


## Highlight News

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Two years ago, Ko Zaw Min Tun, chief executive officer of MyanCare, received special advice from Dr Thein Aung, a professor of medicine for nearly 37 years and founder and chairman of the Parami Private General Hospital Group. The future of the industry in Myanmar, Dr Thein Aung said, lies in using technology to make health care available in the farthest reaches of the country. That conversation was the start of the country's first telemedicine application, MyanCare, which combines technology, telecommunications and data to provide virtual clinical health care to people throughout Myanmar. The app, a combination of technology and medical talent that took a year to develop, launched in 2018. The application eliminates the wait for an acute care appointment, offers a less expensive alternative for health care, and saves time. No longer does a patient have to miss work for a doctor's appointment. The company says MyanCare is a virtual online clinic that allows users with mobile phones to book a doctor, get treatment advice or a consultation from a doctor, reduces the need to travel, and saves the time spent visiting a clinic. "We got the idea for an application to help improve people's access to health care because Myanmar has transportation problems and a lack of doctors, especially in rural areas," Ko Zaw Min Tun, who has made use of his experience as a project manager in the telephone industry, said.

### **Apps used worldwide**

Telemedicine apps are being used around the world, especially in Africa, India and Bangladesh with government support. In Singapore, several businesses run health care apps, and almost a million people use telemedicine apps in Indonesia, where transportation is difficult because of its thousands of islands. Ko Zaw Min Tun and medical professionals were determined to make a telemedicine app to answer the needs of Myanmar's health care sector and provide access to quality health services for the poor and vulnerable. According to World Health Organization statistics, Myanmar has one doctor for every 2000 patients in urban areas but only one health care worker for every 5000 patients in rural and remote areas. "Our main challenge at the beginning was to build the trust of doctors and patients, but we are gradually managing to do that," he said.

### **Consultations anywhere, anytime**

Patients using the app get a 15-minute consultation with a doctor via online chat, voice call or video call. Doctors are available 24/7. The fee for an appointment on the app is between K2000 and K5000. According to MyanCare's policy, the doctor determines the fee. The app accepts electronic payments from KBZ, CB, and AYA banks, MPU cards, Wave Money, OK Dollar and 2C2P. There are now about 5000 people using the app in 34 towns and cities in 11 states and regions. Thirty percent of its users are 18 to 25 years old, 65pc are 26 to 40, and the rest are over 40, according to the company. MyanCare expects to have more than 100,000 users by year end. The app now has 17 general practitioners and one cardiology specialist. The doctors can do consultations from anywhere via the internet, provide follow-up for their patients, and easily manage clinic schedules. Patients can record their electronic medical histories with confidence over a secure online connection. The app's doctors are selected by a board comprised of professors of medicine and qualified practitioners that verifies each doctor's medical or specialist license and that they have at least two years of clinical experience. About 80 doctors, including 10 specialists, have expressed interest in joining the app.

## Future plans

MyanCare plans to increase the number of doctors and specialists on the app, recruiting psychologists and psychiatrists, maternity and post-partum specialists, as well as pediatricians. The company will also try to build a complete electronic medical record system with hospitals and clinics nationwide. "Electronic health records are crucial in telemedicine. It's one of our biggest ambitions. We want to build a complete electronic medical record system in Myanmar," said Ko Zaw Min Tun. "Our main goal is to upgrade the nation's health care by providing service to people in remote and deprived areas. We will always be ready whenever they need us," he said.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myancare-leads-way-telemedicine.html>

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## **Myanmar parliament abolishes legal affairs, special cases assessment commission**



Myanmar's Union Parliament announced abolishing the legal affairs and special cases assessment commission, chaired by U Shwe Mann, former speaker of the House of Representatives (Lower House), on Thursday. The commission was formed and assigned to report to the parliament about legal issues and special cases on March 1, 2016. A total of 555 objections were raised, with 20 votes in favour and 10 abstentions during the Thursday voting session to extend the term of the commission. Meanwhile, a group of 19 people which includes U Shwe Mann, applied to form a new political party under the name "Union Betterment Party (UBP)" at the country's Union Election Commission early this month.

