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Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times"

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Laos launches logo, theme for Asean Chairmanship 2016

(By Times Reporters)

Laos officially launched the logo, theme and website for its Asean Chairmanship 2016 on Friday as part of the country's preparations for the event. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs MrThonglounSisoulith explained the meaning of the logo to officials during the launch . The Asean 2016 theme is “Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic Asean Community” and the website is www.asean2016.gov.la. The logo includes 10 connected circles, comprising an eye and joined hands, around the Asean Emblem symbolising the bonded-together Asean Community. The eye represents the Asean Community Vision 2025. The joined hands reflect harmony, solidarity and close partnership as well as the aspiration of the Asean Member States to further strengthen and prosper the Asean Community through the implementation of the Asean Community Vision 2025 in accordance with the Asean 2016 theme. The different colours used in the logo are red (boldness and dynamics), yellow (prosperity), blue (peace and stability), green (growth and harmony) and orange (warmth and happiness). The colours, apart from representing the colours of the national flags of the Asean Member States, also demonstrate the diversity in Asean. “Laos 2016” indicates that the Lao PDR is the Chair of Asean in 2016. Asean will announce the establishment of the Asean Community on December 31. Asean is now developing the Asean Community Vision 2025 and its attendant documents which will be adopted

by Asean leaders at the 27th Asean Summit to be held on November 18-22, 2015, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The year 2016 is the first year not only for the Asean Community but also for the implementation of the Asean Community Vision 2025, according to the Asean 2016 website. Therefore, the Lao PDR's Asean Chairmanship in 2016 is a period for Asean to focus its efforts on further strengthening the Asean Community by implementing the Asean Community Vision 2025, among others. As such, the Lao PDR has come up with the theme “Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic Asean Community” as the theme for its Asean Chairmanship in 2016. Various sub-committees reported the accomplishments of the preparations under their responsibilities and work to be completed in the near future at a meeting in Vientiane on Friday, which was chaired by MrThongloun. Generally, Laos is ready to play the role of Asean chair and host the 28th and 29th Asean Summits which will be held back-to-back in Vientiane next year. Roads, hotels and other facilities are being improved. Additionally, workshops and seminars are being held to train the functionaries and staff to be deployed during the meetings. Laos first chaired Asean in 2004 when it hosted the 10th Asean Summit and its related meetings. Its second chairmanship of Asean will take place shortly after the bloc establishes the Asean Community at the end of this year.

(Vientiane Times 09 Novembre 2015)

Laos on international unregulated logging list

(By KhonesavanhLatsaphao)

A consultation workshop on the Forestry Legality Compendium held in Vientiane on Friday revealed that Laos is one of many countries still on the list of those where unregulated logging takes place. Laos is listed because internationally it is considered that some aspects of forest management are not sufficiently enforced because logging is not well regulated. Director General of the Department of Forestry Inspection, Mr Khamphout Phandanouvong, told *Vientiane Times* at the meeting that the structure of forest management has been in place for a long time, but its application is not solid or comprehensive. "It will take a long time to improve the system of forest management in order to remove Laos from the international list concerning unregulated logging," he said. Indonesia spent nine years trying to improve forest management before it was removed from the list. Laos has been working for three years to address the problem of unregulated logging. It is expected that Laos could be taken off the list in the next five or six years, as work to accomplish this is now 40 to 50 percent complete. The EU is working with Laos to expedite the process. To improve forestry and environmental protection in Laos, the government is spending several billion kip each year to increase the size of protected forestry areas. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the government mainly sells timber to both Lao

and Chinese companies who export the wood. The workshop on the Forestry Legality Compendium was supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Bank Cooperative programme, the SUFORD-SU project (Scaling up participatory sustainable forest management project, financed by the World Bank and Finland) and the GIZ ProFLECGT project, as part of the Lao EU-EFEGT progress (Forest Enforcement Governance and Trade). The Forestry Legality Compendium project has been undertaken to compile all relevant legal provisions and provide a summary analysis on the forestry legal structure, including legislation associations with forest and forestland and the use of forest products, including from production forest, plantations, forest conversion areas and village use forests. It covers planning, harvesting, transportation, processing and trade in unprocessed and semi-processed wood and finished products. The government plans to increase nationwide forest cover to 65 percent by 2015 and to 70 percent by 2020. The three categories of forest in Laos managed by the government are national protection areas, national protection forests, and national production forests. At present, there are 49 national protection forests covering 7.5 million hectares but the ministry plans to add thousands more to achieve its goal of 8.2 million hectares of protected forest by 2015.

