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Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times" et en français dans l'hebdomadaire le "Rénovateur".

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Govt approves important documents

(By Times Reporters)

Members of the government have agreed that national economic growth has been maintained however the neglect on governance and lack of financial discipline has not been addressed seriously. Government Spokesperson Ms Bounpheng Mounphoxay mentioned the issues when disseminating the results of the government's midterm review plenary for the first six months of the 2014-2015 fiscal year. At the meeting, the government approved in principle the report on the implementation of the socio-economic plan, state budget plan, and currency plan for the first six months, as well as the works to be targeted, and urgent issues in the next half of the year. In the past six months, the government was striving to address the financial difficulties which have arisen over the past 2-3 years, as well as the unpaid public debt on the government development projects. The meeting also agreed that there are shortcomings to be seriously addressed. In relation to the meeting Chairman Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong cited the lack of political responsibility of administrators at various levels in implementing their obligations. "Lax of strictness on governance, financial and budget discipline, which has not been seriously addressed, has retarded development and caused considerable losses to the nation," Ms Bounpheng said in her reading of the press release on Friday following the close of the meeting. The meeting approved the report on the food security and commercial production project, which defines the complex scheme of agriculture and animal husbandry based on the country's potentials. An important document approved at the meeting was the draft of the amendment to the Constitution which will be

brought for debate at the 9th session of the National Assembly in the middle of this year. The meeting also discussed the implementation of the campaign of enhancing the spirit of patriotism in conjunction with socio-economic development and the Sam Sang initiative, which the report said contributed to continuously improving the livelihoods of the people. The meeting also approved the report on the success of the annual 37th meeting of the joint committee on bilateral cooperation between the Lao and Vietnamese governments. The annual meeting agreed for the joint Laos-Vietnam and Vietnam-Laos cooperation committee to be renamed as the joint committee between the government of Laos and the government of Vietnam for bilateral cooperation. For the cooperation between Laos and China, the report from the joint cooperation committee between the two countries reviewed the cooperation for 2013-2014, which has involved trade, investment, transportation, banking, post and telecommunications, education, drug suppression, as well as special and specific economic zone development. At the conclusion of the meeting, Prime Minister Thongsing stressed that the members of the government must implement the six measures for maintaining the stability of the national economy and take real action to address the outstanding debt. He called on the government members to pay attention to skills development for Lao labourers, enhancing the role of the information sector as a voice for disseminating the Party's direction and policy, government laws and regulations, as well as promoting national culture and traditions.

(Vientiane Times 28 April 2015)

Survey to evaluate nutrition

(By Times Reporters)

The Ministry of Health, Lao Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have agreed to conduct a survey on food security and nutrition. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed last week between Deputy Minister of Health Dr Inlavanh Keobounphanh, Head of the Bureau Dr Samaychanh Boupha and UNICEF Representative in Laos, Ms Hongwei Gao. Representatives from the three organisations agreed that the survey was an important step towards strengthening information systems for measuring nutrition in Laos. The survey will be carried out by the Lao Statistics Bureau in close coordination with the secretariat to the National Nutrition Committee led by the Ministry of Health. Dr Inlavanh said that the survey would help us to know information about malnutrition in mothers and children at the age of five and under in five provinces. The survey will include 6,100 households in the provinces of Luang Namtha, Oudomxay, Saravan, Xekong and Attapeu. The first four provinces are priority areas for multisectoral (convergent) action by health, WASH, agriculture and education sectors. "It will assist in eva-

luating the progress of comparing Millennium Development Goal No.1 to data of the Lao Social Indicator Survey in 2011." Dr Samaychanh said that this survey was one of the cooperations between the ministries and involved organisations. "Even though the survey will be conducted in only five provinces it could be a reference at the national level, but it was sufficient to supply statistics for various projects in related-provinces," he said, adding that it would become primary data for the next survey at national level. Attapeu is the focus of the joint EU/UNICEF Maternal and Young Child Nutrition Security initiative in Asia. The main objectives are to establish base-line data for the Lao government's multisectoral response to nutrition; another objective is to provide end-line data for the joint European Union-UNICEF Maternal and Young Child Nutrition Security Initiative implemented by the Ministry of Health since 2011. EU, UNICEF and World Food Programme are providing technical and financial support. The dissemination of the findings is expected in late 2015. The budget for the survey is estimated at US\$895,000.

