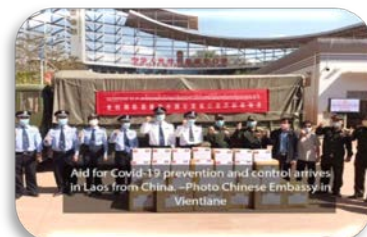




- Cambodia's aviation sector hard hit by Coronavirus pandemic
- Cambodia, Russia to boost bilateral trade, looking at FTA
- Chinese aid boosts Lao efforts against Covid-19
- Buses to Laos, Cambodia suspended
- Kaixi Myanmar factories cut 1,200 workers
- Inflation continued to rise in January, officials say
- Algeria a potential market for Vietnamese products
- COVID-19 to pull Vietnam's growth down to 6.3%: Fitch Solutions



## Cambodia's aviation sector hard hit by Coronavirus pandemic



*Cambodia News 126 March, 2020*

Cambodia has recorded a staggering 40 percent decline in flights coming in or going out due to COVID-19. Of the three international airports, Siem Reap is the worst hit as international flights has all but dried off with many countries going into lock down mode. A Siem Reap airport source told Khmer Times that flights has slowed to a trickle with many cancellations and poor loads on those flights which are still operating, albeit on a lesser frequency. Overall, the number of international flights to and from Cambodia's three airports in March is forecast to fall by around 40 percent compared to that in December last year since the COVID-19 outbreak. During a briefing to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Samdech Sar Kheng, it was revealed that thus far in March, up to March 24, only 2,575 flights had landed or taken off at all three airports. This is a huge drop when compared to December 2019 where there were a total of 4,241 international flights to Cambodia. A visit to Phnom Penh international airport yesterday showed the airport largely deserted with many outlets closed, the domestic terminal shut and very few international flights. The major flight appeared to be Thai Airways and Thai Smile where long queues were observed. Some flights to China also were taking place as and when load factors permitted, said a Phnom Penh airport source. Locally registered airlines were still flying domestic routes although frequency and passenger load was minimal but they were focusing on several destinations in China where flight restrictions has been lifted. Sihanoukville airport reportedly was faring much

better due to continuous flights from China. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) on Tuesday updated its analysis of the COVID-19 impact on revenue in the global air transport industry, and now estimates passenger revenues could plummet \$252 billion, or 44 percent below 2019's figure. The prediction was made in a scenario in which severe travel restrictions persist for up to three months, followed by a gradual economic recovery later this year. IATA earlier predicted up to \$113 billion revenue losses, but that was before countries around the world introduced sweeping travel restrictions that largely eliminated international air travel. "The airline industry faces its gravest crisis. Within a matter of a few weeks, our previous worst-case scenario is looking better than our latest estimates. But without immediate government relief measures, there will not be an industry left standing," IATA CEO Alexandre de Juniac warned.

Source :<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50706043/cambodias-aviation-sector-hard-hit-by-coronavirus-pandemic/>

## Cambodia, Russia to boost bilateral trade, looking at FTA



*Cambodia News 126 March, 2020*

Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Hor Namhong met Russian Ambassador to Cambodia Dmitry Tsvetkov in Phnom Penh this week and said both countries had good diplomatic relations that continue to be strengthened by Russian contributions to the Kingdom's economic growth. Cambodia and Russia have pledged to increase bilateral trade and investment as the Kingdom aims to diversify its market through the signing of a free-trade agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian

Economic Union (EAEU), of which Russia is a member, together with Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It has a total market of 183 million people and a GDP of US\$5 trillion. In Asean, Singapore and Vietnam also have an FTA with the EAEU, while Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are also known to be interested. Namhong said: "Our countries share a good relationship and we cooperate well in many sectors. Since 2015, our countries have signed 51 agreements to boost trade and investments in the financial sector, agriculture and more. Last year, bilateral trade reached US\$55.39 million and we hope it will continue to grow this year. Cambodia welcomed some 55,653 Russian tourists last year and hopes to welcome an increasing number in the future. Presently, we are in talks over 14 memoranda of understanding (MoU) which we expect to be signed soon. These will focus on tourism, education, law and youth development," he said. He also expressed hope that Russia will support Cambodia in its free trade negotiations with the Eurasian Economic Union. In return, Dmitry Tsvetkov noted Cambodia's fast development and said he was impressed by the fact that even though Cambodia was not an oil-producing country, it had seen approximately 7 percent growth last year. He said a Cambodia-Russia Working Group had started negotiations on a free-trade agreement with Eurasia, while he noted Cambodian officials visited Moscow last year to discuss the EAEU FTA. In 2016, Cambodia and the EAEU signed an MoU to enhance cooperation in trade. However, as Cambodia is still in the WTO Least Developed Country classification, 46 Cambodian products can enter the EAEU market duty-free within the next three years. Businesses in

the region are hoping that Cambodia can secure further trade agreements, with agricultural conglomerate Mong Riththy Group planning to expand markets for mango exports in Russia and Hungary. MongReththy Group president, Mong Riththy said his company plans to export around 5,000 tonnes of mangoes a year to Russia.

