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Gov't adds \$50 million to rice fund



Cambodia News | 9 December, 2019

The Cambodia Rice Federation, together with millers and exporters, has hailed a recent government move to allocate an additional \$50 million to rescue the rice sector and stabilise the price of premium varieties. “CRF thanks the government, through the Ministry of Economy and Finance, for allocating an additional \$50 million to the Rural Development Bank (RDB) to expand the credit available to rice millers and rice exporters. This will stabilize the price of paddy and allow more of it to be stocked, milled, process and exported,” CRF said in a statement. CRF said it hopes the additional funds will help rice millers and agriculture communities members of CRF to continue collecting rice from farmers, particularly the varieties Phka Rumdoul and Phka Malis (premium fragrant rice) as well as Sen Kro Ob and Sen Pidor. The harvest of these varieties begins this week, running until early 2020. “We ask rice millers and agriculture cooperatives able to store more paddy to contact RDB to request a loan, using their current stock as collateral,” it said. Chan Pich, general manager of Signatures of Asia, one of the country’s leading rice exporters, told Khmer Times he was happy to learn that the government was injecting another \$50 million into the fund. He said a lot of millers invested all their working capital to purchase paddy from August to November, so they are running short of cash now. “The additional \$50 million will help rice millers collect more paddy to

store in their warehouse,” he said. “We haven’t applied for a loan yet but we will do it soon to collect more paddy in Banteay Meanchey province,” he said. “We are also happy that China allowed more Cambodian rice millers to begin shipping to the Chinese market. This is great news for farmers and exporters alike,” Mr Pich added. Last week, China’s General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) approved the applications of 18 local rice millers that wanted to begin exporting to China. A total of 44 local rice millers can now export rice to the Chinese market. The additional capital going into the fund will be available to all rice millers and exporters from today. “RDB is pushing rice millers and rice collectors to continue buying rice at an affordable price and storing it in their warehouses so that it can be used for collateral to access credit from RDB,” the bank said in a statement. According to CRF, as of the end of November, a total of 350,000 tonnes of paddy had been stored by members of the association. This figure does not include new stock or milled rice for export. During a board meeting last week, CRF agreed to consider the possibility of expanding to new markets based on the existing mechanism with China through the Ministry of Commerce, who is acting as the negotiator. CRF noted that the price of premium fragrant rice has dropped by about 100 riel to reach 1,000 riel per kilogram. “The slight drop in the price is the result of having poor quality. The Malis and Somaly varieties make up only a small percentage of all the rice. Also, the Somaly variety in

some areas is not fragrant but hard-cooked rice, which is not in high demand. “There have also been issues with the quality of the rice in Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap.” He noted, however, that the paddy in Kampong Speu, Takeo, Kampot and Kandal provinces had good quality and was being sold at a higher price although supply was not enough to meet the demand.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50668176/govt-adds-50-million-to-rice-fund/>

Expressway construction continuing as planned: Ministry



Cambodia News | 9 December, 2019

Construction of the country’s first expressway, connecting Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville on the coast, is 7 percent complete almost a year after the groundbreaking. The construction of the thoroughfare is going according to schedule, according to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, who recently said in a Facebook post that the expressway will be completed by early 2023. During a site visit on Sunday, Transport Minister Sun Chanthol was told by representatives of the project’s developer that progress on construction work has reached 7 percent and that work on the main road will begin early next year. Ministry spokesman Vasim Sorya confirmed the company’s remarks saying the main work will begin early 2020. “We are still at the very early stages of the process but that’s mainly because the developer has been busy importing machinery and building offices and accommodation

for workers. The company is working non-stop, days and nights,” Mr Sorya said. “In the next three months, the company will start building some sections of the actual road. Construction is moving ahead as planned,” he noted. Construction started in March this year with a budget of \$1.9 billion. The road is being built by China Road and Bridge Corporation through its subsidiary Cambodia PPSHV Expressway Co Ltd. Malaysian engineering Minconsult SDN BHD is providing technical advice. The expressway begins in Por Sen Chey district in Phnom Penh. It will have two lanes for each direction and a green median strip. It will stretch over 190 kilometres – shorter than the current road, which runs for 240 km. There will be several resting areas along the thoroughfare, according to the ministry. The expressway will alleviate traffic from National Road 4, the busiest thoroughfare in the country, which connects the capital to Sihanoukville’s deep-sea port, the main gateway for exports and imports. Prime Minister Hun Sen said at a groundbreaking ceremony for a road construction project in Sihanoukville last month that the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville expressway will play an important role in the transportation of goods from Sihanoukville Autonomous Port to the capital.

