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- Agriculture sector gains trade surplus of \$3.3 billion in five months



Thailand sole supplier of pigs



Cambodia News | June, 4 /2019

Twenty-six companies have bid to develop a 60-megawatt solar park in Kampong Chhnang province, according to an official from the Ministry of Mines and Energy. Since public bidding for the Cambodia National Solar Park Project began in February, a total of 148 companies have requested applications, but only 26 submitted one, said Ty Norin, secretary of state at the ministry. He said that the applications will now be studied in detail and the winner will be announced as soon as possible. "There are a lot of procedures to follow and it is quite complicated because it is a project in which ADB is involved. It will take some time to select a company," Mr Norin told Khmer Times yesterday. He added that most applicants are foreign firms, although some of them have partnered with local companies. The 60 MW solar park will be built on a build-own-operate (BOO) basis under the cooperation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Electricite du Cambodge (EDC) will purchase the power generated at the plant under a long-term power purchase agreement. The 60 MW solar park project is part of a bigger project funded by the Asian Development Bank that will generate a total of 100 MW. Last week, ADB approved \$7.6 million in loans to fund it.

Power generation will begin 24 months after an agreement with the developer is signed, according to the ministry. According to a statement issued by EDC, the tariff proposed by the developer must be less than \$0.076 per kilowatt hour (kWh). The government in April approved a new hydroelectric dam in the Pursat river and two solar farms in Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces. The dam in Pursat will be able to produce 80 MW and will be built on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) basis with a total investment capital of more than \$231 million. The company has been granted a 39-year concession for the project. The approved solar farms will each have a 60 MW capacity. They will be built on a BOO basis with an investment of more than \$58 million. "The government is trying to focus on solar energy. Many solar projects have already been approved and many more will be approved soon," Mr Norin said. "When we are able to generate a lot of energy through solar, we will not rely on hydropower dams as much and we will not worry about power shortages, particularly during the dry season." Cambodia currently has a 10 MW solar farm in Bavet city and a 20 MW one in Kampong Speu province.

Source: [https://www.b2b-](https://www.b2b-cambodia.com/news/companies-bid-for-60-mw-solar-park-project/Japan%20to%20support%20Laos%20in%20human%20resource%20development)

[cambodia.com/news/companies-bid-for-60-mw-solar-park-project/Japan to support Laos in human resource development](https://www.b2b-cambodia.com/news/companies-bid-for-60-mw-solar-park-project/Japan%20to%20support%20Laos%20in%20human%20resource%20development)

Rise In Approved Real Estate Projects



Cambodia News | June, 3 /2019

More than \$2.7 billion worth of real estate projects were approved during the first four months of the year, a sharp 67.3 percent increase, according to the Ministry of Land and Urban Planning. Speaking Friday at the 2019 Real Estate and Construction Forum, Lao Tipseiha, secretary of state at the ministry, said growth in the sector from January to April has been remarkable owing to political and social stability, national economic growth as well as rising incomes and foreign investment. Mr Tipseiha said that during the four-month period a total of 1,420 projects were greenlighted, a significant increase compared to the 1,171 projects approved from January to April last year. He highlighted the growing role the construction and property sectors play in the country's economic development as foreign direct investment (FDI) flows continue to rise every year. "The social and political stability and the firm economic growth over the years helped to improve the standards of living for the people and made the construction and property sectors very attractive. They now play an important role contributing to economic growth, the rise of people's incomes and job creation," he said. "This forum creates opportunities and momentum to further develop the construction and property sectors in Cambodia, reflecting the stable political situation and security in the country. These are the core elements that keep attracting local and foreign investors into the sector," he added.

Arnaud Darc, Eurocham Cambodia chairman, said, "Political stability, economic growth, and rising foreign direct investment, as well as support from the banking sector, have boosted the real estate sector in Cambodia every year over the last decade. "However exciting the performance of this ever-growing sector sounds we hear year after year in our forum that this vitality demands more and more attention and even scrutiny," Mr Darc said. "Two years ago, the main topic of the Real Estate and Construction Forum was 'Managing Growth' as everyone was wondering whether this outstanding growth could continue at the same pace," he said. "Indeed, as this sector becomes increasingly crowded, every player must find ways to stand out in order to win over the competition. "The reality of competition, the necessity to stand out and the ways to do so are increasingly important concepts, as well as the role of regulators in promoting higher standards in what is becoming a more sophisticated market," Mr Darc added. According to the Cambodian Valuers and Estate Agents Association, real estate prices in the country have increased by about 15 percent annually on average for the last 4 to 5 years. Prices last year increased by more than 10 percent compared to 2017. Land prices rose by around 20 percent, while the prices of houses and commercial buildings grew by around 10 percent. The National Bank of Cambodia (NBC)'s first Financial Stability Review (FSR), released in April, said that growth in the local real estate sector – particularly condominium, retail and office space – will slow down in upcoming months as supply increases.

