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## Cambodia, Laos to sign 2,400-MW power deal



*Cambodia News | 10 September, 2019*

Cambodia and Laos will sign a power deal this week during the state visit of the Laotian prime minister. Through this week's agreement, the Kingdom will buy 2,400 megawatts from neighbouring Laos. This week's deal will be discussed at the Council of Ministers tomorrow, according to Victor Jona, the director-general of energy at the Ministry of Mines and Energy. The deal will be signed during Thongloun Sisolith's, Laos' prime minister, visit to Cambodia, Mr Jona said yesterday, adding that Cambodia is planning to build a high-voltage transmission system to carry the energy from the border with Laos to Phnom Penh. Under the agreement, the power imported from Laos will be generated at a coal-fired power plant, he said. "The power agreement will be signed next week. We are planning to build a 500 kilovolt, high-voltage transmission line from Laos to Stung Treng province, and then to Phnom Penh," Mr Jona said. The power deal was unveiled during a bilateral meeting held on the sidelines of a summit of Asean energy ministers last week in Bangkok, Thailand. Cambodia and Laos have already signed an energy deal through which the kingdom will import 100 MW starting next year. The Cambodian government has been encouraging investments in the energy sector after the country experienced a power shortage earlier this year. Last week, Prime Road Alternative, a Thailand-based

developer and operator of renewable power, won a bid for a 60-MW solar project in Kampong Chhnang province. According to a press release from the Asian Development Bank, Prime Road Alternative will be able to sell power to the national grid at just 3.877 cents per kilowatt-hour. This, ADB said, will be the lowest electricity tariff in the region. Electricite du Cambodge is providing the land and access to the transmission lines. Prime Road Alternative will supply power based on a long-term power purchase agreement with EDC.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50641688/cambodia-laos-to-sign-2400-mw-power-deal/>

## China's rice import quota to be met: CRF



*Cambodia News | 10 September, 2019*

The Cambodia Rice Federation is confident the Kingdom will reach its milled rice export quota in the Chinese market, with the association emboldened by last week's visit of China's largest food processor, COFCO. The Kingdom was unable to meet the quota last year, shipping just 170,000 tonnes out of the 300,000 allowed. This year, however, things will be different, argued Lun Yeng, CRF secretary-general. Mr Yeng said that a delegation from Chinese firm COFCO arrived in Cambodia last week to "understand the situation" of rice production in Cambodia. "During the meeting, we talked about the milled rice quota because Cambodia was unable to export all 300,000 tonnes allowed last year," Mr Yeng said, adding that, "This year, we will increase exports

and reach 300,000 tonnes.” In January last year, Cambodia and China signed an agreement expanding the amount of Cambodian milled rice that Chinese firms can purchase to 300,000 tonnes. Mr Yeng told Khmer Times that that quota will soon be raised. “After reaching 300,000 tonnes in exports, we will begin working towards the new target for next year: 400,000 tonnes.” CRF president Song Saran told Khmer Times recently that the association is now focusing on expanding exports to China and other countries in the region to reduce reliance on the European Union. In the first half of 2019, Cambodia’s milled rice exports rose by 3.7 percent to 281,538 tonnes. Shipments to China represented 42 percent of all exports, about 118,400 tonnes. However, during the same six months, Cambodia’s milled rice exports to the EU fell by almost 50 percent, according to CRF. The drop was the result of the tariffs the bloc imposed on Cambodian rice earlier this year.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50641689/chinas-rice-import-quota-to-be-met-crf/>

## EU programme supports

### Laos’ export



*Laos News | 10 September, 2019*

Geneva (VNA) – Laos and the European Union (EU) on September 9 made a major step forward in bolstering trade and investment with the ARISE Plus-Laos programme with a total budget of 5 million EUR (5.52 million USD).The ASEAN Regional Integration Support – Lao People’s Democratic Republic Trade-

Related Assistance (ARISE Plus-Laos) programme is designed to enhance Laos’s export competitiveness and integration in export in regional and global value chains.It will seek to promote trade and tap into the potential of the two chosen sectors of wood processing and specialty agriculture, which enables small and medium-size enterprises in Laos to increase their export knowledge, including on how to trade better and more with partners in the EU.As the fourth largest trade partner of Laos, the EU voiced its hope that the country will take advantage of its membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and reap the benefits of greater access to global markets.The EU also wants to step up assistance to Laos to strengthen its economic integration into ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).The programme was launched during the official visit to Laos of Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, and Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint agency of the United Nations and the WTO.Between 2014 and 2020, the EU provided Laos with 203 million EUR (224.18 million USD) in financial aid and investment, nearly tripling its investment in the previous phase.-VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/eu-programme-supports-laos-export/160221.vnp>

