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Contract farming schemes on the rise: Ministry



Cambodia News | 13 August, 2019

The Ministry of Agriculture said the number of contract farming schemes has increased this year as farmers and traders are more aware of the benefits of such agreements. Kong Pheach, director of agroindustry at the Ministry of Agriculture, said from January to July almost 60 contract farming schemes were signed in the rice sector, 20 more than during the same period last year. In contract farming, buyers sign agreements with farmers for the production and supply of crops to be delivered at a future date, usually at predetermined volumes, qualities and prices. Speaking yesterday at the agreement-signing ceremony for yet another contract farming scheme, Mr Pheach said so far this year rice millers have signed agreements with agricultural cooperatives from 10 provinces. "Our priority is to increase the number of contract farming schemes in each province. Once such agreements are in place, farmers will be able to increase their production because they have guaranteed markets," Mr Pheach said. "Establishing contract farming schemes is how we help small farmers increase production." Six big rice millers have already entered contract farming schemes with agricultural cooperatives, according to Mr Pheach, who added that once the contract farming model is more widely understood by farmers and rice millers, the number of such agreements will skyrocket. Song Saran, the

newly-elected president of the Cambodia Rice Federation, said CRF's also aims to increase the number of contract farming schemes. "We will keep up our work linking markets to farmers, particularly farmers who produce agricultural goods of great potential. We will continue connecting farmers to companies, particularly rice millers that are members of CRF," Mr Saran said. "Contract farming schemes enables market expansion through innovation. It also helps agricultural cooperatives maintain existing markets," Mr Saran added. Him Sothea, a farmer from an agricultural cooperative in Kampong Chhnang province, said that through contract farming schemes they have been able to find new buyers and sell their rice at a good price. "Before we entered contract farming schemes, the price they offered us for our paddy was much lower; lower than the market price," she said. Ms Sothea's cooperative supplies organic rice to Cambodian Agriculture Cooperative Cooperation through contract farming.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50633015/contract-farming-schemes-on-the-rise-ministry/>

Minister asks Japanese firms to consider local market



Cambodia News | 14 August, 2019

Minister Thong Khon on Monday urged Japanese businesses to consider investing in the Kingdom's tourism sector, particularly to attract retirees. In a meeting with outgoing Japanese ambassador Hidehisa Horinouchi on Monday, Tourism Minister

Thong Khon noted that the number of Japanese tourists visiting Cambodia is increasing rapidly. He urged Japanese firms to capitalise on that growth, particularly by creating new tourism products. "I believe Japanese firms could generate great profits by creating new tourism products and developing existing destinations. Particularly, I see great potential in the creation of products that target retirees," Mr Khon told the Japanese ambassador. Mr Khon said the Kingdom needs more investment in infrastructure as well as a larger tourism offer to attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer here. In the first half of 2019, about 100,000 Japanese tourists visited the Kingdom, up 3 percent from 2018. Last year six Japanese investment projects were registered with the Ministry of Tourism, totalling \$800 million. Cambodia aims to attract more than 300,000 Japanese tourists a year by 2020. The two countries are connected via an ANA airline flight linking Phnom Penh and Tokyo. In 2018, 210,471 Japanese holidaymakers visited Cambodia, making Japan the seventh largest tourism market for Cambodia. That same year, about 22,000 Cambodian travelled to Japan. Trade between Cambodia and Japan exceeded \$1 billion in the first half of 2019, growing by 16.8 percent year-on-year, according to the latest report from the Japan External Trade Organization (Jetro). From January to June, Cambodian exports to the East Asian economic giant were valued at \$792 million, a 12 percent increase. Imports from Japan, meanwhile, rose by 34 percent to \$256 million. In a meeting with

Ambassador Horinouchi yesterday, Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved in the trade relation. Mr Hun Sen said the rapid growth in trade between the two nations is founded on strong diplomatic ties. "Investment and trade, as well as the number of tourists, have increased rapidly as a result of efforts by the Japanese ambassador to Cambodia," Mr Hun Sen said. Seang Thay, spokesman at the Ministry of Commerce, told Khmer Times yesterday that trade growth was made possible by the close relationship between the Cambodian and the Japanese governments. The number of Japanese investors considering the Cambodian market is growing due to the Kingdom's robust economic growth, he added. "I believe that bilateral trade will continue to increase in years to come because Cambodia has reformed its investment law and its investment environment to attract foreign investors," Mr Thay said. Cambodia mostly exported garments and footwear to the Japanese market. It also exported electronic components such as mobile phone batteries, although in significantly smaller amounts. Japan mostly exported machinery, automobiles, and electronics to the Kingdom, as well as beef, steel, and pharmaceuticals, according to the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce. Last year, trade with Japan increased by 27.3 percent, reaching more than \$1.6 billion, according to Jetro. Cambodia bought about \$421 million in Japanese goods, a 17.8 increase.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50633272/minister-asks-japanese-firms-to-consider-local-market/>

