

Highlight News / March 26/2021



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5G development on a roll in Cambodia



Cambodia News | 25 March, 2021

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications said that commercial 5G development in Cambodia is on a roll as the ministry works to compile provisions to regulate the sector. Chea Vandeth, the minister of Posts and Telecommunications, said that the telecom firms have collaborated on developing the 5G technology alongside Chinese companies with several pilot trials having been conducted so far. “We are in the study stage now as we seek more understanding,” the minister said, adding that the ministry is discussing the provisions for infrastructure that will be needed for the latest generation technology. The Ministry is working on a policy that will allow all operators to have the required 100 MHz spectrum to run on the 5G network. As the necessity for continuous connectivity increases, 5G is seen as the answer to meeting this demand by creating a fast, purpose-built network tailored to serve the needs of both citizens and the economy. 5G will provide vast benefits to both society and the economy but its full potential cannot be realised without the active participation of government and regulatory authorities. 5G is the fifth generation technology standard for broadband cellular networks, which cellular phone companies began deploying worldwide in 2019. It is the planned successor to the 4G networks that provide connectivity to most current cellphones. [2]5G

networks are predicted to have more than 1.7 billion subscribers worldwide by 2025.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50829859/5g-development-on-a-roll-in-cambodia/>

Pepper production increase sought



Cambodia News | 25 March, 2021

Pepper farms and exporters are seeking to increase production in Cambodia to meet the high potential for export of the commodity. A discussion via virtual meeting is to be held on March 31 under the auspices of the Cambodia Pepper and Spices Federation. It has confirmed key pepper-processing firms and exporters including amru rice, sela pepper and confirel among other firms will join the meeting. The main topics on the agenda according to the federation’s Operation Manager. Van Vannal will be the commodity’s 2021 production and problems and solutions faced by export and processing firms and contract farming in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. “We currently have 11 exporting firms, so we will be able to estimate how many tonnes of pepper production will be available for export in 2021,” Vannal added. Problems facing the sector raised in the meeting will be reported and submitted to the relevant ministries and institutions for solutions, he added. A report from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries showed that pepper plantation nationwide covered 6,822 hectares in 2020. The ministry stated that of total pepper production, GI pepper accounts for between

70 and 100 tonnes per year, with organic pepper contributing between 100 to 150 tonnes yearly. Normal pepper production accounts for roughly 18,000 tonnes annually. The planting of pepper is expected to increase this year thanks to growing demand for the condiment on the international market, particularly from China. That figure is expected to increase by 5 percent to 7,163 hectares this year.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50829747/pepper-production-increase-sought/>

Laos' new PM begins work by spelling out problems and promising to solve them



Laos News | 25 March, 2021

The newly-elected Prime Minister, Phankham Viphavanh, has agreed with National Assembly (NA) members that Laos faces major challenges and problems, saying that acknowledgement of these issues is a good start to addressing them. "As policy-makers and public administrators, first of all we have to accept that problems exist in order to find ways to solve them," Phankham has announced. "If we do not accept these facts, we will not be able to solve these problems correctly," he added. Phankham made the comment when addressing a NA session designed to give him a platform to interact with lawmakers. Earlier, NA members engaged in a lively debate on the proposed five-year National Socio-Economic Development and state budget plans as well as advising the government on ways to improve

its performance. During the debate session, lawmakers presented a wide range of issues, ranging from problems involving economic difficulties, human resource development, and working and cultural issues, which Mr Phankham agreed with lawmakers that they must all be addressed. Phankham thanked NA members for their sincerity in raising their concerns and suggesting measures to address obstacles to development. "On behalf of the ninth government cabinet, I would like to say that I highly value the comments made by NA members, who represent the Lao ethnic people nationwide in formulating the 9th five-year socio-economic development plan as well as the budget plan to be implemented over the next five years," Phankham said. "The government would like to accept these comments and consider and use them as references when improving the plan as well as the implementation of the plan. [The government] will increase efforts to address these problems," he said. According to Mr Phankham, after listening to the debates, he and his work team had compiled the problems presented into five main categories, which the government would impose measures to address them. The first concern of NA members centred on the use of GDP as an indicator of national development. They claimed it was no longer relevant because it could not secure or create jobs or distribute wealth among the Lao ethnic people. The second concern was that most of the economy operated outside the formal system, meaning that the informal business sector was larger than the

formal business sector. The problem with this is that informal business activities are unsustainable because they have no access to secure markets. The third concern raised by NA members is that the imposition of laws and regulations to administer the socio-economic sector is irrelevant, and that the implementation of these rules is impractical. The fourth concern was that some state agencies and organization administrators did not clearly understand the new economic mechanism and the need for Laos to adapt to global economic integration. As a result, these agencies were not able to impose the regulations, laws and rules needed to control and promote business activities. The fifth concern centred on the fact that people feel they have to rely on external assistance and other forms of support. In addition, some officials are totally reliant on the aid provided by higher authorities. NA members said it was necessary for Lao society to build a culture of self-reliance. Meanwhile, the Lao Ministry of Health on Thursday (March 25) urged authorities and people countrywide to continue their efforts in implementing preventive measures to stop the spread of Covid-19. Deputy Director General of the Department of Communicable Diseases Control under the Lao Ministry of Health, Sisavath Southaniraxay, told a press conference in Lao capital Vientiane on Thursday it was essential that every person and all relevant authorities strictly abide by the new normal guidelines and rules set by the government. Sisavath added that the public should avoid leaving home for unnecessary reasons,

wear masks when going outdoors or visiting risky places, and frequently wash hands with gels or soaps. On Wednesday, a total of 3,114 people entered Laos through international border checkpoints. The temperature of each person entering Laos was checked and no one showed signs of fevers. Some 3,168 people have been put under quarantine at 35 accommodation centers across the country, said Sisavath. The total number of Covid-19 confirmed cases in Laos remained at 49 and 45 patients have recovered.

