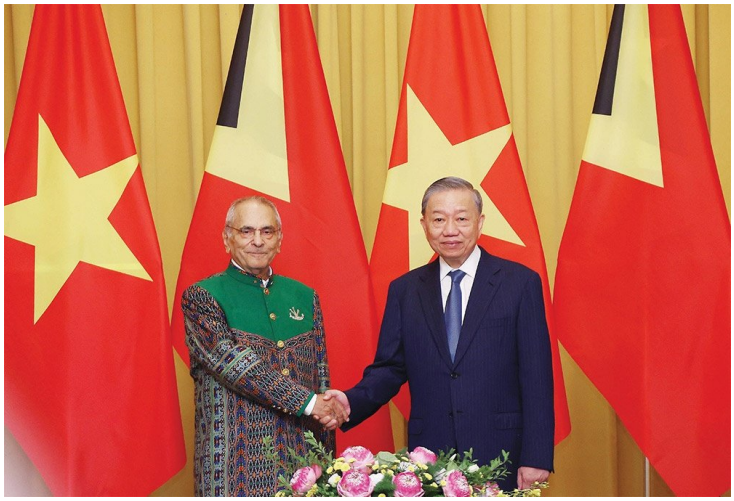
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Vietnam and Timor-Leste explore mutual gains in Agriculture sector

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During a state visit last week to Vietnam by Timor-Lesteâ??s President JosÃ© Ramos-Horta, Vietnamese State President To Lam declared that Vietnam stands ready to continue providing rice for Timor-Leste, contributing to help this nation to ensure food security.

â??Both sides need to extend the existing MoU on rice exports or ink a new one,â? said Vietnamâ??s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Vietnam encourages Timor-Leste to increase importation of Vietnamese high-quality items such as garments and textiles, footwear, drinks, milk, processed foodstuffs, and agro-aquatic products. Vietnam also proposes that Timor-Leste soon ratify a bilateral trade agreement inked in 2013, and that Timor-Leste facilitate Vietnamese enterprises to expand business and investment activities in its market.

The two countries will consider and establish new cooperation mechanisms in line with their cooperation needs. Vietnam will also further boost cooperation with Timor-Leste in agriculture and telecommunications.

â??Big potentials are there for the two countries to cement cooperation in many sectors such as agriculture, oil and gas, fishery, infrastructure development, textile and garment, industrial machinery, electrical equipment, education, culture, and tourism,â• the MoFA said. â??However, cooperation between the two sides remain humble.â?

Vietnam and Timor-Leste inked a framework agreement on technical and economic cooperation in 2010, with the two sides agreeing on establishing a joint-committee mechanism. However, this mechanism has yet to be materialised because Timor-Leste has not arranged it yet.

Over the past recent years, the two countriesâ?? modest trade turnover decreased. It reached nearly $54 million in 2020, $33.5 million in 2021, $17.6 million in 2022, and nearly $15.9 million last year â?? with Vietnamâ??s exports and imports valued at $15.5 million and nearly $372,000, respectively.

Such trade values have been mostly in one way, with Vietnamese exports getting the lionâ??s share, in which rice exports accounts for more than 90 per cent and the rest are consumer goods and processed foodstuffs.

In 2023, Vietnam exported 15,320 tonnes of rice to Timor-Leste, worth nearly $8.8 million. As of April, nearly 3,870 tonnes have been shipped to Timor-Leste, valued at nearly $2.6 million.

When it comes to investment cooperation, while Timor-Leste currently has no project in Vietnam, Viettel has been carrying out a telecommunications project named Telemor in Timor-Leste. This project was established in 2012 and provided telecommunication services from the following year. The initial investment capital was $500,000, which was then increased gradually to $10 million.