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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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## President gives instructions to new government

(By SomxaySengdara)

President BounnhangVorachit has instructed the new government to crack down on violations of financial discipline and other undesirable forms of conduct, and improve the management of crop harvests and the use of natural resources. Mr Bounnhang, who is also Secretary General of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, highlighted these points yesterday when addressing the government's inaugural meeting at the Prime Minister's Office.



President BounnhangVorachit ( seated, centre ), Prime Minister ThonglounSisoulith ( seated, second right ) and members of the new government pose together during the inauguration session yesterday.--Photo Khamphanh

The new government, led by Prime Minister ThonglounSisoulith, was approved by the National Assembly at its inaugural session on April 20, which also approved the eighth five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan. "The government needs to urgently implement the national socio-economic development plan, which should ensure the prevention of and address undesirable conduct at central and local levels of government. In particular, attention must be paid to financial discipline at the deepest levels, the lack of which has caused the growing risk of a crisis," Mr Bounnhang said. He also stressed that the government should take serious steps to regulate all businesses by enforcing the rules on account holders, modernising revenue collection and curbing expenditure. "This is the key task that the government has to address urgently. By doing so, we can strengthen national fin-

ances and the budget and restrict the abuse of power and corruption, which damage the role and influence of the Party," President Bounnhang said. Referring to undesirable conduct, he cited drug dealing and abuse, crime, road accidents, human trafficking, and the migration of Lao workers to other countries. He called on the government to investigate these issues, draw up plans, and use effective measures to curb them. Regarding the use of natural resources, Mr Bounnhang reminded government members that people were seriously concerned about fluctuating crop yields and the sale of their produce. He said the government needed to ensure that the nation's resources were efficiently utilised. "The government needs to have a clear plan concerning the use of resources, ensuring that value is added to produce so that people and the nation benefit from harvests," he said. "In the coming years, we absolutely have to stop exporting timber," he added. He also stressed the need to create policies to facilitate investment by the private sector in remote and rural areas. Referring to the current situation, the President said Laos was going through a transition period with a change in the content and style of leadership by the Party Central Committee in overseeing the work of government agencies. He asked the government to consider all issues carefully when making improvements to the government structure at the central and local levels. Mr Bounnhang called on all government members, of whom most are members of the Party Central Committee, in their capacity as managers to be good models for change. He advised them to continuously improve themselves, make breakthroughs in their area of work, be aware of organisational discipline and political and work responsibilities, and to be stricter in addressing undesirable conduct.

(Vientiane Times 03 May 2016)

## New govt to tackle corruption, reduce poverty levels

(By SomxaySengdara)

The government intends to crack down on corruption and other undesirable forms of conduct, while also tackling poverty reduction and creating sustainable ways for people to earn a living.



Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith speaks to the media.

This was the message delivered by Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith as the head of the new government at a press conference following the government's inaugural meeting on Friday. Mr Thongloun began his address by saying the government would first strive to maintain political stability, social order, and security. "Above all, we have to ensure that the country has strong political stability, security and social order. We will address undesirable conduct such as drug abuse, human trafficking, robbery, and destructive activities on online social networks. We will take action to overcome challenges, and wholeheartedly address corruption." In addition, Mr Thongloun said, the government would step up efforts to alleviate poverty and create sustainable methods of income generation. He noted the continuing development at the grassroots level and widespread rural development, which was taking place in line with the new direction of rural development in harmony with urbanisation. Third on the list of the new government's goals were the enhancement of guidance and leadership to facilitate development in a green and sustainable way on the road to

industrialisation and modernisation. There should be a strong drive towards agricultural development, especially clean agriculture, along with the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises to boost productivity and ensure a strong revenue base. Recognising human resource development as crucial to overall development, the government would expand education and health infrastructure in rural areas, improve social welfare services, and broaden people's general knowledge, Mr Thongloun added. The government also recognised the need for the continuous improvement, strengthening and modernisation of mechanisms and regulations in public administration and working methods, as well as the amendment of laws so they were more enforceable and would result in effective economic and social management. The government's inaugural meeting approved the government's action plan, working methods and style, and assigned duties and responsibilities to the prime minister, deputy prime ministers, and ministers to the Prime Minister's Office. A clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of ministries and government agencies should be outlined, Mr Thongloun said. Concerning foreign affairs, the government reaffirmed the country's unchanged policy of peace, independence, friendship, and cooperation with other nations. At the press conference, Prime Minister Thongloun spoke about areas of work that would be bolstered in the near future. He highlighted a crackdown on undesirable social conduct, more efficient revenue collection and expenditure management, improved coordination between ministries and local administrations, and addressing the possible impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

(Vientiane Times 03 May 2016)

## IFAD supports food security, nutrition project

(By Times Reporters)

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has provided US\$24 million (about 195 billion kip) to support food security and nutrition in Laos.



