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Cambodia's national budget for next year set at US\$7.66 billion



Cambodia News | 28 October, 2019

PHNOM PENH (The Phnom Penh Post/ANN) - The government has planned a national budget of more than US\$7.66 billion for 2020, which will be divided by sectors across 39 ministries and institutions. The government has planned a national budget of more than \$7.66 billion for 2020, which will be divided by sectors across 39 ministries and institutions. A press release issued by the Council of Ministers on Friday following a plenary meeting said the government expects the national budget income to reach more than \$7.49 billion next year. The plenary meeting was held at the Peace Place and chaired by Prime Minister Hun Sen. Of the sectors, the social affairs sector plans to spend 37.4 percent of the national budget – an increase of 8.9 per cent compared to this year. The national defence, security and public order sector were allotted 25.8 per cent of the national budget which is an increase of 9.3 per cent compared to this year. The expenditure on the general administrative sector will increase by 4.7 per cent, while the expenditure on the economic sector will increase by 3.3 per cent compared to this year, the press release said. The expenditure on employees for next year including basic salaries, civil servant allowances, bonuses and social allowances for leaders of public institutions, government, permanent employees and contractual employees is projected at more than \$2.1 billion.

This is an increase of 8.6 per cent compared to the budget for this year. Sub-national level expenditure, including the administration at the capital, province, city, district, and commune-level will record a 10 per cent increase to \$820 million. Funding for the development of communes and districts doubles from an average of \$35,000 a year to an average of \$70,000 for 2020. New strategies introduced Salaries for government officials will be raised from \$270 to \$281 starting January next year. It will further increase to more than \$288 in April. Teachers' and doctors' salaries will be raised from \$295 to \$306 in January next year and it will continue to be raised once more in April to \$313. For the National Police, the salary for sergeants will be raised from \$291 to \$302 in January. It will increase again in April to \$309 (including milled rice allowance). Similarly, the salary for soldiers in the rank of staff sergeant will be raised from \$260 to nearly \$270 and it will continue to increase to more than \$276 in April, excluding milled rice, the press release said. During the plenary meeting, Prime Minister Hun Sen introduced the "Strategy to Reform the Public Investment Management System 2019-2025" and the "Strategy to manage the public debt 2019-2023." Hun Sen said if his party continued to lead the government, it would "continue not to tax government officials and armed forces of all kinds on the minimum salary, no matter how much the minimum salary is raised." The press release said the Cambodian economic growth will drop to 6.5 per cent next year, which will result in a gross domestic product of around \$29.36 billion.

Source:<http://annx.asianews.network/content/cambodias-national-budget-next-year-set-us766-billion-107098>

ADB releases new Cambodia partnership strategy



Cambodia News | 28 October, 2019

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday endorsed a new five-year country partnership strategy (CPS), laying out its support for Cambodia's goal of becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2030. Under the 2019–2023 strategy, ADB will provide \$1.45 billion in loans, grants, and technical assistance for agriculture and natural resources management, improving urban and rural living conditions and renewable energy infrastructure, and the development of human resources. "Supporting public sector reforms and improving institutional capacity will remain at the core of ADB's programme. These initiatives aim to improve the access to and the quality of services for Cambodians, as well as the business environment," said ADB. ADB country director Sunniya Durrani-Jamal said the new strategy supports the government's goals of increasing competitiveness and diversifying the sources of growth, fostering sustainable and inclusive development, building climate resilience, and accelerating governance reforms. "Cambodia's economy expanded 8 percent on average from 1999 to 2018, making it one of the fastest-growing countries in the world. Gross national income per capita rose from \$290 in 1998 to \$1,380 in 2018," she noted. However, she said

challenges remain, including poverty among women-headed households. Ms Durrani-Jamal said social protection is limited and gains in health and education, among other human development aspects, remain fragile. Access to sanitation remains below the average for lower-middle-income countries. She said Cambodia faces an uncertain global trading environment and increased competition in the region. Efforts to diversify the economy into services and manufacturing have been constrained by a lack of skilled workers, gaps in energy infrastructure and logistics, and opaque business processes. "The CPS will help create better job opportunities for Cambodians by investing in their education, skills, and lifelong learning. Given Cambodia's young population, expanding the use of digital technologies and capitalising on innovations lies at the heart of our country partnership strategy," said Ms Durrani-Jamal. "Enhancing women's potential and leadership, particularly in the public sector, and protecting Cambodia's vast natural resources are crucial to the next phase of the country's development."

