



सत्यमेव जयते

EMBASSY OF INDIA
CARACAS



FEBRUARY 2020

COMMERCIAL REPORT

For more information, please write to Vishwa Nath Goel, Second Secretary, Embassy of India, Caracas at com.caracas@mea.gov.in or com1.caracas@mea.gov.in

Embassy of India

Economic & Commercial Report for February 2020

1. Statistical data

i. Bilateral Trade

Period	Imports from Venezuela		Exports to Venezuela		Total trade	
	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs
2019-20 (Apr-Jan) (P)	4,967.12	3,502,164.91	204.82	145,736.07	5,171.94	3,647,900.98
2018-19	7,258.95	5,080,946.23	164.77	115,404.78	7,423.72	5,196,351.01
2017-18	5,866.37	3,779,668.44	79.21	51,053.33	5,945.58	3,830,721.77
2016-17	5,512.06	3,696,429.07	62.22	41,615.42	5,574.28	3,738,044.49
2015-16	5,701.81	3,715,029.41	130.66	85,177.63	5,832.47	3,800,207.00
2014-15	11,729.89	7,158,579.90	258.07	158,004.43	11,987.96	7,316,585.00

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Export Import Data Bank, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry. Venezuela has not published any official data in respect of trade after 2014.

ii. Top 10 items of Venezuelan Imports from India

(US\$ million)

S.N.	Exports	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1	Mineral fuels and mineral oils	0.03	0.05	0.03	-	83.45
2	Pharmaceutical Products	143.55	73.17	24.55	54.48	62.13
3	Nuclear Reactors, Boilers, Machinery and Mechanical Appliances	11.95	14.58	11.01	5.58	3.41
4	Cotton	22.1	6.58	3.11	1.56	2.46
5	Organic Chemicals	4.41	3.39	1.75	1.75	1.98
6	Miscellaneous chemical products	2.04	4.07	0.81	2.88	1.20
7	Rubbers and articles thereof	1.35	0.64	0.58	0.71	1.00
8	Paper and paperboard	1.44	0.44	0.66	0.52	0.96
9	Coffee, tea, mate and spices	0.87	0.19	0.35	0.21	0.70
10	Man-Made Staple Fibers	15.60	3.69	1.91	3.85	0.62

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Export Import Data Bank, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

iii. Top 10 items of Venezuelan Imports from the World

(US\$ million)

S.N.	Commodity	2015	2016	2017	2018
1	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation	2,551.22	1,791.58	2,026.32	4,579.99
2	Cereals	1,159.44	823.56	792.06	897.60
3	Machinery and mechanical appliances	4,453.03	2,326.53	1,479.55	877.15
4	Electrical machinery, equipment and parts	2,242.76	997.94	608.54	440.62
5	Animal or vegetable fats and oils	532.81	257.40	223.92	288.53
6	Organic chemicals	942.19	531.70	308.33	258.82
7	Vehicles, parts and accessories	1,835.93	880.38	371.96	207.14
8	Residues and waste from the food industries	421.21	369.22	181.84	205.95
9	Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	193.75	73.98	85.37	203.77
10	Commodities not elsewhere specified	214.69	249.60	102.09	184.28

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE), Government of Venezuela. Venezuela has not published any official data in respect of trade after 2014. The above data after 2014 has been obtained from the International Trade Centre (ICT) – Trade Map (calendar year).

iv. Top 10 items of Venezuelan Exports to India

(US\$ million)

S.N.	Imports	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1	Mineral Fuels and Oils	11,669.14	5,678.63	5,505.88	5,859.40	7,248.15
2	Aluminium and Articles Thereof	1.75	6.56	3.52	2.22	5.49
3	Iron and Steel	51.06	13.87	-	0.08	1.54
4	Wood and Articles	-	0.01	0.11	0.84	0.86
5	Lead and Articles Thereof	0.38	0.76	0.45	1.67	0.74
6	Raw Hides and Skins and Leather	0.04	0.18	0.08	0.09	0.78
7	Zinc and articles thereof	-	-	-	0.71	0.44
8	Paper and Paperboard; Articles of Paper Pulp	0.22	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.37
9	Plastic and Articles Thereof	0.14	0.54	0.62	0.77	0.18
10	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	-	-	-	-	0.13

