

*Highlight News / March 24/2021*



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- Number of registered internet subscribers increases in 2020
- New Laos president faces rising China debt and battered economy
- Marubeni-involved hydropower project in Myanmar to be frozen
- Vietnam car imports surge over 20% in February
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ADVISORY INSTITUTE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT BY TCC (AiTi)

## CP Cambodia invests \$67 mn in animal food production



*Cambodia News | 23 March, 2021*

Leading Asia-Pacific agro-industrial and food conglomerate CP Cambodia is investing more than \$67 million in animal production, food processing and slaughterhouses in the Kingdom. This investment aligns with the government's policy and development plan for the agricultural sector 2019-2023, said Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF) Veng Sakhon. Sakhon posted on his official facebook page that CP (Cambodia) is one of the largest companies investing and operating in the sector, processing pigs, chickens and chicken eggs, to produce animal feed and food for humans, including sausages, meat balls and ham. According to MAFF's minister, at present the company has two factories, located in Kampong Speu province and Pailin provinces. These two factories are able to produce 55,000 tonnes of a variety of meat up to per month from feed made up of 200,000 tonnes of red corn and 100,000 tonnes of dry cassava per year. The raw materials are sourced locally. Sakhon added that for other raw materials, the company has requested that the agriculture ministry allow it to import inputs from Thailand to fulfill the factory's needs. The company has also supplied chickens that can produce 700,000 chicks per week and sufficient pigs to produce 20,000 piglets a week. "To fulfill the growing need for chicken and meat production, the company has established another

slaughterhouse which is able to produce 10,000s chicken per day and 500,000 kilogrammes of ham per month," Sakhon added. The company's production will cover the entire supply chain, from production, to processing and on to market. The company will need 2,700 workers. It will expand animal production by implementing contract farming for pigs and chickens using 1,400 household farmers across the country from this year forward. "The company plans to increase animal and food production by 15 to 20 percent in order to supply the domestic market, which is increasing year on year.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50828866/cp-cambodia-invests-67-mn-in-animal-food-production/>

## Number of registered internet subscribers increases in 2020



*Cambodia News | 24 March, 2021*

The number of both fixed and mobile internet subscribers in Cambodia increased last year because of high demand to be online during the virus pandemic, while the number of SIM card subscribers reportedly decreased. More than 16 million people including mobile and fixed internet users were registered as internet subscribers last year, said Chea Vandeth, minister of Posts and Telecommunications, adding that the growth rate was about 40 percent compared with the year before. "The number of mobile internet subscribers was about 16 million and, with fixed internet subscribers, the number was close to 17 million," Vandeth said. "The growth is backed mainly by the

development of telecommunication infrastructure – and, because of the pandemic, more people have turned to use the internet on digital platforms, which boosts demand for internet surfing.” He said there were about 20 million SIM card subscribers, sliding down from the previous year. This followed a campaign to remove unregistered Sim card subscribers. “Last year, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications cooperated to remove unregistered SIM card users because some bought cards without providing identification information,” Vandeth said. The current population of Cambodia was 16,884,284 as of March, 2021. Currently, there are five mobile service providers in Cambodia – Smart, Cellcard, Viettel, Cootel, SeaTel – five mobile internet providers and 42 fixed internet providers. As of May, the report said Cambodia had about 10.9 million Facebook users.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50828681/number-of-registered-internet-subscribers-increases-in-2020/>

## New Laos president faces rising China debt and battered economy



*Laos News | 23 March, 2021*

The National Assembly of Laos on Monday elected Thongloun Sisoulith, the general secretary of the ruling party, as the nation's new president, entrusting a popular party leader with rebooting an economy devastated by the pandemic. Thongloun, 75, is the first civilian with no military background to serve in the top job. He was foreign minister from 2006 before

becoming prime minister in 2016. In addition to his native language, he speaks Vietnamese, Russian and English. Thongloun was chosen as general secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party at January's party congress. Assuming Thongloun's old post of prime minister is Vice President Phankham Viphavanh. Both men will serve five-year terms. Mindful of the traps of one-party rule, Thongloun has taken great pains to avoid even a hint of impropriety in his conduct. He does not accept gifts or meet with guests outside his official duties. With his clean image, Thongloun is immensely popular among the public. "His popularity rivals that of Kaysone Phomvihane, the first party secretary and the father of modern Laos," said Norihiko Yamada of the Institute of Developing Economies at the Japan External Trade Organization. The newly reshuffled leadership faces the challenging task of growing the economy while managing the debt owed to China. Most dependent on China among the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Laos often sides with Beijing in international meetings. The goal is to graduate from its least-developed-country status as soon as possible. However, the pandemic has decreased workers who are able to cross into neighboring countries such as Thailand, dealing a blow to the Laotian economy. Born in the poor northern region of the country, Thongloun studied history and linguistics in the Soviet Union. "I am often impressed by how carefully he observes others to assess their ability," a diplomatic source said. Now Thongloun's own ability to tap the right talent will be

tested as he tries to chart a path for the country's growth.

