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## Exports continue strong growth:

### Ministry report



*Cambodia News | 19 December, 2019*

Cambodia's exports under General Systems of Preferences (GSPs) and free trade agreements were valued at \$10.81 billion during the first 10 months of the year, an increase of 6.45 percent, according to the Ministry of Commerce. In its latest report, the ministry notes that, from January to October, exports of garments were worth \$6.4 billion, textiles were valued at \$40 million, footwear at \$905 million, and rice at \$286 million. Exports in the category 'other products' amounted to \$3.17 billion. Speaking at a stocktaking and goal setting conference yesterday, Commerce Minister Pan Sorasak said the value of exports is growing at a rate of 10 percent a year. He said the emphasis is now on diversifying markets, integrating into the Asean framework and improving trade relations with partners of the Southeast Asian bloc, particularly Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India. Mr Sorasak noted that the biggest buyers of Cambodian products are the European Union, the United States, Canada, and China. "Cambodia is expanding to new markets in East Europe and to China, Japan, and South Korea through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement which will be concluded next year," Mr Sorasak noted. He said that, in line with the government's trade integration and market diversification strategy, the Ministry of Commerce will open its sixth trade centre in China on Dec 28. Van Sou leng, chairman of the Garment

Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC), said that peace, political stability and social order have been the foundation for Cambodia's social and economic progress. He said that the country's economic structure has evolved from one dependent on agriculture to one that relies on industry and services. Mr Sou leng said that, given its current trajectory, Cambodia will become an upper-middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income economy by 2050. Discussing the travel bag sector, Mr Sou leng said exports of the commodity grew from \$58 million in 2016 to around \$760 million this year. There are now 27 travel bag factories in Cambodia, 17 more than last year, according to the report from the ministry. "I hope the Ministry of Commerce will soon open new markets in East Europe and Eurasia. This will mean hundreds of millions of dollars more in exports for our country," Mr Sou leng added. Song Saran, president of the Cambodia Rice Federation, said at the event that the association aims to export 1 million tonnes of milled rice a year by 2023. "The association will improve farming, production and processing methods while strengthening the competitiveness of our product," Mr Saran said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50671488/exports-continue-strong-growth-ministry-report/>

## Coal-fired power plant

### breaks ground



*Cambodia News | 19 December, 2019*

Construction of two 350-megawatt coal-fired power units broke ground yesterday. The power generated is scheduled to be linked to the national grid in 2022. CIIDC

Erdos Hongjun Electric Power invested about \$1.2 billion in the plant in Preah Sihanouk province's Stung Hav district. It is a joint venture between CIIDG Erdos Hongjun Electric Power and local firm Cambodia International Investment Development Group Co Ltd. As planned, a 350-MW coal-fired power plant will start to generate power to the national grid in 2022. The other is scheduled to go online in 2023, said Victor Jona, director-general of energy at the Ministry of Mines and Energy. The investment followed marathon talks over prices of power from the plant to Cambodia's Electricity Authority (EDC), Mr Jona said. "The investment is important in generating power to the grid because the government wants to increase the power generated from all sources," Mr Jona said. The agreed price of power sold to the EDC is \$0.0743 per kilowatt-hour, according to Mr Jona. CIIDG Erdos Hongjun Electric Power operates three 135-MW coal-fired power plants in Preah Sihanouk province, generating power to the grid of 405 MW. According to Mr Jona, Royal Group, Cambodia's largest conglomerate, was granted permission to conduct a feasibility study on a 700-MW coal-fired power plant in Preah Sihanouk province. Cambodia currently produces 505 MW from two coal-fired power plants. 100 MW comes from CEL I while the rest is generated by CIIDG Erdos Hongjun Electric Power, which has three 135-MW coal-fired generating units in Preah Sihanouk. Han Seng Coal Mine is now building a 200-MW coal-fired plant in Oddar Meanchey province. The 135-MW coal-fired power plant, called CEL II, is scheduled to go online this month.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50671475/coal-fired-power-plant-breaks-ground/>

## Govt pushes 2020 development plan



Laos News | 19 December, 2019

The government is holding a special meeting to establish common ground among state agencies about ways to ensure effective implementation of the national development plan for 2020. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith presided over the opening of the two-day open government meeting at the National Convention Centre, which is scheduled to end today. Cabinet members, the mayor of Vientiane, provincial governors, representatives of the Party and National Assembly (NA), the courts, prosecution organisations, and the Lao Front for National Development attended the meeting. The joint meeting of government members and state agency representatives took place after Prime Minister Thongloun told the NA last month that the government would improve coordination between the various state agencies to ensure they worked towards approved goals. According to a media release from the Prime Minister's Office, key issues discussed at the meeting included implementation of the recent National Assembly resolutions. These identify the key development and policy targets that the government and state agencies must achieve in 2020. One of the government's main targets is to narrow the budget deficit to 3.7 percent of GDP while trying to maintain a high level of economic growth at

