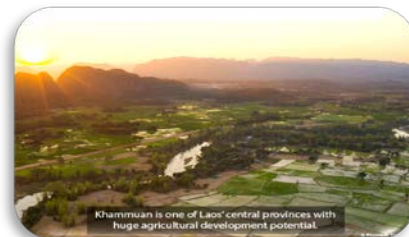
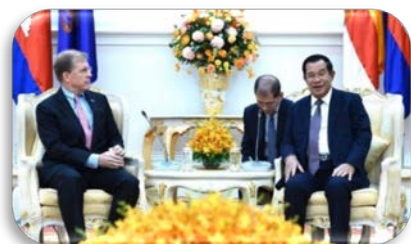




- US trade up 35% in Q1
- FTA feasibility study with S. Korea to conclude in days
- Khammuan promulgates ruling to administer farmland sustainably
- YBS passengers on the rise during COVID-19
- Vietnam's four-month exports surge despite pandemic
- Rice prices rising as Viet Nam prepares to resume exports



US trade up 35% in Q1



Cambodia News | 07 May, 2020

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and the United States has been valued at \$1.678 billion for the first quarter of 2020, representing a 35 percent increase compared with the same time last year, according to trade data from the US Government. Cambodian exports consisted of \$1.594 billion, growing 42 percent, while Cambodian imports were \$85 million, decreasing 30 percent. According to the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce, local exports mostly included textiles, footwear, travel goods and agricultural products. Most imports from the US were vehicles, animal feed and machinery. Lim Heng, vice-president of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce, said that the trade figure reflects the increasing manufacturing activities in Cambodia for exports. “Most of our exports to the US are from products we manufacture from the raw materials we produce and purchase,” Lim said. Since the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) of the US was granted to Cambodia in 2016, exports of “travel goods” such as luggage and handbags, have increased sharply. According to the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC), 80 percent of the \$1.2-billion-worth of “travel goods” last year were shipped to the US market. “The United States is our biggest export market for travel goods accounting for about 80 percent of our total exports,” GMAC said. “This phenomenal growth in exports is because of the joint lobby efforts of the Ministry of Commerce

and GMAC to the US Congress. That has resulted in the review of the GSP in 2016 and included travel goods items on the eligibility list,” GMAC said in a statement issued recently this year.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50720675/us-trade-up-35-in-q1/>

FTA feasibility study with S. Korea to conclude in days



Cambodia News | 07 May, 2020

Cambodia and South Korea have taken a step closer this month to the two nations Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with a feasibility study being signed between South Korea’s Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hee and Cambodian Commerce Minister Pan Sorasak in the Korean city of Busan last November. Seang Thay, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce, told Khmer Times that expert teams from both countries have been continuing to hold meetings through teleconferences because of the COVID-19 travel restrictions. “Both parties have already discussed the structure of the feasibility study and are now planning to finalise the results by the end of this month. We will then proceed to the negotiation stage, Thay said. However, when asked how long the negotiation process would take, the ministry could not provide a specific period because both countries may need more time to discuss extra offers. “This negotiation stage could take from eight months to one year because the timeframe will depend on the results of negotiations from one round to another. If we want it [the FTA] to be finalised too soon, the

negotiation stage will mean nothing,” They explained. Even though the trade deal has not yet been signed, the ministry has already enabled the export of some goods to the South Korean market, through the World Trade Organization (WTO). “Some of the goods we have exported to South Korea have been under the least-developed country status issued by the WTO. However, through this free trade deal, we will be able to have more quotas on more products enter their market,” They added. Currently, two-way trade between Cambodia and South Korea has been valued at \$1 billion in 2019, representing a 36 percent increase from \$756 million in 2018, up 15 percent compared with 2017, according to official government figures. Main exports to South Korea are clothes, electronics, shoes, luggage, aluminium, beverages, medical supplies, tents and natural rubber. Main imports into Cambodia are trucks, clothes, mineral water, quilts, electronics, bulldozers, dyed cloths and beauty products. Once the FTA deal is signed, it is expected to not only strengthen the relationship and promote bilateral trade between Cambodia and South Korea, but also create more employment and investment opportunities – while promoting export services that will contribute more to economic growth and bring more benefits to the people of the two nations.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50720710/fta-feasibility-study-with-s-korea-to-conclude-in-days/>

Khammuan promulgates ruling to administer farmland sustainably



Laos News | 08 May, 2020

Khammuan authorities have issued a governor's decision, which aims to ensure effective administration of agricultural land amid the growing threat of rapid development in the central province. The National Gazette, a government website designed to disseminate active legal documents in Laos, this week uploaded the Khammuan Governor's Decision on the Administration of Agricultural Land. The ultimate goal of this legal document, which the provincial governor, Mr Oday Soudaphone endorsed on March 3, is to protect agricultural land in line with the government's sustainable green growth policy. This legal document also provides guidelines for the development of farmland as well as converting the land for other development purposes to ensure that authorities are in a position to manage land use effectively. Central Khammuan province has enormous potential for agriculture development covering around 132,000 hectares, with 87,000 ha conserved for food production and 44,000 ha designated for agribusiness. According to the governor's decision, converting farming land for other development purposes is discouraged, and landowners must seek permission from provincial authorities to do so. In addition, the redeploying of farmland for other uses must be in line with provincial