MsThipphakoneChanthavongsa( right ) shakes hands with MsHoonae Kim after the signing ceremony.

IFAD is granting support for a new six-year project (2016-2021) following the success of 13 previous projects that have benefited over 238,870 impoverished households. Laos has been receiving assistance from IFAD since 1980 and in 2015 marked the 35th year of cooperation between the two parties, in which IFAD has provided financing for 13 projects worth US\$122.4 million, with US\$74.8 million in loans and US\$47.6 million as grants. Now the government and IFAD have signed a new Financing Agreement for the Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition Project, which is expected to run in the four northern provinces of Phongsaly, Huaphan, Oudomxay and Xiengkhuang. The document was signed in Vientiane on Thursday by Deputy Minister of Finance MsThipphakoneChanthavongsa and IFAD Director of the Asia and Pacific Division MsHoonaeKim. Speaking at the signing, MsThipphakone said the government is following the 8th National Socio-economic Development Plan (NSED) by ensuring food security and nutrition for all citizens, adding “A lack of food and water means that people have no life.” In addition, MsThipphakone said the project will en-

courage local authorities to participate more in ensuring food security by improving harvesting methods and ensuring the nutrition of products to add to their value and gain more market access. “To ensure effective implementation in using resources for each task, we urge that all sectors work closely together to monitor, support and rectify any problems that may arise during the implementation period,” MsThipphakone said. “We need to implement national projects on food security that will yield good results. The target of the agriculture and forestry sector is to grow by 3.2 percent, accounting for about 19 percent of total GDP by 2020.” MsThipphakone said IFAD will continue to support Laos in implementing the NSED to ensure the country moves forward and graduates from least developed status in 2020. The aim of the project is to support the poverty alleviation strategy and improve food security especially for people in rural areas. In particular it will target people who have low crop yields, a low income and poor nutrition, especially women and children under 5 years old. The project is a major development that aims to improve productivity and improve living conditions for all, with a focus on the disadvantaged, children, and women of reproductive age. It will help to reduce malnutrition as well as raise living conditions as part of a clean and sustainable development process. The project will also enhance capacity building in all government sectors in order to put in place the national strategy on food security as well as advising local authorities on its implementation. The signing ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry DrPhouangparisakPravongviengkham, representatives from NGOs, and other guests.

(Vientiane Times 03 May 2016)

## Second phase of Nam Ou hydropower project kicks off

*(By Times Reporters)*

The Nam Ou River Basin Hydropower Project has launched its second phase of construction, after completing the Nam Ou 2, 5 and 6 hydropower plants during the first phase. The opening ceremony for the second phase, comprising the Nam Ou 1, 3, 4 and 7 dams, took place in Vientiane on Thursday. The hydropower development project on the Nam Ou cascade is located in Phongsaly and Luang Prabang provinces. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mr Somdy Duangdy, Minister of Energy and Mines Dr Khammany Inthilath, General Manager of Powerchina Resources Ltd., Mr Du Chunguo, and the Consul General of China in Luang Prabang province Mr Li Baoguang attended the ceremony. Other officials from the government and business sectors were also present. The project includes seven dams, with a projected total capacity of 1,156 MW and an annual energy output of 5,017 GWh, according to Powerchina Resources Ltd. Construction of the seven dams is divided into two phases, with an estimated total cost of US\$2.8 billion. In the first stage of the project, the Nam Ou 2, 5 and 6 dams will be developed. Their eventual total capacity is estimated at 540 MW, with an annual energy output of 2,187 GWh. Construction began in October, 2012, and the first dam began operating in Decem-