Source : : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50705867>

[/cambodia-russia-to-boost-bilateral-trade-looking-at-fta/](#)

## Chinese aid boosts Lao efforts against Covid-19



*Laos News | 27 March, 2020*

The Chinese government has delivered 2,000 virus detection kits to assist Laos' prevention and control efforts against Covid-19, according to information from the Chinese Embassy in Vientiane. The Jack-Ma Foundation has also donated 5,000 sets of protective clothing as well as N95 face masks, 400,000 standard face masks for medical personnel, and 20,000 virus detection sets to Laos. The Chinese government will offer more assistance to Laos in disease prevention and control based on the needs of the evolving situation. The information also noted that local authorities in China such as Yunnan, Hunan, Chongqing, Shandong, and Shanghai had joined with China-Asia Economic Development Association, Chinese and Foreign Entrepreneurs Alliance, ICBC Bank in Vientiane, and the Chinese community in Laos to offer similar aid, of which, some had already been shipped to Laos. "On behalf of a partner of common destiny, the Party, government, and people of China feel sympathy for Laos facing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and are ready together with Laos to overcome the difficulty," the

embassy stated through the information source. Earlier last month, local Lao and Chinese expat communities donated hundreds of thousands of face masks, safety glasses and medical gloves and caps to support the city of Wuhan's efforts to combat the coronavirus outbreak. The novel coronavirus, which was first detected in Wuhan, a city in China's Hubei province, has caused a global pandemic. Six Covid-19 cases have been confirmed in Laos so far, with the first two cases announced by local health authorities on March 24. According to Chinese authorities, the spread of the novel coronavirus was now under the control in China.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent\\_Chinese\\_62.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Chinese_62.php)

## Buses to Laos, Cambodia suspended



*Laos News | 26 March, 2020*

The Transport Co on Wednesday suspended all 15 inter-country bus services to Laos and Cambodia, while imposing stricter measures including thermal scans on passengers taking existing routes to control the transmission of Covid-19. The services will reopen once the situation improves. The bus services were suspended after Laos and Cambodia shut their borders as part of their Covid-19 containment measures, the company said. The Transport Co on Wednesday suspended all 15 inter-country bus services to Laos and Cambodia, while imposing stricter measures including thermal scans on passengers taking existing routes to control the transmission of Covid-19. The services will reopen once the situation improves. The bus services were suspended after Laos and Cambodia shut their borders as part of their Covid-19 containment measures, the company said. For local routes, the company has

imposed new restrictions effective from Wednesday. Among them is ensuring that all staff on buses operated by either Transport Co or its concessionaires wear masks. The same rule applies to passengers, who are required to wear a face mask from when they enter the terminal to when they disembark at their destination. Passengers will also have their body temperature taken at the entrance of the terminal and anybody found to have a temperature above 37.5C will not be allowed to travel, the company said.

Source : <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1886425/buses-to-laos-cambodia-suspended>

## Kaixi Myanmar factories cut

### 1,200 workers



*Myanmar News 26 March, 2020*

Two factories of Kaixi Myanmar in the Ngwepinle Industrial Zone in Hlinethaya Township and Shwepyitha Industrial Zone (4) in Shwepyitha Township, Yangon Region, laid off 1,200 workers on March 21 as they received no order. Customer countries such as COVID-19-hit Italy and France no longer placed an order from the two factories making women's underwear. The two factories laid off 300 workers each who were less than three months in service. "There is no order at all. First, we ran out of raw materials. Our brans were mostly sent to France and Italy. They stopped placing orders. The workers in less than three months' service were laid off," the factory HR manager said. The notice to lay off the workers if there is no order was announced one month

ahead. Factory officials said the laid-off workers would be hired again if orders come.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/kaixi-myanmar-factories-cut-1200-workers>

