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## Chinese group unveils plan to invest \$30m in banana industry



*Cambodia News | 24 October, 2019*

Beijing Capital Agribusiness Group, a Chinese state-owned enterprise, this week announced it is studying investing \$30 million into a banana plantation in the Kingdom. The firm is considering the purchase of 1,500 hectares of land that will be used to grow yellow banana, Li Zhijun, director of Beijing's Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, said on Tuesday during a meeting in the Chinese capital with officials of the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture. During the meeting, Mr Li said Beijing Capital Agribusiness Group considers the Kingdom a potential destination for investment in agriculture, according to a press release by the Cambodian ministry. "The group is now conducting a study and preparing the investment plan," said Mr Li. Ngin Chhay, director-general of Cambodia's General Directorate of Agriculture, welcomed the company's plans and pledged to facilitate the investment. "The investment would be important for the development of the agriculture sector," Mr Chhay said. "It is in line with government policy, which is based on modernising the sector, and encouraging processing, packaging, and the exportation of agricultural products with high-quality standards," he said. Srey Vuthy, spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, told Khmer Times on Tuesday that Cambodia is a very attractive market for foreign investors, particularly from China, due to its geographical location and favourable investment policy. "It is our policy that Cambodia must seize any

opportunity to expand the volume of agricultural exports as much as possible, which will help sustain economic growth," he said. The announcement follows the recent decision of China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) to allow four more Cambodian firms to export bananas to the Chinese market. AQSIQ's decision brings the total number of Cambodian companies allowed to ship the fruit to China to nine, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. Together, these companies occupy 10,000 hectares of land used for growing banana. Hun Lak, director of Longmate Agriculture, one of the companies that have received the thumbs-up from Chinese authorities, said exports of the fruit to China will continue to grow in upcoming years. "Banana plantations in Cambodia are growing rapidly, particular since early 2019," he said. "Within the next few years, banana exports to China will see a remarkable increase and could even be more profitable than exporting rice," he said. Longmate Agriculture is growing the fruit in more than 400 hectares of land in Kampot province's Chhuk district, which is also where the company's packaging plant is located. The company aims to ship 22,000 tonnes of bananas to China in 2019. Next year, the goal is to reach 33,000 tonnes. According to the latest report from the Ministry of Agriculture, Cambodia exported 110,512 tonnes of fresh banana during the first nine months of the year, mostly to China, Vietnam and Japan.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50653739/chinese-group-unveils-plan-to-invest-30m-in-banana-industry/>

## Cambodia one step closer to proper port regulation



Cambodia News / 24 October, 2019

The on-and-off process of drafting a law that will properly regulate Cambodia's ports is once again in motion. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the lead body tasked with drafting a Port Law, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) recently organised an event that brought together representatives from the public and private sectors to share their views on improving a draft of the law, according to a report from Agence Kampuchea Presse (AKP). JICA acts as an advisor to the Cambodian government in the drafting of the proposed law. Among the more than a hundred people present during the workshop, held on Oct 17-18, were officials from relevant departments of the Ministry of Transport and representatives from other ministries, Sihanoukville Autonomous Port (PAS), Phnom Penh Autonomous Port (PPAP), and private port operators. The workshop represents an important step for the Kingdom, which, according to economic and shipping experts, needs to have a law that properly regulates activities within its ports. The lack of a Port Law is seen as a hindrance to the development of Cambodia's ports. The Kingdom has PAS, its sole deepwater seaport, and a few other river ports in Phnom Penh, Takeo, and Kampong Cham. New seaports in the provinces of Kep, Kampot, and Koh Kong are being planned or underway. Ports are seen as important to the development of Cambodia, which has seen its economy rebound and grow tremendously after being one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia just a few decades ago. The Ministry of Transport and JICA