ber 2015. In the second stage of the project, the Nam Ou 1, 3, 4, and 7 power stations will be developed. Their projected total capacity is 732 MW, with an annual energy output of 2,830 GWh. Construction of phase 2 begins this month and will end in 2020. The concession period is 29 years after the project begins commercial operation. After that time, the project will be handed over to the government. Upgrading the power grid, transmitting power across northern Laos, and nationwide interconnectivity will be easier when all the dams are built. Power shortages will also be eased, according to the company. During the ceremony, Dr Khammany said the Nam Ou hydropower project is endorsed by the government. The purpose of the project is to develop basic infrastructure and to eradicate poverty among the Lao people, including those in Luang Prabang and Phongsaly provinces. The project will also spur socio-economic development in the two provinces. Dr Khammany called for the project developer, engineers and consultants to monitor the project closely, to ensure it meets international standards and is completed on time. The developer should also create jobs, generate income for relocated people, and improve their standard of living, he added.

*(Vientiane Times 03 May 2016)*

## New PM vows to tackle mismanagement

*(By Times Reporters)*

The government intends to keep in touch with reality in attempting to address various problems, but needs a lot of time to find solutions to all of the issues. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith made the statement at a press conference on Friday in response to questions about government measures to address unapproved and so-called 'ghost' development projects, public debt, revenue

shortfall, budget leaks, and corruption. "The government wants to be realistic in resolving these problems and begs for time while asking the media to monitor our actions," he said. The press conference, which followed on from the government's inaugural meeting, was greeted with enthusiasm by the representatives of various media outlets as the new head of government took the stage and

opened the floor to questions. A representative from the Economic-Commerce newspaper asked how the government intended to address corruption and deal with unapproved and so-called 'ghost' development projects. MrThongloun said Laos had a complex body of laws, policies and measures and the government would implement them step by step. They would begin with building public awareness and understanding with regard to corruption, as it is a threat to the country and the development process. Concerning unapproved and 'ghost' projects, he said the government had discussed the issue and agreed that unapproved development projects were detrimental to the country's progress and also created chronic debt. "The government has discussed this issue seriously. The Ministry of Planning and Investment and other ministries, including the Ministry of Finance, will work together urgently to limit and prevent corruption and address the issue effectively," Prime Minister Thongloun said. MrThongloun has

years of experience in various fields of government administration and a high level of education. He was previously Deputy Prime Minister from 2001 to 2016 and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2006 to 2016. From 1987 to 1992 he was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, from 1993 to 1997 he was Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, and was a member of the National Assembly from 1998 to 2000. He became Deputy Prime Minister and President of the State Planning Committee in 2001. In his response to media questions about the government's top priorities, MrThongloun said the main goals would be to tackle poverty, accelerate development in remote areas, increase the income base, and attract more domestic and foreign investment in projects that would benefit the nation. "This is my intention and I will lead the government in carrying it out," he said. MrThongloun stressed that the government was primed to move the country forwards, noting that the nation would not be backward.

*(Vientiane Times 04 May 2016)*

## Laos, China sign cooperation agreements

*(By Somsack Pongkhao)*

Laos and China have signed a number of cooperation documents as a guideline to further strengthen their relations, friendship and cooperation in the near future.



*MrBounnhangVorachit and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping attend the signing ceremony in China.*

The agreements were signed during a goodwill visit to China from May 3-5 by Secre-

tary General of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and President of the Lao PDR MrBounnhangVorachit, in response to an invitation from his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. The agreements concern economic and technical cooperation, exchange programmes related to Laos' hosting of the Asean Summit this year, China's provision of equipment to wipe out locusts in Laos, production investment, and loans given by China to fund infrastructure projects. The agreements also relate to a loan for a processing and logistics project in LuangNamtha province and a loan from China to fund the installation of a power transmission line in Borikhamxay province and another power line linking Saravan and Xekong provinces. This is MrBounnhang's first visit to China since he became Party Secretary General in January and President of the

