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Prime Road Alternative wins rights to 60MW solar farm



Cambodia News | 08 September, 2019

Prime Road Alternative Company Limited won construction rights to a 60MW solar farm project at an auction, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB). An ADB press release released last week shows that the auction, which was conducted by Electricite du Cambodge (EdC), ended with Prime Road Alternative's lowest bid of \$0.3877 per kilowatt-hour. The 60MW project is part of a 100MW national solar park in Kampong Chhnang province, which is structured as a public-private partnership. EdC launched a tender offer for construction rights to the 60MW solar farm project in February on a build-own-operate basis. The project, which is supported by the ADB, drew 26 bidders, including several global companies, and has achieved the lowest power purchase tariff for a solar project so far recorded in Southeast Asia, according to the release. ADB office of public-private partnerships director Siddharta Shah said the record low prices show the power of competition. This is a new era for renewable energy development in Cambodia and the region, particularly for solar power generation, he said, adding that this is good news for the EdC and Cambodians. "We believe more governments in the region will adopt auctions as a strategy to procure renewable energy generation capacity, and this structure and tariff will serve as a benchmark for future projects," he said. The project preparation work was carried out by ADB with the support of the Canadian and Singapore

governments. ADB principal climate change specialist Pradeep Tharakan said ADB is working toward the long-term development of the Kingdom's energy sector. "Expanding solar generation is aligned with the country's goal of increasing access to affordable and reliable sources of electricity," he said. ADB's other ongoing forms of support for the Kingdom's energy sector includes financing for the expansion and strengthening of the national grid, the development of a comprehensive power development plan through 2040, and the piloting of innovative technologies, including energy storage systems, said the release. EdC director-general Keo Rattanak declined to comment on Sunday. However, he said in July that the government will prioritise renewable energy development rather than hydroelectric power. He said Cambodia will expand its solar energy investment by 12 per cent by the end of next year and increase it up to 20 per cent over the next three years.

Source: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/prime-road-alternative-wins-rights-60mw-solar-farm>

Cambodia to host Southeast Asia textile and apparel expo



Cambodia News | 09 September, 2019

Cambodia will be the venue next month of one of the biggest and most important gatherings of stakeholders in the garment sector in Southeast Asia. According to the official website of the event, the Textile and Apparel SEA Summit 2019 will be held in Phnom Penh on Oct 28 and 29. The venue for the event has yet to be disclosed. The event comes

after the Kingdom hosted the 8th Cambodia International Textile & Garment Industry Exhibition last month, which also drew foreign attendees and exhibitors. Bruce Zhang, a member of the organising committee, said there is much to learn and gain from the event. The event is being organized by SZ&W Group, a leading event organiser in Asia. “The summit aims to provide the opportunity for industry chain stakeholders to win textile and apparel business and ensure growth in the SEA region. It will seek the latest opportunities and trends as well as good practice sharing to accelerate the growth and development of the industry,” he said. The organisers have invited industry leaders and experts from all over the world to speak at the event, including representatives of the International Apparel Federation, US-ASEAN Business Council, Cambodia’s Ministry of Commerce, Vietnam Textile and Apparel Associations, Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia, Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, China Textile Information Center, and the Textile Association of India. The event website says the major topics that will be discussed are: The influence of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on the region’s textile and apparel industry; apparel procurement; different trends in the region’s labour markets; and the latest government policy on investment in the industry. The organisers are expecting 100 to 500 attendees, including government officials and

representatives from companies in India, Myanmar, Vietnam, China, and other countries. Ten to 50 exhibitors are also expected to display their products and services at the event. Southeast Asia is among the leaders and plays an important role in the global textile and apparel industry. The region is said to have a strong comparative advantage for manufacturers, including market access, low labour costs, investment incentives, and existing industrial basis. In the region, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar have the fastest-growing textile and apparel industry. In Cambodia, the textile and apparel industry is among the most important sectors of economic activity. The industry accounts for more than 40 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) and it employs more than 800,000 people..

