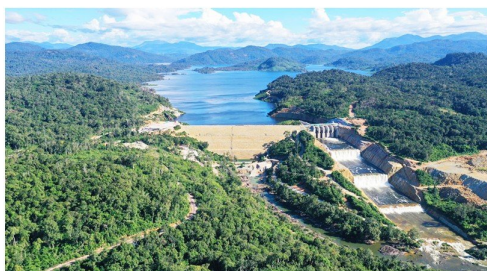




Weekly news Aug 16 - 23, 2022

Highlight on farmers, agribusiness and rural development in Laos



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NEWS DIGEST #32 Aug 16-23, 2022

Lao PDR news

US\$69.2m Solar PV Project officially breaks ground in Laos

VT Times, Aug 16, 2022.

The Solar Attapeu Power Project (SAPP) is a US\$69.2 million solar PV project, including the transmission line, set to commence construction works in Attapeu province and provide a catalyst for the renewable energy sector in Laos.

On Friday, the project developer, Solar Attapeu Power Sole Company, Ltd. (SAPC), held its official groundbreaking ceremony at the project site, 37km marker in Hatxan village, Xaysettha district of the Southern province.

Since 2014 the SAPC development team has worked in close cooperation with the Lao government at the provincial and central levels to select this project site and to develop this first-of-its-kind utility-scale solar PV project in Laos. Speaking at the ceremony, the General Manager of SAPC Lao, Dr Sisavath Souvannavong, said the solar project is scheduled for completion in late 2023 with an installed capacity of 64MWdc / 50MWac.

The plant will create energy security for the country, employment opportunities for the Attapeu community, and generate 128GWh of annual electricity for direct sale to Electricite du Laos (EdL).

The Governor of Attapeu province, Mr Leth Sayaphone, said the project would be a driving force for socio-economic development in the province and would help to improve people's standard of living.

Also attending the SAPP event were Mr Kyle Katoski, Head of Development from SAPC's headquarters in Singapore, and Ms Maria Goravanchi, Regional Managing Director for Lower Mekong (Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand) of the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) – the development finance supporter of the project – and Mrs Bounna Bounghaseng, Attapeu Provincial Party Committee, and Mr Soulichanh Phonekeo, Head of Attapeu Provincial Administration Office, as well as many other relevant stakeholders and member of the wider Attapeu community.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org...>

Overflow alert issued for Mekong communities

VT Times, Aug 16, 2022.

Xayaboury province is advising people living alongside the Mekong River to prepare for possible flooding, while neighbouring Thailand has warned its seven north-eastern provinces to brace for sudden overflows along the river until Thursday.

The Lao province issued the alert following heavy rainfall in recent days, which has seen the level of the Mekong rises.

The Administrative Office in Xayaboury province on Saturday published a notice informing people living upstream and downstream of the Xayaboury run-of-river dam to be prepared for possible flooding and to move their belongings and livestock to higher ground.

The warning was issued following a notice circulated earlier on the same day by the Xayaburi Power Company Limited.

District authorities were told to warn local residents to be prepared for a rise in the level of the Mekong.

The notice issued by provincial authorities advised the relevant authorities and local residents to comply with any advice or instructions issued by the Xayaburi Power Company Limited.

According to the notice, flooding may occur after hydropower dams along the Nam Ou River – a tributary of the Mekong – began discharging more water following heavy downpours across many parts of Laos in recent days, especially in the north.

Heavy rain coupled with discharges from dams on the Nam Ou have caused a surge in the volume of water flowing through the Xayaboury dam. As a result, operators of the dam have raised the emergency situation to Level 2 and taken action to manage the situation accordingly.

In neighbouring Thailand, the country's National Water Command Centre is advising people living near the banks of the Mekong in seven north-eastern provinces to brace for sudden overflows from Sunday until Thursday, Thai PBS reported on Saturday.

The Centre said that heavy rain, triggered by Tropical Depression Mulan on August 11 and 12 in Laos' Luang Prabang area, has substantially increased the volume of water flowing through the Xayaboury dam, causing the level of the downstream Mekong River to rise steadily.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

Ministry, FAO mull agricultural issues

VT Times, Aug 17, 2022.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is discussing with its development partner, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), ways to highlight the impacts of rising food, fuel and fertiliser prices on the country's agriculture sector.

