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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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## Khonphapheng Waterfall recorded as the world largest

By Times Reporters

Khonphapheng Waterfall in Khong district of Champassak province has been recorded as the world largest waterfall, according to the website of [www.worldwaterfalldatabase.com](http://www.worldwaterfalldatabase.com). World Waterfall Database lists the world's largest waterfalls by width and ranks Laos' natural wonder on top. The representative list contains those known to have an average width of at least 300 linear feet (91.44 metres) based on data available to the website.



*A fisherman casts his net in front of the Mekong River's Khonphapheng Waterfall in Khong district of Champassak province. -- Photo Xayphaphone Matmanivong*

The website mentioned the scale of the waterfall and that Khonphapheng Falls is a series of falls and rapids where the Mekong River splits into seven large channels, as well as hundreds of smaller ones. It cascades 69 feet over a series of falls and rapids that when measured from one edge to the other stretch over 10 kilometres in width, making it the widest waterfall on the planet. Due to the immense volume of the Mekong River,

the amount each channel of the river drops varies. The most defined parts of the waterfall drop about 45 feet (13.7 metres) at about a 60 degree angle, but other parts of the river, including the largest channel, appear more like a series of rapids. One of the smallest channels doesn't appear to even have any discernable rapids at all - rather it makes a slow and steady descent as it winds down the escarpment. In monsoon season, the flooding river swallows the waterfall entirely, leaving nothing more than a rough stretch of waves and ripples. Deputy Director General of Tourism Development Department of the Information, Culture and Tourism Ministry Ms Phonemaly Inthaphome told *Vientiane Times* that "We found out about this website six months ago but we still haven't clearly detailed what we'll do with the data to promote our waterfall." "Our department has already informed the ministry about the records from this website, which we have not yet fully discussed but we do have plans to promote it. The Asean Eco Tourism Forum will also be our good chance to promote the falls, which we'll host next week in Pakxe district of Champassak province," she added. On the World Waterfall Database rankings the largest waterfall in the world by width is Khonphapheng Falls on the Mekong River at 10,783 metres followed by the Para with 5,608 metres on the Rio Caura in Venezuela; the Guaira with 4,828 metres on the Rio Parana in Brazil; Kongou falls with 3,200 metres on the Ivin-do River in Gabon and the Iguazu with 2,682 metres on the Rio Lguazu in Argentina. The World Waterfall Database was established to provide a complete, accurate record of the waterfalls throughout the world. Looking in any freely available encyclopaedia, entries for waterfalls usually yield a short list of well known or well publicised waterfalls but the lists are far from complete and usually

rife with inaccuracies due to the data never having been field checked. Most people are unaware of these discrepancies because experts in the field have not readily been able to verify data on such a wide basis. After decades of independent research and futile efforts to keep their data accurate, founders Bryan Swan and Dean Goss established an online database to keep track of the world's tallest and most voluminous waterfalls in 2002. The data slowly grew to record almost 1,000 of the world's most notable waterfalls but until 2008 had never been designed as a record for all of the data they had collected. With the advent of programmes such as Google Earth, NASA Worldwind and various online mapping tools, not only can the

world's waterfalls be easily mapped now, but the data can be easily translated to a user friendly interface and a complete record of all the waterfalls on the planet can now be undertaken. The project will most certainly take decades, if not centuries to complete, because the true extent of the waterfalls on the planet has never been probed, but the record has now been established for future generations. Bryan Swan is a professional graphic designer, photographer and avid waterfall hunter who founded the Northwest Waterfall Survey. Born and raised in Seattle Washington, he has been exposed to the outdoors – and waterfalls in particular – for most of his life.

*(Vientiane Times 18 June 2016)*

## **Early pregnancies still an issue in Laos**

*By Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth*

Difficulties accessing information about methods to prevent early pregnancies among young people means that there are still many unwanted pregnancies and high death rates among young mothers and their children. Access to information and health services is limited among young people in the country, particularly for unmarried men, people in rural areas and poor and impoverished communities. Many are afraid of the possible side effects of prevention methods while traditional beliefs and misperceptions dissuade people from using prevention methods, Dr Phath Keungsaneth said. Unfortunately this puts them and their babies at higher risk of dying during pregnancy and childbirth. Director General of the Hygiene and Health Promotion Department under the Ministry of Health, Dr Phath Keungsaneth spoke with *Vientiane Times* after a workshop examining methods to prevent early pregnancies. He said the