## Govt focusing on education reform to wipe out illiteracy



*Laos News | 11 September, 2019*

The government is concentrating on lifting enrolments at higher primary and lower secondary schools as it aims to wipe out illiteracy, according to a leading official. Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun spoke about the government's determination to eradicate illiteracy at an event held on Saturday to mark the 54th anniversary of International Literacy Day, which falls on September 8. The minister said the government is paying attention to supporting students who complete primary school to continue to secondary school with the aim for everyone aged 15-35 to achieve the equivalent of lower secondary schooling by 2020. Under the ministry's targeted programme in the 2018-2019 academic year, 5,924 students completed primary school education, including 3,029 females. Some 30,065 people completed lower secondary school including 14,362 women and girls, while 2,336 completed upper secondary school, including 685 females. The theme of this year's International Literacy Day (ILD) is "Literacy and Multilingualism". Worldwide celebrations have aimed to promote literacy as part of the right to education, as well as a foundation for individuals' empowerment and inclusive and sustainable development. ILD 2019 has provided an opportunity to rethink the fundamental importance of language and its diversity for both individuals and society. It is also an occasion to reflect on policies, systems and practice required to promote literacy in contemporary multilingualism contexts. Adopting the same theme, the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes, including

the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy (three awards), were presented at a global International Literacy Day event in Paris, France this week.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConteF\\_Govt203.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConteF_Govt203.php)

## Central Bank will consider further rate liberalization



*Myanmar News | 10 September, 2019*

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) will consider further liberalising interest rates and allow private banks more freedom to set their own rates to be more competitive, U Soe Min, deputy governor of the CBM told Parliament on Monday. The CBM will seek assistance and advice from the International Monetary Fund in doing so and observe what other countries are doing on this front. Currently, private banks must set their interest rates within the 8 percent deposit rate and 13pc borrowing rate stated by the CBM. The Central Bank rate is 10pc. U Soe Min stressed that the liberalisation process will be a slow and gradual one. "Some other countries took up to 20 years to liberalise interest rates. These rates cannot be reduced or raised immediately. Adjusting interest rates requires the country to have deep capital markets and this will take time to develop," he said. Meanwhile, the CBM will continue setting and refining regulations for financial institutions to establish more financial stability in Myanmar. That, in turn, will encourage a further deepening of the capital market. The paid-up capital in the banking

sector at the end of fiscal 2017-18 was nearly K3 trillion, which is up by 5.3pc compared to the year before, according to U Soe Min. “Regulations under the Financial Institutions Law and Central Bank law will be enforced to ensure capital soundness, sound management and liquidity in the banking sector. And, if required, on-site inspections will be carried out,” he said. Ultimately, the aim is to align the sector with international standards. Meanwhile, “the CBM is making arrangements to establish a Foreign Currency Regulation Framework to reduce volatility in the exchange rate,” said U Soe Min. A stable exchange rate is essential to encourage more exports and draw more foreign currency into the country. “The depreciation of the Myanmar kyat largely depends on the country’s foreign currency reserve, economy, financials and macro economy,” he said..

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/central-bank-will-consider-further-rate-liberalisation.html>

## Myanmar urged to develop microinsurance for the poor



*Myanmar News | 10 September, 2019*

Insurance services in Myanmar need to reach out beyond the existing clientele to support households with lower incomes to manage their insurable risks, participants at an industry workshop said. UK-funded DaNa Facility and the USAID’s Private Sector Development Activity jointly organised the seminar

on “Promoting Microinsurance in Myanmar” in Yangon on September 9. “It is very important going forward that we develop microinsurance, as these products will benefit the majority of our people,” said state-run Myanmar Insurance managing director Daw Sandar Oo. Although the domestic insurance industry remains limited, recent legal reforms paved the way for its expansion by opening the market to international competition. However, to ensure the industry is able to meet the country’s development needs, it has to become more inclusive and move beyond its traditional customer base to work for people with lower incomes. “Myanmar needs microinsurance products relevant for low income people as much as—if not more than—it needs traditional insurance products,” said Tom Coward, Team Leader of UKaid Myanmar Inclusive and Livelihoods team. The introduction and expansion of a microinsurance market in Myanmar will help to build the resilience of households and small businesses, protecting them from financial and other shocks through products such as health, life, and asset insurance. Microinsurance is a powerful tool that can help millions of people to avoid unexpected shocks. “Uncertainty prevents people from trying new things, such as mobile money, upgrading work tools, or investing in their household. The more vulnerable the family, the stronger this effect,” added founder and CEO of Stonestep Brandon Mathews.

