

Highlight News / March 30/2020



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## Cambodia and Vietnamese enterprises adopt measures strengthen strategic collaboration



*Cambodia News | 28 March, 2020*

NDO – Viettel Cambodia (Metfone), a subsidiary of Vietnam’s military-run telecommunications company Viettel Group and MB Cambodia, a branch of Vietnam’s Military Commercial Joint- Stock Bank (MB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a five-year strategic partnership of cooperation to strengthen their development in and contributions to Cambodia. As per the signing ceremony held in Phnom Penh on March 26, MB Cambodia will fully meet the credit demand of Metfone and provide the company with all corporate financial services with a credit limit of US\$100 million as well as a competitive interest rate. The bank will also provide a credit package of US\$15 million combined with preferential interest rates and incentives for Metfone’s partners, subsidiaries and employees. Meanwhile, Metfone will prioritise the transferring of its revenue to the bank account opened at MB Cambodia and use the various financial services of the bank. In addition, the telecommunications company will prioritise remittances to Vietnam through the MB system and provide telecommunication services to MB Cambodia at preferential prices. Metfone has been operating in Cambodia for over 10 years, becoming one of the leading telecommunications companies in the country. It has created jobs for more than 12,000 workers and contributed a total of over US\$500

million to the Cambodian budget. Metfone has also solidified its position in the Cambodian market with two branches and 120 agents across the country.

Nhan Dan Online

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50706770/cambodia-and-vietnamese-enterprises-adopt-measures-strengthen-strategic-collaboration/>

## Cambodia new investments totaling \$900 million spread over nine provinces



*Cambodia News | 27 March, 2020*

Cambodia registered 40 new investment projects worth more than US\$900 million in the first three months of this year, according to the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). The approved projects include the production of clothing, travel goods, household appliances, furniture, light bulbs and batteries; construction of five-star hotel and super markets.. The 40 projects belong to different companies located in suburb of Phnom Penh capital and the provinces of Takeo, Kandal, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Thbong Khmum, Preah Sihanouk, Siem Reap, and Svay Rieng. The investment projects will generate over 30,000 new jobs for locals, especially those outside the capital city. Phal Sophanith/AKP

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50706552/cambodia-new-investments-totaling-900-million-spread-over-nine-provinces/>

## Govt toughens virus prevention measures



*Laos News | 30 March, 2020*

The government yesterday announced to close all international checkpoints and prohibit public movement for non-essential activities for almost three weeks to control the coronavirus pandemic as fears of outbreak escalate. All international checkpoints are closed for passengers exiting and entering, including to those previously granted permission but not yet acted upon. The measures are imposed from March 30 to April 19 and changes could be made in accordance with further announcement. All local checkpoints have already been closed earlier. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was told to work with the relevant sectors to facilitate foreign nationals who want to return to their home countries. Goods transport is still permitted. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith yesterday issued an executive order intensifying prevention and control measures. The measures are made following an emergency meeting between the cabinet and the National Taskforce Committee for Covid-19 Prevention and Control on Saturday. People from all walks of life, including foreign expatriates in Laos, are not allowed to go out from their houses or accommodation for non-essential purposes. People are permitted to go out just for essential activities such as buying items for their daily needs, including

food, hospitals or for essential duties. Those going out for agricultural production to ensure food security are encouraged to do so under the proper management of local authorities. "Passenger transport is temporarily suspended," the government's Spokesman Prof Dr Chaleun Yiabaoher told a press conference shortly after the PM signed the order. Civil servants were told to work from home for almost three weeks, starting from April 1-19. This except those in charge of essential duties such as soldiers, police, medical doctors and nurses, electricity and water supply service providers, firefighters as well as telecommunications service providers and volunteers for the virus prevention. During this break, ministries and organisations were told to assign teams to come to the office in rotation to ensure normal coordination in essential cases. People are prohibited from travelling to other localities or risky areas where infections were reported, except for essential trips permitted by authorities such as goods transport or going to hospital. "Health officials and other officials concerned must set up checkpoints to check their health, documents and detailed information (in this regard)," Dr Chaleun said. The tightened measures are being imposed as eight people – five in Vientiane and three in northern Luang Prabang province - have been infected with the virus in Laos so far. The five patients are being treated at Mittaphab Hospital in

