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Palm sugar association requests EU assistance



Cambodia News | 18 July, 2019

The Kampong Speu Palm Sugar Promotion Association has asked the European Union to help spread the word about Cambodian palm sugar in Europe, according to the association's president. In April, Kampong Speu's palm sugar was registered as a protected designation of origin and a protected geographical indication (PGI) in the EU, become only the second Cambodian product to earn the distinction after Kampot pepper in 2016. Sam Saroeun, president of Kampong Speu Palm Sugar Promotion Association, told Khmer Times that his organisation is seeking the support of the EU to help promote the product in the European market. The EU has also been asked to provide technical advice regarding the packaging of sugar products, he said. "By advertising our products more widely in Europe, we will get more orders and new customers," Mr Saroeun said. "Next year, we hope to see an increase in orders. We are planning to increase production as several companies have already placed orders." The association has produced about 350 tonnes of palm sugar so far this year, of which 250 tonnes were exported. The association, which sells its products in 25 countries, now has 174 farmers as members. It produces four types of palm sugar – powder, paste, blocks, and syrup.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50624873/palm-sugar-association-requests-eu-assistance/>

Insurance Day to be held next week



Cambodia News | 18 July, 2019

The government will hold the first-ever 'Insurance Day' next week to build public interest and awareness about a sector that has experienced tremendous growth in the last few years. According to an announcement from the Ministry of Economy and Finance yesterday, the event will be held on July 25 with participation from all insurance companies in the country. "Insurance Day aims to promote the development of the insurance sector in Cambodia and to gain the public's trust," the announcement said. Huy Vatharo, chairman of the Insurance Association of Cambodia (IAC), welcomed the initiative. "It is good to have this event because it will help promote the industry, build awareness and help people understand the benefits of becoming insured." Youk Chamroeunrith, Forte Insurance managing director, told Khmer Times that his company will showcase its products at the event. "We need this kind of events because the industry has been developing very fast but there are still many people that do not understand what insurance is. "The event will help educate people so that they understand more about insurance and how it can protect them and their property from any risk." There are 13 general insurers and nine life insurance companies operating in the country, according to a report from IAC. Between 2013 and 2018, the annual compound average growth rate was 15.7 percent for general insurance and 120.5 percent for life

insurance, according to the report. The total gross premium in the insurance industry rose 30 percent last year, mostly driven by life insurance sales, according to AIC. It reached \$196.4 million, compared with \$151.6 million the previous year. Sales from general insurance grew 15 percent, while life insurance expanded 50.6 percent.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50625015/insurance-day-to-be-held-next-week/>

Lao markets eyeing more agricultural imports



Laos News | 18 July, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Laos may have to import more agricultural produce to meet the growing demand for fresh fruit and vegetables. The Aussie Lao fresh market in Sikhottabong district, which is one of the largest markets in Vientiane, may have to sell more imported products, market authorities told Vientiane Times yesterday. Last year, the market imported 15 per cent of the produce it sold from Thailand and 15 per cent from Vietnam, while some produce came from other provinces in Laos. Most of the items imported were tomatoes, eggplant, chillies, limes, onion, garlic, fruit and some other vegetables. Although Lao growers supply about 70 per cent of the produce sold in local markets, consumers still pay more compared to Thailand and Vietnam. People earning middle level and high incomes tend to cross the border into Thailand to shop, while some buy goods to sell in Laos, according to the Ministry of Industry and

Commerce. Domestic producers and entrepreneurs have not been able to compete with imported products and struggle to expand their operations. Many farmers have given up growing vegetables and other crops and taken jobs in factories instead. Or they have switched to some form of trade or other jobs after they were unable to make a profit from farming. Many have also been hit hard by weather extremes. Some agricultural land has been used to build houses and for other construction projects. But agricultural production in the first six months of this year is growing, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Agricultural produce, especially vegetables, have yielded 1.19 million tonnes, an increase of 19 per cent compared to the same period last year. The growth rate in agriculture is expected to achieve the target of 2.8 per cent set for this year if there is no natural disaster. The agriculture, forestry and rural development sectors expanded slowly in 2017 due to extreme weather, damage to irrigation systems, and locust outbreaks. To reach this year's target, the government, especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, will continue to implement projects of national priority such as commercial-scale production and ensuring food security. The government will also encourage farmers to use modern techniques that are more productive, and to grow a wider variety of crops that are cultivated in clean and sustainable ways. Agriculture continues to

play a major role in the economy and last year the sector contributed 15.73 per cent.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-markets-eyeing-more-agricultural-imports-100348>

Lao ministry to regulate petrol stations



Laos News | July, 19/2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) -The authorities will no longer approve the construction of fuel depots and petrol stations close to communities, key government offices, temples, rivers or television and radio stations, according to a new ministerial decision. Minister of Public Works and Transport, Dr Bounchanh Sinthavong, on June 18 put into practice the newly amended ministerial decision on technical construction standards for fuel storage facilities and petrol stations. Under the regulation, fuel depots must be located one kilometre from residential areas, schools, hospitals, protected areas, temples and rivers. This new measure is aimed at preventing accidents and ensuring that such facilities do not cause harm to these compounds or people who live nearby. In relation to petrol stations, these should be located 100 metres from residential areas, key government buildings, temples, and television and radio stations. Petrol stations have become a popular business in Laos in recent years. But one of the challenges is that their construction has not been properly regulated. A number of people have expressed concern over the possible impact of fires

or other accidents at petrol stations, as some are located in residential areas while others are close to temples and rivers. However, the regulation is unclear about what measures the Ministry of Public Works and Transport would impose on fuel depots and petrol stations that are located close to restricted areas. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport also wants any new fuel depot or petrol station to be built one kilometre away from an existing facility. With regard to highways, the distance between two petrol stations should be 5 kilometres. It is believed this stipulation will encourage business operators to open new petrol stations in areas where none already exist. One of the important standards that petrol stations must comply with under the regulation is to be equipped with a fire-fighting system. This means that water must be available for use in the event of a fire. For proper use of the fire-fighting system, a petrol station must employ at least one person who has been certified as having completed a course in fire control, according to the regulation. Petrol stations have come under the spotlight because the government wants to reform the industry. The government recently announced a policy to reduce the number of fuel importers. In addition, business operators and enterprises who want to both import and sell fuel must hold two separate operating licences.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-ministry-regulate-petrol-stations-100430>