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Export Import Data Bank, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

v. Top 10 items of Venezuelan exports to the World

(US\$ million)

S.N.	Commodity	2015	2016	2017	2018
1	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation	34,600.17	24,207.76	28,246.42	29,981.84
2	Natural or cultured pearls,	936.12	2,929.33	1,058.71	2,718.24
3	Organic chemicals	588.31	376.42	534.23	561.66
4	Iron and steel	416.23	280.83	356.80	251.39
5	Aluminium and articles thereof	263.00	242.92	332.26	229.15
6	Ores, slag and ash	365.35	363.15	339.28	219.03
7	Fish and crustaceans	86.77	125.78	154.10	163.94
8	Fertilisers	146.31	205.10	186.69	82.32
9	Inorganic chemicals	233.28	129.42	128.70	80.69
10	Copper and articles thereof	8.94	48.12	61.07	73.94

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE), Government of Venezuela. Venezuela has not published any official data in respect of trade after 2014. The above data after 2014 has been obtained from the International Trade Centre (ICT) – Trade Map (calendar year).

vi. Monthly Inflation Rate

S.N.	Month	National Assembly estimates (2020)	Central Bank of Venezuela figures (2020)
1	January	65.4%	-

Source: Central Bank of Venezuela and National Assembly of Venezuela.

vii. GDP Growth %

Year	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	Total
2014	-5.2%	-5.4%	-2.7%	-2.6%	-3.9%
2015	-1.4%	-4.8%	-7.4%	-10.2%	-5.9%
2016	-13.4%	-17.6%	-19.0%	-17.9%	-17.0%
2017	-12.2%	-15.6%	-15.8%	-18.9%	-15.7%
2018	-18.1%	-17.6%	-22.5%	-	-
2019	-26.8%	-	-	-	-

Source: Central Bank of Venezuela.

2. Trade queries for import/Exports

No.	Enquiry originator	Product
1	BTE International	Copper bottle and all other Handicrafts Item
2	Grupo Telares Maracay (from Venezuela)	Textiles

3	YAMUNA EXPORTS	Cumin Seeds, Ground Nuts, Fresh Mangoes
4	Proyectos Vimany (Venezuela)	Technology projects
5	Skon International	Herbal products
6	CORPORACION MAS FOOD RC, C.A (Venezuela)	Coffee, cocoa and tea
7	Lapreven (Venezuela)	Pharmaceutical products
8	Adiraj Global Private Limited	Jaggery, Red Chilli, Chickpea
9	SH & Company	Surgical Gloves, Examination Gloves (Powder-Free)
10	Elite Corp	Agricultural Commodities & Dehydrated Products
11	Kelvin Plastic Private Limited	Plastic products
12	Aniket singapuri	Narrow Woven Fabrics
13	Agrima Exim	Pulses: Chickpeas, Pigeon peas, Split green gram, Red lentil, Black gram. Grain: Rice (Basmati and Non-basmati), Wheat flour, Sugar, Sesame seeds. Spices: Fennel seed, Cumin seeds, Pepper black Pepper white, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander, Dried red, Jakhya, and Turmeric powder. Dried Fruits: Cashew nut, Peanut, Green cardamom, Kismis, and Poppy seeds. Leather Products: Jackets, Belts, Wallets, Shoes, and Bags
14	Mahabir Industries	Timber
15	Mfg-Exporter	Grains- Cereals, Salt , Oil Seeds, Spices, Castor Oil- Animal-Poultry Feed & Other Agro Food Products
16	NIRMAL INTERNATIONAL	Salt, Spices,Marine Products,Dehydrated Food Stuff and Lemon Products
17	GRUPO PROFARMA 1515 c.a. (Venezuela)	Pharmaceutical products
18	Corporación Havana Gruop (Venezuela)	Pesticides and fertilizers
19	VORTEX FLEX PVT LTD	Leather Ladies Bags, Automobile Seat Covers, Rain Wear, Synthetic Leather, Pvc Flooring
20	Henry Marcano (Venezuela)	Sugar, Vegetable Oil, Wheat Flour, Cement, Pulses, Spices
21	SBC Solutions(OPC) Private Limited	Pharmaceutical medicines packaging materials
22	VANDANA INTERNATIONAL	Paper products
23	Stylam Industries Limited	High Pressure Laminates (HPL), Granex - Acrylic Solid Surface, Fascia - Exterior Cladding, Cuboid - Toilet Cubicles and Lockers, PreLam MDF Boards, Polyester Solid Surface

