

Highlight News / December 24, 2020



- Thailand, Cambodia road link almost complete
- Cambodia anticipates \$1,771 per capita GDP for 2021
- China-Laos Railway station construction continues steady progress
- Home loans on the rise during COVID-19 period
- Vietnam banks to continue making profits next year: experts
- Vietnam targets 2021 seafood exports to reach \$9 bln, up 6% YoY



Thailand, Cambodia road link almost complete



Cambodia News | 23 December, 2020

A commercial road connecting Thailand's Trat province and Cambodia's Veal Veng district in Pursat province is 90 percent complete and expected to be ready ahead of schedule according to the Pursat provincial administration. Thailand's government has spent almost \$2 million in building the link between the two countries. The road comprises four lanes and is 14 metres wide and 1.9 kilometres long. It is between border checkpoints in Tha Sen village, Lem Kat commune, Moeung district in the Trat province of Thailand and at National Road 55 (Thmor Da checkpoint) in Sangkom Thmey village, Thmor Da commune in Veal Veng district. Its construction followed approval by the Thai parliament of a request from the governor of Trat province made on Nov 27, 2019. This trade route will become an important economic channel linking the countries' trades and businesses, especially given the completion of Cambodia's National Road 55, that has connected National Road 5 to Trat. National Road 55 is 182 kilometres long and connects Pursat's Veal Veng to Thmor Da (at the Cambodia-Thailand border). Its construction cost of \$132.8 million was funded by the Chinese government in cooperation with the Royal Government of Cambodia's Compensation Fund for tackling the impact of unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance and construction.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50796224/thailand-cambodia-road-link-almost-complete/>

Cambodia anticipates \$1,771 per capita GDP for 2021



Cambodia News | 23 December, 2020

Cambodia has projected the country's per capita gross domestic product at \$1,771 in 2021, up from \$1,600 in 2020. The projection was shared yesterday by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance Aun Pornmoniroth when leading his team to defend the draft budget law for 2021 at the Senate. The growth, he continued, is made possible through various efforts of the Royal Government, including the provision of tax incentives to small and medium sized enterprises as well as key industries like tourism and hospitality. The Royal Government has already released more than \$200 million from the national budget to subsidise those adversely affected by the COVID-19 crisis and will set aside more budget to assist them if the crisis continues. Although overall manufacturing exports have been hit by the pandemic, exports of bicycles, electrical parts, and vehicle parts and accessories are rising. The exports of milled rice and other agricultural commodities have also surged, while domestic tourists have supported partial recovery of the travel and tourism industry. With the move, Cambodia's economy is projected to contract by 2 percent in 2020, but will bounce back by 4 percent in 2021, according to the latest forecast by the World Bank. Phal Sophanith – AKP

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50796394/cambodia-anticipates-1771-per-capita-gdp-for-2021/>

China-Laos Railway station construction continues steady progress



Laos News | 24 December, 2020

With the final concrete poured, the main structure of the Boten station, contracted by China Railway Construction Engineering Group, was successfully completed on Tuesday. Since then, the construction of the station has moved to steel structure grid installation, electromechanical installation and decoration. The station, located in the border town of Boten in Laos, is the first stop in Laos from China via the China-Laos Railway. It started construction on Aug 16 with an area of 6,500 square meters.

Source: <http://www.ecns.cn/news/economy/2020-12-24/detail-ihaxsqc6150811.shtml>

Home loans on the rise during COVID-19 period



Myanmar News | 23 December, 2020

More residential property is being sold on credit from banks during the COVID-19 period, said U Khin MaungThan, chair of the Myanmar Real Estate Services Association. "Home loans are still quite popular this year, even though the number of properties sold on the market has declined," he said. Prices have fallen, and in some cases buyers are bidding almost 50 percent of the asking price. As interest rates have been reduced, home loans have

