

Highlight News / September 23/2021



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ADB slashes Kingdom's GDP forecast to 1.9% due to Covid



Cambodia News | 22 September, 2021

The Asian Development Bank has more than halved its forecast for Cambodia's economic growth this year. It cut the gross domestic product forecast to 1.9 percent from April's prediction of 4 percent growth. The ADB left next year's forecast unchanged at 5.5 percent GDP expansion. The economy contracted by 3.1 percent in 2020. The bank says the prolonged outbreak of Covid-19 was behind the downward revision because it cut domestic demand. It says this will result in a 2.9 percent rate of inflation this year, down from its April forecast of 2.9 percent price rises. Next year inflation will moderate to 2.7 percent, according to the ADB. Coronavirus cases in the Kingdom have been rising in spite of the rapid progress of the immunisation campaign. The Kingdom's active COVID cases rose above the 5,000 mark yesterday [Tuesday] for the first time in many weeks. Cambodia has fully vaccinated more than two thirds of its 16 million-plus population. ASEAN as a whole has reported more than 11.5 million COVID-19 cases. More than 840,000 were active cases as of September 21. The ADB cut its Southeast-Asia economic growth forecast to 3.1 percent in 2021 from an April prediction of 4.4 percent growth. Next year the region's GDP will grow 5.0 percent, a touch lower than April's 5.1 percent

forecast, the bank said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50939651/adb-slashes-kingdoms-gdp-forecast-to-1-9-due-to-covid/>

Almost 80,000 tourists toured Cambodia in the third weekend of September



Cambodia News | 22 September, 2021

The Ministry of Tourism registered a total of 79,015 tourists in the third weekend of September, an increase of 20 percent compared to the previous week, according to Minister Thong Khon. Of the domestic visitors, 77,804 were national tourists, and 1,211 were foreign visitors, he pointed out, stressing that it is a more positive sign for domestic tourism. The most visited tourist destinations were Phnom Penh capital, followed by Kampot, Kep, Preah Sihanouk, and Pursat provinces. All Provincial and Municipal Departments of Tourism have been actively promoting and implementing the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) introduced by the Ministry of Tourism on Sept. 1, 2021 to ensure the operation of the business tourism in the new normal and especially during Pchum Ben holiday, added Khon. Coastal destinations and ecotourism and adventure tourism continued to play a key role in attracting tourists, the Minister said. Phal Sophanith – AKP

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50939364/almost-80000-tourists-toured-cambodia-in-the-third-weekend-of-september/>

Covid-19 delays economic recovery in Laos: ADB



Laos News | 23 September, 2021

The unanticipated Covid-19 pandemic has delayed economic recovery in Laos, with consumption hit hard by the virus control measures implemented since April, according to a report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday. Laos' economy is now projected to grow by 2.3 percent in 2021, compared with the 4.0 percent expansion forecast in April, the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2021 Update reported. The pandemic has resulted in lockdowns in Vientiane and some provinces, disrupting economic activities, causing rising unemployment, and lowering consumer spending. According to the report, the pandemic has pushed an additional 75 million to 80 million people in developing Asia into extreme poverty. However, the ADB report stated that global recovery is expected to spur domestic growth in 2022, albeit lower than projected in ADB's previous forecast. "Policies to reduce the spread of the coronavirus have curbed output in manufacturing and hurt growth in the retail trade, transport, and tourism services," said ADB Country Director for Laos, Sonomi Tanaka. "Curtailed economic activity has increased joblessness and reduced household incomes, especially among women and those with lower education. A swift recovery from the pandemic

depends on policies that support businesses and households to adapt to the 'new normal'." With lower domestic demand, inflation stayed at 3.1 percent on average in the first seven months of this year, according to the ADB. The kip has depreciated against foreign currencies, with the spread between official and parallel rates for the kip and US dollar exceeding 20 percent in July, reflecting a domestic shortage of currency following large external public debt payments. Revenue collection is yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, with public finances remaining constrained. The report says Laos' economic recovery will be supported by the issuing of new mining licences and earnings from electricity exports, as well as the planned opening of the US\$5.9-billion Laos-China railway in December, linking the capital of Laos with China. With a forecast of warmer temperatures and rainfall on-trend, rice and cash crop harvests are anticipated to be stable. According to the ADB, commodity exports, notably food crops, electricity, and gold, remained strong in the first half of 2021, helping to offset continuing weakness in manufactured exports and payments for imports and investor dividends. Challenges remain. New measures to contain Covid outbreaks and the pace of the vaccine rollout will impact the country's economic prospects. Measures to strengthen macroeconomic management and improve investor sentiment remain essential to

economic recovery and household welfare, as reported in ADO 2021 in April. Boosting development in agriculture and tourism is critical for Laos to alleviate poverty and advance its economic transformation. Agriculture and tourism generate many job opportunities for local people and are an important source of foreign currency earnings.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Covid186.php

Pigeon pea prices double on extension of import validity period by India



Myanmar News | 22 September, 2021

The price of pigeon pea rose to double in the recent days following the news of extension in the import validity period by India, Mandalay traders said. During the harvest time in March, the price of pigeon pea was opened at K6,800 per three-basket bag. Following the news of extension, the price tremendously rose to K135,000 per bag. The prices of pigeon pea are rising in a brisk market, the Soe Win Myint depot from Mandalay stated. "India extended the import validity period from October to December. Additionally, the price rise is attributed to the smaller stock, the Kyat devaluation and the strong demand. The growers are satisfied with the price increase. The traders also make a healthy profit. The pigeon pea market relies on the

neighbouring country India. India set an import quota on beans including black gram and pigeon pea in 2017, causing the price to drastically plummet to K30,000 per bag. The traders and growers were battered by that consequences" Soe Win Myint, a depot owner elaborated. The pigeon pea is expected to have a high yield next season. The beans are actively traded after India relaxed the import quota. Myanmar's pulses and beans exports can generate revenue to a large extent for the country," he continued. The pigeon pea cultivation is commonly found in the upper Myanmar regions such as Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing. The cultivation commenced in August and the favourable weather allows the plants to grow and flourish.— Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