(*Vientiane Times* 09 Novembre 2015)

Nation lacking young scientists

(By PhetphoxaySengpaseuth)

Laos needs more young people to study science so they can contribute to the nation's development, according to a leading official. The number of students enrolling in science courses is continuing to decrease with most high school leavers studying in other fields, Minister of Science and Technology, Prof. DrBoviengkhamVongdarasaid. Speaking at a handover ceremony for telescopes from Thailand to the Lao Academy of Sciences in Vientiane last week he said young people were not showing enough interest in science. "We must highlight the importance of science to young people so we can promote and develop scientific efforts into the future," he said. Prof. DrBoviengkham called on officials, students, researchers and scientists to continue their research and broaden their knowledge to benefit the development of science and technology in Laos. Also at the ceremony, Minister of Science and Technology of Thailand, DrPichetDurongkaverroj commented that there was good cooperation between the two countries in science. Thailand and other Asean countries were ready to assist the Lao government in science and technology be-

cause it was the basis of problem solving for the region, he added. The Ministry of Science and Technology has a strategic plan for 2015-2025 and a vision to progress the field beyond that until 2030. According to the ministry, the strategy plan focuses on developing scientific and technological thought and innovation, the development of human resources, and the building of science and technology centres in rural areas. Another goal is to seek cooperation with regional and international bodies for assistance with funding and personnel exchanges. In terms of the development of human resources in the field, Laos has five state-run universities, over 100 private institutions, and 32 science and technology research institutes. These train researchers and scientists and broaden the knowledge of technical officials. Some 450 people currently hold doctorate degrees in a technological or scientific subject, including 0.27 percent of government officials. Averaged out, this means that in 2014 Laos had just one researcher per 10,000 people. The goal is now to increase the ratio to three researchers per 10,000 people by 2020 and to 11 researchers by 2025.

(Vientiane Times 09 Novembre 2015)

Feasibility study of two hydro plants kicks off in Xekong

(By Times Reporters)

The government has given approval for a local energy developer to conduct a feasibility study on the construction of Xekong hydropower projects 4A and 4B in Xekong province. Dr Bounthavy Sisouphanthong (right) shakes hands with Mr Steven Chan after signing the MoU. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was recently signed in Vientiane between Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Dr Bounthavy Sisouphanthong and Chairman of the Lao World Engineering and Road-Bridge Construction Company, Mr Steven Chan. The signing ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Somsavat Lengsavad and other high ranking officials from ministries, Xekong province and the company. The company, in consultation with the relevant sector and provincial authorities, will initially survey and collect information on the viability of building the two dams, and their potential environmental impacts. The study will take about 12 months to complete after which the

company will submit the results to the government for their consideration. If approved, construction would begin in 2017 with an estimated cost of more than US\$1 billion. Xekong has considerable potential for the construction of both small and large-scale dams. Several companies have already signed MoUs concerning the construction of more than 20 hydropower plants across the province. One of the largest schemes under construction in the province is the Houay-Lamphan-yai hydro plant, which has an installed capacity of 88MW and is set to start generating power this week. The 250MW Xekaman 3 hydropower plant in the province has yet to become operational. The proposed hydropower plant 4A in the lower Xekong River and 4B in the upper reaches of the river will help to spur economic development and eradicate poverty in line with the government's goals, said a senior official with the provincial Energy and Mines Department.