Lao PDR in April this year. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two leaders reaffirmed their intention to deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership and mutual assistance, aiming to maintain peace, stability and cooperation in the region and the world. The two countries also agreed to further exchange visits by delegations at various levels to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation. The two countries also agreed to further enhance cooperation in all areas ranging from politics, economics, law, special economic zones, energy, education, health, information and culture. President Xi Jinping was quoted by Xinhua as saying that the visit showed the Lao side attached great importance to Laos-China ties. He called on both sides to seize opportunities to improve their bilateral comprehensive strategic cooperation. The traditional friendship between the two countries is their shared treasure, Xi said, stressing that China was ready to work with the new Lao leadership to build a

community with a shared future. Xi called on the two socialist countries to enhance high-level contacts, maintain a high level of political mutual trust, improve exchanges between the two ruling parties, and promote mutual learning in governance. Over the past decades, Laos and China have enhanced their cooperative relations in a number of areas ranging from politics to economics and socio-cultural fields. Apart from exchange visits by delegations at various levels, the two sides also focused on economic cooperation. Two-way trade between Laos and China has grown year-on-year with the total value amounting to US\$1.3 billion in 2011, rising to US\$3.6 billion in 2014 but dropping to US\$2.78 billion in 2015, according to the Lao News Agency. Laos has become the second overseas investment destination for entrepreneurs from China's Yunnan province. The value of investment by this province in Laos has climbed to US\$1.04 billion.

*(Vientiane Times 05 May 2016)*

## **More skilled workers needed as Laos joins AEC**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Laos needs to expand its nationwide skills base as domestic and foreign investment increases, particularly now that the country is part of the Asean Community. To meet the needs of the labour market and sustain the country's economic growth, especially in the human resource and technology sectors, Pakpasak Technical College in Vientiane is planning to expand its facilities. The college is building a workshop, laboratory and other facilities in a bid to produce qualified workers. In an interview with *Vientiane Times* yesterday, College Director Mr Saykham Phanthavong said that in compliance with the Ministry of Education and Sports' policy, the college will continue to develop and integrate vocational training methods into its curriculum, with the aim of expanding and improving the skills of the workforce to meet the needs of the domestic and

foreign labour markets. To achieve this goal, Mr Saykham said the college planned to cooperate with skills development centres in Vientiane to enhance the professionalism of the Lao workforce by raising standards and developing a curriculum that covers all trades, especially construction, electronics, sewing, hospitality and other fields. "Our main goal is to better train workers, so that our workforce can make a stronger contribution to socio-economic development," Mr Saykham said. "Upgrading the skills of administrators at the ministerial and provincial level would help to provide the necessary basis for improved vocational training," he added. Mr Saykham said the college also had an option for upper secondary school students to undertake vocational training, in an additional move to meet the needs of the evolving labour market. Improvements will

also be made at different levels of government by introducing a more centralised system of management. Increasing collaboration between the public and private sectors is the focus of the National Training Council in its role to facilitate improvements in the vocational training sector. Mr Saykham said that professional workplace educators and trainers would be encouraged to improve their academic knowledge and abilities, to raise the quality of Lao workers to international standards. The current emphasis on the development of technical and vocational education has a number of driving factors, par-

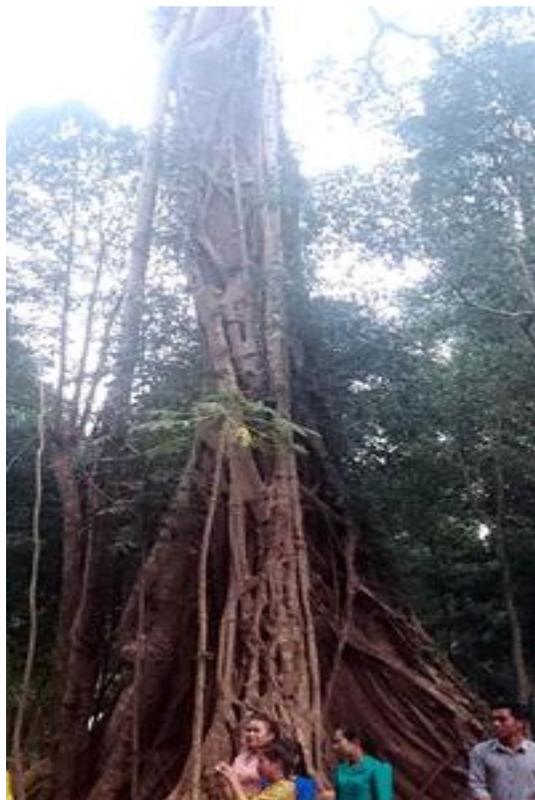
ticularly strong economic growth. Mr Saykham noted that large-scale projects in the hydropower and mining sectors were being implemented, and there has been significant growth in small and medium sized enterprises and private businesses. "Infrastructure has developed at a rapid pace. Essential to these achievements is the fact that the country has put in place policies that meet the changing needs of society," Mr Saykham added. As local and foreign investment increases, human resource development, the application and development of ICT and infrastructure are also showing rapid improvement.