Source: <https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2021/03/25/laos039-new-pm-begins-work-by-spelling-out-problems-and-promising-to-solve-them>

63 Striking Myanmar Investment Staff Suspended by Junta



Myanmar News | 25 March, 2021

Myanmar's investment agency, now under military control, has suspended 63 staff, including a deputy director, who are striking against the regime. Striking civil servants face investigation under civil service rules after refusing to work for the military junta and demanding the return of civilian rule, according to leaked documents from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. The suspension list includes a deputy director, six assistant directors, 10 chief officers and 17 deputy chief officers. The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations agency mediates between

businesses and the government and aims to boost domestic and foreign investment. Thousands of civil servants are on strike in opposition to the military regime, despite facing legal action and intimidation from their superiors. The civil disobedience movement has included health care professionals, bankers, lawyers, teachers, engineers and police across the country. Last week, the military regime dismissed 56 striking Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff. Around 150 striking Electric Power Generation Enterprise staff said they received phone calls threatening suspension and prosecution if they fail to return to work. Coup leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing warned on Monday that civil servants will have to sign confessions the first time they fail to go to work. Further violations will incur prosecution under civil service rules. Under the civil services rules, the maximum action against staff is dismissal. No prison sentences can be applied.

Source : <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/63-striking-myanmar-investment-staff-suspended-junta.html>

Experts consider how Vietnam can attract greater investment from global firms



Vietnam News | 25 March, 2021

VOV.VN - Vietnam must stay active in inviting multinational corporations and renowned companies to invest locally, especially those from countries with advantages in terms of technology, capital, and management skills, including the United States, the EU, and Japan, according to insiders. The past five years has seen the foreign-invested sector make significant contributions to Vietnamese socio-economic development. Furthermore, the country has always represented an attractive investment destination for foreign investors due to Vietnamese FDI attraction increasing from US\$24.1 billion in 2015 to US\$38 billion in 2019, with the figure being recorded at US\$28.53 billion in 2020 despite the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Do Nhat Hoang, director of the Foreign Investment Agency under the Ministry of Planning and Investment, attributes investment inflows into the country to a number of recently-signed free trade agreements (FTAs). This includes the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The enforcement of these various FTAs has created a

wealth of opportunities for large foreign corporations, especially those in hi-tech fields, to invest domestically as they can maximise the benefits and incentives from these FTAs, Hoang adds. Furthermore, he underscores the importance of attracting technology projects relating to AI, blockchain, fintech, and training high-quality human resources that can meet the requirements for Vietnamese socio-economic development. Nguyen Hoa Cuong, deputy director of the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM), emphasises the need to effectively invest in innovation for businesses whilst helping small firms gain access to funding sources from banks. He therefore stressed that although the country can be considered vulnerable to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community has highlighted Vietnamese containment efforts and determination to improve the local business environment and turn the country into an ideal destination for investors. Nakajima Takeo, chief representative of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in Hanoi, says while other countries are still struggling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vietnamese economy has rapidly recovered, with Vietnam becoming the first nation to enjoy the various advantages of the diversification of the global supply chains. Moreover, with keen interest from foreign investors, including Japanese investors, the country should strive to

improve the local business climate to attract more high-tech investors whilst fine-tuning the legal system and supporting firms to overcome the adverse impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the JETRO representative states. According to Nguyen Van Toan, vice chairman of the Vietnam Association of Foreign Investment Enterprises, it is essential to promote technology transfer and corporate governance for Vietnamese enterprises, while also being proactive in inviting multinational corporations and companies with popular brands to invest in the country. Economic experts have therefore stated that it is necessary to complete the legal framework regarding anti-transfer pricing, revise regulations on tax management, whilst also increasing fines and penalties for acts of transfer pricing to ensure the strictness of law. This should be done alongside building and perfecting the database system and national information on FDI projects and enterprises. Source : <https://vov.vn/en/economy/experts-consider-how-vietnam-can-attract-greater-investment-from-global-firms-845168.vov>

Ha Noi strives to have 900 firms in supporting industries



Vietnam News | 25 March, 2020

HÀ NỘI — Hà Nội has set a target of having 900 businesses operating in the supporting industries this year, with 300 eligible to join global production networks of multinational groups in Việt Nam. The

target was set in Plan No 49/KH-UBND on the local supporting industry development programme in 2021, issued by the municipal People's Committee earlier this month. Under the plan, supporting industries would make up 16 per cent of the total production value of the city's processing and manufacturing sector. Those industries' industrial development index is hoped to expand 11 per cent annually. The plan also put forth tasks to help with the development of supporting industries like connecting firms and assisting them in becoming suppliers of domestic and foreign customers, attracting foreign investment in those industries and supporting enterprises in adopting advanced business and production administration systems as well as in promoting R&D activities, technology transfer and modernisation. Hà Nội has aligned the development of supporting industries with the orientation of industrial development, which will focus on making spare parts and accessories for high-tech industries, garment-textile, and leather and footwear.

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/911299/ha-noi-strives-to-have-900-firms-in-supporting-industries.html>