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Cambodia among top five exporters of organic rice to the EU



Cambodia News | 04 September, 2019

Cambodia was the fifth largest exporter of organic rice to the European Union last year, with local companies confident exports will continue to rise in the coming years. Demand for organic rice in the EU and other key markets like the United States, Australia, and China is soaring as consumers become more environmentally and health-conscious, key insiders said. According to figures from the EU shared with the Cambodia Rice Federation, Cambodia exported 8,467 tonnes of organic rice to the bloc last year, representing 3.9 percent of all EU organic rice imports. The US was the largest exporter of organic rice to the EU, accounting for almost 70 percent of the market. It was followed by Pakistan and India, with 10 and 9 percent, respectively. Thailand came in at number four with 4.9 percent of the market (10,522 tonnes in exports). Local rice exporters told Khmer Times that the amount of Cambodian organic rice shipped to the bloc has increased this year. About 90 percent of all Cambodian exports of organic rice to the EU last year belonged to Amru Rice Cambodia. Kann Kunthy, vice president of Amru Rice, yesterday said the company has entered contract farming schemes with about 5,000 farmers and this year it aims to export 20,000 tonnes of organic rice to foreign markets, 80 to 90 percent of which will be sent to the EU. "We are prioritising the production of organic rice and rice produced under the Sustainable Rice

Platform (SRP). These rice varieties make Cambodia more competitive against countries like Thailand, Vietnam, and India," Mr Kunthy said. Mr Kunthy explained that the rise in demand for organic rice is driven by concerns over the environmental impact of growing rice and a greater focus on health on the part of the consumers, who do not want to ingest pesticides and other chemicals used in agriculture. Chan Pich, general manager of Signature of Asia, who last year exported 1,500 tonnes of organic rice to the EU, said demand for organic rice in the European Union grows about 15 percent every year. "Cambodia's organic rice is sought after in the EU because it has good quality and real traceability," Mr Pich said. According to Mr Pich, a tonne of organic jasmine rice fetches \$1,500 while organic long-grain white rice sells for about \$950 per tonne. Last year, Cambodia exported 626,225 tonnes of rice (including all varieties and types), a drop of 1.5 percent compared to 2017. Local firms exported mainly three types of rice: fragrant rice (493,597 tonnes shipped, or 78.8 percent of total rice exports), long-grain white rice (105,990 tonnes, or 16.9 percent), and long-grain parboiled rice (26,638 tonnes, or 4.2 percent). The largest market for Cambodian rice was the European Union, which imported almost 270,000 tonnes, equivalent to 42.9 percent of total exports. By individual country, the largest buyer was China with 170,000 tonnes.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50639919/cambodia-among-top-five-exporters-of-organic-rice-to-the-eu/>

Contract farming schemes

rising: Ministry



Cambodia News / 04 September, 2019

The Ministry of Agriculture said the number of contract farming schemes is increasing remarkably, helping enhance productivity and market access for farmers. From January to August, a total of 91 contract farming schemes were inked in various sectors, including rice, sugarcane and livestock production, the ministry announced during a meeting yesterday. It said that 7,897 smallholder farmers have entered contract farming agreements throughout the country. 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, quality and prices. The government considers the scheme an effective mechanism to raise productivity while benefitting all actors involved. Kong Pheach, director of agroindustry at the Ministry of Agriculture, told Khmer Times that the number of contract farming agreements will continue to rise as the model is more widely understood by farmers and buyers. "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," he explained. Song Saran, Amru Rice's CEO, said contract farming schemes enable market

expansion through innovation and help agricultural cooperatives maintain existing markets. "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 the Cambodia Rice Federation," said Mr Saran, who was recently appointed president of CRF.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50639917/contract-farming-schemes-rising-ministry/>

Vientiane tourist sites set

to get free WiFi



Laos News / 04 September, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - The government is launching a free WiFi system at landmarks in the capital under a project supported by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. A workshop and launch of the Free WiFi System to Enhance Public and Tourism Services in Laos took place in Vientiane on Tuesday. Deputy Minister of Post and Telecommunications, Mr Bounsaleumxay Khennavong, and Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Ms Areewan Haorangsi, cut a ribbon to initiate the project. Mr Bounsaleumxay said the project is an excellent opportunity to utilise funding from APT to install free WiFi for use by the general public and visitors. "This project will enable visitors to use the internet at frequently visited locations such as Wattay International Airport, Namphou Fountain, and Hor Phrakeo," he said. The number of visitors to Laos is increasing with more than 4,100,000 arrivals in 2018, generating over US\$810 million in revenue. These

