

Highlight News March, 12/2020



- Government pledges \$2billion fund for economy
- \$800K dam deal inked to provide clean water
- Covid-19: Vendors unable to sell wares, make profit
- Fear of Covid-19 outbreak causes cuts in car rentals
- EIA process for Kyaukphyu port to start
- 1,250 mining blocks approved in regions, states till February
- Pork imports surge in January-February
- Vietnam's e-commerce market to surpass US\$17 billion in 2023

Government pledges \$2billion fund for economy



Cambodia News | 11 March, 2020

The government has announced they have prepared an emergency reserve fund of between \$800million and \$2billion to aid the Kingdom's economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The fund amount is set to be used in separate scenarios, depending on how long the virus continues to spread, said Prime Minister Hun Sen, speaking in Phnom Penh on Tuesday. "In the first scenario, \$800million has been budgeted if it [COVid-19] continues for six months. For the second scenario, if the outbreak persists for up to a year of longer, then the \$2billion will be used," he outlined. He said his government is continuing in their efforts to turn the slowdown occurring in the country's different sectors, as a result of the virus, into opportunities. The news follows an earlier disbursement by the government of \$30 million to the Health Ministry to aid the nationwide fight against the virus in the coming six months. The substantial aid fund will be facilitated by reducing overall government expenditure by 50 percent, although the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Commerce Ministry, and the Office of the Council of Ministers will only see their budgets slashed by 25 percent. "It's vital that these measures are taken to protect the country's economy through the challenges of the ongoing outbreak," Mr Hun Sen concluded. The move comes as international organisations, including the Asian Development

Bank (ADB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), have announced that they are also ready to offer financial assistance. ADB have earmarked a total of \$4 million; \$2 million of which will enhance detection, prevention, and response in the People's Republic of China and the Greater Mekong sub-region, with a further \$2 million to support response in all of the 23 developing countries, including Cambodia, that the Bank has a foothold in. In a moderate-case scenario, the ADB also estimates that Cambodia will see 1.59 per cent decline of its GDP, which is the highest rate among the 23 countries. ADB will use appropriate means to address the identified needs, including through existing and new financial assistance, emergency assistance lending, policy-based lending, private sector investment and knowledge and technical assistance. The ADB said COVID-19 will have a significant impact on Asia's developing economies, which have seen sharp declines in domestic demand, tourism and business travel and trade, plus serious disruption to production links and supply chains. In a worst-case scenario for Cambodia, the ABD estimates that the Kingdom's decline in tourism revenues could run to \$856.5 million, which translates to about 3.5 percent of the county's GDP. In addition, IMF also announced that it is making available about \$50 billion through its rapid-disbursing emergency financing facilities for low-income and emerging market countries that need seek support. Of this, the IMF said \$10 billion is available at zero interest for the poorest members through the Rapid Credit Facility, squarely aimed at

those low-income countries (LICs) in urgent need of fiscal support.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50700267/government-pledges-2billion-fund-for-economy>

\$800K dam deal inked to provide clean water



Cambodia News | 11 March, 2020

The Chinese-owned Sinohydro Kamchay Hydroelectric Project Co will start construction of an \$800,000 overflow dam in Prek Kampong Bai, Kampot province. The project will provide a supply of water to be held for treatment at a plant in Kampot and flow through the hydropower dam in Kamchay. The announcement was made at a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft and Sinohydro Kamchay Hydroelectric Project Co. Cham Prasidh, Minister of Industry and Handicraft said that the comprehensive strategic partnership is another example of the historical ironclad friendship between Cambodia and China. "The project will hold 1,770 million cubic meters per year from the dam in Prek Kampong Bai and will flow through the hydropower dam in Kamchay. The water will then be processed at the water treatment plant in Kampot providing 22 million cubic meters per year of treated water," Cham said. The new dam will also contribute to the development of a clean water supply in Cambodia, especially in the Kampot province and will also help to protect the environment. Wang Tiefeng, general manager of Sinohydro Kamchay Hydroelectric

Project Co said that the company will build and complete the dam as soon as possible, with a view to building a second following further discussions with the government. Oum Sotha, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft, told Khmer Times that the construction of the overflow dam will divert water headed to the Gulf of Thailand. Instead, it will be processed by the Kampot Water Supply Authority and delivered to the Kampot population and surrounding districts. "Kampot has a demand of 20,000 cubic meters per day, but the government is expanding its supply to 60,000 cubic meters. This is part of our mission over the next two decades to provide a clean water supply to the province," Oum said. In addition, the government aims to give access to clean water to everyone in the country by 2025.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50700257>

[/800k-dam-deal-inked-to-provide-clean-water](#)

