



- US firms to visit Cambodia
- Loan portfolio goes over \$7bln, but is predicted to be lower this year
- Aquatic research centre breeding programme targets 4 million fish
- New agreement paves way for solar power development
- Myanmar earns over US\$1 B from agricultural products
- Myanmar to hedge against slower China trade due to coronavirus
- Vietnam reports trade deficit of 100 million USD in January
- Coronavirus might affect exports to China: ministry



US firms to visit Cambodia



Cambodia News | 3 February, 2020

Representative of 16 companies from the United States will visit Cambodia this week to explore the latest trends in the country's agriculture sector in particular. The companies are large-scale and well-known firms – including Amazon, John Deere, IBM, Walmart, US Grains Council and Sripipat Engineering. They are scheduled to arrive early next month, according to the US embassy in Phnom Penh. The delegates will participate in a two-day event, which is set to be held in Phnom Penh on Feb 6 and 7 under the theme: “Business Opportunities in Cambodia's Agriculture Sector” where the companies will have the chance to learn about technology, biosecurity and food safety in the agriculture sector. During a meeting held last November with US Ambassador Patrick Murphy, Commerce Minister Pan Sorasak asked the United States to increase investments in the Kingdom. The minister suggested US firms could invest in agriculture, gem processing, light manufacturing and electronics. “The Cambodian government has made significant progress in improving working conditions in the Kingdom,” he said. Two-way trade between Cambodia and the United States reached approximately \$5.4 billion in 2019, a nearly 40 percent hike on the previous year, data from the US government shows.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50686575/us-firms-to-visit-cambodia>

Loan portfolio goes over \$7bln, but is predicted to be lower this year



Cambodia News | 3 February, 2020

The microfinance sector will continue to stay healthy as the loan portfolios reached more than \$7 billion, Kea Borann, chairman of Cambodia Microfinance Association's (CMA) board of directors said last week. He noted that 2.1 million Cambodians used the services of a micro-lender, borrowing a combined \$7.5 billion in 2019, almost a 30 percent increase on the previous year. “If we look at the MFI (microfinance institution) achievements, in general, it was good last year. The credit portfolio continued with a better performance, with almost a 30 percent increase, while deposits are also growing steadily,” he told reporters after the annual general assembly held in Phnom Penh on Friday. He noted that the healthy performance also reflected the nonperforming loans (NPL) ratio – of which he said the loans where payments are more than 30 days overdue – was lower than 1 percent at the end of 2019, a lower rate than the previous year. Customers that used loans from the MFI sector are mostly in the field of agriculture, commerce and production, while services have also notably increased, according to Borann. “We faced some challenges, one of which was the threatening of drought conditions in 2018 because the agriculture was one of the priorities in the MFI sector, where credit growth slightly decreased in early 2019. However, credit growth began to experience a good growth rate from the

third quarter of the year,” he said. Last week, the Ministry of Economy and Finance forecast the Kingdom’s real economic growth at an average of 6.1 percent this year, down up to a percentage point on last year. This is mainly because of external factors, with the government citing as reasons the trade war between China and the US, the new potentially fatal Novel Coronavirus pandemic, climate change, lower geopolitical and global security after Iranian attacks on US interests, widespread protectionism, the uncertainty over the Everything but Arms (EBA) trade deal between Cambodia and the European Union and a general economic slowdown. Borann believes that if the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) growth slows down, it will affect the MFI sector. “If the economy slows down, loan requests will likely also decrease and loan disbursements will also have to be taken into account,” he said. “We have to wait and see how things evolve in the short term,” said Borann, adding that these factors, including the virus outbreak and the EBA scheme, will pose a challenge to the banking sector as a whole – not just the microfinance sector. “That is why we expected that the loan portfolio this year would not grow higher than 2019.” However, he added, the EBA trade deal, if it is withdrawn, would not directly affect the MFI industry because, as mentioned the sector focuses mainly on agriculture.

