

Highlight News / December 01/2023



- Cambodia to build its first LNG gas-fired power plant
- Cambodia makes \$1.2 bln from exports of raw cashew nuts, rubber in 10 months
- PM advises Phongsaly to produce more crops, handicrafts for export
- Lao, Korean universities mull plans to establish dairy industry in Laos
- Raise cooking oil production to have high sufficiency
- Magway Region welcomes 1.5-mln visitors in 10 months
- November's CPI grows 3.45 per cent
- November sets new record for international tourist arrivals in Vietnam



Cambodia to build its first LNG gas-fired power plant



Cambodia News | 30 November, 2023

Cambodia to build its first gas-fired power station at Botum Sakor, said Minister of Mines and Energy, Keo Rattanak. The statement comes in an interview with an international media in the lead-up to COP28 (Convention on Climate Change), the United Nations annual climate conference that begins this week in Dubai. The forum will run from November 30 to December 12, and will be attended by Rattanak and other Cambodian environment ministry officials. “The Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet will announce on November 30 the cancellation of the 700 MW coal power plant project in Koh Kong and the plan to replace it with an 800 MW LNG [plant] to be commissioned after 2030,” Rattanak told Reuters. The announcement from the minister suggests that the new gas-fired plant plans will replace a formerly slated coal-powered plant, the planned Botum Sakor coal plant, which was scheduled to begin power production by the end of 2025. The now-benched Botum Sakor coal-power project was to be undertaken by the Royal Group, which will now build the gas-fire plant project instead, Rattanak said. The previously planned coal plant had an investment value of \$1.5 billion, and potential output of 700 megawatt (MW). The new plant will be able to generate 800 MW in total, said Rattanak, but the exact cost of the gas-fired plant is yet to be revealed by the minister or the Royal Group. In order to

support the change to gas-fired production for the Cambodian grid, Cambodia is also exploring construction of a fixed land-based liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal to import the fuel and re-gas it for use in the local power plant, said Rattanak. Until now, Cambodia has not imported such levels of LNG, and the new plant will make Cambodia a new regional importer of the commodity. In 2020, five ASEAN countries only imported LNG, namely Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore Malaysia and Myanmar. This year, Vietnam and the Philippines also began their first major imports of gas. Rattanak said that the change in direction toward a gas-fired plant at the site, using LNG imports to fuel it, reflects the country’s commitment to cleaner power, more electricity self-sufficiency, and their commitment to the principles of the United Nation’s Convention on Climate Change. The minister confirmed Cambodia’s commitment to lift its share of clean generation capacity from 52 percent in 2022 to 70 percent by 2030, by implementing cleaner and more sustainable energy methods than burning coal such as wind and solar power. The recent announcement comes after the Cambodian ministry announced two years ago it would not build any new coal-fired power projects, except for those already under construction. Last month, the minister also told Reuters that Cambodia would scale up solar projects along with electricity imports from neighbouring countries through regional grid interconnections in order to address volatility in hydropower output and rising power demand. Rattanak said that

hydropower accounts for nearly half of the country's annual electricity use but output volatility due to weather changes has made it crucial to diversify fuel sources for the national grid. With the announcement of Botum Sakor plants switching to gas, Cambodia's only remaining coal power project under development is a 265 MW unit in the northern Oddar Meanchey province.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501399350/cambodia-to-build-its-first-lng-gas-fired-power-plant/>

Cambodia makes \$1.2 bln from exports of raw cashew nuts, rubber in 10 months



Cambodia News | 30 November, 2023

Cambodia earned a total of \$1.2 billion from the exports of raw cashew nuts and dry rubber during the first 10 months of 2023, according to official reports on Wednesday. A report from the Cashew Nut Association of Cambodia showed that the kingdom exported a total of 615,000 tonnes of raw cashew nuts to Vietnam during the January-October period this year, down 16.7 percent year-on-year. The Southeast Asian country made \$831 million in revenue from the exports of the commodity, the report said. Meanwhile, the General Directorate of Rubber reported that Cambodia exported 283,829 tonnes of dry rubber in the first 10 months of this year, an increase of 3 percent compared to the same period last year. The kingdom earned 376.6 million dollars from the exports of dry rubber during the above-mentioned period, down 7.3 percent year-on-

year, the report added. "A tonne of dry rubber averagely cost 1,327 dollars during the January-October period of 2023, about 154 dollars lower than that of the same period last year," Him Oun, director general of the General Directorate of Rubber, said in the report. Cashew nuts and rubber are among Cambodia's potential cash crops in addition to rice. Xinhua

