

Highlight News

March, 20/2019



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150 Megawatt Coal-fired Power Plant in Sihanoukville to Operate September 2019



Cambodia News | March, 19/2019

March 18 - Keo Rattanak, Minister attached to Prime Minister and Director General of EDC, confirmed to Fresh News Monday that a new 150 megawatt coal-fired power plant in Sihanoukville's Stung Hav will launch in September 2019. According to Rattanak, the project has started its construction for more than two years, jointly managed by General Electric (GE) and Toshiba. The construction of the power plant is invested by Malaysian firm Cambodia Energy II Co., Ltd., having GE as supplier of electrical equipment for both the plant and distribution network

Source: <http://en.freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/localnews/13390-2019-03-18-13-50-29.html>

Kingdom's tobacco industry undergoes decrease last year



Cambodia News | March, 19/2019

Cambodia's tobacco industry saw a decrease in cultivation last year, despite the Kingdom being granted duty-free and quota-free exports of tobacco leaves to Vietnam, according to Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries data. Cambodia produced 7,454 tonnes of tobacco last season, an 18 per cent decrease from the previous season's 9,089 tonnes, while cultivation fell 16 per cent to 5,743ha nationwide from 6,859ha. Tbong Khmum province is the Kingdom's largest producer of tobacco. Sum Ra, Kroch Chhmar district's Agriculture office chief in Tbong Khmum province, said tobacco

cultivation has seen a decrease in the last few years due to market fluctuation. "Tobacco cultivation is not much of a challenge, it is easy to grow along the river," he said. "Tobacco cultivation increases and decreases depending on market fluctuations. Farmers will alternate with corn if the tobacco market is not good." Ministry of Commerce spokesman Seang Thay on Monday said Cambodia still enjoys preferential duty-free market access to Vietnam for agricultural products, which includes tobacco. In 2016, Cambodia and Vietnam signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) granting preferential tariff treatment for agricultural products crossing their shared border. Under the agreement, the Kingdom was allowed to export 3,000 tonnes of dried tobacco to Vietnam duty-free for one year starting in 2016. Ministry of Commerce data shows the Kingdom exported a total of 1,200 tonnes of tobacco to Vietnam in 2017, worth \$2.37 million, a 24 per cent increase from 2016. In 2016, 989.75 tonnes were exported, valued at \$1.91 million. "The MoU with Vietnam brings a potential market for exporters and also for farmers as they save on tariff costs and increase product value," he said. "Farmers cannot export to Vietnam directly but a sustainable market will ensure [stable] prices for them." Besides exports, farmers supply tobacco to Cambodia-based British American Tobacco (Cambodia) Limited under a "contract farming" system, a system offering tobacco farmers more security than selling to Vietnam. Khun Bochheang, a tobacco farmer with 10ha of land in Kroch Chhmar district, said it is currently tobacco leaf harvesting season and prices would be known next month. He said he sold his dried leaf stock at \$2 per kg last year. "We've never heard of any new market from Vietnam, we sell only to tobacco factories. However, we have no idea yet how much we'll be able to sell [the

tobacco] for next,” he said, adding that sales will begin at the end of this month and last throughout April.

Source:<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/kingdoms-tobacco-industry-undergoes-decrease-last-year>

UNDP helps farmers adapt to climate change



Laos News I March, 20/2019

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Laos has helped farmers improve their rainwater management infrastructure that helps to prepare the region for changing weather patterns associated with climate change and which secures the agricultural sector in Xayaboury province. Representatives from the Ministry of Nature Resources and Environment and the UNDP recently visited the site of a project entitled “Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector to Climate Change Impacts at Nasom Village, Xayaboury Province” which came to an end in 2015. The support the project provided to the agriculture sector in these drought-prone areas came in the form of 126 tanks with a capacity between 1,000-1,600 litres each. 288 well tube-rings of 1,000 litres each and seven steel tanks with a capacity of 3,000 litres for rain harvesting were also provided, according to a report on the UNDP website. Some 15 small scale reservoirs with a capacity ranging from 80 to 7,500 cubic meters were also constructed in various areas of Xayaboury province. “Climate change is already impacting agricultural production and the long term future of agriculture and food security for the local people is at risk,” concerned officials reported during their project visit.

However, the positive impacts brought about by the UNDP project remain evident today. The reservoirs that were constructed have helped farmers grow crops, even across the dry season, and tanks have been useful in providing fresh water to many villagers. Projects such as this help push forward the government’s food security programme and drive to meet its sustainable development goals which include zero hunger in the country by 2030.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry reported in its recent strategy that the Department of Agriculture is now focusing its efforts on helping farmers across the country adapt to the changing weather. The Rice Research Centre, for example, is putting a lot of time and energy into improving the efficiency and output of various rice varieties. Testing programmes are being run on farmers properties in the hopes that new rice types can be developed that will grow in warmer, more variable conditions. The National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute has also set up a rice breeding programme aimed at developing new climate-resilient rice varieties. This programme breeds rice varieties that have submergence tolerance and drought tolerance. The programme is also exploring grains that have different aerobic qualities, direct seeding processes and species that are shatter resistant when harvested using large mechanical equipment.

