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### Revue de presse du 14 Au 18 Mars 2016



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

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## ADB provides loan for road maintenance

(By Times Reporters)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a 238 billion kip (US\$29.9 million) loan to the Lao government to finance the Road Sector Governance and Maintenance Project. The five-year project will run from April 2016 to March 2021, in support of the government's strategy to improve road asset management in three main areas.



Deputy Minister of Finance MsThipphakoneChanthavongsa (right) and ADB Country Director to Laos Ms Sandra Nicoll shake hands after signing the loan agreement.

The first is to improve governance and procedures for axle load control, road maintenance planning, and road maintenance financial management. The second is to strengthen institutional capacity at national and provincial levels for undertaking road maintenance activities while the third is to support the physical maintenance of 327km of national and local roads in the provinces of Saravan, Xekong and Attapeu. Improved road quality will facilitate year-round access to markets and services in provincial townships for rural communities. Deputy Minister of Finance MsThipphakoneChanthavongsa on Friday signed the loan agreement on behalf of the government with ADB Country Director to Laos Ms Sandra Nicoll. In her remarks at the signing, MsNicoll noted that as a landlocked country Laos depends heavily on road trans-

port for economic development. The significant expansion of the road network in recent years has supported economic growth. However, road maintenance must keep pace with the rapid road network development. Inadequate maintenance results in poor road conditions, frequent road closures and constraints on the movement of people and goods, which have economic and social consequences, MsNicoll said. The government's efforts to address road maintenance issues are well recognised. The Road Maintenance Fund was established in 2001 to prioritise and finance the maintenance of roads as an integral part of a well functioning road management system. Despite significant progress, the upkeep of roads remains a challenge. Institutional capacity needs to be strengthened and sustainable funding for road maintenance provided to ensure a high quality road asset management system. MsNicoll said the ADB collaborated closely with the government and other development partners including the World Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency in designing the project. It builds on existing road asset management systems and focuses on areas for improvement. "We are confident that the project will be implemented successfully in partnership and with strong support from the Lao government. ADB will continue to work closely with the government during project implementation to ensure that the project improves road asset management in Laos," MsNicoll said.

(Vientiane Times 14 March 2016)

## Lao exports to EU enjoy strong growth

( By Times Reporters)

Lao exports to the European Union amounted to 204.9 million euros from January-October 2015, growing by 16.6 percent from the same period last year. Textiles and clothing remained the largest imported commodities from Laos making up 63 percent of total imports, growing by 8.1 percent, according to an EU report. Coffee, the second largest import from Laos, accounted for 10.6 percent of total imports increasing by 33.3 percent, while sugar made up 4.8 percent of total exports from Laos experiencing unusually strong growth of 513.4 percent. The large percentage increase in sugar exports was most likely due to it coming from a low base compared to the same period in year 2014. The increase in Laos' exports to the EU market could be linked to several factories in the Savan-Seno special economic zone in Savannakhet province beginning to export their products. In the meantime, the EU's total exports to Laos for the same period stood at 88.1 million euros, significantly decreasing by 36.1 percent. The decrease may be linked to Laos becoming more regionally and globally integrated, with the nation sourcing products from more markets around the world. Most of the key exports to Laos experienced moderate to sharp declines, including machinery, gems and jewellery, precious metals, pharmaceutical products, malt, starches, insulin, wheat gluten, electrical machinery and equipment. However, automotive parts, which represent 6.5 percent of EU exports to Laos, continued to enjoy robust growth of 107.7 per-

cent. Overall, the EU's trade deficit with Laos widened to 186.4 million euros (from 133.2 million euros for the same period last year). The EU is the fourth largest investor in Laos after China, Thailand and Vietnam. The EU works closely with Laos under the framework of the EU-Asean Cooperation Agreement to ensure an effective environment for trade and investment relations. As a Least Developed Country, Laos benefits from the most favourable regime available under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences, namely the Everything But Arms scheme. The Everything But Arms scheme gives the 48 Least Developed Countries - including Laos - duty free access to the EU for exports of all products, except arms and ammunition. The EU is committed to fair trade and open markets. It is the world's largest trading partner and the main destination for exports from 130 countries worldwide. It therefore has a strong interest in creating conditions in which trade can prosper. Facilitating trade is also an important part of the EU's strategy to foster development and reduce poverty. The EU cooperation also helps Laos develop its trade policy and capacity so as to maximise economic development and poverty reduction as well as to integrate into the world economy. Trade cooperation in this regard aims at improving market access on a preferential basis and assisting the beneficiary country in improving the structures and means of exploiting this market access.