Source: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-02/28/c\\_137858080.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-02/28/c_137858080.htm)

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## **Cambodia urges Pakistan, India to exercise restraint to avoid further clashes**



Cambodia on Thursday called on Pakistan and India to exercise utmost restraint to avoid further clashes, according to a foreign ministry's statement. "Cambodia follows with great concern the recent escalation of tension between Pakistan and India in the Kashmir region," the statement said. "As friends of both countries, Cambodia hopes that Pakistan and India exercise utmost restraint to avoid further armed clashes which would give rise to hostile sentiment among the peoples of the two countries," it said. The statement said that Cambodia strongly believed that Pakistan and India could work through negotiation to defuse the current tension and find appropriate solution to their disputes through peaceful means. The statement came a day after Pakistan said its air force had shot down two Indian fighter jets inside Pakistani airspace and captured an Indian pilot. India confirmed that Pakistan destroyed one of its MiG-21 aircraft and that the pilot was missing. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday announced to release the Indian pilot for the sake of peace and de-escalation of tensions between the two neighbors. "In our desire of peace, I announce that tomorrow (Friday), and as a first step to open negotiations, Pakistan will be releasing the Indian Air Force officer in our custody," Pakistani prime minister's office also announced at twitter quoting Khan.

Source: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2019-02/28/c\\_137858345.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2019-02/28/c_137858345.htm)

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## **Electronic goods sales up 30 percent last year**



Sales of electronic products in the Kingdom rose sharply last year, a reflection of the increasing purchasing power of Cambodia's growing middle-class. According to the Singapore office of global research firm GfK, the value of sales of electronic products increased by 27.8 percent in 2018, reaching \$413 million. Mobile phones accounted for \$282 million of this figure, while sales of consumer electronics – a category that includes televisions, washing machines, air conditioners, and refrigerators – amounted to \$121 million. By comparison, electronics sales in 2017 were valued at \$323 million, with \$214 million worth of mobile phones sold and \$109 million of consumer electronics. Sok Piseth, CEO of Ggear, an authorised distributor for LG Electronics in Cambodia, said demand for electronic products will be strong as long as the economy continues to thrive. "Last year our sales numbers were huge. Despite this, our sales of consumer electronics did not grow as much as expected because competition is tough," he said. Hor Men, managing director for Sunsimeco, a company that imports many well-known consumer electronics brands, said the consumer electronics market is huge in Cambodia but added that the competition is fierce. "Sales did not vary much from last year because, as you can see, there are just too many electronics stores. There is too much competition," he said. Thai Kheang, an employee at an electronics store in Phnom Penh, echoed Mr Men's remarks. "Sales were moderate last year because there are a lot of retailers that have joined the market. They know demand for electronics is huge and want to make a lot of money," he said. Mr Piseth pointed out that companies that operate in the grey market enjoy an unfair advantage over those that legally import their products, and added that this is a problem that requires government intervention. "I wish to see fair competition and a level playing field so that we can provide quality products and a good service to our customers while fulfilling our tax obligations," he added. Last year, Cambodia's economic growth rate reached 7.5 percent, with income per capita increasing to \$1,563 from \$1,434 a year earlier, according to figures from the government.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50582851/electronic-goods-sales-up-30-percent-last-year/>

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## **Japanese eye hospitality investment in Kampot**