become an attractive option for those looking to enter the market, said U Nay Min Thu, Managing Director of iMyanmarHouse.com. "People are mainly interested in housing projects in townships outside Yangon and projects in other Regions and States. In Yangon, people are interested in apartments that have prices under K50 million," he said. The market has been adversely affected by the COVID-19 restrictions, meaning that the overall volume of sales has dramatically fallen in the second half of 2020, said U Tin Maung, chair of Myanmar Real Estate Development Association. Online sales and marketing have picked up during the second lockdown as it's almost impossible for agents, buyers and sellers to meet in person, said U Kaung Thu Win, director of Shweperroperty.com. "As about 90 percent of the buyers are searching for property online, companies need to provide accurate and reliable information," he said. Moreover, buyers tend to ask more questions via online messenger and through emails and realtors need to change their marketing strategies to assure this new generation of buyers, he said. - Translated

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/home-loans-rise-during-covid-19-period.html>

Vietnam banks to continue making profits next year: experts



Vietnam News | 23 December, 2020

A pandemic induced slowdown in credit growth has not hurt commercial banks this year, and this will continue next year, too, experts say. Several banks

have already achieved their pre-tax profit for the whole year by November, with ACB exceeding its target by 14 percent and ABBank by 1 percent. Some lenders like VIB and Sacombank had already completed their target by October. In the first nine months, the combined post-tax profit of 26 banks rose 11.5 percent year-on-year, with 16 of them posting growth. Le Dat Chi, deputy head of the School of Finance, University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City, said that although the central bank has ordered lenders to lower interests and delay loan dues for borrowers affected by the pandemic, the number of businesses eligible for this policy is small and therefore banks' revenues and profits have remained mostly unaffected. He also said businesses that have survived the pandemic have now returned to the regular cycle of borrowing and repaying as the economy recovers. Economist Nguyen Tri Hieu said as countries are set to relax their monetary policies to support recovery next year, Vietnam can benefit from an expected growth in exports, helping increase credit growth and benefiting banks. Chi said with the government targeting a 6 percent GDP growth next year it will likely increase public spending on key urban areas, which will also create opportunities for banks to lend more. A recent report by Ho Chi Minh City-based brokerage VNDirect said as Vietnam's economy recovered, demand for loans would rise in the last quarter of this year and continue to increase next year. Credit growth for this year is estimated at 9 percent, and this is likely to rise to 13-14 percent next

year, it added. However, risks remain. Hieu said that the severity of the Covid-19 situation in Western countries and impacts of the U.S. election could weaken the global financial system and Vietnam's banking industry could be affected, in turn.

Source: <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/economy/vietnam-banks-to-continue-making-profits-next-year-experts-4210813.html>

Vietnam targets 2021 seafood exports to reach \$9 bln, up 6% YoY



Vietnam News | 23 December, 2020

Despite pandemic, Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has set 2021 seafood export target at \$9 billion, an increase of 6 percent compared to estimated achievement in 2020. The ministry estimated 2020 seafood export at \$8.5 billion, an unchanged amount from 2019. In the first half of 2020, seafood exports fell due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers. However, situation recovered from July and saw double-digit growth since September, thanks to the steady growth of shrimp exports and positive signs of seafood products since August, said the association. After an increase of 10 percent in September, 12 percent in October, November seafood export continued to grow 13 percent compared to the same period in 2019. Shrimp exports grew double digits of 25 percent in September and October, and continued to increase by 28 percent in November to reach \$395 million. As

of end-November, shrimp exports reached about \$3.5 billion, up 14 percent over the same period in 2019. Shrimp exports in 2020 are expected to reach over \$3.85 billion, up 15 percent from 2019. Pangasius exports fell sharply from March to September with a decrease of 17 percent and 35 percent over the same period in 2019.

Source: <https://e.nhipcaudautu.vn/economy/vietnam-targets-2021-seafood-exports-to-reach-9-bln-up-6-yoy-3338706/>
