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PM Hun Sen Orders Commerce Minister to Consider Complaints to WTO on EU's

Tax on Rice



Cambodia News I April, 2/2019

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen ordered commerce minister Pan Sorasak to consider on filing complaint to World Trade Organization regarding EU's tax imposition on Cambodian rice, speaking at the 18th Royal Government-Private Sector Forum held Friday at the Peace Palace. The order was made following the request from Cambodian Rice Federation (CRF). "CRF requested for complaint to WTO [...] the tax imposition is a violation against Cambodia," stated the Premier. 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. The tax will cost Cambodia 175 euros per ton in the first year, 150 euros the second year, and 125 euros the third year. In 2018, Cambodia exported nearly 300,000 tons of rice to Europe, an equivalent to 43% of the total export volume of 620,000 ton. Commerce experts claimed that Cambodia is likely to lose \$50 million per annum. The Ministry of Commerce said that the EU's decision on 17 January 2019 did not fully reflect international trade rules, technical standards, truth, and good relations and cooperation between Cambodia and EU. EU's decision will murder Cambodian farmers and families in debt of credit institutions.

Source:<http://en.freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/localnews/13542-2019-03-29-10-59-51.html>

Tourism dollars lost on imports



Cambodia News I April, 2/2019

PHNOM PENH, 1 April 2019: Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism will exert pressure on the country's hospitality industry to use more local products to spread the benefits of tourism to communities. The government is struggling with the task of balancing the benefits of tourism against the high costs of imports that supply the tourism industry. In a report published by Khmer Times at the weekend officials estimated Cambodia loses between USD300 to USD400 million in revenue because hospitality firms, mainly hotels and restaurants, are buying imported goods rather than locally sourced items. Speaking to reporters, on the sidelines of a conference promoting local products at the weekend, Minister of Tourism, Thong Khon, confirmed he established a working group to boost the production of agricultural goods, market garden produce and handicrafts that hospitality companies could buy to reduce the reliance on imports. "Some imports cannot be replaced, but some can. For instance, Cambodia does not need to import vegetables, fruits, chicken or beef as they can be produced locally," he told the media. Estimates suggest the tourism sector earned USD4.3 billion in revenue, last year, an increase of around 20%, but a massive slice of the foreign exchange earnings paid for imports. Last year, the country welcomed 6.2 million visitors an increase of 10.7% year-on-year increase. This year arrivals should reach 6.7 million and 7 million in 2020.

Source:<https://www.ttrweekly.com/site/2019/04/tourism-dollars-lost-on-imports/>

Laos-China Railway: Almost Half Of Affected Families Compensated



Laos News | April, 2/2019

Relevant authorities have paid over 76 billion kip as compensation for families affected by the Laos-China Railway Project in Luang Namtha. The amount equals 47 % of planned compensation. "Right now, the authorities have completed compensating 144 out of 317 families in four villages including Boten, Tintok, Bopeak and Natea which have been affected by the railway project," said Deputy Chief of Luang Namtha district Thongdeng Sithison. "We will continue to pay compensation worth 30 billion kip to 44 more families," said Mr Thongdeng. An initial report showed that 167 villages in 13 districts would be affected by the railway, which stretch more than 400 km from the Chinese border to Vientiane through the provinces of Luang Namtha, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang and Vientiane. Seventy five tunnels with a combined length of 197.83km have been drilled and being drilled along the railway line. The Laos-China Railway Project's cost is US\$5.8 billion with 70 per cent of which coming from China and 30 per cent from Laos. The project is on track and is set to be completed in 2021. The project is linked to the 'Belt and Road' initiative instigated by Chinese President Xi Jinping and is expected to contribute to increased friendly relations and cooperation between Laos and China and Asean as a whole. The Lao government places great importance on the project, which

is part of a planned regional rail network linking southern China to Singapore via Laos, Thailand and Malaysia.

Source: <http://kpl.gov.la/En/Detail.aspx?id=45307>

Myanmar To Allow Casino Gambling



Myanmar News | April, 2/2019

Myanmar is close to legalize casino gambling in a bid to boost the local tourism industry and attract foreign investors. Gambling will become legal in the country in May when the nation's 2018 Gambling Law is set to take effect. Select hotels in Yangon and Mandalay will be able to add casino operations under the new law, Myanmar Times wrote. According to Myat Nyarna Soe, Secretary of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Assembly of the Union) Joint Bill Committee which drafted the new legislation, the nation can no longer ignore the illegal border casinos as well the gambling venues operating in neighbouring countries. While casinos are currently not permitted in the country, there are several operational gambling venues of this type on remote islands and in border areas, including in the self-administered zones of Kokang and Wa. According to the report, President U Win Myint has recommended the proposed amendments to the country's Gambling Law from 1986 and it is now up to the parliament to approve the legislation. Lawmakers are set to resume work after this year's Thingyan (Burmese New Year Festival) in mid-April. News about the Southeast Asian country's plan to legalise casino gambling first emerged in 2017 when the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism requested the permission of casinos at selected hotels across islands that are popular with international tourists.

The legislation allowing casinos on the territory of Myanmar was jointly drafted that year by the Ministry for Union Government Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The new Gambling Law will aim to curb unregulated operations, create a tax revenue source from legal gambling services and boost the local tourism industry. However, it is yet to be determined whether the new rules and regulations would apply to already existing casinos in self-administered zones. Myanmar citizens will be able to operate casinos and to be employed at the facilities. However, gambling at those will be strictly prohibited and punishable for them under the new law. In addition, casino operators allowing residents of the country to gamble will face fines and sentences and will be forced to shut their operations down.

Source : <http://investvine.com/myanmar-to-allow-casino-gambling/>

jumped 25 places in the ranking in 2018 compared to two years earlier to rank 39th out of 160 surveyed countries.

The LPI is released by the bank every two years, and it measures performance in trade logistics based on six indicators: efficiency of customs and border management clearance; quality of trade- and transport-related infrastructure; ease of arranging international shipments with competitive prices; competence and quality of logistics services; ability to track and trace consignments; and frequency with which shipments reach consignees within the scheduled or expected delivery time.

Source: http://bizhub.vn/news/vn-seeks-to-improve-logistics-eyes-climb-in-world-bank-ranking_304413.html

VN seeks to improve logistics, eyes climb in World Bank ranking

 **Vite nam News I April, 1/2019**

The Ministry of Industry and Trade has announced a plan to improve the performance of the logistics sector to improve the country's business climate. It seeks to improve Viet Nam's ranking in the World Bank's logistics performance index (LPI) by five to 10 spots by 2025. It will focus on improving infrastructure, shipping capacity and logistics services quality, increasing the use of technology to optimise traceability, reducing time and costs, and streamlining customs clearance. Viet Nam had