

Highlight News

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Cambodia rice export up 1.9 pct in 1st two months



Cambodia exported 112,486 tons of milled rice in the first two months of 2019, an increase of 1.9 percent over the same period last year, according to an official report on Friday. China is the biggest buyer of Cambodia rice, said the report from the Secretariat of One Window Service for Rice Export. Cambodia export 43,452 tons of milled rice to China during the Jan.-Feb. period this year, up 32 percent over the same period last year, it said, adding that Chinese market absorbed 38.6 percent of Cambodia's total rice export. According to the report, Cambodia rice export to the European markets declined by 33 percent during the period because the European Union, in January, imposed tariffs on rice going from Cambodia in a bid to curb a surge in rice imports from the kingdom. The Southeast Asian nation shipped 33,969 tons of rice to Europe in the first two months of this year, down 33 percent over the same period last year, the report said. Cambodia produces around 10 million tons of paddy rice a year, according to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Source:<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/taiwanese-garment-company-posts-surge-kingdom-profits>
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Government creates 'great tourism zones'



A sub-decree issued Thursday coined 'great tourism zones', a term for areas where a wide range of tourism-related services is available. In last week's sub-decree, the government describes the zones as areas that have accommodation, food and beverage services, entertainment complexes, sports facilities, gardens, parks, health care centres, and other tourism-related facilities. Great tourism zones must cover at least 100 hectares, according to the sub-decree. Investors that wish to create great tourism zones in any part of the country must first submit an application to the Tourism Development Committee of the Ministry of Tourism, who will study and evaluate the project and submit a report to the government, the sub-decree said. Top Sopheak, spokesman at the Ministry of Tourism, told Khmer Times that the concept of great tourism zones is modelled after special economic zones, areas that bring together facilities needed to streamline manufacturing activity. "In Khmer, the word 'great' (piseth) has a similar meaning to the term 'special'. That's why the government chose this word," Mr Sopheak said. "Great tourism zones are hubs that offer all tourism-related services. It is based on the same idea that special economic zones, which focus on manufacturing," he said. Mr Sopheak said great tourism zones cannot be established in existing tourism sites but only in new locations that show great tourism potential.

Source:<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/pal-launch-new-route-between-manila-pp>
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Govt considers tax to protect environment from industrial pollution



Industries that produce pollution may have to pay more taxes now that the government has embraced the National Green Growth Strategy. Under the strategy, which Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith endorsed on January 30, the Ministry of Finance will impose taxes to discourage industries from producing pollution and harmful waste. At present, industries pay corporate tax, which is calculated at 24 percent of a company's profit, as well as excise, value-added, and income tax. Tax officials cannot yet say what form this new tax would take. But what is clear to the media is that such a tax would be imposed to deter companies from producing pollution. In some countries, governments impose a carbon tax, which is levied on companies that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. However, many countries see this tax as reducing the competitiveness of their economies. In addition to the environmental protection tax, the finance ministry may also impose taxes in support of energy saving, efficient use of natural resources, and fairer distribution of wealth, in support of the new strategy. The government plans to implement the initiative from now until 2030. To promote green growth, the

strategy advises the finance ministry to reduce taxes or offer tax exemptions to businesses that import modern and environmentally friendly technologies and machinery, so that Laos can reduce the amount of environmental damage. The finance ministry is also recommended to levy low or no taxes on green products so that businesses can make their operations more competitive. This would result in green products being cheaper so that more people would be encouraged to use them. In rolling out the green growth strategy, the banking sector must introduce monetary policies that favour investment in environmentally friendly operations. This would mean that companies that committed to producing less pollution would be able to get easier access to finance. In addition, companies that are committed to protecting the environment would be able to get lower interest rates on bank loans. According to a report from the President of the National Economic Research Institute, Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh, environmental degradation and climate change are costing the country a lot of money. At a meeting to discuss measures to implement the green growth strategy on March 5, he said that since 1970 Laos had suffered 33 serious flood events, which had negatively impacted 9 million people. The economic cost of the floods totalled about US\$4,400 million. In average, the economic cost of natural disasters was 2.8-3.6 percent of the GDP value each year. This was a stumbling block on Laos' path to graduation from the UN's list of Least Developed Countries..