(Vientiane Times 10 Novembre 2015)

Overpass mulled as solution to Vientiane's traffic snarls

(By KhonesavanhLatsaphao)

Officials are wrestling with the problem of identifying a long-term solution to Vientiane's chronic traffic jams and some are suggesting that an overpass might ease the situation.



Authorities wonder if an overpass would ease traffic congestion on Lane Xang Avenue.

While no such scheme currently exists, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility to imagine that overpasses will one day be built in Laos' larger urban centres. An official from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, who requested anonymity, told *Vientiane Times* on Tuesday that this had been the only suggestion proposed in meetings to consider the issue. However, the idea of an overpass is still only a figment of someone's imagination and is not yet under serious consideration. "There are roads in four or five districts of central Vientiane that we can widen, but in many places there is nothing we can do because there are too many buildings in the area," the official said. Traffic volumes have been building up significantly over the past four or five years, with the work day rush hours especially chaotic. But now some main streets are also heavily congested on

Saturdays and Sundays as well. Motorists repeatedly say traffic police are slow to respond and unable to tackle the situation efficiently. The official suggested that a more efficient bus service would improve matters by reducing the number of private vehicles on the streets. The traffic police must also exert a greater effort and station themselves on more streets and for longer hours, as well as stopping more vehicles for traffic violations. In many places, congestion builds up because officials do not enforce the regulations. On Monday morning this week the congestion was worse than usual because lots of people were gathering in Chao Anouvong Park to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Chao Anouvong statue. This brought traffic to a standstill for about two hours on FaNgum, Samsenthai, Souphanouvong and adjoining roads. The problem occurred because officials closed Don Chan Road to regular traffic, thus making one of the city's main thoroughfares unavailable. The number of road users in Vientiane increases each year, and road construction has been unable to keep pace with the growing army of vehicles. The Vientiane Public Works and Transport Department reported earlier this year that the number of registered vehicles stood at 661,612. With 850,000 people living in the city, this means that over 70 percent of the population possesses a vehicle of some kind.

(*Vientiane Times* 11 Novembre 2015)

Nam Theun 2 dam generates funds for poverty reduction

(By Times Reporters)

The Nam Theun 2 hydropower plant, one of the largest in Laos, has generated sizeable revenue for the government and contributed to the alleviation of poverty, according to the International Environmental and Social Panel of Experts. The Nam Theun 2 Panel of Experts released its latest report this week. The report stated that since the 1070MW dam in Khammuan province became operational in 2010, the government has received US\$174 million in gross revenue from the project. The multipurpose hydropower plant has also brought livelihood, health and educational benefits to more than 6,000 resettled people on the Nakai Plateau. The government made a strong commitment to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which supported the mega project, that it would use the income earned from the sale of electricity to reduce poverty. According to a press release posted on the official website of the Nam Theun 2 Power Company in Vientiane, the families who were relocated from project areas are benefitting from 1,310 new houses with bathrooms and toilets, electricity and rainwater collection tanks, and 330 water pumps. They also have access to 270 kilometres of new or upgraded roads, 16 nursery and 17 primary schools, two new health centres and an upgraded district hospital, and community infrastructure such as roofed markets. All of these provide better opportunities for improved living condi-

tions. Apart from that, the resettled families receive financial and technical support to take advantage of new livelihood opportunities. A household survey conducted in 2013 found that 86 percent of the resettled families said they were better off than before resettlement and that 97 percent had reached the Household Income Target – the national rural poverty line. A later survey, conducted from late 2014 to early 2015, revealed that the average consumption of resettled communities significantly exceeded the rural average. Since 1997, the Nam Theun 2 power project has benefitted from the advice of the panel of experts, whose mandate is to provide guidance on managing the social and environmental impacts of the project. The 24th report focuses in particular on the closure of the Resettlement Implementation Period in December 2015, as anticipated in the Concession Agreement between the Lao government and the project developer, the Nam Theun 2 Power Company, the media release states. The report contains a number of recommendations, including extending the Resettlement Implementation Period for two years with a view to the long-term sustainability of livelihoods on the Nakai Plateau. The government plans to build more hydropower plants in a bid to generate funding to drive the economy and reduce poverty. The government has also made a strong commitment to develop these power projects in a sustainable manner.

