



Comité de Coopération avec le Laos

Boîte postale 4791, Vientiane, Laos

Tél : (856-21) 25 40 39 - Télécopie : (856-21) 21 69 25

Email : cclvientiane@ccl-laos.org

Site : www.ccl-laos.org

Revue de presse du 22 au 26 Février 2016



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

Bonne réception et bonne lecture,
Cordialement,
Bureau du CCL à Vientian

➤ **Vientiane Times**

- [World heritage sites can benefit everyone: Deputy PM](#)
- [Restoration beautifies national icon](#)
- [Elephant Festival draws jumbo crowd](#)
- [Laos aims for further strides in poverty reduction](#)
- [Khong district forecasts 500,000 tourist arrivals this year](#)
- [EU announces funding for civil society](#)
- [Feasibility study for Laos-Vietnam railway begins](#)
- [Trade agreement set to boost Laos-US economic cooperation](#)
- [242 billion kip lost to corruption, inspection reveals](#)

World heritage sites can benefit everyone: Deputy PM

(By BounfaengPhaymanivong)

Pakxe district, Champassak province: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Sports MrPhankhamViphavanh has called for local authorities and residents of Champassak district to comply with the guidelines and regulations set by UNESCO to preserve the Vat PhouChampassak World Heritage Site.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Sports MrPhankhamViphavanh(centre) attends the opening ceremony of a forum on the preservation of Vat PhouChampassak World Heritage Site. The forum was held in Pakxe district, Champassak province yesterday.

In his opening speech at a forum held here yesterday, MrPhankham said UNESCO has recently issued warnings to the Lao government in regards to the ineffective implementation of the principles of UNESCO. “This is because local authorities and residents who are living around Vat Phou do not strictly follow the guidelines issued by UNESCO because they do not understand the meaning of a heritage site,” the Deputy PM said. He also noted that some years ago LuangPrabang province faced the same challenges as people there did not understand the perspectives of the World Heritage body when the town of LuangPrabang was declared a World Heritage Site in 1995. But within a couple of years people began to understand its significance as they were able to earn an income from the many visitors to the town. “Now the people of LuangPrabang

understand the importance of preservation as they are acutely aware of the benefits and value of the world heritage site,” MrPhankhamsaid. He urged local authorities and villagers to cooperate with UNESCO to ensure that Vat Phou remained on the list of world heritage sites and to take part in the long term preservation of Laos' heritage sites. The Lao government is now proposing two new sites for UNESCO to consider as world heritage listings. These are the Plain of Jars in Xiengkhuang province and Hin Nam Nor or the Stone Forest in Khammuan province. Also speaking at the meeting, the Governor of Champassak province DrBounthongDivixay said the forum was part of events to mark the 15th anniversary of Vat PhouChampassak's listing as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001. “Vat PhouChampassak has a long history and has been valued as a historical site from generation to generation. It has been a world heritage site for the past 15 years,” he said. DrBounthong asked forum participants to share their ideas on an effective management and preservation strategy for Vat PhouChampassak during a panel discussion at the daylong meeting. The forum on the preservation of the Vat PhouChampassak World Heritage Site was co-chaired by the Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Prof. DrBosengkhamVongdara and Deputy Governor of Champassak province MrBoualinVongphachan. According to a report from local authorities in Champassak district, visitors to Vat Phou increased by 28 percent last year. VatPhouChampassak has been selected as the Most Popular Tourist Place for two years running (2015 and 2016) by China's www.lianorg.com.

(Vientiane Times 20 February 2016)

Restoration beautifies national icon

(By SouknilundonSouthivongnorath)

Local tour operators always list the HorPhaKeo museum in central Vientiane as a must-see for visitors thanks to its impressive architecture and collection of prized artefacts. A visit to HorPhaKeo often inspires visitors to delve into Laos' rich past with the site being the former resting place of the revered Emerald Buddha.



HorPhaKeo is a drawcard for tourists from around the world.