(Vientiane Times 14 March 2016)

## Plans announced for Francophonie Festival 2016

*(By PhetphoxaySengpaseuth)*

The Embassy of France to Laos and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a joint press conference on Friday to announce the programme for Francophonie Month in 2016. This month, Francophonie member countries traditionally celebrate their common use of the French language and various aspects of French culture. Member governments under the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) celebrate their linguistic grouping annually. International Day of Francophonie commemorates the signing on March 20, 1970, of the Niamey Convention which resulted in the grouping together of French-speaking states. A programme of events to mark Francophonie Month in Laos was announced at the press conference, which was attended by Vice President of the Lao Journalists' Association, Mr Somsanouk Mixay. Speaking at the press conference, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Europe and America Department, Mr Khouanta Phalivong, said Laos will hold events to celebrate the International Day of Francophonie with other francophone countries around the world. He said the festival aims to gather a wide audience of French and Lao speakers, including Lao nationals and French and non-French speaking expatriates during a day dedicated to promoting the plurality of the French-speaking community in Laos. "Since the ac-

cession of Laos to the OIF in 1991, dozens of events have been organised every year in Vientiane as well as in the provinces to celebrate the values of Francophonie," he said. "This is an opportunity for all Lao French speakers and nationals of OIF member states to unite and highlight the multiculturalism inherent in the notion of Francophonie." The Francophone Festival will take place at the Sokpaluang campus of the National University of Laos. Also speaking at the press conference, French Ambassador to Laos Ms Claudine Ledoux said the widely used French language is a source of values and sharing. Francophonie is not based on a relationship of domination or imperialism but on universal values that our language is intended to convey, especially solidarity, she added. She explained that cultural diversity was also a mark of the French language and it is in this fundamental principle that our joint actions are part of the Francophonie here in Laos. A programme of celebrations will take place in Vientiane from March 19 to 27. The games of La Francophonie, held under the auspices of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, are multi-sport and cultural competitions in individual or team events. There are sports competitions, cultural competitions, the Grand Duchy short films, taste of France, a poetry contest, and the Lao Olympiads, Ms Ledoux said.

*(Vientiane Times 14 March 2016)*

## Exhibition raising money and profile for Lao art

(By VisithTeppalath)

An exhibition featuring 28 colourful oil paintings of Lao women in traditional costumes by MrSompaseuthChounlamany is drawing art enthusiasts following its opening in Vientiane last week.



MrPhonepaseuthVannalathsamy with his traditional goldwork embroidery.

The exhibition's opening ceremony took place at Maison de la Culture de Ban Naxay (House of Culture in Naxay village) on Thursday and was attended by Vice President of the Lao Journalists' Association MrSomsanoukMixay, Deputy Director of the

exhibiting house MsXaypraniChanthalangsy, foreign ambassadors, art lovers and the media. The exhibition aims to promote the fine art of oil painting while encouraging local artistic expression in others. The award-winning MrSompaseuth, who blends realism and impressionism, is a USA-based Lao artist with a great love for oil painting, having exhibited his works both in Laos and the US. MrSompaseuth told *Vientiane Times* he was very happy as this was his first solo exhibition, having previously exhibited only in a group. "I want to promote more art activities in Laos and preserve the fine tradition of Lao costume through the arts. This is my first solo exhibition and I'm proud to support the exhibition house and its activities by donating paintings for auction," he said. MrPhonepaseuthVannalathsamy, from Luang Prabang province, also displayed his exquisite traditional goldwork embroidery on the opening day. Speaking at the opening ceremony, MrSomsanouk congratulated the gallery on holding such an impressive exhibition and congratulated MrSompaseuth for bringing his beautiful art for public display. An auction of some of the paintings began on March 10 and ends today at 5pm. All the money raised will help preserve Maison de la Culture de Ban Naxay and promote its artistic activities. The exhibition can be seen at the gallery on Sisangvone Road in Naxay village, Xaysettha district, until March 31.