ministry had launched a new reproductive health scheme in target provinces of the country, enabling health officials and village volunteers to provide information on the dangers of and methods of preventing early pregnancies. Awareness is still a major challenge to preventing unwanted pregnancies because so far only 30 percent of young people are aware of the prevention methods available to them. A senior official from the Centre for Maternal and Child Health said some people wonder why family planning should be advocated when Laos has such a small population. However preventing early pregnancies or unwanted pregnancies does not mean limiting the size of the population but can help women to fall pregnant at times best suited to their health. Employing prevention methods will help them to stay healthy and to have healthy families. By not using family planning methods, women are more likely to have dangerous pregnancies and

high risk deliveries. There are various reasons why people don't know methods of prevention such as condoms, hormone injections, the pill, inter-uterine devices, vasectomies and sterilisation for men. In addition, some officials in positions of leadership do not understand the concept of family planning, she said. The campaign is seeking to mobilise communities and individuals to eradicate misunderstandings about the side effects of family planning methods. The plan will publicise correct information about unwanted pregnancies and will also strengthen local leadership and communities to encour-

age people to use family planning services, she added. The prevention of early pregnancies in Laos focuses on reducing the death rates of mothers, newborns and infants. It also aims to improve the health and living standards of mothers and their children. The ministry has created a plan to encourage more men and women to use family planning or prevent early pregnancies. Worldwide, it is estimated that about 287,000 women died during pregnancy and delivery in 2010, although this figure was down by 47 percent compared to the number of deaths in 1990.

*(Vientiane Times 20 June 2016)*

## **Laos prepares two sites for world heritage listing**

*By Souksakhone Vaenkeo*

Laos expects to make a submission to Unesco for world heritage listing of the Plain of Jars in northern Xieng Khuang province as well as Phou Hin Nam Nor (stone pillar mountain) in central Khammuan province next year. Officials from the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment, and Khammuan provincial authorities met last week in the province to discuss works prepared to submit the proposal to Unesco for listing Phou Hin Nam Nor as Laos's first world heritage site based solely on its natural charms. "We will soon finalise a report to the government for consideration and once the government approves it we can proceed to the next step, the submission of the proposal to Unesco," Deputy Director General of the Heritage Department under the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Mr Viengkeo Souksavatdy reported on Friday. Mr Viengkeo, who attended the meeting and has been involved in the preparations since the early stages, added that all-round preparations have been set down. Laos plans to submit a proposal to Unesco to consider

listing the Plain of Jars first, to be followed by potential listing for Phou Hin Nam Nor. "We expect to submit the proposal to Unesco to consider listing the Plain of Jars by early next year and then make a proposal for listing Phou Hin Nam Nor soon after," he told *Vientiane Times*. The 82,000-hectare Phou Hin Nam Nor comprises a multitude of rocky outcrops that en masse resemble a stone forest. Its attraction is enhanced by the wildlife and plant species that inhabit the area. A naturally created seven kilometre tunnel under the stone pillar mountain area through which the Xebangfai River flows creates additional natural charm. Phou Hin Nam Nor is believed to have formed due to a volcanic eruption several centuries ago. The site was added to the country's list of National Protected Areas in 1993. If listed, Phou Hin Nam Nor would be Laos' first natural World Heritage Site. Two sites in Laos - the historic town of Luang Prabang and Vat Phou Champassak were listed as cultural World Heritage sites in 1995 and 2001 respectively. Officials said creating a more detailed map to outline the boundaries of the

Plain of Jars and removing unexploded ordnance (UXO) from remaining sites will be the focus of preparations for proposing the tourist attraction be listed as a world heritage site. The Plain of Jars is a megalithic archaeological landscape that is thought to date back 2,500 to 3,000 years. It contains more than 2,000 stone jars, the biggest of which is more than three metres high with a circumference of eight metres. Scattered throughout

the Xieng Khuang plateau, the stone jars appear in clusters, ranging from a single or a few to several hundred jars in the lower foothills surrounding the central plain and upland valleys. With the Jars having been scattered over many sites, officials in charge have decided to select 12 sites on the Plain of Jars for inscription on UNESCO's list of world heritage sites.