Source:<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50668279/expressway-construction-continuing-as-planned-ministry/>

NA closes with support for domestic development agenda



Laos News | 9 December, 2019

The National Assembly (NA) conference has concluded with the adoption of several legal documents aimed to create favourable conditions for the government to implement the national socio-economic development plan. The 8th session of the 8th legislature's closing ceremony took place on Friday at the NA grand meeting at Km 6 in Vientiane with President Bounnhang Vorachit, NA President Pany Yathotou and Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith attending the event. Delivering the closing remarks, Mrs Pany said over the past 20 days the NA conference had considered and approved eight new and revised laws and 10 resolutions to support the government's implementation of the national development plan.

"The approval serves as a legal foundation to support socio-economic development," she said, adding the approved legal documents were aimed to support the people, protect their rights and implement their obligations to the state under the constitution. Other primary issues of the nation, which the 8th session of the 8th legislature of the NA considered and approved, included the endorsement of the appointment of new Minister of Planning and Investment and Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism. The meeting also considered and approved the implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and Budget Plan

for 2019 as well as the 2020 plans. Mrs Pany said the NA conference effectively evaluated the efforts of the government to supervise ministries, local administration, entrepreneurs, and the public to confront difficulties and maintain political stability, social order and improve the livelihoods of people. The meeting provided recommendations and measures for the government to address unresolved problems as well as how to achieve national development. During the session, NA members performed their duty to inspect law enforcement and NA resolutions and regulations relating to revenue collection, land concessions, and immigration skill development and job creation. In this regard, the NA urged the relevant sectors to strictly enforce the approved legal documents as well as amend and address barriers to the implementation of the legal documents, and enhance the responsibility of officials in performing their duties. The work should be undertaken alongside the mobilisation of public participation in revenue collection, Mrs Pany explained. The NA meeting welcomed the 2018 State Audit Organisation report, adding that it provided useful reference information for considering and approving the 2020 budget plan. As part of efforts to utilise the state audit organisation findings, the NA meeting urged the government, Mayor and provincial governors to supervise their budget units and enterprises, which were audited to address the results of the investigation in accordance with the law. The meeting also considered and approved

reports from the People's Supreme Prosecutor and People's Supreme Court. During this session, the NA conference held the first assessment of officials' performance, with the assembly electing and endorsing appointments. Mrs Pany said the result of the assessment indicated that NA members have confidence in the officials which they elected and endorsed. She said the result of the assessment would be useful information for the appointed officials, as well as motivate them to perform their duties more effectively.

Source: http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_NA_closes_265.php

Laos-Vietnam promote tourism cooperation to strengthen bilateral ties



Laos News | 9 December, 2019

Laos and Vietnam have discussed plans on tourism cooperation, aiming to attract more visitors and strengthen ties between the two countries. Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Prof. Dr Kikeo Khaykhamphouthone welcomed Vietnamese Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Nguyen Ngoc Thien in Vientiane on Thursday as both sides exchanged ideas on cooperation in the sector and plans together. Prof. Dr Kikeo proposed that both nations continue their long history of cooperation by focusing on exchanging lessons and information on domestic and international conditions in culture and tourism. He requested that Vietnam assist with Laos'

application for Hin Nam No National Protected Area to become World Heritage-listed as well as holding training courses in Vietnam to upgrade the skills of Lao authorities. "We should increase exchanges in culture and tourism and learn lessons by using the latest technology and communications and continue cooperation on the national art school construction project", Prof. Dr Kikeo added. Mr Nguyen Ngoc Thien thanked the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism for the warm welcome and proposed to Dr Kikeo that cooperation between two countries be enhanced after Lao visitor numbers to Vietnam decreased while other countries increased. Past cultural and tourism cooperation between the two countries has included the organising of training courses to exchange experiences in the areas of the arts and performing, printing, and library management. The two countries also exchanged lessons in areas such as hotel management, environmental protection, souvenir production, development, established tourism links, tourism promotion of the two countries, and attending international tourism fairs. Laos and Vietnam plan to undertake joint tourism promotions, improve facilities at immigration checkpoints and examine infrastructure at tourist sites to welcome visitors. This information was recently reported at a dialogue in Champassak province between leaders of the four southern Lao provinces, the central and southern

provinces of Vietnam as well as tourism entrepreneurs from both countries.

Source:http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_Laos_Vietnam_265.php

Estimated Ks 15.6 billion worth of contraband seized



Myanmar News | 8 December, 2019

From September, 2018 to October, 2019, the Commerce Ministry seized contraband worth an estimated Ks 15.6 billion in nine regions and states, said Union Minister for Commerce Aung Htoo. The deputy minister replied to the question raised by Upper House MP Soe Thein from Kayah State Constituency-9 on December 2 in Upper House, about the measures to control illicit trade and conflict economy. In replying to the question, the deputy minister said the incumbent government is implementing Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030) composed of five pillars, for eternal peace, rule of law and sustainable development. For the fight against narcotic drugs, money laundering and development of businesses, the government has given priority to development of private sector and micro, small and medium enterprises. In a bid to control illegal trade, the ministry formed the anti-illicit trade teams in nine regions and states, which are sharing border with neighbouring countries. In addition, the government is working on the prevention and control against narcotic drugs in

accordance with the Anti- Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, poppy-substitute growing, supervision of restricted chemical, educative program and the use of modern machines for drug inspection. The Anti-Narcotics Drug Police made an investigation into money and moveable and immoveable things that come from drugs sale. Thanks to it, the police took action against ten money laundering cases in 2018 and 16 cases in 2019, he continued. The government has stepped up its effort to fight against illegal trade, the deputy minister said.