(Vientiane Times 11 Novembre 2015)

Xekong dam set to power up this week

(By Times Reporters)



The government-owned HouayLamphanGnai hydropower plant will officially start commercial operation on Saturday in Thataeng district, Xekong province, after over four years in construction. A pipe snakes across the hills of Xekong province, part of the HouayLamphanGnai hydro plant. “We finished construction and started testing energy generation on September 3, two months ahead of schedule,” Electricite du Laos (EDL)’s Power Plant Development Department Deputy Director, MrVongsakounYingyong, said yesterday. The dam will generate electricity for the national power grid for supply to the southern provinces, where the demand for power is increasing rapidly. MrVongsakoun said electricity will also be sold to Thailand and Cambodia. The dam has a capacity of 88MW and will gen-

erate 480 million kWh per year. The powerhouse is equipped with two sets of impulse turbines of 44MW each. EDL ploughed about 1.68 trillion kip (US\$206 million) into the hydro plant through a loan from China’s Exim bank. The loan is to be repaid within 15 years after the dam becomes operational. The project contractor is the China Gezhouba Group Company Limited. The Lao government intends to use the profits from hydropower sales to fight poverty. In recent years, the energy sector has played a part in social development, notably in the fields of education, human resources, health care, and job creation. Twenty-seven power plants are currently operational with an installed capacity of about 3,304MW, including 11 plants that have an installed capacity of 405MW which are operated by EDL. The 16 other plants, which have a combined installed capacity of 2,899MW, are operated by independent power producers. Laos is aiming for total installed capacity of about 12,000MW by 2025, the Ministry of Energy and Mines said. The abundant resources of the Mekong River and its tributaries give Laos the potential to produce more than 25,000MW of electricity.

(Vientiane Times 11 Novembre 2015)

Govt should maintain budget deficit at lower than 5 percent

(By Times Reporters)

Economists have warned that the government should maintain a budget deficit of not more than 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to prevent the country from accumulating chronic debts. The move comes after the budget deficit rose to over 5 percent of GDP last fiscal year, attributing to the country's rising demand for development projects, including unauthorised projects. For the fiscal year 2015-16, the government has revised the state budget, reducing the national revenue target from 29.213 trillion kip to only 26.159 trillion kip and budget expenditure from 35 trillion kip to 31.946 trillion kip. But the budget deficit is set at 5.787 trillion kip, accounting for 5.7 percent of the GDP, according to a report from the Ministry of Planning and Investment. The government will prioritise its spending on paying the salaries of state employees, public debts and state investment projects to further boost national economic growth. Nevertheless the budget deficit will remain a greater challenge for the government as a result of the country's revenue shortfall. This means the government has to seek more funding from other sources including issuing bonds and asking for loans from other countries to fill in the budget deficit. A senior economist from the National Economic Research Institute DrLeeberLeebouapao told *Vientiane Times* yesterday that "In my opinion, the budget deficit should not be higher

than 5 percent of the GDP at this time as our country is facing economic slowdown." "If we fail to control the deficit, our chronic debts could escalate beyond our capacity to manage it." National Assembly members commented that unauthorised projects should not be carried out as they made it hard for the government to manage the budget and its debts. DrLeeber accepted that borrowing money to pay debts could only address the problem in the short-term but it was better than allowing the country's debt to rise even further. The revenue shortfall in Laos has occurred for several years. One of the main factors behind the shortfall is that many companies (both small and large) try to avoid paying taxes to the government via various means. Another factor was financial leakages, which if not addressed could bring greater damage to the nation while income from the mining sector has declined as a result of falling prices for commodities on the world market. The revenue shortfall also resulted in slow payment of officials' salaries and affected development projects in Laos over the past years. For the 2014-15 fiscal year, the country's budget deficit was expected to be 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2015-16, the Lao economy is set to grow at around 7.5 percent and the value of GDP is expected to exceed 115.452 trillion kip while income per capita should reach 16.7 million kip.