Source:http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Govt_considers_59.php
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Water supplies still an issue in Myanmar



Despite having plenty of water, Myanmar faces a problem of not having enough water for its people, Vice President U Henry Van Thio said. “Factors such as differences in rainfall, increasing population in big and small cities, population density, and more industrial zones have led to a rapid rise in water usage, which results in water shortages,” he said at the World Water Day 2019 ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday. Myanmar has 16 percent of freshwater resources in ASEAN and 12pc in Asia, but due to environmental issues such as droughts and winds, Myanmar faces water issues like other developing countries, he said. “Basic requirements such as access to safe drinking water and water for sanitation and waste treatment are still an issue in many parts of the country,” said U Henry Van Thio. Moreover, as wastewater and chemicals are disposed of in rivers and creeks without proper treatment, there are water pollution problems. To solve these issues, the country needs to systematically implement comprehensive water-resource management. Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Zin Maung said, “Myanmar is prone to cyclones, floods and riverbank erosion during the rainy season, and drought is common during summer, so the government requires the assistance of all relevant ministries, organisations,

development partners and international organisations.” The government has been implementing measures, such as infrastructure development, to store more water and efficiently use water. Also, education campaigns to help the public understand the importance of water and its conservation are needed. “The sharing of knowledge and technology, consultation and partnership must be promoted among water users,” U Henry Van Thio said.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/water-supplies-still-issue-myanmar.html>

08/03/62

AYA Bank to sue debtors for funds used to run YBS bus lines



Ayeyarwady (AYA) Bank is planning to sue its debtors for failing to repay funds borrowed to operate bus lines under the Yangon Bus Service (YBS), which began operations in January 2017. AYA Bank announced on March 7 that it had lent money to several private companies in the business of supporting development and operations of the YBS. However, a handful of those companies have yet to repay the funds borrowed. Consequently, AYA Bank has already met with, issued official bank notices and finally served legal notices to its debtors. AYA Bank had also informed the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) of its plans to sue. The bank made the announcement after news was

Rice and broken rice exports expected to decline



circulated on social media by local online news platform Hit Taing claiming that the bank is suing Omni Focus General Services Public Company Limited for outstanding funds in relation to the YBS. Omni Focus operates bus lines under YBS and is owned by the grandson of former Myanmar dictator U Nay Win. According to social media, Omni Focus borrowed K100 billion from AYA Bank but still owes the bank more than half the amount. The bank added that the funds owed to it by its debtors represent just 1 percent of its total assets. In a statement released on March 8, Omni Focus said that the news released by Hit Taing on social media is unethical and “not true.” It added that it had already sent a reply to AYA Bank in January proposing how it would repay the capital and interest owed. It also denied that the Yangon Regional Government acted as a guarantor of the loan from AYA Bank. In its statement, Omni Focus condemned the news, saying this could tarnish its reputation as well as the image of AYA Bank and the Yangon government. It added that it had the necessary documents and records related with the transaction and would present these in court if necessary. So far, the government has not issued a statement on the matter. Attempts by the Myanmar Times to reach the YRTA were unsuccessful. The Myanmar Times also contacted Omni Focus spokesperson U Kyaw Nay Win, who declined to comment over the phone.

