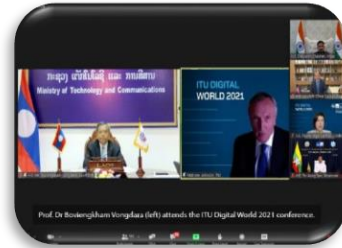


Highlight News / October 14/2021



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- Cambodia looks to electric vehicles for energy efficiency
- Laos highlights need for digital transformation
- Myanmar aquaculture exports down by 8.6% in 2020-2021FY
- Vietnam's rice price surges, surpasses that of Thailand
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## \$10 million Kep coastal road to start in November



*Cambodia News | 13 October, 2021*

Kep Provincial Administration aims to start upgrading the coastal road linking the city hall of Kep to the Angkol area, south of Kep city. Construction is scheduled to begin in November this year and is expected to be completed in September 2023. The 11.4-kilometre coastal road will be built using a concession loan of \$10.5 million from the Asia Development Bank (ADB). The project was discussed at a meeting between the administration and ADB representatives in Cambodia held recently. The coastal road is part of ADB's Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project phase II. ADB has provided \$30 million in loans to Cambodia to implement three projects in Kep province, including a landfill project, the Koh Tonsay tourism port and the coastal road. Koh Tonsay port, which sits on Koh Tonsay island, 4.5 kilometres offshore of Kep province, is scheduled to start construction within a month. Chhay Sivlin, president of Cambodia Association of Travel Agents, said that the improvement of the beauty of these tourism sites will attract more tourists, both domestic and foreign. "We applaud these developments for both enhancing the infrastructure and upgrading the beauty of Kep," she said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50950385/10-million-kep-coastal-road-to-start-in-november/>

## Cambodia looks to electric vehicles for energy efficiency



*Cambodia News | 13 October, 2021*

Despite the lack of a record of the number of electric vehicles (EVs) registered in Cambodia, the Kingdom appears very keen for their use as part of its energy efficiency policy. The Ministry of Mines and Energy with support from the Asia Development Bank is drafting the National Energy Efficiency Policy, mentioning EVs, said Heng Kunleang, director-general of energy at the ministry. The government encourages the use of EVs to reduce expenditure on petrol and to contribute to the protection of the environment through reducing gas emissions. Facilities such as EV charger units in the public places will be needed, as well as home-installed chargers. The ministry has not received any investment proposals for EV charger units from the private sector, Kunleang said. "The use of EVs is encouraged in Cambodia because in the private sector they will contribute to reducing gas emissions and contribute to dealing with climate change activities," Kunleang said. He said the EVs should be priced affordably, according to the living standards of ordinary people. In February this year, the government issued a sub-decree on reducing the rate of special value-added tax on vehicle imports. For families and tourists using an EV, the rate of import tax was reduced from 30 percent to 10 percent. Last year, vehicle imports were valued at a total of \$1.099 billion, a 36.6 percent decrease

compared with the year before, signifying an effect of Covid-19.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50950405/cambodia-looks-to-electric-vehicles-for-energy-efficiency/>

## Laos highlights need for digital transformation



*Laos News | 14 October, 2021*

A senior Lao leader has highlighted the need to accelerate digital transformation in line with sustainable development, while attending the ITU Digital World 2021 conference from October 12-14. A ceremony marked the 50th anniversary of the first ITU Telecom meeting, the forerunner of this year's largely virtual conference and exhibition. Co-hosted by Vietnam and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ITU Digital World 2021 welcomed high level participants from the public and private sectors and across the ICT industry. Speaking at the event, Minister of Technology and Communications Prof. Dr Boviengkham Vongdara highlighted three main issues relating to pricing and infrastructure; local content; and digital skills and people awareness. "On pricing and infrastructure, our ministry has worked with operators and service providers to encourage them to provide Internet promotion pricing during this Covid-19 period and also encourage network expansion where it is necessary," he said. "In terms of localisation, our

ministry has been promoting the use of local language and the creation of digital content. The development of a Lao font and Lao keyboard for computers and mobile devices has made local content possible." "For digital skills and people awareness, under the new normal we can see that more and more people are aware of digital transformation. For people in the provinces and rural areas, we have local authorities and district offices to help ensure connectivity at the very last mile of telecommunications. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the digital divide gap still remains with fast changing technology." Prof. Dr Boviengkham also addressed the topic: "Cutting the cost: can affordable access accelerate digital transformation?" The minister explained that cutting costs was just part of the solution. The key factors in accelerating digital transformation are related to (1) collaboration, (2) ensuring ecosystem and infrastructure readiness, and (3) capacity building in digital literacy. In Vietnam, the government seeks to stimulate trade, build skills, and strengthen its economy through digital transformation and has pledged to harness innovation to improve people's living standards substantially by 2030. Officials said access to and use of relevant Internet services is critical to digital transformation. Ensuring universal access is fast becoming an issue of affordability and capacity rather than infrastructure or technology.

