



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 21 Au 25 Mars 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 Vientia

➤ **Vientiane Times:**

- [NUOL students debate importance of forests](#)
- [Borikhamxay, Khammuan get set to improve visitor experience](#)
- [Govt bans sale and purchase of land in LuangPrabang SEZ](#)
- [Phongsalymountains become coffee plantations](#)
- [Huaphan's new natural wonder to attract visitors](#)
- [Lao-Thai border fire extinguished](#)
- [EU supports children's rights project in Laos](#)

NUOL students debate importance of forests

(By SangkhomsayBubphanouvong)

Students from four faculties of the National University of Laos on Monday gathered at the Faculty of Forest Sciences for a debate to mark International Day of Forests (March 21). The debate was held to broaden students' knowledge of forestry, develop their public speaking skills, and show younger students a new aspect of education. This was the second year a debate was held to mark International Day of Forests. This year it seemed they were more interested in the debate topics. The first was "Between people in towns and people in rural areas, who will better preserve forests?" while the second topic was "The government should spend more money on forest conservation than business development". The opening ceremony was attended by Vice Dean of the Faculty of Forest Sciences, Assoc. Prof. DrKhamlaPhanvilay, and lecturers and students from the faculties of Forest Sciences, Law and Political Science, Social Sciences, and Environmental Sciences. DrKhamla said it was hoped the debate would engender lively discussion and

produce some interesting ideas in relation to social and economic development. He also thought it would be a good opportunity for students to share their knowledge. The objective of this year's debate was to generate a deeper understanding of the importance of forests. The debate by students from the Faculty of Law and Political Science was supported by the European Union, Care and other international organisations. The Faculty of Law and Political Science's debate group was headed by a third year student, MrThammasinSithakham. He said the objective of the debate was to highlight the importance of forests and the environment, especially conservation. MrThammasin added that the students held debates each year, covering various topics. Last year, the Faculty of Law and Political Science also organised a debate to mark International Day of Forests. The United Nations declared March 21 to be International Day of Forests in 2012.

(Vientiane Times 22 March 2016)

Borikhamxay, Khammuan get set to improve visitor experience

(By Times Reporters)

Better management of tourist sites in Borikhamxay province is required to improve the experience and make access more convenient for visitors, local tourism operators noted yesterday.



Dragon Cave is one of the most fascinating attractions in Borikhamxay province.

--Photo Phoosab TVS

ment of New Zealand through the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism under the Tourism Activity Promotion in Laos Project. Under this project, conservation activities are undertaken with the involvement of local people, with the aim of encouraging stable tourism in each area. The first day of the visit included riding in boats made from alloy bomb casings left over from the Indo-

This was the opinion expressed by two popular tour operators, EXO Travel Laos and Green

Discovery, who participated in an official survey trip to Borikhamxay and Khammuan provinces from March 21-23. The

survey was supported by the govern-

china War, at Vang Nam Yen (Blue Lake) near Thabak village. The team also watched textiles being woven in Napavan, Phontan and Pakha villages in Khamkeud district, Borikhamxay province. A representative of the Borikhamxay Information, Culture and Tourism Department, Mr Xaykham Panyanouvong, said "It was great to receive advice directly from the tour operators, so we will pass on recommendations to local people about improving facilities for visitors." "One of their suggestions was to improve the way down the riverbank to get to the boats in Thabak village," he said. The team began their survey trip in Borikhamxay province to look at new tourist attractions before continuing on to Khammuan province to visit Thalang village, a staging point for boat trips on the Nam Theun 2 reservoir, along with the Nakai Tourist Information Centre, Buddha Cave and Pa Seuam Cave, Nongthao Lake, Xang Cave, Green Climbers Home, and Thakhaek old town. Today they will visit Konglor Cave and Konglor, Nam Sanam textile weaver villages and the Stone Forest viewpoint. Mr Xaykham said tourism had the potential to help local people in both provinces to benefit from visitors but they needed to improve the management of local tourism services and work together to promote their various attractions, particularly Borikhamxay province. "The ministry and the New Zealand government would like tourism in the region to be sustainable which will help local people to benefit and is one of the strategies to end poverty in Laos," he added.