Source:<https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/estimated-ks-156-billion-worth-of-contraband-seized>

Farm produce export earnings exceed \$ 470 m



Myanmar News | 8 December, 2019

Till November 22 of this fiscal year, export earnings from the farming sector reached 473.892 million US dollars, up over 114.241 million US dollars compared with the same period last year, according to the figures from the Commerce Ministry. Last year's export earnings amounted to 359.651 million US dollars. Myanmar mainly exports farm, animal, marine, mining, forest, CMP and other products. In around two months of this FY, the total export earnings have reached over 2.5 billion US dollars, up over 580 million US dollars compared with the same period last year, according to the commerce ministry. In a bid to reduce the trade deficit and

promote the export sector, the commerce ministry is working on the National Export Strategy, the relaxations of procedures, encouragement to the private sector, tariff reduction like Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and the expansion of export market.

Source: <https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/farm-produce-export-earnings-exceed-470-m>

Vietnam – Cambodia business cooperation forum to boost trade



Vietnam News | 7 December, 2019

Phnom Penh (VNA) – A Vietnam – Cambodia business cooperation forum was held in Phnom Penh on December 6, focusing on how to boost trade efficiency and protect the legitimate interests of enterprises, as well as experiences in completing procedures for cross-border goods. This is part of the activities in Cambodia of the caravan to boost connectivity between Vietnamese and Cambodian entrepreneurs, attracting the participation of major enterprises in the Mekong Delta and Cambodian partners. Speaking at the forum, Vietnamese Ambassador to Cambodia Vu Quang Minh affirmed that the busy trade and investment promotion activities as well as tourism between the two countries over the past two weeks manifest the great attention of their firms to the chances of cross-border trade and investment. During the function, many questions raised by Vietnamese entrepreneurs concerning business chances, registration

procedures, investment environment,, and especially conditions to open economic zones in Cambodia were addressed by Cambodian authorities. The Vietnam – Cambodia trade last year amounted to over 4.7 billion USD, increasing 23.8 percent over 2017, and it is forecast to reach 5.2 billion USD this year. By now, Vietnam has had 214 investment projects in Cambodia with a total capital of over 3 billion USD, of which 176 projects are still valid with a combined capital of 2.77 billion USD, becoming one of Cambodia's largest foreign investors. Meanwhile, Cambodia has 21 investment projects in Vietnam with a combined capital of nearly 64 million USD, ranking the 54th among the 132 countries and territories investing in Vietnam.

Source: <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam--cambodia-business-cooperation-forum-to-boost-trade/164998.vnp>

Quang Ninh speeds up MICE tourism development



Vietnam News | 8 December, 2019

The southern province of Dong Nai has seen swift disbursement of foreign direct investment MICE is a sophisticated tourism model that combines work and tourism. It requires a high level of organization, infrastructure, staff, and additional services. Over the past 2 years, Quang Ninh has adopted MICE to catch up with worldwide tourism trends and has hosted events that demanded elaborate preparations from upgrading transportation infrastructure to expanding tourism facilities. Quang

Ninh is on its way to building its own MICE tourism brand, according to Trinh Dang Thanh, Deputy Director of the provincial Department of Tourism. "Our ambition is to boost MICE tourism from 20% to 35% of the local tourism market share. MICE is expected to become a brand of Quang Ninh and boost the GDP of the local service industry," said Mr. Thanh. Quang Ninh has paid special attention to tourism human resource training, especially professional vocational, and foreign language skills. Thanks to natural resources, developed infrastructure, and relatively high quality human resources, Ha Long city in particular and Quang Ninh province in general are attractive destinations for the MICE tourism. Quang Ninh now has more than 20,000 guest rooms in 1,400 registered guest accommodations, including 214 hotels. It offers visitors 32 tour routes, 78 tourism landmarks, 500 tour boats, and thousands of land transportation units for hire. Nguyen Thu Thuy, Director of the Service, Tourism, and Science Company, said "Visitors under the MICE tourism model often have higher requirements for tourism services and standards. Not every 5-star hotel in Ha Long can satisfy the requirements of MICE guests in terms of infrastructure and staffing. For the near future, we should focus on domestic visitors for the MICE model. They are less demanding. This will al

Source: <https://english.vov.vn/economy/quang-ninh-speeds-up-mice-tourism-development-407280.vov>