According to ITU data, over 90 percent of the world's urban population and over 70 percent of the rural population were covered by 4G, satellite or other technologies in 2020, but only 51 percent of the global population is using the Internet. Barriers to Internet adoption include affordability, digital skills, public awareness, and the existence of relevant content in local languages.

Source : [https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContenten\\_Laos201.php](https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContenten_Laos201.php)

## Myanmar aquaculture exports down by 8.6% in 2020-2021FY



*Myanmar News | 12 October, 2021*

The value of Myanmar's aquaculture exports in the financial year 2020-2021 (October-September) dramatically dropped to US\$784.889 million, showing a decrease of 8.6 per cent compared to the previous FY2019-2020, as per the statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce. The figures fell short of \$74 million to reach the value recorded during the year-ago period. Myanmar shipped \$858.95 million worth of fishery products to the external market in the corresponding period of last FY. Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) is attempting to grow fishery export regardless of the COVID-19 disruption on maritime trade, closure of land borders and fuel oil price instability. Despite the open season of offshore fishing, Myanmar's fishery export industry is facing a series of challenges such as the oil price hike, surge

in container shipping rate, the closure of border posts, disruption on maritime trade and the COVID-19 negative impacts. Consequently, it will harm the export sector somehow in the long term. "If the border posts resume the trade activity, the trade will go smoothly. The closure of the border posts is triggered by the COVID-19 threats. The cross-border between Myanmar and Bangladesh is still open for trade. The federation is planning to export fishery products to Bangladesh. Myanma Port Authority is also ensuring smooth freight flow with non-stop operation. The federation is attempting to tackle these fishery export hurdles," said Dr Toe Nanda Tin, senior vice-president of the MFF. The price of fish fell by half. The high input cost such as fishing net, oil price posed another burden for the industry, coupled with the devaluation of Kyat in the forex market, Mawlamyine Commodity Centre stated. The marketable fish products, especially fish, shrimp, eel and crab from Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions and Rakhine state are primarily exported to foreign markets. The federation is turning to the Bangladesh market with export potentials. MFF is working together with the stockholders in the supply chain to have sustainable export growth. The fishery exports through the Sino-Myanmar border has ground to a halt following the consequences and safety measures on the imported seafood amid the COVID-19 pandemic, traders stressed. Myanmar's fishery

export was experiencing a downturn due to the import restrictions triggered by the detection of the COVID-19 on fish imports in China. Chinese market constitutes about 65 per cent of Myanmar's fishery exports. China accounted for US\$254 million out of overall fishery export value of over \$850 million in the past financial year 2019-2020. At present, China shut down the border areas in the wake of the COVID surge in Myanmar. Myanmar Fisheries Federation stated that only a G2G pact can tackle problems being faced in the export of farm-raised fish and prawns and ensure smooth freight movement between countries to bolster exports. Myanmar exports fisheries products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union. The MFF is making concerted efforts to increase fishery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes that meet international standards and adopting advanced fishing techniques. To ensure food safety, the foreign market requires suppliers to obtain Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP) certificates. To meet international market standards, fishery products must be sourced only from hatcheries that are compliant with GAqP. The MFF is working with fish farmers, processors, and the Fisheries Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and

Irrigation to develop the GAqP system. Processors can screen fishery products for food safety at ISO-accredited laboratories under the Fisheries Department. There are 480,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms across the country and more than 120 cold-storage facilities in Myanmar. — KK/GNLM

Source : <https://www.gnfm.com.mm/myanmar-aquaculture-exports-down-by-8-6-in-2020-2021fy/>