The report also pointed out delays in several construction projects within the condominium, retail, and office segments during 2018's last quarter. This pending supply is expected to hit the market during the first half of 2019, along with the scheduled delivery of other projects. "By the end of 2019, the supply of condominium units in all segments, retail space, and office space is expected to surge," NBC said. "These developments have raised some concerns that perhaps incoming supply might outstrip demand. This is particularly the case if both external and domestic demand weaken going forward. As a result, sales, rental and occupancy rates across the market could be adversely affected in 2019," it said. The 2019 Real Estate and Construction Forum, organised by Eurocham Cambodia, was held Friday at Raffle Hotel Le Royal in Phnom Penh.

Source: <https://www.b2b-cambodia.com/news/rise-in-approved-real-estate-projects/>

ChildFund Laos, NCAWMC join forces to strengthen role played by young people



Laos News | June, 4/2019

The National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC) and ChildFund Laos are continuing to help adolescents to build resilience and forge a productive path in life. This is being done by enhancing young people's capacity to plan, access information, voice their ideas, make decisions, and take actions that positively affect their psychological and socio-psycho wellbeing. A Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) on the second phase of a project titled "Child and Youth Participation for Resilience in Laos" (the Ready for Life Project) was signed on Friday between the Director General of the NCAWMC Secretariat, Ms Chansoda Phonethip, and Country Director of ChildFund Laos, Ms Keoamphone Souvannaphoum. The project, which targets young people aged 10-19, is financed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade under the Australian AID programme, according to ChildFund Laos.

The NCAWMC and ChildFund Laos will begin project activities in 30 target secondary schools in Xieng Khuang and Huaphan provinces, and in Vientiane.

The signing event was also an opportunity for NCAWMC to launch its National Guidelines on Child and Youth Participation, an approach to improve child and youth participation in reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the two Optional Protocols report, and the National Children's Forum. The event was also a good opportunity for adolescents to speak out about their experiences of participating in Phase I of the project, how they improved their knowledge of children's rights, and their participation at local, national and Asean levels. Children and youth representatives in the three target areas will showcase the achievements of four of the small grant initiatives led by adolescents, namely "The Youth-led Anti-drug Use Campaign", "Youth Peer-education on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights,", "Youth Volunteers for the Environment and Children's

Forum”, and “The Youth-led Campaign for the Elimination of Violence Against Children in Schools”. Speaking at the MOU signing, Ms Keoamphone said “ChildFund is pleased to promote adolescents’ capacities and leadership in taking action through different youth-led projects during the first project phase. We look forward to working with adolescents to create more spaces for youth to voice their opinions and influence actions that impact their well-being in all respects.” The project is led by a framework constructed around the three themes of realising individual rights, decision making and critical thinking, and looking forward. The project continues until June 2021. The initiative is based on the premise that the rapid pace of change in Laos is dependent on Lao youth being able to make a successful transition into adulthood and assume their roles within society to guide the country forward on a path of sustainable, positive, development.

Given the population statistics, the project leaders believe that now is the right time to focus on young people’s health, education, skills, and protection from abuse, including online bullying and exploitation, and to provide a space for them to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The NCAWMC and ChildFund Laos will partner with the Vientiane Youth Centre, Lao Youth Union, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, and other relevant offices at the village, district and provincial levels.

Source:

http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContenten_ChildFund.php

Trade deficit falls for first time since 2013, says govt



Myanmar News | June, 3/2019

Myanmar’s trade deficit, which had been rising since the 2012-13 fiscal year, has been successfully reduced thanks to the efforts of the National League for Democracy-led government, said Deputy Minister of Commerce U Aung Htoo. “We reduced the trade deficit year-on-year to a low of US\$905 million on May 10 for this fiscal year,” he said during press conference held at the Ministry of Information on May 29. For this fiscal year ending September 30, export volume is projected to be \$15.3 billion while imports are forecast to hit \$15.8 billion, so deficit is expected to be around \$500 million, the deputy minister said. “Despite criticisms of the country’s trade deficit, Myanmar is a developing country so it needs to import significant amounts of goods and services,” U Aung Htoo said, adding that only four percent of total imports are luxury goods. “Only four percent of import are luxury goods,” he said. He suggested encouraging export promotion so that the deficit can be reduced. This fiscal year, export volumes hit \$10.15 billion as of May 10. “Exports of garments were around \$800 million in 2015-2016 and now, the amount nearly tripled to \$2.56 billion,” U Aung Htoo said. Exports of aquaculture products have also increased. Although the export volume of