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501399578/cambodia-makes-1-2-bln-from-exports-of-raw-cashew-nuts-rubber-in-10-months/>

PM advises Phongsaly to produce more crops, handicrafts for export



Laos News | 1 December, 2023

Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone has advised authorities in Phongsaly province to spur the development of each locality according to its potential to grow crops, produce handicrafts, and farm fish for the purposes of export. During his working visit to Phongsaly district on Monday, the PM also advised provincial authorities to send officials to teach local residents the best ways to grow crops and raise livestock in order to boost productivity, as well as raise the standard of education and expand the healthcare network to all villages. The Prime Minister visited Nong Kinnali village where some residents were relocated from Kormanmai village after it was flooded when the Nam Ou 6 hydroelectric dam was built. Nong Kinnali village authorities outlined the problems that villagers are currently facing, including the operation of a coal mine on the

edge of the village, which has caused people's living conditions to deteriorate. In addition, they do not have enough land to grow crops and access to their farmland is difficult.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freefreenews/freecontent_234_PM_y23.php

Lao, Korean universities mull plans to establish dairy industry in Laos



Laos News | 1 December, 2023

The National University of Laos (NUOL) and Seoul National University (SNU) in the Republic of Korea are discussing plans to set up a dairy farm in Laos after first introducing a dairy course in the Department of Livestock at the Faculty of Agriculture, NUOL. It is envisaged that the initiative would take seven years and comprise four main components, with a total cost of US\$2.6 million. First, a dairy course would be offered at the Department of Livestock, followed by the writing of textbooks and other materials for use by students and lecturers. Lao professors and researchers would then be invited to visit Korea to strengthen their research capabilities. Fourthly, a pilot farm and milk production facility would be built at the Faculty of Agriculture in cooperation with agricultural companies in Laos so that the technologies learnt could be passed on to Lao dairy farmers.

Source : https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freefreenews/freecontent_234_Lao_Korean_y23.php

Raise cooking oil production to have high sufficiency



Myanmar News | 30 November, 2023

With the arrival of the monsoon and the onset of the open season, the opportune moment has arrived to adapt crop cultivation practices to the prevailing climatic conditions. Shifting towards cold-season crops on croplands becomes imperative to yield new crops this season. Emphasizing the importance of agriculture and livestock farming to meet local demands, Myanmar aligns its efforts with the inherent nature of its people — a continuous and boundless supply of agricultural and livestock products. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to intensify efforts to boost the annual production of crops and livestock. Currently, escalating individual oil consumption has led to the annual importation of thousands of tonnes of edible oil. Myanmar, according to recent statistics, imported over 800,000 tonnes of cooking oil. To curb foreign exchange expenditures, the nation must encourage local farmers to expand the sown acreage of oil crops while urging businesspersons to produce high-quality cooking oil. The imperative now lies in striving to achieve targeted yields for paddy, pulses, beans, corn, and oil crops. The key to success lies in farmers adopting the right mix of quality crop strains, fertile soil, efficient water supply, and advanced agricultural techniques to realize high crop yields. Authorities are actively overseeing the sale of cooking oil and fuel oil, ensuring compliance

with reference prices and preventing prices from exceeding market suitability. The release of weekly reference prices for cooking oils aims to alleviate the financial burden on consumers and stabilize the cooking oil market. To combat the rising prices of cooking oils, it is crucial to expand the sown acreage of oil crops across all available lands, leaving no acreage vacant or unused. This expansion not only boosts local growers' incomes but also caters to consumer demand while reducing reliance on foreign imports of cooking oil, thereby saving foreign exchange expenditures. Additionally, oil crops, integral to the agriculture sector, contribute to an increase in per-acre yields, positively impacting the nation's GDP. Myanmar's population also consumes oil crops such as ground-nut and sesame in addition to cooking oil. Retaining these crops for domestic oil production instead of exporting them has the potential to elevate local oil sufficiency to an impressive 249.5 per cent annually. This shift could result in a significant reduction of approximately US\$600 million per year in cooking oil imports, underscoring the need for all farmers to intensify the cultivation of oil crops to meet the growing demand for local oil consumption.