Director of the Vientiane Information, Culture and Tourism Department, MrKhampadithKhemmanith, said the HorPhaKeo temple or museum is one of the most respected places in Laos and is also open for visitors to explore its antiquities. MrKhampadith said that each year, as there were a large number of tourists visiting the museum, the building's age required that it be restored. HorPhaKeo is one of the oldest buildings in Vientiane and was used as a royal chapel during the time of the Lane Xang Kingdom and also housed the precious Emerald Buddha (PhaKeo). It was built in 1565 during the reign of King Setthathirath. The building was badly damaged several times by enemies but it was twice restored. The first renovation occurred in 1816 when Chao Anouvong ruled Vientiane, while the second renovation was undertaken between 1936

and 1942. After national liberation in 1975, the government placed HorPhaKeo under the management of the Ministry of Education and it became a museum in 1987. From 1983-1987, HorPhaKeo was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Information and Culture. MrKhampadith, who has headed the HorPhaKeo Museum renovation project committee since 2015, said the restoration would make the place more attractive to foreign and local visitors alike. The committee reported that the renovation was costing over 12 billion kip with money coming from government, local business and museum entry fees. Work started early last year and was now about 80 percent complete on the first phase with the remaining 20 percent of the restoration making up the second and third phases to be completed by May. "This is the third restoration of HorPhaKeo; the first took place in 1816, and the second from 1936-1942, with 2015 being the latest," he said. MrKhampadith told a recent press conference that this weekend they would officially announce the conclusion of the first phase of the project and arrange an almsgiving ceremony so that local people and tourists could pay their respects to the museum. During the press conference the Vice Mayor of Vientiane MrSaithongKeoduangdy invited people to come to the museum on Sunday and Monday morning to celebrate the completion of the first phase. "So many people want to know about the process because some of the restoration funds came from them. All of the money went into the project so people should come to see the results of our work," MrSaithongsaid. The authorities asked tour agencies to put HorPhaKeo on their itinerary for February 21-22 so tourists could experience Lao culture and traditions firsthand.

(Vientiane Times 20 February 2016)

Elephant Festival draws jumbo crowd

(By Times Reporters)

Xayaboury's 10th annual elephant festival kicked off in grand style on Saturday morning when 67 gaily decorated elephants and their mahouts paraded through the provincial capital. The opening ceremony on Saturday was attended by Deputy Prime Minister AsangLaoly and other officials. Thousands of people turned out to watch the colourful procession and also to browse the more than 300 stalls selling an enticing array of handicrafts and other goods. Among the intriguing events taking place was an elephant baci ceremony and an elephant beauty contest, while mahouts put the docile animals through their paces in routines that demonstrated their agility and strength. Visitors could have a ride on an elephant and watch them being bathed in the river. Elsewhere, local students and members of the province's ethnic groups performed traditional dances. In the evening the vibrant street market came alive, while a concert and circus acts also entertained the throngs of happy spectators. A member of the event organising committee, Mr Yeunyong Sipaseuth, said "The aim of this festival is to preserve Lao

culture and the livelihoods of Lao people who work with elephants. Elephants are a longstanding part of our history and have been an integral part of Lao life since ancient times." "We want successive generations to learn about elephants and become aware of the significance of these huge and intelligent animals," he said. The main purpose of the festival is to spotlight the past and present role that elephants play in Laos, and their importance in Lao history and lifestyle. It also highlights the plight of these endangered animals, whose numbers are dwindling fast. Today, elephant owners are being encouraged to care for their animals so that they are not overworked and can reproduce. Their former role as the mighty haulers of massive tree trunks through forests is becoming a thing of the past and instead they are living an easier life in the tourism industry. The first Elephant Festival was held in 2007 in Hongsa district, when it was organised by the conservation group ElefantAsia. It was subsequently held in Paklai district and then in Xayaboury district, which has hosted the event since 2012.

(Vientiane Times 22 February 2016)

Laos aims for further strides in poverty reduction

(By Times Reporters)

Laos will further mobilise all of its untapped potential and step up cooperation with all stakeholders, backed by support from friendly countries, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The fight against poverty was the main focus of the Millennium Development Goals and continues to remain a priority of the SDGs for 2016-2030. This was the message delivered by Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Dr Khamlien Pholsena at a meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals that took place in Vientiane yesterday. He said Laos had made a considerable effort to reduce poverty and laid strong foundations to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2020. Laos was also embarking on the eighth five-year National Socio-economic Development Plan and was now a member of the Asean Community. Dr Khamlien noted that there are 17 global SDGs that aim to tackle problems that affect us all – poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change – aiming for tangible results by 2030. The Lao government has also set an 18th goal focusing on UXO clearance, which is a major issue in the country. In working towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Laos is striving to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2020. Dr Khamlien said that although Laos is moving towards upper

