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Winds of change for energy industry



Cambodia News | 23 April, 2020

A leading Southeast Asia energy firm's plans to create the Kingdom's first wind turbine farm are one step closer to being realised. Singapore-based The Blue Circle are in the early stages of negotiation with the state-run electricity supplier Electricite du Cambodge (EDC) to thrash out a power purchase agreement (PPA) over the farm, which will be located on Bokor Mountain in Kampot province. "The process could take between six months to a year to complete and the PPA could be as low as 7 cents per kilowatt-hour," said Victor Jona, director general of Energy at the Ministry of Mines and Energy. Once a deal has been struck, construction of the clean-energy farm, which will feature a minimum of 10 wind turbines and the capability to produce 80 megawatts per year. In general, one megawatt can serve the energy needs of between 225 and 300 houses over 12 months. Power consumption across the country last year reached about 12 million kilowatt hours, an increase of 23 percent on 2018. Hydropower currently dominates and serves 33 percent of the nation's needs, but the government is on a mission to diversify into "stable and reliable" energy sources contributing to the national grid to meet growing demand. According to a recent study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Cambodia has further potential for 10,000 megawatts (mW) of hydropower, with 8,100 mW and 6,500 mW respectively for solar and wind power. Keo Rattanak, director-general of

EDC, previously said that the country's energy mixture will change drastically in upcoming years, noting that the government will be able to produce at least 20 percent of the country's requirements from solar energy systems in the next few years. "We want to integrate green energies into the country's economic development strategy because it is good for the environment," he said. Construction work on five solar parks are in fact being fast-tracked so they can be connected to the national grid as soon as possible this year, according to the Ministry of Mines and Energy. The projects, spread over Svay Reign, Pursat, Kampong Speu, Battambang and Banteay Meanchay provinces will cumulatively boost the nation's annual power supply by a total of 160 mW. Plans are also already in motion for two further solar farms to start generating energy in 2021. Located in Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces, they will contribute a further 120 mW of power to the national grid every year when fully operational.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com>

[/50716028/winds-of-change-for-energy-industry/](https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50716028/winds-of-change-for-energy-industry/)

Maybank offers free client advice to COVID victims



Cambodia News | 16 April, 2020

Maybank Cambodia is adding free financial advisory services to all its business clients in addition to its existing help. The bank has shown strong liquidity in Cambodia despite the COVID-19 pandemic-hit businesses that has affected the entire value chain in the Kingdom. In the first quarter of 2020, Maybank

registered positive year-on-year growth for both deposits and loans. In an exclusive interview with Khmer Times, Maybank Cambodia Chief Executive Officer Dato' Mohd Hanif Suadi, said in Cambodia, from the industry standpoint, the bank is obviously affected as well because of COVID-19 because every segment of society, especially businesses in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, have also been affected. So far, the bank has received more than 200 applicants seeking loan restructuring and delays in the payment of debt and it has been assessing all of them and trying to see which is the best solution for those customers, said Dato' Hanif. He said that Maybank now offers financial advisory services to clients affected by the Coronavirus outbreak in addition to its financial relief schemes in the form of restructuring and rescheduling (R&R) of financing facilities, as well as moratoriums on loan repayments. The financial relief is open to both big businesses and small and medium enterprises (SME) customers and individuals affected by the current situation, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, he added. Dato' Hanif added that the moratorium for Maybank is not new because the Maybank Group in Malaysia, for example, has offered this sort of delayed repayment ever since the Asian financial crisis in 1997. "Maybank is quite familiar with how to actually assist customers. Today Cambodia is in that situation and we feel that the right thing to do is to make sure that we do not take away the umbrella when it is raining," said Dato' Hanif. "Our role is to engage customers and deal

with other problems and try to find solutions for them by advising them of the right options, our role is to provide the right advices in terms of alternative solutions for customers and hopefully they make the right decision. As their bank, we are here to help them so they can continue to do business in the future," Maybank Cambodia's chief said. He added that the moratorium will be providing a six month window for customers. In doing so, the bank has a prior discussion with the customer to understand the source of the problem, how long it will take the resolve it so that the bank is able to offer a better decision on when it can continue to be able to do business. "COVID-19 does not discriminate and everybody is affected so the customers come from small, medium and big businesses. Thus, our stand is we want to help these customers," Dato' Hanif added. The CEO noted: "We understand that the sudden turn of events arising from the virus outbreak have affected our customers across different segments of society – those who may need some breathing space in meeting their financial obligations at this time. "As their trusted financial partner, we would like to do our part and help relieve them from added distress during this difficult period, in line with our mission of humanising financial services. While we are able to consider a moratorium on repayment (R&R) for their facilities, we have taken this a step further by offering financial advisory services to enable them to better manage their finances currently as well as better plan for the future when the pandemic is over." Dato' Hanif added that the