Source : <https://www.mdn.gov.mm/en/raise-cooking-oil-production-have-high-sufficiency>

Magway Region welcomes 1.5-mln visitors in 10 months



Myanmar News | 30 November, 2023

Between January and October, Magway Region received nearly 1.5 million visitors, including both foreign and domestic tourists, according to U Myint Sein, the director of the region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism. "During the Thadingyut Festival in October alone, Magway welcomed 0.87 million visitors – the highest number this year. Most of them were pilgrims, drawn to the major attractions of the Myathalun Pagoda and the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda," explained the director. The Myathalun Pagoda Festival was splendidly organized during the Thadingyut Festival this year, attracting pilgrims nationwide. The number of visitors in October increased by 37 per cent compared to the same period last year. In addition, a familiarization trip (Fam Trip) to Magway was arranged for four holidaymakers from Thailand, and the Yangon-Magway-Minbu-Minhla-Yenangyoung route gained popularity both locally and internationally. The region boasts a rich cultural and natural heritage, and efforts are underway to develop a sports tourism project for cyclists in the sandy valley of the Gyatkya area in Yenangyoung to attract more visitors.

Source : <https://www.mdn.gov.mm/en/magway-region-welcomes-15-mln-visitors-10-months>

November's CPI grows 3.45 per cent



Vietnam News | 30 November, 2023

HA NOI — The consumer price index (CPI) for November has gone up by 0.25 per cent compared to the previous month and 3.45 per cent to the same period last year, announced the General Statistics Office (GSO) on Wednesday. The reasons behind

the higher CPI include some localities raising the cost of healthcare services and tuition fees as per regulations, as well as domestic rice prices further rising due to an increase in the export price of the product. Against October, eight among the 11 groups of essential goods and services experienced price increases, two saw price decreases, and the cost of the equipment and household items group remained unchanged. On average, for the first 11 months, the index grew 3.22 per cent year-on-year, with the core inflation rate up by 4.27 per cent. During the period, the highest CPI increase was recorded in January at 4.89 per cent, followed by a gradual decrease until June, which recorded an increase of only 2 per cent. Factors contributing to the CPI rise between January and November included average airfare index which soared by 87.29 per cent annually, primarily due to the costs of airlines and the high demand for travel, especially during holidays and summer vacations. Train and bus ticket prices also went up by 29.67 per cent and 7.43 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, the education, food, and household electricity price indices rose by 7.35 per cent, 6.67 per cent, and 4.55 per cent, respectively. Among the factors reducing the CPI in the 11-month period, the most significant was a decrease in the price index of petroleum products, at 12.12 per cent. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1637260/november-s-cpi-grows-3-45-per-cent.html>

November sets new record for international tourist arrivals in Vietnam



Vietnam News | 30 November, 2023

HCMC – Vietnam has attracted 1.23 million foreign tourists this month, up by 11% against the previous month. This is the highest monthly number of foreign tourist arrivals this year. According to data from the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, a total of 11.2 million international tourists have visited Vietnam so far this year, surpassing the full-year target by a remarkable 40%. South Korea has remained Vietnam's largest tourist-generating market, with 3.2 million Koreans coming in the January-November period, accounting for 28.5% of the total. China follows with 1.5 million tourists, and Taiwan with 758,000 visitors. Vietnam has also seen significant tourist arrivals from other countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Australia, and India, all of which are among the top 10 markets in the first 10 months. Notably, European tourist arrivals have surged by a staggering 58.5% this month, the highest growth rate among continents. This rise is attributed to Vietnam's unilateral visa waiver, allowing visitors to stay visa-free for up to 45 days. Chinese tourist numbers have also maintained steady growth, with an increase of 9.6%.

Source : <https://english.thesaigontimes.vn/november-sets-new-record-for-international-tourist-arrivals-in-vietnam/>