



On the Cover:

Dubai continues to suffer after a request for debt restructuring by Nakheel, builder of the emirate's palm-shaped islands... (page 8)

Editorial

The recent request for debt restructuring from the Dubai developer Nakheel, builder of the emirate's palm-shaped islands, there are concerns that other narrow, real-estate-based and/or heavily-indebted economies could default on debts, potentially leading to another credit crisis.

Greece, suffering instability and saddled with large debts, has recently had its sovereign ratings downgraded, and there are worries that inflation-stricken Vietnam could be next to falter. With financial transparency leaving much to be desired in Cambodia, how at risk is the kingdom from a potential new wave of real-estate triggered woe?

The total sums are difficult to figure out: Most funding came in stages from abroad, and less from local banks and investors, and Cambodia's estate has hitherto been much affected by liquidity constraints, but not toxic assets abroad.

But overpriced property and suggestions of massive oversupply do not bode well, despite the new law allowing non-Cambodians to own some property.

*As ever, ETM welcomes readers' suggestions and comments.
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SRI Takes Hold

High Yield Rice Methods Growing in Popularity

Rice, accounting for 2.58 million ha of the total 3.1 million ha cultivated area, is undoubtedly Cambodia's most important crop. The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) is helping the kingdom's farmers get the most out of their fields.

The Cambodia government wants to up agricultural productivity and diversification through modern rice planting methodology and extending the cultivated area, aiming to expand the rice production for export to 8 million tons by 2015. (page 14)



Cambodian Organic Brown Rice Enters US

High Hopes Other Deals can be Revived

In a deal that bodes well for local farmers, the Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC) recently successfully exported the first 17-ton container of certified Cambodian organic brown rice to the US.

The German organizations GTZ and Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED), along with CEDAC, have worked together for years to make the deal happen. Selling organic rice in the domestic market was easy compared to exporting, said those involved. (page 20)



Convicted Thai Spy Pardoned

Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni has pardoned a Thai man jailed for 7 years and fined CR10 million for spying on fugitive former Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra during his 4 day-visit to Cambodia beginning Nov 10, DAP News Cambodia reported Dec 12.

Sivarak Chothepong, 31, an employee at the Cambodia Air Traffic Service (CATS), was released from prison Dec 14 to his family and a delegation from Thailand's opposition Puea Thai party, spokesman Khieu Kanharith told DAP Dec 11. (page 33)



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