A meeting between the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr Phet Phomphiphak, and FAO Representative to Laos, Mr Nasar Hayat, covered a range of issues including the forthcoming high-level Hand-in-Hand Initiative event being held in Rome.

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative supports the implementation of nationally led, ambitious programmes to accelerate agrifood system transformations by eradicating poverty (SDG1), ending hunger and malnutrition (SDG2), and reducing inequalities (SDG10).

It uses advanced geospatial modelling and analytics, as well as a robust partnership-building approach to accelerate the market-based transformation of agrifood systems.

This initiative aims to raise incomes, improve the nutritional status and well-being of poor and vulnerable populations, and strengthen resilience to climate change.

FAO is currently undertaking a Master Tea Plan and preparing for the upcoming Food Systems follow-up meeting in Bangkok and World Food Day.

The meeting was a good opportunity to update the Minister on the research carried out by FAO.

Mr Hayat said the Master Tea Plan was being developed for Laos given its high potential and that opportunities to introduce processing to add value to products were being explored.

Dr Phet confirmed the importance of this sector for the entire country, noting its very high quality and reputation and the ministry's support for tea processing studies, both in person and virtually.

Mr Hayat explained that FAO had recently conducted small focus groups in five provinces, in consultation with local authorities, to understand the impact on farmers of the rising costs of food and agri-product imports, while continuing to work with the government to assist farmers and improve food security.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

VT Times, August 17, 2022.

The government has vowed to diversify energy sources in Laos by placing more emphasis on renewable energy sources, particularly electricity generated by solar, wind and biomass systems.

The move is part of the government's efforts to ensure energy security, addressing the electricity shortage in the dry season and minimising imports.

At present, 81 percent of the electricity consumed in Laos is generated by hydropower, followed by coal-fired power plants with 17 percent.

Meanwhile, renewable energy sources such as solar power and biomass represent only 2 percent of the power used in Laos, according to a recent report from the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

The government plans to increase the proportion of renewable energy to 11 percent, as endorsed in its five-year plan for 2021-2025.

Conversely, the proportion of electricity used from hydropower and coal-fired power plants will account for 75 percent and 14 percent respectively by 2025.

There are currently 90 energy-generating plants across the country, with a combined installed capacity of nearly 11,000MW. These include 77 hydropower plants, 8 solar power plants, 4 biomass schemes, and 1 coal-fired power plant.

Although no new power plants have become operational in the first six months of this year, the government is pushing for progress in the construction of large-scale energy projects as stipulated in its five-year plan.

Among them are the Nam Ngum 3 hydropower plant, coal-fired power plants in Lamam and Kaleum districts of Xekong province and Bualapha district in Khammuan province, and dams on the Mekong in Luang Prabang and Vientiane provinces.

The main challenge is that about 1,500MW of potential electricity generation is wasted by hydropower stations during the high-flow wet season, while Laos has to import electricity from Thailand in the dry season. The price that EDL pays for this imported power makes it almost twice as expensive as imported electricity sourced from EGAT.

Laos has the capacity to produce 10,000-15,000MW of solar power and about 100,000MW of wind power, according to Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Dr Sinava Souphanouvong.

Wind farms generating 1.6 gigawatts are now planned, including the 600-megawatt (MW) Monsoon Wind project in Xekong and Attapeu provinces which will sell electricity to Vietnam, according to the Asian Development Bank's Asian Development Outlook 2022.

In July last year, the government and shareholders in the Nam Theun 2 hydropower plant signed a Project Development Agreement to develop Nam Theun 2-Solar, with an installed capacity of 240MWp. The solar project will be built on the Nam Theun 2 reservoir in Khammuan province.

The government has pledged to tap the potential of the energy sector, particularly the development of hydropower, solar and wind power, so that more electricity can be sold to neighbouring countries.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

Floods a fresh blow to the economy

VT Times, August 17, 2022.

Floods that have ravaged many parts of Laos in recent days will be a further setback to economic growth and people's livelihoods.

The damage done to crops will undermine local economies and slow farmers' efforts to escape poverty, posing further challenges for the government.