began drafting the Port Law in 2009 based on a study of the Kingdom's maritime sector by the Japanese aid agency, but there is little to show for their efforts so far. The proposed law would put in place regulations that will improve audit standards and management practices at all of Cambodia's ports. Anthony Galliano, CEO of Cambodia Investment Management (CIM), said he hopes this time the effort will be more successful. CIM is one of the leading business consultancy firms in the Kingdom. "This has been a stop and go effort supported by JICA, evolving from the report 'The Study on the Master Plan for Maritime and Port Sectors' in 2007 to the proposed drafting of new laws to improve audit standards and management practices at all Cambodian ports in 2009," he pointed out. The study looked at the regulatory deficiencies in the Kingdom's maritime sector, particularly its ports, and proposed ways to address them by way of legislation. "Hopefully this latest endeavor will come to fruition and address the essential regulatory and legal frameworks for the Kingdom's ports, especially security arrangements for ships, ports, and government agencies," he added.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/653738/cambodia-one-step-closer-to-proper-port-regulation/>

## Lao, European business chambers launch child labour free certification service



Laos News / 24 October, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and the European Chamber of Commerce

and Industry in the Lao PDR (ECCIL) have officially launched a Child Labour Free Certification Service. Vice President of LNCCI and President of the Association of the Lao Garment Industry, Dr Xaybandith Rasphone, ECCIL President Mr Arnaud Caulier, and Hi-Tech Lao Apparel Co., Ltd. Managing Director, Mr Chamlong Janetanakit. yesterday signed an agreement at the apparel company in Vientiane to launch the certification service. Both LNCCI and ECCIL have a long history of fruitful cooperation in supporting economic development in Laos by providing services to the private sector. The launch of the joint Child Labour Free Certification Service creates a new service line for both organisations and is expected to strengthen the international competitiveness of Lao companies and increase commercial opportunities. The service targets small and medium-sized enterprises and larger corporations, and is not limited to any specific sector or products, according to a press release from ECCIL. Hi-Tech Lao Apparel Co., Ltd. employs about 600 people in its factory in Vientiane and is an internationally successful manufacturer of garments. It exports quality products to acknowledged retail chains in Canada and Germany. Mr Chamlong expected a positive recognition of the company's products, especially in foreign markets where a growing number of consumers expect transparency as they take an increasing interest in the ethical practices of the companies they buy from. Implementation of the LNCCI and ECCIL Child Labour Free Certification Service has been

supported by the Experts Programme of German Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-european-business-chambers-launch-child-labour-free-certification-service-106884>

## Water users urged to prepare for drought conditions



Laos News / 25 October, 2019

The already exceptionally low level of the Mekong and some of its tributaries is expected to become lower still as October is just the start of the dry season, according to a senior official in charge of river flow monitoring. "The rainy season has come to an end so from now on the water level in the Mekong and some of its tributaries will continue to fall," Deputy Director General of the Meteorology and Hydrology Department, Ms Outhone Phetluangsy, told Vientiane Times on Thursday. Ms Outhone made the comment as the water level in the Mekong and its tributaries in Laos is at a record low. This unusual situation is now affecting household water supply as well as business activities and agriculture. This is an indication that consumers should be prepared to cope with water shortages. The Vientiane Water Supply Enterprise announced earlier this week that the distribution of water in some parts of Vientiane would be insufficient because its pumps in the Nam Ngum are now floating above the river. Ms Outhone said that although the department was aware of the unusual drop in the level of the Mekong and its

tributaries, it did not have the authority to announce that the country was suffering a drought. "Our role is only to monitor and report on water flow so we cannot say whether the country will suffer a historic drought. It is the role of the government and other relevant sectors to announce whether there will be a drought in Laos," she said. When asked about the cause of the unusual drop in river levels, Ms Outhone said it was the result of unusually low rainfall. "If the amount of rainfall this year was the same as in previous years, we would not be experiencing such unusually low water levels," she said, adding that dams in Laos could not be blamed for any drought. Lao dams on the Mekong are based on scientific studies and are well designed so they don't store a large volume of water and affect normal river flows, she said. Ms Outhone said that based on the data collected by the department in recent years, rainfall this year was at a historic low, especially in the north of the country. A report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology in July indicated that rainfall in that month was 70 percent less than average. An updated report was not immediately available to the media. But observers say that most of Laos except for central and southern areas experienced record-low rainfall over the past rainy season. Ms Outhone said that El Nino, a regularly occurring global phenomenon that causes unpredictable weather extremes, was a contributing factor to low rainfall in Laos and the Mekong region. The international community in Laos is aware of the impact of the climate change that is occurring in Laos. The government has established a

