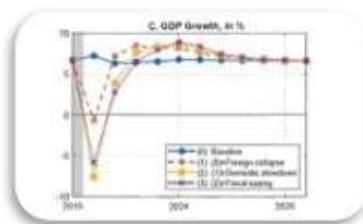


Highlight News / April 5, 2021



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IMF offers economic outlook on Cambodia



Cambodia News | 04 April, 2021

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued a report using macroeconomic frameworks to analyse the economic shock that COVID-19 has had on two countries: Cambodia and Colombia. The IMF team built a simulation model based on the Cambodian economy to project the short and medium-term impacts of the pandemic. Three assumptions were used to carry out the model. Those assumptions were recessions in countries which trade with Cambodia affected demand for Cambodian exports and led to a massive decrease in tourists, domestic supply and demand were affected by this and that the government will employ some kind of fiscal stimulus to counteract the first two assumptions. The report predicted that domestic demand will decrease by two percentage points in 2021 and that the country's risk premium will increase by 200 basis points in 2021 due to "tighter financial conditions." It also predicted a rise in food prices due to hoarding. The report also pointed to a potential gradual economic recovery starting this year. "The economy will start recovering in 2021, growing at more than two percent and in 2022 closing the output gap," the report said.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50833827/imf-offers-economic-outlook-on-cambodia/>

Cambodia-ASEAN trade volume recorded over \$11. 330 billion in 2020



Cambodia News | 04 April, 2021

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and ASEAN was valued at \$11,330 million in 2020, a year-on-year increase of 22.42 percent. The figures from the Ministry of Commerce shows that from January to December 2020, Cambodia exported \$3,722 million goods to ASEAN, up by 185 percent compared to the same period last year. Cambodia imported about \$7,607 million worth of products from ASEAN, a year-on-year decline of 4.33 percent, added the same source. In 2019, the two-way trade was recorded at \$9,254 million. Phal Sophanith – AKP

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50833785/cambodia-asean-trade-volume-recorded-over-11-330-billion-in-2020/>

production Mass rollout of Covid-19 vaccine gets underway



Laos News | 05 April, 2021

The government has begun vaccinating the most vulnerable and at-risk groups in a step towards ending the acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. The national rollout of COVAX-supported vaccines began at Mittaphab Hospital in Vientiane on Friday. Present on the occasion was the Deputy Head of the Prime Minister's Office, Mrs Thipphakone Chanthavongsa. Vaccinations were administered on April 2 and 3, with the aim of immunising about 4,000

individuals categorised as being at the greatest risk of exposure to Covid-19 and those most likely to develop severe symptoms from infection. After this initial push the vaccines will be administered in seven main hospitals in Vientiane and the provinces. The vaccines were received on March 20 and were provided by the COVAX Facility, a partnership between the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF, and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The shipment consisted of 132,000 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India. This shipment is the first of Laos' initial allocation of 480,000 doses. COVAX aspires to provide enough vaccine to supply at least 20 percent of the population this year, according to a press release from UNICEF. Deputy Minister of Health, Associate Prof. Dr Phouthone Muongpak, said the mass vaccination using the first batch of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines supported by COVAX is another critical step towards achieving the country's goal to end the acute phase of the pandemic. To successfully end the pandemic, everyone must do their part, he said. It is vital that those who are listed in the most vulnerable and at risk groups get vaccinated so that all communities can be protected against Covid-19. According to the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan, the priority groups comprise healthcare workers, adults above the age of 60, and people with underlying health conditions. Some essential workers will also be prioritised based on the nature of their job and

high-risk of exposure to the virus, such as workers at points of entry and in quarantine centres, and diplomatic staff. WHO Representative to the Lao PDR, Dr Mark Jacobs, said no country was safe from Covid-19 unless every country was protected, and vaccines were the key to achieving this. The Covid-19 vaccines have been carefully reviewed by WHO and assessed for quality, safety and efficacy.

