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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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Food security project kicks off in four provinces

By Times Reporters

The Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition project is getting under way after officials from all sectors of the project met in Vientiane last week. The project will ensure increased quality of health and life for poor rural people in 12 districts and approximately 400 villages or 34,000 poor rural households in Oudomxay, Phongsaly, Xieng Khuang and Huaphan provinces. The project is funded by a US\$30 million grant from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), through the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which will receive US\$24 million and the World Food Programme (WFP) which will receive US\$6 million. The startup workshop was chaired by Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Dr Phouangparisak Pravongviengkham and representatives from IFAD, WFP, provincial authorities and officials from relevant government and international organisations. Preparations for the project began in June last year, when planners from IFAD and GAFSP began collecting information. They formulated the first plan in June and the second in September. Then Lao technicians joined with IFAD and GAFSP experts for a final appraisal and the project was approved by the donor in April this year. The project is the first convergence project to involve the ministries of Health, Planning and Investment, Education and Sports, and Finance, together with the

Lao Women's Union, Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, international organisations and development partners. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the direct coordinator and manager of the project, which is implemented by provinces, districts, villages, farmers and entrepreneurs. The project will focus on planting vegetables and other crops as well as live-stock breeding for processing to supply food, Dr Phouangparisak said. The project supports the government's nutrition and food security strategy as well as the Millennium Development Goals, he added. The project will reduce malnutrition and enhance income and food security in rural communities by supporting nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart agricultural practices. It will 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 five 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. 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.

(Vientiane Times 02 July 2016)

Private investor set to boost tourism in Meuangfeuung district

By Times Reporters

A businessman in Meuangfeuung district, Vientiane province, will invest 400-500 million kip in the development of leisure activities on the Nam Lik River, hoping to attract more domestic and foreign tourists to the area.



This mountain is known locally as Pha thor nor kham, meaning sacred golden hill, and is a visitor attraction in Meuangfeuung district, Vientiane province.

The programme is designed to be community based and has a concession period of 15 years. It is set to become operational later this year when the district officially opens its tourism year. "Our district has a lot of interesting tourist activities and its attractions are almost the same as in Vangvieng. But Meuangfeuung district has more unexplored sites and the environment is still perfect," local investor Mr Vanna Sengphachan told *Vientiane Times* recently. Mr Vanna, who is in charge of a tourism service group in the district, said he will put his own capital into the development of facilities, while local villagers will also benefit from the initiative. "I plan to put the money into building

several rest points along the Nam Lik River, to be used by tourists who participate in tubing, long-tailed boat riding and rafting activities," he said. He envisages that these activities will be around 13km in length from the starting point at Naxaeng village to the end point at Meuangfeuung village. The district has a dramatic mountain range and its heart is located amid green hills. Unlike more developed tourist hotspots, it is well-known for its unspoiled waterfalls, caves and temples. *Pha thor nor kham* is known locally for the sacred golden spot that could be seen high up on the mountainside. It was considered lucky to see it, but now it is no longer visible. The area is a popular destination with both domestic and foreign visitors. Mr Vanna said local residents will benefit from the proposed project because they can contribute boats, tubes, rafts and transport services. "The Nam Lik River has a special character. It is much deeper than the Xong River in Vangvieng district and is crystal clear in the dry season. It will be the outstanding highlight of our tourism service programme," Mr Vanna said. Meuangfeuung district is about 130km from Vientiane and visitors can reach it by car because it is only about 30km from Road No. 13 North. There are seven or eight guesthouses in the town centre and other facilities are also available, including restaurants and markets.

(Vientiane Times 02 July 2016)

Thai AirAsia begins flights between Vientiane and Bangkok

By Times Reporters

Thai AirAsia has inaugurated daily flights from Bangkok (Don Mueang Airport) to Wattay International Airport in Vientiane, beginning on July 1. The official opening of the new route took place in Vientiane on Friday.



Mr Tassapon Bijleveld.