A senior official from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has said it will cost billions of kip to rebuild the livelihoods of people affected by flooding.

Following many hours of heavy rain unleashed by tropical storm Mulan and earlier downpours, at least 200 villages in seven provinces have been affected.

Many families have moved into shelters after their single-storey homes were partly submerged.

The deluge struck the capital Vientiane and Savannakhet, Saravan, Xayaboury, Luang Prabang, Huaphan and Champassak provinces.

The floods inundated an estimated 10,000 homes, restaurants, other buildings and bridges, while water and electricity supplies were cut off in some areas.

The delivery of relief supplies and recovery operations are underway to help people get back on their feet, while the government has appealed for support from members of the public and other countries to tackle the situation.

Provincial authorities are working to repair bridges and roads and assist volunteers with the distribution of money, food and clothing to people who are temporarily homeless.

Although flood-hit communities have received some assistance from provincial authorities, NGOs and other donors, many families need help with health services, hygiene and sanitation, and the provision of general consumer items.

Apart from helping villagers in need, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has advised local authorities to plan for rehabilitation and identify what crops need to be grown and what animals should be bred after the floodwaters recede.

Rebuilding people's livelihoods is of critical importance for authorities, to enable villagers to recover from the impacts of the flooding.

As of August 15, some 140 villages in four districts of Saravan province had been inundated, including over 1,000 hectares of paddy fields, according to the latest report from the province.

Flooding has also destroyed fishponds and damaged irrigation systems, schools, electricity transmission lines, healthcare facilities, and other infrastructure.

In Savannakhet province, floods have affected healthcare centres and other facilities.

Authorities in Xayaboury, Luang Prabang and Huaphan provinces are working to help villagers in need. Provincial officials said the prime minister had told them to plan for rehabilitation and identify the best ways to restore life to normal.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

Riverside villages put on alert for possible flooding

VT Times, August 18, 2022.

Villages along the nation's main rivers have been warned to be alert for rising water levels following torrential rainfall in recent days, with people in low-lying areas advised to be prepared for floods.

The Meteorology and Hydrology Department says the Mekong, Ou, Ngum, Xan, Ngieb, Kading, Xe Bangfay, Xe Champhon, Xe Kong and Xe Don rivers are currently well below the official warning level but waters are expected to rise following more rainfall in the coming days.

According to an update issued by the department on August 17, the level of the Mekong River in Vientiane has risen to 9.41 metres, which is below the warning level of 11.50 metres and the danger level of 12.50 metres.

In Luang Prabang province, the Mekong has risen to 12.90 metres, where the warning level is 17.50 metres and the danger level is 18 metres. In Savannakhet province, the Mekong has risen to 5.81 metres, with a warning level of 12 metres and a danger level of 13 metres.

In Pakxe city, Champassak province, the Mekong now stands at 7.16 metres, where the warning level is 11 metres and the danger level is 12 metres. The Xong River in Vangvieng district, Vientiane province, is now 2.14 metres in depth, where the warning level is 3.50 metres and the danger level is 4.50 metres.

The level of the Ngum River in Vernkham village, Pakngum district, Vientiane, is now 5.62 metres, well below the warning level of 12 metres and the danger level of 13 metres.

In Borikhamxay province, the level of the Xan River is now 5.10 metres, also well below the warning level of 7 metres and a danger level of 8 metres. However, river levels are expected to increase after many dams discharge water due to full reservoirs, especially dams on the Mekong River.

The Ministry of Energy and Mines has informed people living alongside the Lik River that on August 18 the Nam Lik 1/2 hydroelectric dam plans to discharge water from the reservoir.

The water level in front of the dam is approaching the warning level, so the sluice gates must be opened to allow water to flow out and ease pressure on the dam wall.

The ministry has advised authorities in Vientiane province to instruct river-based tour companies to temporarily cancel tours and move equipment, especially boats, to safe areas.

The ministry has also instructed people living near the river to prepare for a possible emergency situation. More rain is expected across many parts of the country and everyone is advised to monitor weather forecasts issued by the Meteorology and Hydrology Department and take precautions if flooding seems likely.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

Greengoods Company brings eco-friendly livestock production to Laos

VT Times, August 19, 2022.