middle income status through green and sustainable development, poverty eradication remains the country's top priority. Meeting participants also heard about the government's urging for a nation-loving spirit of development through the Party's Three Builds (Sam Sang) directive. In this connection the government is focusing on infrastructure development, access to public health services in rural areas, food security, commercial production, services, education, and sanitary facilities. Senior officials from line ministries were also committed to supporting the efforts of other nations in promoting awareness of the significance of poverty eradication. Dr Khamlien said the meeting served as a significant platform to promote mutual understanding and sharing of experiences and best practices aimed at strengthening cooperation in poverty reduction, to ensure that people lived in better conditions and could enjoy prosperity. The poverty rate had now dropped below the 23 percent figure recorded in 2013, and more than 122,000 households and 1,430 villages had been freed from poverty in the past five years, according to the Ministry of Planning and Investment. Laos is one of the fourth newer members of Asean, and lags behind the six original member states in terms of development, Dr Khamlien noted.

(Vientiane Times 23 February 2016)

Khong district forecasts 500,000 tourist arrivals this year

(By Times Reporters)

Authorities in Khong district, Champassak province are now prioritising the improvement of services in the tourism sector in a bid to boost the number of domestic and international tourist arrivals in the coming years. "Improvements to services, especially in regards to tour operations, accommodation and restaurants are key elements to boosting the number of visitors to our district," district Governor Mr Sanan Siphaphommachan told *Vientiane Times* reporters last week.



Foreign tourists queuing to cross from Nakasang village to Don Det and Don Khone Islands in Khong district, Champassak province.

He said that Khong district has many tourist attractions in the wider area generally known as 'Si Phan Done' or the 4,000 Islands. "The tourism sector plays a critical role in the socio-economic development of Khong district as local authorities are targeting a growth figure of 8 percent for 2016-20," Mr Sanansaid. Last year, there were more than 400,000 tourists to the area, including a majority of domestic visitors at 58 percent, while the remainder came from Thailand, Vietnam, China, Cambodia and various Eu-

ropean countries. "We expect that a total of more than 500,000 domestic and foreign tourists will come to visit Khong district this year, which will also contribute to the rapid growth of the local economy," Mr Sanansaid. Meanwhile, Deputy Director of Champassak province's Information, Culture and Tourism Department Ms Mala Chanthalam, said that Khong district is one of the most attractive tourism sites in the province. "Khong district is the most attractive tourism hub and the two respective districts of Pakxe and Champassak are also important tourism destinations," she said. Currently Khong district itself has a bridge crossing the Mekong River from the mainland to Khong Island, making it more convenient for public transportation, goods circulation and tourism. The funds for the construction of this bridge came in the form of grant aid from the government of China, representing 95 percent, while the remainder of the construction budget was provided by the Lao government. The multi-million dollar Don Khong Bridge is 718 metres long and 11 metres wide, including 1.5 metres sidewalk. The bridge was officially opened to traffic at the end of 2014 after construction commenced in mid-2012. Khong district is well known for its natural tourism sites including the wonderful waterfalls of Khonphapheng and Somphamit on the Mekong River.

(*Vientiane Times* 25 February 2016)

EU announces funding for civil society

By Times Reporters

The European Union (EU) is offering 7 million euros through an open call for proposals in support of civil society organisations and local authorities' initiatives contributing to poverty reduction. The objective of this call for proposals is to strengthen the capacity of Lao civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) to contribute to poverty eradication and achievement of national development goals in the Lao PDR.



EU Chargé d'Affaires Michel Goffin.