The event was attended by Thailand's Ambassador to Laos Mr Noppadon Theppitak, Minister Counselor (commercial) to Laos Ms Pimol Pongkongkaew, Director General of Laos' Department of Civil Aviation, Mr Vanhpheng Chanthaphone, and Director of Vientiane's Information, Culture and Tourism Department, Mr Khampadith Khemmanith. Air ticketing agencies in Laos were also represented at the inauguration. Speaking at a press conference on the occasion, Thai AirAsia CEO Mr Tassapon Bijleveld said the new route would help to stimulate both tourism and investment in Vientiane and build on the already strong relationship between Laos and Thailand while offering more opportunities for the two neighbours to strengthen their ties. "To mark the inauguration of the Vientiane-Bangkok route we are offering a special promotional fare starting at only US\$35 per trip, available for booking July 1-3, 2016, for travel from

July 1-November 30, 2016," he added. "We are confident that both Lao and Thai nationals will see that this route offers great travel opportunities by saving them both time and money," Mr Tassapon said. "We plan to actively promote this route to both Thai and foreign travellers so that they can come to Vientiane to support its business sector. We are proud to be able to contribute to enhancing Laos' economy while also building on ties between Thailand and Laos," he added. AirAsia currently serves three routes from Laos with AirAsia Bhd. (code AK) flying from Vientiane to Kuala Lumpur three times a week and Thai AirAsia (code FD) flying from Luang Prabang to Bangkok daily (starting March 24, 2016), and now Vientiane to Bangkok daily. These routes not only provide more convenient travel between Laos and Thailand but also help to bridge the nations of Asean. Each year, the number of passengers using AirAsia's services increases by about 15-20 percent, of which some are in Asean countries, Mr Tassapon said. The decision to allow Thai AirAsia to fly to Vientiane will give the airline cover in all neighbouring Mekong region countries, namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Flights to Vientiane from Don Meuang in Bangkok depart at 12:05 daily, and leave Vientiane at 14:15. The flight time is one hour and 20 minutes. Meanwhile Lao Airlines is improving its service standards to differentiate itself from low cost airlines as well as increasing the number of flights to other countries to give it a competitive edge.

(Vientiane Times 04 July 2016)

France backs development of health research

By Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth

The French government has provided grant assistance to Laos to develop health research to bring the country into line with more advanced nations. A signing ceremony for the project on Tuesday was attended by the French ambassador to Laos, Ms Claudine Ledoux. The agreement was signed by Minister of Health Associate Prof. Dr Bounkong Syhavong and Director General of the Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement (IRD), Mr Jean-Marc Chantaigner. Lao and French health experts were also present. The Cooperation on Health Scientific Research Project will focus on improving the capacity of health officials to access and develop scientific research, carry out medical and technical work, and improve the skills of Lao researchers through trainings and the sharing of information and publications. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Associate Prof. Dr Bounkong Syhavong said that in this era of globalisation Laos is making the transition from a landlocked country to a regional trade hub. This presents both precious opportunities and serious challenges. "We are also dealing with the impacts of climate change which are bringing emerging diseases such

as dengue haemorrhagic fever and various infectious diseases." "And as is true for most developing countries, we face a severe shortage in the production of quality food," he added. Food quality is mostly uncontrolled due to a lack of trained staff and regulations on quality control. This is one reason why it is very important for Laos to encourage research, to better understand the health status of the population and its healthcare needs. Policies also need to be adapted for the country's many ethnic groups, Assoc. Prof. Dr Bounkong added. The objectives of the cooperation with the IRD are to help develop and establish scientific research by developing research plans in partnership with the University of Health Science, research institutes, and hospitals. Mr Jean-Marc Chantaigner thanked the Ministry of Health for its valuable cooperation. Assoc. Prof. Dr Bounkong said he appreciated the many years of support provided by the IRD to Laos and wished the institute's staff success in their mission in Laos. The institute began working with the Ministry of Health in 1995 and opened a representative office in Laos in 2001.