(Vientiane Times 23 March 2016)

Govt bans sale and purchase of land in LuangPrabang SEZ

(By Times Reporters)

With a special economic zone (SEZ) slated for development in LuangPrabang province, the government has issued instructions for people living within the planned zone not to sell or purchase land until further notice. The Phousy Group has been granted a 99-year concession on an area of land in Chomphet district across the Mekong River from the provincial capital, and all land transactions have been prohibited to prevent land speculation. Development of the zone on an area of 4,850 hectares is expected to cost the Phousy Group US\$1.2 billion, and will bring the total number of SEZs nationwide to 13. The announcement from the government was issued on March 7 after an agreement to build the zone was signed earlier this year by representatives from the government and the Phousy Group. Citing the notice, people who try to buy or sell land from this point forward will be penalised under the relevant laws and regulations. Compensation for land within the zone that is needed for development is under consideration, according to the provincial authorities. The development is part of plans to create a new town outside the provincial capital, while ensuring the town's cultural integrity is preserved. The zone will be located about 10km outside LuangPrabang town centre with another site in Chomphet district on the other side of the Mekong. Based on the plan, the Phousy Group

will build a bridge across the river along with roads, electricity, water supply and other amenities to attract businesses to the area. People who live in the area, along with visitors, currently use ferries to cross the Mekong to travel the short distance between the town of LuangPrabang and Chomphet district. A bridge will facilitate tourism, trade and investment in the province. Designed as a new town, the zone will feature a 23-storey building, schools, hospitals, a shopping centre, bank, hotels, restaurants, and residences for older people. Areas for vegetable gardens are also planned. A one-stop operating service will be introduced for businesses in the zone to ensure transparency and accountability and to facilitate development. When the development is complete, the government believes it will help to boost economic growth in the province and generate job opportunities for local people. The zone will not only serve as a driver of economic growth, but will also spur development in other areas. Other Special and Specific Economic Zones in Laos are the That Luang Marsh SEZ in Vientiane, the Savan-Seno SEZ in Savannakhet province, the Golden Triangle SEZ in Bokeo province, the Boten Dankham SEZ in LuangNamtha province, the Vientiane Long Thanh Golf Course, the Phoukhiew SEZ in Khammuan province, and the Pakxe-Japan Specific Economic Zone in Champassak province.

(Vientiane Times 23 March 2016)

Phongsaly mountains become coffee plantations

(By KhonesavanhLatsaphao)

Laos' northernmost province of Phongsaly appears to be exchanging the trees and shrubs on its hilltops for coffee and tea plantations. Chinese companies were already growing thousands of tea bushes on the fertile slopes but now they are also planting coffee trees at higher altitudes where it is cooler. Director of the Phongsaly provincial Agriculture and Forestry Department, Mr Santi Keoyasan, told Vientiane Times on Tuesday that 2,500 hectares of coffee trees are now being cultivated in the mountainous province. Provincial authorities are hoping Chinese growers will plant the crop on 12,000 hectares in total. "But we won't fell large primary forest tree species on the mountains, only shrubs, because the coffee trees will grow under the trees," Mr Santisaid. Commercial crops such as coffee and tea are well suited to this area because most of the land is hilly. Popular coffee varieties are normally grown in cooler climates and if grown in hotter areas the resulting crop is of poor quality. The promotion of industrial crops is a priority of the government as it seeks to build a long term socio-economic development programme. Phongsaly's coffee

plantations should not affect soil or rivers because the provincial agricultural authorities have provided growers with land that is a long way from watershed areas. But an official from another provincial department, who asked not to be named, said water in nearby rivers was receding. She suggested this might be because indigenous tree species had been felled to make way for coffee trees, or because of changing weather patterns. One of the problems with water supply in Phongsaly province is that it has not yet been possible to collect water from pipes at night to store for use during the day. The provincial capital is located in mountainous terrain and does not have as many water sources as flatland areas. The importance of a regular water supply is increasing as Laos becomes more regionally connected through better road networks, tourism and regional trade. Several years ago, some villages in Phongsaly relocated to areas with more water because their natural springs had dried up owing to deforestation after local villagers attempted to encroach into forest areas to grow upland rice crops, but this has now been stopped.

(Vientiane Times 23 March 2016)

Huaphan's new natural wonder to attract visitors

(By Phaisythong Chandara)

Phavang Waterfall, a beautiful natural tourist site in Huaphan province, will be officially opened on April 12 seeking to attract both local and foreign visitors. The new tourist site is located near Paonuea in Xamtaï district, 25km from the village and 5km off the main road, according to the District Information, Culture and Tourism Office. An official from the office's tourism sector Mr Somsouk Xayavong told Vientiane Times yesterday the district authority had developed the

area to be a new tourist site after it was discovered at the end of last year, saying "This is one of the most wonderful waterfalls to be seen in the province and is surrounded by beautiful scenery." Mr Somsouk said the entrance fee was 5,000 Kip for Lao people and 10,000 kip for foreigners. As there was no public bus going to the waterfall the best way for visitors to get there was to hire a bicycle, motorbike or minibus. Mr Somsouk explained the 700m-long waterfall featured

clean water flowing from a high mountain to feed a lake below. "Opening a new tourist site there will help promote the district's socio-economic growth, especially to the benefit of local people," MrSomsouk said. He said the development of the waterfall was carried out by district authorities after local officials found the site. MrSomsouk explained that tourists would be able to see not only the waterfall but also natural views around the forested site. There were also cultural activities, especially involving the Tai Daeng ethnic group, one of many groups in the province. MrSomsouk explained the district authority planned to give the green light to business investment for further development on the site to increase future visitation. Although the province had many tourist sites, the tourism sector had not blossomed due to a lack of basic infrastructure, especially road access. MrSomsouk added