Local farmers and members of the Parksarpmai Cooperative Group will be able to upgrade their livestock production, thanks to the support of an agricultural solutions company from South Korea, the Greengoods Company Limited.

Through the support of Greengoods Co., Ltd., villagers will have a chance to get practice in producing feeds and organic fertilizer to boost the efficiency of agricultural production.

The company has provided laboratory equipment to enable practical research and development on how to produce eco-friendly livestock feed, organic fertiliser and solutions for poultry disease reduction to villagers and farmers of the Parksarpmai Cooperative Group.

The support aims at boosting efficiency in agricultural production, reducing animal mortality rate, and lessening the dependence on foreign products, especially fertiliser and animal feed.

The company, together with the Faculty of Agriculture of the National University of Laos and experts from South Korea will perform research and development in creating microorganisms to decrease bacteria in animal food and its environs that cause disease. It is also purpose to utilise local resources to produce inputs for agricultural production.

A ceremony to hand over equipment for use in the production of eco-friendly animal feeds and organic fertilizers took place in August 16, at Parksarpmai Cooperative Center.

The event was organised under the KOTRA's Global ESG+ Program 2022. KOTRA is the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA). ESG stands for environmental, social, and governance standards. ESG considers the impact a company has on its employees, customers and the communities where it operates. The Global ESG+ Program is a project to contribute to solving local social problems by supporting ESG activities of Korean companies, and to support the establishment of win-win cooperation with Laos beneficiaries. Present on the occasion were representatives from the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry; the CEO of Greengoods, Mr Jaewon Lee; the Board of Parksarpmai Cooperative Group; and representatives from KOTRA Vientiane.

The supported items include one feed compounder, one air shower, two microbial refrigerator, one microbial incubator and one microscopic microscope, worth US\$18,874 in total.

Meanwhile, Greengoods Company organised a two-day training seminar on August 15-16 in order to share knowledge of how to effectively use the equipment on producing organic agriculture production inputs, particularly chicken food, organic fertilizer for plants, and environmental-friendly insecticide. During the Training Programme, representatives from Greengoods presented the introduction of modern agricultural practice and its positive impact on agricultural work in terms of cost reduction and the environment; the seminar demonstrates the use of Korean advanced eco-friendly agricultural technology aiming to protect animals' health and create a virtuous cycle resulting from green agriculture practice.

Director General of KOTRA Vientiane, Mr Pil Seong Kim, said "A Korean agricultural start-up that invests in Laos is creating positive synergies in cooperation with the local community of small-scale farmers in Laos. Furthermore, KOTRA is transferring Korea's know-how to increase exports of Laos through the Global ESG+ Program, as well as the KSP Program (Knowledge Sharing Program) with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Laos. It is expected that both parties will contribute to the foundation for exporting local agricultural products."

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

Authorities promote clean veggies, fruits at Vientiane markets

VT Times, August 19, 2022.

The government is aiming to build confidence among consumers of vegetables and fruits sold at markets in Vientiane by launching a series of tests to detect contamination in domestic and imported produce.

To ensure food safety for consumers, the Agriculture Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, in collaboration with the Vientiane Agriculture and Forestry Department and the Plants Protection Centre, launched the first testing activity at Taladlao Market in Xaythany district of Vientiane on Thursday.

The launch ceremony was attended by the Director General of the Agriculture Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr Bounchan Kombounyasith, the Deputy Director of Vientiane's Agriculture and Forestry Department, Mr Bouakham Sisongkham, representatives of the market management team and local traders.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Bouakham said the testing of vegetables and fruits is a priority for building confidence regarding food safety among consumers. It is also part of efforts to implement the government's policy to promote domestic products.

"It is a technical test to promote food safety for consumers and to boost the government policy on domestic production. This activity will continue to be implemented at various major fresh markets in Vientiane," he said.

Mr Bouakham said similar activities were recently carried out in Xaysettha, Sisattanak and Chanthabouly districts in Vientiane, and several training courses on contaminated vegetables and fruits were held for agriculture officials of the nine districts of Vientiane.

"According to the plan, this activity will be implemented at the remaining markets in districts of Vientiane after today's official kick off at Taladlao Market in Saphangmeuk village," he added.