3. Commercial and Economic News:

INDIA – VENEZUELA

India's Reliance says purchases of Venezuelan oil have been approved by the U.S: India's refining firm Reliance Industries said on 06 February 2020 that its purchases of Venezuelan crude were reported and approved by the U.S. government amid sanctions imposed by Washington since early 2019 on PDVSA. [Read more.](#)

Indian buyers of Venezuela oil vowed compliance as US sanctions hit Rosneft: Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries is studying the impact of the newly imposed U.S. sanctions on a unit of Russia's Rosneft over trade of Venezuelan crude oil, and would make sure that its purchases from Venezuela comply with the U.S. regulations. "Reliance will continue its direct communications with the U.S. Government to ensure that Reliance's purchases of Venezuelan oil after the Rosneft Trading SA (RTSA) sanctions are both compliant with U.S. sanctions and consistent with U.S. policies regarding Venezuelan oil sector," the Indian company said in a statement. [Read more.](#)

Indian oil firms to wind down business in Venezuela fearing US sanctions: Indian refiners Reliance Industries Limited and Nayara Energy are reportedly planning to wind down purchases of Venezuelan oil in April fearing future U.S. sanctions could choke off all avenues to trade with state-run oil firm PDVSA. Such a step by Reliance, would severely curtail purchases by one of Venezuela's last big export destinations. India accounted for about a third of Venezuela's oil shipments in January. The move comes as U.S. President Donald Trump warned during his visit to India in February of an increase in sanctions on Venezuela. The U.S. Government set a 20 May 2020 deadline for companies to wind down purchases from Rosneft. [Read more.](#)

OTHER NEWS

Venezuela's banks store millions in Dollars and Euros: Some US\$ 1.8 billion worth of foreign currency entered Venezuela in the last year. At least half a dozen Venezuelan banks began using vaults to store millions of dollars and euros accumulated in cash by businesses during an unexpected economic liberalization of the Venezuelan economy. The private banks' new custodial

service of storing the cash - which reportedly began discreetly in late 2019 and has not been previously reported in full - is further evidence of how the ruling Socialist Party is allowing financial arrangements that would be unthinkable for most Venezuelan citizens. The new service is only offered to well-known firms with significant revenue and long-standing accounts. By storing cash that

comes from established firms, banks avoid contact with companies that are linked to the government, which is under a broad sanctions programme by the US Government. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela exported 14% less oil in January: Venezuela's oil exports declined almost 14% in January 2020 from December 2019, but crude oil inventories fell, helping PDVSA deal with a storage glut accumulated due to U.S. sanctions. PDVSA exported 951,903 barrels per day of crude and refined products in January 2020 against 1.1 million bpd in December 2019, and 1.38 million bpd in January 2019. Venezuela's exports fell by 33% in 2019, to an average 1 million bpd, primarily due to sanctions imposed in early 2019 by the US Government. Unsold crude inventory has eased since October 2019, as PDVSA recovered one of its most important markets: **India**. In January, **India** was the largest market for Venezuela's oil, receiving 38.5% of total exports, followed by Singapore, Togo and Malaysia, countries where PDVSA's crude is transshipped and blended before reaching final destinations such as China, the data showed. [Read more.](#)

