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Thailand Cambodia business forum slated



Cambodia News | 15 January, 2020

A gathering of business leaders that seeks to enhance trade ties between Thailand and Cambodia is scheduled to be held this week in Phnom Penh. The Thailand Cambodia Business Forum 2020 will be held on Jan 16 at Rosewood Hotel, according to a post in the official Facebook page of the Cambodian Business and Franchise Association (CambFA). “Cambodian Business and Franchise Association is honored to invite all members to attend the Business Forum 2020 between Cambodia and Thailand,” the post read. The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is spearheading the event. CambFA, which was formed last year, is a non-profit organisation that seeks to promote small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship through franchising and matching franchisor to franchisee. The group counts more than 80 members engaged in real estate, construction, startups and other businesses. Created by a royal decree in 2002, the TCEB has a mission to promote Thailand as a destination for meetings, incentives, conferencing and exhibitions. The announcement said that Thailand Ambassador to Cambodia Panyarak Poolthup will be the guest of honor and will deliver the opening remarks. Presentations about business opportunities in Cambodia and Thailand will be delivered by Kanokporn Damrongkul, director of Exhibition Department at TCEB, and representatives from the Cambodian Government and CambFA. Representatives from Thai and

Cambodian businesses are expected to grace the occasion. According to an official of CambFA, four or five of their members will be among the attendees. Frederic Chan, chief investment officer at WS Asia Pacific, said such gatherings are good for both countries, noting that it will link entrepreneurs, SMEs, big companies and other stakeholders in the trade sector. “This is a tremendous opportunity for Thailand and Cambodia to work together to improve and develop their economies,” he said. A similar event in June 2019 drew more than 40 companies from Thailand that were seeking investment opportunities in Cambodia. The holding of the event comes as Thai investors are preparing to expand their network across Indochina and South Asia with the help of the Thai Government. According to Thai media reports, the Thailand Overseas Investment Support Centre will launch in March a training course intended to help Thai investors as they seek more investment opportunities in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Thailand has substantial investments in the Kingdom and is among Cambodia’s biggest trade partners. The Thai Business Council of Cambodia reported that bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$4.1 billion in the first half of 2019. Both countries are aiming to increase that amount to \$15 billion by the end of 2020.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50679838/thailand-cambodia-business-forum-slated>

Investment on 'waste to energy' boosted



Cambodia News / 15 January, 2020

Investment on converting waste to energy in Cambodia has been boosted as part of urban garbage management in what officials said would help to keep the country clean and generate power for the grid. Investment in generating power from burning waste is mentioned in the draft on urban waste management policy which is being discussed by inter-ministries mainly led by the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Environment. The policy was discussed yesterday with participants including the heads of the inter-ministries of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Environment and Phnom Penh City Hall. According to a report from the Ministry of Environment, 1.7 million tonnes of solid waste was collected and sent to waste dumpsites, a 15 percent increase year-on-year. The solid waste accounted for 51 percent of total rubbish in 2018. The policy on urban solid waste management lasts from 2019 to 2028. One of the prioritised projects stated in it is that there should be investment in converting energy from urban solid waste – a new development for Cambodia. The government has encouraged the private sector to step up investment in converting waste to energy in a marathon of discussions between commercial companies and the government's ministries and institutions. Victor Jona, director general of energy at the Ministry of Mines and Energy, said yesterday that the high cost of investment and power tariffs generated from waste-burning power plants are higher compared with other power sources,. "The tariff from burning to generate power is higher but it is important

because it can keep our cities clean from waste and also get power for the grid," Jona said. "We have issued certificates for companies to conduct studies [on converting waste to power] but the cost of products make the power tariff sold to the EDC (Cambodia's electricity authorities) higher and so it does not match government policy to decrease the cost of power every year to people," Jona said. The power tariff from waste-burnt power plants is around \$0.14 to \$0.15 per kilowatt hour sold to the EDC and power tariff from hydro dams is \$0.06 to \$0.07 per kilowatt hour. It is \$0.08 per kilowatt hour from coal-fired power plants. "Through the discussion, we hope the government through the Ministry of Economy and Finance will find an appropriate deal such as a subsidy policy to encourage waste-to-energy investment," Jona said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50679839/investment-on-waste-to-energy-boosted>

Laos to export 20,000 MW of electricity by 2030



Laos News / 15 January, 2020

Laos' electricity exports to neighbouring countries and Asean states are expected to increase to about 20,000 MW between 2020 and 2030. Electricity is considered a huge revenue earner for Laos, especially through exports to neighbouring countries and Asean states such as Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore. Electricity is exported from Laos to Asean countries through Thailand by means of a transmission line. The power is first supplied to