The first of tranche of 6.4 million euros will be made available for projects and initiatives from civil society organisations, while 600,000 euros will be for the proposed action of local authorities. EU Chargé d'Affaires Mr Michel Goffin delivered an address at the information session in Vientiane yesterday attended by more than 30 representatives of civil society organisations and local authorities. "The European Union has a long term commitment to promoting an enabling environment and capacity for CSOs and LAs around the globe, including Laos, through this instrument. We believe that the roles of CSOs and LAs are very important for contributing to country development, especially in poverty alleviation," Mr Goffin said. The contribution of civil society organisations towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been recognised

by the government of Laos. Their engagement in development sectors, especially at grass root levels brings significant changes toward achieving the MDGs, including building capacity for local CSOs and local authorities. Eligible applicants under this programme include both European and Lao civil society organisations and local authorities. Trainings on writing proposals will also be provided by the EU to interested CSOs and LAs in order to improve their applications for this programme. Actions under the CSO and LA programme will complement the ongoing EU cooperation programme which covers three key areas such as governance, nutrition and education. This programme was introduced in Laos in 2007 and has provided support to over 15 ongoing projects in the Lao PDR contributing to the achievements towards development goals in the country. The full guidelines for applicants are available for consultation at the following internet sites: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/laos/index_en.htm The EU is one of Laos' biggest development partners in terms of grant aid for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, and also an important trade partner. The EU development partners have at the moment ongoing cooperation activities worth more than 440 million euros, according to the EU website. With the overarching objective of reducing poverty, European ODA to Laos targets mainly the sectors of agriculture, trade and economic development, education and health, and reduction of the UXO threats. Important cross-cutting areas are also supported, such as sound public financial management, good governance and human rights, and now climate change. The EU works towards an increased level of coordination, aid efficiency and division of labour.

(Vientiane Times 25 February 2016)

Feasibility study for Laos-Vietnam railway begins

(By Times Reporters)

A feasibility study for a railway linking the Lao capital of Vientiane with VungAng seaport in central Ha Tinh province of Vietnam has begun, a senior Lao official has said. The study of the 550km-long rail line is set to take about two years to complete, scheduled from December 2015 to December 2017, according to *Vietnam News*. The study is being conducted with a US\$3 million grant from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), with the aim of preparing a master plan and providing capacity building to the railway sectors of the two countries. The Lao official has confirmed that the study began a few months ago, adding that Lao officials in charge of the project held meetings with KOICA's experts yesterday in Vientiane to discuss related works. "We are scheduled to meet with Vietnamese officials today," he said. The project's section in Laos will be about 450 km long, while the section in Vietnam was reported to be about 119 km long. The Vientiane-Thakhaek-Muya rail project is technically known as the A3 rail project. If realised, it will connect Laos to VungAng seaport in central Ha Tinh province of Vietnam. It will also be an important link within Asean, the 10-member regional bloc. Currently, the Lao and Chinese governments are developing the Kunming-Singapore rail network, whose section in Laos from Vientiane to the Chinese border is

being developed following the groundbreaking ceremony that took place on December 2, 2015 in Vientiane, according to the Lao Ministry of Public Works and Transport. The Kunming-Singapore rail network will link China to Singapore via Laos, Thailand and Malaysia. With the Lao government having set an ambitious plan to develop four railways in total, the Vientiane-Thakhaek-Muya rail project will link the Kunming-Singapore rail network in Vientiane southward to other two railways, which are planned – the Savan-Lao Bao rail project and the Vientiane-Pakxe-Chongmek rail project. In 2012, the Lao government signed an agreement with a Malaysian investor, Giant Rail Company Limited, to develop the Savan-Lao Bao rail project linking central Savannakhet province of Laos with the Laos-Vietnam Dansavan-Lao Bao border gate over a distance of about 220km in length. This project is still in the preparation stage for construction. In addition, an initial survey was completed on the Vientiane-Pakxe-Chongmek project some 452 km in length connecting Vangtao-Chongmek Lao-Thai border checkpoint in the southern province of Champassak with the Savan-Lao Bao railway project and the Vientiane-Thakhaek-Muya rail project as well as the Vientiane-Boten project.

(Vientiane Times 25 February 2016)

Trade agreement set to boost Laos-US economic cooperation

(By Times Reporters)

A new bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement signed by the governments of Laos and the United States in the US last week will expand economic ties between the two countries, the US Embassy to Laos has said.



United States Trade Representative Mr Michael Froman and Lao Minister of Industry and Commerce MsKhemmaniPholsena sign a bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.