Trinidad cancelled gas deal over U.S. sanctions on state-run Venezuelan company: Trinidad and Tobago cancelled an agreement with Venezuela for the joint development of a natural gas field straddling their maritime border because of U.S. sanctions on Venezuela's state energy company PDVSA. Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister, Keith Rowley, said on 03 February 2020 that the two countries will now independently develop the 10.04 trillion cubic feet Loran-Manatee shallow-water field. "Progress in the development of the unitized Loran-Manatee field has been impeded by the sanctions imposed by the U.S. government,

which inhibits U.S. companies from doing business with Venezuelan oil company PDVSA," Rowley said. [Read more.](#)

Chevron said activities in Venezuela are permitted by U.S. Treasury: Chevron Corp said on 06 February 2020, that its operations in international crude marketing through joint ventures in Venezuela are permitted by the U.S. Treasury and that it may pay for expenses related to maintenance of operations. [Read more.](#)

Industrial federation warned that wheat reserves reached to zero: The President of the Flour Workers Federation of Venezuela (Fetraharina), declared to media that only 2 out of 14 wheat flour mills in Venezuela, are active. In addition, he warned that the levels of the wheat flour reserves in Venezuela have dropped to zero. [Read more.](#)

Reduction of imports affected the customs activity: According to the President of Industrial and Customs Chamber of Vargas state, Venezuelan imports have reduced from US\$ 60 billion in 2012, to US\$ 6 billion in 2019. During a media interview, he declared that between 2007 and 2012, private imports were reduced by 98%, as the Government almost became the sole importer of food, medicines and luxury vehicles. This situation has affected the customs activity. In 2007, the customs warehouses were given for the Government to control, and out of 80 warehousing companies, only 10 remain active. [Read more.](#)

Venezuelan Government approved partial reform of customs tariffs to strengthen national market: President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, approved the partial reform of the customs tariffs to bring quality to the market and strengthen the capacity of the

companies to export. The President declared that his government would create a tariff and para-tariff balance policy “in all of those products that we are making in Venezuela to supply the market with quality”. [Read more.](#)

Telecommunication operators to be ruled by a new tax reform: The National Commission for Telecommunications of Venezuela (Conatel), announced that on 27 February 2020, the new reform of the Organic Tax Code of Venezuela would be enforced. The new rule establishes that fines would be fixed using the currency with the highest exchange rate given by the Central Bank of Venezuela. [Read more.](#)

Central Bank of Venezuela published inflation figures for 2019: The Central Bank of Venezuela announced that Venezuela closed 2019 with 9,585.5% inflation, a sharp fall from 130,060% in 2018. The drop in inflation came after the government last year unexpectedly relaxed 15 years of stringent economic regulation, abandoning enforcement of price controls and allowing dollar transactions in the face of runaway inflation and U.S. sanctions. [Read more.](#)

Government of Venezuela allowed companies to issue securities in hard currency: On 05 February 2020, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro authorized local companies to issue securities in hard currency, amid a broad liberalization of an economy that was for years hemmed in by stringent controls. “The other important thing that has been proposed is legal authorization for companies to issue securities in foreign currency ... approved!” said Maduro during a televised broadcast. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela to impose tax up to 25% on purchases in foreign currency: Venezuela

will begin applying an extra sales tax on purchases of goods using foreign currency under a law approved this week by the National Constituent Assembly. The law allows the government to impose a tax ranging between 5% and 25% on goods purchases made in foreign currency. [Read more.](#)

Puerto Cabello port made paperwork-free hub for exports: During a meeting of President Nicolas Maduro with representatives of the Federation of Industries (Fedeindustria), and members of Venezuelan SME’s, it was decided to make the port of Puerto Cabello in Carabobo state, as a paperwork-free hub for exports. [Read more.](#)

2nd Fitven Business Round inaugurated: Over 200 tourism operators, public and private investors and more than 15 Embassies, participated in the inauguration of the 2nd Fitven Business Round held in Caracas on 12 February 2020, organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Foreign Trade of Venezuela. During the inauguration, Felix Plasencia, Minister for Tourism and Foreign Trade, promoted Venezuela as destination for international tourism and investment. During his opening remarks, he recognized the importance of **Indian market** for Venezuela as it represents along with China, almost 3 billion people. He said that Venezuela wants to have business with **India**. [Read more.](#)