Covid-19: Vendors unable to sell wares, make profit



Laos News | 11 March, 2020

Retailers in Vientiane are running their businesses at a loss. Their sales are dipping following the outbreak of Covid-19 and this has also resulted in the postponement of several trade fairs and exhibitions. Advisories have been issued by many countries to avoid crowded places so exhibitions and trade fairs where these vendors showcase their products have been canceled or indefinitely postponed. The global economy has been hit and vendors, the smallest

spokes in the wheel, are obviously not spared. The postponement of fairs and exhibitions has resulted in the reduction of footfall at the ITECC Mall and sales are sluggish, the owner of Noy Vongkhanty Handicraft, Mr Noy, said. Normally, there are exhibitions or trade fairs two or three times a month which helps attract people to the mall. Even though the mall is taking steps to prevent an outbreak - such as providing hand sanitisers for visitors - there has been no increase in visitors. Our sales have fallen by around 70 percent over the past three months due to the postponement of fairs which we needed to boost our online sales, he added. The shop sells silk goods made by local people, including skirts, ethnic Lao clothing and other textiles. In addition, the shop stocks accessories such as silver belts, earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces and souvenirs of various sizes and types. The general economic recession is another issue resulting in losses for retailers, Mr Noy said. "We ordered a large quantity of consumer goods to sell at a fair, but it has been postponed due to fears of Covid-19. This is resulting in losses," said another retailer in Vientiane. If the outbreak spreads further this will be bad news for vendors as exhibitions are the perfect place for them to showcase and market their products.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/covid-19-vendors-unable-sell-wares-make-profit-115471>

Fear of Covid-19 outbreak causes cuts in car rentals



Laos News | 11 March, 2020

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Many businesses engaged in tourism and related services in Laos are feeling the heat following the outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid-19). The outbreak has caused the cancellation of hotel reservations, restaurants are running losses, and car rental services are losing potential clientele. Car rental bookings have declined significantly as clients cancel their trips to Laos and neighbouring countries. R W Car Rental & Cleaning Service Company Limited, a Vientiane-based car rental agency, is virtually out of business with many customers cancelling their bookings since the outbreak of Covid-19 was first reported in December. The company's manager, Mr Sengmany Luang-aphay, told Vientiane Times on Tuesday that their parking lot was full of vans and cars because their business had been hit along with many others around the world. "It is having a significant and direct impact on the car rental business because this kind of service is heavily reliant on clients' bookings. When they cancel their bookings, it means our business suffers," he said. He explained that many companies provide similar services and are also in dire straits as the number of clients is significantly dropping. He called this a crisis in the tourism sector. "In the first two or three months of last year all our vehicles were booked but this year we have been

hit badly,” he said. The company not only provides car rental for travel within Laos but also for trips in the neighbouring countries of Thailand, China, Vietnam and Cambodia. Meanwhile, the Phouphieng Bolaven Travel Company Limited, a two-decade old travel agent based in Champassak province, is facing a similar predicament and has seen a significant drop in customers from Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. “Many customers have cancelled bus tickets to Vietnam following the outbreak of the virus. Today a 45-seater bus from the Laos-Cambodia border had only 10 passengers. I have never seen this situation before,” Ms Waen told Vientiane Times. Many tourism hotspots in Laos are also suffering from plummeting visitor numbers. In addition, the government has cancelled several important national events to prevent the possible spread of the virus. Several flights to various destinations have been temporarily suspended or cancelled. Although there are no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Laos, festivals and other events have been cancelled or postponed as a precautionary measure. One of the postponed events is the National Games in Xieng Khuang province which had been scheduled for March 22 to April 1. Authorities in Xieng Khuang predict that the cancellation of hotel and guesthouse bookings and empty seats at restaurants will result in considerable economic losses. Xieng Khuang has at least 100 guesthouses and hotels which can accommodate 3,000 people a night, a representative of the

province’s hotel association said, but it appears many of these will now go unused.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/fear-covid-19-outbreak-causes-cuts-car-rentals-115470>

EIA process for

Kyaukphyu port to start



Myanmar News | 11 March, 2020

Chinese state-owned CITIC is set to initiate bidding for its environmental impact assessment (EIA) consultant for its port project in central Rakhine following the environmental ministry’s response to its project proposal. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MONREC) last month designated the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port project as an EIA-type project after screening the proposal submitted by the consortium led by CITIC in September 2019. Through a bidding process, the consortium will choose an independent consultant to conduct EIA, the statement said. After the selection, it will have to submit the information of such a third party for the ministry’s further verification before an EIA could officially take place. The Kyaukphyu project refers to a Special Economic Zone encompassing a deep-sea port, industrial park and other schemes. The megaproject was awarded to the consortium - led by CITIC and comprised of four other Chinese firms and Thailand’s Charoen Pokphand Group - during the last months of U Thein Sein’s presidency. Negotiations stalled in the first two years under the National League for Democracy-led government, which then renegotiated the port’s

