

## Vietnam News Article from January 2021 to April 2022



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## **Vietnam fishermen face starvation as fuel prices surge**

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-fishermen-face-starvation-as-fuel-prices-surge/96731>

John Nguyen Cong Ngan is taking apart his six-meter-long fishing boat to dock it in a harbor as he cannot bear the rising cost of fuel since the Ukraine war began.

The fishing harbor near his home in the Gio Linh district of Quang Tri province, usually bustling with commercial activities, wears an empty look in peak season except for the few men still catching fish.

Ngan, 43, will be storing the diesel engine and fishing equipment at home, overturning the boat and placing it on the sandy shore where many other boats are already placed.

“We are bitterly disappointed that we could not earn enough money to put food on the table while we are in the fishing season,” said the skilled fisherman with tanned skin, a sign he’s been catching fish long enough.

But this year he made only one trip and incurred a loss of 1 million dong (US\$44) on fuel alone.

Ngan said the price of auto diesel had shot up to 25,268 dong per liter on March 11 from 17,579 dong last December, while the prices of 95 octane petrol and kerosene went up by 6,529 dong and 7,400 dong respectively.

Fuel prices have topped the previous peak reached in 2014.

“The hike in fuel prices imposes a heavy burden on low-income families like us and deprives us of our daily food,” Ngan said, adding that the prices of all essential goods too had gone up as a result.

Last year he and two workers daily caught 110 kilograms of herrings and anchovies in the waters of Cua Viet and sold the fish for 11,500-19,000 dong per kilogram. He earned 400,000 dong after paying the two workers and the fuel costs.

To add to Ngan’s woes, this year traders are buying herrings and anchovies for 5,000-7,000 dong per kilogram as local fish sauce factories have shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic raging through the country. His catch has been mostly going into fish sauce production.

Ngan, whose wife works as a dressmaker at home, now plans to look for manual jobs in Dong Ha to support their two children.

His Gio Viet commune is home to 250 fishermen, most of whom have stopped fishing and are looking for other means of earning a living.

Nguyen Van The, 54, a fishing boat owner from the Gio Linh district, said he landed good catches this season but still made losses. He owes 1 million dong to a fuel seller while being forced to borrow money to buy food for his family.

He started working at a construction site and earns 300,000 dong a day. “I do not have a clue when I can pay off my debts if the pandemic continues and fuel prices do not drop,” he said.

Le Thi Tuyet, a ninth-grader, said she started working at an onion shop in Gio Viet market last week after her father lost his job.

“I earn 50,000 dong a day to buy food for my family office,” she said, adding that four other children too were employed in the shop.

Nguyen Van Trung, director of the Department of Fisheries Exploitation, said some 10,000 fishing vessels and boats have come ashore due to rising fuel prices caused by Russia’s attacks on Ukraine, the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic and a steep drop in prices of fishing products.

Dam Thi Danh, one of 150 traditional fish sauce producers in Cua Viet who alone buys some 27 tonnes of fish annually, said she has had to stop production because of the pandemic, poor catches and unseasonably wet weather.

Father James Tran Dinh Hoa, the pastor of Cua Viet Parish, said the parish serves 2,000 Catholics, over half of whom survive on fishing incomes. It was helping 200 households with essential food supplies as well as clothes and stationery.

The 47-year-old priest said the government should control fuel prices to secure the livelihoods of the local fishermen, which had been badly affected since February.

### **Fishing regulations promoted among Ha Tinh fishermen in Vietnam**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/fishing-regulations-promoted-among-ha-tinh-fishermen/223993.vnp>

"Fishermen at Thach Kim fishing port in Loc Ha district are making preparations to head out to sea. In a bid to help them understand and strictly follow the Governments regulations while fishing offshore, border guard soldiers have visited each fishing vessel and spoken about fishing rules.

Seeing the significance of promoting regulations among fishermen, the Cua Sot border station has worked closely with relevant authorities to hold 65 training classes for more than 5,000 fishermen.

Communications work on fishing regulations coupled with COVID-19 prevention and control

measures have been effectively carried out by border soldiers. Public awareness about laws has improved, helping to ensure social order and national sovereignty at sea..."

### **Stop fishermen encroaching into Malaysian waters, PM tells Vietnam**

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2022/03/22/stop-fishermen-encroaching-into-malaysian-waters-pm-tells-vietnam/>

Vietnam has been told to take concrete action against "aggressive" fishermen encroaching into Malaysian waters, says Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

Ismail said of late, Vietnamese boat crews had been "aggressive" when facing off with maritime officers or fishermen in the country's waters.

"I have expressed Malaysia's concern over these encroachments by foreign fishermen, including those from Vietnam.

"These activities have affected the fishing industry and livelihoods of Malaysian fishermen," he said at a press conference during his official visit to Vietnam.

On another matter, Ismail also announced that the country had agreed to supply 300,000 barrels of petroleum (RON95) to Vietnam.

"Yesterday, Vietnam had submitted a request for additional petroleum and gas supplies from Malaysia."

On fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, Ismail said Malaysia had also agreed to recognise Vietnam's vaccination certificates.

He said Vietnam used the same types of vaccines, approved by the World Health Organization, as Malaysia.

"We have agreed to integrate the MySejahtera application with Vietnam's PC-Covid app," he said.

Ismail, who arrived in Vietnam on Sunday, is scheduled to return to Kuala Lumpur today.

### **Vietnam's Quang Binh fishermen raise awareness of marine protection**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/quang-binh-fishermen-raise-awareness-of-marine-protection/223216.vnp>

"Fishermen of Vietnam's central coastal province of Quang Binh take along rubbish bags during their long sea trips to bring garbage to land instead of discharging it to the ocean. The new habit

shows determination to protect the marine environment and hope for bumper catch during fishing trips.

On the days, fishermen in Canh Duong commune, Quang Trach district, are preparing for their long trips, with more than 300 fishing vessels docking at Roon river. Ship owners place cargo nets or baskets onboard to collect garbage discharged in daily activities during the trips.

Le Ngoc Tinh, 54, owner of vessel QB 93561TS, said that fishermen have been aware of the significance of sea and aquatic resources protection. They pick up the marine litter for proper disposal while fishing.

The Quang Binh fisheries office built a model calling on fishermen to collect garbage during offshore trips in August 2020, and chose Canh Duong commune to pilot the model. Fishermen were provided with guidance to make rubbish bags from damaged fishing nets.

Local authorities assigned personnel and devices to collect waste upon the ships' return.

After two years, more than 500 ships in the commune participated in the campaign. One vessel is estimated to collect an average of about 100 kg of waste a year, head of the office Le Ngoc Linh said.

There are over 1,500 offshore fishing vessels in Quang Binh.

### **Vietnam suspends pangasius, tuna exports to Russia amid Ukraine war**

<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/vietnam-suspends-pangasius-tuna-exports-to-russia-amid-ukraine-war>

"Vietnam has suspended exports of pangasius and tuna to Russia due to the impacts of the war that Russia has launched in Ukraine, according to Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP).

International sanctions imposed on Russia following to its invasion of Ukraine have complicated commerce between the two countries. Several Russian banks were banned from using Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) payment system, impeding the completion of financial transactions, such as payments for shipments. Some Russian importers have functioning bank accounts in third countries, but those are more time-consuming and also at risk of being blocked, VASEP reported. Additionally, a sharp decline of the value of the Russian ruble has resulted in many Russian importers either being unwilling or unable to pay the full value for cargoes, VASEP said, citing information provided by several major Vietnamese pangasius exporters to Russia.

Further complicating trade between Vietnam and Russia is the fact that international shipping companies have announced they will no longer provide services to Russia.

The suspension of pangasius exports to Russia comes as Vietnamese processors are scrambling to find sufficient materials for processing to serve high demand from other markets.

In 2021, Vietnam reached USD 32.5 million (EUR 29.9 million) in pangasius exports to Russia, up 72.5 percent from 2020, making Vietnam the third-largest supplier of whitefish to Russia after Argentina and China. However, in January 2022, pangasius exports to Russia declined 29.8 percent to USD 2.2 million (EUR 2 million).

Vietnam has also halted exports of tuna products to both Russia and Ukraine, with some cargoes returned due to payment difficulties, VASEP said. As a result, Vietnam's tuna exports are likely to decline in the coming months, and exporters will have to find new buyers to take in the excess product no longer being sent to the two countries. Russia ranked 13th in the list of top markets for Vietnamese tuna in 2021, with sales of USD 14.3 million (EUR 13.2 million), up 58 percent year-on-year. Vietnam's tuna shipments to Russia soared 427 percent year-over-year in January 2022. Ukraine ranked 19th on the same list, with Vietnam earning USD 6.8 million (EUR 6.2 million) from its tuna exports to Ukraine in 2021, up 106 percent year-on-year, VASEP said.

Overall, Vietnam exported nearly USD 27 million (EUR 24.8 million) worth of seafood to Russia in the first two months of 2022, up 24 percent year-on-year.

Vietnam's seafood exports to Ukraine in January and February 2022 totaled USD 4.9 million (EUR 4.5 million), up 11.8 percent from the same period of 2021.

Another big challenge facing Vietnam as a result of the Ukraine crisis is a looming shortage of sunflower oil, which is used in tuna-canning. The escalation of the Ukraine war will lead to further increase in sunflower oil prices and potential shortages, increasing the cost of the tuna-canning process in Vietnam and other countries, VASEP reported.

### **Vietnam's Tien Giang province striving to develop sustainable offshore fishing: Official**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/tien-giang-striving-to-develop-sustainable-offshore-fishing-official/222913.vnp>

"Many concerted and drastic measures have been taken by the Mekong Delta province of Tien Giang since the beginning of 2021 to promote offshore fishing, prevent illegal seafood exploitation, and sustainably develop the fisheries industry, according to a local official.

Deputy Director of the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Tran

Hoang Nhat Nam said inspection teams have been set up to examine fishing boats compliance with rules against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and strictly deal with wrongdoings.

Tien Giang has coordinated with ministries, central agencies, and the administrations of the 27 other coastal provinces and cities to share and process information in a timely manner so as to deal with and soon put an end to IUU fishing in foreign waters.

Efforts have also been made to boost the dissemination of the Law on Fisheries, anti-IUU fishing regulations, maps of sea storms and maritime boundaries, along with information about maritime traffic safety, aquatic resources conservation and development, and Vietnam's seas and islands so as to raise fishermen's awareness of sustainable fisheries, Nam noted.

He added local authorities have implemented some policies to encourage and assist offshore fishing and related services in order to boost economic value and safeguard security, order, and sovereignty at sea.

So far, Tien Giang has seen the establishment of 44 fishing cooperative groups gathering 405 vessels with 3,544 crewmembers, one fishing cooperative with seven vessels and 68 crewmembers, and three seafood unions with 98 vessels and 745 crewmembers.

Nam said the founding of fishing cooperative groups and cooperatives, as well as the development of logistics services boats, has helped improve the catch value and supplies for sea fishing, reduce expenses, raise offshore fishing efficiency, protect the maritime sovereignty, and assist one another in coping with unexpected incidents while working at sea.

The province targets over 125,000 tonnes of seafood caught this year to serve the domestic market and export processing. The volume approximated 20,000 tonnes in the first two months of this year.

### **Crab prices in Vietnam plunge over border trade jam with China**

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/economy/crab-prices-plunge-over-border-trade-jam-4429777.html>

"Crab meat prices in Vietnam have dropped by nearly half as traders at the northern border gates with China limit purchases over export difficulties. The export of goods through border gates in the northern province of Lang Son has remained sluggish with many trucks having to turn around because of long customs clearance time after China tightened regulations over what it says are Covid-19 concerns.

With China being a major buyer, the current situation has caused seafood prices in Vietnam to fall sharply. Bui Chi Lam, a crab-raising household in the southern province of Ca Mau, said

that the selling price of top-tier crabs at the farm was just VND600,000 (\$26.28) per kg , down 50 percent compared to the Lunar New Year season early this month. He has noticed a drastic fall in the number of traders looking to buy seafood. "

"Normally, when supply decreases, prices will increase. But the impact of border gate closures has caused crab prices to plummet," Lam said, adding that crab farmers are forced to rely exclusively on domestic consumption. The price of regular crab meat at the farm is just VND300,000 per kg.

Thanh, another crab farmer in Ca Mau, said prices of the crustacean will drop further if domestic consumption was low.

Apart from crab meat, shrimp prices have also fallen to around VND150,000-200,000 per kg, depending on the variety.

Hoa, a seafood trader in the southern region, said that prices have decreased by 10-45 percent compared to the Lunar New Year period, but purchasing power remains low.

"I have temporarily stopped exporting and am only selling to domestic traders," Hoa said.

A VnExpress survey of several seafood stores and markets in HCMC found that the price of grade 1 crab at stores was VND800,000 per kg and that of regular crab around half that.

As for shrimp, though supply was lower compared to the same period last year, prices have also dropped by VND50,000 per kilo in the past two days to VND200,000 per kg (about 30 shrimps per kg).

Hoa said both difficulties at the China border and lower purchasing power back home were major factors in the sharp drop in prices.

Over the past week, more than 2,000 trucks of goods have been stuck at Lang Son border gates because of slow customs clearance.

The delay in clearing container trucks at the border has been happening since the end of last year. During the Lunar New Year holiday from Jan. 19-Feb. 6, the issue was partly resolved thanks to intervention from senior officials, but it has resurfaced since.

China was Vietnam's second-largest export market for agricultural, forestry and fishery produce behind the U.S., with a turnover of \$8.4 billion in the first 11 months of last year, accounting for 19.2 percent of Vietnam's total agricultural exports.

On February 17, China suspended trade through the Kim Thanh Border Gate in Vietnam's Lao Cai Province after discovering Covid-19 cases on its side, leaving 350 container trucks stranded.

With Chinese authorities placing the Hekou Yao Autonomous County under a lockdown, it is unclear when the trucks can cross the border.

Four other border gates in the province: Huu Nghi International, Dong Dang, Tan Thanh and Chi Ma International Railway Stations have begun clearing goods again.

However, China is continuing to strengthen pandemic prevention and quality control measures, so it takes 40-50 minutes to clear a truck. With a clearance capacity of 5-69 vehicles per day, the border trade congestion look set to continue.

### **Vietnam authority promotes information against IUU fishing in Con Co island**

<https://www.sggpnews.org.vn/national/quang-tri-authority-promotes-information-against-iuu-fishing-in-con-co-island-97293.html>

"This morning, the Con Co Border Guard Command in the Central Province of Quang Tri in Vietnam spread information against Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which means capturing a wide variety of fishing activity including illegal fishing, unreported fishing, and unregulated fishing.

The Con Co Border Guard Command coordinated with ship 4038 of the Coast Guard Region 2 Command to convene a meeting with 20 fishing boats with 150 fishermen inside and outside Quang Tri province operating and anchoring on Con Co island.

Border soldiers distributed leaflets with anti-IUU content according to the Partys guidelines and the government's policies and laws, regulations of the coastal countries in the field of fishing, and the security and order situation at sea.

In addition, the functional forces noted the captain to strictly follow the logging of fishing activities, report on fishing, install and operate fishing vessel monitoring equipment in accordance with regulations, and how to detect frequency when fishermen's boats at sea if they help.

Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Dinh Cuong, Head of Con Co Border Post, said that this activity contributes to a strong change in fishermen's observance of the laws of Vietnam and other countries in the region on fishing at sea"

### **Vietnam cautiously optimistic about pangasius exports in 2022**

<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/vietnam-cautiously-optimistic-about-pangasius-exports-in-2022>

Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) has expressed a cautious optimism about sales of pangasius in 2022, as challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to face the industry in the new year.