## Vietnam's rice price surges, surpasses that of Thailand



*Vietnam News | 13 October, 2021*

CAN THO – The export price of Vietnam's 5% broken rice has soared recently, surpassing that of Thailand and far outstripping the rice prices of India and Pakistan, according to the Vietnam Food Association. In mid-August, the export price of Vietnam's 5% broken rice fell to US\$385 per ton, down US\$100 per ton against the same period last year and the lowest since February 2020. At this time, the export price of Vietnam's 5% broken rice was US\$8 per ton lower than Thai 5% broken rice but still US\$25 and US\$40 per ton higher than that of India and Pakistan, respectively. However, the export price of Vietnam's 5% broken rice is now US\$433-437 per ton, which is US\$49, US\$68 and US\$55 per ton higher than that of Thailand, India and Pakistan, respectively. Nguyen Thanh Long, director of Van Loi Company, said the Government has increasingly

tapped rice from the national reserve to support people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and then replenished the national rice reserve, thus boosting both the domestic and export prices of rice. Besides, the recovery of Vietnam's major rice importers since the beginning of September has further led to the increased rice prices. Data of the Vietnam Food Association showed that Vietnam exported more than 247,400 tons of rice worth US\$121.64 million in the first half of September 2021, increasing 22.15% in volume and 20.31% in value compared with the same period last year. However, the country's rice exports from January to mid-September 2021 dropped over 12% in volume and nearly 4.5% in value year-on-year to 4.22 million tons and US\$2.26 billion. According to the Department of Crop Production under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the cost of rice production in the Mekong Delta, which is the country's biggest rice producing region, reached VND3,713 per kilogram in the 2021 summer-autumn season, the highest since 2018. The average rice production cost in the 2021 summer-autumn season in the Mekong Delta rose by VND222, VND156 and VND64 per kilogram compared with the same period of 2020, 2019 and 2018, respectively. Seeding and soil tillage account for 9-10% and 5-6% of the rice production cost, respectively. Meanwhile, fertilizers and pesticides account for 21-24% and 15-17% of the production

cost, respectively. Other factors that affect the cost of rice production include harvest, transport, package and labor. Prices of fertilizers, which account for the largest proportion of the rice production cost, have soared since the beginning of this year. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development said this is one of the main reasons that the rice production cost in the 2021 summer-autumn season in the Mekong Delta rose to the highest level since 2018.

Source : <https://english.thesaigontimes.vn/vietnams-rice-price-surges-surpasses-that-of-thailand/>

## WB lowers Vietnam's GDP growth forecast to 2-2.5 percent this year



*Vietnam News | 06 October, 2021*

Hanoi (VNA) – Vietnam's GDP growth forecast for this year has been lowered to 2-2.5 percent, according to the World Bank's October 2021 Vietnam Macro Monitoring. Vietnam's GDP in the third quarter of 2021 decreased by 6.2 percent from the same period last year, the sharpest decline since Vietnam announced its quarterly GDP, the WB estimated. Given the sharp contraction of the GDP in the third quarter and depending on the strength of the economic rebound in the fourth quarter, GDP growth for 2021 is projected to be in the 2 percent to 2.5 percent range, well below the WB's August forecast of 4.8 percent, it said. Labour market conditions worsened substantially, reflecting the adverse economic impacts of the lengthy lockdown

in major economic centres. As the number of new COVID-19 infections started to fall, Hanoi and several provinces eased stringent restrictions so that mobility, industrial production index and retail sales started to recover although they remained lower than a year ago. The merchandise trade balance improved as import growth slowed while foreign direct investment (FDI) commitment grew for a third month, suggesting foreign investors remain confident in the longer-term potential of the economy. Inflation remained subdued amid weak domestic demand while the Vietnamese dong experienced further nominal appreciation in the domestic official market. Credit growth decelerated due to weakening credit demand associated with slower economic activities but was comparable to pre-pandemic rates as banks continued to provide preferential loans and forbearance to support businesses affected by the pandemic, according to the WB. The year-on-year budget balance remained in surplus over the past nine months despite posting another monthly deficit in September, mainly driven by a sharp fall in revenues. The resumption of economic activities after a prolonged social distancing is facing obstacles as can be seen from the experiences of other countries in the world. Reactivating manufacturing factories and businesses in the services sector will face potential product and labour shortages, it said. To ease logistical constraints, the WB recommended that the Government of Vietnam continue testing and vaccination on a large scale and encouraging labour

mobility should be prioritised. The authorities should also adopt a more expansionary fiscal policy and use the various fiscal tools available to support the economic rebound, including easing procedural rigidities in the budget to spend the planned current budget, accelerating the implementation of planned public investment, and expanding social protection to households and to formal and informal workers, it said./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/wb-lowers-vietnam-gdp-growth-forecast-to-225-percent-this-year/209673.vnp>

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