*(Vientiane Times 21 June 2016)*

## **Great importance placed on ecotourism**

*By Somsack Pongkhao*

Ecotourism represents between 15 and 20 percent of the tourism industry in Laos which directly generates income for local people, officials in charge have confirmed. The government has attached great importance on ecotourism development across the country aiming to protect the country's natural and cultural resources while bringing economic benefits to local communities. Laos is entrusted to host the Asean Ecotourism Forum in Pakxe, Champassak province from June 22-25 to discuss regional cooperation regarding sustainable tourism development. Proceeding under the theme: "ASEAN Without Borders: a Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Tourism Corridors", the forum will discuss and adopt a Pakxe declaration aiming to align the region's ecotourism destinations. The declaration will call for an Asean coordinated roadmap for both public and private sectors to pool resources and unlock economic opportunities along designated tourism corridors. Over 300 delegates from Asean nations are expected to attend the forum with a tourism trade fair featuring 200 booths scheduled to take place during the event. Apart from Asean nations, China, Japan and Republic of Korea will

also be exhibiting at the tourism fair. According to Xinhua, quoting a 2015 World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report, the forum comes as ecotourism operators sought to increase their share of leisure travel spending in South-East Asia which generated a total of US\$158 billion in 2014 and was projected to rise to some US\$285.5 billion by 2025. A tourism official in charge of the event Mr Somxay Sitpaseuth told *Vientiane Times* yesterday that "We are now ready to host the forum which should contribute to enhancing tourism cooperation in the region." Ecotourism aims to assist environmental protection, the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources and the delivery of measurable socio-economic benefits to local communities. Ecotourism activities in Laos include trekking through conservation areas and communities to experience nature and the culture of local people. Activities also include zip lining, homestays and others that contribute to raising awareness for communities to protect nature and culture. Laos has a population of 6.5 million people but the country is full of unspoiled, diverse ethnic lifestyles and traditions and perhaps the most extensive network of ecosystems on the Indochina Penin-

sula. In place to protect and conserve these irreplaceable resources is a network of 20 National Protected Areas, often cited as one of the best designed Protected Area Systems

in the world. In 2015, the number of foreign visitors to Laos reached 4.6 million, representing an annual increase of 13 percent, compared to the previous year.

*(Vientiane Times 21 June 2016)*

## **Hydropower project plants trees for new resettlement area**

*By Times Reporters*

Nam Ngiep 1 Hydropower Project (NNP1) staff, local government officials, and community members planted trees to symbolise the start of new lives for people in the Houay Soup Resettlement Area (HSRA) in Borikhan district, Borikhamxay province recently. The HSRA is one of the most important areas under construction in the NNP1 project. Since the construction of the area started a few months ago the project has made good progress with 15 different construction activities being carried out in the new community. Currently, 23 houses are being built for Hatxaykham villagers who chose to settle in this area according to Nam Ngiep 1 Power Company. Hatxaykham is located just across the Nam Ngiepin in Borikhan district and is one of the villages that will be impacted by the new NNP1 project. Half of the total villagers have chosen to relocate to the HSRA while the other half elected to relocate themselves elsewhere in Borikhan district with compensation given to them by the project. Besides houses for all re-settlers construction in Houay Soup comprises access roads, a bridge across the Nam Ngiep, a preschool, accommodation for teachers, a market, a village meeting hall, and a bus station. Development of paddy fields, fields for other crops, tree plantation areas, grazing land, and an irrigation system are all provided as well. The first stage of construction of the HSRA is expected to be completed in August this year with the initial settlement in Houay Soup scheduled to take place im-

mediately after completion. Nam Ngiep 1 is a hydropower project with a 290-megawatt installed capacity that is under construction in Borikhamxay and Xaysomboun provinces. The project consists of the construction of two dams and two powerhouses along the Ngiep River in Borikhamxay province and is on schedule for commercial operation in January 2019. The overall progress of construction at the end of May 2016 was about 40 percent complete, the company reported.

Approximately 520 households from Hatsaykham village, Borikhan district and four other villages in Hom district, Xaysomboun province, will be relocated to make way for the construction of the project. Under consultation with local communities, using local and international best practices and leadership of the provincial resettlement and livelihood restoration committee, NNP1 has developed compensation packages that aim to minimize the impact of the project on local communities. The HSRA is only one part of the project. Projected affected people can either choose to relocate to HSRA or receive full compensation and resettle by themselves, according to compensation policy. NNP1 has provided life skill activities to all involved and will continue to do so, ensuring that projected affected people are better off after their relocation by measurement of the improvement in their income and lifestyle.