Source : https://www.gnlim.com.mm/pigeon-pea-prices-double-on-extension-of-import-validity-period-by-india/?__cf_chl_managed_tk__=pmd_B7qlq6wvmcQXIk4pOwFeaKVO9EufyEzJ3z4KoOpIf7o-1632320088-0-gqNtZGzNA5CjcnBszTAI#article-title

Vietnam may attract US\$30 billion in FDI this year: experts



Vietnam News | 22 September, 2021

Vietnam may attract about US\$30 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2021, posting a year-on-year rise of 2%, economists forecast, pointing to positive signs in FDI attraction in the first eight

months of 2021 despite the complexities of COVID-19. According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment, foreign investors channelled US\$19.12 billion into the country in January-August, equalling nearly 98% of the same period last year, with several multi-billion USD projects. Singaporean investors poured over US\$3.1 billion into the Long An LNG power plants No 1 and 2 while the O Mon 2 thermal power plant in Can Tho city invested by Japan received US\$1.31 billion in the period. The LG Display project in Hai Phong city has received additional investment twice this year, with US\$750 million in February and US\$1.4 billion in August. Despite social distancing measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, the country's FDI inflow in the first eight months only saw a slight decline of 2.1% against the same period last year, said Nguyen Van Toan, deputy head of the Vietnam's Association of Foreign Invested Enterprises. Of note, new registered capital surged 16.3% and disbursement of FDI capital hit US\$11.58 billion, up 2%. Speaking with Cong Thuong (Industry and Trade) newspaper, Phan Huu Thang, former head of the Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency (Vietrade) at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, voiced his belief that FDI inflow into Vietnam may still reach about US\$30 billion this year. To address current difficulties facing foreign investors when they want to enter the country to study investment possibilities or to implement

investment projects, the Government and relevant ministries and agencies are urged to consider reducing quarantine period for those who have been fully vaccinated and hold a negative COVID-19 testing certificate. In the first eight months of this year, Vietnam attracted investors from 92 countries and territories. Singapore was the leading investor with registered capital exceeding US\$6.2 billion, or 32.5% of the total FDI inflow.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/en/economy/vietnam-may-attract-us30-billion-in-fdi-this-year-experts-892505.vov>

Sales of Vietnamese cement products rise amid COVID-19 pandemic



Vietnam News | 22 September, 2021

HÀ NỘI — The sale of Vietnamese cement products reached 70.7 million tonnes over the past eight months of 2021, up 4 per cent year-on-year amid the COVID-19 pandemic which had negative impacts on many other industries. Of the total, export volume was 27.23 million tonnes, up 12 per cent thanks to buying rebound seen in many large export outlets such as the US, Canada and China, **Lương Đức Long**, General Secretary of the **Việt Nam Cement Association (VNCA)**, said. Long said demand for cement products in these markets had increased and cement prices there had a tendency to go up. Meanwhile, domestic consumption saw a modest decline of 5 per cent to about 43.54 million tonnes in

the period, according to the association. Chairman of VNCA Nguyễn Quang Cung said the fourth wave of COVID-19 which broke out from the end of April, had suspended construction projects in Hà Nội and HCM City and 19 southern localities, resulting in a decline in demand for cement in recent months. The southern region had the strongest increase in consumption in the country with a year-on-year increase rate of 12.2 per cent. Therefore, the prolonged social distancing in this region affected domestic cement consumption significantly, Cung explained. However, Long said, the vaccination rollout was being accelerated in many localities in order to effectively control the pandemic and gradually relax social distancing to bring daily life back to a new normal. Therefore, domestic cement consumption was expected to flourish again in later months as the peak construction season began, Long forecast. According to experts, exports continued to be the growth engine of the cement industry in recent years. They attributed the strong increase in the country's cement exports to the fact that China has gradually closed cement factories, mainly for environmental purposes and increased imports from other countries, especially Việt Nam. In the second quarter alone, China was the largest importer of Việt Nam's cement and clinker with nearly 10.3 million tonnes, worth \$368.6 million, accounting for 49.4 per cent of total export volume and 45.6 per cent of total turnover. It was followed by the Philippines with 3.85 million tonnes, worth \$176

million, and Bangladesh with 1.93 million tonnes, valued at \$65.4 million. Experts said the advantage of sea routes had facilitated Việt Nam's exports of cement and clinker to China. Việt Nam is currently the fifth biggest cement manufacturer in the world, after China, India, the US, and Russia. Its cement output has doubled within 10 years, from 45.5 million tonnes in 2009 to about 100 million tonnes, turning the country from a cement and clinker importer to the world's largest exporter of these commodities. Last year, the country shipped 101.5 million tonnes of these products to overseas markets, representing a rise of 1.5 per cent over 2019. However, in order to maintain exports, cement producers should apply advanced technologies in production to enhance quality and added value while reducing environmental harm, which would significantly help boost competitiveness, experts suggested. They should also monitor the cement market and adjust their production plans accordingly to keep prices from falling. In addition, cement firms should also work out long-term development strategies. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1035871/sales-of-vietnamese-cement-products-rise-amid-covid-19-pandemic.html>