At the same event, Mr Bounchan also said the ultimate goal of the ministry is to promote domestic products in order to reduce the quantity of imported goods.

"Both domestic and imported products will require a test for contamination to meet the two standards for green and clean agriculture produce," he said.

Cooperation from market owners and traders is required to ensure the implementation of this practical action efficiently and regularly.

He said there should be a standby checking unit at various fresh markets in Vientiane to serve the requirements of buyers who may wish to get their products tested.

In the past, there was a large volume of contaminated products, notably tainted food, vegetables and fruits imported into Laos, and this resulted in escalating concerns among people over long-term health risks.

The government has encouraged officials to reinforce their inspections to protect the interests of consumers and to punish those violating the law.

Buyers say some traders use chemicals on vegetables and formalin in seafood and meats to make them more attractive to customers. Therefore, regular inspections with necessary testing equipment is required to tackle this problem.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

FAO releases rice-cum-fish seeds in Attapeu

KPL, August 22, 2022.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) released 28,000 rice-cum-fish seeds (fingerlings) to 14 demonstration farms in 7 target villages in Sanamxay District and organized a handover ceremony in Donephai Village on Aug 16.

The ceremony is part of the rice-cum-fish activity implemented under the “Building Climate-Resilient and Eco-friendly Agriculture Systems and Livelihoods” (Climate REAL) project, funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The fingerling handover ceremony was welcomed by Mrs. Phoudone Choummaly, Sanamxay District Vice Governor and co-chaired by Director of Sanamxay DAFO. There were 22 participants joining the ceremony, representing the Provincial and District Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO and DAFO), FAO, KOICA PIU, chiefs of the villages, and villagers benefiting from the initiative.

At the handover ceremony, Sanamxay District Vice Governor encouraged the beneficiaries to seriously take care of the fingerlings and well utilize this opportunity to learn the techniques for rice-cum-fish farming. The released fingerlings consist of Tilapia, Common Carp and Silver Barb. The 103 beneficiary farmers in the Integrated Farming Group will learn how to farm and nurture the rice-cum-fish around the 14 demonstration farms and will receive the fingerlings in 2023, after the season long learning is completed.

Director of Sanamxay DAFO also inspired the 14 model farmers from the villages of Khang, Joumpoy, Inthi, Doneseua, Donephay, Donesoung and Oudomxay, to make fish farming a commodity. The result of this activity will surely help to leverage the living conditions of the villagers and beyond.

<https://kpl.gov.la/En/Detail.a...>

Khammuan farmers get new irrigation system

VT Times, August 23, 2022.

An irrigation system that takes water from the Kata River in Bualapha district, Khammuan province, has recently been completed, benefiting about 1,700 families in four villages of the district.

Construction of the irrigation system was funded by Agence Francaise Developpement (AFD) at a cost of US\$4.5 million.

The irrigation scheme was officially handed over on Friday to the Governor of Khammuan province, Mr Vanxay Fongsavanh, in a ceremony that was also attended by representatives of various organisations.

Speaking at the event, Mr Vanxay instructed families in the district to use the irrigation system beneficially and to maintain it well. He praised the Insi Investment and Development Construction Co., Ltd. which built the system, saying they had complied with the terms of the contract and carried out the work successfully and to a high standard.

Company representative Mr Leokam Vongsavanthong said the surveying and design of the irrigation scheme had been undertaken by the company but the actual construction was supervised by a company in France, which had invested in the project and carried out inspections.

The Insi Investment and Development Construction Co., Ltd. won the contract for the job in July 2020 through competitive bidding and signed a construction agreement in November that year.

Construction was affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, which slowed the provision of workers and construction equipment.

The cost of equipment and fuel increased, but the company enlarged its budget so the work could continue as planned. Construction was completed in July this year, two months ahead of the final deadline.

The work consisted of creating a dike to drain off floodwater, digging the irrigation channel, carrying out repairs, and building a road.

<https://www.vientianetimes.org..>

Which Dams Are Releasing Water in Laos?

Laotiantimes, August 19, 2022.

As monsoonal rains drench Laos and rivers continue to rise across the country, several hydropower projects have been forced to release water. Where are these dams, and when have they released water?