Source:http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_UNDP.php

Vietnam shares experience in developing cooperatives with Laos

 **Laos News I March, 20/2019**

Deputy Prime Minister Vuong Dinh Hue (R) and Head of the Lao National Economic Research Institute Bouasone Boupavanh (Photo: VNA) Hanoi (VNA) – Deputy Prime Minister Vuong Dinh Hue shared Vietnam’s experience in developing cooperatives with a delegation of the Lao National Economic Research Institute in Hanoi on March 19. Vietnamese cooperatives have seen a change for the better after 15 years implementing the resolution adopted at the fifth plenum of the ninth Party Central Committee on collective economy, and 10 years implementing the resolution of the seventh plenum of the tenth Party Central Committee on agriculture, rural areas and farmers, he said. The official said new-style cooperatives have not adversely affected household economy but, on the contrary, helped increase values of the model. Up to 60 percent of Vietnamese cooperatives are operating effectively instead of the previous 10 percent, he said. The Deputy PM stressed that leaving farmers to operate cooperatives by themselves or using administrative orders to get farmers join in cooperatives will not produce good outcomes, adding that cooperatives should be formed and developed on the basis of economic benefits. He also underlined the need to develop cooperatives in tandem with the process of agricultural production restructuring, and the building of new-style rural areas. Regarding the State-owned sector, Deputy PM Hue affirmed Vietnam’s policy of equitisation of State-owned enterprises and divestment of State capital while applying market standards and norms towards enhancing transparency in

the sector’s operation, and separating the State management function from the representative role

Source: <https://www.talkvietnam.com/2019/03/vietnam-shares-experience-in-developing-cooperatives-with-laos/>

Government Cancels License Requirements for Imported Spare Auto Parts

 **Myanmar News I March, 19/2019**

Ministry of Commerce has cancelled import license requirements for importing spare car parts. The cancellation only applies to spare parts used for brand new cars, not for used car imports the Customs Department announced on March 18. Thanks to the liberalization of the importation process, it will be faster to import parts and the importers will save time and money because they won’t need to apply for an import license, according to the statement of the department. However, the importers will have to comply with 9 regulations for imported spare parts, such as that the imports must be brand new, and come with the HS Code described in the import declaration as well as other factors such as quantity, brand, sub-brand, part number, weight, etc. All which should be stated in the import declaration. Furthermore, the statement highlighted that the importers, when submitting the import declaration, will no longer need to mark the category: ‘Imports of goods to be cleared under SCA Section 29’, which is one of the categories in the import declaration. Myanmar’s automotive aftermarket and aftersales services industry is undergoing an impressive growth phase following the ease of car import regulations after decades of restrictions, therefore demands for spare

parts and aftersales services are on the rise, according to the automotive experts. Stakeholders in the industry welcome the move.

Source: <https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/governments-cancels-license-requirements-imported-spare-auto-parts>

Myanmar, Thailand Border Trade Hit

1.4 Bln USD in 1st Half of FY 2018-19

 Myanmar News I March, 19/2019

Border trade between Myanmar and Thailand totaled about 1.4 billion U.S. dollars in the first half of fiscal year (FY) 2018-2019 which started in October last year, according to the figures from Myanmar's Ministry of Commerce Saturday. The country's export to neighbouring Thailand reached 985.8 million U.S. dollars while its import shared 412.9 million U.S. dollars. Myanmar carries out border trade with Thailand mainly through Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese border checkpoints. During the period, Hteekhee border gate topped with most bilateral border trade value of 791.6 million U.S. dollars. Myanmar exports agricultural and fishery products to neighbouring Thailand and imports cosmetics, food products, machinery and raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers. According to the ministry's data, the total trade between Myanmar and foreign countries reached over 14.18 billion U.S. dollars, including 4.05 billion U.S. dollars' border trade during the first half of FY 2018-2019.

Source: <https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/myanmar-thailand-border-trade-hit-14-bln-usd-1st-half-fy-2018-19>

Myanmar to Boost Trade, Investment Cooperation With Chinese Province

 Myanmar News I March, 19/2019

Myanmar has planned to promote trade and investment cooperation with China's Guangdong province for better development in the country, an official has said. China is the largest foreign investor in Myanmar and 20.3 billion U.S. dollars of investment from 304 Chinese enterprises entered Myanmar as of Jan. 31 this year, U Zaw Min Win, head of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) said during the Myanmar-China (Guangdong) trade and investment cooperation conference on Tuesday. Xie Guoxiang, economic and commercial counselor of Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, said Myanmar's cooperation with China's Guangdong province in the trade and manufacturing sector could support the socio-economic development of Myanmar. Ouyang Weimin, vice-governor of China's Guangdong province, said Tuesday's conference would create business opportunities, and expressed interest in boosting cooperation in infrastructure, manufacturing, trade, technology, tourism and health sectors. In 2018, trade between China's Guangdong province and Myanmar recorded 1.632 billion U.S. dollars, a 11.6-percent increase compared to 2017, the vice-governor said.

Source: <https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/myanmar-boost-trade-investment-cooperation-chinese-province-official>

Phone exports to Israel increase sharply

 **Vite nam News I March, 20/2019**

Exports of telephones and components from Việ̂t Nam to Israel hit US\$39.3 million in February, a month-on-month surge of 91.9 per cent. The total export turnover of Việ̂t Nam to Israel in February increased 8.15 per cent compared to the previous month to reach \$54.5 million.

The export turnover to this market in the first two months of this year reached \$104.4 million, declining 11.73 per cent compared to the same period last year. In particular, the exports of telephones and components accounted for a large proportion, up to 57.9 per cent of the total export turnover in the first two months of the year, reaching \$59.9 million. The Việ̂t Nam Trade Information Centre under the Ministry of Industry and Trade said that Israel was a small market with just 8.5 million people, but the country had a high per capita income (up to \$42,000 per person per year on average). Two-way trade turnover between Việ̂t Nam and Israel has grown steadily over the years and has reached over \$1 billion per year and is expected to reach the target of \$3 billion in the future. In addition to phones and components, agricultural products are strong points for Việ̂t Nam in this market, including seafood, cashew nuts, coffee and shoes. — VNS

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/507309/phone-exports-to-israel-increase-sharply.html#wBuLGMym6sgccKz.97>