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50654726/adb-releases-new-cambodia-partnership-strategy/>

Lao workers benefitting from improved labour policies



Laos News | 29 October, 2019

VIENTIANE (Vientiane Times/ANN) - Labour authorities say Lao workers have benefited from greater support in recent years and the majority of

young people can now access some form of job skill development. For several years, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has been attempting to train workers by equipping young people from poor backgrounds with essential vocational skills. Young people now have more opportunities to improve their skills thanks to the ministry's improved labour policies. These comments were made by the minister, Dr Khampheng Saysompheng, when giving an interview on Friday ahead of the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organisation, when he spoke about the progress made in improving the circumstances of Lao workers. He said the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare had taken numerous steps to protect and promote the rights of Lao workers. Labour authorities have partnered with the private sector to improve employment services and self-employment, strengthen workers' protection, and enhance industrial relations. This must continue to be the focus in the future, he said, even though skills have been improved to some extent. In addition, workers have improved employment security with access to social protection and dialogue, which strengthens both the workforce and the country's economy. Vice President of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, Mr Simoun Ounlasy, said the Party and government must work to resolve issues in relation to the labour situation and workers' livelihoods. Lao workers have improved their skills over the years and demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility in their duties. This has inspired confidence in the workforce among Party

and state organisations, civil society organisations, and domestic and foreign investors. Future activities will focus on ensuring that the public understands the importance of workers for the country's development. Mr Simoun called on all trade union members to be good role models and strengthen the discipline of members working in government agencies, to prevent harmful behaviour such as corruption, bribery, violations of the law, laziness in the workplace, and absenteeism. At present, Laos has over 551,200 workers, many of whom are unskilled or have few skills. About 70 percent work in the industrial sector. The International Labour Organisation was established in 1919 and is the United Nations' specialised agency that is dedicated to labour and work issues. Within a unique tripartite structure, it brings together governments, employers and workers' representatives to set labour standards, develop policies, and devise programmes that promote decent work for everyone. In Laos, the tripartite constituents are represented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, and the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Source: <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-workers-benefitting-improved-labour-policies-107168>

Ruili Airlines starts direct flight between Yangon and Yunnan's Dehong



Myanmar News | 28 October, 2019

Chinese service carrier Ruili Airlines has started its second direct flight, this time connecting Yangon and Dehong, Yunnan Province, on Sunday. Ruili Airlines will be flying four times weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays from Yangon International Airport (YIA) to Dehong, the airport said in a statement. The airline will be flying a Boeing 737 aircraft which can carry up to 144 passengers. Ruili Airlines' first direct flight commenced between Mangshi to Mandalay on January 31. With the addition of this new route, YIA is now operating flights to 34 international destinations with services from 36 international airlines.

Dehong is situated on the China-Myanmar border and known for its Hinayana Buddhist temples, stretches of Banyan trees, and the Dai ethnic group. The Dai ethnic group celebrates a festival similar to Myanmar's Thingyan and splash water for 3-4 days in April. YIA is seeing a passenger increase of more than 6 percent over the last 12 months due to new routes mainly from the Chinese market. Passenger traffic at the main aviation gateway of Yangon increased to 4.6 million in the first nine months of 2019, 6.5pc higher than the previous year. As tourism is badly affected by the northern Rakhine

crisis, the government has granted visa-on-arrival arrangements for citizens from six Western countries this year, after relaxing the visas for six territories in 2018. Tourists from Australia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Russia have been given visa-on-arrival access for US\$50 each at Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw airports, starting this month. Last October, tourists from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Macau were granted visa-free entry into Myanmar, while Indian and Chinese nationals were given visas-on-arrival. These arrangements have been renewed this year.