the sector was only \$421.4 million in 2014-2015, the amount increased to \$699.04 million in 2017-2018, an increase of 65pc. "As fish, prawn and crab farms developed, the income of the sector is expected to reach \$1 billion in 2020," he said. Similarly, only around one million tonnes of rice was exported in the past but in 2017-2018, the amount increased to 3.5 million tonnes and this year, it is expected to export 2.2 million tonnes. Another factor supporting export growth is cattle. Although previous governments prohibited exports of live cattle, the current government has permitted the trade, which has so far generated \$500 million.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/trade-deficit-falls-first-time-2013-says-govt.html>

Myanmar grants visa-on-arrival to 6 more countries to boost tourism



Myanmar News | June, 3/2019

YANGON, June 2 (Xinhua) -- Myanmar will grant visa-on-arrival to six more countries beginning Oct. 1 as a relaxation of restriction on entry into the country to boost tourism, according to a statement of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. The six countries are Italy, Spain, Germany, Russia, Switzerland and Australia. Visitors from these countries will be allowed to enter through three international airports -- Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw as well as some designated border gates by paying 50 U.S. dollars as visa fee, said the statement released late Saturday. The timely grant of such visa is expected

to draw more visitors from Europe in the open season starting October when tourist arrivals used to grow by that time. Myanmar has granted visa exemption to Japanese and South Korean visitors as well as visa-on-arrival to travelers from China starting Oct. 1, 2018. Tourist arrivals in Myanmar reached 1.136 million in the first three months of 2019, up 208,162 or 22.4 percent from the same period of 2018, according to the ministry's statistics. The significant increase of the tourist arrivals during the period was attributed to the large amount of tourists from Asian countries especially China. The other countries are Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, India and Malaysia. However, the number of tourists from Europe was on the decrease during the first four months of this year with 76,736, down by 2 percent from last year correspondingly. Myanmar received 4.6 million tourists in 2015, 2.91 million in 2016, 3.44 million in 2017 and 3.55 million in 2018, and is likely to grow in 2019.

Source:

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2019-06/02/c_138111000.htm

Vietnam central bank says not pursuing 'unhealthy competitive advantage' in trade



Vietnam News | May, 30/2019

HA NOI – The agriculture sector gained a trade surplus of US\$3.3 billion in the first five months of this year, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The nation achieved an export value of \$16.1 billion from agricultural, forestry and aquatic products during the period, a year-on-year increase of 1.2 per cent, including \$3.6 billion in May. The sector spent \$12.8 billion on agricultural, forestry and fishery imports in the first five months, up 2.1 per cent over the same period last year. Of which, imports of fertilisers, pesticides and key agricultural products reached about \$10.8 billion, up by 2.7 per cent year-on-year. However, the key agricultural product exports were estimated at \$7.7 billion, down 9.5 per cent over the same period.

The ministry said the export value of agricultural, forestry and fishery products increased again after slowing since the beginning of this year compared to 2018 due to China's policy changes and the impact of the US-China trade war, the Vietnam News Agency reported. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nguyễn Xuân Cường said competition had grown this year, reported baodautu.vn. In 2018, many countries had to import rice, including China, pushing the average export price of Vietnamese rice to \$436 per tonne, it's highest level ever.

Other agricultural products as well as fishery and vegetable products had faced a similar situation, he said, and many countries had applied new technologies in production to become export rather than import markets. This had created fiercer competition in the global market, Cường said.

According to the ministry, in the first five months of this year, rubber exports were up 2.4 per cent to \$662 million, tea was up 30 per cent to \$79 million and fruit and vegetables climbed 10.3 per cent to \$1.8 billion. Some commodities, however, suffered a drop in export value such as pepper (down 26 per cent), cashew nuts (down 21 per cent), coffee (down 10 per cent) and rice (down 15 per cent) despite increased export volume. Cashews surged 7.9 per cent in export volume but was down 14.9 per cent in value to \$1.2 billion, and pepper increased 33.2 per cent in export volume but fell 2.4 per cent in value to \$372 million. Seafood exports were estimated at \$3.15 billion, down slightly from the same period last year, including \$795 million from tra fish exports and \$1.1 billion from shrimp exports. Forest product exports maintained high growth at 19.6 per cent to \$4.3 billion. According to the ministry, the results of agricultural production in the first five months showed that there were many difficulties in implementing the sector's growth target this year, especially with the spread of African swine fever.

VNS

Sources:

<https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/520792/agriculture-sector-gains-trade-surplus-of-33-billion-in-five-months.html#4Y210oo7Ew7Yfmg5.97>