(Vientiane Times 28 April 2015)

First Lao woman receives commercial pilot's diploma

(By Times Reporters)

The achievement of the graduation of Lao female pilot, Ms Soudaphone Visounnarath, aged 23, from the Ecole Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ENAC) in Toulouse, France on April 16 makes her the first national female commercial pilot in the country. The graduation is part of Lao Airlines State Enterprise stepping up its international standards and advancing human resource development particularly for pilots who need to be highly competent and experienced to comply with the demands of the airline. Ms Soudaphone

is from the third pairing of student pilots out of the six individuals who were chosen in a pre-selection from more than 150 candidates, and who passed the stringent medical examination at the end of 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand. Subsequently, they were again tested and passed the final selection conducted by a specialist from the French National School of Civil Aviation in mid-2013. Finally, they were sent to study the Ab-Initial Pilot Training course at ENAC in Toulouse, France. She and her fellow paired

student began their course at the end of September 2013 studying the Air Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL) Ground Course and training in Visual Flight Rating (VFR). They were then able to make their first solo flight in a single engine aircraft on April 15, 2014. Achieving the first solo flight is a stepping stone in aircraft control capability without the guidance of instructors; at that time, though, they were not yet qualified pilots. During the following year the student pilots continued their education on a flight simulator for Instrument Flight Rating (IFR) for single and multi-engines under different conditions such as bad weather and night flights, being tested for communication ability, 4th level English aviation and many other skills until ultimately they were able to obtain a Commercial Pilot's Licence on April 16, 2015 from the institution. Amongst the six individuals there was one who obviously stood out from the others, female student Ms Soudaphone Visounnarath. She passed the selection process, endured long hours of study, training night and day alongside her paired male colleague until she successfully reached her goal in one of the most internationally accredited institutions in the world, becoming the first female pilot in the history of the Lao PDR. The success of Ms Soudaphone has raised the role of Lao women in society as being equal to men. She has

become a role model for the younger generation, inspiring them to become a strong backbone for the nation and create prosperity for Laos. Out of the six student pilots who passed the TB20 and Beachcraft B58 qualifications requiring a total of 232 hours of flying, four obtained the ATR type rating and two (including Ms Soudaphone) went on to obtain an Airbus A320 type rating in Toulouse, in order to become pilots for Lao Airlines in two months time, accumulating valuable experience in order to become skillful and responsible pilots under the administration of the Lao Civil Aviation Department's operation permits. This landmark event will shine a new light on the importance of this occupation and life as a pilot in our country. This will boost the expectations of receiving more applications from interested individuals, especially female candidates, to help alleviate Lao Airlines from the heavy expense of hiring for foreign pilots there by developing the prosperity of the state airline. Another female Lao pilot recently went solo for the first time, Ms Thinanong Leusasinh from Lao Skyways, who was one of six trainees receiving flight instruction here in Laos. The first solo flight is a milestone in the two-year pilot training course, when trainees take the controls of a four-seat, single engine Cessna 172 with no instructor aboard.

