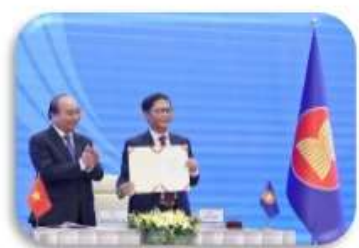


*Highlight News / November 16, 2020*



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- Leaders strengthen ties between Mekong region, ROK, Japan
- Myanmar to launch TradeNet 2.0 system in January
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ADVISORY INSTITUTE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT BY TCC (AITI)

## Education on energy is key to Kingdom's Industry 4.0 future



*Cambodia News | 13 November, 2020*

As Cambodia takes steps towards entering the world of Industry 4.0, experts believe the key is educating future generations on energy and its value while they are in school, at the primary, secondary, college and university level. They note demand for clean energy is growing and with that demand will come the need for a skilled workforce ready to be part of the fourth industrial revolution. Not only will the Kingdom need more engineers, scientists and technicians, a sound base in industry 4.0 practices will also open the door for careers in sales, marketing, finance, business development, policy and regulation. The energy industry will be influenced by all Industry 4.0 developments, with Energy 4.0 ultimately influencing Industry 4.0. The energy sector is going through a grand transition requiring the integration of renewable energies into innovative sustainable systems, end-use fuel switches, the coming of electric mobility solutions with their potential for grid management and individual ownership giving way to shared assets and services. Because of this, it is detrimental for Cambodia's youngsters to not be educated on renewable energy, its efficiency and related technologies. This will be important for the country's economy as well as keeping up with other nations' industry 4.0 advances and capabilities. Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Cambodia Nick

Beresford said: "For many years we have focused on the obvious issues of environment and climate change, but increasingly the story has become more exciting due to new technology, so it's now about skills and jobs because that is where the future in employment is coming from. If we look at the economy in terms of renewable energy, we must move towards all of the new exciting technology around that sector. That means companies will start to take on apprenticeships and train people up in new technology leading to a workforce that has a higher set of skills. That's a self-perpetuating mechanism because once a workforce has those skills, that will attract more companies ready to invest in Cambodia and do more in helping Cambodia's renewable energy sector." Cambodia is, however, somewhat behind when it comes to renewable energy. In comparison with its neighbouring countries, Thailand and Vietnam, the Kingdom has no real roadmap or policy in place. For example, Vietnam has a renewable energy policy that aims to have 21 percent of its energy renewable by 2030 while Thailand is aiming for 30 percent by 2030. On a wider scale, Asean has set an ambitious target of securing 23 percent of its primary energy from renewable sources by 2025 because energy demand in the region is expected to grow by 50 percent. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), this objective entails a two-and-a-half-fold increase in the modern renewable energy share compared to 2014. Through education, the Kingdom has the opportunity to transition to a

sustainable society powered by renewable energy, but a key factor in achieving this is adequately and proactively preparing its future generation for their place in a changing workplace full of opportunity. Cambodia must train a new generation of engineers, technicians and scientists to implement renewable technologies on a greater scale and integrate resources into energy systems. Stephane Munster, Co-founder of Sirea Asia, a leading energy firm, said: "I think universities are doing well, however, I think more integration between the private sector and universities is key. The biggest challenge in doing this is having the resources. The strategy is to have Western experts come and work with the younger generation. We need to continue to invest and also value the teachers in the universities so they are properly incentivised to want to stay and make a difference."

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/782455/education-on-energy-is-key-to-kingdoms-industry-4-0-future/>

## Local investors boost construction sector



*Cambodia News | 13 November, 2020*

The Kingdom's construction sector is being boosted by local investors who have stepped in to replace foreign investment projects hindered by COVID-19, according to insiders. Chiv Sivpheng, general manager of Cambodia Constructors Association, says that the pandemic has led to a sharp decline in foreign investments in large construction projects. "Most of the projects that are currently under way

right now are funded by local investors. This domestic bloc has boosted the sector during this troubled time and helped to maintain economic stability by providing jobs," he said. Sivpheng noted that while travel restrictions have largely kept foreign investors from the Kingdom, local investors have been able to continue with their projects more or less unimpeded by the pandemic. "Construction activity fuelled by local investment tends towards smaller scale residential and borey projects." He added that the large-scale developments currently postponed are primarily those driven by Chinese and South Korea interests. "While some larger scale projects have continued to progress slowly, most of them are delayed for the foreseeable future. Foreign investors hampered by travel restrictions are loathe to progress with construction activity when their ability to move freely between the countries in which their projects are under way or planned for is so difficult," he said. A report from the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUP) shows that capital investment in the country's construction sector during the first nine months of 2020 totalled \$5.8 billion, falling more than 9 percent from the \$6.5 billion reached in the same period last year. This is despite a report showing an increase in project approvals to 3,739 construction plans, an increase of 8.9 percent from 2019. Sivpheng hopes that post-pandemic, the huge projects planned and approved will be back online. One issue that may need to be overcome is ensuring that the supply line of construction materials,