(Vientiane Times 07 July 2016)

FAO highlights sustainable agriculture in Laos

By Times Reporters

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has reaffirmed its commitment to the government's policies for the sustainable development of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. The FAO has also emphasised the need for ecological approaches to increase production and improve people's livelihoods. These messages were given by the Global Leader of FAO's Strategic Programme on Sustainable Agriculture, Dr Clayton Campanhola, during his working visit to Laos from June 29-July 2. The FAO has made the sustainability of agriculture one of its five strategic objectives, as the world's production systems struggle to deliver under multiple pressures including chemical use and soil depletion. Dr Campanhola and his delegation visited Phaxay district in Xieng Khuang province and took the opportunity to examine work focusing on the sustainable intensification of rice production which started last year and gave excellent results in the 2015 season. Villagers formed groups to hold weekly participatory sessions over five months to study the ecology of the rice in their fields, and manage various aspects of the growth of the crop to increase yields without using chemicals. The local extension officers from the district agriculture and forestry office are facilitating these community-led approaches in the "Farmer Field School" model under the guidance of FAO experts, and ensuring that the policies adopted by the provincial government are followed. Dr Campanhola also visited Khoun

district where he saw that rice fields can produce much more than rice. Farmers have been managing natural features in the landscape to regulate water levels and increase the production of fish, frogs, and other aquatic animals in the paddies. With advice from the office and FAO, farmers have also created small ponds to breed important species, which are being released into the paddies to augment the natural stocks of key species. The FAO mission also attended a meeting of the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development and, accompanied by Ministry of Agriculture representatives, visited a range of locations in Xieng Khuang province to see the results of FAO's support to the government. Dr Campanhola also met with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Dr Phouangparisak Pravongviengkham and the FAO team in Laos to discuss the government's policies and programmes on sustainable agriculture and forestry. FAO Representative in Laos Dr Stephen Rudgard said "Villagers are using these approaches to improve their nutrition as well as earning money from the sale of surplus production in the market." The approaches being used in three districts in Xieng Khuang are being also used in Champassak, Savannakhet, and Xayaboury provinces. The mission will report its findings to FAO senior management as Laos is one of the highest priority countries for FAO at the global level, and share the lessons learned with other countries.

By Times Reporters07

(Vientiane Times 07 July 2016)

Lao Central set for return to skies, more aircraft planned

By Times Reporters

Lao Central Airlines (LCA) will soon reopen for business after temporarily halting flights in the middle of 2014 and has announced it also plans to buy additional aircraft in the coming years. LCA hopes to buy about five new Boeing 737 MAX, which have over 160 seats each, to ensure full service operations. Currently LCA has a fleet of three aircraft. "We have talked to Boeing but we do not know when the new aircraft will arrive in Laos as we have wait in the queue," CEO of LCA Mr Somboun Phongsavanh said yesterday. Mr Somboun said LCA expects to reopen for service as soon as possible due to the launch of the Asean Economic Community (AEC) and the consequent boom in tourism, trade and investment. The airline halted its operations after being in business for about two years, during which time it fully tested its services. LCA called a temporary halt to operations to improve services and management systems, services, and study the possibility of expansion. The government has agreed to its plans and will facilitate the project. Lao Central Airlines, which is part of the Phongsavanh Group, was established in May 2010 with registered capital of 80 billion kip (US\$10 million) to operate commercial air services both domestically and internationally. It is currently expanding its fleet because Laos is now a member of the World Trade Organisation and the AEC came into effect at the end of

last year to boost regional economic integration. It is the first private airline in Laos and has trialed flights and services for over two years but has not yet officially opened for business. Mr Somboun said the company is working with foreign experts from Singapore and the EU to help with expansion preparations. "We do not yet know when the preparations will be complete," Mr Somboun said. The government supports the existence of private airlines in order to cater to the AEC, especially for improved connectivity with neighbouring countries. LCA plans to partner with Khon Kaen Airport on flights to facilitate tourism between Khon Kaen, Vientiane, Da Nang in Vietnam, and Siem Reap in Cambodia. According to an official from the Civil Aviation Department, so far there are over 10 flights flying in and to Laos, including the local airlines, and the flights from Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Vietnam and South Korea. The Phongsavanh Group is a leading group of companies in Laos. Over the past three decades, the group has grown remarkably since it diversified into various business sectors of the wood industry, telecommunications, trading, construction, banking and financial institutions, mineral extraction, oil and petroleum products, airlines, franchise, innovation, convenience stores, logistics and insurance.

