

Laos delays decision to build Mekong dam

Laos has deferred a decision to build the Xayaburi dam on the lower Mekong River in face of opposition from neighbouring countries including its closest ally, Vietnam

▶ Opponents fear \$3.5 billion project would open door to building spree of up to 10 other dams on lower Mekong, degrading river's fragile ecology

▶ Laos says revenue from 1,260MW dam will spur economic and social development. Thailand has already agreed to buy 95% of electricity output

▶ Dam would forcibly resettle 2,100 people and could affect livelihoods of millions of others

▶ Mekong is second only to Amazon in terms of biodiversity, with more than 1,000 fish species, including critically endangered Mekong giant catfish

▶ Government ministers from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam will meet to consider issue later this year

Sources: International Rivers, wire agencies



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