The higher costs of production, and higher export costs coupled to uncertain demand in key markets, are the main obstacles the industry will face this year, according to VASEP General Secretary Truong Dinh Hoe.

Vietnam's pangasius industry had to deal with "unpredictable difficulties" in 2021 as the fourth outbreak of COVID-19 severely disrupted the industry's production and export activities. Starting in the third quarter, pangasius producing provinces and cities in the Mekong Delta underwent strict and prolonged lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19, directly affecting the entire supply chain – from farming to processing and exports.

In addition to the supply chain impacts, companies were required to implement a "3-on-site" model, meaning workers had to work, eat, and sleep within the premise of their plants, causing further costs for the producers.

Meanwhile, freight costs have risen by between eight and 10 times compared to a year before.

The combined challenges have pushed down the export value of pangasius by 21 percent year-on-year to USD 295 million (EUR 261 million) in the third quarter.

Exports to key markets in 2022 will also be impacted by the ongoing reaction to COVID-19. Countries around the world continue to implement various economic reopening policies to co-exist with the coronavirus, and many have introduced stimulus packages to promote growth in 2022. Amid inflation risks and possible supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic, companies are likely to deal with increases in electricity prices, feeds, and raw materials causing production costs to increase.

Despite headwinds in 2021, Hoe believes that China (including Hong Kong) will remain one of the most important markets for pangasius producers in Vietnam in 2022.

In the first 11 months of 2021, Vietnam exported pangasius worth USD 376 million (EUR 332.5 million) to China (including Hong Kong), 22 percent lower year-on-year.

Exports to China have experienced major disruptions since April 2021 due to increased testing of frozen seafood cargoes for COVID-19 by Chinese authorities as part of the country's overall strategy to implement a "zero COVID" policy. The heightened inspections have resulted in the delays of clearance for shipments, adding further costs for both Vietnamese exporters and Chinese importers.

In the second half of December, more than 1,500 container trucks carrying agricultural products, including more than 1,000 frozen seafood containers, were stranded at Mong Cai in Vietnam, which borders China, as Chinese authorities intensified strict measures to prevent COVID-19 from entering China, according to Vietnamese media reports.

VASEP said despite the challenges, China will remain the largest buyer of pangasius from Vietnam in 2022. But the cost for sending pangasius cargo to China is expected to double that in

2021 due to the continued shortage of containers, higher freight rates, and more difficult customs clearance at Chinese ports.

The uncertainties in supply, along with higher prices, are likely to drive pangasius out of many restaurant menus in China. Restaurants may end up replacing Vietnamese pangasius with domestic Chinese species thanks to supply and price advantages, Hoe said.

For the U.S. market, 2021 was considered a success for many pangasius exporters from Vietnam. Sales to the U.S. reached USD 324 million (EUR 286.5 million) in the months spanning January to November, soaring 48 percent year-on-year, making it the second largest destination for pangasius from Vietnam.

Leading exporter Vinh Hoan said its sales to the U.S. were worth VND 415 billion (USD 18 million, EUR 16 million) in November 2021, up 68 percent year-on-year and accounting for 45.5 percent of the firm's total sales.

However, both general secretary Hoe and VASEP Deputy General Secretary To Thi Tuong Lan, as cited by local media, said that the growth in sales to the U.S. in 2022 will not be as high as in 2021 as “they have already purchased sufficient volume for their need.”

For the European Union and United Kingdom, it is unlikely there will be a sudden uptick in pangasius exports as they are struggling with the new COVID-19 variant Omicron. Moreover, many customers in the E.U. and the U.K. may be unwilling to pay more for pangasius, the price of which has risen due to skyrocketing freight rates.

Amid uncertainties in key markets, VASEP said it hopes sales to smaller potential buyers – including Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Russia, and Egypt – will grow to partially offset the possible decline in exports to China and other major destinations. These five markets saw sales grow by between 44 and 84 percent year-on-year from January to November of 2021, with a combined export value accounting for 16.3 percent of Vietnam’s total pangasius export value in the period.

VASEP also said the supply of raw materials is a matter of concern in 2022, following the sharp decrease in stocking during the lockdowns in the third quarter and cold weather conditions in late 2021. The price of pangasius materials and feeds are expected to remain high in 2022.

According to VASEP’s forecasts, pangasius exporters are expected to bring home a turnover of USD 1.7 billion (EUR 1.5 billion) in 2022, up 13 percent from the estimated value in 2021.

### **Fishermen in Vietnams Central Province of Binh Thuan prepare for ships to sail out to sea**

<https://www.sggpnews.org.vn/national/fishermen-prepare-for-ships-out-to-sea-96612.html>

In recent days, when the Covid-19 epidemic has been basically controlled, the bustling atmosphere at the major ports such as Phan Thiet, La Gi in Binh Thuan Province is on the air and fishermen are rushed off their feet to prepare for ships out to sea.

For many months, the boat with a capacity of nearly 400 CV of old fisherman Tran The Anh had to anchor at the wharf to ensure the prevention of epidemics, so he and his boat mates experienced economic hardships.

Fortunately, in the days approaching Tet, the epidemic situation has gradually stabilized, fisherman Anh and thousands of other fishermen in Binh Thuan Province feel as happy. They are rushing to prepare fishing gear and necessities to sail through the New Year with a hope that the sea trip at the end of this year will be full of fish and shrimp, making up for the cost after spending months on the shore to prevent epidemics.

Mr. Anh revealed on this trip, he prepared more delicious food than usual to celebrate the New Year at sea with my boat mates.

According to fisherman Tri in La Gi town, the end of the year is a time of season change between weather zones at sea, so fishermen can collect more fish. Therefore, he has celebrated New Year's Day and Tet holidays ( the Lunar New Year) at sea for more than 15 years.

In addition, the price of seafood at the end of the year is often high, so fishermen take advantage of the sea to earn extra income to look forward to returning to welcome a traditional New Year with their families. To prepare for the sea trip through the New Year, Mr. Tri's fishing boat prepared 7,000 liters of oil, 750 rocks, and enough food for 9 crew members for about 20-25 days.

According to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Binh Thuan Province, in the past four months, the Covid-19 epidemic broke out and developed complicatedly in the province, but thanks to increased epidemic prevention and control measures, fishermen have caught over 210,000 tons.

Fortunately, the conditions of the fishing grounds are favorable in recent days, so fishermen who go to the sea have a stable income.

Furthermore, for fishermen, going offshore is not only an economic purpose, a hope to change lives, but we fishermen also aspire that we are a "living milestone" at sea, making a small contribution to protecting the sovereignty of the sea and islands, said old fisherman Nam Tau.

### **Vietnam's aquaculture output grows 4.17 per cent to 4.75 mn tones**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/aquaculture-output-grows-417-percent-to-475-million-tonnes/219799.vnp>

"Vietnam's aquaculture output is estimated at 4.75 million tonnes this year, rising by some 4.17 percent from 2020, according to the Directorate of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

Of which, the output of tra fish, a major foreign currency earner, stood at 1.5 million tonnes, equivalent to last year's figure.

The directorate predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic may continue developing complicatedly in 2022, directly affecting logistics and subsequently production and business activities of the fisheries sector. Processing firms may face material shortages in the first quarter of next year. Given this, MARD will order localities to press on with farming so as to ensure sufficient supply of materials for processing in 2022, the directorate added.

This year's aquatic product exports are estimated at 8.89 billion USD, posting a year-on-year increase of 5.7 percent, data from the Directorate of Fisheries show.

### **Vietnam's basa fish industry may lack material for export processing next year**

[https://www.einnews.com/pr\\_news/559272715/basa-fish-industry-may-lack-material-for-export-processing-next-year](https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/559272715/basa-fish-industry-may-lack-material-for-export-processing-next-year)

The Directorate of Fisheries forecasts a shortage of raw materials for export basa processing in the first quarter of 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19.

Nhu Văn Cấn, head of the directorate's Aquaculture Department, said the area of farming basa in the third quarter of 2021 decreased by about 30-55 per cent on year because aquaculture activities were suspended in many Mekong Delta provinces due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

With a sharp reduction in the farming area, the industry is likely to lack raw materials for export processing in the first quarter of 2022, according to Cấn.

Therefore, after the Government's Resolution 128/NQ-CP on temporary regulations for safe, flexible adaptation to and effective control of COVID-19, basa farming activities have been enhanced to meet demand at processing plants which have restored their operation.

"Basa producers have proposed the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and those localities to create favourable conditions for them to expand the basa farming area," said Trần Văn Hùng, chairman of the Hùng Cá Company.

Nguyễn Ngô Vi Tâm, general director of the Vĩnh Hoàn Joint Stock Company, said besides the impact of COVID-19, the challenges for the basa industry next year included increasing price of feed, shortage of labour and higher electricity prices.

"Basa fish processing enterprises have had support in reducing electricity bills but the basa fish producers have not. This has greatly affected farmers and enterprises producing raw material of basa. The basa fish producers need this support," said Tâm.

She has also suggested the MARD start a supportive programme in terms of fingerling for the basa fish producers, ensuring supply of better quality varieties.

By this year-end, the fishery industry would remove difficulties caused by the COVID-19 to restore production. The industry would enhance production of the fingerling and input materials to supply fingerling for basa fish producers in the first quarter next year, according to the ministry.

MARD Deputy Minister Phùng Đức Tiến said: "The industry needs to have specific, synchronous and timely solutions to develop the farming of basa. That would ensure food quality and safety for the consumption in the last month of 2021, and raw materials for export processing in the first months of 2022."

Accordingly, the provinces need to have appropriate policies to develop basa fish farming areas associated with processing facilities and consumption enterprises. This cooperation will help the producers regulate production according to market demand.

The localities need to implement solutions on supporting basa fish producers affected by COVID-19, such as reducing electricity prices, taxes, and fees and providing soft loans, to ensure the stability of the basa production chain and control of food quality and safety, Tiến said.

He has requested the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Quality Control to control quality and food safety at basa farming regions, meeting quality requirements of export markets. Besides that, the department needs to promote measures on recovering the export of basa products to the Saudi Arabian market.

The Department of Agricultural Products Processing and Market Development updates market information for enterprises and farms. That will help the producers have suitable production plans.

Associations, enterprises and business facilities in basa production chains need to develop production scenarios in the pandemic period and build brand and sustainable development strategies.

Meanwhile, Tiến also proposed the enterprises diversify products according to market needs and promote electronic transactions during the pandemic.

They also need to comply with regulations on the use of chemicals and antibiotics in basa farming, product quality and traceability.

Besides that, localities should promote linkage between processing enterprises with small basa farms to ensure stable production.

According to the General Department of Fisheries, the output of basa in 2021 is estimated to reach about 1.5 million tonnes, the same output in 2020. Basa export value is estimated at over US\$1.5 billion this year.

The basa industry has set ambitious goals for next year of basa output at over 1.7 million tonnes and export value of US\$1.6 billion.

### **Vietnamese fishermen protest project blocking access to the sea**

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/access-12232021180110.html>

A fishing community in central Vietnam is uniting to oppose a container port after police and workers for the development injured several fishermen who were rallying against the project.

Hundreds of residents of the Binh Thuan commune in Quang Ngai province's Binh Son district gathered on Dec. 17 to block National Highway 1A to demand the release of fishermen arrested earlier in the day for protesting construction of the port.

Project developers and provincial police had attacked protesters, leaving many seriously injured, said one woman named Nguyen Thi Be. She had tried to go fishing that morning but found her way cut off, she said.

“When I asked why we had to leave, they said we were no longer allowed to stay here, as they needed to start building the port,” said Be, whose name has been changed to protect her from retaliation by authorities.

“Other fishermen then gathered in large numbers and began to shout to oppose the construction, saying that we had to earn a living and that if the company was going to take the sea away from us, they would have to give us something else to live on.”

Project workers and police then attacked the crowd, Be said.

“One person's teeth were broken, and some others suffered broken arms and scratches on their faces from all the beating and shoving. One of my arms was broken too. We are very angry,” she said.

Project developer the Hoa Phat Group was awarded approval in June 2019 to build the port in a U.S. \$169 million project that has offered local fishing families compensation described by many as unequally distributed, leading to area protests.

“For most of us, our livelihood depends on fishing, and when the Hoa Phat Company began to encroach more and more on the sea, local people began to ask for compensation,” said one local resident surnamed Trung.

“But the company called it financial support instead of compensation, and when providing the support they made it unequal and unfair,” he said. “People therefore got upset and began to block work on the project, with many setting up tents on the construction site in protest.”

Asked whether local authorities are supporting residents' demands for better support, Nguyen Thi Be replied that commune officials said that residents should allow the company to proceed with its work, and that the company would gradually meet their demands.

“However, the company hasn't done this, and so we have lost our confidence in the commune authorities,” she said.

RFA called the Binh Son District People's Committee for comment on the case, but staff members refused to provide contact numbers for committee officials.

While all land in Vietnam is ultimately held by the state, land confiscations have become a flashpoint as residents accuse the government of pushing them aside in favor of lucrative real estate projects, and of paying too little in compensation.

### **Protecting raw resources vital to the future of Vietnam fish sauce**

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2021/12/23/protecting-raw-resources-vital-to-the-future-of-vietnam-fish-sauce>

Fish sauce is a staple found on tables up and down the country - in fact, the General Statistics Office (GSO) reported last year that the average person consumed 3.9 litres of fish sauce annually.

However, the industry is at risk of over-exploitation as producers attempt to keep up with demand.

The issue was addressed during a workshop held by the Việt Nam Fish Sauce Association, Vietnam Fisheries Society and the Research Institute for Marine Fishery, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) recently.

Speaking at the workshop, MARD Deputy Minister Phùng Đức Tiến said that by 2030, fishing output may reduce to 2.8 million tonnes while aquaculture production would reach seven million tonnes because the current fishing intensity was too great.

The GSO reports that Vietnamese fish sauce productivity last year reached nearly 380 million litres.

The fish sauce processing industry has generated jobs for 10,000 people and millions of fishermen, traders and salt makers.

The processing industry shows great potential, however, its export turnover left behind the production capacity by 12.6 per cent compared to total production output.

Vietnam's export of fish sauce to Asian countries accounted for 54 per cent, Australia with 18 per cent, the European countries with 13 per cent and the US with 13 per cent.

Đinh Xuân Lập, Deputy Director of the Center for International Cooperation in Aquaculture and Sustainable Fisheries (ICAFIS) under the Vietnam Fisheries Society told participants that the Vietnamese fish sauce production industry has an abundant source with about 2.45 million tonnes of fish.

The fishing industry has a 500-600 year history and a large number of highly skilled fishermen. The exploitation has formed a close link between fishing to processing.

Along with hygienic and human health protection requirements, the fish sauce industry must be responsible for the fishing sector. This is a common roadmap and also the country's commitment to the international market.

Vietnam is now home to 1,500 fish sauce manufacturers; among which 35 specialise in making fish sauce for export.

However, many of them have not yet fully ensured food hygienic and safety conditions such as hazard analysis and critical control points and ISO standards. Fish sauce processors have still shown weakness in post-harvest preservation.

Furthermore, Decision 1005 of the EC stated that fishery products and those derived from sea products exported to Europe must have a certificate for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing regulations.

In addition, Vietnamese fishing vessels near the coastal area are not fully installed with equipment following the IUU regulations such as fishing vessel monitoring systems. Fishing boats are still small-scaled and the exploitation cost remains high.