particularly those sourced from outside Cambodia and the region is restored without delay. Cambodia produces many of the materials needed, including cement, so the sector may not face a drastic shortage of the supplies, he added. Sihanoukville, which is home to the country's second-most active construction sector after Phnom Penh, has reported diminished progress since the government banned online gambling and was then hit by COVID-19. Preah Sihanouk Provincial Hall spokesman Kheang Phearum noted that construction in Sihanoukville has remained quiet with only a tiny amount of small project activity taking place. He pointed out, though, that the global virus has affected all sectors locally, not just construction and tourism. "Some Chinese have come back to Preah Sihanouk, mostly investors, workers, company staff and even a few tourists as well. But most of them are not here for construction sector-related purposes. They've come back to manage their factories and companies in the special economic zone and take charge of their businesses as they become busier or reopen," he said. Phearum said that like in Phnom Penh, most of the large construction projects in Sihanoukville are owned by Chinese interests and that local investors are working on small projects approved at the provincial level. "Both types of projects, foreign and local owned, have seen little activity, though, since the virus outbreak," he said. 2019 saw the ministry approve 4,446 construction projects, up 55.07 percent from the 2,867 approved in 2018. The valuation of 2019 projects is set at \$9.353 billion, up

from 2018's \$5.228 billion. The Kingdom's construction sector provided more than 170,000 jobs on average per day across the country during the first half of 2020, an increase from 134,000 compared with the same period last year, according to figures from MLMUPC. The report shows that in Phnom Penh alone, the sector provided between 24,130 and 24,500 jobs per day. According to the study, labour costs in the construction sector have also been rising during this period. Unskilled workers earn between \$10 and \$15 per day, while skilled workers and team leaders can earn between \$15 and \$25 per day, according to the report, with engineers earning around \$2,500 per month.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50782454/local-investors-boost-construction-sector/>

## Leaders strengthen ties between Mekong region, ROK, Japan



*Laos News | 16 November, 2020*

Cooperation between the countries in the Mekong Basin and the Republic of Korea (ROK) has grown rapidly, while cooperation between the Mekong countries and Japan has also broadened. This was the assessment of leaders from the Mekong countries, Korea and Japan when they met for virtual talks at the 2nd Mekong-ROK and 12th Mekong-Japan summits on Friday. Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc co-chaired the summits with Korean Prime Minister Moon Jae-in and Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide. At the Mekong-ROK summit, leaders from Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar,

Thailand, Vietnam, and Korea reviewed past cooperation, especially the implementation of the Mekong-Han River Declaration adopted at the first Mekong-ROK Summit held in Busan, Korea, last year, and the work plan for 2017-2020. The leaders said the cooperation framework had grown rapidly under the three pillars and seven priorities in the fields of culture and tourism, human resource development, agriculture and rural development, infrastructure development, information and communication technology, the environment, and non-traditional security challenges. Laos has implemented four projects with support from the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund valued at US\$1.5 million. The projects concern capacity building for people and poor districts in Laos, a master plan and capacity-building for meteorology and hydrology infrastructure in the Mekong Basin, cooperation on assistance for project management in the Mekong region, and soil, water and fortification quality management to boost the incomes of farmers in drought regions of Laos. The summit agreed to upgrade Mekong-ROK cooperation to a strategic partnership for the benefit of people, prosperity, and peace. The leaders discussed the next five years of cooperation for socio-economic recovery in the Mekong region and Korea from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. They also planned to accelerate infrastructure development, human resource development in the health sector, strengthening of trade and investment cooperation, and sustainable development based on the United

Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. At the 12th Mekong-Japan Summit, the leaders of the five Mekong countries and Japan reviewed the implementation of the joint statement they made at the 11th Mekong-Japan Summit, Tokyo Strategy 2018, Mekong-Japan initiative for sustainable development 2030, and programmes and projects. The leaders noted that cooperation had progressed in many fields, particularly in infrastructure development, human resource development, sustainable development, and cooperation with various organisations in the region. "The cooperation framework is a good stage for Mekong countries and Japan in enhancing cooperation and building capacity for the Mekong region's economy and for its connectivity with other regions, including Asean," a news release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated. Laos has benefited from several assistance projects under Mekong-Japan cooperation. These include a survey for Vientiane-Hanoi connectivity development, bridge construction on National Road No. 9, study of an electric power system master plan, Nam Ngum 1 power plant expansion, and Wattay International Airport passenger terminal expansion. Leaders from the Mekong countries and Japan discussed targeting the implementation of projects under the Tokyo Strategy 2018, and the Mekong-Japan initiative for sustainable development 2030. They also discussed post-Covid-19 socio-economic restoration, especially the emergency health response for the prompt sharing of information, best practice and experience, and laboratories in

handling and treating communicable diseases, which threaten nations and peoples. Also discussed was support for businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises affected by the pandemic, especially the need to ensure they had ways to obtain funding and make use of modern technology.