(Vientiane Times 11 Novembre2015)

Natural resources sector reviews future goals

(By Times Reporters)

The Natural Resources and Environment Sector Working Group convened on Tuesday for their annual meeting to summarise their work over the past year and plan for the year ahead. The meeting took place at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and was led by Minister SommadPholsena, German Ambassador to Laos Michael Grau, World Bank Country Manager to the Lao PDR Sally Burningham, and other officials. Participants discussed the finalisation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2016-2020 and the contribution of the natural resources and environment sector to its outcomes. Addressing the meeting, MrSommad said: “Our meeting today will discuss these preparations and especially the desired outcome No. 3: reduced effects of natural shocks as required for Least Developed Country graduation and sustainable management of natural resources. This will be a good opportunity to review the contribution of the natural resources and environment sector to the said outcome.” Also on the agenda was the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution as a part of preparations for the 21st United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties. Prior to the meeting, the Climate Change Response Technical Forum was held on November 4. Representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, line ministries and development partners actively participated in the workshop and participants were

briefed on the introduction of monitoring and evaluation regulations within the ministry, as well as preparations for the 12th High Level Round Table Meeting. The five year action plan for 2016-2020 sets the direction for implementing the ministry's first National Resource and Environment Strategy for 2016-2025. The strategy has the overall goal of “making the Lao PDR green, clean and beautiful, based on green economic growth, to ensure sustainable resilient development and climate change”. To achieve the targets set in the five year action plan, the ministry has compiled seven priority programmes in the fields of land management, forest resources and biodiversity management, geology and mineral resources management, water resources, meteorology and hydrology management, environmental protection and climate change, regional and international integration, and cooperation and institutional capacity development. MrSommad said “Fiscal year 2014-15 is the final year for the implementation of the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015 and the final year for the preparation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020.” “The government has assigned all sectors and provinces to develop a long term vision, strategy and action plan. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has initiated the process to develop its long term direction in parallel with the preparation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan.”

(Vientiane Times 12 Novembre2015)

Preparations for 12th High Level Roundtable Meeting discussed

(By Times Reporters)

Officials are satisfied with the progress of preparations for the 12th High Level Roundtable Meeting to be held in Vientiane later this month after meeting to discuss the arrangements in Vientiane on Tuesday. The meeting to hear about the progress of preparations for the meeting was chaired by Minister of Planning and Investment MrSomdyDuangdy. Ministers, deputy ministers, director generals, and deputy director generals of various relevant departments were also invited to the meeting to hear about the progress of preparations. Director General of the International Cooperation Department under the Ministry of Planning and Investment MsSisombounOunavong reported about the overall preparations for the 12th High Level Roundtable Meeting to be held on November 27 in Vientiane. She said that the agenda of the meeting and other extra activities have also been arranged including a field visit to Borikhamxay province where many activities will take place, supported by international organisations and non-government agencies. The field visit will be arranged on November 25-26 prior to the official opening of the 12th High Level Roundtable Meeting on November 27 at the National Convention Centre (NCC). A development cooperation exhibition will be launched on November 26, featuring the achievements and projects of the ten government-led sector working groups and other related agencies. The exhibition will be opened by Deputy Prime Minister and Mi-

nister of Foreign Affairs MrThonglounSisoulith. The Vientiane Declaration on the Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation will also be launched at the meeting and signed by its development partners. The declaration updates an existing document drawn up in 2006, expanding the concept of 'aid effectiveness' to 'effective development cooperation'. This places a greater emphasis on new sources of development financing alongside Official Development Assistance (ODA). During the meeting to review the progress of the preparations, senior officials also discussed various important events, especially welcoming VIP guests who are coming to attend the meeting. Some 300 delegates from the government and its development partners, donor governments, non-profit organisations, national non-profit associations and the private sector are expected to attend. The meeting will be held under the theme of an "Enhanced Partnership for Effective Implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) – Achieving the Least Developed Country graduation criteria by 2020." The meeting will be opened by Prime Minister ThongsingThammavong while Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and Chair of the UN Development Group, Ms Helen Clark, will deliver the keynote speech at the forum, which will also consider the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