Fishery sources near coastal areas are increasingly depleted due to environmental issues and climate change.

Lập said Vietnam has so far signed 13 free trade agreements. These agreements have provided opportunities for local businesses and fish sauce processors.

MARD, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Industry and Trade should support aquatic products and fish sauce production. Foreign clients, interested in Vietnamese fish sauce, are a huge opportunity for domestic fish sauce makers.

To promote the fish sauce industry, Lập suggested conducting community-based resource management models by working towards sustainable exploitation of aquatic resources. Close links between the Fish Sauce Association and fish sauce makers should be further enhanced to bring more Vietnamese fish sauce to foreign markets.

The country's marine resources are being overexploited. To protect and develop seafood resources in a sustainable manner, the fish sauce industry needs to find other marine sources with high nutrient value.

It should focus on studying the the biological characteristics of seafood species to determine the location of spawning, breeding grounds and seasons to protect the marine sources.

### **Vietnam reins in fisheries as EU ~yellow card threatens sector**

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Vietnam-reins-in-fisheries-as-EU-yellow-card-threatens-sector>

Vietnam's fishermen are now sailing the seas equipped with better tracking devices and improved ship logging methods in a bid to steer clear of penalties imposed by the European Union for illegal fishing, and to join efforts aimed at preventing depletion of the world's marine life.

The tracking measures and new penalties have been part of a crackdown since 2017 when the EU slapped a warning on Vietnam -- the world's third-biggest fish exporter, whose overfishing has gotten its boats sunk by neighboring Indonesia. The warning, officially referred to as a "yellow card," is meant to advise Vietnam to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

It has hung like an albatross around the country's fishing sector, which faces a red card, or outright ban on fish exports to the EU, if the problems remain unresolved.

While the EU previously said Vietnam's local and central governments lacked effective oversight powers, two provinces recently fined fishermen \$43,000 each for switching off tracking gear and illegally fishing in Malaysia and Indonesia, state broadcaster VTV reported on Dec. 9.

Vietnam hoped to shed the yellow card this year, ending the extra customs scrutiny that pushed fish sales to the EU down by 36% -- about \$320 million -- from 2018 to 2020. But with COVID-19 preventing EU inspectors from visiting the Southeast Asian country, waiting to lose the less-than-favorable status will drag on into 2022.

Vietnam's dismal fishing grade has not gone unnoticed by the central government, owing to the sector's importance to the economy. Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh has listed several national priorities to help the country recover from the pandemic, according to an Oct. 3 post on the government news portal. Besides increasing public investment and leveraging trade deals, the post said, Vietnam must get the EU yellow card removed.

As the world's biggest fish importer, the EU claims to have a duty to ensure responsible sourcing, a concern that is increasing in the wake of growing global fish consumption and Seapiracy, a contentious documentary film, spotlighting destructive fishing.

One destructive method, bottom trawling, involves dragging nets along the seabed. The three biggest producers of trawled catch are China, Vietnam and Indonesia, according to a report this month by environmental group Fauna & Flora International.

Overfishing is "detrimental" to marine life, but also self-defeating, said Vuong Trong Binh, World Wildlife Fund's specialist on Vietnamese fishing, in comments to Nikkei Asia.

"IUU can destroy marine habitats like coral reefs [and] further degrade overall marine ecosystems, thus creating negative impacts on long-term livelihoods of fishing communities," he said.

Whales, dolphins, turtles and other endangered species become collateral damage when they get unintentionally captured, Binh explained.

Vietnam's Fisheries Law took effect in 2019 and establishes protected zones, a database to track vessels and hefty penalties. It also bans some fishing techniques, like the use of explosives or electric pulses.

To keep fishermen from encroaching on foreign waters, Vietnam has registered its ships and issued licenses, forcing fishermen to install gear that monitors their movements. The country has also set up a system to collect landing data, such as catchweight.

The world is starting to realize that marine life is in decline. According to the United Nations' State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020 biennial report, 90% of fish stocks were at biologically sustainable levels in 1990 -- a number that plunged to 66% by 2017.

The European Commission handed out 27 yellow cards from 2012 to 2021, including to Thailand and the Philippines -- both of which subsequently had the cards lifted -- and Cambodia, which has since been slapped with a red card.

Despite dire warnings over the oceans' plight, some governments in Europe and elsewhere have doled out "harmful subsidies" that "shift the risk of overfishing to other countries' water," says Oceana, a nonprofit marine conservation organization. The environmental group reported that the top three entities offering subsidies are China, Japan and the EU. The World Trade Organization is trying to stamp out these subsidies.

An EC official told Nikkei that when pandemic conditions allow, the commission will visit Vietnam, which is expanding on its Fisheries Law as part of an industry overhaul.

"Once fully implemented, this new legislation will allow Vietnam to fulfill its international obligations in relation to combating IUU fishing," the official said on Monday. "Vietnam acknowledges that the level of implementation of the new legal framework is not yet sufficient, but is working intensely to achieve this goal."

### **Shrimp exporters in Vietnam rush to achieve export target**

<https://www.sggpnews.org.vn/business/shrimp-exporters-rush-to-achieve-export-target-96184.html>

"In early December, raw shrimp prices in the Mekong Delta fluctuated at a high level. Specifically, black tiger shrimp-sized 40 pieces per kilogram was priced at VND150,000-VND160,000 per kg; white-leg shrimp sized 100 pcs per kg was sold at VND102,000 per kg,

sized 50 pcs per kg at VND136,000 per kg, and sized 30 pcs per kg at VND168,000 per kg. The average price increased by VND20,000-VND30,000 per kg compared to that in August and September. Although shrimp prices are high, many shrimp farmers in the Mekong Delta have no more shrimp to sell

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had caused shrimp prices to fall sharply for a long time, along with the increasing cost of feed, causing farmers to suffer losses, so they had to suspend shrimp farming. Exporting enterprises also face a shortage of raw shrimp, so they encounter many difficulties in delivery.

According to the Department of Industry and Trade of Bac Lieu Province, the province's total export turnover in the first 11 months of this year exceeded US\$707 million. Of which, frozen shrimp reached \$688 million. It is forecasted that the shrimp export turnover of Bac Lieu Province by the end of the year will still post a growth compared to 2020.

The last month of 2021 is the time for enterprises to speed up the delivery of orders to foreign partners as planned. Currently, Vietnam's frozen and steamed shrimp products have been exported to many markets globally, such as Japan, Australia, the US, and the EU. Besides, the advantages from free trade agreements that Vietnam has signed, along with an increase in export shrimp prices over the same period, will continue to create many advantages when exporting.

### **Fishermen in the Mekong Delta province of Kien Giang in Vietnam receive support to resume operations**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/kien-giang-fishermen-receive-support-to-resume-operations/211373.vnp>

Fishermen in the Mekong Delta province of Kien Giang have taken their vessels offshore again for fishing, resuming their operations at sea as COVID-19 has been put under control.

As part of efforts to support local fishermen, Kien Giang has created favourable conditions for the operations of seafood production, buying and processing facilities, while asking the health sector to speed up COVID-19 vaccination for labourers in the fisheries sector.

Local authorised agencies have offered assistance to owners of fishing vessels to upgrade their vessels to improve the capacity of seafood storage and improve their products' quality.

Chairman of the provincial People's Committee Lam Minh Thanh said that the committee has asked departments and sectors to coordinate closely together to support local fishermen to operate at sea for a long term, while effectively implementing the policies on fisheries development, and stabilising product prices.

The province has requested the commercial bank system to support fisheries firms and owners of vessels facing difficulties. The locality has asked the State Bank of Vietnam to propose the Government take measures to freeze and reschedule debts for fishing vessel owners hit by the pandemic. Kien Giang has also assigned the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to design plans to recover the fisheries sector after the pandemic, he said.

Kien Giang is one of the coastal localities that are strong in fishing with a large fishing vessel fleet. Currently, the province has finished the installation of vessel monitoring system (VMS) on 99.15 percent of local fishing vessels having a length from 15m.

### **Coastal localities in Vietnam take stronger measures against IUU fishing**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/coastal-localities-take-stronger-measures-against-iuu-fishing/211317.vnp>

Numerous stronger measures have been implemented by 28 coastal provinces and cities nationwide in the past four years in a bid to prevent and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, towards developing a sustainable fishery sector, having the European Commission (EC)'s "yellow card" lifted and promoting Vietnam's seafood exports.

Since the EC imposed the "yellow card" on the Vietnamese fishery sector, the Mekong Delta province of Soc Trang has set up and completed a provincial steering committee and inspection groups based at fishing ports to popularise IUU prevention regulations to fishermen.

The province has regularly organised inspections and examinations on legal documents, necessary equipment of fishing vessels before allowing them to go offshore and dock at Tran De fishing port.

Like Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh and Ca Mau provinces have also rolled out measures to enhance local fishermen's awareness of sustainable offshore fishing.

Nguyen Viet Trieu, Vice Director of the Fishery Sub-Department of Ca Mau province, said that in order to minimise IUU fishing activities, the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has given advice to the provincial People's Committee on preventive measures and coordinated with relevant agencies to build and implement synchronic solutions such as closely supervising and monitoring fishing vessels committing violations in foreign waters.

Ca Mau's authorities have refused to issue new fishing licences to vessels repeating their violations and not allowed their captains and owners to enjoy fishery support policies from the State, he said.

Meanwhile, drastic measures have been also carried out to fight IUU fishing activities in other coastal provinces and cities. Currently, many localities have shown strong performance in the work, including Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan, Kien Giang and Bac Lieu provinces.

In reality, active and prompt efforts to remove the EC “yellow card” on the Vietnamese fishery sector also aim to protect the lives of fishermen at sea.

### **Vietnam's Ben Tre province tightens handling of illegal fishing**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/ben-tre-tightens-handling-of-illegal-fishing/209785.vnp>

Secretary of Ben Tre province’s Party Committee Le Duc Tho asked localities and competent forces to strictly handle violations of fishing regulations at a meeting on fighting the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing on October 14.

The Mekong Delta province has taken an array of measures, in line with the government's resolve to have the European Commission (EC)’s “yellow card” removed as early as possible.

Ben Tre has stepped up coordination with information and communication agencies to raise public awareness of relevant regulations.

Competent agencies and local authorities have kept a close watch on the registration of vessels, the installation of monitoring devices and the operation of local fishing boats at sea, especially large boats going deep sea fishing, and strictly handled violations.

For boats that register in Ben Tre but operate in other localities, Tho required coordination with those localities in supervision work.

He also urged the coastal guard force to boost inspections to prevent any boats not meeting regulations from going to sea, and quickly detect and punish boats violating foreign waters, fishing illegally, and or involving in the organisation of illegal exit from and entry into Vietnam.

According to the provincial People’s Committee, up to 98.8 percent of fishing boats meeting requirements in Ben Tre have installed monitoring devices.

Since the beginning of this year, competent forces have found seven fishing boats violating foreign waters. Four of them were fined a total 3.2 billion VND (140,600 USD), while papers for punishment for the three others are being completed.

### **Tasks assigned to put an end to IUU fishing in Vietnam by year end**

<https://www.sggpnews.org.vn/national/tasks-assigned-to-put-an-end-to-iuu-fishing-by-years-end-94916.html>

The Government leader recently chaired a teleconference on the prevention of IUU fishing so as to have the European Commission’s “yellow card” warning lifted.

According to the Government Office, the PM requested that fishing boats’ violation of foreign sea areas be eradicated by the end of this year.

He asked the national steering committee for IUU fishing prevention to order ministries, sectors, and localities to carry out solutions in a drastic and uniform manner.

The Ministry of National Defence has to coordinate with relevant agencies, ministries, and sectors, and the People's Committees of the 28 coastal provincial-level localities to increase examination and strictly control fishing boats' activities, especially in overlapping or undemarcated waters between Vietnam and other countries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is tasked with working with related sides to advise the Government about plans to negotiate with the countries sharing overlapping or undemarcated sea areas with Vietnam so as to identify the boundary for legal activities by Vietnamese fishing boats. It is also told to proactively grasp the situation and collect information and evidence in the countries detaining violating fishing boats from Vietnam, while pushing ahead with the protection of fishermen arrested overseas.

The Ministry of Public Security is assigned with boosting the investigation and settlement of the rings brokering illegal fishing in foreign waters.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) needs to keep overhauling legal institutions and framework to strictly manage fisheries exploitation.

Cooperation in fisheries and the IUU fishing combat between Vietnam and other countries, regional and international fisheries societies needs to be further enhanced. Besides, Vietnam will fulfill its obligations and commitments to the international agreements and treaties on fisheries to which it is a party.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment is requested to allocate part of the medium-term public investment capital for 2021 - 2025 and other fundings to building and upgrading fisheries infrastructure, fishing ports, and storm shelters for boats, and developing a modern fisheries management system.

The Ministry of Finance should prioritise funding for relevant agencies, ministries, sectors, and localities to carry out programs and plans on anti-IUU fishing.

The Ministry of Transport has to work with the MARD and other related ministries to examine seafood imported into Vietnam.

In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs must team up with the MARD to devise a vocational training program and manage fishery workers in line with domestic and international labour regulations.

## **Vietnam's tra fish exports drop drastically due to Covid-19 social distancing**

<https://www.sggpnews.org.vn/business/tra-fish-exports-drastically-drop-due-to-covid19-social-distancing-94909.html>

A representative from the Directorate of Fisheries made the statement at the virtual conference presided by Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Le Minh Hoan on September 25 with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Vietnam Pangasius Association, the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP), leaders of provinces in the region and exporters.

Tra fish is raised on 3,516 ha in the Mekong Delta and farmers have harvested an estimated 932,000, just equal to 81 percent compared to the same period last year, according to the Directorate of Fisheries.

Due to strict social distancing mandates, tra fish processing facilities in the Mekong Delta have reduced their processing capacity leading to a long-run fall in the prices of the fish to VND21,000 – VND22,000 per kilogram even lower than production costs.

Approximately 119 fish processing plants with 190,000 employees in the region are eligible for export. Around 49 percent of factories stopped operation in early September and 70 percent of workers in the facilities got unemployed.

A representative of VASEP said that since the middle of July, the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the sector due to social distancing. Tra fish plants in the Mekong Delta City of Can Tho were shuttered temporarily.

It is forecast that many businesses will not resume operation in October because of a shortage of employees and finance.

Because of these above-mentioned difficulties, pangasius export turnover in August 2021 decreased by 28.5 percent over the same period, expected to continue reducing 30 percent year on year in September. However, the turnover of pangasius exports alone in the first eight months of 2021 increased 8.8 percent compared to the same period in 2020 thanks to steady growth in new markets such as Russia, Brazil, Egypt, Colombia, and the US. It is forecast that the demand for pangasius in many countries will increase, especially at the end of the year.

Nevertheless, businesses are unable to restart production soon or expand production resulting in losing orders in the year-end; worse, enterprises have been reluctant to accept new orders.

Duong Nghia Quoc, Chairman of the Vietnam Pangasius Association said that from 2019 to now, the price of pangasius has fluctuated at a low level for a long time, so farmers have not been interested in raising the fish anymore. Meanwhile, scores of businesses are also facing difficulties due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, some factories have maintained operations as per the regulation of Covid-19 prevention and control with high costs and many risks.

Therefore, seafood enterprises in the Mekong Delta hope that the Ministry of Health will allocate more vaccines to speed up the vaccination coverage in order to restart production and processing in the new normal. Additionally, enterprises petitioned banks to reduce interest rates and extend debts for the recovery of the pangasius industry, especially in the last months of the year.