Source: <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/aya-bank-sue-debtors-funds-used-run-ybs-bus-lines.html>

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From April 1, 2018 to March, 2019, Myanmar’s rice and broken rice exports are expected to reach about 2.3 million tons, down about 1.2 million tons compared with the same period last year. Ye Min Aung, President of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) said: “This year, we have exported more than two million tons of rice. The total rice exports are expected to hit about 2.3 million tons including the additional exports in March.” In the past, Myanmar’s fiscal year was from April 1 to March 31. Since 2018-2018 fiscal year, Myanmar has changed its fiscal year from October 1 to September 30. Aung Than Oo, Vice-President of MRF said: “Our calculation is based only on crops. It is related to the paddy harvest season. It is nothing to do with the government’s fiscal year. But the rice export is calculated during the period from April 1 to March 31.” “In 2017-2018 FY, Myanmar exported more than 3.5 million tons of rice and broken rice. The rice export broke the record set over 50 years ago. The total rice export is no more than three million tons. Over five or six years, the country exported more than two million tons of rice,” Ye Min Aung added. The country earned 699.467 million US dollars from exports of over 2.115 million tons of rice and broken rice from April 1, 2018 to February 15, 2019. Exports of rice via the border trade camps account for 50 per cent of the total export while the exports of rice via sea route represent over 49 per cent. During ten and

half months, Myanmar exports rice to more than 50 countries. Myanmar is negotiating with China to official export a quota of 400,000 tons of rice to China. Both sides will soon sign the MoU, Aung Than Ooaded.

Source:<https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/commercially-proven-gas-reserves-found-offshore-zawtika-field.html>
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Myanmar's gems emporium to kick off in capital city



The 56th Myanmar Gems Emporium is due to kick off in the capital city of Nay Pyi Taw on Monday, expecting to attract over 2,600 gems merchants from China, Thailand, Australia and the United States, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation on Sunday. The emporium, which is also expected to draw over 900 local gems merchants, will put a total of 274 pearl lots, 500 jewelry lots and 6,974 jade lots on sale at the 10-day event which will last until March 20. Arrangements will also be made to produce and sell finished gemstones and jewelry besides selling raw gems, said U Ohn Win, minister of natural resources and environmental conservation, when pre-inspecting the display of gems and jade lots on Saturday to be auctioned at the event. In the last 55th Myanmar Gems Emporium held in June 2018, 495 million U.S. dollars worth of 5,259 jade lots, 3 million

U.S. dollars worth of 341 pearl lots and 1.6 million U.S. dollars worth of 69 gems lots were sold under open tender system. At that event, licensed and authorized buyers from both home and abroad included those from China, Thailand, Canada, Australia and the United States, of whom the majority were from China. Sponsored by the ministry, Myanmar gems emporium has been held annually since 1964..

Source: <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/mandalay-host-sme-trade-fair-first-time.html>

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Canada supports SME development in Tra Vinh



The management board of the small- and medium-sized enterprise development project in the Mekong Delta province of Tra Vinh (SME Tra Vinh) has revealed that it will spend 70 billion VND (3 million USD) to support provincial SMEs in 2019, including over 65 billion VND from the Canadian government in non-refundable aid. To Ngoc Binh, the project director, said that of the investment, more than 10 billion VND will be used to support startup activities, while over 23 billion VND will be spent to assist the building of trademarks for major products, promote production connectivity, and expand markets. Additionally, nearly 22 billion VND will be invested in activities to improve the business environment and enhance provincial competitiveness. The rest will be

poured into communications and project management, said Binh. In 2018, the SME Tra Vinh project disbursed nearly 28 billion VND on activities supporting businesses, including developing SMEs in the 2018-2020 period in association with activities related to gender, ethnic minorities and the environment; expanding markets and communications for coconut products; facilitating startups; and the building, monitoring and evaluating of plans to develop SMEs. Through the activities, local SMEs have enhanced their management capacity and strengthened their connectivity with partners to expand their markets, while receiving support to realise ideas on developing key products of the province. Currently, Tra Vinh has about 2,200 businesses operating with a total investment of over 25,600 billion VND and a combined workforce of nearly 90,000 hands. To support the growth of firms, Global Affairs Canada has funded the SME Tra Vinh project in the 2014-2020 period with a total investment of 12.1 million CAD (8.17 million USD). The objectives of the project include assisting the growth and improving the competitiveness of SMEs in the province, benefiting about 200 enterprises and more than 194,000 locals in 22 rural areas

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/govt-seeks-more-private-sector-foreign-help-education.html>

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