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PM Hun Sen Urges Reasonable Price on Electric Generators



Cambodia News | March, 28/2019

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen urged electric generator salespeople to ensure reasonable price during the electricity crisis, addressing Wednesday at the annual meeting of Education Ministry. “This year, we have faced extreme electricity cut off. I urge the salespeople not to charge too much on supplying electric generators,” the Premier stated. The electricity shortages Cambodia faces resulted from the booming of construction sector, the increase of 700% in 2019 compared to last year. Cities in the capital Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville used to require only 20MW, now 100MW is not enough for those cities. EDC technical official said the hot weather has reduced water level in reservoirs that impacted hydroelectric dams. According to the government’s circular, Cambodia will face drought during April and May and that temperature will rise to 40-42 degree Celsius due to El Nino. In the circular, it stressed that the influence of El Niño will also cause less rainfall, thunderstorms and winds, and late rainy season. El Niño Southern Oscillation refers to the cycle of warm and cold temperatures, as measured by sea surface temperature of the tropical central and eastern Pacific Ocean. El Niño is accompanied by high air pressure in the western Pacific and low air pressure in the eastern Pacific.

Source:<http://en.freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/localnews/13517-2019-03-27-15-14-31.html>

EU Imposes Tariff on Cambodian Rice, as EU Rice Can’t Compete with Cambodian



Cambodia News | March, 27/2019

The European Union has begun to impose import taxes on rice of Cambodia and Myanmar, which are exported to 28 EU Member States, for a period of three years from 18 January 2019-2021. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen stated that the EU’s decision on Cambodian rice was made after complaints from Italy and Spain, saying Cambodia and Myanmar rice imported into Europe are hurting European farmers, addressing Wednesday at the graduation ceremony held at National Institute of Education in Phnom Penh. Prime Minister reassured his compatriots that at the end of the day, Cambodia could not avoid tax payment; the kingdom economy reached a certain point that is over qualified for preferential scheme. “Our companies have prepared to pay taxes. We will no longer follow their commands [ordering Cambodia to do this and that]” said the Premier. Over the past two months of 2019, Cambodian rice export increases despite the prerequisite import taxes the EU imposed for a period of three years from 18 January 2019-2021, according to Prime Minister. By the end of February 2019, the kingdom has exported 33,900 tons of rice to EU out of the 110,000 tons exported. For 2019, Cambodia will pay 175 euros per ton. It is worth noting that the European Union is an important market for Cambodian rice. In 2018, Cambodia exported nearly 300,000 tons of rice to Europe, an equivalent to 43% of the total export volume of 620,000 tons.

Source:<http://en.freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/localnews/13509-2019-03-27-05-37-07.html>

More than a thousand projects implemented unlawfully, top inspector says



Laos News | March, 28/2019

As many as 1,225 state investment projects have been implemented unlawfully over the past years, the Government Inspection Authority (GIA) reported this week. In 2017, the State Auditing Organisation (SAO) recommended GIA to inspect the projects after learning of irregularities. They included unapproved projects, projects that did not undergo a bidding process and those whose tendering did not follow the right procedures as well as those projects without assessment and projects categorised in the 'f' grade deemed as poor quality. As of 2018, some 678 projects have been completely inspected and 547 projects remained unchecked, according to the report presented at a meeting between the GIA and SAO on Tuesday. Deputy Prime Minister and President of the GIA, Dr Bounthong Chitmany chaired the meeting, with President of the SAO, Dr Vienthong Siphandone and relevant officials attending. The participants heard that many of the reported projects were infrastructure development projects. According to GIA, the inspection found that some projects were implemented without undertaking a survey and design. The projects were unapproved by the relevant departments. Though some were approved, the approval processes were just staged. Some projects were carried out without undertaking proper assessment as to whether they really needed to be