*(Vientiane Times 06 May 2016)*

## Large tree species still flourishing: ministry

*(By Times Reporters)*

Laos' forests are still home to large tree species although these are in decline because of the encroachment of infrastructure required for the country's economic development.



A big wild tree in Saravan province.--Photo Ngae

Deputy Director of the Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fore-

stry, Mr Boualy Phameuang, told *Vientiane Times* on Thursday that there are plenty of large trees still to be found in woodlands. "Although Laos is steadily developing, our forests will not be depleted of large trees because the public would immediately voice concern," he said. People are increasingly concerned about the sight of scores of trucks loaded with massive logs that ply the roads in some parts of the country. This gives the impression that Laos' forests may soon be stripped of all big trees. Adding to the public's concern is the fact that most of the trucks look overloaded and some do not display number plates, leading to suspicions of illegal timber trading. Mr Boualy said forest management in Laos is improving, but admitted that illegal logging occurs in some remote areas. Some neighbouring countries such as Vietnam and Thailand have made good progress with forest management, but it is possible that illegal logging is taking place in some regions. The Forestry Department said that the logs people see being transported may be carrying timber that was harvested between 2011 and 2013. No logs have been felled since then because the government has ordered the closure of production forests in a bid to let woodland areas

regenerate. The department also said these logs could have come from places where trees have been felled to make way for the construction of dams, roads or crop plantations. Large areas of forestry have been seriously degraded, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The main reasons for deforestation are the conversion of forests into agricultural land for food production, and illegal logging. The government

plans to increase forest cover nationwide to 65 percent by 2015 and to 70 percent by 2020. The two categories of forest in Laos managed by the government are national protection 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.

*(Vientiane Times 06 May 2016)*

## **Hydropower, mining is key for Lao economic growth, UN surveys**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Domestic and regional demands and increasing wages are central to region's inclusive growth and sustainable development, according to a survey of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).



*Dr Leeber Leebouapao (right) speaks at the launch of the UNESCAP Economic and Social Survey 2016 at the UN office in Vientiane yesterday.*

Meanwhile Lao economic growth decreased from an annual rate of almost 8 percent to 6.4 percent in 2015 and the high growth rate is still driven by hydropower and mining. The survey titled 'Nurturing Productivity for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development' highlighted that such a strategy will also improve the quality of economic growth towards more inclusiveness and sustainability. The agricultural sector also actively contributes to the growth in terms of job creation but labour productivity remains low. As nations begin implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the next phase of Asia-Pacific economic growth should be driven broad-based productivity

gains. However, ESCAP also emphasised in its flagship publication Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific 2016 that this will require higher, targeted fiscal spending, enhanced skills, better infrastructure, and improved agricultural productivity. ESCAP also pointed out that economic diversification and increased industrialisation remain priorities, and the development of tourism and labour-intensive manufacturing, such as garment production, will also help expand employment opportunities. Speaking at the launch of the survey, Director General of the National Economic Research Institute Dr Leeber Leebouapao, said the agricultural sector plays an essential role to the nation's economic growth in relation to employment and poverty reduction. "Surely, the agricultural sector has a lower growth if compared to other sectors but it is sustainable," he said, noting that a presentation made by ESCAP will also be used as a reference by the government to boost the strategic economic development plans. At the same time, the foreign experts also placed their recommendations on enhancing productivity and increasing wages to bolster economic growth, and also advised that the development of labour skills will enable them to work in more value-added workplaces. Despite the fact that the Lao economy continues to grow, many improvements are still needed to support the

8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan. At the event, UNDP Country Director a.iMr Charles Chauvel also attended the

launch of the survey along with other guests from the government and international organisations.

*(Vientiane Times 06 May 2016)*