Many businesses have suggested that the Mekong Delta provinces need to remove difficulties for their drivers who should be allowed to travel from province to province to collect raw material. Currently due to epidemic prevention, workers cannot go to another province to harvest the fish.

Deputy Minister of Health Nguyen Truong Son expressed his sympathy with enterprises in the pangasius industry. At the same time, he proposed that localities just apply distance in the red zone and expand the green zone for the facilitation of fish companies' production expansion. At this point, the Ministry of Health considers providing more vaccines to pangasius businesses in the region.

Secretary of the Dong Thap Provincial Party Committee Le Quoc Phong said that during the expansion for production, fish processing facilities should have an appropriate response when a worker is tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, without applying lockdown measure. Therefore, businesses need to build a reasonable production line with the most optimal production plan to handle the problem.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Le Minh Hoan suggested that the Mekong Delta provinces need to strengthen regional linkages to develop the pangasius industry.

### **Vietnam keen on more Russian companies exporting fish, agricultural products, Ambassador**

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/vietnam-keen-on-more-russian-companies-export-1360873.html>

"Vietnam is actively exploring ways to engage more Russian companies in exporting agricultural and fishery products to the country and give a fillip to bilateral trade relations, Ambassador to Russia Dang Minh Khoi told Sputnik in an interview. "

"In the coming years, in order to further develop bilateral trade cooperation in agricultural and fishery products, the Embassy of Vietnam in Russia will organize seminars and forums to offer practical solutions for more favorable conditions and help businesses of the two countries better access each others markets,"" Khoi said. "

The diplomat believes that together with the dynamic entrepreneurs and benefits brought about by the free trade agreement, the close cooperation between the two countries in creating favorable conditions for businesses and helping them access markets is crucial. He believes the

trend has significantly contributed to the dramatic increase in bilateral trade volumes of agricultural and aquatic products in recent years, especially exports from Russia to Vietnam.

"Up to now, Vietnamese authorities have allowed 51 Russian enterprises to export meat and meat products (beef, pig, chicken), and 26 Russian enterprises to export seafood to Vietnam," the ambassador added.

In recent years, agricultural cooperation has become one of the key directions in economic and trade relations between Vietnam and Russia. Total bilateral trade in agricultural, forestry and fishery products grew strongly after Vietnam and the Eurasian Economic Union, of which Russia is a key member, signed the Free Trade Agreement in May 2015.

In July, Russian agricultural watchdog Rosselkhozadzor said that 11 domestic companies received the right to export fish products to Vietnam.

### **Vietnam calls for vaccines and climate change action at UN**

<https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/vietnam-calls-for-vaccines-and-climate-change-action-at-un/>

The global offensive against COVID-19 took center stage at the recent 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The UN's urgent pandemic messaging was underscored by all nations, especially by Vietnam's President Nguyen Xuan Phuc, who recognizes that this global health storm, inextricably linked with the deadly coronavirus, has created obstacles for development, affecting the economic, political, and social life of the world, especially in small and developing countries.

"The pandemic sounds a warning bell of the shocking destruction that may be caused by non-traditional security challenges such as diseases or climate change, if they are not addressed", declared Mr. Phuc. At the UN podium, his voice was unwavering about the global perils associated with a failure to contain the virus and for the promotion of fair and equitable access to vaccines and medications.

While this is an international issue and not just for a single country, Vietnam, once a recognized leader in the early curbing of the transmission of the COVID-19, has been forced to adopt draconian lockdown measures in response to the widening virus spread, especially in Ho Chi Minh City with rising deaths among the more than 9 million residents. The latest cumulative death statistics in the city has risen to over 13,000, accounting for 77% of Vietnam's total.

While developed countries are taking measures to control the coronavirus, the urgent task of the world is to prevent this health crisis from ravaging developing countries because, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has made clear: "No one is safe until everyone is safe." Vietnam continues to be in short supply of available vaccines and has one of the lowest

COVID-19 vaccination rates in Asia, with just under 2% of its 98 million people fully vaccinated.

It's no wonder that Mr. Phuc's speech reinforced the need for the expansion of vaccination coverage, the network and supply of vaccines administered to small countries, developing countries, and support for countries to aid in their recovery post pandemic.

At a virtual COVID summit, held during the UN session, President Joe Biden committed the United States to sending an additional 500 million COVID-19 vaccines around the world, increasing the total doses to more than 1.1 billion. Global leaders know that to beat back this pandemic, all nations, rich and poor must be engaged.

This pledge has arrived at a critical moment since Hanoi is struggling to rein in a surge of new cases attributed to the Delta variant. "For the pandemic to be repelled, it is essential that we stand in solidarity, uphold a high sense of responsibility, and step up cooperation," claims Mr. Phuc.

Despite a resurgence of COVID-19, Vietnam's self-image was boosted in its rotating role as a member of the UN Security Council and presidency in April 2021, and ability to steer signature events and peace-building efforts. This marks the second time that the emerging nation has served as president as a non-permanent UNSC member.

The Security Council is the most powerful UN body, composed of fifteen members, five who are permanent; namely, China, France, Russia, the UK, and the United States, along with ten non-permanent members elected every two years.

"COVID-19 is not the sole challenge that we are facing today. Increasing tensions among major powers has led to a divisive and unstable international system," says Mr. Phuc.

He also alluded to China, like President Joseph Biden, without naming China as contributing to "disputes over territories and resources in many areas and in a disregard for international law." This veiled irresolute reference plainly ignored China's assaults on the United Nations mission.

Vietnam was first elected as a non-permanent member for the 2008-2009 term, and acted as the council's president in July 2008 and October 2009. In 2020, Vietnam for the second time in history became a non-permanent member after securing 192 out of 193 votes.

Vietnam's ascendancy in international security has been broadly witnessed in its role in hosting the 2017 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, the 2019 Hanoi Summit, in a meeting bringing together North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump. Although the summit failed to bridge any resolution on the disarmament of a global nuclear threat, Hanoi emerged as a recognized peace-builder in what is generally regarded as a niche position in reconciliation or mediation diplomacy.

Vietnam's repositioning as a middle power and evolving role as a peace builder demonstrates the nation's growing confidence to play a key mediation role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on regional security issues.

Over the past three decades, Hanoi has garnered recognition as a responsible member of the international community. The nation has successfully adopted the correct market institutions that have led to more than two decades of impressive economic performance. UN member nations have applauded Vietnam's vaulted role in the promotion of the struggles for national independence, sovereignty, and self-determination. Vietnam's remarkable journey from low to middle-income status lifted over 40 million people out of poverty between 1993-2014.

The nation's successful march to the UN was accelerated by the remarkable steps taken from 1995 to 1999, including the normalizing of diplomatic and trade relations with the United States, and cooperation with multilateral donors like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Notably, Vietnam has leveraged greater integration with the international economic system, including through ascension to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Despite spending a half-century at war, Hanoi has lost no time in supporting UN initiatives that highlight the fundamental principles of international laws and the Charter in addressing international conflicts through peaceful means.

A central part of its openness and engagement with the world has been the country's willingness to acquire a more prominent voice and position in the United Nations. This has been most evident in its successful efforts to join UN Peacekeeping Operations in early 2014, and Vietnam has its national flag proudly displayed at UN Peacekeeping Missions in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Vietnam recognizes the urgency in supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Paris Agreement (COP21). The country's leadership faces the present dangers of climate change seen in their 1800-mile long coastline along the East Sea, to landslides in the northern mountains, to rising sea levels in the Mekong Delta, the rice bowl for its citizens and home to more than 20 million Vietnamese.

Vietnam is in complete accord with the UN in recognizing that poverty and environmental issues are interconnected. Human impact on the ocean and on coastal communities has been profound, ranging from the destruction of marine ecosystems and loss biodiversity.

"Cooperation in mitigating and preventing the dire impacts of climate change has become more crucial than ever before," added Mr. Phuc in his speech.

Vietnam faces some of the greatest and most urgent threats of biodiversity degradation, extreme weather, and sea level rise from climate change of any country in the world. However, a number of new initiatives are starting to address these challenges, ranging from a national transition to green energy to a UN-backed push for sustainable development. Hanoi's political leaders have pledged to restructure Vietnam's economy to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Phuc also referenced the lead up to toward the Conference of the Parties, (COP-26) a global UN summit on climate change scheduled in Glasgow in November. “We need to make every effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions, in which developed countries should take the lead,” claims the Vietnamese president.

Next to COVID-19, climate change ranks among the highest concerns among all Southeast Asians. Particularly the Philippines and Vietnam – two of the worst-hit countries by extreme weather events in 2020, including super typhoons Goni (Rolly) and Vamco.

With the dual challenges of COVID-19 and climate change, the transition to a new normalcy will require the cooperation of the wealthy nations helping poor and developing countries.

Vietnam is pledging to stake its own future to making proactive and responsible contributions to meet the United Nations peacekeeping charter, to uphold international law, and to achieve sustainable development goals. According to Mr. Phuc, “the pre-requisite to fostering recovery and growth in the post- pandemic era is to sustain peace, security, and stability in each country, each region, and the world at large.”

### **Vietnam's prime minister orders an end to illegal fishing this year**

<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/vietnam-s-prime-minister-orders-an-end-to-illegal-fishing-this-year>

Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh has asked his government’s ministries and agencies to put an end to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing by the end of 2021, with the goal of obtaining removal of the European Commission’s yellow card.

Chinh made the statement in early September while chairing a virtual conference with officials from coastal provinces and cities, as well as representatives seafood sector.

Vietnam was first issued a yellow card in October 2017 by the E.C., which said the Southeast Asian nation had not done enough to tackle IUU fishing.

Since its imposition, the E.U. has been conducting a review of Vietnam’s fisheries-related policies to determine which route it will take out of three options available to it: maintaining the country’s yellow card status, issuing a red card banning all seafood imports from Vietnam, or rescinding the yellow card and resuming normal trading relations.

The prime minister said there remain many shortcomings and problems in implementation of the E.C.’s recommendations. For example, penalties on IUU fishing have not been strict enough in some localities to halt it from happening, and monitoring and control of vessels at Vietnam’s fishing ports has not been conducted effectively, Chinh said.

Vietnam National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue on his two-day visit to the European Union, ending 10 September, asked the European Parliament to support Vietnam's efforts to address the issues raised by the E.C. in its yellow card announcement.

In a separate government meeting in July, Vietnam Deputy Prime Minister Le Van Thanh said Vietnam has not been able to completely prevent its fishermen from fishing illegally in other countries' waters, despite some progress on the issue. He requested that coastal provinces, cities, ministries, and the fisheries sector work to gradually reduce the number of fishing boats considered to be in violation of IUU policies, with a view to completely ending all violations in 2022.

Following the issuance of the yellow card – between 2017 and 2019 – Vietnam's seafood exports to the E.U. contracted by 12 percent in value, with that loss estimated at USD 183.5 million (EUR 155.4 million). Octopus exports to the E.U. dropped 37 percent, mollusk and crab exports declined 11 percent, and tuna exports fell 2 percent. The export value of farmed seafood sent from Vietnam to the E.U. also shrank by 13 percent during the timeframe.

In 2020, Vietnam's E.U. seafood exports decreased 5.7 percent by volume to USD 959 million (EUR 812.4 million), both due to the yellow card and the negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The red card would cause severe losses to Vietnam's seafood exports, according to a report from the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) and the World Bank. Their report, "A Trade-Based Analysis of the Economic Impact of Non-Compliance with Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing: The Case of Vietnam," was issued on 10 August. In it, they estimate Vietnam will lose USD 387 million (EUR 327.8 million) per year from the loss of export revenue from wild-caught seafood including tuna, squid, and octopus, and USD 93 million (EUR 78.8 million) annually from a loss of income from farmed seafood exports, which would be indirectly affected by the E.U.'s ban. Vietnam's wild-caught seafood output is likely to decrease by about 30 percent within two to three years of a red card being implemented, the report found.

### **Worsening COVID-19 outbreak impacting Vietnams seafood industry**

<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/worsening-covid-19-outbreak-impacting-vietnam-s-seafood-industry>

"The disruption to Vietnams seafood sector caused by an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 continues to worsen, resulting in a growing impact on its import and export activities and a reduction in its processing capacity. Vietnam is confronting its worst outbreak of COVID-19, with more than 171,000 residents having contracted the virus since 27 April, with most cases in the countrys south. In comparison, between early 2020 and April 2021, Vietnam experienced fewer than 3,000 cases, according to government data.

Since the middle of July, Vietnams government has instituted lockdowns in dozens of provinces and municipalities, and on 31 July, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh extended a federally mandated lockdowns in 19 provinces and cities, including Ho Chi Minh City “Vietnams main gateway for seafood exports “and the Mekong Delta, the countrys primary region for seafood production, by another two weeks through mid-August. During the lockdowns, factories and farms are still allowed to operate, but their workers must work, eat, and sleep within the plants and farms and completely isolate from the public and their families

However, only about 30 percent of seafood companies in Vietnams south have been able to meet the requirements continue operations, the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) said in a statement on 2 August. And for the processing plants that have remained open, their capacity has been reduced by around half, as they can only house between 30 and 50 percent of workers at their factories, VASEP said.

The harsh measures have taken a toll, with VASEP now projecting Vietnams seafood export value to decrease by about 4 percent year-on-year to USD 763 million (EUR 641.7 million) in July, the first month to experience a year-on-year decline since February 2021.

The countrys exports rose 16 percent by value in the first half of July, but fell as much as 20 percent in the second half of the month compared to the first half of July. Of the total, the export value of shrimp dropped by about 4 percent year-on-year to USD 374 million (EUR 314.6 million) in the month, followed by pangasius at USD 117 million (EUR 98.4 million), down 5 percent; tuna at USD 60.5 million (EUR 50.9 million), 5 percent lower year-on-year; and squid and octopus at USD 47 million (EUR 39.5 million), sliding 9 percent from a year earlier. The export value of crab and other fish species exports also contracted by between 2 and 3 percent, according to VASEP. Without measures to support production and export capacity, the countrys export activities are likely to slow down further in the remaining months of this year, VASEP said.

For the seafood industry, the outbreaks impact has been felt most harshly in the southern province of Tien Giang. At least 180 workers at a pangasius facility operated by Godaco Seafood in the province have tested positive for the coronavirus. The factory has been shut down and sickened workers have been sent to a local hospital for treatment, the Voice of Vietnam reported. Godaco, which was the fifth-largest pangasius exporter in Vietnam in 2019, had already reduced its workforce at the factory by a half to 550 workers as of 15 July to align itself with health decrees issued by the provincial government, Godaco General Manager Nguyen Van Dao said. Infections were also detected at the Quang Thuong Viet Nam steel plant in Tien Giang, with at least 127 confirmed cases as of 30 July.

The clusters at Godaco and Quang Thuong Viet Nam have forced the provincial government to order all businesses in the province to completely suspend operations from 5 August. But Vietnams leading pangasius producer, Vinh Hoan, is asking the government to reconsider its

decision, as it will affect production at Van Duc Tien Giang facility, which is partly owned by the company, according to a letter sent by the Vinh Hoan to Vietnamese Agriculture Minister Le Minh Hoan on 29 July.