The government received alerts from five hydroelectric plants in recent days regarding the release of water from their dams, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

Nam Khan 2 and Nam Khan 3



Nam Khan 2, built in 2016 by Power Construction Corp and Electricite du Laos.

Following a request from Electricite du Laos, the Ministry of Energy and Mines issued a notice today advising that water will be released from Nam Khan 2 and Nam Kham 3 dams in Luang Prabang from 18 August to 31 August.

According to the notice, water from Nam Khan 2 will be released at a speed of 103 cubic meters per second, while water from Nam Kham 3 will be released at 155 cubic meters per second.

Nam Lik 1-2

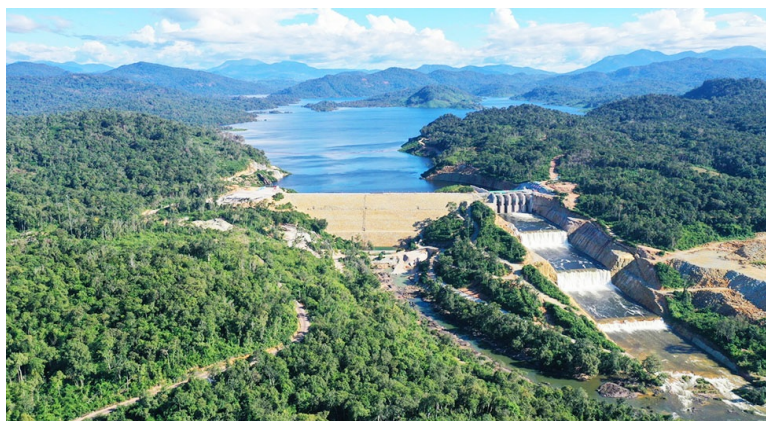


The Nam Lik 1 dam is located in Hinheup District, Vientiane Province.

Nam Lik 1-2 [released water yesterday](#) (18 August) after the Ministry of Energy and Mines advised residents in Vientiane Province, particularly in Feuang District, to prepare for changes in water levels.

The Ministry stated that campgrounds, bungalows, and entertainment venues along Nam Lik River must close for visitors until further notice from the Ministry.

Nam Kong 1



The Nam Kong 1 Dam on the Nam Kong (river) in Phouvong District,

Attapeu Province was completed in 2021.

The Nam Kong 1 dam in Attapeu Province released water yesterday (18 August) at 104 cubic meters per second on the same day, causing the water level near the dam to fluctuate slightly.

Nam Ou



The Nam Ou 3 Hydroelectric dam built on the Nam Ou River in Luang Prabang is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The Nam Ou Dams, a series of seven cascading hydroelectric dams along the Nam Ou river in Phongsaly and Luang Prabang provinces, released water on Saturday (20 August), however, no official government notice was issued.

Xayaburi Dam

The release of water from the Nam Ou dam on Saturday caused the Xayaburi Dam reservoir to fill up. The Xayaburi project issued a Level 2 alert to nearby residents, warning them to immediately vacate the area before the water was released on 14 August.

Other Dams



A Luoi dam in Vietnam's Hue Province.

Authorities in Laos also [warned residents in Sekong Province](#) of rising water levels in the Xe Khong River last week due to the release of water by a Vietnamese dam nearby.

<https://laotiantimes.com/2022/...>

Facing low corn and soybean yields, Vietnam looks to genetic engineering to increase food security

August 16, 2022

Vietnam [is] dependent on imported feed materials because our corn and soybean yield is low, production costs are high, and profits are less attractive compared to other sources. other plants.

“For example, our maize yield is only 4.8 tons/ha, but that of countries using transgenic sources, their yield is up to 9 tons/ha. American soybean has 132 fruits, but ours only has 132 fruits. less than 70 years, so the productivity of our livestock materials is still very low, so having to import lower prices is a requirement” Deputy Minister Phung Duc Tien said.

“We will focus on growing biomass maize, focus on processing 1.5 million tons of agricultural by-products to convert to feed for large cattle, thereby saving foreign currency on imported feed.” Phung Duc Tien emphasized.

For the cultivation of genetically modified corn, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development said that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has issued a circular on crops applying biotechnology, according to this circular, cultivation is completely allowed.