"I would like to congratulate the Lao government on its efficiency and swiftness in organising this mass vaccination session, only shortly after receiving the latest shipment of vaccines supported by COVAX," Dr Jacobs said. The vaccines that will be used in Laos have gone through rigorous development and safety testing procedures, and the Ministry of Health's Food and Drug Department has assessed the evidence, benefits and risks. The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine licensed to the Serum Institute of India provided through COVAX was authorised for emergency use by the Ministry of Health on February 22, after being listed for emergency use by WHO on February 15. UNICEF Representative to the Lao PDR, Dr Pia Rebello Britto, said "UNICEF is proud to be playing a major role in procuring Covid-19 vaccines for Laos through the COVAX facility with the support of partners." "It brings me joy to see how the vaccines that we have worked tirelessly to procure are now being used by Laos to take another important step towards ending the pandemic and for the good health of all."

"UNICEF, alongside our sister agency WHO, will continue to work closely and provide our technical

expertise to the government to ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines across the country,” Dr Britto said.

Source: https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Mass_66.php

Kilo guava enhance family income in Kyaukse



Myanmar News | 02 April, 2021

THE local growers are earning extra income from manageable scale kilo guava cultivation in Kyaukse township. At present, some pagodas have now reopened, and the guava market has revived. The Kyaukse Township is engaging mainly with farming business. There are also many creeks, dams and lakes near Kyaukse farmlands. The villagers from Kyaukse township are growing the paddy crops typically under the irrigated water system. Also, they are growing other essential seasonal produce such as sesame, bamboo, banana, green gram, chilli and turmeric. “I have cultivated more than 100-kilo guava trees on a manageable scale for four years to earn family extra income. The fruits could yield after a year of planting. My guava farmland is close to Mahar Shwe Thein Taw Pagoda. The shopkeepers opened the shop in pagoda come and buy the kilo guava from our farmland. Earlier, the sale of kilo guava was declined because the pagodas were closed in the pandemic period. Now, the pagodas are reopened under the COVID-19 condition, and many vendors are selling near the pagodas. So, the vendors come and buy the kilo guava in our farmland for K150 per

fruit daily. Now, the kilo guava farmland is enhancing extra family income,” said Daw Aye Win, a kilo guavas farmland owner from Thinthauung village. Guava is considered a nutritionally-valuable and remunerative crops. The fruits are consumed widely in the country where retailers traditionally sell the fruits mainly in the markets and near bus stops. The trees of guava are grown at least 12 feet away from each other so that the tree can have fresh air and will be having beautiful fruit. After passing the planting time for a year, the trees bear the fruits. Each fruit is wrapped in paper and covered with plastic bags to make the fruits beautiful and prevent germs from penetrating. Then, it can start to pick up after two months of covering with plastic bags. Guava cultivation requires fewer labour and input costs. So, guava is a crop that should be grown. — Thet Maung (District IPRD)/GNLM

Source: https://cdn.myanmarseo.com/file/client-cdn/gnlm/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2_April_21_gnlm.pdf

Tamu border still requested to close



Myanmar News | 03 April, 2021

The Tamu town border area in the Sagaing region between Myanmar and India is still requested to close, said U Kyaw Win Oo, the Tamu District administrator. “We have submitted a request to the divisional level authorities to close the borders in the area between Myanmar and India at the end of March. But, we haven’t got any information yet. We have also requested that if the authorities open the borders for some reasons, they should open the

crossings only to load the cargos,” he said. Myanmar mainly exports to India foodstuffs, personal goods, kitchenware, fruits and vegetables, beans, onion, garlic and areca nuts through the Tamu border route while importing from India foodstuff, clothes, electronic products, motorbikes, cotton yarn, non-alloy steel and other construction materials. Myanmar government has closed the bilateral border crossing between Myanmar and India in Tamu town from 14 to the end-March. Now, we have requested divisional level authorities to close the border checkpoint again. Nearly 60 per cent of the local residents from Tamu town depend upon the border for their livelihood. According to the locals, the Myanmar-India border crossings have hampered the flow of trade for the residents. There are two Myanmar-India border crossings in Tamu township No 1 checkpoint and No 2 checkpoint. Border trade between Myanmar and India hit US\$145 million as of 19 March in the current financial year 2020-21 ending September, said a statistical report of Myanmar’s Commerce Ministry. – Lulay/GNLM