Source:

[https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50686626/loan-](https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50686626/loan-portfolio-goes-over-7bln-but-is-predicted-to-be-lower-this-year)

portfolio-goes-over-7bln-but-is-predicted-to-be-lower-
this-year

Aquatic research centre breeding programme targets 4 million fish



Laos News | 4 February, 2020

The Living Aquatic Resources Research Centre (LARReC) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is targeting the breeding of 4 million fish this year to support national food security efforts and supply to farmers. LARReC officials said the centre is expanding its fish breeding programme, with 8,000-10,000 tonnes expected to reach farmers this year. The centre will also continue to cooperate with a network of 15 private farms across the country to increase national fish breeding efforts to 215,000 tonnes as outlined in the ministry’s current strategic plan. However, authorities have pointed out the challenges in fish farming such as extreme weather conditions, which increase the difficulties in meeting farmers’ needs. The centre will provide policy support and technical assistance to local fish farmers to help them reduce input costs and also increase yields in line with LARReC’s target. Plans are also afoot at the centre to reduce fish fingerling imports from other countries as the nation aims for self sufficiency. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry reported that fish breeding in Laos, particularly tilapia, is concentrated along the Nam Ngum and Mekong rivers and has slowly expanded in recent years. Until recently, about 60 to 70 percent of the fish consumed in Vientiane came from tilapia

breeders in these rivers with the remainder from other domestic suppliers.

Source: http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Aquatic.php

New agreement paves way for solar power development



Laos News | 4 February, 2020

The Ministry of Science and Technology in collaboration with Japan's Marubeni Corporation and the AMZ Group will undertake a prefeasibility study of solar power technology research and development in Laos. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the project was signed recently in Vientiane between the Director General of the Cooperation and Planning Department, Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr Khamphet Vongdala; Deputy General Manager of the Power Development Section at Marubeni Corporation, Mr Shigeru Nagashima; and President and CEO of the AMZ Group, Ms Alivan Sithara. The event was witnessed by Minister of Science and Technology Prof. Dr Boviengkham Vongdara. "If Laos is to participate in the Industrial Revolution 4.0, we need the use and development of technology to enhance our research and development, which requires greater skills in the fields of science and technology," Dr Khamphet said. This MOU is consistent with the plan for science and technology development. It also paves the way for possible cooperation in the future, such

as enhancing the use of science and technology for the use of solar power development and research in Laos, he added. He believed that the signing of the MOU was a step towards the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement in the near future. The aim of the feasibility study is to look into the possibility of building more and more solar power stations. The use of new technology and science in developing the economy requires quick decisions and the success of this project requires the cooperation and participation of surrounding countries in the use of solar power, he added. "We look forward to further support and cooperation from the government," Mr Nagashima said.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/new-agreement-paves-way-solar-power-development->

Myanmar earns over US\$1 B from agricultural products



Myanmar News | 3 February, 2020

Myanmar is earned US\$1.082 billion from agricultural products exports from October 1 to January 17 in this fiscal year and it is more US\$141.18 million compared with the farming products exports in the same period last year, according to Ministry of Commerce. It is exporting agricultural products, animal products, fishery products, mining products, forestry products, CMP exports and other products mainly. "Myanmar is exporting rice largely. Jade exports can increase the

sale of jades. CMP is increased annually. Price of natural gas is soared to earn more. The export amounts are increased as well as their price. The bean export is decreased to 80,000 tons in compared with the same period last year but we earned the same,” said Khin Maung Lwin, Assistant Secretary of the ministry.

Source:<https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/myanmar-earns-over-us1-b-from-agricultural-products>

Myanmar to hedge against slower China trade due to coronavirus



Myanmar News | 3 February, 2020

Myanmar wants to expand its exports to other markets to hedge against a potential dip in demand from China, where a new respiratory virus has infected more than 14,000 people and killed more than 300, mostly from Hubei province, where illnesses from the new type of coronavirus were first detected in the city of Wuhan in December. China is now Myanmar's largest export market. Already, trading of melons has come to a standstill and prices have halved, said U Naing Win, chair of the Myanmar Watermelon and Muskmelon Producers and Exporters Association. As such, preparations are being made for Myanmar to send more goods to other markets to avoid any volatility in demand from China. “As the market has just reopened after the Chinese New Year break, we can't tell the exact extent of the impact the Wuhan virus has on the