*(Vientiane Times 22 June 2016)*

## Many rural communities oblivious of fisheries law

*By Times Reporters*

Rural people's difficulty in accessing information on the Law on Fisheries is one the reasons for continuing illegal fishing in Laos, according to an official. Unfortunately, illegal fishing techniques such as using electric shock equipment continued in many provinces because people had little knowledge or understanding of the law and this was putting pressure on fish populations, the official confirmed. The anonymous official from the Livestock and Fishery Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry told *Vientiane Times* by telephone yesterday that accessing information about the law was still difficult around the country, particularly in rural areas. However, ministry officials and local authorities would distribute information on the Law on Fisheries including advice on sustainable fishing methods to promote conservation in target provinces, he said. The ministry's plan will encourage local people to conserve fisheries in nation.

the target provinces of Vientiane, Borikhamxay, Khammuan, Savannakhet, Saravan, Xekong, Attapeu, Champassak and the capital. The plan would also publicise the correct information about the fisheries law and also strengthen local leadership and communities in encouraging people to fish while promoting conservation, he added. The Law on Fisheries in Laos focuses on reducing the illegal fishing in the country. It specifies principles, regulations and measures governing the organisation, implementation, management, and inspection of the work of fisheries, the promotion of aquaculture, conservation, protection, development and the sustainable exploitation of aquatic fauna, aiming to ensure the provision of fish and other aquatic fauna as a food source for all Lao people, the protection of the environment, while contributing to the economic development of the

*(Vientiane Times 22 June 2016)*

## Local coconut oil producer eyes Japanese market

*By Times Reporters*

A local manufacturer expects to export virgin coconut products to Japan in the forthcoming months after the company reached an agreement deal recently. Virgin Coconut Oil Producing Company Factory Manager, Ms Malisa Bousatry, yesterday told *Vientiane Times* they have been producing virgin oil products under the Sengtaven (Sunshine) brand over for the past few years which were selling well on the domestic market. "Our products are now being recognised and attracting interest from foreign customers, and our company has already received orders from Japan," she said. "We expect to export about 540 litres of virgin coconut oil in the first order, but now we are waiting on quality checks". Ms Malisa highlighted there were good opportunities for Lao coconut oil producers in Japan given that they had already purchased from the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam in the past. In addition, the product has also gained recognition from consumers in France who want to use it as a traditional skin treatment and for hair care, but the firm has to improve its smell due to customer complaints. The company was now researching and producing the product with fragrance in order to meet customer expectations, she said. Ms Malisa said they planned to increase production in response to higher demand but sometimes there was a shortage of raw materials

and had to buy coconut oil from Vietnam. Ms Malisa gained a master's degree in food technology from Vietnam and upon returning wanted to manufacture some products that she could distribute to domestic and export markets. She also wanted to make healthy products, so she decided to study about the production of coconut oil because it is used in many countries for its health giving properties. She decided to invest about seven to eight million kip and began producing it in her house back in September 2012 in Xokkham village, Xaysettha district, Vientiane. The appeal of virgin coconut oil is that it has multiple uses. It can be applied to moisturise and soften hair, to moisten skin or used to massage the body. Moreover it contains high levels of vitamin E and it is turning around perceptions that coconut oil is not good for your health. Ms Malisa said company has recently launched new lip balm product made from coconut oil with orange, mint, and lemon flavours. "We brought this new product to showcase at the recent job fair and it has become popular among students," she added. Their products are currently on sale in mini-marts, beauty salons and shopping malls around the country. Prices range from 30,000 kip for a small bottle, 60,000 kip for a medium size and 110,000 kip for the largest bottle. Lip balm sells for 25,000 per 10 grammes.

*(Vientiane Times 23 June 2016)*

## Local fishers still reporting catches at Don Sahong

*By Times Reporters*

Local fishers around Don Sahong Hydropower Project (DSHP) area in Khong district, Champassak province said their fish catches have only decreased slightly this year as the project has improved fish passage for upstream and downstream migration. One fisherman in Don Sahong village, Mr Viengxay explained that recently the project removed rocks, traps and other barriers to make it more convenient for fish passage, so fish migration upstream is quicker than in the past.