Swiss micro-insurance technical services company Stonestep AG announced last year an investment of \$1.1 million to develop several new microinsurance products in Myanmar. Both USAID and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) are supporting Myanmar authorities to develop the insurance industry. From USAID, this support has included assistance in drafting the new Insurance Business Law, along with capacity building support for Financial Regulatory Department staff to undertake supervision of a rapidly growing insurance sector. DFID's DaNa Facility meanwhile has been working to promote microinsurance, including through grant support to Stonestep.

Source: <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/myanmar-urged-develop-microinsurance-poor.html>

## Central Highlands launches the largest fruit, vegetable processing centre



*Vietnam News | 10 September, 2019*

GIA LAI — The largest fruit and vegetable processing centre of the Central Highlands was inaugurated in Gia Lai Province on Monday. The factory complex of the Dong Giao Foodstuff Export JSC covers 6ha and is designed to manufacture 52,000 tonnes of products annually. It comprises of three modern automated production lines, including one for manufacturing fruit juice with a capacity of 20,000 tonnes per year, another for freezing

vegetable and fruit with an annual capacity of 22,000 tonnes, and the rest for canning vegetable and fruit with a capacity of 10,000 tonnes per year. Dinh Cao Khuê, Chairman of the firm's board of directors, said the processing centre will help ensure stable consumption of agricultural products of Gia Lai and the whole Central Highlands region. It is set to generate an export turnover of about US\$100 million and revenue of VND2 trillion (\$86.3 million) each year while providing jobs for tens of thousands of labourers in agriculture, industry, service, sale and transportation. As the complex will process 500 tonnes of raw materials each day, it will form 10,000ha – 15,000ha of large-scale concentrated farming areas applying high technology under value chains in the region. It will help local fruit specialties like passion fruit, avocado, banana and durian gain a firm foothold in the global market, Khuê stressed. At the opening ceremony, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Lê Quoc Doanh said with the inauguration of this processing centre, Gia Lai Province will have a favourable condition to keep the 10,000ha of its fruit farming area stable and connect farmers with businesses, thus helping promote the stature of the Central Highlands' agricultural products. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/535191/central-highlands-launches-the-largest-fruit-vegetable-processing-centre.html#UqzY7GvJQp3zqrJk.97>

## Ministry investigates dumping of Chinese cold-rolled steel



*Vietnam News | 10 September, 2019*

Hanoi (VNA) - The Ministry of Industry and Trade will investigate alleged dumping of steel products imported from China. The investigation was initiated after requests by domestic producers including Phu My Flat Steel Company Limited (VNSTEEL), POSCO Vietnam Co., Ltd. and China Steel Sumikin Vietnam Joint Stock Company. These companies claimed cold-rolled steel products imported from China have been dumped in the Vietnamese market at low prices. This dumping is the main cause of significant damage to Vietnam's rolled steel manufacturing industry, the enterprises said. According to the law, after initiating the investigation, the ministry will send questionnaires to related parties to collect information to evaluate the alleged contents including: dumping behavior of Chinese exporting enterprises; losses of Vietnam's rolled steel industry and the causal relationship between dumping and losses of cold rolled steel industry. Based on preliminary investigation results, the ministry may apply provisional anti-dumping measures to prevent acts that continue to cause considerable damage to the domestic manufacturing industry. The ministry will check information provided by the parties before revealing its conclusions. Public consultations will also be held for stakeholders to exchange, provide

information and express their views on the case before a final decision. The ministry recommends all organizations and individuals that are exporting, importing, distributing, trading, using the investigated goods to register as related parties and provide necessary information to the ministry to ensure their rights and interests. The agency may also apply retroactive anti-dumping duty on goods subject to taxation within 90 days before the imposition of provisional anti-dumping duty. — VNA

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/ministry-investigates-dumping-of-chinese-coldrolled-steel/160190.vnp>