



Asia (ex-China) Retail & E-commerce

Weekly Updates

26 March – 1 April 2020

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the latest in Asia

Japan

[Apparel and footwear: Uniqlo to open giant retailtainment venue Uniqlo Park](#)

Uniqlo will open a giant retailtainment venue named Uniqlo Park, its largest store yet, at the recently refurbished Mitsui Outlet Park in Japan on 10 April; Uniqlo Park, apart from housing stores for both Uniqlo and its sister brand GU in the same location, will combine retail space and amusement facilities, featuring slides, jungle gyms, greenery and interactive spaces for families to rest and play

[Beauty and personal care: Shiseido unveils new skincare brand Baum](#)

Shiseido recently has rolled out a new sustainable skincare brand named Baum, which is developed with social responsibility and environmental considerations in mind; the new line, offering 27 new products, joins the company's prestige beauty portfolio including Clé de Peau Beauté, Nars, BareMinerals, Laura Mercier and Dolce & Gabbana

South Korea

[Retail in general: South Korea's retail sales up 9.1% yoy amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Retail sales in South Korea rose 9.1% yoy in February as more people purchased daily necessities through online platforms amid the COVID-19 outbreak; the growth was mainly attributed to a 34.3% yoy growth in online sales as local consumers moved online and refrained from visiting crowded places or having face-to-face contact during the outbreak

[Retail in general: Big three retailers in South Korea seek to buy e-commerce and logistics firms](#)

Lotte Shopping, Shinsegae Group and Hyundai Department Store, the three largest retailers in South Korea, are seeking to acquire logistics and e-commerce firms to accelerate migration of their sales to online channels; major retail chain E-Mart, a subsidiary of Shinsegae Group, has been in talk to buy the country's fourth largest logistics firm Logen, while Lotte Shopping and Shinsegae are also reportedly interested in acquiring eBay Korea

[Duty-free sales: South Korea's duty-free sales slump in February](#)

South Korea's duty free sales were nearly halved in February as air travel came to a halt given escalating COVID-19 outbreak in the country; South Korean duty free operators posted sales of 1.1 trillion won (US\$904.2 million) in February, down 45.5% mom, according to the South Korea Duty-Free Association, while the number of shoppers also plunged 54% mom to 1.75 million, of which 40% were foreigners

Singapore

[Retail in general: Singapore urges public to stay home and avoid non-essential trips to malls to curb spread of COVID-19](#)

The Singapore government on 28 March advised the public to stay home and avoid non-essential trips to malls, requesting the public to practise safe distancing seriously in a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19; Singaporeans are also advised to buy food and groceries online and reduce physical interaction, while local malls and supermarkets have also implemented safe distancing measures to regulate the flow of people to limit the spread of the virus

[Retail in general: Singapore announces unprecedented stimulus plan worth US\\$33.7 billion](#)

The Singapore government passed through on 26 March an unprecedented stimulus plan worth around S\$48 billion (US\$33.7 billion) to deal with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic; a key part of the stimulus package involves boosting the jobs support scheme first announced in February, meaning that the government will now offset up to 25% of monthly wages, capped at US\$3,225 per worker, for nine months

[Supermarkets: NTUC FairPrice launches exclusive shopping time for vulnerable citizens](#)

Singapore's largest supermarket operator NTUC FairPrice has recently introduced priority shopping hours for "vulnerable" members of the community, including senior citizens, pregnant women and people with disabilities, to help them access vital grocery supplies while practicing social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic

Thailand

[Retail in general: Shopping malls, markets in Bangkok close for three weeks due to COVID-19](#)

Shopping centers and markets in Bangkok have remained closed since 23 March, as a move to contain the spread of COVID-19; the massive closures are in response to a Bangkok government edict to shutter all department stores and markets in the capital for three weeks to curb the outbreak

[Retail in general: Thai mall operator Central Pattana to waive rents of retailers hit by COVID-19](#)

Thailand's largest mall operator Central Pattana Plc will waive the rental fees of retailers ordered to close temporarily by the government as a measure to curb spread of the Covid-19 contagion; the company has launched some necessary services for customers, including food

delivery, take-home pick up counters and drive-throughs, while supermarkets, pharmacies and convenient stores in its properties stay open

[Convenience stores: 7-Eleven Thailand hires 20,000 delivery staff amid COVID-19 outbreak](#)

7-Eleven Thailand is recruiting 20,000 workers to handle deliveries during the COVID-19 outbreak, as part of the retailer's efforts to ramp up its delivery services to support those in isolation; the newly recruited staff will be responsible for deliveries from all 7-Eleven locations throughout the country

India

[Retail in general: India unveils US\\$22.5 billion stimulus to help those affected by lockdown](#)

The Indian government announced on 26 March an economic stimulus package worth 1.7 trillion rupees (US\$22.5 billion), aiming to help millions of low-income households affected by the 21-day lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak

[Retail in general: 30% modern retail stores in India face closure if lockdown prolongs](#)

In India, 30% of modern retail stores, including those selling non-essential goods apparel, jewellery and consumer electronics, are expected to shut down permanently if the 21-day lockdown announced by the government on 24 March continues until June, according to Retailers Association of India; currently, India has over 1.5 million modern retail stores which generate 4.7 trillion rupees worth business, with 6 million people working for these stores

[Retail in general: Discretionary spending in India take big hit over COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Discretionary spending in India is expected to take a hit of US\$45 billion (3.3 trillion rupees) per month due to the COVID-19 outbreak, equivalent to 1.4% of GDP, according to a research by Axis Capital; on average, an Indian consumer spends about US\$80 per month on discretionary items including clothing, footwear, household equipment, and recreation

[Department stores: Reliance Retail acquires Shri Kannan Departmental Store](#)

Reliance Retail Ventures Limited, a retail unit under India's conglomerate Reliance Industries, has recently acquired local department store chain Shri Kannan Departmental Store for US\$20 million; the investment will further strengthen the group's retail operations and facilitate its retail and new commerce initiatives

[E-commerce: BigBasket offers jobs to those laid-off amid COVID-19 lockdown](#)

India's online grocer BigBasket has teamed up with the National Restaurant Association of India and Retail Association of India to offer temporary jobs to laid-off restaurant staff and retail employees due to the COVID-19 lockdown

[E-commerce: E-commerce platforms in India suspend cash on delivery payment method](#)

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