environmental protection objectives and the socio-economic development plan, the governor's ruling highlights. The provincial agriculture and forestry department is in charge of overseeing the development and conversion of farmland. The organisation is also responsible for drawing up agriculture land development and transformation plans for the provincial people's council to consider and approve. To transform farmland for other development purposes, landowners must pay fees and file a request to the provincial agriculture and forestry department to consider and approve, according to the governor's decision. To convert farmland for the construction of business and commercial facilities, landowners must pay authorities 2,000 kip per square metre and 200 kip m² to transform properties to residential land. This governor's ruling also bans the general public, private and public enterprises from converting their agricultural land to residential, industrial and other development purposes without permission from the agriculture and forestry division.

Source : http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Khammuan_87.php

YBS passengers on the rise during COVID-19



Myanmar News | 07 May, 2020

The Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) said the number of YBS passengers has increased to

250,000, despite the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in Myanmar. "The number of YBS passengers has been steadily increasing over the past few weeks from 100,000 at the start of the month to 250,000. Some people still take the buses for their important matters. The bus lines still run over 2,000 buses every day," U Maung Aung, secretary of YRTA, said on May 5. Posters from the Ministry of Health and Sports installed posters in YBS buses, which urge passengers to wear masks and keep a safe distance while traveling on the bus. "The number of YBS passengers has been on the rise this past week. I don't want people to come out if it's not necessary. We have hand sanitiser on our buses, and people need to clean their hands when they get on and off the bus," said U Ko Ko Naing, chief operating officer of Ludu Mateswe (People's Friend) bus company.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/ybs-passengers-rise-during-covid-19.html>

Vietnam's four-month exports surge despite pandemic



Vietnam News | 07 May, 2020

Hanoi (VNA) – Vietnam's export turnover increased by 4.7 percent year on year to nearly 83 billion USD in the first four months of 2020 despite an interruption to orders from key importers in Europe, American and Japan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to their quick thinking and adaption to market demand, many businesses have still been receiving regular orders. Contrary to the shortage of orders for exporters in key sectors, enterprises specialising in

producing biodegradable packages and exporting fruit received steady orders from partners in Japan, Europe, the US and Australia in the period. According to Tran Thanh Hai, Deputy General Director of the Export-Import Department under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the US remained the largest market for Vietnamese exports in the reviewed period, with a 20.3-billion-USD turnover, surging 13.4 percent. It was followed by China and Japan with respective turnovers of 13.1 billion USD and 6.7 billion USD, up 26.7 percent and 10.1 percent, respectively. The country's exports to American markets also increased, including Chile (93 percent), Colombia (93 percent), Peru (82 percent), Panama (73 percent), Mexico (61 percent), and Argentina (55 percent). However, Hai noted that export prospects will depend greatly on the disease's developments in its major export markets such as the US, the EU and China. He predicted that Vietnam's exports to China and the Republic of Korea would recover faster than other markets because the COVID-19 is under control in the two countries. The Prime Minister's recent decision to allow the resumption of rice exports has contributed to promoting the nation's export growth, he added.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnams-fourmonth-exports-surge-despite-pandemic/172918.vnp>

Rice prices rising as Viet Nam prepares to resume exports



Vietnam News | 07 May, 2020

HCM CITY — Export prices are rising for rice grown in the Cửu Long (Mekong) Delta. Since Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc allowed resumption of exports from May 1, prices have risen by VNĐ200,000-400,000 (US\$8.5-17) per tonne from late April. The PM's decision has made farmers happy and they are taking better care of their rice crop, hoping prices would continue to increase for the summer-autumn crop, Trần Chí Hùng, director of the Hậu Giang Province Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, said. The delta has sown more than 750,000 hectares of summer-autumn crop rice. According to the Hậu Giang Sub-Department of Crop Production, the rice has ripened due to favourable weather and the yield is estimated to be seven to eight tonnes per hectare. Rice growers are in the final tending stages in preparation for the harvest. The expected summer-autumn output in the delta is 8.7 million tons, providing 2.3-2.4 million tonnes for export. Experts said businesses need to take advantage of the rising export prices. Việt Nam's rice prices are on a par with Pakistan's, higher than India's and lower than Thailand's. On March 24 Việt Nam capped exports of rice to ensure food security after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. It is the world's third largest exporter after India and Thailand. Last year the country exported 6.37 million tonnes worth US\$2.81 billion, with its top markets

being the Philippines (2.1 million tonnes), Ivory Coast (580,000 tonnes), Malaysia (550,000 tonnes), and China (477,000 tonnes). Exports in the first two months of this year had topped 890,000 tonnes and fetched \$410 million, increases of 27 per cent and 32.6 per cent year-on-year. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the country is projected to grow 43.5 million tonnes of the grain this year, nearly 30 million tonnes of which will be used for domestic consumption and the rest will be exported. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/716341/rice-prices-rising-as-viet-nam-prepares-to-resume-exports.html>