(Vientiane Times 12 Novembre2015)

New law to strengthen civil servant management

(By Times Reporters)

All civil servants, including leaders will have new uniform regulations imposed on them if a newly drafted law on public service is promulgated. This is the perspective of the new proposed civil service management law drafted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is responsible for public administration. The newly drafted law has been sounding out the opinions of government members at their monthly meeting in October. The government is currently governed by the Decree No.82 dated May 19, 2013 on Civil Servant Charter. Speaking to *Vientiane Times* on Wednesday, the ministry's Department of Civil Service Management Director General MrSouvannyRattavong said the difference between the new proposed law and the current promulgated regulations was that the new law covered all civil servants, including those in leading positions, while the decree only covered positions of department director general and lower. Other important points in the new law mentioned by MrSouvanny, concerned positions of technical expertise, which the decree

did not cover, and retirement age which has some changes. "Additionally, we have included positions for technical experts into this law, national artists for example," he said. Regarding the retirement age, decree 82 defines 60 years old as the age for male civil servants to retire on a pension, and 55 years old for females. While, the new law has adjusted the age for female civil servants as they will be able to retire earlier at 50 or later between 50 and 60. Concerning prohibitions, the department director general said the stipulations were mainly maintained as in the existing decree. The law aims to ensure to there are uniform, transparent and just regulations in the public service. MrSouvanny said if the law is approved by the National Assembly at the upcoming session, the next step for the ministry is to draft the other ten related decrees, including the decree on high-ranking (leadership) civil servants, decree on pay raises, decree on post of technical experts, and the decree on performance evaluation

(Vientiane Times 13 Novembre2015)

Gov't, development partners discuss macroeconomics

(By Times Reporters)

The government and its development partners discussed the arrangements related to the Macroeconomic Working Group to be presented at the 12th High Level Round Table Meeting on November 27 in Vientiane. Several developmental strategies were discussed, including economic stability, macroeconomic management, sustainable development, green growth with participation of society, and the Joint Statement of the Macroeconomic Working Group. Country Manager of the World Bank Office in Laos, Ms Sally Burningham, co-chaired the meeting. In his opening remarks, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, DrKhamlien-Pholsena, said the meeting focused on the progress of the 4th Population and Housing Census by the Department of Social Statistics under the Lao Statistic Bureau, and other important issues. “The result of the 4th Population and Housing Census will officially be announced by next month,” he said, declaring that the census was now in its final stage of conclusion and assessment. DrKhamlien noted the meeting marked significant preparations of the relevant documents for the Macroeconomic Working Group, which will be presented at the High Level Round Table Meeting. Country Director and Lao Resident Mission of the Asian Development Bank, Ms Sandra Nicoll, who

also co-chaired the meeting, said the Macroeconomic Working Group has previously organised one technical and one executive level meeting in 2015. “The results of these meetings have contributed to the direction of the working group as well as the preparation process of the High Level Round Table Meeting,” she said. She added the preliminary results of the population census will provide basic information to inform approaches for achieving the goal of inclusive growth in Laos. “Census figures are important for all of us to formulate appropriate development strategies that reach out to all communities and leave no one behind,” MsNicoll said. Senior Economist of the World Bank Laos Office, MrEvgenijNajdov, presented the systematic country diagnostics of Laos. The diagnostic system will enable Laos to better comprehend and find ways to increase sustainable growth of the Lao economy. The 12th High Level Round Table Meeting will focus on “Enhanced Partnership for Effective Implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) – Achieving the Least Developed Country graduation criteria by 2020.” Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and Chair of the UN Development Group, Ms Helen Clark and VIP guests will attend this meeting.

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