(Vientiane Times 29 April 2015)

Anti-corruption and civil management discussed

(By Times Reporters)

Members of the Governance Sector Working Group (GSWG) gathered in Vientiane to share information and views on the topics of anti-corruption and civilian management, which are considered priorities for the government. The workshop took place yesterday, co-chaired by Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Dr Khammoun Viphongxay and Deputy Minister of Justice Prof. Ket Kiettisak. Anti-corruption is considered as a critical task for the government as it is vital to

good governance and a state governed by the rule-of-law so every sector should pay attention to it as a priority, Dr Khammoun said at the opening of the meeting. Besides the State Inspection Authority, each ministry and organisation has successfully built their own inspection departments to scrutinise internal operations. The inspection departments have a role as counselors for the Party committee and ministers in terms of State and government inspection, anti-corruption and co bat-

ing negative social issues in government organisations. Their role is to scrutinise senior officials and government employee in their respective ministries, he explained. The government also assigned the home affairs ministry to be the counselor in regards to citizen management, in particular building juristic acts and collecting population data. Citizen management is a significant task, especially in this period of rapid growth and socio-economic development which has seen a lot of internal migration so it requires a legislation framework, Dr Khammoun said. He cited that in 2014, the ministry, on behalf of the government, endorsed civil registration for all by 2014 in line with the declaration with Asia-Asia Pacific countries in Thailand. This was the second meeting of the GSWG this year. In the context of the discussions during the first GSWG of 2015, the panel focused on three main points. Firstly, addressing inputs from the sector-

working group in preparation for the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED), which will start next year. Secondly, concentrating on linkages between models such as the district development fund and the Party's Three Builds directive (known as Sam Sang), which both aim to bring developmental support to remote provinces and districts in Laos. Thirdly, seeking further comments on the work plan for the GSWG in 2015 and ensuring it caters adequately into important processes, such as the high-level roundtable meeting in 2015. The GSWG is an important forum for actors in the field of local development to come together and share information and views. Attendees included representatives from government sectors, development partners, embassies, international organisations, and civil society organisations who are interested in governance work in Laos.

(Vientiane Times 29 April 2015)

Deficit may decline by 4.2 percent in 2014-15

(By Times Reporters)

Laos may expect to see new opportunities for foreign investment, lower costs for some imports, and potential future inflows of professional services that the country lacks, when it comes to Asean Economic Community integration, according to the World Bank. In the World Bank's latest Economic Monitor, it indicated that the Lao economy continued its robust expansion with growth around 7.5 percent in recent years, fuelled by robust activity in construction, forestry and services. "Laos has been growing fast in terms of economic development over the past years and job recruitment is more in the agriculture sector but productivity is still low when compared to the power and mining sectors," said the World Bank's Country Senior Economist Mr Evgenij Najdov at a meeting in Vientiane yesterday. He noted that the power and mining sector has a smaller rate of job recruitment but it produc-

es impressive productivity, which may cause difficulties for other sectors. The dissemination of the Lao Economic Monitor was chaired by the World Bank's Country Manager Ms Sally Burningham, and representatives from various ministries, universities and international development partners were invited to the meeting. Speaking at the meeting, Ms Burningham said that the Lao government has taken some steps to restore macroeconomic stability but it is also critical that these efforts continue. "In the longer term, efforts to create a conducive business environment and create more productive jobs can help the country to grasp opportunities from regional integration, as well as foster shared prosperity and reduce poverty," Ms Burningham said. In the report, the World Bank, indicates that the fiscal deficit in the fiscal year 2014-15 is expected to decline slightly to 4.2 percent of the annual

budget, as improved tax administration offsets lower resource revenues and controls on spending remain tight, supported by the lower public recruitment and wage freeze for civil servants. For the public debt, it was estimated at 60 percent of GDP by the end of 2014 and credit growth has slowed but continued monitoring of the financial sector is necessary to safeguard stability, the World Bank report noted. The World Bank also

forecast that economic growth in Laos is expected to moderate to 6.4 percent due to the decline in mineral production and falling commodities prices. It also suggested that Laos would need to create a conducive business environment and ensure the effective implementation of reforms, which will best equip the country to benefit from increased regional integration.