The company, which was already operating at 50 percent of capacity during the pandemic, is strictly following federal safety guidelines and has not had a single coronavirus case at the plant, even after testing all 1,200 workers at the facility on 27 July, the company wrote, asking for an exception to the decision or a full reversal. It expressed concern over not being able to meet the terms of signed contracts and the terms of its operating loan, and its knock-on effects of the closure on its supply chain and material pangasius sales.

The decision could cost the company market share, Vinh Hoan said in the letter. Vinh Hoan asked the Agriculture Ministry to consult with Tien Giang authorities to ask for permission to continue operations at its Van Duc Tien Giang facility. It argued the suspension order should only be applied at facilities where workers have contracted COVID-19, Vinh Hoan said in the letter.

According to local newspaper Tuoi Tre Online, in a virtual meeting on 31 July, Tien Giang Agriculture Department Deputy Director Tran Hoang Nhat Nam said the provinces leaders have agreed to consider exceptions to the lockdown to allow facilities in accordance with local health regulations to continue operating.

Meanwhile, Cat Lai, the largest port for seafood export and import in Vietnam, has stopped receiving refrigerated cargoes until 16 August due to a growing pile-up of containers at the port. The port will also stop taking oversized and overweight containers beginning 5 August. The build-up of containers at the port has worsened in recent weeks due the mass suspension of business operations during the lockdowns, according to the port operator, Saigon New Port Corporation.

### **Pangasius play a key role in Vietnams increased seafood exports**

<https://thefishsite.com/articles/pangasius-play-a-key-role-in-vietnams-increased-seafood-exports>

"A growth in the pangasius trade has been a key driver behind a 20 percent increase in Vietnams aquatic exports in the first six months of the year.

According to the latest statistics from the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP), seafood exports reached US\$4.1 billion up to the end of June.

In the US market, two Vietnamese pangasius producers have been given a zero-percent anti-dumping tariff, which helps facilitate shipment of the product to this market. Meanwhile exports of pangasius to markets including Mexico, Brazil, the UK, Thailand, the Netherlands, Colombia

and Russia has showed triple-digit increases, compensating for a decrease in the Chinese market, although the latter remained the biggest importer of the fish, accounting for 26 percent of the total.

### **Ben Tre province in Vietnam works hard on fight against IUU fishing**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/ben-tre-province-works-hard-on-fight-against-iuu-fishing/203748.vnp>

"The number of fishing vessels of the Mekong Delta province of Ben Tre committing illegal fishing in foreign waters in the first six months of 2021 fell 52.4 percent year-on-year, according to the provincial steering committee for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing prevention (Steering Committee 689). The local authorities have punished eight out of 12 owners of fishing vessels violating foreign waters in accordance with Decree 42/2019/ND-CP on stipulating penalties for administrative violations in the fisheries sector with a total fine of 6.6 billion VND (over 286,000 USD).

In the coming time, the province will continue to drastically implement solutions to combat IUU fishing, in order to remove the European Commission (EC)s yellow card warning. Vice Chairman of the provincial Peoples Committee Nguyen Minh Canh, who is also head of Steering Committee 689, said special attention will be paid to strengthening supervision over fishing vessels operating offshore through monitoring systems, and resolutely sanctioning fishing boats which violate regulations on fishing boundaries and those with no cruise monitoring devices.

The local authorities will also focus on promoting patrolling activities and closely inspecting ships entering and leaving ports. Communication campaigns have been promoted in coastal localities to raise public awareness of IUU fishing prevention, he said. According to Doan Van Danh, Director of the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the observance of legal regulations by offshore fishing vessel owners has witnessed positive changes.

The dissemination of laws, especially the Law on Fisheries 2017 and related documents, have been implemented regularly, contributing to raising the awareness of fishing ships owners, he said."

### **Biodiversity protection: top priority in Dong Thap, Vietnam**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/biodiversity-protection-top-priority-in-dong-thap/203696.vnp>

"The Mekong Delta province of Dong Thap is taking measures to preserve bio-diversity in its wetlands, waterways, and dry land areas, as well as in agricultural production, in the 2021-25 period. Huynh Minh Tuan, deputy chairman of the province's Peoples Committee, said that fish

and other aquatic species, for example, were often released into the wild on public holidays. The province releases more than 2 million fish of various species into the wild each year. The province has surveyed eco-systems to identify the specific areas and species of plants and animals that should be preserved.

Typical plants like lotus, water lily, cajuput trees, bamboo, rice varieties and other indigenous plants will be preserved. Many plants, especially rice varieties and specialties fruits like Cat Chu mango, Cat Hoa Loc mango and pink mandarin, will be preserved as well. The province is also focusing on developing animal husbandry, aquaculture and plants in the Dong Thap Muoi (Plain of Reeds) area in the Tram Chim National Park, Go Thap Heritage Site, Xeo Quyt National Historic Site and Gao Giong cajuput forest area.

In the Gao Giong cajuput forest area in Cao Lanh district, 68 types of bamboo on a bamboo reservation area are under preservation. Huynh Thanh Hien, head of the Gao Giong cajuput forest areas Management Board, said the reservation is part of a preservation area attached to the Gao Giong ecotourism area. Many bird species are now coming and making nests in the bamboo area. The bamboo reservation is also a place for researchers and tourists to visit and study about bamboo species in Vietnam.

From 2021 to 2025, the province Peoples Committee said it would improve public awareness about bio-diversity preservation and environmental protection. Nature reserves, endangered animals and plants, and forest areas, especially special-use forests, will all be protected. Focus will also be on the reproduction of indigenous plants and animals that have high value and the use of advanced techniques in agricultural production to promote bio-diversity.

The province is calling for private investment in bio-diversity, forest and eco-tourism preservation and environmental protection projects.

### **Vietnams shrimp exports swell despite COVID-19**

<https://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0007509882>

"Despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, shrimp exports by provinces in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam have been strong this year thanks to efforts made by both authorities and businesses.

According to the Ca Mau Province Department of Industry and Trade, exports in the first five months are estimated at more than U.S.\$423 million, a year-on-year increase of 16%. Bac Lieu Provinces revenues were up 9% at \$280 million. Nguyen Minh Tuan of Minh Cuong Seafood Import-Export JSC, an old operator in the shrimp industry, said his companys shrimp exports grew sharply this year, and it was scrupulously implementing COVID prevention measures at its

factory. Many shrimp farmers in the delta continue to expand production since they earn good incomes.

Pham Van Quan of My Long Nam Commune in Tra Vinh Provinces Cau Ngang District, said: A few months ago, a kilogram of black tiger shrimp fetched VND200,000-220,000 (\$8.7-9.6), but now it has decreased to VND170,000 (\$7.4), and white-leg shrimp is priced at VND130,000 - 140,000 (\$5.7-6.1). But farmers still make a profit.

According to the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers, exports were worth \$ 3.27 billion in the first five months, up 14% year-on-year. Shrimp exports accounted for \$1.33 billion, an increase of 14%. The exports went to over 120 markets, with the United States, Japan, the EU, China, Korea, ASEAN and Australia being the largest markets, it said.

Demand for shrimp had increased significantly in many markets, while supply from India, Thailand and some other countries had fallen due to COVID-19, it said.

Taking advantage of this, Vietnamese companies had accelerated shrimp exports, it added.

According to seafood businesses, shrimp exports to the US will continue to boom this year, and they also expect to increase exports to the EU, mainly white-leg shrimps.

Seafood exports to the Republic of Korea have shown signs of recovery, and so shipments to the market would increase, they said, adding that exports to countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK, and Russia would continue to be good thanks to an increase in demand and lack of market barriers.

### **Green playlist: Films on fishing villages in Malaysia, Vietnam among Asian short films on protecting the environment**

<https://globalvoices.org/2021/06/16/green-playlist-asian-short-films-on-protecting-the-environment/>

In celebration of World Environment Day on June 5, EngageMedia curated a playlist of documentaries and short films on how communities across the Asia-Pacific are fighting to preserve and protect their lands against environmental degradation, industrialization, and climate change. These films on Cinemata, a mix of new uploads and works from the archives, take us from Nueva Vizcaya (“Dagami Daytoy”) in the Philippines and Nam Dinh province in Vietnam (“Another Exodus”), to Sawarak in Malaysia (“Melikin”) and Taunggyi in Myanmar (“Plastic Outlive Us”).

The playlist also includes award-winning films, among them “Dagami Daytoy” (winner of the 2020 Gawad Cultural Center of the Philippines Para sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video), “Anak

Pokok” (Films for the Forest, SXSW Community Screening), and “Kaise Jeebo Re!” (winner of the 1997 International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam).

#### Philippines: Dagami Daytoy (This is our Land)

In “This Is Our Land”, Filipino filmmaker Noni Abao chronicles how local indigenous communities in Nueva Vizcaya, northern Philippines, are fighting against years of environmental degradation by calling for the closure of OceanaGold, one of the largest producers of gold and copper in the world. This documentary won the grand prize in the 2020 Gawad Cultural Center of the Philippines Para sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video and was the second-place winner in the 2020 Yale Environment 360 Video Contest. Since Abao finished filming, dozens of the activists who organized the road blockade have been arrested following clashes with police and company representatives.

#### Malaysia: Doa Seorang Nelayan (A Fisherman's Prayers)

Zakaria Ismail believes it is his divine calling to defend fellow coastal fishermen from a land reclamation project in southern Penang that threatens to bury their fishing grounds under 4,500 acres of reclaimed land. He and other members of his village are labeled B40, referring to the bottom 40 percent of Malaysian households with monthly incomes of RM 3,900 (949 US dollars) and below. In this story about class struggle, tensions between modern and traditional values, and the Machiavellian interventions of political actors, Zakaria turns to his God for wisdom and courage to stand against one of the most ambitious projects being carried out in New Malaysia.

#### Indonesia: Mother Earth (Ibu Bumi)

Bagus, a 20-year-old farmer who lives in the fertile area of the Kendeng Mountains, Central Java, is anxious about the environmental damage that has occurred in his region. Together with his punk band Kendeng Squad, Bagus voices this anxiety. He made a video clip “Berani Bertani” to record the sounds of nature and the destruction that occurs. Bagus hopes the music can inspire the younger generation to keep protecting nature.

#### Vietnam: Another Exodus

A fishing village in Vietnam wakes up in the murmur of predawn prayers while the ebb and flow of waves hit the breakers. Fishermen from the older generation quietly recall the good old days, anxiously awaiting what’s coming up next. They know of the exodus every 50 or 60 years, where they’ll have to move away from the shorelines because of climate change. Once prosperous neighborhoods have become poor fishing villages, and fertile fields and fruitful orchards have been destroyed by the rising seawater. “Another Exodus” is a short documentary by Vietnamese filmmaker Le Nguyen.

#### Myanmar: Without

This advocacy film was used to lobby the Myanmar central government to increase the water supply in Myanmar regions affected by droughts. The film was produced in 2016 by participants in the Picture People workshop on visual storytelling for change held in Yangon, Myanmar

#### Indonesia: Dayak Facing the Giants

The continuing industrialization of Indonesia is endangering its indigenous people and causing massive environmental destruction and social conflict. This documentary follows the Dayak people of Kalimantan in their response to these threats, particularly the forest fires and toxic haze in the region.

#### Malaysia: Melikin

This is the story of Melikin. The story of many indigenous peoples in Sarawak who lost their native land to palm oil companies. With the help of corrupt politicians, almost 10,000 hectares of forest and agricultural lands were flattened and fences were erected, barring indigenous peoples from entering their own ancestral land.

#### Cambodia: Forest Conservation: A Message from Indigenous Women

“Climate Change is a reality. In order to mitigate its adverse impact, there no doubt that we need to conserve our forests. In this video meet the women and men of the Kouy indigenous peoples of Cambodia to discover more about what the forest means to them and how indigenous women have taken the lead to protect the forest.”

#### Myanmar: Plastic Outlive Us

The aim of this Public Service Announcement (PSA) is to influence Taunggyi's residents in Myanmar to change their practices around plastic recycling. This PSA was produced by the participants of Picture People's Visual Storytelling workshop for Social Change in Taunggyi, Myanmar in October 2019. Taunggyi is the capital and largest city of Shan State, Myanmar and is situated on the Thazi-Kyaingtong road at an elevation of 4,712 feet.

#### **Sea off Indonesias Natuna Islands being emptied of fish by large Vietnamese and Chinese ships**

<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2021/06/11/de-vissers-van-natuna-hebben-steeds-minder-beet-a4046946#/handelsblad/2021/06/16/#112>

"At night in the dark, the sea looks just like a city. That's how many lights can be seen, says Indonesian fisherman Muhammad Rapi. Most come from foreign ships at anchor, although they sometimes also fish at night. Then we have to pay attention, because they often sail with two ships and a dragnet in between. They can pull our boat with them in their nets.

Rapi moves as if he is one with his bright blue-painted fishing boat. With his feet he operates the steering wheel and the clutch of the engine, while at the same time he hangs with his upper body from the window with a fishing line that disappears into the depths. He immediately feels it when the strip of fish he had put on the hook as bait has disappeared.

Or, which happens less often, if he has a bite. For the fishermen of Indonesia's Natuna Islands, a small archipelago in the south of the South China Sea, competitors from Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan and China are our greatest fear, our number one fear, says Muhammad Rapi.

The foreign ships often sail into their Exclusive Economic Zone, where according to international sea treaties only Indonesia has the right to fish. "They drag their nets over the bottom and take all the fish away." The trawls destroy the coral, where the fish reproduce and get their food. In the South China Sea, the fishermen act as pawns in a field of mounting tensions. China's presence and assertiveness at sea has been increasing for years, to the chagrin of other countries in the region. And to their discomfort, because how do you counterbalance such a superpower? In March, Muhammad Rapi went out to sea with some of his mates for the last long time.

Usually they go for ten or twelve days, and then they sail all the way to the border of the Indonesian economic zone. This time they saw a naval ship number 171, they determined that it must be a Chinese ship. Rapi shows videos on his phone, there were also foreign fishing vessels. Reporting was only possible days later, because Rapi has no satellite connection on his boat. This kind of confrontation with, probably, the Chinese navy is the exception rather than the rule. More often the Indonesians come across Vietnamese ships. Logical, says researcher Collin Koh of the Institute for Defense and Strategic Studies in Singapore, because for years an unresolved conflict has been going on between Indonesia and Vietnam over the boundaries of their economic zones: Both countries believe that their fishermen have the right to fish there.

Yet China poses the greater risk, Koh says: China has been messing with Southeast Asian countries for years at sea. Economical interests China claims almost the entire South China Sea and says it has "historical rights" to about 90 percent of the waters. The nine dash line, a line of nine dashes on the map, indicates the so-called Chinese territory, which overlaps with waters belonging to the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei. An international court ruling from 2016 that that line has no legal value and that China can therefore not claim the areas, does not prevent Beijing from doing anything.

The nine lines also partly overlap with the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone near Natuna and that sometimes leads to tensions. At the end of 2019, there was a serious incident when Indonesia found a Chinese naval vessel with a group of Chinese fishing vessels in that zone. And in 2016, the Indonesian navy fired warning shots at a group of Chinese ships. However, Indonesia does not see itself as a party to the territorial conflict. China has never disclosed the exact coordinates of the area they claim. So, Indonesia argues, there can be no dispute either,

explains Collin Koh. This is useful geopolitically, he says, because the Indonesian government has major economic interests in a good relationship with China. The country invests billions in Indonesia every year and, conversely, China is one of the main importers of Indonesian palm oil, coal and rubber. Not to mention Chinese vaccine diplomacy “ Indonesia gets the bulk of its corona vaccines from China.