figures had encouraged the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications to develop internet infrastructure, promoting wider access to information, he added. In line with current digital trends, the project aims to allow visitors to access the internet at major tourist sites in the country. "In Laos, cell phones account for 94 percent of the entire phone network and the mobile internet network reaches 78 percent of all villages. Internet users make up nearly 40 percent of the population with strong growth in social media use, especially Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and WeChat. Among online social media users, 28-38 percent are young people aged 16-24," Mr Bounsaleumxay said. In July, an online tourist visa application service became available, aiming to increase the number of foreign visitors. Initially, e-visas will be accepted only at Wattay International Airport and the first Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge in Vientiane.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/vientiane-tourist-sites-set-get-free-wifi-103349>

Central bank imposes measures to stabilise kip



Laos News / 05 September, 2019

The Bank of the Lao PDR has imposed measures to help prevent the further depreciation of the kip against international currencies. According to a newsletter published by the central bank earlier this week, to prevent the kip sliding further against the US dollar and Thai baht, the bank has adjusted the money supply at a level that is relevant to the current socio-economic context. In addition, the bank has been applying the managed floating exchange rate regime to keep the value of the kip more stable, according to the newsletter, which is posted on the homepage of the Bank of the Lao

PDR's website. The Bank of the Lao PDR said one of the most effective ways to stabilise the kip was to limit the demand and increase the supply of foreign currencies in the country. In this regard, the bank demanded the participation of all sectors and the public to support and promote investment in businesses that produce goods for the international market. Meanwhile, consumers need to change their behaviour by buying fewer unnecessary and luxury imported goods and services, the bank said. In addition, the bank called on relevant sectors to do more to promote the domestic tourism industry as this sector generates a significant amount of foreign currency. The Bank of the Lao PDR said one of the main factors causing the kip to fall in value was the rising value of the dollar and baht in recent months. The value of the dollar against the Euro rose by 1.5 percent over the first eight months of this year, while the baht increased in value by 3.5 per cent against the US dollar. With the strengthening of these two currencies on the international market, a fall in the value of the kip is inevitable, the bank says in its newsletter, which outlines the current situation on money exchange management. According to data from BCEL, the exchange rate yesterday was 290 kip per Thai baht, down from 276 kip per baht in June. The kip also fell against the dollar and was valued yesterday at 8,790 kip per dollar, down from about 8,600 kip per dollar in June. On the open market, the exchange rate was at least 300 kip per baht, and over 9,000 kip against the dollar.

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

Diplomatic means will be sought for exporting millet grains to Thailand



Myanmar News | 04 September, 2019

The export flow of millet grains to Thailand from the Myanmar-Thailand border trade camp in Myawaddy has stopped as of August 31. The Chairperson of Myawaddy border trade association Thin Thin Myat said she will find diplomatic answers to resume the export. "A meeting was held at the border trade camp inviting directors of the trade camp, district administrators and millet grains traders in September 2. Data will be collected on the grains at the camp and find ways to export millet grains to Thailand," said Thin Thin Myat, Chairperson of Myawaddy border trade association. About 100,000 tons of millet grains are at the Myawaddy border trade camp. As there were natural disasters and transportation difficulties, we couldn't export it according to the target date. Therefore, millet grain merchants face hardship to export them. She continued in saying that whole-sales centers in Thailand such as CP and Vitaco said the demand for millet grains are very high in Thailand. We will request recommendations from big companies through Ministry of Commerce. So, I think there is hope for exporting these millet grains left at the trade camp.

Source : <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/diplomatic-means-will-be-sought-for-exporting-millet-grains-to-thailand>