(Vientiane Times 07 July 2016)

Vientiane to issue temporary work permits to migrants

By Times Reporters

Vientiane authorities will begin to register and issue temporary work permits to foreign migrant workers this month in a bid to regulate the increasing number of undocumented workers in Laos. Registration and issuance of temporary work visas for foreigners will start in the capital's nine districts on July 17 and end on August 17. The plan was reported in Vientiane yesterday at a meeting on the matter, chaired by Vientiane Vice Mayor Mr Sihoun Sithileuxay. There are a large number of foreigners working illegally in Vientiane and it has become a chronic problem. Authorities will collect information and identify the number of foreigners working illegally so they can assign resources to best regulate the situation and avoid the complexities of the past. Authorities have assigned district authorities and the labour-social welfare and security sectors to coordinate the registering and issuing of temporary work permits. Foreign workers will be classified into two groups. Six month and one year status will be allocated to vendors or people who operate a business in compliance with the regulations, and people who work in business and service units, investment projects, and special and specific economic

zones. The three month status will be allocated to itinerant hawkers, people who breed livestock, and those who operate beauty salons, coffee shops, karaoke bars, and game shops that contravene the regulations. Mr Sihoun called on the relevant sectors and people in Vientiane to actively participate in resolving the problem and make sure that foreign workers register for temporary work permits. Recently, Savannakhet province registered and issued temporary work permits for foreigners. The province collected information on the number of foreign workers in 25 villages in Kayson Phomvihane district and found 537, including 523 Vietnamese, six Chinese and two Thai nationals, and was able to collect 463 million kip in revenue. Meanwhile, Borikhamxay public security officials reported they had located 1,471 foreigners working unlawfully in the province. They were from Vietnam, China, Thailand, India, Germany and the Republic of Korea. Of the total, only 257 were registered and granted temporary work permits. Attapeu province tracked down 1,317 foreigners working in the province, of whom 848 were working unlawfully.

(Vientiane Times 08 July 2016)

Borikhamxay riverbank suffers erosion

By KhonesavanhLatsaphao

A 79-kilometre section of the Mekong riverbank in Borikhamxay province is in need of an embankment, but less than one kilometre has any defences against erosion.



A 50 metre section of riverbank along the Nam Xan River in Pakxan district, Borikhamxay province, is breaking up due to the heavy rain. --Photo Pathedlao

A survey of 197 kilometres along the Mekong in the districts of Pakxan, Thaphabath and Pakkading revealed that 79 kilometres were subject to subsidence in the rainy season. A provincial official, who did not wish to be named, told *Vientiane Times* on Thursday that a stretch of about 450 metres in Pakxan district where the Nam Xan River joins the Mekong is currently protected. "We want to build a concrete embankment along the whole riverside where erosion traditionally occurs, but we are unable to because the government cannot afford it. So we can only build protection against soil erosion a little at a time," he said. On Thursday a 50-metre

section of the Nam Xan riverbank collapsed at the point where it merges with the Mekong after three days of rain. The riverbank collapsed where an embankment is being built. The official said that shoring up the Mekong riverbank cuts the risk of erosion and this area had been stable up until now. The earth subsided only because of the rain and the embankment will be rebuilt in 15 days when the rain stops. In October last year, people living in 14 houses in the Phonson area of Phabath village in Thaphabath district had to move out quickly after four houses slid into the Mekong and 10 houses were damaged due to torrential rain. The place where this incident occurred still has no riverbank protection to prevent further slippages. According to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Mekong riverbank is increasingly being protected against erosion through the construction of embankments, with the work beginning in 2007 and 2008. Many towns located along the Mekong are now protected, including Vientiane, and about 50 percent of the riverbank running through towns has been shored up against erosion. The Mekong River floods perennially during the rainy season around July and August on its way through Laos and neighbouring countries.

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