Value of national gold reserves fell by 15.52% in 2019: In respect of 2018, Venezuela lost around US\$ 879.85 million in terms of national reserves, whilst in terms of international reserves lost US\$ 2.23 billion. The value of the gold reserves maintained by the Central Bank of Venezuela, fell by 15.53% in 12 months, from US\$ 5.66 billion in 2018 to

US\$ 4.78 billion by the closure of 2019. [Read more.](#)

National Assembly published inflation rate for January 2020: According to the opposition-led National Assembly of Venezuela, inflation rate for January 2020, stood at 65.4%. [Read more.](#)

ATM for buying and selling cryptocurrencies to be installed in Caracas: According to media reports, an ATM for buying and selling cryptocurrencies is to be installed at CCCT, one of the largest shopping malls in Caracas. This device would allow for the purchase and sale of bitcoin, dash and Litecoin, and would accept US Dollar payment as well. [Read more.](#)

Unrestricted imports of sugar affected Venezuela sugarcane growers: According to the Sugarcane Growers Federation of Venezuela (Fesoca), the unrestricted imports of sugar affected most of the national growers of sugarcane. The Federations called for halting the import of sugar, considering that they are generating unfair competition in detriment to the national industry. [Read more.](#)

Fedeagro warned that coffee production fell by 50% in 2019: According to the Federation of Agricultural Producers of Venezuela (Fedeagro), national production of coffee fell by 50% in 2019, as the coffee growers lacked raw materials and fertilizers, and to a larger extent, due to the rising inflation. The Federation informed that they are operating without public or private financing. [Read more.](#)

Chevron says oil output share at Venezuela joint ventures dropped 16% in 2019: Chevron Corp's share of oil output at its joint ventures in Venezuela PDVSA dropped

16% in 2019 to 35,300 bpd, down from 42,000 bpd in 2018, a company spokesman said on 11 February 2020. The drop mirrored the decline in crude output across Venezuela last year, according to data provided to OPEC, as it suffered from crippling blackouts in March and April 2019 and U.S. sanctions on PDVSA. [Read more.](#)

Commercial establishments accept Euro at US Dollar market rate: Formal commercial establishments and street vendors are accepting Euro at US Dollar market rate on the day. Despite the value differences amongst the two currencies, shops are forcing customers when paying in Euros, to value it at the same rate as the US Dollar representing a loss on the payer. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela's shipment of crude oil to Spain grew 412.44% in 2019: According to the Corporation for Strategic Reserves of Petroleum Products (CORES), Ministry for Ecologic Transition of Spain, Venezuela has multiplied oil exports to Spain since 2018. CORES indicated that by the end of 2019, Venezuela had sent 15,700,860 barrels of crude oil, representing an increase of 412.44% in comparison with 2018, when Venezuela had exported 4,610,570 barrels. It is believed that most of the oil sent to Spain, handled by Repsol, is intended for the reduction of the debt that Venezuela has with the European country. [Read more.](#)

Venezuelan pharmaceutical sector operates between 25-30%: The President of the Pharmaceutical Industry Chamber of Venezuela (CIFAR), indicated that the national pharmaceutical industry is operating between 25-30% of its capacity and it does not count with enough medicines to supply the local market. He also indicated that at the moment, medicines in Venezuela are much

costlier than international prices due to the economic system and the absence of public policies by the State. [Read more.](#)

U.S. slapped sanctions on Russian oil firm Rosneft: On 18 February 2020, the United States blacklisted a subsidiary of Russian state oil major Rosneft that President Donald Trump's administration said provides a financial lifeline to President Nicolas Maduro's government. The U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Rosneft Trading SA, the Geneva-based trading unit of Rosneft, as Washington targeted Moscow over its backing of Maduro's government. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela suspended flights from Portugal's TAP after Guaido flight: The Government of Venezuela said on 17 February 2020 that it would suspend TAP Air Portugal flights in and out of the country for 90 days, accusing the carrier of allowing opposition leader Juan Guaido's uncle to bring explosives onto a flight to Caracas during the second week of February. [Read more.](#)