Dawei-Kanchanaburi road construction expected to start soon



Myanmar News | 04 September, 2019

An invitation to tender for the project to build the two-lane Dawei-Kanchanaburi road will be issued soon, says an official for the Dawei Special Economic Zone Management Committee. "As the road project is a major component of the special economic zone (SEZ), we hope to start work on its construction as soon as possible," said Dawei Special Economic Zone Management Committee Secretary U Tint Tun Naing. An eight-month study on the possible impacts of the road project has already been carried out and its results made public. The project will be implemented as soon as possible after an agreement for a loan is signed with Thailand, U Tint Tun Naing said. He said that the project involves the upgrading of an existing dirt road and that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Assembly of the Union) has approved the acceptance of the loan for the project which Thailand has agreed to provide, adding that the agreement for the loan is expected to be signed soon. The loan will be for 4.5 billion baht (K220.6 billion) over a 30-year period with an interest rate of 0.1 percent and interest-free for the first 10 years. While the amount of the loan has been agreed, the figure may change according to the needs of the project, U Tint Tun Naing said, adding that the Ministry of Construction will oversee the project.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, the hope is that the Dawei Special Economic Zone project, can be completed in three years. Although an agreement was signed with Thai construction company Italian-Thai Development PLC to build the initial phase of the Dawei SEZ in 2008, work was suspended in 2013 due to dissatisfaction over the Thai company's performance. In 2015, another tender was invited to resume the project. The tender was again won by Italian-Thai, although this time around the scale of the project was reduced. "We instructed them to implement it quickly as the project would be beneficial for many people and the country," said U Tint Tun Naing. Work on the SEZ, which is expected to feature nine zones, is now focused on building out infrastructure such as roads, port facilities, and power first.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/dawei-kanchanaburi-road-construction-expected-start-soon.html>

Dong Nai sees 2.1-billion-USD trade surplus in eight months



Vietnam News | 04 September, 2019

Dong Nai (VNA) – The southern province of Dong Nai enjoyed a trade surplus of 2.1 billion USD in the first eight months of this year, according to the provincial Department of Statistics. Export turnover of the locality in the reviewed period hit 12.76 billion USD, representing a year-on-year increase of 5.22 percent, while the province spent 10.66 billion USD

on imports, up 1.11 percent from the same period last year. The foreign investment sector is the biggest contributor to the trade surplus with its 8-month export turnover reaching 10.44 billion USD. Meanwhile, the non-State and State-owned economic sectors respectively earned 1.98 billion USD and 333.2 million USD from export. The provincial People's Committee attributed the low growth of export turnover in the period to the reduced export of traditional farm products of the locality, including cashew nut, pepper, coffee and rubber. The US remains Dong Nai's biggest importer, buying 490.7 million USD worth of goods, accounting to 29.6 percent. It is followed by Japan and China with 188.3 million USD, and 187.5 million USD, marking up 11.4 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively. Dong Nai mainly imports animal feed, corn, yarn and plastic materials from China, the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan (China).-VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/dong-nai-sees-21billionusd-trade-surplus-in-eight-months/159927.vnp>

Investment in startups up 48 pct



Vietnam News | 04 September, 2019

Investment in Vietnamese startups in the first half of the year rose 48 percent year-on-year to reach \$246 million with South Korea the top investor. The capital was raised in 56 deals, according to a recent report by Ho Chi Minh City-based venture capital ESP Capital and Singapore's Cento Ventures. Researchers estimate the investment in startups to

reach \$800 million this year, almost double that of last year's \$444 million. The first six months of this year saw South Korea become the top investor participating in almost 30 percent of all deals, while the corresponding top spot for the last two years were taken by Singapore and Japan respectively. The country is seeing a growth in large-size deals, the report said, noting that both last year and this year, Vietnamese startups raised between \$50-100 million per round. If this trend continues, there could be more Vietnamese companies approaching \$500 million and eventually \$1 billion valuation mark in the years to come, it added. E-payment app Momo pulled in about \$100 million from American private equity company Warburg Pincus in January, one of the largest single round investments ever raised by a Vietnamese startup. E-commerce company Tiki reportedly raised \$75 million in March from investors led by Singaporean private equity company Northstar Group. Prominent among the smaller deals were \$4.5 million raised by room sharing startup Luxstay, and \$6 million last month by point-of-sale system operator KiotViet. The report said that the amount of invested capital and the number of technology deals done have grown six-fold from the first half of 2017. The reason for the increasing interest in Vietnam is that the country is in an "important period when key components of a strong digital economy are beginning to shape up," the

report said. The fact that 60 percent Vietnam's population is aged under 35 with a growing mobile and internet penetration rate are factors that will benefit the digital economy, the report said, adding that over 10 million more consumers will go online by 2023. Investment in Vietnam accounted for 17 percent of the \$5.9 billion invested in the ASEAN-6 (Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam) in the first half of this year, threefold that of five percent for the whole of last year, Cento Ventures said in another report on ASEAN investment. In only two years, Vietnam jumped from the second least active startup ecosystem among the six largest ASEAN countries into third place, only behind Indonesia and Singapore, it added.

Source : <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/data-speaks/investment-in-startups-up-48-pct-3977006.html>
