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## Cambodia-US trade valued at \$5.8 billion



*Cambodia News | 10 February, 2020*

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and the United States was valued at \$5.8 billion in 2019, a 37 percent increase compared with a year before, the latest data from the US government shows. Cambodian exports to the world's largest market grew sharply by 40 percent, to \$5,356 million. Cambodia's imports from the United States rose by 15 percent, to \$513 million. Cambodia's exports to the US have increased remarkably since July 2016, when Cambodia was granted duty-free benefits for the exports of travel goods such as luggage, backpacks, handbags, and wallets under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme. Lim Heng, vice-president of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce, applauded the trade growth, expecting more products including agricultural products to be exported to the US market, as well as garments. "The figure shows the economy to be in a good position. The amount of trade keeps increase, showing that Cambodia-made products in US market can increase," Lim said yesterday. Lim said once Cambodia starts to export agricultural products to the US market, it will make future figures bigger. "So far we have not yet exported any agricultural products to the US because our production standards do not yet meet the requirements of the US market," Lim said. "Last week, a dozen companies from the US visited Cambodia aiming to explore

investment in Cambodia for agriculture. From this visit, we hope agricultural production will improve to comply with the requirement of the US market." According to Lim, agricultural production is related to irrigation, farming, packaging meeting sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements. The US delegates met with officials including the Minister of Agriculture Veng Sakhon and Minister of Commerce Pan Sorasak to help identify strong local partners and grow the many opportunities for US business in Cambodia. "Farming can fuel economic growth and food security, improving the lives and livelihoods of Cambodians," US Ambassador to Cambodia Patrick Murphy said on his embassy's Facebook page. In 2018, trade between Cambodia and the US reached \$4.26 billion, up 23 percent year-on-year. Cambodian exports to the US were valued at \$3,818 million.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50689345/cambodia-us-trade-valued-at-5-8-billion>

## Kingdom's rice exports to EU declined through tariffs but 2020 outlook good



*Cambodia News | 10 February, 2020*

Cambodia's milled rice exports to the European Union (EU), which takes the current largest market share of the Kingdom's rice, saw a more than 20 percent decrease in January compared with the same period last year, data from the Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF) shows. In the first month of the year, the Kingdom sent a total 50,450 tonnes abroad,

a 15 per cent decrease, generating \$39 million in revenue. Of that, 91 per cent was fragrant rice and the rest was long grain white rice. In its report released this week, the CRF said the EU remains the main source of Cambodian rice exports, representing 37 per cent of the total, followed by China (30 per cent), Asean (11 per cent). Other destinations take the remainder. In terms of weight, the EU market decreased by 5,269 tonnes, accounting for 22 per cent. It is being blamed on measures imposed on rice from Cambodia that it says are hurting farmers in Europe. The EU imposed a \$199.50 a tonne levy in 2019. CRF Secretary-General Lun Yeng said that Cambodian rice would enjoy a slight increase in sales in the European bloc this year, because the tariff will stand at \$170 per tonne, which is lower than 2019. There will also be a levy in 2021. He said Cambodian rice still sells well in the Asan market well and remained stable in Malaysia and Brunei, while Gabon and Australia saw a notable increase in exporting milled rice from Cambodia. Currently the Kingdom benefits from a preferential trade deal with the EU known as Everything but Arms (EBA) but there are fears this will be withdrawn later this month amid allegations of human rights breaches. The EU imposed duties on Cambodian rice in order to protect domestic producers. This has been acutely felt by most of the 500,000 families in Cambodia who eke out a living farming jasmine and fragrant long-grain rice, even though these varieties are geographically specific and do not compete directly with products grown in

the EU," the CRF said in a statement last August. Some 7.9 million tonnes of wet season paddy rice were harvested in 2019 while the milled rice exports were reported at 620,106 tonnes, registering a year-on-year decrease of about 1 per cent. Of that export amount, it saw about a 24 per cent decrease in the EU market last year.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50689327/kingdoms-rice-exports-to-eu-declined-through-tariffs-but-2020-outlook-good>