Source: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/ruili-airlines-starts-direct-flight-between-yangon-and-yunnans-dehong.html>

Tea export price enjoys drastic rise in Chinese market



Vietnam News | 28 October, 2019

VOV.VN - The average export price of tea in the Chinese market during the first nine months of the year has increased sharply by 66.2 per cent to over US\$3,384 per kilo in comparison to the same period last year, according to statistics released by the General Department of Vietnam Customs. Vietnam shipped a total of 5,800 tons of tea overseas during the first half of October, raking in US\$9.8 million, up 1.3 per cent in volume and up 0.4 per cent in value compared to last year's corresponding period. Despite this growth, the average export price fell slightly by 0.9 per cent to US\$1,686 per ton. Between

the beginning of the year and October 15, the country exported 99,850 tons of tea worth US\$175.1 million, up 2.7 per cent in volume and up 8.8 per cent in value on-year. In line with this increase, the average export price rose by 5.8 per cent to US\$1,753 per ton. Pakistan remained Vietnam's largest tea importer during the nine-month period, purchasing 31,000 tons of tea for US\$62.3 million, up 30.6 per cent in volume and up 18.4 per cent in value compared with last year's same period. According to projections calculated by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Pakistan's consumption of black tea currently stands at 172,900 tons per year, with this figure projected to rise to 250,750 tons by 2027. With an increasing demand for tea, Pakistan represents a strong potential export market for domestic tea firms. Elsewhere, the country shipped 13,900 tons of tea to the Taiwanese market during the nine-month period for US\$ 21.6 million, up 1.4 per cent in volume and up 2.2 per cent in value

Source: <https://english.vov.vn/economy/tea-export-price-enjoys-dramatic-rise-in-chinese-market-405305.vov>

EVFTA to bring logistics firms both opportunities and challenges



Vietnam News | 28 October, 2019

Vietnamese logistics companies need to improve their competitiveness to stay afloat when the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) comes into effect, experts have said. Trade between Vietnam and the EU would increase strongly thanks to the EVFTA, boosting logistics demand, they said. The

deal, currently under ratification, has a number of commitments in the logistics sector that exceed those under the WTO. When it comes into effect, it would open the door wide to EU logistics service providers, who are highly competitive, to enter Vietnam, said Nguyen Thi Thu Trang, Director of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry's WTO Integration Centre. This would create competitive pressure but also bring capital, new technologies and opportunities for co-operation, she said. "This is exactly what Vietnam's logistics industry needs, and is an opportunity to reduce logistics costs." Logistics costs in Vietnam account for 21-25 percent of the country's annual GDP, 12 percent of the cost of fishery products, 23 percent in the case of wooden furniture, 29 percent for vegetables, and 30 percent for rice, much higher than that in Thailand, Malaysia or Singapore, she said. Besides, the country's logistics infrastructure falls short of requirements, affecting the distribution of goods, and thus the competitiveness of Vietnamese goods, she said. Therefore, the EU trade deal would be a challenge to the logistics industry but could push it into reforming and improving its competitiveness, she added. To enable the logistics industry to benefit from the EVFTA, Nguyen Thi Lan Phuong of the Ministry of Industry and Trade's Department of Multilateral Trade Policy said it needs to clearly understand the commitments under the agreement.

According to experts, to take advantage of the opportunities and cope with the challenges from the EVFTA, businesses need to improve their technology and logistics platform and increase digitisation and human resource training. According to the Vietnam Logistics Business Association (VLA), the country has 4,000 companies involved in the transportation of goods on domestic and international routes. Vietnam ranked 39th out of 160 countries in the World Bank's 2018 Logistics Performance Index, a big jump from two years earlier when it was 64th.

Source : [https://english.vov.vn/economy/evfta-to-bring-logistics-firms-both-opportunities-and-challenges-](https://english.vov.vn/economy/evfta-to-bring-logistics-firms-both-opportunities-and-challenges-405316.vov)

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