Malaysia and then sent through a Malaysian transmission line to Singapore, according to updated information on the Lao PDR Trade Portal website. Demand for electricity in Laos grew last year due to the increase in the population and the number of factories. In 2019, domestic consumption was 1,222MW, and the Ministry of Energy and Mines has said consumption is expected to increase by 1,800MW between 2020 and 2025. The ministry and Electricite du Laos plan to generate enough electricity to meet increasing domestic demand. They will take steps to provide enough electricity for household consumption, special economic zones, industrial zones, railways, express roads, and processing and heavy industries around the country. Laos has the potential to export power to neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar, and to Malaysia and Singapore by integrating transmission lines and distribution systems for electricity deals and exchanges. The integration of power transmission lines with neighbouring countries is an important step for electricity exports from second to third countries, and Laos is the first country in Asean to initiate such a step. According to the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Laos will be able to generate about 20,000MW of electricity from 2020-30. During this period, the Thai government expects to import about 9,000MW of electricity from Laos, Cambodia

about 6,000MW, Vietnam about 5,000MW, Myanmar about 300MW and Malaysia about 300MW. Singapore is currently engaged in trade negotiations for electricity imports. According to the Import and Export Department of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the value of electricity exports from January to October 2019 was about US\$1,066 million. The largest importers were Thailand (more than US\$1,010 million), Vietnam (US\$46 million) and Cambodia (US\$8 million).

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/laos-export-20000-mw-electricity-2030-112058>

Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry strengthens ties with China-Asean Business Council



Laos News | 15 January, 2020

Laos is seeking more quality investors from China, a close neighbour that has already invested in many projects in the country. Last week, the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the China-Asean Business Council (CABC) during a Lao and Chinese business operators' meeting in Beijing. The MOU aims to strengthen cooperation between the two parties. Through the agreement, the Lao side will share information about the qualifications of Chinese companies that are interested in investing

in Laos with the council because it has a special selection system, Executive Vice President of the chamber Mr Thanongsinh Kanlagna told Vientiane Times yesterday. Chinese investors are focusing on the Asean region, including Laos. China is a large contributor to foreign direct investment in Laos. Sectors that Chinese companies are considering include the construction of expressways, hospitals, supply of industrial products, tourism, trading, real estate, economic zones, skill development, duty free zones, and agriculture. Mr Thanongsinh said Chinese investors are very keen to operate businesses in Laos. When the Lao-Chinese business operators' meeting was held in Beijing last week, it attracted a lot of participants. More than 300 companies in China asked to attend the event but the venue could accommodate only about 120 firms to exchange investment information with Laos and other Asean members. The Laos-China railway, the trade conflict between China and the United States, being a transit route to other Asean members and transaction cooperation between Lao and Chinese banks are significant reasons to attract Chinese companies to Laos, the chamber's Executive Vice President explained. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith spoke at the meeting which took place during his official visit to China from January 5 to 9.

Mr Thongloun said Laos welcomes Chinese firms' investment in Laos to contribute to social and economic development, and promised that Laos would continue to improve the business climate to attract more foreign direct investment. Chinese companies have invested in and are operating in many fields in Laos such as the Saysetha Economic Zone, Thatluang special economic zone, shopping centres, and hydropower. Mr Thanongsinh, who addressed the meeting, said that under the Belt and Road Initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Laos has strong potential for trade and investment operations. In addition to closer relations between the two countries that provide facilities for trade operations and cooperation, Laos also has a strategic location to connect China with countries in the Mekong sub-region and Asean members. To benefit from these opportunities, Laos is developing infrastructure such as the Laos-China railway. Sectors that draw a lot of foreign direct investment are hydropower, agriculture, construction, tourism and logistics. Investment does not just enter Lao markets, but also the Asean market, which has more than 600 million people.

Source : <http://annx.asianews.network/content/lao-national-chamber-commerce-and-industry-strengthens-ties-china-asean-business-council>

China, Myanmar invest in power project in Kyaukphyu



Myanmar News | 15 January, 2020

Kyaukphyu Electric Power Company has invested US\$172 million in a power generation project in Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. The Kyaukphyu Electric Power Co, which is a joint venture between Myanmar's Supreme Group and state-owned Power China Enterprise, will construct a gas-fired power plant which can generate a total of 135 megawatts of power. The company signed an electricity purchase agreement with the Ministry of Electricity and Energy in November, 2019. As Myanmar's power requirement is increasing by about 1,000 MW year on year, a Notice to Proceed was issued for four long-term projects in January, 2018, including the project in Kyaukphyu, Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing was quoted by state media as saying. The projects are expected to take at least three years to complete before being able to generate power. In the shorter term, seven power projects with capacity totaling 1,166 MW are currently being implemented. Other projects will also be carried out to fulfil the country's power requirement of 1,000 MW in 2021, U Win Khaing said.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/china-myanmar-invest-power-project-kyaukphyu.html>