climate change fund, hoping to raise money to strengthen Laos' capacity to accommodate changing weather patterns.

Source : [http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent\\_Water\\_235.php](http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Water_235.php)

## Bank loosens repayment period for farmers



*Myanmar News | 24 October, 2019*

Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) has announced that it will extend the repayment period for its agricultural loans for the winter crop season by next three months for the convenience of farmers. Normally, agricultural loans for the winter crop season have to be repaid by the end of June but MADB has extended the repayment period to September 15 for this year's loans. "The extension of the repayment period will help farmers stockpiling crops to wait for better prices. In the past, farmers had to sell crops to traders and brokers as soon as it was harvested. The announcement of the extension is good news for farmers," said Free Farmers Association chair U Thein Aung. This year's loans were extended for several additional crops, the bank also said in its announcement. The eight additional crops were butter beans, yellow peas, flower sesame and sunflowers, onions and chilli. These crops are export

products and have high domestic consumption, and therefore were added to list of crops for eligible for loans, said the announcement. Farmers would also like the government to provide help so they can breed livestock and plant crops at the same time and earn more income, said U Thein Aung, adding that farmland can be used as collateral, making farmers good credit risks. MADB currently extends loans of up to K150,000 per acre of rice and K100,000 per acre of other crops. The loans for rice growers was increased from K100,000 to K150,000 in 2016, and other crops from K50,000 to K100,000 in 2018. Loans are being provided for a total of 22 kinds of crops. Loan applications can be obtained at the community-based loan screening groups and respective township branches of MADB. In the past, farmers could only take out winter loans after the monsoon loan was fully paid, but since last year, MADB changed the scheme to allow winter loans although the monsoon loans have not yet been repaid. MADB provides loans for farmers based on the three main planting seasons in the country - monsoon, pre-monsoon, and winter. On another matter, an MADB official said repayments by farmers have been declining since the beginning of 2012 due to natural disasters such as climate change,

heavy rain, floods, drought, and pest infestations. He added however, if the farmers are unable to repay loans due to the damage to farmland, they can apply to the bank to defer repayment with the approval of the village administrators, township Agricultural Department, and the Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/bank-loosens-repayment-period-farmers.html>

## About \$880m earned from maritime trade in two week this FY



*Myanmar News | 24 October, 2019*

Maritime export earnings have reached about US\$880 million over two weeks of the current 2019-2020 fiscal year, exceeding over US\$17 million compared to the same period of last fiscal year, according to figures from the ministry of commerce. From October 1 to 11 this FY, Myanmar earned US\$877.283 million from maritime trade while the same period of last year saw US\$859.598 million. Therefore, this year's earnings exceeded US\$17.685 million. Myanmar deals with both maritime and border trade. Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, marine products, forest products, mineral products, finished industrial goods (CMP) and others. In order to reduce trade deficit and improve trade surplus,

the ministry of commerce is taking measures such as adopting national export strategic plans, relaxing the procedures, encouraging the private sector, getting GSP and extending export market. In 2018-2019 FY, the total export value was expected to hit US\$15.3 billion. When the financial year ended, export value reached nearly US\$17 billion exceeding US\$473.218 million compared to the year before.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/about-880m-earned-from-maritime-trade-in-two-week-this-fy>