6.5 percent in 2020. During the recent NA session, the prime minister said that mega investment projects would help to maintain strong GDP growth. The meeting also discussed and endorsed a prime ministerial decree on the implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and State Budget Plan for 2020, which will come into effect on January 1. In addition, the meeting endorsed the draft of a prime ministerial decree on the improvement of the so-called “one-stop service” to facilitate domestic and foreign investment. Other topics discussed included the promotion of production for commercial purposes, food security, domestic goods consumption, and the administration and regulation of imports. The meeting also heard a report on the implementation of the natural disaster response plan and measures, and discussed preparations by the government and state agencies to prevent and address future disasters. Reports on land concession project investigation and the development of micro, small and medium sized enterprises were also heard and discussed.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten\\_Govt\\_274.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Govt_274.php)

## EU reaffirms support for gov't's education, nutrition initiatives



Laos News | 19 December, 2019

The Delegation of the European Union to Laos (EU) has reiterated its support for the government's ongoing efforts to develop and improve the education system and nutrition in all areas of the country. This includes financial and technical assistance for initiatives such as the Basic Education Support Programme and Nutrition Budget Support Programme. To discuss these issues, the Ministry of Education and Sports on Wednesday held the Lao-EU Budget Support Steering Committee Meeting for the Education and the Nutrition Sectors. Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun; Ambassador of the European Union to Laos, Mr Leo Faber; Deputy Minister of Health, Associate Prof. Dr Phouthone Muongpak, and representatives of other ministries attended the meeting. Mrs Sengdeuane, as a representative of the government, expressed her appreciation to the European Union for its long-term partnership in assisting the education and health sectors. She noted that 14 million euros were received from the EU recently to support basic education in Laos and about 4.8 million euros for nutrition planning. This was substantial assistance and very important to

assist in developing the education and health sectors, she said, requesting that ministries and organisations cooperate effectively to maximise the investment. Laos still faces challenges in developing human resources, and Mrs Sengdeuane hoped the European Union would continue technical and financial support for the education and health sectors. “We expect the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning and Investment will continue to set the education and health sectors as investment priorities for human resource development,” she added. Mr Faber used the meeting to reaffirm the EU’s commitment to supporting the implementation of the Lao National Strategy on Education and Nutrition, to provide access to quality education for all children of all backgrounds, with adequate conditions, including access to nutrition, water, and health. He mentioned the ongoing financial assistance, including 7 million euros that were transferred recently to the Lao government under the Education Budget Support Programme. “Allow me to remind you that the Education and Nutrition Budget Support Programme total amount made available is 97 million euros. Of this, 25.8 million euros have so far been disbursed, while 71.2 million euros will be available from 2020 to 2022,” he added. The meeting heard that with Laos heading towards Least Developed Country graduation in 2024, this would

require investment in human capital as an obligation, not an option.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten\\_EU\\_274.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_EU_274.php)

## Foreign investment volume reaches over US\$1 B within over two months



*Myanmar News | 19 December, 2019*

The foreign investment volume is reached US\$1.148 billion including the investment amount of over US\$15 million in Thilawa SEZ within two and a half months in this fiscal year, according to Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC). The MIC allowed two proposed foreign investments. Yangon Region investment committee allowed 11 confirmed foreign investments and the Bago Region investment committee allowed 4 confirmed foreign investments this week. There is one investment each in electricity and housing development sectors and 15 investments in the industrial sector. Total foreign investment from those 14 businesses is US\$84.171 million and can create 8,538 job opportunities for locals. More than US\$1.087 billion worth of 57 foreign investments are allowed from October 1 to December 14 in this fiscal year and total foreign investment is about US\$1,133 million including additional investment. According to special economic zone law, the total foreign

investments in Thilawa SEZ are US\$15.203 million from October 1 to December 14 in this fiscal year. Major foreign investments are made in oil and natural gas, energy, production, transportation and communications, housing, hotel and tourism, mining, livestock and fishery, agriculture, industrial zone, construction, and other services sectors within 31 years' time.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/foreign-investment-volume-reaches-over-us1-b-within-over-two-months>