recent guidelines on loan restructuring issued by the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) were certainly a welcome move to alleviate the financial burden of the businesses and individuals affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly the four priority sectors: tourism, garments, construction and transportation. He added that affected businesses and individuals must be aware of, and agreeable to, the accrued interest and revised repayment amounts or tenure of the deferment and to understand thoroughly the terms of the revised financing. Dato' Hanif said affected customers were welcome to contact their branch officers or relationship managers to discuss possible solutions to overcome any financial challenges they may be facing. The financial advisory services are offered at no cost to customers. On March 27, the NBC issued a directive to all banks and financial institutions to restructure loans in order to maintain financial stability, support economic activity and ease the burden of debtors facing major revenue declines who may find it difficult to repay loans during the ongoing viral outbreak. This directive requires banks and financial institutions to establish a policy and procedure on loan restructurings amid the Coronavirus outbreak and have it approved by the board of directors.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50715986/maybank-offers-free-client-advice-to-covid-victims/>

Laos Remains Vulnerable Despite Mostly Avoiding COVID-19 Carnage, Officials Say



Laos News | 24 April, 2020

Health officials in Laos say the government has implemented effective measures to prevent the spread of the deadly coronavirus, but that authorities must ensure they continue to be upheld because the impoverished nation with limited medical resources remains at risk. The small landlocked country of 7 million people has registered 19 confirmed COVID-19 cases since March 24 with no related fatalities — a number has remained the same for nine consecutive days, the Lao National Taskforce Committee for COVID-19 Prevention and Control said Wednesday. Laos is effectively controlling and preventing the spread of the contagious pathogen, said a Lao worker at the World Health Organization's (WHO) office in the capital Vientiane on Wednesday. "The WHO continuously gives advice to the Lao Health Ministry about the monitoring, treating, and managing COVID-19 as well as [employing] other measures against it, and our leadership has made a precise decision," said the woman, who did not provide her name because she is not authorized to speak to the media. The WHO, a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health, is working closely with the Lao Health Ministry and has requested advice and aid for Laos,

including medical equipment, from ASEAN members, China, South Korea, and Italy, she said. Laos is a member of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional group that promotes economic, political, and security integration among its members. A member of Laos' COVID-19 prevention task force said Wednesday that the country is still at risk because it lacks the medical personnel and equipment to deal with a large coronavirus outbreak. "Laos is still at risk and under surveillance," said the person, who did not want to be identified because he is not authorized to speak to the media. "Members of the specific task force teams are working hard and campaigning relentlessly to warn the public because our hospitals and medical equipment are not modern," he said. "We don't have that much equipment. That's why we have to take strict measures." Laos shares long and porous borders with China, Vietnam, and Thailand, adding to the country's vulnerability to infection.

Source : <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/covid-19-vulnerable-04222020202207.html>

National leadership and harmonised joint efforts for psychosocial support



Laos News 24 April, 2020

Members of the Lao Women's Union (LWU), Vientiane Youth Centers (VYC) and Lao Youth Union (LYU) recently met in Vientiane to participate in an online training programme on psychosocial support

during the Covid-19 pandemic. They discuss the UNFPA elements for psychosocial support and the best collaborative ways to complete and coordinate each other's work. The participants also exchanged their related experiences and ways to cope with the emotional and behavioural reactions to the epidemic. The LWU representatives discussed their role and work in providing psychosocial support and counselling, especially to women and girl survivors of violence and human trafficking, as well as counselling knowledge and practical skills. The LYU representatives provided practical skills on techniques for psychosocial support for the young population, while the VYC members shared their experiences when providing counselling on sexual reproductive health to the general population and young people. To ensure the best counselling assistance, the aim of balanced participation of men and women counsellors was also met. The twelve counsellors of the LWU will focus on GBV and women and girl's needs, the three from the LYU will provide youth with accurate information and how to deal with life, love and relationship issues. The members of VYC will deal with the general population on SRH services. At the same time, in a crisis such as this, the UNFPA is preparing to respond to the most vulnerable within the context of quarantine, self-isolation, social distancing, and lockdowns. The spread of Covid-19 and necessary

