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Construction date yet to be set for \$1.3B coal-fired station

Hin Pisei | Publication date 20 August 2019 | 21:43 ICT Share



Cambodia will have more electricity capacity after investment in an oil-power plant in Kandal province, as well as solar power plants in Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces. Heng Chivoan

A nearly \$1.3 billion coal-fired power station project in Preah Sihanouk province is still in the research and development stage with a construction date still not set, a Ministry of Mines and Energy spokesman told The Post.

The 700-megawatt power station project, set to be developed by the Cambodia International Investment Development Group (CIIDG), was approved by the Council of Ministers of Cambodia on May 25 last year as a 35-year build-operate-transfer project.

After approval, the project was scheduled to begin early this year, but has now faced delays. However, ministry spokesman Victor Jona said he is still optimistic that the project will commence this year.

He told The Post late last week that because of the size of the project it will have a significant impact on the surrounding area in terms of noise and vibration. Therefore, an extensive study of the soil and surrounding area is being conducted before commencing construction.

"Currently, the company is drilling to take soil to examine. Construction could begin as soon as this year," he said.

The project is divided into two phases, with each phase set to contribute 350 megawatt to Cambodia's national grid network. The first phase is expected to be integrated into the national grid by 2023, while the second phase will be integrated the following year.

Despite Cambodia's electricity demand set to rise between 18-20 per cent by next year, Jona said there will be no shortage of electricity.

"I believe the supply of electricity will be sufficient next year because we have prepared better than last year," he said.

According to Jona, Cambodia will have more electricity capacity as of the fourth quarter of this year after investment in a series of new power plants - namely an oil-power plant in Kandal province, as well as solar power plants in Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces.

CIIDG already operates a \$383 million coal-fired power plant in Preah Sihanouk province. The 270 megawatt capacity plant was also split into two phases, with the second 135 megawatt phase slated to be completed in 2021.

In addition to CIIDG's coal-fired power plant, Malaysia's Leader Universal Holdings also operates a 100 megawatt-capacity plant in the province.

The development of coal and hydropower plants is controversial and regarded by many as a threat to the environment.

Ham Oudom, a freelance consultant on natural resource governance, said that coal power is a dated technology that many countries no longer use as it produces higher greenhouse gas emissions.

"Burning coal impacts the environment if we do not have the technology to filter emissions in the process," he said.

He added that a sensible energy policy is important in ensuring the sustainability of people's livelihoods, the economy and the environment.

"Cambodia should consider extracting energy from other sources, especially renewable energy such as solar, wind and biomass," he said.

Keo Ratanak, Electricite du Cambodge (EDC) director-general, said at a forum on Cambodia's 2020 energy vision last month that the Kingdom would expand its solar energy investment at the expense of hydropower. He said solar power investment would increase 12 per cent by the end of 2020 and 20 per cent over the next three years.

"EDC does not want to see hydropower construction along the Mekong River for the generation of electricity," he said.

Contact author: Hin Pisei

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Prime Minister Hun Sen late on July 28 instructed the municipal and provincial authorities nationwide to strictly enforce Covid-19 measures including curfew for two weeks from July 29 midnight through August 12 to stem the new coronavirus Delta variant. The instruction came shortly after he issued a directive

Provinces on Thai borders put in lockdown amid Delta fears

The government has decided to place several border provinces in lockdown for two weeks in a bid to prevent the new coronavirus Delta variant spreading further into community. According a directive signed by Prime Minister Hun Sen late on July 28, the provinces include Koh Kong,

Two luxury hotels latest quarantine options for inbound travellers

The Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat Covid-19 has designated two luxury hotels as alternative quarantine options for travellers who wish to enter Cambodia through Phnom Penh International Airport - Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel & Residence and the Courtyard by Marriott Phnom Penh. In a notice detailing guidelines issued

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As the US and its allies joined hands last week to expose what they allege to be China's Ministry of State Security's malicious cyber activities around the world, the attention also turned to Cambodia with the US Department of Justice claiming that four

US' Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccines arrive

The first batch of 455,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine donated by the US touched down in Phnom Penh on the morning of July 30. They are part of the total 1,060,100 doses the US has pledged to provide to Cambodia through the World Health Organisation-led (

AZ Covid shot to be used as booster for China jabs

Prime Minister Hun Sen has decided to use the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines as the booster dose for the Chinese-manufactured Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, while the US-donated Johnson & Johnson vaccines will be used for ethnic minority groups and migrant workers. Speaking at the launch of the