Source:[http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent\\_Leaders\\_223.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Leaders_223.php)

## Myanmar to launch TradeNet 2.0 system in January



*Myanmar News | 13 November, 2020*

Myanmar is aiming to fully implement the newly upgraded TradeNet 2.0 system by January 2021, said Minister of Commerce U Than Myint during the launch of the online trade platform on November 12. When the system is fully implemented, traders will be able to apply for export/import licenses online. The upgraded e-licensing system is expected to consolidate the application process onto one platform and make things more efficient for traders, said U Than Myint. In the first phase of implementation, the ministry will be able to verify application forms and issue export/import registration certificates, licenses and other related cards online. The information provided during the application process will be saved on the system to simplify future renewal or registration procedures. The Ministry of Commerce plans to implement TradeNet 2.0 with technology and funds provided by the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID). The admin process for trading will be much fast and costs will be reduced when trade registrations and license applications are moved online under a single entry system. It will help manufacturers and farmers promote and export local crops overseas, according to USAID. - Translated

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-launch-tradenet-20-system-january.html>

## Viet Nam's economy forecast to grow bigger than Singapore by 2029



*Vietnam News | 15 November, 2020*

Viet Nam's economy could grow bigger than Singapore by 2029, the UK-based Global Business Outlook recently cited the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS)'s report. A corner of Ho Chi Minh City (Source: Global Business Outlook) In its report, the DBS predicts that Vietnam could grow at a pace of 6 percent to 6.5 percent in the next ten years. "If it can sustain that pace of growth, the Vietnam economy will be bigger than the size of the Singapore economy in ten years' time", the magazine cited the bank's senior economist Irvin Seah as saying. The DBS's forecast is largely based on factors such as robust foreign investment inflow and productivity growth in the next couple of years. Currently, the Vietnamese economy is worth 224 billion USD. This means it covers 69 percent of Singapore's economic size which is worth 324 billion USD.



Source: <https://baodanang.vn/english/business/202011/viet-nams-economy-forecast-to-grow-bigger-than-singapore-by-2029-3872550/>

## Vietnam inks world's largest trade pact RCEP



*Vietnam News | 15 November, 2020*

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed Sunday by leaders of 15 Asia Pacific countries that make up 29 percent of global GDP. The pact was signed online by leaders of 10 ASEAN member states as well as Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea as part of the 37th ASEAN Summit chaired by Vietnam in Hanoi. The free trade agreement (FTA) will give the Vietnamese economy advantageous access to another one-third of the world's population, generating export growth opportunities in markets which together account for 29 percent of the world's GDP, or about \$26 trillion. The pact commits signatories to maintain open markets for goods, services and investments, harmonization of rules of origin among all participants, and strengthening trade facilitation measures. The agreement will also provide opportunities to develop new supply chains in the region. The RCEP has 20 chapters, covering areas and principles not seen in previous trade agreements between ASEAN and partner countries. It also includes chapters on intellectual property, e-commerce, competition, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), economic and technical cooperation, and government

procurement. For the agreement to take effect, at least six ASEAN member states and three partner countries have to send their ratification documents to the depositary. RCEP members say the agreement is open and comprehensive, and is therefore still open to India - which had withdrawn from the negotiation process - to join it even after the agreement comes into effect. Countries that already signed the RCEP can enter into negotiations with India whenever the latter sends a document to express its intention to join the pact. India can also participate in RCEP meetings as an observer and in economic cooperation activities undertaken by RCEP signatories. The RCEP will help establish long-term stable export markets for ASEAN countries in the context of risky and uncertain global supply chains. It will also create a legally binding regional framework for trade policy, investment, intellectual property, e-commerce, dispute resolution and others. Overall, it will contribute to creating a fair trade environment in the region. Vietnam, for instance, can import electronic chips from Japan and South Korea, import textile materials from China then produce goods domestically for export to other countries, and at the same time, satisfy rules of origin within the bloc to take advantage of tariff preferences. Jason Yek, senior Asia country risk analyst with market research company Fitch Solutions, said Vietnam's major export categories that are expected to benefit the most from the deal are telecommunications, information and communications technology, textiles, footwear,

agriculture, and automobiles. The pact will help businesses in Vietnam access large consumer markets which are double the size of GDP of those under the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The CPTPP, signed by 11 countries – Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam – took effect in Vietnam in January 2019.

Source: [https://](https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-launch-tradenet-20-system-january.html)

[www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-launch-tradenet-20-system-january.html](https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-launch-tradenet-20-system-january.html)

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