(Vientiane Times 29 April 2015)

New hydro plant in pipeline at Savannakhet

(By Times Reporters)

Lao and Chinese energy companies expect to complete a feasibility study (FS) on a proposed hydropower plant development project in Savannakhet province in the next five or six months following an agreement made last November. Simuong Group Co Ltd (SMG) has engaged a Chinese company to conduct the study and dam design of Xelanong 3 hydropower project in Nong district of Savannakhet province. "So far they have completed the field study and they are now in the initial stages of dam design, environment assessment and preparation of reports," Nam Phao Hydropower Co Ltd Deputy Director and SMG representative, Mr Samly Mahavong, said yesterday. SMG engaged the Chinese company at a cost of 17.6 billion kip (US\$2.2 million) to conduct the FS with an expected completion date of 18 months. The Xelanong 3 project site is about 60km from the town of Savannakhet. "I think that it is possible to develop this power plant; it may have an installed capacity of about 60 to 70 megawatts (MW)," Samly said. However, according to an initial study, the project was expected to have an installed capacity of about 80 MW with an expected generation of 305.62GWh annually and to need an investment of about 1.3 trillion kip (US\$162.88 million), according to a hand-out. Simuong Group signed the project memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the

Planning and Investment Ministry in October 2013. Preliminary studies were undertaken by Hydro Lao earlier last year. The MOU includes provisions for the investor to conduct studies including assessments of the potential social and environmental impacts of the plant as well as other issues. The company will receive permission to start development immediately should the study yield positive results, with a concession by the government to operate the project for 30 years. SMG signed an agreement with the Savannakhet provincial administration to conduct an initial feasibility study on the dam in 2011. The project is expected to generate energy for local supply. Laos still has many other hydropower plants with the potential to sell carbon credits, and energy developers have already been contracted to sell these credits to other overseas companies. Twenty-seven power plants are currently operational in Laos with a combined installed capacity of about 3,304MW. Laos is aiming for total installed capacity of about 12,000MW by 2025, a ministry report has noted. The abundant resources of the Mekong River and its tributaries give Laos the potential to produce more than 25,000MW. The SMG was established in September 2001. Since its inception, the company has successfully executed many projects, both under government and internationally

funded programmes. Since 2001, the company has brought together diverse concerns in road-bridge and building construction, survey design, energy and mining consulta-

tion, real estate, automotives, import-export and banking under the umbrella of SMG of Laos.

(Vientiane Times 29 April 2015)

Blooming champa awaiting to amaze visitors this weekend

(By Phoonsab Thevongsa)

Lao frangipani collector Dr Outhaki Chounlamany-Khamphoui will officially open her impressive garden tomorrow to visitors after spending many years collecting different frangipani species from around the world. The Amazing Champa Blooming 2015 will feature 5,000 beautiful frangipani trees with more than 200 species from around the world, along with singing and dance performances, poetry readings plus stalls and other activities during the Labour Day holiday long weekend from May 1-3. Lao frangipani collector Dr Outhaki Chounlamany-Khamphoui said tomorrow she would officially open her private Champa garden to the public for the first time after spending many years collecting frangipani species from around the world including Australia, mainland USA, Hawaii, Guatemala, Venezuela and Indonesia. Dr Outhaki said she was inspired by the beauty of frangipanis a long time ago and decided six years ago to travel and collect each species herself and put them together in her garden. Now she is proud to

present and share the beauty of these blooming frangipani flowers with visitors during the biggest blossoming time of the year. The frangipani or Dok Champa is the national flower of Laos. The evocative tropical flowers with a sweet romantic fragrance can be seen everywhere from the north to south of the country especially decorating the grounds of temples and monasteries. Commonly the frangipani flower is propeller-shaped with a delicate yellow centre melting into the creamy-white outer petals. However, at the garden visitors will discover and learn of many colours and smells from different species and wonder at the panoramic view standing on the tower in the centre of the garden. The frangipani garden is located on the road linking the 450 Year Road to the National Stadium in Dongsanghin village, Xaythany district, Vientiane. For more information visitors can contact 5478 7999, 7772 2266 and 5562 0109. Admission is 10,000 kip per person.