Lao Minister of Industry and Commerce KhemmaniPholsena and United States Trade Representative Michael Froman signed the agreement in the US last week during the Asean Economic Ministers' US Roadshow in San Francisco, California. MsKhemmani and MrFroman co-chaired the roadshow. The agreement creates a forum for the United States and Laos to engage on bilateral trade and investment issues to expand bilateral economic ties, including through trade facilitation, non-tariff barriers, intellectual property, environmental protection, and capacity building, the embassy said in its press release. The agreement also offers a forum to coordinate on multilateral and regional issues, such as Asean Economic Community (AEC) integration. "Today's agreement provides a vehicle for strengthening US-Lao trade and investment relations," said Froman. "It reflects President Obama's commitment to Asean and it will promote increased economic opportunities between us." The signing ceremony was the latest

demonstration of the growing cooperation between Laos and the United States. The United States was Laos' 9th largest export market with an export value amounting to more than US\$24 million in 2014, according to statistics from the Lao Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Meanwhile, Lao imports from the US amounted to more than US\$21.2 million in 2014, making the US the 10th largest importing source for Laos that year. The signing ceremony of the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement took place after the US-Asean Special Summit convened on February 15-16 at Sunnylands in California. The summit was co-chaired by US President Barack Obama and Lao President Choummaly Saisone. During the Roadshow, Asean economic ministers heard from leading technology companies in California's Silicon Valley and discussed ways to enhance trade and investment relations among Asean members and the United States. President and CEO of the US-Asean Business Council, Alexander Feldman, said at the Roadshow event that Asean is significant to the US as the regional bloc has been one of the US's key trade and investment partners. Asean countries are collectively the United States' fourth-largest trading partner. Total United States investment in Asean is more than the combined US investment in China and India, and in 2014 reached US\$13 billion or 10 percent of Asean's total foreign direct investment. With Laos taking the Asean Chair in 2016, MsKhemmani said at the Roadshow event that Laos was ready to work with Asean member countries to further improve the investment and trade climate to draw greater investment and trade to the region. Given that US investors have not been active in some Asean countries, Adjunct Senior Fellow of the East-West Centre based in Hawaii, Charles B. Salmon Jr., said it is important

for a country to establish a rule-based investment environment where businesses

enjoy fair competition and treatment in order to attract foreign investment.

(Vientiane Times 25 February 2016)

242 billion kip lost to corruption, inspection reveals

(By Times Reporters)



Prof. DrBosengkhamVongdara (centre) and MrSingphet-Bounsavattiphphanh (right) address the meeting.

A government inspection committee has uncovered almost 242 billion kip in lost assets due to corruption in 2015, resulting in 95 officials being disciplined. The shocking figures were released in a report that summarised the work of the Inspection Committee of the Party Central Committee, and the Government Inspection Authority. The report was presented yesterday at the annual meeting of the Inspection Committee of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism in Vientiane. Of the 242 billion kip in missing assets, only a little more than 10.2 billion kip had been recovered so far, Vice Chairman of the Inspection Committee of the Party Central Committee, and Government Inspection Authority, MrSingphet-Bounsavattiphphanh told the meeting, which was held at the National Culture Hall. The 95 officials who were disciplined included four women. Sixty-two officials worked in Oudomxay province, 11 at the Ministry of Finance, and 22 in state banks. The cases involved the embezzlement of state assets, accepting and giving out bribes, the production of fake documents for personal gain, and abuse of power to obtain assets belonging to the state and individuals. Some corrupt

officials had faked documents certifying construction and design standards, among other things, for their personal benefit. Inspection authorities also carried out investigations into state expenditure and revenue collection in 303 targeted bodies within 11 ministries and state organisations as well as in 13 provinces and Vientiane. These investigations revealed that more than 3,034.3 billion kip had been lost through various means, of which only 467.59 billion kip had been recovered, according to the report. Deputy Director General of the Inspection Department under the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, MrKiangkeoSilaphom, said the department carried out inspections into 37 targeted bodies under the ministry. In addition, the department investigated 27 state-funded investment projects worth more than 59 billion kip. These projects were found to be in line with the relevant regulations. The meeting also discussed the inspection plan for the 2015-16 fiscal year. During the meeting, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Prof. DrBosengkhamVongdara called for inspection officials to work harder to fulfill their mandates, including improving the work of Party building. He stressed the need to ensure that all the Party members within the ministry observed the Party's statute and acted as role models, while continuing to build Party organs with all-round strength. He told officials at the meeting to improve the management of state expenditure and revenue collection, and urged them to make sure that financial discipline was strict.

(Vientiane Times 26 February 2016)