life-saving measures being practiced in society can result in multiple dimensions of social inequalities, gender-based violence, lack of access to information, and disquieting levels of anxiety and stress for youth, women, and the elderly. To mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the population, including women, girls, youth and those living in rural areas, UNFPA Laos is supporting these three national partners in a complementary union of interventions to provide psychosocial support. The immediate response for Covid-19 mobilised governments, UN agencies, civil society, individuals and the private sector to strengthen health systems and equip them for continuous medical assistance. UNFPA has actively helped to ensure the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including maternal ones, and protection of health word.

Source: http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeConten_National_77.php

Govt to beef up rice and palm oil reserves



Myanmar News | 23 April, 2020

The government is planning to beef up the national rice and palm oil reserves for emergencies in case the COVID-19 outbreak drags on. The Ministry of Commerce (MOC) announced in an April 22 statement that it will buy and stockpile 50,000 tonnes of rice and 12,000 tonnes of palm oil as reserve food for emergencies. It also added that the ministry will purchase the items at a reasonable

price. “We would like to inform the public that there is no need to worry about the supply of rice. We have sufficient supply of rice in the country. The government is planning to buy 10 percent of the amount of rice exports, which is 50,000 tonnes,” commerce minister U Thant Myint said. The MOC said it has already received funds to procure the supplies needed. The ministry is also working on the national reserve food plan with the private sector as well as the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Rice Federation and Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association.

Source: : <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/govt-beef-rice-and-palm-oil-reserves.html>

Honda Vietnam resumes automobile, bike production from April 23



Vietnam News | 23 April, 2020

Hanoi (VNA) – Honda Vietnam announced on late April 22 that it will resume the production of automobiles and motorbikes from April 23 after 22 days of suspension to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic. Nguyen Huy Trung, head of the External Relations Division of Honda Vietnam, said that the resumption is carried out as the pandemic is well controlled in Vietnam with no new cases reported in the last six days. Honda Vietnam commits to ensuring the health and safety of its staff and workers, he added. Earlier, the company twice announced to suspend the manufacturing of cars and motorbikes, with the first one from April 1-15 and the second from

April 15-22 due to the complicated developments of the disease. Despite the pandemic, its automobile sales reached 1,968 units, up 40 percent against the previous month, and motorbike sales reached 157,984 units, down 3 percent. In the month, Honda Vietnam exported 19,739 automobiles to different markets./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/honda-vietnam-resumes-automobile-bike-production-from-april>

Vietnam sees high shrimp export growth to US and Japan in Q1



Vietnam News | 23 April, 2020

Hanoi (VNS/VNA) - Vietnam gained shrimp export growth to some key export markets in the first quarter of this year, especially Japan and the US, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan jumped to first place in the five largest export markets, accounting for 21 percent of Vietnam's total shrimp export value after the export value to this market in February surged sharply by 63 percent year-on-year, according to the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP). During this period, Vietnam earned 132 million USD from shrimp exports to Japan, 8.4 percent higher than the same period of last year. Meanwhile, the US became the second largest export market for Vietnamese shrimp in the first quarter because of higher demand for essential food, including shrimp, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the association reported. In the first three months Vietnam's shrimp export value to the US market reached 115.5 million USD, a surge of 18.2

percent year-on-year. This was the highest growth rate among the top five export markets for Vietnamese shrimp during the first quarter. In March alone, the shrimp export value to this market increased by 11.5 percent to 41.3 million USD year on year. However, in the same month, shrimp export to many other major export markets decreased in value against the same period of last year, including the EU (16 percent), the Republic of Korea (6.3 percent) and China (6.4 percent). It is reported that Vietnam's total shrimp export value in the first three months rose by 1.8 percent year-on-year to 628.6 million USD. Although it is still unclear when the pandemic ends, there is high demand for shrimp on the domestic and global markets because it is one essential food, according to the association. Therefore, Vietnam needs to ensure shrimp supply for the home and abroad markets now and in the future. Shrimp output in many key producers in the world such as India and Ecuador is estimated to reduce due to disease of shrimp and bad weather while the shrimp demand on the global market is forecast to increase sharply after the pandemic./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-sees-high-shrimp-export-growth-to-us-and-japan-in-q1/172232.vnp>