(Vientiane Times 30 April 2015)

Laos, China agree on joint plan for Boten-Mohan economic zone

(By Times Reporters)

Laos and China have agreed on the draft of a joint framework plan for the Boten-Mohan Economic Cooperation Zone border crossing between Luang Namtha province of Laos and Yunnan province of China. Delegations from the two parties attended a meeting in Vientiane yesterday to discuss the joint framework plan to establish and develop the cross-border economic cooperation zone. The Lao side was led by Deputy Minister to the Government Office and Vice Chairper-

son of the National Committee for Special and Specific Economic Zones Management (NCSEC), Ms Bouatha Khattiya, while the China side was led by its Ministry of Commerce's Foreign Investment Administration Department Director General Mr Tang Wenhong. The discussion on the joint framework plan aims to reach agreement on the contents, in particular main six areas that the two parties will have cooperation with each other such as basic infrastructure, trade,

investment, measures on development and clear definitions of management mechanisms at the central and local levels. The two parties signed an agreement on the draft of joint framework plan, for which the cooperation plan will be signed at the 6th Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) Economic Corridor Week in June this year. According to the press release, in April last year the NCSEC established a coordinating committee to join with the coordinating committee of China to discuss and research ways forward in terms of cooperation. In June the NCSEC represented the Lao government to sign a memorandum of understanding on

establishing the Boten-Mohan Economic Cooperation Zone with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. After that each side continued to discuss and work together with their relevant sectors, the press stated. Establishment and development of the Boten-Mohan Economic Cooperation Zone aims to implement the strategy of “long-term stability, mutual trust, friendly neighbourliness, and comprehensive cooperation.” It aims to jointly promote the Belt and Road Initiative, to consolidate and develop a bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership and enhance cooperation for mutual benefits between the two countries.

(Vientiane Times 30 April 2015)

FAO advises on adaptation of agriculture to climate change

(By Times Reporters)

An agricultural project is seeking to provide Laos with technological and knowledge capacity to develop urgently needed policies for adapting agriculture to climate change and sustain food security. The national validation workshop on Strengthening agro-climatic monitoring and information systems to improve adaptation to climate change and food security in Laos took place in Vientiane from April 28-29. The workshop was organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). The workshop comprised three components, consistent with Laos' priorities on climate change adaptation, such as the National Adaptation Programme of Action (2009) and the National Early Warning Strategy (2011) among others. One of the project's components aims at rehabilitating agrometeorological facilities, such as weather stations in the major agricultural production areas, laboratories and instruments to allow the gathering of data and information of early warning and climate information services. Such investments are key to generate reliable information to influence decision making. The project also envisions the strengthening of the technical capacity of govern-

ment staff at the national, provincial and district levels. Technical staff from the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology will be trained accordingly to analyse and interpret meteorological information to develop materials such as seasonal climate forecasts. Similarly, the development of a country-wide database on Land Resource Information Management Systems (LRIMS) and Agro-Ecological Zones (AEZ) will help the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE) to conduct assessments of climate change impacts on land, soil, water and crops. These resourceful tools will guide the government to prepare for potential food insecurity risks and develop climate responsive policies. The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has funded this project with US\$5.5 million. It is expected to be implemented over four years starting from mid-2016. Currently the project is in a preparation phase which will conclude by July 2015 with a detailed and comprehensive project document. This validation workshop serves as an opportunity to include inputs and recommendations from past consultations and define the project

results. FAO has been operational in the Lao People's Democratic Republic since 1975, delivering policy and technical development assistance through approximately 250 projects to date. Guided by the 2013-2015 Country Programming Framework for the

Lao PDR, one of FAO's priorities is to enhance the capacity of the Government and communities to adapt and mitigate climate change and reduce natural disaster vulnerabilities related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

(Vientiane Times 01 May 2015)