Rice quota to EU set at 768 tonnes for Sept

ALLOCATIONS ON 'FIRST COME FIRST SERVED' BASIS

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THE NATION

THE Commerce Ministry has announced that the September quota for rice exports to the European Union will total 768 tonnes, and on Monday began accepting applications from exporters.

Duangporn Rodphaya, director-general of the ministry's Foreign Trade Department, said rice-export quotas would be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis until the 768.08-tonne limit is reached. Applications are open to licensed exporters.

Exporters that win a quota allocation need to send a report to the department within 120 days after shipping the first lot of rice. If any are unable to export the volume they requested, they need to ask the department for a refund within 10 days of starting the shipment.

Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry said PTT and Bangchak Petroleum had proposed purchasing damaged rice from the government's stocks for ethanol production. However, the ministry could not yet finalise the rice-sale procedure as it needs to determine the exact volume of the stockpiles, as well as calculate the losses of the pledging scheme.

Rungson Siworasart, permanent secretary of the Finance Ministry, said it had asked for cooperation from the Commerce Ministry in order to proceed with auditing of the rice-pledging budget.

Import ban mulled

In another development at the Commerce Ministry, its Foreign Trade Department is considering a ban on imports of "electric cigarettes" and barakus – electronic hookahs – amid strong concerns about consumer health, said Panjit Pisawong, deputy director-general of the department.

With the growing popularity of these devices, found by many studies to be as unhealthy as ordinary cigarettes, the department may include them in its import-control measures.