## Shrimp exports to EU suffer steep decline



*Vietnam News | 24 October, 2019*

VOV.VN - Vietnam exported US\$2.4 billion worth of shrimp during the first nine months of the year, down 7 per cent against the same period last year, whilst shrimp exports to the EU dipped 20.8 per cent, according to statistics released by the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers. This steep drop is attributable to the falling price of raw shrimp, coupled with factors such as high inventories in various markets and the rise in the supply source of shrimp from other countries, resulting in low prices of imported shrimp in markets compared to last year. In September, shrimp exports to the EU have dropped sharply by 23 per cent to more than US\$61 million against last year's corresponding period. The UK, the Netherlands, and

Germany also faced declines of 37 per cent, 32 per cent, and 9 per cent, respectively. Throughout the reviewed period, shrimp exports to the EU reached US\$513.4 million, down 20.8 per cent on-year. The average import price at these markets has plummeted by US\$1 per kilo in comparison to last year. The EU accounts for approximately 31 per cent of the world's shrimp imports and holds 21 per cent of the nation's shrimp exports. If Vietnam can tap into the advantages of the preferential tariffs presented from the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and apply the rules of origin, then The country's shrimp exports to the EU will likely grow since 2020. Elsewhere, shrimp exports to the United States enjoyed a 1 per cent rise to US\$476.9 million against the same period last year, while exports to the Japanese market suffered a 1.9 per cent drop to only US\$444.7 million during the nine-month period. In the Chinese market, shrimp exports recorded positive signs of growth with a 7.2 per cent increase, touching US\$382.3 million during the reviewed period.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/economy/shrimp-exports-to-eu-suffer-steep-decline-405144.vov>

## IUU fishing must be eradicated:

### Deputy PM



*Vietnam News | 24 October, 2019*

Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung inspected the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the southern province of Kien Giang on October 23, requesting ministries, sectors and

localities to make stronger efforts to swiftly put an end to the problem. Kien Giang (VNA) – Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung inspected the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the southern province of Kien Giang on October 23, requesting ministries, sectors and localities to make stronger efforts to swiftly put an end to the problem. In October 2017, the European Commission (EC) issued a “yellow card” warning to Vietnam due to the country’s failure to demonstrate sufficient progress in the fight against IUU fishing. Countries that fail to meet EC standards are given a “yellow card”, followed by a “green card” if the problems are resolved, or a “red card” if they are not. A red card can lead to a trade ban on seafood. At a working session with the Deputy PM, Vice Chairman of the Kien Giang People’s Committee Mai Anh Nhin said as of September 2019, the province had 9,858 registered fishing boats. It recorded a total catch of 450,593 tonnes of aquatic products in the first nine months – equivalent to 76.24 percent of this year’s target. To fight IUU fishing, Kien Giang has issued directives and plans, including stepping up inspections, increasing communications about laws of regional countries, monitoring the installment of tracking devices, and certifying seafood’s origin, he noted. However, the official admitted that local fishing boats still commit infringements, with 52 violations in the first half of 2019, up 21 from the

same period last year. Although a high percentage of boats are now equipped with tracking devices, connections with mainland stations remain limited. Deputy PM Dung pointed out the shortcomings Kien Giang needs to address, especially the low rate of tracking devices that are turned on while boats are at sea, which is about 30 – 40 percent. He asked the province to deal with boats that switched off their equipment while increasing human resources and upgrading infrastructure to ensure food safety in the docks. He demanded an immediate end to IUU fishing, telling local authorities to carry out the EC’s recommendations to remove the “yellow card” and prevent local boats from fishing in foreign waters. Meanwhile, ministries, sectors and localities must stay focused on their tasks, particularly controlling boats and vessels in Vietnam’s waters and strictly dealing with violations of fisheries laws. To boost the sustainable development of Vietnam’s fisheries sector, the industry must be restructured towards smaller catches and more aquaculture, the Deputy PM said, adding that restructuring will help eradicate IUU fishing, develop the sector sustainably, and improve its competitiveness in regional and global markets./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/iuu-fishing-must-be-eradicated-deputy-pm/162556.vnp>

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