The Indonesian government has sent fishermen from the island of Java to Natuna for reinforcements. Only, meanwhile, the fishermen have a problem. In the small harbor of Natuna, residents arrive on their mopeds around seven in the morning, to be able to buy fish directly from ships that have just returned from the sea. Fish that's "only once died," they call it, instead of the multiple deaths that a frozen fish dies before it ends up on a plate somewhere far away. But the catch is disappointing today. After ten days at sea, skipper Wan Zakarti and his two crew members arrive.

On the deck are grubby T-shirts, they smoke cigarettes until their client comes by to inspect the catch. Their big coolers aren't nearly as full of red snappers as they'd like. The sea is empty. We caught something like 600 kilos in ten days. Two years ago we brought in 900 or sometimes 1,000 kilos. It is always careful for the foreign ships, says Zakarti. And although he often cannot see well under which flag they are flying, there are more than us.

Coastguard Despite the major economic interests, the Indonesian government is certainly not going to let it go. In 2017, President Joko Widodo declared the Indonesian economic zone the North Natuna Sea as a diplomatic signal to China. The Philippines has already done the same with their part of the sea, the West Philippine Sea. After the confrontation with China at the end of 2019, Jakarta took more concrete measures to boost its defence. Bakamla Coast Guard, officially not part of the fighting force, was given permission to arm its ships.

The navy announced that an important command post will be moved from the capital Jakarta to Natuna. And just last week, the Ministry of Defense announced that it will invest considerably more in new equipment in the coming years, among other things to be able to do more checks in the South China Sea. The Bakamla Coast Guard lookout on Natuna is located on a hill surrounded by palm trees. Their team here is modest: with a club of six, they keep watch. At sea, their patrol ships confiscate dozens of fishing boats every year, says officer Rachma.

The ships and their crews are handing them over to the Ministry of Fisheries for further investigation. Often the captain is sentenced and the crew is deported to the country of origin. "The cooperation with the fishermen is very important to us," says Rachma, "if they see suspicious ships, they can report them to us and we will investigate". Some other elements of the strategy to defend Indonesia's waters more vigorously are docked on the other side of the island. Rough men with bare torsos hammer noisily on an engine part. They rest for a week ashore before sailing for another three weeks.

Last year, the government sent dozens of fishing vessels here from Java to increase Indonesia's presence in Natuna waters. They tell the same story as the local fishermen: the foreign ships get in the way and disrupt their catch. Local fishermen such as Muhammad Rapi, in turn, are not so happy with this reinforcement from their own country. For them, this only means additional competition at sea. The Javanese fishermen also use larger equipment. We only fish with lines. We suddenly found ourselves in a bind between fishermen from home and abroad. The program was short-lived most Javanese fishermen have already left because their catches were disappointing.

Fortunately, relations between the local fishermen and coastguard Bakamla and the navy are good, Rapi says, and they are aware of their problems. When they return home, the fishermen can fill out an online form if they have seen suspicious activities at sea. Only then, of course, it is often too late. If you want to make fishermen a serious part of the defense strategy, then we need to get resources for telecommunications. Give us satellite phones so the Navy can come right away if we make a report."

"Corruption Problems It is true, says analyst Collin Koh, that fishermen from Vietnam and China are often better equipped than the Indonesians. Their ships are larger and they receive subsidies for, for example, fuel or their engines. This creates an unfair battle: It is also a matter of priorities and budget. The Indonesian Ministry of Fisheries is not functioning very well. It suffers from corruption problems.

Last November, the minister and a group of senior officials were arrested on suspicion of fraud involving export licenses for baby lobsters. Indonesia is very aware of its geographically crucial position in the region and therefore wants to "maintain as much strategic autonomy as possible," says Koh. That means: avoiding quarrels with superpowers, but certainly not making too close connections. That's why President Joko Widodo will probably never join The Quad, the new alliance of the United States, India, Australia and Japan. Koh: "That initiative will be so clearly set up as a front against China "Indonesia will not want to get burned.

International Sea Rules International sea rules are laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Both China and the other countries around the South China Sea have signed this treaty. The treaty was created to end international conflicts over fishing rights and oil extraction and stipulates that the boundary for territorial waters is 12 nautical miles (about 22.2 kilometers) offshore. Until then, the laws of the country in question apply. This is followed by a Connecting Zone and the Exclusive Economic Zone.

The latter zone applies up to 200 nautical miles from the coast, in which countries have the right to exploit all natural resources, such as oil, gas and fish. Ships from other countries only have the right of passage in that zone. After the 200 miles, the international waters begin, waters that are freely accessible to all states, but do not belong to any state."

## **Tra fish exports from Vietnam expected to continue recovering**

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/tra-fish-exports-expected-to-continue-recovering/202980.vnp>

"The Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) forecasts that Vietnam's tra fish (pangasius) exports will continue to grow in the coming months thanks to the control of the COVID-19 pandemic in importing countries, said VASEP Secretary Truong Dinh Hoe. According to VASEP, after having COVID-19 vaccines, the economic and trade activities of many countries have started to recover, so the countries have also increased imports of seafood from Vietnam, especially tra fish products.

Viet Nams total export value of pangasius in the first five months of 2021 reached 600 million USD, an increase of 10 percent compared to the same period in 2020. The large export markets of Vietnamese pangasius in this period were China, US, Brazil and Thailand. Of which, the tra fish export value reached about 27 million USD to Brazil and 26 million USD to Thailand, a year-on-year increase of 38.7 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively."

"The export growth to Thailand, the largest pangasius importer in ASEAN, is a good signal to increase the pangasius export value to this region in the next quarter," said Hoe. In addition, the US market also increased imports of Vietnamese pangasius from the beginning of 2021, according to the association.

In May, Vietnams tra fish export value to the US increased by 120 percent over the same period last year, reaching more than 35 million USD. Since the end of 2020, the inventory of pangasius in the US has been limited. Meanwhile, the domestic catfish production has also declined. Therefore, the US has increased imports of frozen tra fish products from the beginning of this year.

The total value of pangasius exports to Hong Kong in the first five months reached 146 million USD, accounting for nearly 24 percent of Vietnam's total pangasius export value. This market returned to the list of largest pangasius export markets for Vietnamese tra fish products, VASEP reported.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the sales strategy of Vietnamese seafood enterprises. Besides reducing trade activities due to the social distancing policy in many countries, high transportation costs and the shortage of containers have also had great impacts on Vietnams seafood exports, it said.

This forces the local seafood processing and exporting enterprises to change their sales strategies to keep customers and overcome difficulties during this period, according to VASEP. Truong Tien Dung, general director of the Saigon Seafood Trading Joint Stock Company (APT), said the companys exports of pangasius and catfish products in the first five months of this year increased by 10 percent over the same period in 2020. To achieve this result, APT must actively discuss

with customers to produce products according to demands of the export market, instead of offering products that the company produces. Therefore, it has enhanced production of new processed products from pangasius and catfish.

According to Ong Hang Van, Deputy General Director of the Truong Giang Seafood Joint Stock Company in Dong Thap province, in the context of COVID-19, many seafood businesses have also changed their trading methods with partners. Instead of signing CIF contracts that the local enterprises have delivered goods at the port in importing countries, the enterprises have signed FOB contracts, in which the enterprises deliver goods at ports in Vietnam. With this method, the importers must take care of transporting the country's export goods to the importing countries. The Ministry of Industry and Trades Import-Export Department also forecasts that Vietnam's seafood exports by year end will continue growing due to increasing demand in the US and EU markets.

After increasing 22 percent to 749 million USD in April 2021, Vietnam's seafood export continued to surge by 24 percent in May to 790 million USD. This export value in the first five months of this year rose by 14 percent to reach 3.27 billion USD. Although the economic recovery in the EU market is slower than that of the US, consumption demand is recovering because the pandemic is being controlled gradually. European importers tend to be more interested in Vietnamese seafood suppliers due to tariff advantages from the EVFTA and stable raw materials, according to VASEP. Vietnam's seafood export value to the EU in May increased by 30 percent to 95 million USD.

The export value in the first five months reached 380 million USD, up 15 percent over the same period last year. For the US market, the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign along with economic stimulus package of the US Government have encouraged quick recovery of seafood consumption demand in this market.

The higher seafood demand is not only in retail but also services, restaurants, hotels and entertainment after a period of social distancing due to the pandemic. The market has higher demand for shrimp, tuna, salmon, pangasius, squid, octopus, crabs and molluscs such as clams and mussels.

In addition, Vietnam's seafood exports to countries with free trade agreements also increased sharply in the first five months, including to Australia (65 percent), Canada (12 percent), and to the UK (17 percent). These markets are expected to play a significant role in promoting Vietnam's seafood export growth in 2021 and beyond.

### **Indonesia: Vietnam has not repatriated 500 fishermen**

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/requests-05242021184901.html>

"More than 500 Vietnamese fishermen are stranded in Indonesia as Vietnam has not repatriated any since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesian officials and the detained fishermen told BenarNews and sister entity Radio Free Asia. The detainees are scattered in detention centers near ports across the country, said Pung Nugroho Saksono, an official at Indonesias Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. The number has reached more than 500 people, because it has been almost a year since they have not been sent home,he said, adding that only ship captains are charged. So far, our effort has been to inform the Vietnamese by sending a note complete with a list of fishermen who have not been subject to legal proceedings. However, there has been no response at all from the Vietnamese side.

Before the pandemic, Hanoi repatriated fishermen arrested for trespassing in Indonesian waters within two months, said Ahmad Nursaleh, spokesman for Indonesias Directorate General of Immigration. The Director General of Immigration has communicated with the Vietnamese side every time there are additional Vietnamese detained, Ahmad told BenarNews, an RFA-affiliated online news service. Their number keeps increasing and there is no clarity about their return.

Vietnam, the flag country of the seized boats, is responsible for repatriation, he said. We also cant enforce their countrys policies. The important thing is we make an effort to coordinate with all related parties, Ahmad said. When asked if President Joko Jokowi Widodos and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh had discussed the fishermen during their meeting last month at the Bogor Presidential Palace in West Java, Indonesian officials said they did not know.

Ahmed said that Indonesia would prefer if the Vietnamese fishermen went back. Basically, we want them to return home immediately, but the current situation, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, does not allow them to return to Vietnam because Vietnam itself is still on lockdown. There havent been any flights there yet, Ahmad said. In mid-December 2020, Indonesian authorities said 225 fishermen had been detained that year “ but 199 of them were cleared to return to Vietnam at any time. The Vietnamese Embassy in Jakarta did not respond to at least three BenarNews requests for comment.

Meanwhile, some of the fishermen said that, because they have been housed in detention centers in Indonesia, they have not been able to support their families back home in Vietnam. One Vietnamese fisherman who has been held at Tanjung Pinang detention center in the capital of Indonesias Riau Islands province since March 2020 told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that he had not been able to provide for his young children and his parents who are in their 70s. His parents continue to work so they can send him about U.S. \$45 a month so he can buy food, he said. All of us at the detention center are having a hard life. Many are often hungry as we are provided with only a half bowl of rice each meal. We all want to return to Vietnam to live and earn money to support our families. Its miserable here, said the fisherman, who asked that his name not be used because of security concerns. Nugroho Saksono, the Indonesian Fisheries and Marine Resources Ministry official, said the fishermen had enough to eat.

We feed them and there are quite a lot of them. Nobody is hungry, they can eat between three and four times a day, he told BenarNews. In Vietnam, a woman who asked to be identified as Ms. Vy, and whose younger brother has been detained in Tanjung Pinang, said that her family had contacted her local Department of Foreign Affairs office many times. The Department of Foreign Affairs here said that they had sent all [the related documents] to the embassy [in Jakarta], Ms. Vy told RFAs Vietnamese Service. When I contacted the embassy, they said that we should wait. Weve been waiting for over a year but havent heard back from them.

She said many families have reached out to an unscrupulous broker to assist in efforts to free their kin. I heard that around 100 families of the detainees had to borrow money, some even had borrowed money from evil gangs or banks to pay the broker, she said. Many are now worried that the broker has been cheating them.

In December 2020, detainees at Tanjung Pinang sent videos of themselves to RFA to highlight their poor living conditions. An inmate, who asked to be identified as Mr. Bien, said the Vietnamese officials had visited the detention center before the lunar New Year in early February 2021, to collect information after the videos had been published.

Before Tet, the Vietnamese Embassys staff came to interview us in person. I did ask them to help all of us to return and reunite with our families soon,he told RFA. The Embassy staff said they would try their best to facilitate it at the earliest possible, but so far, we havent seen any progress.

In addition to Tanjung Pinang, Vietnamese fishermen were also being held at facilities in Pangkal Pinang, off the east coast of Sumatra; in Pontianak, West Kalimantan; and in the Natuna islands, according to Nugroho Aji, director of enforcement at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries."

### **Climate change pushes Vietnams rice growers to farm shrimp**

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/climate-change-pushes-vietnam-s-rice-growers-to-farm-shrimp/5881038.html>

"Farmer Ta Thi Thanh Thuy worked hard for years to grow rice on her small piece of land near the mouth of the Mekong River in Vietnam. But now Thuy has started farming shrimp. Many of her neighbors over the last 10 years have done the same. In the past, such a change was unlikely. However, the effects of climate change are making rice-growing in her area more difficult. Seawater has brought higher salt levels to the Mekong River Delta area. Officials hope the move toward shrimp farming will improve the countrys seafood industry. The government has set the high goal of increasing shrimp exports by more than 100 percent to \$10 billion by 2025. Local governments are giving farmers training and some assistance, including loans with good terms. ""Life was very hard for us until we began to farm shrimp,"" Thuy told Reuters news agency.

The 52-year-old farmer also said, "Many shrimp farmers around here have been able to build nice houses and open saving accounts at banks."

"We planted rice but we harvested no rice," said Ta Thanh Long, another shrimp farmer. "There was a time the rice could still grow when the water was still fresh. But then the water became more and more salty each year." At least one-third of the rice farming area along the 72-kilometer coastline of Soc Trang Province has been affected by seawater in recent years. That information comes from Duong Minh Hoang. He is the former director of the province's Agriculture Promotion Center. Hoang said the center has urged people to farm things that will grow in salty water. He said climate change is affecting everyone, so they have to try new things to survive.

Vietnam is the world's third largest exporter of rice. But earnings from shrimp exports have risen above those from rice since 2013. And they continue to grow. Seafood processors around here come to buy up all the shrimp we farm," said Ta Thanh Tung, who is 44 years old. He is one of Thuy's five siblings who have all moved from rice to shrimp farming. "We heard they're exporting the shrimp to Europe, China and the United States, he said.

Industry experts say exports will rise by five to 10 percent yearly over the next 10 years. Land used for shrimp farming is increasing by three to five percent a year. Vietnam's largest seafood exporter is Minh Phu Seafood Corporation. It has the goal of turning the country into the world's largest shrimp exporter. The company expects trade agreements between Vietnam and other countries to help raise the countrys exports to one quarter of the worlds total by 2045. That could help ease economic pressure that the Southeast Asian country will face in the years ahead. The World Bank estimates that climate change may lower Vietnam's national income by as much as 3.5 percent by 2050.

The change to shrimp from rice comes with its own set of environmental problems. The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates more than half of Vietnams mangrove tree forests have been cleared to make space for shrimp farming. Mangroves protect coastal areas from soil loss and the effects of powerful storms. And experts criticize the lack of government oversight of the new small shrimp farms. They have many questions including what the shrimp eat and what happens to the shrimp waste.

