

Myanmar, South Korea to build bio-research center

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Myanmar and South Korea will cooperate to build a bio-research center and implement a biofuel-substitute project in Myanmar soon, the Yangon Times, one of the leading weekly journals reported Thursday.

The mutually-benefited project will be jointly implemented by the state-run Myanmar Industrial Crops Enterprise and the Haejohyub Bio Energy Myanmar Corporation of South Korea under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) reached recently, the report said.

According to the MoU, the research center will be set up in Yangon division's Lay Daung Kan area, while the biofuel substitute project will be launched using more than 300,000 work force to grow over 150,000 hectares of Jatropha physic nut plantations to substitute diesel.

Myanmar has projected a sharp increase of biofuel output this year from the Jatropha physic nut, according to the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Up to 3.24 million hectares of the plants will be grown to realize the projected increase of the biofuel up to 20 million tons a year, the ministry-run industrial crops enterprise said.

Jatropha physic nuts were being planted on 648,000 hectares mainly in three dry zones of Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway divisions, it said.

Official statistics show that Myanmar yielded about 90 million gallons (405 million liters) of diesel a year while importing more than 200 million gallons (900 million liters) annually to meet its domestic demand.

According to the enterprise, Myanmar has about 6.41 million hectares of land suitable for growing Jetropha plants.

"Source: Xinhua"