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50641199/cambodia-to-host-southeast-asia-textile-and-apparel-expo/>

Lao business sector seeking crackdown on illegal operators



Laos News / 09 September, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Legitimate private sector interests have called on the government body responsible for creating a business-friendly environment to tackle illicit trade, informal businesses, and firms operating without licences. Members of the business community representing numerous companies and entrepreneurs made the call at a Public and Private Consultative Meeting held recently in Vientiane. The meeting sought solutions to improving the business climate in Laos and assessed related issues such as the

removal of unnecessary barriers to attracting domestic and foreign investment. It also discussed the challenges faced by the public and private sectors in terms of implementing measures to enhance the business climate, which needs to be urgently reformed. Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mr Somchit Inthamith, and Vice President of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), Ms Valy Vetsaphong, co-chaired the meeting. Speaking on behalf of the private sector, Ms Valy told the media that illicit trade and illegal business operators without licences was resulting in a massive loss of government tax revenue. "Also, the unlawful practices of informal businesses give them an unfair advantage over legal firms," she said, and urged the public sector, as a key player in cracking down on all forms of illegal trade and business operations, to take immediate action. A formal summary of issues proposed to the public sector by business, which cited examples of illegal trade, highlighted the distribution and sale of smuggled tobacco products without payment of duties and taxes. A senior customs official from the Ministry of Finance responded to the complaint by stating that checking for smuggled goods was a priority at international checkpoints, but efforts weren't always successful in catching smugglers. He said senior ministry officials had been closely monitoring unsolved issues in collaboration with the concerned ministries to tackle unlawful practices among informal business operators. A Prime Minister's order has tasked the ministries of Planning and Investment, Public Works and Transport, Energy and Mines, Natural Resources and Environment, Finance, Public Security and Justice, and the Bank of the Lao PDR to improve the business climate. The

government is determined to promote a business-friendly climate, with concerned ministries working with international development partners to seek solutions to several issues.

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-business-sector-seeking-crackdown-illegal-operators-103706>

Japan trade group promotes Lao SEZs



Laos News / 08 September, 2019

The Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro) Vientiane will work with the developers of four special economic zones (SEZs) to encourage more investment by Japanese companies, to boost trade and economic ties between Laos and Japan. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed in Vientiane last week by the Chief Representative of Jetro Vientiane, Katsuichi Iwakami, and the zone developers. The signing ceremony was attended by the Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Khamchanh Vongseneboun, representatives from the Malaysian and Japanese Embassies to Laos, the SEZ Promotion and Management Office and officials from various government bodies. The four targeted zones are the Pakse-Japan SME SEZ, Savan Park, Saysettha Development Zone and the Vientiane Industrial and Trade Area (Vita Park). Since the 2014 establishment of Jetro Vientiane, investments by Japanese companies in Laos had doubled and many firms are now considering the possibility of opening a branch in Laos, he added. Some companies approached the Jetro Vientiane Office for consultations and to seek information on Laos' investment laws and other

considerations, especially those relating to establishing a company, tax payments, marketing studies, and business partners, Iwakami said. Laos currently has 12 SEZs which have attracted investment from almost 600 Lao and foreign companies, of which 40 are Japanese, Khamchanh said. Japan is ranked third among foreign investors in the SEZs, she added. Among members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry who have invested in the Mekong sub-region, only 105 companies have a presence in Laos. The comparative figure for Vietnam is 1,900 companies, 400 for Myanmar, and 270 for Cambodia, according to Jetro.

Source: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/japan-trade-group-promotes-lao-sezs>

Housing loans to target both ongoing and forthcoming projects

 Myanmar News | 07 September, 2019

Loans will be provided not only for ongoing low-cost housing projects in Yangon and Mandalay but also for upcoming projects to be implemented by the construction ministry, said Union Minister for Construction Han Zaw. Under a Japanese OAD loan plan, long-term home loans with low interest rate are being provided for housing projects that meet the loan requirements, the minister said. For low-income people to have the right to accommodation, loans are being provided for housing projects that meet the criteria of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and ODA loans. The Construction, Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank has provided K121.43 billion in construction loan, K80.87 billion in commercial loan, K24.61 billion in housing loan and

K0.10 billion in employee loan totalling over K227 billion. The Construction, Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank gave out a total loan of over K227 billion with 10.5, 11 and 13 percent interest rates.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/housing-loans-to-target-both-ongoing-and-forthcoming-projects7/9/62>

Golden Myanmar Airlines introduces new domestic flights



Myanmar News | 07 September, 2019

Golden Myanmar Airlines is start introduced new Yangon-Sittwe-Yangon and Yangon-Heho-Techilek-Heho-Yangon flight schedules, said its CEO Kyaw Nyein. The airline provided a lucky draw system to present eight scale models of ATR-72 600 XY-AMR aircraft to eight passengers to mark its maiden flight. The third ATR plane bought from France arrived in Yangon International Airport on August 23. The airline will expand its flight schedule to Dawei and Kawthoung, he said. It is operating with two ATR planes in domestic flights Mandalay, Putao, Myitkyina, Nyaung-U, Heho, Techilek, Lashio, Thandwe and Sittwe. The first plane from the Airbus for the airline arrived in Myanmar on January 9, 2013 and it is running Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Singapore and Yangon-Bangkok routes using the plane. The second plane from the Airbus arrived in Myanmar on October 6, 2013 and is operating Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw flight. The first and second ATR

planes arrived in Myanmar in May 2014 and June 2015 respectively for domestic flights.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/golden-myanmar-airlines-introduces-new-domestic-flights>