Source: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/tamu-border-still-requested-to-close/#article-title>

Central Retail to invest \$1.1 billion in

Việt Nam in next 5 years



Vietnam News | 03 April, 2021

HCM CITY — Thai retailer Central Retail Corporation has unveiled a five-year plan to invest 35 billion baht (US\$1.1 billion) to expand in Việt Nam. Yol Phokasub, its CEO, said: “Throughout CRC’s nine

years of operations in Việt Nam, food has remained a significant category, contributing approximately 70 per cent of total revenues. The company [now] aims to solidify the non-food category and enhance its omnichannel platform. The omnichannel platform will include online sales, e-commerce, quick commerce, social commerce (chat & shop), hotlines, and ‘click and drive’ services. Philippe Broianigo, CEO of Central Retail Vietnam, said: “CRC has set up a five-year road map with the key focus on expanding multi-concept penetration in all clusters across city centres and suburban and rural areas, revamping brands in the food category for better synergy and enhanced customer experience, building brands in non-food categories, and developing the omnichannel platform.” Last year, the company opened four GO! malls in Trà Vinh, Quảng Ngãi, Buon Ma Thuot, and Bến Tre provinces; rebranded Big C to GO! and opened the first go! supermarket in Quảng Nam Province. This year it continues its expansion with an investment of six billion baht (\$191.8 million). It will open four GO! malls in Thái Nguyên, Bà Rịa, Thái Bình, and Lào Cai provinces, and one go! mini supermarket and change 15 Big C to eight GO! hypermarkets and seven Tops Market, and further diversify its non-food business. Its long-term plan is to expand to 55 provinces nation-wide within five years. It currently gets an average of 175,000 customers a day in to its 37 malls and over 230 stores across 39 provinces. — VNS

Source:<https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/917608/central-retail-to-invest-11-billion-in-viet-nam-in-next-5-years.html>

HSBC grows less bullish on Vietnam growth prospects



Vietnam News | 03 April, 2021

HSBC has revised downward its estimate for Vietnam's GDP growth this year from 7 percent to 6.6 percent. The lender said in a note it made the revision after growth in the first quarter was lower than expected. Vietnam's GDP grew at 4.48 percent in the first quarter, according to the General Statistics Office. HSBC said however that given an upswing in the tech cycle, consistent FDI inflows and multiple free trade agreements, Vietnam remains among the brightest prospects in Asia. "Exports in the first quarter rose over 20 percent year-on-year, driven by burgeoning demand for electronics and machine equipment. In particular, [Vietnam] has benefited from an extended strong global tech cycle and unwavering FDI interests." It forecast inflation of around 3 percent for 2021, well below the State Bank of Vietnam's 4 percent ceiling. Despite external resilience, the recovery in domestic demand has stalled, given strict the social distancing measures due to the new outbreak, the bank said. With the third wave which began in late January under control, domestic demand is likely to revive in due course. HSBC revised upward its growth forecast for 2022 by 2 percentage points to 8.5 percent. The World Bank has forecast Vietnam to be among the

fastest growing economies in East Asia and the Pacific in 2021 with a likely rate of 6.6 percent. Standard Chartered Bank has forecast Vietnam to grow at 7.8 percent this year, with manufacturing driving the revival. The Asian Development Bank and the IMF have forecast 6.1 percent and 6.5 percent rates.

Source:<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/economy/hsbc-grows-less-bullish-on-vietnam-growth-prospects-4256989.html>