## Laos aiming to add 83,900 skilled workers to labour pool



*Laos News | 10 February, 2020*

The government plans to add at least 83,900 people to the country's work pool this year, up from 75,769 people in 2019. Under the workforce skill development plan for 2020, it is expected that this number will comprise 30,100 people for the agriculture sector, 29,600 people for industry, and 24,200 people for the service sector, the Laophatthana newspaper reported on Friday. Last year, the 75,769 people added to the workforce included 19,063 in the agriculture sector, 19,332 for industry, and 37,370 people for the service sector. A total of 7,286 people joined the workforce in Laos while 54,091 went to work in other countries. Deputy Prime Minister Mr Bounthong Chitmany recently instructed authorities to speed up work to improve the law and strategy plan in relation to the protection of workers' rights. The government aims to continue with efforts to improve workers' skills to create a

more highly skilled workforce to meet the growing needs of social and economic development. In Oudomxay, the provincial Labour and Social Welfare Department plans to strengthen the skills of 3,000 people this year. Over the past year, the department took steps to improve the skills of disadvantaged and poor young people, recruited people for jobs in Laos and other countries, and publicised the law on workers' rights.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/laos-aiming-add-83900-skilled-workers-labour-pool-113540>

### Trade deficit hits US\$137 million despite exports exceeding target



*Laos News | 10 February, 2020*

Laos recorded a trade deficit of US\$137 million last year even though the value of exports exceeded the yearly plan, according to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Exports were targeted to hit US\$5,516 million but achieved US\$5,603 million, while imports were planned to reach US\$5,775 million, with only US\$5,740 million recorded. The country's leading exports include electricity, copper ore, copper and accessories made of copper, wood pulp, camera parts, beverages, rubber, livestock, cassava, mixed gold and gold bars, clothing, bananas, electrical machinery and equipment, fruit and nuts. The main destinations for exports are Thailand, China, Vietnam, India, Japan, Germany, the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and the UK. The chief imports are fuel, vehicles other than tractors

and motorcycles, iron and steel products, mechanical appliances, insulated wire, cable, electrical machinery and equipment, plastics, bars and steel rods and formed structural steel sections, vehicle parts, and communications equipment. The main countries supplying these goods are Thailand, China, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea and the United States. Electricity continues to be Laos' major revenue-generating export totalling more than US\$1 billion. Laos currently exports electricity to Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, with Thailand being the largest importer of energy. The government has set a combined trade target of US\$13,037 million in 2020, with a deficit of US\$193 million. Exports this year are expected to reach US\$6,422 million and imports US\$6,615 million, according to a report by the planning and investment sector, which held a meeting in Vientiane on Monday.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/trade-deficit-hits-us137-million-despite-exports-exceeding-target-113541>

### CPI hits 161.72 pc in late December



*Myanmar News | 11 February, 2020*

Consumer Price Index (CPI) in late December reached 161.72 per cent, up 9.45 per cent compared with the same period last year, according to the report on the CPI and inflation rate issued by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO). According to the calculations using 2012 as a base

year, the CPI for the food group hit 174.13 per cent, the non-food group, 144.26 per cent and all groups, 161.72 per cent in late December. An increase in the CPI is due to a significant increase in commodity prices. In late December, Mandalay saw the highest with 15.38 per cent and Rakhine, the lowest with 3.16 per cent. In November, 2012, the CSO conducted a household income and consumption survey on 32,669 households in 82 townships across the country. The survey covered 438 goods and services. For the calculation of CPI, the CSO took samples from 274 items—108 for the food group and 166 for the non-food group. In late December, the average inflation rate was 8.81 per cent and the year-on-year inflation, 9.45 per cent.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/cpi-hits-16172-pc-in-late-december>

## Govt's efforts on environmental management making progress:

official



*Myanmar News / 10 February, 2020*

Many businesses that have been instructed by the government to submit environmental management plans (EMP) have already done so, says a senior official of the Environmental Conservation Department. U Min Maw, deputy director general of the Environmental Conservation Department, which falls under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), tells