Japanese investors announced yesterday their intention to invest in a bungalow development covering four hectares of land in Kampot province. The delegation of Japanese businesspeople announced their plans during a meeting with Chea Tay, the governor of Kampot province. The project will be located in Traeuy Kaoh commune in Kampot district. The provincial governor supported the project, adding that he wants to see more projects in the hospitality sector to meet rising demand from tourists. Soy Sinol, director of Kampot's tourism department, confirmed the investment plans but had no details to share. "All we know is that they have a clear intention to invest in the project, but they haven't told us any details about the project itself, such as the groundbreaking date or the capital that will be invested," he said. "It is possible that they just need more time to study the project and that when they finish they will reveal more. "We hope the project will serve to attract more tourists from Japan as we are now focusing on making Kampot more beautiful and green," Mr Sinol added. Kampot city – together with Battambang, Sihanoukville, Siem Reap, Kep, Kampong Cham, and Doun Penh, a district of Phnom Penh – all received the top accolade, three romdul flowers, at this year's edition of the government's National Clean City Contest. In 2018,

Kampot province received 1.6 million tourists, 10 percent of which were foreign nationals, according to Mr Sinol.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50582787/japanese-eye-hospitality-investment-in-kampot/>

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## **Germany backs Laos' efforts to fulfil Sustainable Development Goals**



Germany has agreed to provide more than 487 billion kip (50 million Euro) to deepen cooperation with Laos as the country moves forward to fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. The new funding was made available by Germany to support projects in the areas of rural development, environment and natural resources, sustainable economic development, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure in Attapeu province. Agreements were signed in Vientiane yesterday during a visit by the Vice Minister and Parliamentary State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Mr Norbert Barthle, and a high-ranking delegation of German parliamentarians. The Lao government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany signed new agreements on financial and technical cooperation. These agreements form part of the commitment of more than 487 billion kip (50 million Euro) in new funding for the period 2018-2020 that was made available by Germany during intergovernmental negotiations in Berlin in September last year. The agreements on financial and technical cooperation were signed by Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, Dr Kikeo Chanthaboury, and German Ambassador to Laos, Mr Jens Lütkenherm. The signing was witnessed by Minister of Planning and Investment Dr Souphanh Keomixay, German Vice Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Mr Norbert Barthle, and German members of parliament along with high-ranking officials from development organisations and the private sector. Dr Souphanh said "These agreements are a testament to the strengthened bilateral cooperation between Laos and Germany. We recognise the importance of this cooperation for Laos to move towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and graduate from Least Developed Country status." From the total commitment, 20 million Euro will go to financial cooperation projects in the area of microfinance in rural areas, rural development, and land management. A further 20 million Euro will be allocated to technical cooperation projects, specifically in the areas of citizen engagement for good governance, accountability, and the rule of law, Laos' integration into the Asean Economic Community, vocational education, support for mine safety and environmental protection at mines, land management and decentralised planning, and the sustainable use of forests and biodiversity. A special additional contribution of 10 million Euro is being provided for the rehabilitation of infrastructure destroyed by the devastating flood that occurred in Attapeu province last July. All of these projects will be implemented by the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ), KfW Development Bank and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources. Ambassador Lütkenherm said the longstanding official German development cooperation with Laos, together with projects from numerous German NGOs and private initiatives, have contributed vastly to the overall development of Laos and the reduction of poverty over past decades. He also commended the efforts of the government to eliminate poverty and the progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. During their visit, Mr Barthle and his delegation also visited high-ranking Lao government officials.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent\\_Laos\\_UN\\_50.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Laos_UN_50.php)

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## **Commerce Ministry Slams US Congressmen Over Trade Sanctions Bill**