the capital, and the other three are being cared for at Luang Prabang provincial hospital. Outbreak fears in Laos escalated after thousands of Lao workers in neighbouring countries, especially Thailand, where a widespread outbreak was reported, have rushed home. The returnees were impacted by measures imposed by authorities in the neighbouring countries. There are fears they are carrying the virus. Dr Chaleun said the latest measures the Lao government is imposing appear to be the toughest ones ever recorded against a virus outbreak. The order prohibits the organising any event, party, celebration or meeting with more than 10 attendees in order to avoid crowded gatherings. If the event is essential, the organiser must apply guidelines issued by health officials, including temperature checks, social distancing, wearing masks and handwashing. Factories, including garment workshops and other major projects that are at risk of infection, were also ordered to close down temporarily. Those factories manufacturing goods essential for daily need such as pharmacies and consumption goods are encouraged to continue production. Entertainment venues, karaoke, beer shops, night markets, massage and spa service venues, witness or sporting centres were told to close down. Referring to the PM's order, the spokesman warned distributors and merchants, not to stock goods and increase prices unreasonably,

especially food and medical equipment used for virus prevention. Dr Chaleun warned those circulating fake news triggering fear or panic would face punitive measures.

Source:[http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent\\_Govt\\_63.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Govt_63.php)

## More woes for Myanmar garment industry as EU cancels orders



*Myanmar News | 29 March, 2020*

Update: More garment factories stopped operations in Myanmar as European Union countries, a major export market, cancelled orders last week amid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior industry leader said. U Myint Soe, chair of Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA), said the EU market accounts for 70 percent of the country's garment export. "All operations of the factories that have accepted orders from the EU have stopped. I don't know how we will deal with this issue," he said. The bad news came as the supply of raw materials from China re-started to flow back into the country after three months of stoppage due to the virus outbreak. "We began to receive raw materials from China. We have no more raw materials problem. Now, the EU no longer accepts our garment exports. It happened since last week," U Myint Soe said. "As COVID-19 spread in Europe, all shops closed there. Garment factories in Myanmar face difficulty as they told us not to make the clothes, which they have bought, and not to ship them. This problem is big.

That's why, factories have shut down and reduced their number of workers," he added. Among the garment companies that suffered cancellations of orders are the Global Apparel Textile Myanmar Co. Ltd, which no longer has problems with the supply of raw materials but left with huge inventory due to cancelled purchase orders. Daw Sandar Min, a Yangon regional MP, said another garment firm, the Lat War Co. Ltd., is stuck with 500,000 pieces of garments after a European buyer cancelled the order. Other companies in the same predicaments are Gold Emperor, Hong Text, and Myanmar Irrawaddy. The shutdown of more garment factories led to more labour unrest, including the strike at the Grand Enterprises Garment Co. Ltd at Yangon's East Dagon Industrial Zone on Thursday as the company announced a layoff of thousands of workers. Before the cancellation of orders from the EU, at least 20 out of the 500 factories in Myanmar have shut down due to the pandemic, leaving more than 10,000 workers unemployed, industry sources said. Since January, 38 cut-make-pack factories that includes the garment factories, have shut down, according to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population. Among these were 22 garment factories. Others reduced the number of workers at their facilities. U Myint Soe said besides the EU, the US market has also started cancelling its orders. So far, Japanese and Korean companies have not cancelled their orders. This story has been updated at 6:11pm on March 29.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/more-woes-myanmar-garment-industry-eu-cancels-orders.html>

## Only ticket holders allowed inside Yangon airport



*Myanmar News | 29 March, 2020*

Yangon International Airport (YIA) will restrict the public's access to its terminal buildings in accordance with the Department of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Health and Sports. From Sunday (March 29) onwards, only air travelers with valid air tickets and staff on duty will be permitted to enter the airport premises, YIA said on March 28. Those seeing off or welcoming passengers will not be allowed to access the terminals. This is to prevent the spread of COVID-19, YIA said.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/only-ticket-holders-allowed-inside-yangon-airport.html>

## First-quarter CPI sees highest rise in 2016-2020



*Vietnam News | 28 March, 2020*

The consumer price index (CPI) in the first quarter of 2020 rose by 5.56%, the highest increase during the 2016-2020 period, Director of the General Statistics Office (GSO) Nguyen Bich Lam said. The rise was attributed to the increasing demand for food in January and February – the duration of the Lunar New Year (Tet), Lam told a press conference in Hanoi on March 27, adding that food and vegetable prices climbed up 13.21% and 4.14% respectively.