(*Vientiane Times* 15 March 2016)

## Laos to further protect its biodiversity

*By Phaisythong Chandara*

Laos aims to move forward over the coming years with a clear understanding of what needs to be done in a bid to ensure sustainable development and the protection of its rich biodiversity. Biodiversity in Laos is directly related to poverty and development. It is thus crucial to conserve and protect it. Studies have indicated that as much as 80 percent of the country's rural population depends on fish as a main source of protein, non-timber forest products as part of daily subsistence and fresh water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. Loss of biodiversity, on which so much of human life depends on, is one of the world's most pressing crises. It is estimated that the current species extinction rate is between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than it would normally be, according to the International Union for Conservation (IUCN). Globally, converting natural areas to farming and urban development, introducing invasive alien species, polluting or over-exploiting resources including water and soils and harvesting wild plants and animals at unsustainable levels are the main drivers of this loss. This was a main message delivered by IUCN Laos Country Manager Mr Adam Starr during the Validation Workshop for the 2nd National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2025) and the 5th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held yesterday in Vientiane. The meeting's aim was to validate the key findings of more than six months of research and preparation required in the finalisation of the action plan and the national report. The action plan, prepared as part of

Laos' commitment to being a signatory of the CBD, lays out an action plan and strategy, which will consist of six main strategies, including protecting ecosystems; valuing biodiversity; strengthening knowledge; enhancing communication, awareness and public knowledge; implementing effective plans, projects and programmes; and climate change and disaster risk management. "A large part of the economy in the country is based on nature, with hydropower, agriculture, and agroforestry all significantly dependent on the health of ecosystems," Mr Starr said. However despite being rich in biodiversity, Mr Starr highlighted that Laos' wide array of ecosystems has been changing for some time now, due in part to human activities. "Challenges to Laos' rich biodiversity are wildlife trade, deforestation and large scale development projects," he said. "While development is essential for the wellbeing of the people of Laos, sustainability and protection of biodiversity should be an integral part for all economic activities." Citing the IUCN, Mr Starr noted that the IUCN has worked closely with the government of Laos to ensure that the ecosystems and natural resources of the country are effectively conserved and sustainably utilised in an equitable manner that contributes to the socio-economic development of the country. Yesterday's meeting was attended by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's Forest Resource Management Department Director General Mr Vongdeuan Vongsihalath and other invited guests.

*(Vientiane Times 17 March 2016)*

## Lao satellite should help with low cost services

*(By SouknilundonSouthivongnorath)*

Officials from the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication recently replied to questions among members of the public asking about the potential benefits for them after the first Lao satellite was launched into space a few months ago. The Department of Telecommunications under the ministry said there were various things that Lao people would benefit from after the satellite launch and the most important is they would like society to utilise its service systems. About four months after the launching LaoSAT-1 satellite, there were a lot of comments from members of the public asking the government side whether they would benefit from the cheaper cost of internet services in Laos. Then Vientiane Times brought the questions to the ministry last week. Director General of the Lao Satellite project under the Telecommunications Department DrPhouluang Kanolath, who is a representative of the government side, answered that now that Laos has its own satellite, the prices for internet should go down as the providers will no longer have to pay rental from other satellites. "We would like local people in society to access the real service systems of the LaoSAT-1 satellite," he explained. The government received LaoSAT-1's In-Orbit Delivery and witnessed the opening of the Lao Asia-Pacific Satellite Company Limited last week. The ministry also reported that the telecommunications sector in Laos will have more convenience after Laos got the satellite, including high quality services in In-

formation Communication Technology which will cover every area in Laos, including remote areas where fiber optic cables do not reach. These services will include Direct To Home (DTH), Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), National Emergency Communications Network (NECN), Television Production Centre (TVPC), International Gateway Station (IGS), and Wireless Broadband Cognitive Networks (WBCN) which serve the internet in the present day by using the Time-Division-Long Term Evolution (TD-LTE) 4G system. DrPhouluang said there are a lot of services which will be made possible by the satellite, aiming to make it easier than today in regards to communication between the remote areas and central provinces or the capital, including e-learning and e-medical services. The LaoSAT-1 satellite represents a new technology for Laos which can help further the country's socio-economic development and boost the quality of telecommunications in Laos. In November 2015, the LaoSAT-1 satellite was launched into space and until now the experiments relating to the satellite's technical capabilities have proved it is fully functional for telecommunications. The satellite was launched from China into the 128.5 degrees East orbital slot, which has been specifically allocated to Laos. The satellite launch is part of the government's efforts to propel the country towards industrialisation and employ advanced technology for telecommunications.

*(Vientiane Times 18 March 2016)*