Aquatic exports fetch over 5.5 billion USD in eight months



Vietnam News | 07 September, 2019

Hanoi (VNA) – Export revenue of aquatic products in August was estimated at 833 million USD, bringing the result for the first eight months of this year to 5.52 billion USD, a drop of 1.2 percent over the same period last year. According to the Agro Processing and Market Development Authority (AgroTrade), top four markets of Vietnamese aquatic products in the first seven months of this year were Japan, the US, China and the Republic of Korea, with their combined consumption accounting for 56.5 percent of Vietnam's total earnings from the products. In the reviewed period, Vietnam shipped to the US 802.56 million USD worth of aquatic products, up 1.1 percent year on year, while earning 811.07 million USD in the Japanese market. Strong growth was seen in many markets, including Taiwan (China) (16.3 percent), Mexico (14.6 percent), Malaysia (12.3 percent), and Japan (10.4 percent). Shrimp and tra fish remained the major export product of the sector. Exports of white-leg shrimps accounted for 25.7 percent of the total export revenue, while that of tra fish made up 24.05 percent of the total. According to Truong Dinh Hue, General Secretary of the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and

Producers (VASEP), after the 13th period of review (POR 13) of anti-dumping tariff on Vietnamese warm-water shrimp exported to the US, 31 Vietnamese firms will enjoy zero percent tax rate in the market. He held that this is a good chance for businesses to increase export to the US as with the tax rate, Vietnamese shrimp can compete with same product from other suppliers. Commenting on the shrimp export situation in the future, Hoe said that the demand for shrimp will increase towards the end of the year, thus raising export volume. However, the rise will depend on domestic material supply, he added. In 2020, bright prospects are forecast for shrimp export, he asserted, adding that the question is whether domestic supply can meet demand. Meanwhile, Vietnam imported 133 million USD of aquatic products in August, pushing the total for the first eight months of 2019 to 1.19 billion USD, up 3.8 percent year on year.-VNA

Source: <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/aquatic-exports-fetch-over-55-billion-usd-in-eight-months/160091.vnp>

Vietnam's fiscal deficit forecast at 6.6 percent of GDP in 2019



Vietnam News | 08 September, 2019

Hanoi (VNS/VNA) - Vietnam's fiscal deficit, including principal repayments, would come in at 6.6 percent of GDP this year and next year, up from 5.9 percent in 2018, Fitch Solutions Macro Research forecast. It was revised from 5.7 percent and 5.8 percent projected previously. According to Fitch analysts, this follows a 7.4 percent deficit based on its

estimates (including principal repayments, otherwise 3.2 percent without according to official figures) in the first half of 2019. “We expect falling Vietnamese government bond yields in line with the decline in global bond yields to ease growth in interest payments on new issuances going forward. However, we expect this to be more than offset by increased government borrowing to fund key public infrastructure projects to ease the congestion in major cities and ports exacerbated by the influx of companies relocating their operations to Vietnam as a result of the ongoing US-China trade war,” the analysts said. Global yields have fallen as a result of a rush to safety amid growing economic and geopolitical uncertainty globally, as well as expectations of further monetary easing by the US Federal Reserve and major global central banks. This has supported a decline in Vietnamese credit default spreads and also yields offered on new Vietnamese government bond issuances. Given that risks to the global economy appear to be firmly weighted to the downside, government bond yields are likely to head even lower over the coming quarters. However, Fitch believes that the positive impact of this on fiscal accounts will be outweighed by an increase in government borrowing to expedite key infrastructure projects, which would put upside pressure on interest payments. Besides, according to Fitch, evidence has so far shown that Vietnam is

the main beneficiary of the relocation of manufacturing operations out of China. “We expect the rush by companies to relocate manufacturing operations from China to Vietnam to avoid the US’ tariffs on Chinese exports to continue worsening congestion in major cities such as Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, as well as at Vietnam’s sea ports,” the analysts said. According to Fitch, an important point to note is that delays to land acquisition for these projects would also increase project costs for the government as the influx of businesses to the country would increase competition for land, particularly in and around the major cities, putting upside pressure on land prices. –VNS/VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnams-fiscal-deficit-forecast-at-66-percent-of-gdp-in-2019/160103.vnp>