USAID partnership helps local coffee producers tap int'l market



Myanmar News | 18 July, 2019

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced a partnership with the Myanmar Coffee Association (MCA) assisting local coffee producers in gaining access to the international coffee market and cultivating higher quality coffee. The partnership involves a US\$1 million loan from private banks, which will enable more than 8,000 coffee farmers to adopt new technologies providing them with higher yields and higher quality coffee produce needed to qualify for international coffee competitions. Teresa McGhie, USAID mission director, joined MCA to celebrate the exponential private sector growth in Myanmar's coffee industry yesterday. The event brought together eleven Myanmar coffee roasters with more than 30 buyers from Yangon hotel restaurants to facilitate business deals and further promote local Myanmar coffee. USAID has supported MCA since 2013. "USAID and the American people are proud of the contributions Myanmar's private enterprises in the specialty coffee sector are making. As these private enterprises grow, more people will benefit from economic development. Ultimately, that means Myanmar's economy will be more self-reliant," said Ms McGhie. MCA now manages cupping events, quality training and other technical assistance to coffee farmers and roasters. It also hosts promotional business-to-business events that help

coffee roasters sell more coffee for Myanmar consumers and for export. The US Embassy is aiming to promote Myanmar's transition to a more inclusive and open economy, as well as increase bilateral trade and investment, through a US\$27 million USAID Value Chains for Rural Development activity and other efforts. It also collaborates with farmers and processors in the ginger, soy, melon, and sesame sectors.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/usaid-partnership-helps-local-coffee-producers-tap-intl-market.html>

Vietnam to import more electricity from Laos, China



Vietnam News | 18 July, 2019

At a meeting on energy issue held Wednesday, Phuong Hoang Kim, director of the Department of Electricity and Renewable Energy under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, cited data showing 47 out of 62 proposed energy projects with above 200 MW capacity are behind schedule. Since electricity consumption would continue to increase while water, coal and gas available for producing power are expected to decrease, there is a risk of a shortage from 2020, he said. The shortage is estimated to be 6.6 billion kWh in 2021, nearly 10 billion kWh in 2022 and 15 billion kWh in 2023. To partially mitigate the problem, the ministry said it would increase electricity imports from Laos and China. Specifically,

Vietnam has planned to import 3.6 billion kWh in 2021 and 9 billion kWh in 2023. Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Hoang Quoc Vuong said however that increasing electricity imports is only a temporary solution and stressed the need to speed up work on major power projects. Vuong said many energy projects are two to three years behind schedule mainly because of difficult procedures for land acquisition and compensation, which makes it harder to get funding for them. Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Tuan Anh said: "We must clarify the roles of corporations in the very slow implementation of projects. We must also review the responsibilities of investors in build-operate-transfer projects as some deliberately cause delays to sell their projects." He said there must be a specific mechanism for key energy projects and instructed the Department of Electricity and Renewable Energy with drafting a detailed proposal on his suggestion for submitting to the government for approval. Vietnam's fast economy growth in recently years makes the country hungry for energy. World Bank country director for Vietnam Ousmane Dione said at a recent forum that Vietnam would need to raise up to \$150 billion by 2030 to develop its energy sector. Dione added that electricity demand in the country is set to grow by about 8 percent a year for the next decade.

Source : <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/industries/vietnam-to-import-more-electricity-from-laos-china-3954206.html>

Japanese pharmacy chain eyes

Vietnam expansion



Vietnam News | 18 July, 2019

Japanese drugstore chain Matsumotokiyoshi Holdings plans to expand to Vietnam amid the increasing demand for health-related products. The company said its Vietnam operations would be run in partnership with Ho Chi Minh City-based Lotus Food Group, the Nikkei Asian Review reported. But it has not specified a time frame for opening stores in the country. "Vietnam is an emerging market, so there's plenty of room to open new stores," a spokesperson for the company said. Matsumotokiyoshi has been pursuing overseas expansion. It had 33 stores in Thailand and three in Taiwan as of the end of June, and also plans to expand to Hong Kong. Vietnam's growing middle class is increasingly interested in health-related products. "Health goods and medical services" was among the top six spending categories in the country last year, according to a report released in June by market research firm Euromonitor. Vietnam is among 17 countries in the so-called "pharmerging" markets, a group of countries that are expected to be the pillars of the global pharma industry, according to U.S. information technology firm IMS Health. Its drug market is expected sustain growth of 10 percent annually for the next five years. It grew at

16 percent a year in 2015-2018, with sales currently topping \$10 billion, a report by global research firm Business Monitor International showed. The country still imports over half of its drug needs, especially of patented drugs. In the first six months of this year its imports were worth \$1.52 billion, up 11.9 percent year-on-year, the General Statistics Office reported.

Source: <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/companies/japanese-pharmacy-chain-eyes-vietnam-expansion-3953769.html>