Laos needs more exports for freight train to Thailand



Laos News | 13 August, 2019

VIENTIANE, Aug. 13 (Xinhua) -- The newly launched cross-border freight train service between Laos and Thailand requires more cargo shipments from Laos to reduce an imbalance of trade. The train can carry 10 to 20 containers in and out of the country every day, but the number of exporters is smaller than the number of importers. This is a problem that the parties involved must address by working together, the Vientiane Times daily reported on Tuesday. "Having the freight train service is good. Transport costs will be lower because companies can export more goods at the same time, but this service must have a lot of goods for two-way shipments," President of the International Transport Association under the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pachit Xayavong, told local media on Monday. The imbalance in shipments entering and leaving Laos is an issue that needs to be addressed by stakeholders. A lot of goods are being brought into Laos, but little is being sent out of the country, which might impact the freight business, according to the report. The governments of Laos and Thailand launched the freight train service across the First Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge on Aug. 1 to facilitate business and boost economic cooperation.

Source : http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-08/13/c_138305734.htm

WB optimistic about economic growth in Laos



Laos News | 13 August, 2019

VIENTIANE, Aug. 13 (Xinhua) -- The World Bank is optimistic about economic growth in Laos, which is projected to rebound to 6.5 percent in 2019, rising from 6.3 percent recorded in 2018. Despite continued fiscal tightening, the pickup is expected to be driven by robust investment in mega infrastructure projects including the China-Laos railway, according to the World Bank's Lao Economic Monitor released on Monday in Lao capital Vientiane. Economic growth will also be driven by a resilient services sector led by wholesale and retail growth associated with robust construction. Meanwhile, Lao government remains committed to fiscal consolidation to contain public debt in the medium term by tightening public spending and improving revenue administration. This should result in a decline in the fiscal deficit from 4.4 percent of GDP in 2018 to 4.3 percent in 2019. Economic growth is rebounding after declining in 2018 partly due to the impact of floods, local daily Vientiane Times on Tuesday quoted World Bank Country Manager for Laos, Nicola Pontara as saying at the launch of the World Bank's Lao Economic Monitor report in Vientiane. However, he warned, Laos is at high risk of debt distress and several measures needed to be undertaken to deal with this situation. "Strengthening revenue collection is important to create fiscal deficit space and reduce

the burden of public debt," Pontara said. "Looking forward, it will be important to improve the business environment to support private sector development, including the growth of small and medium enterprises. These measures can contribute to maintaining a stable macroeconomic environment, promoting job creation and reducing poverty and inequality," he added. Lao Senior Economist at The World Bank Lao Office, Somneuk Davading, said compared to other countries in the region, economic growth in Laos remains strong and the nation is one of the top five countries in this dynamic region. Nevertheless, he said, Lao government needs to continue its reform measures and further improve the investment climate to attract more capital. One of the main challenges for Laos is to ensure environmentally-friendly and quality growth, which generates job opportunities for local people. Instead of relying on the export of natural resources and raw materials, it is essential to ensure that value-added products are also exported, said the report. Laos is vulnerable to external impacts and natural disasters, which can add fiscal pressure. Likewise, if compared to other countries in the region, foreign reserves in Laos are lower, according to economists. The depreciation of the kip against the U.S. dollar and Thai baht is another concern for Laos, which could impact on debt serviceability, according to the report. The World Bank report also notes the key constraints faced by small and medium enterprises such as access to finance, competition with informal firms, and electricity

outages. The report confirms that strengthening the performance of SMEs can improve the quality of jobs, generate income and contribute to the greater well-being of the Lao people.