Cambodia exported \$400 million in garments and textile products to the United States duty-free last year, according to GMAC. PHNOM PENH — A senior commerce ministry official has called on the United States to carefully consider the consequences of imposing trade sanctions on Cambodia over its human rights record. Two US congressmen, Alan Lowenthal, and Steve Chabot, this week filed a bill that proposes the US government consider removing Cambodia from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), a preferential trade scheme. Seang Thay, a commerce spokesman, said on Wednesday that the US should not rush to judgment and first look at “the happy faces” of garment workers. “It’s merely a request that they come and look in every corner [of the country],” he said. “It’s improper to listen to just one person, two people, three people, or four people. They should come and see what’s going on with Cambodians.” Thay added that the economic impact of removing Cambodia from the GSP would be devastating. He added that if the motivation behind the move was a perceived democratic deficit, Washington should reconsider. “It doesn’t mean that Cambodia is not grateful for what we have been given so far, such as tax exemptions on some goods, but we paid tax on other goods,” he said. Phay Siphon, a government spokesman, and Ken Loo, secretary general of the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC), could not be reached for comment. Moeun Tola, executive director of the Alliance of Labor and Human Rights, said the GSP was essential for the Cambodian economy, along with the EU’s Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme, which is also under review. “Cambodia must not let them happen at the same time, both the EBA and GSP,” he said. Under the GSP, Cambodia has received preferential trade status since 1997. The country exported \$400 million in garments and textile products to the United States duty-free last year, according to GMAC.

Source : <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/commerce-ministry-slams-us-congressman-over-trade-sanctions-bill/4807957.html>

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## **Vietnam, Cambodia more serious in building strong bilateral ties**



Vietnam’s President Nguyen Phu Trong concluded an official state visit to Cambodia on Tuesday. His visit to Cambodia this time signifies an important milestone in bilateral relations with both Vietnam and Cambodia showing strong commitment to build amicable and peaceful ties. Thearith Leng comments.

Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and General-Secretary of the Communist Party, paid an official state visit to Cambodia on February 25-26, in a move to further enhance bilateral relations with Cambodia. Mr Trong, besides paying a courtesy call to His Majesty the King of Cambodia, met with his Cambodian counterparts, such as Senate President Say Chhum, National Assembly President Heng Samrin and Prime Minister Hun Sen during the two-day visit. In recent years, Vietnam has become one of the Kingdom’s top economic partners with bilateral trade turnover coming close to \$4.68 billion in 2018, an increase of 23.7 percent compared to 2017. The two countries plan to increase the bilateral trade volume up to \$5 billion in subsequent years. Vietnam is also one of the top foreign investors in Cambodia, with a total value of over \$3 billion. On February 26, both parties concluded five documents namely Addendum on the Revision of Articles 6 and 17 of the Agreement on Waterway Transportation, Protocol on Amendment to the Protocol of Implementation of the Agreement on Road Transportation, MoU on the Provision of the Grant for the Project of Construction of New Administration Buildings for Secretary

General of the National Assembly of Cambodia, Arrangement on Bilateral Trade Enhancement and MoU on Tourism Cooperation 2019-2021. The most interesting aspects of cooperation between the two countries can be seen in the contents of the joint statement issued on February 26. First of all, unlike the previous statements or declarations, the two leaders are more serious in terms of building strong bilateral ties. Paragraph 3 of Article 3 of the statement reads, “the two sides agreed that protecting, preserving and developing bilateral relations of good neighbourliness, traditional friendship, comprehensive cooperation and long-lasting stability...were the common responsibilities of the two countries.” The term ‘common responsibilities’ suggests the level of seriousness of the commitment of the two countries in upgrading their bilateral ties into a new height. Apart from article 3, the content of article 4 is worth analysing. The article reads as follows, “Both sides agree to strengthen and deepen their political relations...promote the awareness and education on the traditional friendship and solidarity between Cambodia and Vietnam among the two peoples, especially the young generation.” This statement demonstrates a new approach of the two leaders in improving the bilateral relations given their strong historical animosity. They might have envisioned that the best way to build a sustainable peace between the two nations was to foster the mutual understanding between the two peoples, not just between the leaders per se. Further, the content of the article 6 is also worth mentioning. The article states, “the two sides stressed the importance and agreed to strengthen defence and security cooperation on the principle of not allowing any political or military forces to use the territory of one country to harm the national security of the other...” This paragraph apparently helps to ease Vietnam’s concern about a possible Chinese military base in Cambodia, although the Kingdom has never allowed any foreign countries to set up the base on its soil. Such a concern is understandable, as there was, over the past few months, a rumour that China established the naval base in Cambodian province of Koh Kong – a claim that the Cambodian government fervently rejects. Moreover, article 9 suggests the two countries have paid strong attention to two main issues namely the Mekong and South China Sea. The issue of Mekong water-resource management has been mentioned both in the 2017 and 2019 joint statement, suggesting the utmost importance of the issue for both countries. It is likely that they may support each other in raising the issue in a multilateral fora, possibly in Asean-related meetings in the future. Despite the significance of the Mekong for both nations, this issue has not attracted enough attention from some Asean countries. Apart from the Mekong, it is the first time that the issue of South China Sea is mentioned in the bilateral document. This demonstrates Cambodia’s flexible diplomacy in handling the issue of great interest to both of its crucial partners – Vietnam and China. Overall Mr Trong’s visit to Cambodia this time signifies an important milestone in the bilateral relations between the two countries, for the contents of the joint statement reflect the strong commitment of the two nations in building amicable and peaceful ties. This visit per se reflects Hanoi’s seriousness in building good relations with Phnom Penh, because it comes amid Vietnam’s preoccupation with hosting the second US-North Korea summit which concluded yesterday.