There are also concerns about the use of antibiotics to treat disease in farmed shrimp. Antibiotics can be found in shrimp waste. Waste is usually thrown back into surrounding waterways. This raises the risk of chemical pollution in nearby areas and harm to the food chain. Matt Landos said these kinds of unseen pollutants are not discussed enough. He is an Australia-based animal medicine scientist. He told Reuters that pollutants are present at harmful levels in the area.

The increasing salt levels that led to shrimp farming could harm the mouth of the Mekong area in the long term. A rise of 0.7 to one meter would put about 40 percent of the area underwater, said Le Anh Tuan. He teaches at the College of Environment and Natural Resources at Can Tho

University. The problem will continue and parts of the rice fields will have to become seafood farms, or grow fruit or other crops, Tuan added. Shrimp farmers say they are already dealing with worrying signs that the water is getting saltier faster. Thuy said it was harder to find fresh water now. ""We are very concerned that because of rising seawater levels our farms will one day be under water, Thuy added."

### **Vietnam calls on Malaysia, Philippines to treat detained fishermen humanely**

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-calls-on-malaysia-philippines-to-treat-detained-fishermen-humanely-4263382.html>

"Newly-elected Minister of Foreign Affairs Bui Thanh Son requested Malaysia and the Philippines to continue treating detained Vietnamese fishermen in a humane way. During his phone call with Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and Filipino counterpart Teodoro Locsin on Wednesday, Son suggested the two countries handle these cases ""in a cooperative and friendly way,"" as reported by the government portal.

In recent years, a number of Vietnamese fishing vessels have been caught trespassing in neighboring waters, with hundreds of fishermen arrested for illegal fishing in neighboring countries, including Malaysia and the Philippines.

Despite its 3,260 kilometer (2,025 miles) coastline, Vietnam is running out of near-shore seafood resources, forcing fishermen to encroach on foreign waters. Son thanked the governments of both countries for facilitating repatriation flights for Vietnamese citizens amid the complicated developments of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as cooperation in accessing safe Covid-19 vaccines. Last year, 75,000 Vietnamese stuck abroad were brought home on repatriation flights operated by domestic carriers.

### **Shrimp Insights: India, Indonesia, and Vietnam all poised for continued growth**

<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/shrimp-insights-india-indonesia-and-vietnam-all-poised-for-continued-growth>

"Despite setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing competition from Ecuador, Asia's top shrimp exporting nations should expect continued growth, according to a top shrimp market analyst. Willem van der Pijl, who founded the Seafood Trade Intelligence Portal (STIP) in 2013, formed Shrimp Insights, a consultancy aimed at the shrimp sector, in June 2020. He recently published a series of blogs on his site looking deeper into the shrimp industry in India, Indonesia, and Vietnam. India, the world's top shrimp exporter, had a difficult year in 2020, with production and export performance severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The South Asia nation is estimated to have produced between 650,000 and 700,000 metric tons (MT) of shrimp

last year, down from 780,000 to 800,000 MT in 2019. According to data from the Society of Aquaculture Professionals (SAP), production in Indias shrimp-farming states of Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat, all fell in 2020.

And Indias shrimp exports dropped 14 percent year-on-year to 575,000 MT in 2020, with the U.S., China, and the E.U. remaining the countrys primary markets. Its sales of raw peeled products dropped 12 percent to 21,200 MT, though its overall exports of cooked and other value-added products to the U.S. increased last year. Its drop in production was replaced in the global marketplace by Ecuador, which boosted sales of raw peeled products by 15,000 MT. Ecuador sharply increased its shipments of mid-sized shrimp to the U.S. last year, while India dropped 14 percent of its U.S. market share. India also lost a portion of the shell-on market in the U.S. to Ecuador and Indonesia. Indias exports to China performed even worse, falling 35 percent, or more than 100,000 MT in 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19 and trading uncertainties caused by a border dispute.

With China being Indias most important market for smaller-sized shrimp, Chinas recovery will be crucial for Indias 2021 outlook, van der Pijl said. India will struggle to improve production in the first half of 2021 due well-stocked inventories in the U.S. and Chinas heightened food security checks, van der Pijl said. Nonetheless, Indias outlook is bright, given its potential to expand its capacity and its low production costs. I am sure that, in the long run, India will be a major contributor to the expected surge of global farmed shrimp production, he said. I even believe that under the right conditions, Indias own surge in production might come sooner than we expect.

Elsewhere in Asia, van der Pijl projected Indonesia, which increased its vannamei exports by 24 percent last year to 209,000 MT, will continue its significant shrimp-sector growth. Indonesias overall shrimp exports totaled 239,000 MT in 2020, 15 percent higher than 2019, with vannamei accounting for 75 percent of the total, black tiger shrimp 16 percent, and wild-caught shrimp 9 percent, according to data from Indonesias Department for Competitiveness of Marine and Fisheries Production.

Discrepancies between the two data-sets could be due to the fact that Indonesian exporters were forced to stockpile some product as a result of a shipping container shortage that grew more acute at the end of 2020. Additionally, Indonesias improved 2020 figures could possibly be the result of lower domestic consumption, van der Pijl surmised, pointing to the fact that shrimp feed sales dropped by 12 percent to 309,000 MT last year “ a figure that suggests the countrys 2021 shrimp production might decline, he said.

The U.S. was Indonesias top export market for shrimp, followed by Japan. Higher demand from the retail sector in the U.S. was the main contributor to the growth of the Indonesias exports last year. However, many U.S. buyers have shifted over to purchasing smaller sizes from other suppliers, such as Ecuador, as Indonesia processors sold larger sizes, according to van der Pijl.

Indonesia has set an ambitious goal of growing its shrimp industry by 250 percent by 2024. Van der Pijl said he skeptical of Indonesias ability to reach that target, but said the country does have potential to increase its production significantly. I expect that improved availability of consistently high-quality post-larvae, combined with more biosecure farms and sustainable production practices, will result in an increase in Indonesian vannamei production in 2021 and beyond, he said.

Another Southeast Asian nation making moves in the shrimp segment is Vietnam, which grew its farmed shrimp exports by 8 percent in 2020 to USD 3.3 billion (EUR 2.8 billion), supported by the growth of vannamei sales due to higher demand from the retail sector during the pandemic. Van der Pijl said Vietnam has an advantage in its Best Aquaculture Practices- and Aquaculture Stewardship Council-certified farms producing vannamei shrimp, which will help meet rising global demand for ecolabel-certified raw peeled and cooked peeled products. I think in terms of demand the situation might be quite good for Vietnam due to continued retail consumption during the first and probably also second quarter of the year at the cost of foodservice, van der Pijl said.

According to van der Pijl, Ecuador remains the biggest threat to Asias shrimp export trade, and evidence of that can be seen in the fact that it increased its share of the U.S. and European markets as compared to its total exports last year, especially challenging Asian competitors in the retail sector. In the U.S. market, Vietnam had an advantage in cooked shrimp but trailed Indonesia and Ecuador in exports of raw peeled and headless shell-on (HLSO) shrimp, according to the Vietnam-focused Shrimp Insights report. And prompted by the loss of the Chinese market and encouraged by a free trade agreement with the E.U., Ecuador has increasingly targeted Europe to drive up sales. In doing so, Ecuador may have taken some raw peeled retail business away from Vietnam, which used to be northwestern Europes favorite supplier, van der Pijl said.

Lower demand due to the pandemic and possible more competition from Ecuador have together contributed to the moderate growth in Vietnams shrimp exports to Europe last year, despite the support from its new free trade agreements with the European Union and the United Kingdom. But van der Pijl said he believed Ecuadors aggressive moves into the U.S. and E.U. markets are just a temporary tactic and that Ecuadorian shrimp exporters will return their focus to Asia “ and specifically China “ once the COVID-19 pandemic comes under full control.

### **Feed prices for pangasius, shrimp on the rise in Vietnam**

<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/feed-prices-for-pangasius-shrimp-on-the-rise-in-vietnam>

"Pangasius and shrimp farmers in Vietnam are facing higher prices for their feed, with suppliers citing higher costs for imported raw material. Pangasius feed prices in the Mekong Delta are expected to hit their fifth increase in early April, a source from a leading feed producer told

SeafoodSource on 24 March. The cumulative effect of the previous four hikes brought the price up between VND 1,050 and VND 1,300 (USD 0.045 and USD 0.056, EUR 0.038 and EUR 0.047) per kilogram, the source said.

Other announcements from various feed producers in March, seen by SeafoodSource, have further revealed the trend of higher prices. For example, Tainan, Taiwan based Uni-President on 15 March announced to its agents an additional VND 500 (USD 0.022, EUR 0.018) price hike per kilogram of pangasius feed, effective 16 March. Another feed producer, Vietnam-based Proconco Can Tho, had tried to keep the prices of its feed products unchanged until the end of March. But an increase of VND 250 (USD 0.01, EUR 0.009) per kilogram will be applied from 1 April. And Ede, The Netherlands-based De Heus has also announced a hike of VND 250 (USD 0.01, EUR 0.009) per kilogram for its pangasius feeds, starting 1 April.

Most of the producers said the increase was unavoidable due to escalating prices of imported material for feed production, claiming supply chains for the material have been disrupted due to augmented control measures imposed to protect against spread of COVID-19. While the more expensive feed has put pressure on local farmers, they have been able to offset the higher cost of feed with their own price increases. Data from Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) showed that pangasius was sold at between VND 21,000 and VND 21,500 (USD 0.91 to USD 0.93, EUR 0.77 and EUR 0.78) per kilogram for fish between 0.7 kilograms and 0.8 kilograms between 12 and 18 March. That was up from between VND 19,500 and VND 20,000 (USD 0.84 to USD 0.86, EUR 0.71 and EUR 0.73) per kilogram of the same size they received in the first three weeks of February.

Vinh Hoan just paid VND 21,500 [USD 0.93, EUR 0.78] per kilogram to buy more than 300 metric tons (MT) from farmers we have business with, the source said on 24 March, adding that the production cost now is in the range of between VND 20,500 and VND 21,500 (USD 0.88 and USD 0.93, EUR 0.75 and EUR 0.78) per kilogram.

According to price updates from local fisheries platform Tep Bac, the average farm-gate price on 25 March rose even higher, to VND 22,000 (USD 0.95, EUR 0.80) per kilogram for an average size of 0.82 kilogram per fish, up from VND 20,000 (USD 0.86, EUR 0.73) two months ago. Prices are rising as processors are encountering growing global demand for their products. Pangasius exports to many of Vietnams biggest markets, especially China and the United States, surged in the first half of March, data seen by SeafoodSource revealed. For Vietnams shrimp farmers, the situation is very similar.

Feed prices for shrimp have gone up by between VND 1,200 and VND 1,900 (USD 0.052 and USD 0.082, EUR 0.044 and EUR 0.069) per kilogram, up by between 1.69 percent and 5.03 percent over last year, the Ca Mau newspaper reported on 23 March. Ca Mau is a major seafood producing province in the Mekong Delta. At the beginning of February, Tongwei Vietnam increased the prices of its vannamei feed product by VND 1,200 (USD 0.052, EUR 0.044) per

kilogram and its black tiger shrimp product by VND 1,400 (USD 0.06, EUR 0.05) per kilogram. And at the start of this month, the cost of C.P. Vietnams shrimp feed product was up by VND 1,500 (USD 0.065, EUR 0.055) per kilogram.

Beginning 1 April, Grobest Industrial (Vietnam) will follow suit and raise its shrimp feed prices (excluding Gold Shield product) by VND 1,200 (USD 0.052, EUR 0.044) per kilogram. Similar to Vietnams pangasius feed suppliers, Vietnams shrimp feed producers have been forced to compensate for the higher costs of imported production materials caused by disrupted global supply chains.

Rising shipping rates caused by a worldwide shortage of shipping containers and vessels also worsened the situation, the Ca Mau newspaper reported. But unlike the pangasius market, shrimp prices were volatile in March, depending on sizes. For example, the average price for black tiger shrimp on 25 March VND 190,000 (USD 8.20, EUR 6.90) per kilogram for 40-count shrimp, down from the VND 200,000 (USD 8.60, EUR 7.30) per kilogram price recorded on 19 March but higher than the VND 170,000 (USD 7.30, EUR 6.20) per kilogram price on 11 March, data from Tep Bac showed.

The average rate for whiteleg shrimp on 25 March fell to VND 134,000 (USD 5.80, EUR 4.90) per kilogram for 50-count shrimp, down from VND 150,000 (USD 6.50, EUR 5.50) per kilogram on 19 March and VND 139,000 (USD 6.0, EUR 5.0) per kilogram on 11 March. Vietnam saw its pangasius export value grow by 21.7 percent from a year earlier to USD 123.5 million (EUR 104.4 million) in January but drop 17 percent year-on-year to USD 90 million (EUR 76.1 million) in February. Similarly, its shrimp export value declined 18 percent year-on-year to nearly USD 218.8 million (EUR 184.9 million) in February, following the year-on-year increase of 15.8 percent to USD 128.8 million (EUR 108.9 million) in January.

### **Vietnam needs to make its fishing practices more sustainable**

<https://www.sustainability-times.com/expert/vietnam-needs-to-make-its-fishing-practices-more-sustainable/>

"Vietnam was issued a yellow card in October 2017 by the European Commission (EC) because of rampant illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities by Vietnamese fishermen and fishing vessels. Since then, following its carding system, the EC have conducted several reviews of Vietnams fisheries and seafood-related policies and efforts to determine whether the yellow card would be maintained or rescinded. However, all results disappointed both sides. The failure of Vietnams efforts in removing the yellow card should be ascribed to Vietnams limited progress in improving fisheries governance and curbing IUU fishing.

In other words, Vietnam has not effectively enacted all recommendations raised by EC, including: (1) Revising the legal framework to ensure compliance with international and regional rules applicable to the conservation and management of fisheries resources; (2) Ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of countrys revised laws; (3) Strengthening the effective implementation of international rules and management measures; (4) Increasing the traceability of its seafood products; (5) Preventing sales of IUU products. However, the Vietnamese government thought it was wronged.

As Vietnamese officials have repeatedly stated, the Vietnamese government has taken strict measures and made significant progress in recent years to fulfil ECs requirements, such as (1) Amending the fisheries law and strengthening the legislation; (2) Creating a legal framework for a gradual transition to commercial, responsible and sustainable fisheries; (3) Reducing the number of Vietnamese fishing boats operating illegally in other countries; (4) Downsizing the fishing fleet; (5) Strengthening education and information so as to raise awareness of our fishermen not to violate other countries waters. But why is there such a difference between Vietnams intention and reality? A direct answer is that the effectiveness of Vietnams implementation of the relevant policies to curb IUU fishing is far from expected.

From an economic perspective, Vietnam has suffered vast losses because of the yellow card status and thus has a strong need to remove the yellow card. Recent statistics show that Vietnams export of fishery products relied considerably on European (EU) market, which is one of the biggest export markets of Vietnams fishery products with a value of \$1.3 billion in 2019, accounting for 15.1 per cent of the total seafood export value of Vietnam. However, the EU has many strict technical regulations on food safety, environment and sustainable development. Vietnamese businesses should meet the requirements of food safety and hygiene to access the market and quality is paramount and key to Vietnams development strategy for seafood exports. Due to the yellow card for Vietnams seafood products, Vietnams exports to the EU fell by 6.5 per cent to US\$390 million in 2018 and by 11.5 per cent to \$345.2 million in 2019 according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Vietnam.