World Bank says growth in Myanmar to improve this year



Myanmar News | 15 January, 2020

Growth in Myanmar is expected to pick up to 6.4 percent in fiscal 2019-20 from 6.3pc in 2018-19 and 6.2 pc in 2017-18 as a result of the increasing government spending and private investments on infrastructure, transportation and communication, according to the World Bank. World Bank released its Myanmar Economic Monitor report – Resilience Amidst Risk – on Tuesday in Nay Pyi Daw. According to the report, growth will be supported by a higher volume of government infrastructure projects in transportation and communication. A larger flow of foreign direct investments in construction is also expected to boost growth. The banking sector will benefit from higher construction, manufacturing and trading activities through loan opportunities with foreign banks. Other growth sectors include the tourism and services sector as well as wholesale and retail trade. The agriculture sector should receive a boost from higher export demand, preventing a further narrowing of the trade deficit. Meanwhile, pressure on core inflation is expected to intensify this year as a

result of higher electricity tariffs and an ongoing shortage of power. There are still downside risks though, including slowing global and regional growth, trade tensions between the US and China as well as the crisis in Rakhine, all of which could impact foreign investments.

Source : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/world-bank-says-growth-myanmar-improve-year.html>

Motorbike sales in Vietnam shrink in 2019



Vietnam News | 15 January, 2020

The Vietnam Association of Motorcycle Manufacturers (VAMM) has said its five members, namely Honda, Piaggio, Suzuki, SYM, and Yamaha, sold over 3.25 million motorbikes in 2019, a year-on-year decline of 3.87 percent. Honda is making up nearly 81 percent of the sector's market share with the most diverse range of products. The five VAMM members are manufacturing and distributing nearly 100 models of motorcycles with prices ranging from tens of millions of VND to over one billion VND each. Other domestic brands present in Vietnam's motorcycle market are VinFast and Pega, as well as foreign firms such as Kymco, Ducati, Kawasaki, BMW, KTM, Benelli, Harley Davidson, Triumph, Royal Enfield, and Motorrad. According to insiders, as Vietnamese people's incomes have increased, more customers have been switching to buying cars. Last year, 400,000 cars were sold at home, a record

number over the past 20 years. Air pollution in big cities has also made a large number of people use their personal cars or buses instead of motorbikes to ensure health and reduce traffic jam, experts said.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/motorbike-sales-in-vietnam-shrink-in-2019/167316.vnp>

Steel industry not likely to have the best of times in 2020



Vietnam News | 15 January, 2020

HCM CITY — The Vietnamese steel industry is expected to face difficulties this year due to an increase in production capacity, falling demand and protectionist measures by countries to reduce imports, according to experts. Last year was a difficult one for steel exporters due to the increase in protectionism, they said. Exports to the US and the EU markets, the second and third largest markets for Vietnamese steel, fell by a combined 44 per cent in terms of volumes. Prices too dropped due to falling global demand, causing losses to some construction steel companies. Many companies have seen profit margins plummet, suffered losses or have cut output. Domestic consumption was also lower than in 2018, with consumption in the first 11 months growing by 3.5 per cent year-on-year compared to 10 per cent in 2018. Entering 2020 with opportunities from integration, especially the EU-VietNam Free Trade Agreement, the steel industry expects to boost production and export to new markets. But the US

Department of Commerce recently imposed import taxes of up to 456 per cent on corrosion-resistant steel and cold-rolled steel products using steel of Korean or Taiwanese origin, showing that protectionism continues and would put pressure on the steel industry. According to SSI Securities Corporation, domestic consumption is expected to grow at 5-7 per cent in 2020 due to the slowdown in the real estate market and public investment. But the increase in FDI could be a factor supporting demand. In 2020 construction steel capacity is expected to increase by 15 per cent, mainly due to the new Hòa Phát Dung Quất iron and steel production complex area and VAS Nghi Sơn plant with a capacity of 2 million tonnes and 500,000 tonnes. In the context of increasing competitive pressure, large companies in the construction steel segment with significant advantages in production, transportation costs and distribution such as HPG will hugely benefit. The galvanised steel sheet segment could be more stable in 2020 because large companies do not plan to expand capacity this year. According to SSI, a slowdown in China's economy might negatively affect steel demand, indirectly affecting steel prices in Viet Nam. The Việt Nam Steel Association forecasts China's steel demand to increase by 1 per cent this year, much lower than the estimated 7.8 per cent growth rate in 2019. Global demand is estimated to grow at 1.7 per

cent compared to 3.9 per cent last year. Capacity increases amid a demand slowdown, especially for construction steel, would increase the pressure in the domestic market, making prices to be volatile, it added. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/571153/steel-industry-not-likely-to-have-the-best-of-times-in-2020.html>
