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New Rubber Factory Opens

BY KAY KIMSONG | JANUARY 18, 2001

In hopes of increasing rubber production, the state-owned Peam Cheang rubber plantation on Wednesday opened its new rubber processing factory, officials of the plantation and the Ministry of Agriculture said.

The Kompong Cham plantation, one of seven developed in the northeastern part of the country during French colonial rule, has been in need of its own processing factory for at least 30 years.

With financial help from rubber trader Mong Reththy, the plantation renovated an outdated and deteriorating factory into the modern manufacturing plant.

“We invested \$700,000 to build this new factory because other factories in the other six plantations can no longer process rubber from Peam Cheang,” said Ly Phalla, director of the ministry’s rubber department.

He said the new factory will run around the clock to process a minimum of 7,500 tons of dry rubber annually. The factory is expected to produce 1 ton of dry rubber per hour, he said.

According to Mong Reththy, who donated \$200,000 to the new plant, processing factories at Snuol, Memot, Chamka Angdong and Beung Ket plantations can produce as much as 2 tons of rubber per hour, while Krek plantation’s factory makes up to 4 tons of rubber hourly.

Rubber production in Cambodia has been increasing every year since 1997, when the country experienced its lowest production of 30,000 tons per year. It recovered to 50,000 tons last year, and industry insiders predict Cambodia could produce 53,000 tons this year because more newly planted trees are producing raw latex.

Chea Vong, marketing manager of Peam Cheang plantation, said his company will be able to sell rubber processed at the new factory for \$500 per ton this year. His factory will also process rubber brought by family-scale rubber growers living near the plantation, he added.

In Kompong Cham, about 7,500 hectares of land are used for the state-run plantations and another 5,000 hectares are used by family-scale rubber farmers.

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