More than 64% of Venezuela's sales are now in foreign currency: Venezuela is becoming increasingly dollarized, as greenbacks help shoppers avoid the inconvenience of the hyper-inflationary local currency. An estimated 64% of all sales in Venezuela involve foreign currency, of which 55.7% are made in dollars, according to a survey of almost 16,000 transactions carried out from 09-14 February across 10 cities by local economic research firm. Over the past year, the U.S. dollar has become Venezuela's unofficial currency. The collapse of the bolivar, which shed 99% of its value against the dollar in 2019, mirrors that of the Venezuelan economy, which is entering its sixth year of decline. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela's PDVSA investment portfolio exceeds US\$ 25 billion: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said that the national oil and gas corporation PDVSA's portfolio of investment proposals exceeds US\$ 25 billion. "Investment proposals today exceed US\$ 25 billion. In oil production and refining, petrochemicals and much more", Maduro said at a meeting with representatives of PDVSA's employee council. [Read more.](#)

Fedeagro denounced that Pequiven would not produce or import fertilizers: According to the President of the Federation of Venezuelan Farmers (Fedeagro), Pequiven, the state owned company in charge of the production of fertilizers in Venezuela, would not be producing or importing any fertilizers in 2020. He said that this would have an impact on the local production as they are unable to access credits as the banks are lacking funds to provide financing. "This situation leaves production adrift", he added. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela exported 50 tons of cocoa to Indonesia: Governor of Miranda, Hector Rodriguez, informed that a shipment of 50 tons of cocoa from Miranda state, were exported to Indonesia, as part of a strategy of strengthening local economy not dependent on oil. "This is an important effort of exporting this product to a friendly country, Indonesia in Asia, and that's where we are heading", the Governor said. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela turned to Russian money printer to buy millions of Bolivar bills: The Government of Venezuela turned to a state-owned money printer in Russia to purchase 300 million new bolivar bills. The notes would carry denominations ranging from 10,000 (US\$ 0.14) to 50,000 bolivars (US\$ 0.68). The cash order would reportedly be worth US\$

143 million. In the past, the government has struggled to make good on its dues with bill suppliers. In 2019, De La Rue, one of the world's largest makers of bank notes, reported a nearly US\$ 23 million hit due to outstanding debts with Venezuela. [Read more.](#)

Movistar invests US\$ 10.5 million in new 4G technologies: Spanish telecommunications company Movistar, announced that they were investing US\$ 10.5 million in Venezuela for the activation of 339 new 4G nodes to expand the service to 10 additional cities in Venezuela. The new cities would be Acarigua, Barinas, Cabimas, Ciudad Ojeda, Guarenas, Guatire, Los Teques, Maturin, San Antonio and San Cristobal. [Read more.](#)

PDVSA sought buyers for 677,000 bpd of February crude: PDVSA had 677,000 bpd of crude available to sell for February. PDVSA reportedly offered deep price discounts for its crude, and flexible loading windows of more than 30 days. The volume available for sale represented 80% of the 850,000 bpd of total crude production by PDVSA for February, as estimated by media. Reports indicated that 502,000 bpd of Merey crude is available for February, 40,000 bpd of Boscan, 23,000 bpd of Laguana and 17,000 bpd of Bachaquero. Another 95,000 bpd of Special Hamaca Blend (SHB) is also available. SHB is produced by PDVSA/Chevron Petropiar joint venture. In addition, same reports mention that between February and March, **India-based** Reliance has agreed to supply PDVSA with 260,000 barrels of Ultra-low-sulfur diesel (ULSD) and 260,000 barrels of diesel. [Read more.](#)