Source : http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-08/13/c_138305713.htm

Average inflation rate increases for nine consecutive months



Myanmar News | 13 August, 2019

From April 2018 to June, 2019, the average inflation rate increased by 1.53 per cent to 3.27 per cent, for nine consecutive months of this fiscal year, according to the figures released by the Ministry of Planning and Finance. The year-on-year inflation is expected to hit 4.10 per cent and the average inflation rate, 4.81 per cent in 2018-2019 FY. From April 2018 to June, 2019, the average inflation rate hit 6.34 per cent in October, 6.66 per cent in November, 6.86 per cent in December, 6.94 per cent in January, 7.07 per cent in February, 7.28 per cent in March, 7.51 per cent in April, 7.82 per cent in May and 8.08 per cent in June. Since April, 2018 till June, 2019, the inflation rate saw an increase for 15 consecutive months. The average inflation rate calculated using 2012 as a base year was 8.08 per cent and the year-on-year inflation rate, 9.51 per cent. In late June, Magway Region topped the list of inflation with 12.31 per cent, followed by Mon State with 10.14 per cent and Mandalay Region with 9.99 per cent. In November, 2012, the Central Statistical

Organization conducted a household and consumption survey on 32,669 households in 82 townships nationwide to calculate the CPI and inflation rate. In the past, the inflation rate was calculated using 2006 as a base year. Now 2012 is used as a base year to calculate inflation rate.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/average-inflation-rate-increases-for-nine-consecutive-months>

New online building permit system in Yangon goes on live



Myanmar News | 13 August, 2019

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, has been supporting the Building Control Authority of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) in efforts to reform the construction permit system and improve the ease of doing business in the city. The Yangon Building Permit System, an automated, paper-free system, went online on July 1 and will be piloted until the end of the year. The system is estimated to reduce the processing time for 90 percent of the 4000 construction permits submitted yearly from an average of 95 days to 49 days. The new online building permit system, available in English and, Myanmar languages, was custom-built for YCDC. 'Dealing with construction permits' is one of the 10 indicators used to determine the Ease of Doing Business index, on which Myanmar now ranks 171 out of 190 countries. "Compared to other sectors, Myanmar's construction sector has the

highest earning potential. An efficient, transparent, and affordable permit system will enable a conducive business environment in Myanmar," said Vikram Kumar, IFC Country Manager for Myanmar.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/yangon-trials-digital-construction-permit-system.html>

Shrimp exports expected to pick up in 2nd half



Vietnam News | 13 August, 2019

HCM CITY - Viet Nam's shrimp exports are expected to be strong during the rest of this year because countries tend to import more in the latter months of the year, with the free trade agreements Viet Nam has signed boosting its exports. According to the Viet Nam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers, shrimp exports were worth US\$1.4 billion in the first half of the year, a year-on-year decline of 12 per cent. This was mainly due to a fall in imports by Viet Nam's key markets such as the US, EU and China, it said. Exports to the EU, the largest buyer of Vietnamese shrimp, fell 25.9 per cent to \$300.5 million. The UK, Germany and the Netherlands are the three main markets in the bloc, and exports to them fell by 9.5 per cent, 12.5 per cent and 50.2 per cent. Shrimp exports to China were down 4.9 per cent to \$233.5 million since the neighbouring country tightened its border trade policy and there was fierce competition from India and Ecuador. China has increased its imports from India and Ecuador, who offer more competitive prices than Viet Nam. Its

shrimp imports from India went up by 573 per cent in the first quarter and from Ecuador by 185 per cent in the first half. Vietnamese shrimp exports to China showed signs of increasing in May and June. India's shrimp harvest season has ended, and Viet Nam's export to that country is expected to increase during the rest of the year, it said.

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/523927/shrimp-exports-expected-to-pick-up-in-2nd-half.html#f2UkmlJLouYgl0R1.97>

[/7773002-28-items-see-import-value-of-over-us\\$1-billion-in-seven-months.html](#)

Vietnam's trade surplus plunges to \$43 mln in July: customs



Vietnam News | 13 August, 2019

Vietnam recorded a trade surplus of \$43 million in July, narrowing from a surplus of \$1.93 billion in June, customs data released on Monday showed. Exports in July rose 7.2% from the previous month to \$22.979 billion, while imports were up 17.7% at \$22.936 billion, the Customs Department said in a statement. Smartphones, garments and electronic home appliances were among the largest export earners in July. Key imports were electronics, machinery and fabrics, the department said. In the first seven months of 2019, Vietnam's exports climbed 7.8% to \$145.482 billion from a year earlier, while imports were up 8.6% at \$143.779 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of \$1.7 billion. The government's General Statistics Office late last month forecast July trade surplus at \$200 million.

Source : <https://en.nhandan.com.vn/business/item>