The COVID-19 outbreak began in late January 2020, so the demand for some medical products, electricity and water also increased, pushing up their respective prices by 1.43%, 9.89% and 4.75%. Price hikes were also seen in other groups of commodities such as beverage and tobacco 1.8%; ready-made garments 1.19%; and housing maintenance materials 2.52%. Average oil prices in the first quarter dropped by 5.75% compared to the same period of 2019 due to the impact of COVID-19 and the oil pricing war between the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia to gain market shares. Tourism demand increased during the Tet holiday but declined afterwards in face of the coronavirus outbreak. As a result, full-package tours went down by 1.74% in January-March. Amid the complicated developments of COVID-19, the Government and the Prime Minister as well as ministries and departments directed the implementation of numerous measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic and stabilise the market. According to the GSO, basic inflation (CPI exclusive of foodstuff, fresh food, energy, and healthcare and education services) in the three-month period rose by 3.05%.

Source: <https://english.vov.vn/economy/firstquarter-cpi-sees-highest-rise-in-20162020-411898.vov>

## Vietnam enjoys trade surplus of US\$2.8 billion in first quarter



*Vietnam News | 28 March, 2019*

Vietnam ran a trade surplus of US\$2.8 billion in the first quarter of this year, higher than US\$1.5 billion recorded in the same period last year, despite the growing COVID-19 pandemic in the country's major export markets, reported the General Statistics Office (GSO). The domestic sector posted a trade deficit of US\$4.4 billion while the foreign direct investment sector, including crude oil, recorded a trade surplus of US\$7.2 billion. Accordingly, the export revenue of goods in the first quarter was estimated at US\$59.08 billion, up 0.5% year-on-year. Eight groups of commodities saw export turnover surpassing the US\$1 billion benchmark, accounting for 70.6% of the total. The US remained Vietnam's largest importer with a total value of US\$15.5 billion, up 16.2% annually. It was followed by China with US\$8.4 billion, up 11.5%; the European Union US\$7.5 billion, down 14.9%; ASEAN US\$6 billion, down 5.2%; Japan US\$4.8 billion, up 3.5%; and the Republic of Korea (RoK) US\$4.5 billion, down 2.7%. Meanwhile, the country's goods imports decreased by 1.9% to US\$56.26 billion. Up to 14 kinds of goods spent more than US\$1 billion each, or 72.9% of the total. Production materials were bought for an estimated US\$52.6 billion, down 1.2% annually and equivalent to 93.5% of the combined. Expenditure on consumer goods stood at US\$3.66 billion, down 10.6%, accounting for 6.5% of the total. China remained the largest exporter of commodities to Vietnam with a turnover of US\$13.3 billion, down 18% year-on-year. It was followed by the RoK with US\$11.7 billion, up 2.4%; ASEAN US\$7.2 billion,

down 8.3%; Japan US\$4.9 billion, up 15.8%; the EU US\$3.4 billion, up 5.2% and the US US\$3.4 billion, up 13%. The GSO predicted that once the EU – Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) takes effect, Vietnam's exports to the EU will soar by over 20 percent this year and the growth will be on the rise in the following years. Aquatic products are expected to benefit most from the deal. The EU is now the second largest importer of Vietnamese aquatic products, behind the US. Vietnam's shipment of farm produce to the EU is also forecast to hike by around 10% this year.

Source: [https://english.vov.vn/economy/vietnam-enjoys-trade-surplus-of-us28-billion-in-first-quarter-](https://english.vov.vn/economy/vietnam-enjoys-trade-surplus-of-us28-billion-in-first-quarter-411899.vov)

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