Source: [https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9076594/chinese-businesses-control-dragon-fruit-collection-units-in-](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9076594/chinese-businesses-control-dragon-fruit-collection-units-in-vietnam/)

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## **Australia to boost VN trade ties through table grapes**



Viet Nam is a potential market for Australian table grapes because of its growing middle class, rapid economic growth and the increasing purchasing power of Vietnamese consumers. The statement was made by

Yvonne Chan, Australian Deputy Consul-General and Senior Trade Commissioner to Việt Nam, at a seminar in Hà Nội on Thursday. The event was organised to cement existing trade relations and build new partnerships among Australian table grape exporters and Vietnamese importers. Table grapes are produced in all Australian states, with the majority grown in Victoria. Of the country's roughly 1,000 table grape growers, most are small-scale, family owned businesses. Australia plants an average volume of 170,000 tonnes of table grapes each year, 62 per cent of which is exported to 42 countries and territories, Chan said. Việt Nam is the 7th largest importer of Australian table grapes with a 4 per cent share, following China (38 per cent), Indonesia (15 per cent), Japan (10 per cent), Hong Kong (7 per cent), the Philippines (5 per cent) and Thailand (5 per cent). According to Dianne Phan, trade head of Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited, Việt Nam is a key export market for Australia, and the Australian table grape industry has worked hard to introduce Vietnamese consumers of Australian grapes. "Over the past four years, Australian table grape exports have grown 73 per cent, demonstrating the increasing demand for our high quality and premium produce," she said. Australian Table Grapes Association CEO Jeff Scott said several new varieties were coming into production for export this year such as sweet nectar, sweet sapphire, pristine seedless, long crimson, cotton candy and melody seedless. However, thompson seedless and crimson seedless are still expected to be Australia's main export varieties. "Việt Nam is one of the best favourable markets for Australian table grapes, especially thanks to the easy delivery through air flights between the two countries," Scott told Việt Nam News. "I expect the exporting volume of Australian table grapes into Việt Nam will reach 7,000 tonnes this year, nearly five times higher than that in 2016," Scott said. Besides table grapes, Australia is exporting two other types of fruits into Việt Nam, including citrus and cherry fruits. Negotiations are also ongoing to bring Australian stone fruits into the Vietnamese market. "I look forward to the trade ties between Australia and Việt Nam being closer and more and more Australian products being presented in Việt Nam, especially after Việt Nam officially became a member of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)," Chan told Việt Nam News. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/506280/australia-to-boost-vn-trade-ties-through-table-grapes.html#zr3EG5YME8k6b1Zr.97>

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