### Extended free visa with Vietnam does not benefit Myanmar travellers much: tourism official



*Myanmar News | 19 December, 2019*

The extension of visa exemption period involving Myanmar and Vietnam from 14 days to 30 days may not yield many benefits for Myanmar travellers, said Naung Naung Han, chairman of Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association. The agreement on free visa extension for Myanmar and Vietnamese travellers holding ordinary passports was signed on the second-day visit of Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc on December 17. Moreover, the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in agriculture and rural development, the action plan (2019-2024) and the MoU on cooperation

between the two foreign ministries were also signed. "There will be nothing special for Myanmar travellers. In tour programmes for Vietnam, most last about five days or one week. Previously, we had two weeks. There can be benefits for some inbound and outbound tours. Two weeks is already enough for us. But, the more days we have, the better it is for us," said the chairman. Likewise, Vietnamese coming to Myanmar stays a maximum of about five days. "Vietnamese visitors don't stay in Yangon for long. They usually take about three days to visit places such as Yangon and the Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda. Some go to Bagan. They don't have a long stay," said Naung Naung Han. From January to October 2019, 43,146 Vietnamese visitors came to Myanmar. The number decreased by 691 as last year saw 43,842, according to the figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/extended-free-visa-with-vietnam-does-not-benefit-myanmar-travellers-much-tourism-official>

### Free trade agreements increase tax collection



*Vietnam News | 19 December, 2019*

HA NOI — The signing and implementation of free trade agreements has increased Viet Nam's tax collection this year, said Luu Manh Tuong, director of Import-Export Tax Department under Vietnam Customs. According to Vietnam Customs, total tax



collection of the sector has so far reached VND335.6 trillion (US\$14.5 billion), an 11.6 per cent year-on-year increase and exceeding the target of the finance ministry. At a Vietnam Customs press conference on Wednesday, Tuong said free trade agreements between Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea (RoK), ASEAN and RoK, and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership have helped improve Viet Nam's business climate and created better conditions for trade. "The free trade agreements have also expanded investment and trade activities of Vietnamese enterprises, having positive impacts on the country's export and import," he said. Tax collection from export-import activities in the first 11 months of this year reached \$105.16 billion, up 7.97 per cent compared to the same period last year. Cars and crude oil are key import products. Since early this year, more than 135,200 cars worth \$2.91 billion have been imported, double the number in the same period last year. More than seven million tonnes of crude oil were imported in 11 months, costing VND3.33 billion (\$144,800). Tax collection from these two products during the period hit VND46.08 trillion (\$2.03 billion), a year-on-year increase of more than VND21.6 trillion (\$939 million). Vietnam Customs has cracked down on trade fraud, smuggling and inspected tax-free and tax reduction cases, said Tuong. About VND992 billion (\$43.1

million) of tax arrears have been paid as of November 30. To facilitate citizens and businesses to pay tax anytime and anywhere, the customs authority has signed tax collection agreements with 42 commercial banks. A total 30 banks offer 24/7 online tax payment and others collect direct payment. Thanks to the system, 96 per cent of import-export enterprises have paid tax online. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/570061/free-trade-agreements-increase-tax-collection.html>

## Forestry exports expected to beat US\$11.3 billion during 2019



*Vietnam News | 19 December, 2019*

VOV.VN - The forestry sector has maintained a high growth rate of over 5 per cent throughout the year with export turnover being recorded at an estimated US\$11.3 billion, up roughly 20 per cent on-year, according to Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Ha Cong Tuan. With such a high export turnover recorded throughout the year, the forestry sector is poised to enjoy a trade surplus of approximately US\$8 billion, therefore making a considerable contribution to the agricultural sector's overall growth. Vietnam's forest products have been exported to over 140 countries and territories worldwide. As a result, the country's main export markets for forest products include the United States, Japan, China, the EU, and the Republic of

Korea, which account for over 80 per cent of the nation's total export value of forest products. There are over 4,500 domestic wood processing enterprises and establishments nationwide, of which over 1,800 local firms are directly involved in export activities. In addition to businesses in the FDI sector, the wood processing industry has developed on a large scale and currently enjoys greater use of technology, while processed products of diverse patterns and types are now up to the standard requirements of the international market. According to Deputy Minister Tuan, these achievements can be attributed to the positive changes made in the restructuring of the sector.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/economy/forestry-exports-expected-to-beat-us113-billion-during-2019-407762.vov>

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