people. The premier said roads will facilitate travel and goods transport, enhancing transportation connections between Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. "Where there is a road, there is hope. The road contributes to the daily travel and transportation of people and will also act as a catalyst to promote socio-economic activities in the surrounding areas and across the country," Mr Hun Manet said. In the regional framework, National Road 5 is an important part of the connection from China, through Myanmar, Thailand to Cambodia and on to Vietnam, which is called ASEAN Highway No 1 (AH1), the premier said. Japanese ambassador Ueno Atsushi said 2023 marks the year of bilateral diplomatic ties between

Cambodia and Japan, upgrading relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership, saying that a number of projects built under Japanese assistance including Preah Sihanouk deep seaport, National Road 1 and Tsubasa Bridge. Cambodia is located at the geographical heart of the southern economic corridor. This area is prioritised for connectivity enhancement in line with the master plan on ASEAN Connectivity, adopted in 2010, he said. "As Cambodia is considered a regional hub of transportation, the National Road 5, which connects Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, serves as a crucial piece of infrastructure in the context of regional development, contributing to economic activities and efficient goods transportation in Cambodia and in the sub-Mekong region," Ueno Atsushi said. National Road 5, stretching from Prek Kdam to Battambang Province, was ceremoniously inaugurated after an extensive 7-year construction period. After National Road 5 is officially inaugurated, the government will work to encourage investment in factories as well as more special economic zones along the road, leading the provinces along this road to a more prosperous economy and people to have jobs without migration, the Prime Minister said. Mr Hun Manet said that the inauguration of National Road 5 is also a symbol of communication with friendly countries.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501396473/national-road-5-to-facilitate-goods-transport-and-enhance-connectivity/>

Booming Sectors, Looming Debts: Laos Nears Halfway Point of Socio- Economic Development Plan



Laos News | 24 November, 2023

As Laos reaches the midpoint of its five-year socio-economic development plan (NSED), the country looks back at the achievements and challenges of the past years. The NSED, spanning 2021-2025, was designed to align with the resolutions of the 11th Party Congress and advance the National Strategy on Socio-Economic Development 2016-2025 and Vision 2030 of Laos. The economic brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years didn't spare anyone, especially low-income countries like Laos. Despite these setbacks, the Bank of Laos Annual Economic Report for 2022 highlighted a number of resilient sectors, with the agricultural industry experiencing a notable 3.4 percent growth. This growth was credited to heightened investments in plantations and increased cattle exports to China and neighboring countries, resulting in a yield of 2,425,000 cattle. Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone, addressing the 6th National Assembly, emphasized the government's commitment to debt servicing, particularly foreign debt. PM Sonexay also alluded to the potential sale of stakes in hydropower projects to alleviate financial burdens. Contrary to the industrial and service sectors, Laos' monetary sector faced skyrocketing inflation challenges, surpassing the projected 6 percent increase until 2025. In February 2023, inflation spiked to 41.26

percent, but recent efforts by the Bank of Laos (BOL) aim to bring it down to a single-digit figure by the end of 2024.

Source : <https://laotiantimes.com/2023/11/23/booming-sectors-looming-debts-laos-nears-halfway-point-of-socio-economic-development-plan/>

Octane prices see slight increase on 22 Nov



Myanmar News | 23 November, 2023

Octane prices moved up a bit in the domestic market, indicating a one-day increase of K105-110 per litre. Fuel prices were K2,105 per litre of Octane 92 and K2,240 for Octane 95 on 21 November. Then, the prices increased slightly to K2,210 per litre of Octane 92 and K2,350 of Octane 95 on 22 November. Yet, diesel prices stayed unchanged at K2,125 for diesel and K2,215 for premium diesel on 22 November. The price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, is closely tied to the domestic fuel prices, according to the Supervisory Committee on Fuel Oil Import, Storage and Distribution. In August 2022, the oil prices hit the highest of K2,605 per litre for Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,330 for premium diesel and K3,245 for diesel. The committee is therefore steering the fuel oil storage and distribution sector effectively so as not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and to ensure price stability for energy consumers. Of 146 petrol stations in Yangon, some petrol stations braced for the high demand for

Octane 92. Distribution by three terminals did not meet the demand, causing fuel shortages on 10 November. However, the petrol stations were urgently filled with stocks on the night of 10 November. Four oil tankers docked at port terminals on 11 and 12 November, and 15 more are slated to arrive at the port. Therefore, oil will be distributed to the filling stations on time, as per the committee.

At present, there is a fuel oil security in the market, with stocks of over 13 million of Octane 92, over three million of Octane 95, 1.4 million of Octane 97, over 29 million of diesel and over 20 million of premium diesel. Myanmar imports 90 per cent of fuel oil consumption, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The government is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries. Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices compared to that of Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also levies only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate.