“I remember former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nguyen Xuan Cuong worked with the US Secretary of Agriculture to agree that the records of genetically modified crops will continue to be processed, not used because of the fact that we are also in the process of importing genetically modified corn and soybean products” Deputy Minister Phung Duc Tien said.

<https://geneticliteracyproject...>

Essential oil lab provides growth market for local farmer produce

phnompenhpost, 18 Aug 2022

Reaksmey Chhorpon dreamt a seemingly impossible dream. She wanted to become a scientist. Now, as the founder of HathKal Lab, she is using chemical engineering to turn high quality Cambodian crops into 11 kinds of pure essential oils.

Lemongrass, kaffir leaf and turmeric essential oils are just some of the products she makes, creating jobs for Cambodian farmers and developing the chemical engineering and food technology of Cambodia on the international stage.

Chhorpon graduated in chemical engineering and food technology from the Institute of Technology of Cambodia in 2016 and was granted a scholarship to study in the US, before establishing her lab in 2018.

“There were many people around me saying that Khmer products are poor, and we may not be able to do this. In order to silence the naysayers, I established the lab with my own money,” the 28-year-old founder told The Post.

She had observed that Cambodian produce was of high quality, but thought that value could be added to them. She identified one of the main issues with agriculture in Cambodia – some produce has too small of a market and is sold too cheaply.

“So now, not only am I doing something which I love, I am also responding to a wider issue, finding markets for unwanted products,” she said.

She had heard of the famous Kampot pepper, which gained global recognition, but she was unsure of the quality of the Kingdom’s other agricultural products.

“When I started to do my own research, I found that Cambodian land is really fertile. Khmer products are really good – they are unique and I want to add that the quality of my oils reflects this,” she said.

<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/...>

Global interest rate increases hurt Cambodia, says ADB

Khmer Times , August 23, 2022.

The increase in global interest rates has adversely affected many ADB developing member countries (DMCs) with heavy food import needs, such as Cambodia, Fiji, Georgia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand, according to the Asian Development Bank report.

It pointed out that the increase in global interest rates has led to capital flight and currency depreciation, hurting the prospects of DMCs.

"While some food prices and trade restrictions had eased by July 2022, and grain shipments from Ukraine have resumed, prices remain sharply elevated from a year ago and the outlook for food security remains deeply uncertain. The rising cost and shrinking availability of fertilizers because of the Russia-Ukraine war is a major concern," ADB said.

The report said a perfect storm of events had created the worst threats to global food security in decades.

It said the Russian invasion of Ukraine is the main driver of food price inflation but other factors are at play including the ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic which has disrupted food supply chains, macro-economic challenges, and the imposition of trade restrictions by some countries which have affected the availability of a number of food commodities.

Besides, a recent study showed that global farming productivity had been suppressed by 21 percent due to climate extremes. Scorching heat waves and droughts in major growing regions of the northern hemisphere during the summer of 2022, and extreme flooding in many parts of the world, including East and South Asia, are ominous signs of a rapidly worsening climate problem, the report noted.

It said currently millions of people are facing chronic food shortages. Record price spikes in food and fuel threaten to push many low-income families, who spend a large proportion of their household budget on these commodities, into extreme poverty. "Asia and the Pacific are in the eye of this storm with half of the world's 600 million people classified as hungry, living in the region. In Sri Lanka, food price inflation has exceeded 90 percent and, combined with a debt crisis, is threatening to push millions into a prolonged period of hunger and poverty, while countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan face severe localised food insecurity," the ADB report said.

"Short-term food security issues are not independent of long-term challenges, and while food price increases are seen as a particularly acute threat today, the food security issue could become systemic due to the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture," said Qingfeng Zhang, chief of the ADB Rural Development and Food Security Thematic Group.

"In developing assistance packages for developing member countries, ADB is mindful of the need for longer-term actions to help mitigate the risk of future crises, as well as providing immediate support for vulnerable populations," Zhang said.

ADB said it is working closely with a wide range of partners, including Agence Française de Développement, Food and Agriculture Organization, IAEA, OPEC Trust Funds, and World Food Programme to scale up support for food security in DMCs. That includes joint projects, as well as knowledge exchanges, which allow ADB and its partners to keep abreast of the latest food security developments in the region, the report added.

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/5...>

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