export market yet. But we are working on seeking new border markets to export our goods in the event that the spread of the virus continues,” U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister for Commerce, said in a press briefing on the drafting of the National Export Strategy 2020-2025 on January 31. Plans have also been made to export more goods via air and maritime routes to offset slower trade at the border. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, China has stopped importing melons from Myanmar and stockpiles of fruit are being held in Yunnan province. Around 80 percent of total border trade takes place at the Muse trade gate on the Myanmar-China border. “The movement of goods in certain provinces in China has been suspended, making it difficult for the melons to be transported from one province to another. This is why the melon traders have been instructed not to accept large shipments at the Muse gate. Many of the farmers are diverting the melon shipments to Yangon now,” said U Aung Soe, director general of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organisation. U Aung Htoo said disease preventive measures are also being carried out at the border gate to prevent the coronavirus from spreading into Myanmar. He added that the ministries have been given directives on the procedures to take should the disease spread. Border trade volume between Myanmar and China

amounted to US\$1.6 billion between October 1 and January 24 of the current fiscal year.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-hedge-against-slower-china-trade-due-coronavirus.html>

Vietnam reports trade deficit of 100 million USD in January



Vietnam News | 3 February, 2020

Hanoi (VNS/VNA) - Vietnam reported a trade deficit of 100 million USD in January, according to the General Statistics Office (GSO). The GSO said the country's exports reached 19 billion USD in January, a year-on-year drop of 15.8 percent while its imports hit 19.1 billion USD, a decrease of 14.4 percent. The domestic sector reported an estimated trade deficit of 2.4 billion USD while the foreign direct investment (FDI) sector posted a trade surplus of 2.3 billion USD. Goods that still witnessed increases included electronics, computers and components (2.6 billion USD, up 5.6 percent), and timber and wooden products (1 billion USD, up 1.4 percent). Meanwhile, the exports of textiles and garments dropped by 21 percent to 2.6 billion USD, phones and their parts also worth 2.6 billion USD, down 22.4 percent; and footwear worth 1.6 billion USD, down 9.7 percent. This month, importers spent 3.7 billion USD on electronics, computers and parts, down 8.5 percent from last January. They also spent 3.2 billion USD on machinery, equipment and components and 1.1

billion USD on phones and parts, as much as the reduction of 6.8 percent and down 9.5 percent respectively from last January. Dropping 7.6 percent in the import from Vietnam in January, the US still remained the country's largest export market spending 4.8 billion USD. Following were China with 3.7 billion USD, up 32.8 percent and the European Union with 2.6 billion USD, down 30.8 percent. Also declining 7.1 percent in exports to Vietnam, China was the largest supplier with 6.2 billion USD of goods in January. Followers were the Republic of Korea with 3.2 billion USD and ASEAN with a combined value of 2.4 billion USD as much as the reduction of 22.8 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively compared to last January. Experts said import and export activities were often influenced by the long holidays, especially the Lunar New Year that always sees a sharp rise in consumer goods imports, leading to a trade deficit./.

Source: <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-reports-trade-deficit-of-100-million-usd-in-january/168057.vnp>

Coronavirus might affect exports to China: ministry



Vietnam News | 3 February, 2019

The Import-Export Department under the Ministry of Industry and Trade is keeping a close watch on the development of the coronavirus, urging firms to prepare for negative impacts of the epidemic on exports, especially exports of agricultural products,

to China. Currently, the epidemic had not yet had a significant impact on import and export activities between Viet Nam and China, the department said. However, there was signs that sales of some agricultural products in China had started to slow due to the development of the epidemic. In addition, ongoing strict disease prevention measures also made transportation of goods much more difficult. The department learned that border gates in Pingxiang, Guangxi which bordered Viet Nam's Lang Son Province would close until February 8, except for Friendship Pass which would open on February 3, as an effort to prevent the epidemic from spreading. The department said traffic as well as cross-border transportation of goods between Viet Nam and China might be affected. The department urged Vietnamese firms, especially those exporting agricultural products to China, to prepare for their partners in China not being able to receive goods. Firms should change delivery methods or seek other markets for their products. Firms must also regularly discuss with their partners in China to remain updated of any changes to the epidemic, the department said. The ministry would keep providing updates on the epidemic and its impacts on import-export activities. Viet Nam exported goods worth US\$41.41 billion in 2019, around 20 per cent of which came from agro-fishery products. China was the largest market for Viet Nam's agricultural products.

Source: <https://www.vir.com.vn/coronavirus-might-affect-exports-to-china-ministry-73553.html>