that roads in the province had been improved to facilitate tourism, trade, communication as well as foreign investment. Huaphan is famous for its intricate Lao silk and cotton weavings. For those interested in learning about weaving and purchasing high quality products at reasonable prices directly from the producers themselves, Huaphan is well worth the visit. In particular, Xamtaï district is renowned for producing high quality silk and cotton goods. Visitors can observe the process of making natural dyes and hand weaving complex traditional designs, which are unique to the province, and purchase pieces to take home. Huaphan has abundant natural resources and a rugged landscape that led the Lao People's Party's selection of the area as its base during the Indochina War years. The province is famous for its limestone mountains, temples and caverns, with over one hundred caves in the area.

(Vientiane Times 24 March 2016)

Lao-Thai border fire extinguished

(By KhonesavanhLatsaphao)

A wildfire which was burning out of control on Wednesday on the border of Laos and Thailand in the provinces of Bokeo and Chang Rai has been brought under control by the relevant authorities. However, the origin of the blaze remains a bone of contention, with Lao authorities keen to make it known that the fire did not originate from Laos as has been claimed on social media. Director of Bokeo provincial Agriculture and Forestry Department MrKhamson Keopraseud told *Vientiane Times* on Thursday that he also saw the Facebook site mentioning this matter and citing that the fire began on the Lao border and spread to a forest in Thailand. The province of Bokeo shares a land link with Thailand in Paktha district, and three villages in Laos are located near the site of this border. "We asked the local

authorities to check the information and they answered that Thai farmers burned off weeds and stubble before planting a new rice crop. The fire then spread to a mountain forest in Laos," MrKhamson said. The fire is in the area of Chiengthong village in Paktha district, but there were no houses damaged by the fire because the community area is situated in the lowland and the wildfire was on the mountain, which is quite far from the township. However local authorities and villagers helped to stop the flames. Based on the *Nation* and *ANN* on Thursday, air hazard levels in Chiang Rai have risen to nearly 300 microgrammes of pollutants per cubic metre, the worst in the country so far this year, which has caused thousands of haze-affected residents to seek medical treatment. As forest fires continue to occur in the far north of

Thailand, the border district of Mae Sai had 200 microgrammes of pollutants per cubic metre, while Muang district was at 182 mcg as of 3pm on Wednesday. Other provinces with hazardous pollution levels included Mae Hong Son at 191 mcg, Phrae at 150, Phayao at 139 and Lampang's Mae Mo district at 136. In Laos, forest fires occur every year between February and April. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry alerted provincial forestry departments nationwide to prepare for and prevent forest fires. Fires not only affect wildlife and the natural environment but can cause extensive damage to both property and human life. To prevent forest

fires occurring the ministry has advised farmers through provincial forestry departments to burn felled tree stumps on their farms at least 5m from wooded areas, and has prohibited them from starting forest fires to hunt animals. This week a wildfire occurred in Huaphan province in the northern part of the country after the hot weather arrived for this year but the blaze was stopped by over 30 villagers near the forest. Mr Khamson said that every year forest fires occur in the northern provinces, including Bokeo. However as he has observed Luang Prabang province is burned quite often to clear land to grow crops.

(Vientiane Times 25 March 2016)

EU supports children's rights project in Laos

(By Times Reporters)

The Together for Children's Rights project has been officially launched to participate in the protection and promotion of children's rights in Laos with financial support from the European Union (EU). The project aims to raise awareness of the need to protect the rights of children, upgrading basic knowledge of children's rights among local communities, targeting children, teenagers and also adults. It will also seek to upgrade the skills and knowledge of local social organisations and empower young people to follow up, inspect, campaign, protect and promote children's rights. The project is running from February 1, 2016 to July 31, 2018, with financial support from the EU totalling some 290,000 euros or about 2.6 billion kip. The project will target children's rights pro-

grammes in the capital Vientiane as well as the provinces of Luang Prabang and Borikhamxay, with some 4,275 children and young people expected to benefit. The project launch "Together for Children's Rights" was held at Vansana Hotel in Vientiane on Thursday to introduce the project to official partners. The meeting was attended by the President of the Aid Children with a Disability Association Mr Somphet Akhavyong, Deputy Director of the Pre-School and Primary Education Department under the Ministry of Education and Sports, Mr Kheun Xaysanavongxay and the Programme Director of Save the Children, Mr Vilasack Viraphanh. Various issues in relation to the aims, goals and implementation of the project were discussed at the meeting.

(Vientiane Times 25 March 2016)