*Hou Xangpheuak recently had rocks removed to improve fish passage as an alternative to Hou Sahong channel.*

For example, two years ago, villagers built fishing equipment to catch fish in their nets because they had difficulty swimming upstream through the rocks. Currently, the rocks have been removed and fish find it easier to go upstream, so fish catches have only decreased slightly. However, Mr Viengxay said fishers in upstream or northern areas of the Mekong River at Hou Wai fish channel are catching more fish than downstream, possibly as a result of the improved fish passage. Other fishers at Hang Sadam village said Don Sahong Hydropower Project has not affected their lifestyle much even though it removed some of the illegal fish traps they had built to provide for more sustainable fish conservation.

They didn't know what effect the project would have upstream but said the fish catches in the area had decreased slightly as fishers were using only nets rather than illegal equipment. An official at the Don Sahong Hydropower Company, Mr Somphone Phommanivong explained that the Sahong channel was probably the best channel for fish passage but it was obstructed by fishing gear. Xang Pheuak and Sadam Channels were advised by the MRC as also passable by fish and improvements have made them more passable. Physical improvements have been made at seven sites for fish passage now on three channels, and more will be carried out each dry season while large illegal fishing gear which blocks the channels is being removed. He said once the dam is built, fish will be able use several other channels for upstream and downstream migration. Such fish can use the nearby Hou Sadam for upstream and downstream migration. Earlier this year, villagers worked with project staff to remove rocks, traps and other barriers, as a result, Hou Sadam is now about 0.5m deeper. The developers also removed rapids and rocks from Hou Xangpheuak so that more fish can pass through that channel, which is similar to but larger than Hou Sahong. Don Sahong hydropower project is being implemented by Mega First Corporation Berhad with the power generated by the US\$500-million dam to be sold domestically. Don Sahong has a concession period of 25 years. It is expected the dam will generate about 2,000 GWh of electricity per year and is slated to commence commercial operations in 2019 or 2020, with the power sold to Electricite du Laos (EDL).

*(Vientiane Times 24 June 2016)*

## Xieng Khuang sources 5 trillion kip for investment

By Times Reporters

Xieng Khuang province has mobilised more than 5 trillion kip for investment within the province in the first six months of 2015-2016, an increase of 2.7 percent according to the yearly plan.



### Xieng Khuang province.

The province has received around 128 billion kip from the state budget for 245 investment projects and was able to implement 168 investment projects worth more than 76 billion kip in the first six months, according to the provincial Planning and Investment Department. These included 71 investment projects worth more than 11 billion kip for the economic sector, 22 projects worth more than 3 billion kip for the cultural sector, 42 projects worth about 9 billion kip for the administration and office sectors. It also featured 11 projects worth 2 billion kip for the poverty eradication and rural development sectors, 5 projects worth 1 billion kip for relocation, and 12 projects worth more than 46 billion for development targets. The province has received grant aid and loans of around 49.7 billion kip (about US\$6 million) from international organisations and foreign countries for 28 investment projects, including 24 billion kip (US\$3 million) from official development assistance (ODA) for 18 projects and more than 25 billion kip (US\$3

billion) from NGOs for 10 projects. In addition, state enterprises have invested 118 billion kip in their responsible projects and generated 14 billion kip into the state budget. Besides that, the domestic and foreign private sectors have invested over 4.2 trillion kip in 12 projects in the province, including 2.7 trillion kip in six domestic investment projects and over 1.6 trillion in six foreign investment projects. Provincial authorities also signed Memorandums of Understanding with local and foreign developers to conduct feasibility studies on the construction of several small scale hydropower projects. These include the Nam Khom and Nam Sam hydropower plants in Kham district; Nam Ngum Keng Khuan hydropower plant in Paek district; Nam Lieng, Nam Chao, Nam Chiet, Nam Nhiem and Nam Mang hydropower plants in Mok district; and Nam Hok hydropower plant in Khoun district. Also slated are the Nam Ngum hydropower project in Phoukoud district; Nam Thong and Nam Kam hydropower plants in Phaxay district. Over the next six months, Xieng Khuang will strive to seek more funds for investment in the province in order to achieve the yearly plan. All sectors should take full responsibility in implementing the socio-economic development plan based on the resolution of the 10th Provincial Party Congress and the province's 8th Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan, which is focused on solving issues of development and difficulty. The authorities also have to pay attention to monitor, inspect and evaluate projects to ensure they will be implemented effectively and abide by the relevant regulations and laws.

*(Vientiane Times 24 June 2016)*