Source : <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/New-Laos-president-faces-rising-China-debt-and-battered-economy>

## Marubeni-involved hydropower project in Myanmar to be frozen



*Myanmar News | 23 March, 2021*

Electricite de France SA, one of Europe's largest power companies, will freeze a hydropower project in Myanmar's northeast that also involves major Japanese trading house Marubeni, according to a local civic group briefed on the plan. The planned freeze is likely linked to the military coup last month that ousted the country's civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and sparked a wave of anti-coup protests that security forces have sought to crush using deadly force. Marubeni is part of the consortium pushing to build a giant hydropower station on the Shweli River in Shan State, and could be forced to take a related loss. The French government is a major shareholder in the French utility. The consortium had planned to build a 671-megawatt hydropower plant there by 2026 at a cost of about \$1.5 billion, making it one of the largest projects of the kind in Myanmar. The French utility, also known as EDF, told the local civic group in writing that it respects human rights and has suspended the development project as a consortium. It also told the group that it would monitor the situation while consulting with the French

government and European Union. Marubeni has not made public details of its involvement in the project, including the size of its investment. The Japanese company said in a statement that it will handle the case "appropriately" but did not say how it assesses the project's future prospects.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/marubeni-involved-hydropower-project-in-myanmar-to-be-frozen>

## Vietnam car imports surge over 20% in February



*Vietnam News | 23 March, 2021*

Ninety percent of imported cars in Vietnam in February came from Thailand, Indonesia and China. In February, Vietnam imported 10,039 cars worth US\$209 million, up 20.3% month-on-month in volume but down 1.88% in value, according to the General Department of Vietnam Customs (GDVC). According to the GDVC, 90% of imported cars in Vietnam in February came from Thailand (5,200 units), Indonesia (3,300) and China (589). Overall, nearly 18,400 cars were imported to Vietnam during the two-month period, up 23.7% year-on-year, of which, passenger cars made up a lion's share of over 12,000, or 66.3%. Customs statistics also showed that car accessories and parts worth US\$345 million were imported into Vietnam in February, up 10.2% month-on-month. Suppliers of those products were mainly from South Korea with US\$93 million, followed by Thailand (US\$63 million), China (US\$59 million) and India (US\$22.6 million). Overall, accessories and parts imported to

Vietnam during the January-February period reached US\$730 million, up 11% year-on-year. Data from the Vietnam Automobile Manufacturers' Association (VAMA) revealed the number of cars sold in Vietnam declined for two consecutive months in February with a contraction of 22% against the previous month to nearly 13,600 units. In the first two months of 2021, car sales in Vietnam, however, rose by 21% year-on-year to more than 40,000 units across all segments. As many as 23,120 locally assembled cars were sold in the period, up 11% against the previous month, and the figure of imported cars rose by 37% to 16,900 units.

Source : <http://hanoitimes.vn/vietnam-car-imports-surge-over-20-in-february-316742.html>

## Vietnamese tech firm exports first

### Bphone smartphones to EU



*Vietnam News | 23 March, 2021*

The Hanoi-based firm expects to expand its business scale from the export of this first batch. Bkav, a Hanoi-based technology firm, exported its first batch of Bphone to the EU, according to the company's Chairman Nguyen Tu Quang. The Vietnamese corporation said it signed a supply contract with a partner from an EU country which Quang did not specify but revealed it is a global military power. "Those who will use the high-end smartphones produced by us are very important people," Quang shared. "We have worked with our partners to develop a highly-secure operating

system which is based on our BOS for the model." The special order is expected to open up a new business model, which is suitable to Bkav's strengths including cyber security and premium hardware production, Quang said. "We may see the image of a European leader using the Made-in-Vietnam smartphone one day." Bkav also plans to launch some new models from flagship to mid- low range smartphones this year, however, did not disclose the specific date and product name. Last November, the Vietnamese maker exported its AI View security cameras to the US, which will be installed at the headquarters of Qualcomm Incorporated in San Diego, California, making a step closer to fulfill its goal of becoming the five leading camera manufacturers in the world. Bkav leader also announced that the launch of its true wireless AirB headset using Qualcomm's chipset will be available as planned.

Source : <http://hanoitimes.vn/vietnamese-tech-firm-exports-first-bphone-smartphones-to-eu-316743.html>