Myanmar Times that most of the businesses in nine sectors pinpointed by the government had submitted EMPs by a deadline that expired last month. In January 2018, MONREC issued a notification to businesses in the nine sectors to submit EMPs to the ministry. In July 2019, the ministry again issued a notification on the requirement, but provided a six-month extension so that the businesses could draw up the plans. The deadline for the submission of the plans expired last month. The requirement was drawn up for businesses involved in: alcohol, wine and beer production; food and beverage; pesticide formulation and packaging; cement and lime manufacturing; textiles and dyeing; metal smelting and refining and manufacture of pig iron, raw and low alloy steel; tanning and leather finishing; pulp and paper mills; and sugar manufacturing. "As of the deadline in January, most of the businesses in the nine sectors in the country have met the government's requirement for submitting their EMPs. Right now the government is analysing the data from the submitted plans so we don't have exact numbers for the businesses that submitted EMPs, but it is safe to say most of the businesses required to have done so over the last six months," U Min Maw said. "The ministry will study the EMPs to see whether they can be approved. Once approved by the ministry, the businesses are required to follow and implement the

plans,” he added. The ministry has announced that it will take action against businesses that do not follow the EMP requirements under the country’s environmental conservation laws.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/govts-efforts-environmental-management-making-progress-official.html>

## Việt Nam's garment-textile expects boom in 2020



*Vietnam News | 10 February, 2020*

HÀ NỘI — Việt Nam’s garment-textile sector is expected to make breakthroughs in 2020 thanks to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Other factors, including free trade agreements (FTA) that will take effect in 2020 and the penetration of international brands like Zara, H&M and Mango will also favour the industry’s growth. The sector has made significant progress, especially in yarn and dyeing, through IT applications, as reflected in improved productivity, accelerated production and reduced labour force. According to Trương Văn Cẩm, vice chairman of the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association, more than 2.5 million tonnes of yarn were churned out in 2019, of which over 1.5 million tonnes valued at about US\$4 billion were exported. Fabric output also increased six times and export value clocked up \$2.1 billion, he added. The Fourth Industrial Revolution’s impacts on production mindset and methods are tangible. An example is

Đức Quân Investment and Development JSC in the northern province of Thái Bình, which has doubled its yarn output to 17,000 tonnes per year through the application of Big Data in production and management. Garment 10 Corporation JSC has also used online business management software DIP BMS.NET to better monitor transactions of distribution chains. Members of the Vietnam National Textile and Garment Group (Vinatex) such as Hòa Thọ Textile-Garment Joint Stock Corporation, Viettien General Garment JSC and Nhà Bè Joint Stock Corporation have joined the trend. Vinatex General Director Lê Tiến Trường said technological applications offer workers stable jobs with higher incomes while helping the group double its profits. Applying the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution has become an inevitable trend. However, this has met a range of difficulties, especially a severe shortage of trained labourers who can use the new equipment. Humans, particularly technicians, play a key role in the process, said Vinatex Managing Director Cao Hữu Chiển, adding that the group has mobilised different resources for personnel training. The Prime Minister has also agreed to upgrade the Hanoi Industrial College for Textile, Garment and Fashion to the Hanoi Industrial Textile Garment University, creating a major personnel training channel for the sector, he said. — VNS



Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/592061/vietnams-garment-textile-expects-boom-in-2020.html>

## Capital city lures more than \$140m in foreign investment



*Vietnam News | 10 February, 2019*

HÀ NỘI — Hà Nội licensed 68 new foreign-invested projects worth US\$30.2 million in January, the capital's Department of Planning and Investment has announced. In the first month of this year, the city also approved seven existing projects to raise their investment capital by \$71.4 million. It also granted permission to foreign investors to spend nearly \$40 million to acquire shares in domestic firms in the month. Last year, Hà Nội led the nation in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction, luring \$8.45 billion, the highest amount in the last decade while the disbursed amount hit \$6.5 billion, or 74 per cent of total registered capital, the highest disbursement rate so far. Foreign-invested businesses also earned \$6.8 billion in exports in 2019, making up 40.7 per cent of the city's total export turnover and up 5.6 per cent year-on-year. The positive performance was attributable to the city's efforts to carry out administrative reform, improve the business and investment environment, and support enterprises. The department's director Nguyễn Mạnh Quyền said the city is striving to attract between \$35 billion and \$45 billion in foreign investment by the end of this year. The city would continue to encourage foreign investment in priority fields with high added value, such as construction,

smart city, IT, high-quality services, hi-tech farming and finance-banking, among others, he said. — VNS

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/592039/capital-city-lures-more-than-140m-in-foreign-investment.html>