developed. Payment for some projects upon their completion was duplicated. Construction of several projects was reported as fully completed but actually was not. Work on some projects was cutback but investment cost remained unchanged. Worse, poor quality standards were applied to the construction of many projects resulting in infrastructure becoming damaged before the defined period. Moreover, investment costs for many projects were unreasonably high. "Many projects were implemented without transparent practices," GIA said, adding that all these issues have caused huge losses. All these issues have happened due to state officials in charge of the projects and those in relevant sectors as well as consultant companies conspiring for personal gain. The officials helped contracting companies hide the truth and did not report the facts to higher authorities, according to GIA. The inspection has enabled the government to save thousands of billions of kip and GIA pledged to carry out further inspection into the remaining projects and targets. Minister of Public Works and Transport, Dr Bounchanh Sinthavong told local media on Monday that the government could save more than 3.5 trillion kip (almost US\$419 million) from overvalued projects within the sector following inspections by relevant authorities. The excess costs were discovered during the inspection of 18 projects in 2017 and 12 projects inspected during the first 10 months of 2018.

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

Myanmar Real Estate Services Association to sell 10,000 units

 Myanmar News | March, 27/2019

The Myanmar Real Estate Services Association will sell over 10,000 apartments built by the Myanmar Licensed Contractors Association, according to the chair of the former, U Khin Maung Than. Most of the units are residential and about 10 percent are condominiums. “Two associations are cooperating in this venture to boost sales among both. It is mainly to strengthen each. Contractors will construct the buildings carefully and we will sell them effectively,” he said. As there are many units constructed by the MLCA, it signed a memorandum of understanding with the MRESA on Saturday under which apartments constructed by the MLCA will use the services of the MRESA. Many units built by the contractors haven’t been sold and many projects haven’t even started. “In the past, we were selling units on our own, but now we will sell by connecting with members. I hope to see more sales,” said MLCA Secretary U Lar Zar. Myanmar’s rental and sale of real estate has dropped around 40pc, and only units are that are less than K100 million are selling in Sanchaung, Kyeemyindaing, Thaketa, and South Okkalapa townships. Since 2014, Myanmar’s real estate market has slowed. MRESA has signed a deal to connect the market with other ASEAN countries.

Source : <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/myanmar-real-estate-services-association-sell-10000-units.html>

Rice demand from China declines, causing concern among farmer

 Vite nam News | March, 27/2019

The General Department of Customs (GDC) reported that Vietnam exported 712,000 tons of rice in the first two months of 2019, with export turnover of \$311 million, decreasing by 14.4 percent in quantity and 23.6 percent in value compared with the same period last year. China, which had always been the biggest buyer of Vietnam’s rice over many years, consuming 35-40 percent of Vietnam’s total exports, has fallen from the No 1 position. The country bought 9,500 tons of rice from Vietnam in the first two months of the year, worth \$4.5 million, a sharp fall of 95.14 percent in quantity and 95.48 percent in value. The Philippines has become the biggest importer of Vietnam rice with 315,000 tons having imported so far this year, valued at \$125 million, an increase of 80.92 percent in quantity and 60.63 percent in value. The second position belongs to the Ivory Coast, with 65,000 tons and \$30 million. Meanwhile, Malaysia is now in the third position with 38,000 tons and \$17.6 million, and Hong Kong, Ghana and Singapore are fourth, fifth and sixth. The decrease in rice exports to China was anticipated as the Chinese government has begun applying new policies, including higher tax imposition and tightening of imports across border gates. Nguyen Van Don, director of Viet Hung Co Ltd, said China warned in advance that it would tighten control over imports from Vietnam and ASEAN countries. In order to export rice products to China, Vietnam’s enterprises must satisfy many technical and administrative requirements.

Samples of export products must be tested at Chinese facilities, while the labels on products must include information about product origin as per international practice. In 2017, Chinese agencies granted licenses to 22 Vietnam's enterprises, allowing them to export rice to the country through official channels. However, in order to obtain visas to the Chinese market, exporters have to satisfy many other requirements. All the consignments of exports must be examined and the production progress must be controlled by Chinese agencies, from growing areas and production factories to storehouses and sterilization. However, rice exporters have regained optimism this year. The Vietnam Food Association (VFA) said more orders have come. Vietnam signed a contract on selling 120,000 tons of rice to Iraq, while Malaysian Bernas has ordered 25,000 tons of white 5 percent broken rice from Vinafood 1. Vietnamese exporters are negotiating with importers from the Philippines and China

Source:<https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/business/220663/3/rice-demand-from-china-declines--causing-concern-among-farmers.html>