Basic food basket in Venezuela averaged US\$ 317.62 in January 2020: According to the Center for Documentation and Analysis

for Workers (CENDA)'s monthly report, the price of the basic food basket in Venezuela for January 2020, averaged US\$ 317.62 or Bolivares 24,139,128.44. As per the study, this represented a 58.3% increase in respect of December 2019 and 2,560.60% in comparison with January 2019. The report indicated that for a regular Venezuelan family to obtain all the products of the food basket, they would require 96.5 minimum salaries per month. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela's PDVSA paying off debt to Russia's Rosneft as scheduled: PDVSA is paying off the debt it owes to Russia's Rosneft as scheduled, Rosneft Vice President for Commerce and Logistics Otabek Karimov said on 19 February 2020. "Everything is going on as scheduled, we do not disclose more detailed information", Karimov said, when asked how many deferrals Venezuela discharged in the fourth quarter of 2019. Rosneft has given to PDVSA around US\$ 6.5 billion in advance payments for oil deliveries. The Venezuelan state oil company is expected to settle the debt fully by the end of 2020. As of the third quarter of 2019, its advance payment arrears amounted to US\$ 800 million. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela revamped PDVSA leadership after Maduro launched restructuring: PDVSA announced changes in its leadership and has named new Vice Presidents for its four units as well as a new President for the unit that handles joint ventures with private oil companies. President Maduro named a commission led by Economy Vice President Tareck El Aissami in February to restructure the industry. [Read more.](#)

In Venezuela's major cities, over 50% of goods are sold in hard currency: More than 50% of basic goods sold in Venezuela's major

cities are paid for in hard currency, according to a local economic consultancy firm Ecoanalitica. This is happening amid a broad liberalization campaign by the government of Venezuela. Some 52% of goods such as food and clothing are sold in euros or dollars in the capital of Caracas, a figure that is closer to 90% in the border cities of San Cristobal and Maracaibo near Colombia, Ecoanalitica said in a report. Dollar transactions have soared in Venezuela since Maduro relaxed price and currency controls at the end of 2018 following 15 years of astringent regulations. [Read more.](#)

Venezuela to let companies raise capital in dollars as President Maduro liberalizes economy: According to media reports, Venezuela would allow companies to raise capital in foreign currency, according to a new rule by the country's securities regulator, as President Nicolas Maduro liberalizes the struggling economy in the face of sanctions. The shifting policies and rhetoric from the government have prompted some companies, including rum distiller Ron Santa Teresa, to offer shares in local currency in the hopes of economic liberalization similar to that of China and the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The new rule by the National Securities Agency said that it would allow "the public offer of securities issued by the private sector in foreign currency." [Read more.](#)

US Government in talks about Chevron's operations in Venezuela: The US Government is in discussions about whether to renew the license for Chevron Corp's operations in Venezuela as Washington looks to increase pressure on its socialist leader. The Trump administration has been divided on whether to revoke California-based Chevron's ability to continue operations in Venezuela, home to the world's largest oil

reserves and where the company has been active for about 100 years. It has renewed the license for Chevron and four other U.S.-based companies several times and the current one expires on 22 April 2020. [Read more.](#)

PDVSA shifted oil cargoes to different Rosneft unit: PDVSA shifted several oil cargoes from Rosneft Trading SA to another affiliate of the Russian oil giant. Reports indicated that four cargoes carrying some 6.7 million barrels of Venezuelan oil (previously allocated to Rosneft Trading for February loading), were changed in February to another unit of the Russian firm, TNK Trading. Two of the cargoes were changed in the first week of February. [Read more.](#)

Oil tanker caught in protracted PDVSA-Citgo dispute finally set to leave Venezuela: A tanker laden with US\$ 57 million in crude discharged its cargo in Venezuela after sitting for more than a year off the country's coast due to a dispute between PDVSA and its U.S. unit Citgo Petroleum. The Gerd Knutsen, which had been stranded amid fallout over U.S. sanctions on PDVSA, arrived at the company's Jose oil terminal earlier this month under orders to discharge its crude. The tanker returned to Venezuela to discharge on the orders of a Caracas criminal court, said John Dalsvag of Norway-based Knutsen Group, which owns the tanker. He said he hoped the tanker would be able to depart for Aruba soon. [Read more.](#)