Nevertheless, economic concerns have not given a strong impetus to Vietnams full commitment to curbing IUU fishing. The reasons are multifold. First, fishing operations by Vietnamese fishermen and fishing boats, either legal or illegal have been acquiesced as a necessary mean by the government to safeguard its maritime rights. The Vietnamese government hence hesitates to exert all efforts to regulate fishing activities, despite evoked strong protests from neighboring countries. Second, exhausting fishery resources and unsuccessful fishery industrial transition and upgrade failed creating new employment opportunities for local fishermen, who are forced to take the risk of conducting illegal fishing activities as a matter of survival.

Third, the regulatory authorities sometimes lack the ability in monitoring IUU fishing attributed to both financial and technological factors. In short, the Vietnams combat with IUU fishing lacks motivation, either politically or socio-economically. Facing past unsuccessful experiences

and current pressure, Vietnam needs to have new thinking. First, divert the orientation of policies from unilateral activities to multi- and bilateral cooperation. IUU fishing has long been a source of contention in regional disputes and flare-ups between regional states. Curbing IUU fishing hence cannot be conducted unilaterally.

One precondition for effective cooperation is the consensus of maintaining the stability at sea. It is thus important for Vietnam to abandon the idea that encroaching into disputed waters by Vietnamese fishermen is a mean of safeguarding maritime sovereignty. Maritime disputes can only be solved through negotiation under international laws. Based on this, there is possibility to jointly establish an IUU fishing combat network in the interest of regional states around the South China Sea. Second, pursue innovative approaches in improving the living standard of fishermen to reduce their dependence on illegal IUU. More than half of Southeast Asia's inhabitants (including the Vietnamese) rely on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods. Due to constantly exhausted fishery resources, it is rather understandable that local fishermen will continue using illegal methods to increase their catch.

The policy-makers have to consider how to diversify their income sources. Deep-sea farming and aquaculture industry shall be encouraged. Based on this, advanced processing industries can be established to upgrade the export structure with value-added fishery and seafood products aiming for EU market. Third, introduce high technology to optimize existing monitoring system. Although Vietnam has made great efforts in installing fishing vessel monitoring systems based on the EC's recommendations, only about thirty percent of the Vietnamese fishing boats have been equipped with such facilities. Moreover, future IUU fishing trace and suppression need the Vietnamese government to apply high-tech facilities and infrastructure, such as IT-driven risk management system, big-data analysis, wireless sensor networks, etc. This requires the Vietnamese government to allocate more funds and resources for research and development.

Of course, all parties shall bear in mind that curbing IUU fishing is a time- and resource-consuming process. Some scholars have argued that regional states' efforts to combat IUU fishing are seldom fully evaluated. Some research institutions also emphasize too much on the status quo, reducing the interest of the EC and other countries in making positive progress in practice. Nevertheless, to remove the yellow card, Vietnam has to insist on co-operation, transparency and honesty in providing and exchanging information regarding curbing IUU fishing. Only by this can Vietnam harvest extensive environmental, economic and diplomatic benefits.

### **Illegal fishermen volley between Cambodia and Vietnam**

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50809922/illegal-fishermen-volley-between-cambodia-and-vietnam/>

"Vietnamese and Cambodian fishermen are still illegally fishing in each others territorial waters in Kep province, even though authorities have attempted to crack down on it, an official said yesterday. Theng Borin, director of the provincial Department of Agriculture said at a press conference that recently, local authorities observed there is still illegal fishing in Kep province which is destroying natural resources such as coral reefs and clam habitats.

In the past, Vietnamese fishermen came for subsistence fishing not using large-scale commercial boats with electric equipment, because the water in the border area is just two to four metres deep. It is not possible for a boat larger than twelve metres, he said.

Borin said the provincial authorities cooperate with Marine Conservation Cambodia and the border police to prevent illegal fishing. He said that in 2020, Vietnamese authorities arrested 25 Cambodian fishermen caught fishing illegally in the border area.

Cambodian officials requested their release and the governor of Kep province went to repatriate them. He educated them not to continue illegal fishing before sending them home, Borin said. He said that when there is illegal fishing in Cambodia, authorities detain the Vietnamese fishermen. At the request of the Vietnamese authorities, we release them and send them back to Vietnam, Borin said.

### **Panel urges protection of Mekong fish stocks**

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/panel-urges-protection-of-mekong-fish-stocks/94612#>

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) today released two reports recommending the protection of fish stocks to ensure food supplies for millions of people in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

Around 65 million people rely on the Mekong for their chief source of protein and live hand to mouth, but climate change, drought, dam construction in Laos and China and illegal fishing have resulted in sharply lower fish catches.

The reports — Status and Trends of Fish Abundance and Diversity in the Lower Mekong Basin during 2007–2018 (FADM) and Social Impact Monitoring and Vulnerability Assessment 2018 (SIMVA 2018) — found people continue to rely on water resources that are increasingly under pressure.

“These studies further highlight the importance of responsible development, balanced regional and national interest, and stronger regional cooperation in order to safeguard the Mekong River water and related resources,” said MRC secretariat chief executive An Pich Hatda.

Adverse changes in water resources, which include agriculture, aquaculture, fish, other aquatic animals and plants, are affecting incomes, with around 22 percent of households indicating they had been impacted by these issues.

According to the SIMVA 2018, 35 percent of 2,800 surveyed households said their income was lower, 32 percent said it was the same and only 26 percent said that their income increased slightly, while 6 percent indicated that their income increased significantly compared to 2013.

The 138-page long FADM is the first ever large-scale study to consider both spatial and temporal variations of fish abundance and diversity in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) using the MRC's long-term fisheries monitoring data.

The MRC said the study established that fishing communities in almost all zones of the LMB were disturbed. In Laos and Vietnam, catch rates declined at two of four and three of five stations surveyed respectively.

Among its other findings, the SIMVA 2018 survey revealed that the percentage of households engaging in fishing fell across the region from 50 percent in 2014 to about 37 percent in 2018.

It said this was due in part to reduction in fish catches and partly to growth in other economic opportunities and livelihoods diversification.

The reports also found that gender inequality was also an important factor stoking societal vulnerabilities. Traditional gender roles were prevalent in "many areas of the LMB corridor" with major disparities in employment and pay between women and men.

It said female-headed households were particularly exposed as they were also single-parent households. The survey found 19 percent of households were headed by females and 81 percent by males.

As part of broader recommendations, the study urged governments to enforce fisheries laws and jointly implement the approved Mekong Basin-wide Fisheries Management and Development Strategy to restore distressed fishing communities.

It also further proposes integrating river management plans to address risks from increasing hydropower development.

### **Sewage from anchored ships laying waste to coral reefs in Spratly Islands in the South China Sea report**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/07/12/2111973/sewage-anchored-ships-laying-waste-coral-reefs-spratlys-report>

"Raw sewage from hundreds of anchored ships in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, including West Philippine Sea, have damaged coral reefs in the area, according to a report from a US-based geospatial imagery and data analysis company. Liz Derr, co-founder and CEO at Similarity, presented the Spratlys water quality report in an online forum organized by the Stratbase ADR Institute on the fifth anniversary of the South China Sea arbitral ruling. Similarity released satellite images showing how anchored ships created chlorophyll-a blooms in Union Banks, located entirely within the country's exclusive economic zone in the West Philippine Sea. According to the report, chlorophyll-a concentration in water is a measure of phytoplankton."

"Excess phytoplankton that cannot be consumed by the reef inhabitants dies off and sinks to the sea floor, where it is consumed by bacteria," the report read. "These bacteria consume oxygen that would normally be available to the fish, creating a 'dead zone,'" it added.

The report showed chlorophyll-a concentration on Mabini (Johnson South), McKennan (Hughes), Pagkakaisa (Lansdowne), Ross and Roxas (Collins) Reefs. Mabini and McKennan Reefs are occupied by China while Pagkakaisa and Roxas Reefs are occupied by Vietnam. Satellite images showed that there had been increased chlorophyll-a concentration on these features in the past five years, indicating overgrowth of algae. "

"Fleshy algae on reefs increase copious amounts of nutrients, which microbes eat. These microbes then endanger corals by depleting oxygen from the environment or by introducing diseases," Similarity reported. What is worse is that overfishing in the waters near coral reefs have removed the primary-algae eaters, increasing the population of fleshy algae."

"Tipping the balance towards algae results in increased acidification of the water, increasing coral erosion," the report read, adding that this is in addition to increased ocean acidification from climate change. Coral reefs in the Spratlys matter as fishes from the area supply 85% of coastal inhabitants.

Similarity also noted that Spratly reefs serve as nurseries for adult fish stock that make up the fisheries in the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia."

"Damaging these reefs directly affects the fish stocks of the entire South China Sea and can lead to a hunger crisis in coastal regions and a collapse of commercial fishing in the South China Sea," Similarity said. As of June 17, 236 ships, likely Chinese, have been spotted in Union Banks as seen on satellite images released by Similarity.

### **Mekong Delta posts positive results in shrimp exports**

<https://sggpnews.org.vn/business/mekong-delta-posts-positive-results-in-shrimp-exports-92828.html>

"Tran Van Trung, Director of Anh Khoa Seafood Company Limited in Ca Mau Province, said that the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic affected shrimp exports, as some countries controlled imports more strictly. Therefore, goods have to wait a whole month for the host country to take samples for quarantine after being brought to the ports, leading to higher costs.

However, thanks to the initiative and good adaptation, from the beginning of this year to now, the company's shrimp exports have increased significantly compared to the same period last year. It is expected that the company's exports will be 2-3 times higher than the previous year. As one of the longtime enterprises in the shrimp industry, which also faced many difficulties due

to the Covid-19 pandemic, Mr. Nguyen Minh Tuan, the representative of Minh Cuong Seafood Processing Joint Stock Company, said that shrimp exports of his company grew fairly well in the first months of this year. Currently, the company tries to maintain production and export and implement strict Covid-19 prevention measures, with the determination not to let the disease enter the factory.

According to the Department of Industry and Trade of Ca Mau Province, by the end of May this year, the province's shrimp exports were estimated at more than US\$423 million, achieving 40 percent of this year's plan, up more than 16 percent year-on-year. In Bac Lieu Province, the total export turnover of shrimp products in the first five months of this year was estimated at \$280 million, up more than 9 percent over the same period. In other provinces in the Mekong Delta, shrimp exports also grew positively compared to the same period last year.

Along with exporting, many shrimp farming households in the Mekong Delta continue to expand production and stabilize their lives. Mr. Pham Van Quan, a farmer in My Long Nam Commune in Cau Ngang District of Tra Vinh Province, said that a few months before, the price of black tiger shrimps sized 30 pieces per kilogram was up to VND200,000-VND220,000 per kg, which now has decreased to about VND170,000 per kg, and that of white-leg shrimps sized 30 pieces per kg is at VND130,000-VND140,000 per kg. At this price level, farmers still ensure profits. According to the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers, seafood exports reached roughly \$790 million in May this year, up 24 percent.

Seafood exports in the first five months of this year hit \$3.27 billion, up 14 percent year-on-year. Of which, shrimp exports reached \$1.33 billion, up 14 percent year-on-year. This is an impressive result at a time when many other agricultural products are struggling with consumption. Mr. Nguyen Quoc Toan, Director of the Agro Processing and Market Development Authority under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, said that Vietnamese seafood exports are recovering. Specifically, in the first five months of this year, Vietnamese seafood products had been exported to over 120 markets, with the US, Japan, the EU, China, South Korea, the ASEAN, and Australia being the seafood export markets with the highest value.

As for shrimp products, the advantage is that the global import demand is increasing heavily, especially in large markets. Meanwhile, shrimp supply from some countries, such as India, Thailand, and other suppliers, has been reduced due to the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Taking advantage of this, Vietnamese enterprises have accelerated shrimp exports in the first months of this year and got good results.

It is forecasted that in the coming time, the US will continue to be a market with good growth for Vietnam's shrimp products. Vietnamese enterprises also expect to increase shrimp exports to the EU, mainly white-leg shrimps. As for the South Korean market, there are also good signs of recovery and positive economic growth, so seafood trade with Korean enterprises will be more

vibrant in the coming time. Other markets, such as Australia, Canada, the UK, and Russia, will continue to be new potential markets because demand increases and there are no uncertainties or market barriers.

### **COVID-19 and small-scale fisheries in Southeast Asia: Impacts and Responses**

<http://www.asianfisheriessociety.org/publication/downloadfile.php?id=1355&file=Y0dSbUx6QXIOekU0TkRRd01ERTJNVGswTURZME1qa3VjR1Jt>

"This new paper describes the impacts of and responses to COVID-19 of small-scale fisheries in six selected countries in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The paper used a structured case study approach to analyse the impacts and responses and relied heavily on existing reports and data sources in each country.

The pandemic has further revealed the vulnerability of small-scale fishing households in the region. Given the few assets of fisher households, their ability to cushion the negative impact of crises and shocks is limited. Fishers made adaptive responses such as direct fish marketing, online marketing, and home delivery services.

While short-term responses of providing food and financial assistance have been helpful, long-term support to address pandemics such as COVID-19 and other stressors will require developing more resilient fishing households. The paper recommends several approaches and interventions to improve household resilience and to be better prepared for similar challenges and threats in the future.

These include: i) strengthening the fishing households social network of friends, relatives, and neighbours to serve as both a social safety net and a bridge towards the transition to financial inclusion; ii) diversifying livelihood to reduce dependency on the fishery and provide for additional sources of income and food; iii) promoting financial inclusion through savings, credit, digital payment products, and insurance; iv) value chain upgrading through post-harvest fish handling and processing methods; and, v) providing access, especially for women, to social protection measures such as government health insurance and social security."

### **Mekong river at worrying low level amid calls for more Chinese dam data**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/mekong-river-at-worrying-low-level-amid-calls-for-more-chinese-dam-data-101613137861375.html>

"Water levels in the Mekong River have fallen to a "worrying level" in part due to outflow restrictions from Chinese hydropower dams upstream, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) said on Friday, calling on Beijing to share all of its water data. The vital waterway has turned

blue along the Thai-Laos border, from its usual murky brown colour - signaling shallow water and low levels of nutrition-rich sediment - partially from outflow restrictions from the Jinghong dam in China's Yunnan province, the inter-governmental MRC said.

Friday's statement said low rainfall and dams on the Lower Mekong and tributaries also contributed to the drop in levels. "There have been sudden rises and falls in water levels immediately downstream of Jinghong and further down to Vientiane," said Winai Wongpimool, director of the MRC Secretariat's Technical Support Division. Such fluctuations affect fish migration, agriculture and transportation that nearly 70 million people rely on for their livelihoods and food security. "

"To help the Lower Mekong countries manage risks more effectively, we call on China and the Lower Mekong countries themselves to share their water release plans with us," Winai said. The MRC said normal conditions may be restored if large volumes of water are released from Chinese dams' reservoirs. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs disputed the MRC's findings, adding that there are many causes of downstream drought. China last year pledged to share data from its dams with MRC member countries Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

In January, Beijing notified neighbours that its dams were filling reservoirs until Jan. 25. Outflow levels at Jinghong Dam were 785 cubic metres per second in early-January before rising to 1,400 cubic metres per second in mid-January, the MRC said. However, levels dropped again in February and were 800 cubic metres per second as of Thursday, the MRC said. The statement did not mention any recent notification from Beijing. China said the dam's outflow has been consistently more than 1,000 cubic meters per second since the end of January, a level it says is nearly twice the natural flow of the river. It called on the MRC "to avoid causing public misunderstanding".