price tag from US\$7.5 billion to \$1.3 billion. In late 2019, CITIC hired Canadian firm Hatch as project manager to supervise and recruit consultants for a legally required environmental and social impact assessment. Kyaukphyu is the site of twin pipelines through which oil produced in Myanmar is delivered and exported to China. Having a port in central Rakhine is geostrategically important for China to reduce its reliance on the Strait of Malacca through the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, which is part of Beijing's flagship Belt and Road Initiative. During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit in February, the two governments inked a concession agreement and shareholders' agreement for the port. There are five agreements still to be signed on the project, according to Myanmar Deputy Commerce Minister Aung Htoo. The final report of the advisory commission on Rakhine led by former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan recommended a strategic environmental assessment before starting any environment assessments. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has publicly endorsed and pledged to implement all of the commission's recommendations.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/eia-process-kyaukphyu-port-start.html>

1,250 mining blocks approved in regions, states till February



Myanmar News | 11 March, 2020

The government had granted permission to run 1,250 large, medium, small and artisanal mining

blocks in various regions and states till the end of February, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. Of the total number, 112 mining blocks are in Kachin State, 18 in Kayah State, 46 in Kayin State, 4 in Chin State, 230 in Sagaing Region, 86 in Taninthayi Region, 3 in Nay Pyi Taw, 7 in Bago Region, 53 in Magway Region, 333 in Mandalay Region, 24 in Mon State, 1 in Rakhine State, 143 in Shan State (South), 95 in Shan State (North), 92 in Shan State (East) and 3 in Ayeyawady Region. In three months of the current 2019-2020 fiscal year, 151.84 tons of metal were extracted from tin and tungsten mining blocks in the states and regions. Of them, Taninthayi produced the large amount.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/1250-mining-blocks-approved-in-regions-states-till-february>

Pork imports surge in January-February



Vietnam News | 11 March, 2020

Hanoi (VNA) – Vietnam imported over 13,800 tonnes of pork in the first two months of 2020, a year-on-year rise of 150 percent. Most imports were from Canada (33.06 percent), Germany (25.4 percent), Brazil (16.10 percent), Poland (15.81 percent), and the US (7.78 percent). In the period, Vietnam imported more than 12,450 tonnes of beef and 12,930 tonnes of buffalo meat. All buffalo meat came from India, while beef was imported mainly from the US, Australia, and Canada. Vietnam purchased over 26,650 tonnes of poultry meat from abroad in the first two months,

mainly from the US, the Republic of Korea and Brazil. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, by the beginning of March 2020, Vietnam had about 24 million pigs, 77 percent of the total pigs before the African swine fever. The number of pigs in the country is expected to increase further from April, which helps ensure sufficient pork supply for domestic demand./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/pork-imports-surge-in-january-february/169917.vnp>

Vietnam's e-commerce market to surpass US\$17 billion in 2023



Vietnam News | 11 March, 2020

NDO – The e-commerce market of Vietnam is forecast to hit US\$17.3 billion by 2023, a sharp increase of US\$9.4 billion compared to 2019, according to GlobalData. The data and analytics company said that the annual growth rate of Vietnam's e-commerce market is anticipated to reach 16.3%. Vietnam's e-commerce market has doubled over the past five years with online spending soaring from US\$3.9 billion in 2015 to US\$9.4 billion in 2019. Nikhil Reddy, Banking and Payments Analyst at GlobalData, said that besides traditional instruments of payment for e-commerce such as cash, bank cards and money transfers, other forms of payment are also on the rise in Vietnam. In addition, demand for faster and more convenient methods of payment is increasing. According to the GlobalData survey, cash remains a popular means of payment, accounting for 35.6% of

e-commerce transactions. Several alternative instruments of payment have gradually been dominating the market with a proportion of 15.5%. MoMo is the most preferred alternative payment solution in Vietnam, followed by PayPal. Global companies have also promoted their investment in Vietnamese e-commerce companies. Tiki received an investment of US\$5.3 million from VNG Corporation and US\$44 million from China-based investor JD.com. Sendo also earned investment of US\$51 million from Japan-based SBI Group and other investors in 2018. In addition, Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba invested an additional US\$2 billion in Lazada, one of the leading e-commerce in Vietnam.

Source : [https://en.nhandan.com.vn/business/item/8479702-vietnam%E2%80%99s-e-commerce-market-to-surpass-us\\$17-billion-in-2023.html](https://en.nhandan.com.vn/business/item/8479702-vietnam%E2%80%99s-e-commerce-market-to-surpass-us$17-billion-in-2023.html)