Source : <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/octane-prices-see-slight-increase-on-22-nov/#article-title>

Kayin State witnesses 100% surge in visitor arrivals, hotel revenue in 9 months



Myanmar News | 23 November, 2023

During the first nine months of this year, visitor arrivals reached 100 per cent in Kayin State, and hotels and guesthouses received more than K2,500 million, according to the Kayin State Directorate of Hotels and Tourism. A total of 134,359 local and foreign visitors entered the state during this period, contributing to hotel and guesthouse revenue of K2,557.751 million, as reported by Kayin State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo at a completion ceremony for three basic hotel service courses held in Hpa-an, Kayin State, on 20 November. In the state, the number of hotels and guesthouses increased to 60, offering a total of 2,159 rooms this year, compared to 49 establishments with a total of 1,673 rooms as of 1 February 2021. The licence issuance rate has increased by 22.45 per cent, and revenue has seen a significant rise from K628.313 million in 2021 to K2,557.751 million in the same period of 2023. The number of local and foreign visitors increased from 32,260 over nine months in 2021 to 134,359 over the same period in 2023, marking a remarkable 100 per cent increase, according to the directorate. State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo stated that both revenue and visitor arrivals have shown a 100 per cent increase when comparing the two periods. Kayin State, known for its beautiful landscapes, caves, green paddy fields, waterfalls, Kayin ethnic

culture and traditions, and seasonal festivals, has become a renowned tourist destination.

Source : <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/kayin-state-witnesses-100-surge-in-visitor-arrivals-hotel-revenue-in-9-months/#article-title>

Vietnam's online shopper number surges with increasing purchase value

 *Vietnam News | 23 November, 2023*

HANOI, Nov. 23 (Xinhua) -- Vietnam is seeing a boom in e-commerce as the number of online shoppers surges with improving shopping skills and increasing purchase value, VnExpress reported Thursday, citing Tran Van Trong, general secretary of the Vietnam E-commerce Association. The supply surges have been prompted by the rise in demand, he said, adding that millions of people are now online sellers, and most do not even own a brick-and-mortar store. The newspaper reported that more than half of Vietnam's population shopped online last year as supply and demand in the e-commerce sector continued to boom. Dang Anh Dung, deputy CEO of e-commerce platform Lazada Vietnam, cited that around 57 million Vietnamese made online purchases last year, most of them in capital city Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang City, according to a report by Google and Temasek & Bain. Young people in Vietnam are becoming more particular with their products. They seek values and will change brands if they receive low-quality items, he said. E-commerce is one of the main contributors

to Vietnam's digital economy and is forecast to grow 22 percent to reach 24 billion dollars in 2025.

Source : <https://english.news.cn/20231123/3426c6078e824b6ea290936c3007e8c7/c.html>

Fruit, veggie exports soar to all-time high

 *Vietnam News | 23 November, 2023*

HCMC – Vietnam's fruit and vegetable exports have leapt to unprecedented highs, driven by the strong demand of China and the sector's ongoing market diversification efforts. The agricultural sector has achieved a remarkable milestone, with fruit and vegetable exports having surpassed US\$5.2 billion year-to-date, up a significant 70% over the same period in 2022, showed data from the Vietnam Fruit and Vegetable Association (Vinafruit). Durian has emerged as the leading export earner, accounting for 40% of the overall export revenue. Other fruits such as jackfruit, watermelon, pomelo and longan have also registered substantial export growth, ranging from 50% to 200%. Remarkably, the fruit and vegetable sector has outpaced traditional agricultural exports like rice, cashew, coffee and cassava. China has remained the top importer, representing 66% of Vietnam's total fruit and vegetable exports, with a cumulative value of US\$3.2 billion over the past 10 months. Although there is a slight dip of over 3%, the U.S. has retained its position as a key market with US\$212 million. South Korea has recorded a 25% year-on-year increase at US\$187 million, and Japan saw a 7% rise at US\$151

million. Dang Phuc Nguyen, secretary general of Vinafruit, has attributed this surge to increased demand from China and strategic trade agreements signed in 2022. Additionally, significant improvements in logistics infrastructure, including roads, warehouses, and shipping terminals, have played a pivotal role in reducing costs and enhancing competitiveness. Vietnam's success extends beyond sheer volume; diversification and enhanced quality also contribute. Durian benefits from additional planting zones, while improved quality across various fruits stabilizes and expands market reach. As negotiations for new markets continue, Vietnam anticipates broader global reach. Talks include exporting passion fruit to the U.S. and Australia, pomelo to Japan, South Korea, Australia, and India, and durian to India. Experts predict that Vietnam's fruit and vegetable exports will reach US\$5.5 billion by the end of 2023, driven by year-end consumption and growing interest from China in various new fruits.

Source : <https://english.thesaigontimes.vn/fruit-veggie-exports-soar-to-all-time-high/>