## Inflation continued to rise in January, officials say



*Myanmar News | 26 March, 2020*

Inflation continued to rise in January 2020, according to the latest available data released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO). The annual rate of inflation in Myanmar steadily rose throughout 2019 and continued to do so in January, the CSO said. The figure for January peaked at 9.06 percent in January, having risen from 8.81 percent in December last year. The CSO's data for January showed food prices, including rice, oil, meat and fish, vegetables and other basic goods, decreased, however, non-food items such as gold, beverages, cigarettes, clothing, and home rents rose. The country's inflation rate hit a high of 10.6 percent in June 2016. The International Monetary Fund said in December said that Myanmar's inflation is expected to fall to 6-7 percent in the medium term as the one-off impact from higher electricity tariffs ends and pressures from rising food prices abate. The World Bank says that persistently high inflation rates could adversely affect lower-income households and undermine business competitiveness. Persistently high inflation could hurt savers, workers with fixed wages, and lower-income households, which spend a large share of their income on food. Moreover, Myanmar's external competitiveness could be weakened if its inflation rate

were to exceed those of its major trading partners over a substantial period.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/inflation-continued-rise-january-officials-say.html>

## Algeria a potential market for Vietnamese products



*Vietnam News | 26 March, 2020*

Hanoi (VNA) – Algeria is a potential market for exports of Vietnamese staples, especially coffee and rice, official statistics show. Vietnam's export revenues to Algeria enjoyed a year-on-year increase of 2.1 percent in the first two months of 2020. According to the Trade Office of Vietnam in Algeria, Vietnam may bolster coffee shipments to the Algerian market as it is the most popular drink of local people. The African country spends 300 million USD on the import of about 130,000 tonnes of coffee beans each year. Coffee has been among leading export items of Vietnam to Algeria over the years, accounting for the lion's share of over 50 percent in the Algerian market. Vietnam shipped about 70,000 tonnes of the product to the African nation last year. Rice also holds huge potential for export in the coming time when the COVID-19 is repelled. Algeria mostly depends on rice imports, buying about 100,000 tonnes of the grain annually. In addition, the country's import tariffs for the food are lower compared to those of others. In 2019, Vietnam shipped nearly 17,000 tonnes of rice to Algeria, making up for around 16 percent. The increasing number of Asian workers in Algeria has also prompted a surge in rice demand in the country./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/algeria-a-potential-market-for-vietnamese-products/170720.vnp>



## COVID-19 to pull Vietnam's growth down to 6.3%: Fitch Solutions



*Vietnam News | 26 March, 2020*

Fitch Solutions on March 24 revised down Vietnam's economic growth in 2020 to 6.3% from 6.8% previously due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In a report on the outlook for emerging markets (EM), Fitch noted that Vietnam had low fiscal flexibility, given its high public sector liabilities, to manoeuvre with regard to policy, which could limit the size, speed and effectiveness of their responses. Fitch also downgraded the growth of other emerging markets, forecasting that the pandemic would pull EM growth down to 2009 levels. "Although we have not seen many large localised outbreaks of COVID-19 across emerging markets, we forecast EM growth to come in below 3% in 2020. This will mark a sharp deceleration from the recent high of 4.8% in 2017 and the slowest pace of growth since 2009 during the financial crisis, when EMs grew by 2.6% in 2009," Fitch said. It noted it had already made several revisions to its growth forecasts and expected more over the coming weeks, as an increasing number of countries experience outbreaks of their own and as more governments impose localised lockdowns and travel restrictions. According to Fitch, the combination of financial market stress hitting EMs, less policy space, weakening external demand and a rising number of localised coronavirus cases will weigh heavily on growth. "Global financial market stress has seen a sharp tightening of liquidity conditions for EMs, which we believe will weigh significantly on growth. The sharp sell-off in markets has resulted in around a 30% decline in the MSCI Emerging Market Equity Index, around a 350 basis points (bps) widening in the JP Morgan Global

EMBI Spread, and about an 8% decline in the MSCI EM FX Index since January 2020 on the back of a recent 9% appreciation of the US dollar across the board. Historically, this type of volatility has led a sharp reduction in growth across EMs in the months following the period of stress." While not surprising, there is clear evidence that financial market stress in EMs results in a sharp slowing in growth after financial conditions deteriorate. Going forward, Fitch expected ongoing financial stress and especially the sharp widening of credit spreads and declining equity, currency and commodity markets to weigh on growth.

Source : [https://english.vov.vn/economy/covid19-to-pull-vietnams-growth-down-to-63-fitch-solutions-](https://english.vov.vn/economy/covid19-to-pull-vietnams-growth-down-to-63-fitch-solutions-411813.vov)

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