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### Revue de presse du 21 au 25 Septembre 2015



Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times"

Bonne réception et bonne lecture,  
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➤ **Vientiane Times** :

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## Borikhamxay has more cassava growers despite weaker market

(By Times Reporters)

The amount of cassava produced in Borikhamxay province has increased despite the market not being in a healthy state. In 2013 the province had about 13,400 hectares of cassava which increased to 13,700 hectares in 2014 and 13,900 hectares this year, the provincial agriculture section reported.



### Local farmers check through their raw cassava.

Farmers in different areas stopped growing the crop after the price dropped, the section official, Mr Viengphone Sisomphong told *Vientiane Times* on Friday. They are also struggling to sell their production as the domestic traders have delayed payment, he said. The cost of raw cassava dropped by about 400 kip a kg, dried cassava by 1,100 kip, Mr Viengphone reported. The province currently has a foreign owned tapioca factory located in Pakxan district to process cassava powder for export to Vietnam and there

are some domestic companies who will buy and collect it from farmers, he explained. Cassava is the main commercial crop in the province. In previous years some of the provincial cassava growers supplied the tapioca factory owned by the Lao-Indochina Group Public Company in Pakxum district, Vientiane, but there are only small number of farmers still doing this after the company experienced financial difficulties. However, the provincial agriculture and forestry authorities are trying to prevent the expansion of cassava growing because of the loss of forest land this would cause. The province is limiting cassava cultivation, wanting to see other commercial crops being grown, especially ones that don't have such a bad effect on the soil. Cassava growers in different areas around the country are also faced with this issue, even though the demand on the world market is still high. Cassava production last year covered 45,550 hectares and amounted to 1.5 million tonnes, which was a 20 percent increase over 2013 according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. This year the government planned for cassava cultivation on 46,000 hectares with the harvest reaching more than 1.5 million tonnes. Most cassava growers are in Vientiane and the central provinces of Vientiane and Borikhamxay because they have readily accessible buyers there.

(*Vientiane Times* 19 September 2015)

## Lender visits Nam Ngiep 1 hydropower project

(By Times Reporters)

Representatives of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) visited Nam Ngiep 1 Hydropower project in Borikhamxay province last week to hear about its progress. During the visit, JBIC Deputy Director of Division 3, New Energy and Power

Finance Department I, Infrastructure and Environmental Finance Group, Mr Ryoichi Abe and his delegation were briefed on the progress of the Project's construction progress as well as environmental management and social development programmes,

according to a Nam Ngiep 1 Power Company press release. After the briefing, they visited the construction site where they saw the progress of the construction of the re-regulation powerhouse, the excavation work of the main dam, and the almost completed diversion tunnelling. Deputy Managing Director – Technical Division of Nam Ngiep 1 Power Company (NNP1PC), Mr Shoji Tsutsui said, “Overall, we have made good progress as planned since the construction started in November 2014. The percentage completion progress has reached around 25 percent,” “The river diversion for the main dam and powerhouse construction is expected to begin at the end of 2015,” he said. During the visit, the delegation visited Hatsaykham; one of five communities in the project's area that will be inundated once construction of the dam is completed. In the village, the delegation were briefed about the relocation plan and saw some of the livelihood improvement activities that have been piloted by the project in order to improve the living conditions of the villagers prior to and after resettlement. The delegation also visited different water treatment systems at contractor's camps and the community's recycle bank, and were briefed about social work implemented by the project in the construction area. In Vientiane, the delegation visited Lao Holding State Enterprise, one of the

shareholders of the project, and paid a courtesy visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. JBIC is one of the main lenders of Nam Ngiep 1 Hydropower project. The visit is part of the Lender's Technical Advisor criteria specified in the lender's agreement. Nam Ngiep 1 is a 290-megawatt hydropower project with 290 megawatt installed capacity and is under construction in Borikhamxay and Xaysomboun provinces. The Project is managed by NNP1PC. NNP1PC is co-owned by KPIC Netherlands, a subsidiary of Japan's Kansai Electric Power, EGAT international, a subsidiary of Electricity Generation Authority of Thailand, and Lao Holding State Enterprise. Electricity generation is expected to start in January 2019 with the annual output of about 1,651 Gigawatt hours per year. Out of this, 93 percent will be sold to EGAT and the rest to Electricite´ du Laos. During the 27-year concession period, Laos expects to receive more than US\$600 million from the project through royalty fees, taxes and dividends paid to Lao Holding State Enterprise, the government's shareholder in the project. Laos also expects to benefit directly and indirectly from the project through electricity supply, local employment, community infrastructure such as roads and bridges and through the use of goods and services supplied to the project by Lao contractors.

*(Vientiane Times 21 September 2015)*

## Lao products to secure local market share

*(By Times Reporters)*

Laos will seek ways to promote and protect the sale of local products to ensure they will secure a market share in the small and medium size enterprise (SME) sector after the inception of the Asean Economic Community. A senior government official at the Foreign Trade Policy Department Dr Laohoua Cheuching, announced the move at a press conference to inform about the results of the 47th Meeting of the Asean Economic Ministers (AEM) held in Malaysia from August 22-25.



**These tea products produced by Lao Farmers' Products are on display at various Vientiane markets.**

He said that many people now worry that Lao products will be in trouble when the AEC is officially launched at the end of this year because of the free flow of regional products. "Currently we can already see many foreign products on sale in Laos, which is not strange at all. At the same time,

our agricultural products such as coffee and tea products are already well-recognised by domestic and international buyers," he said. When asked about how many kinds of local preserved products there are for which the authorities will not allow similar products from Asean countries to be imported to Laos, he said some agricultural products will not yet be allowed to be imported to Laos. This restriction will continue with the inception of the AEC but agricultural imports will be allowed at an appropriate time in the future. According to Dr Laohoua, the majority of local agricultural and brewery products will be preserved for local businesses unless the imported products are properly proved to have Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Country of Origin (CO) certification. When the Asean Economic Community comes into force at the end of this year, many developing Asean countries will be ready to set zero tariff barriers for imported products. "The majority of Asean countries have already implemented the measures to reduce tariff barriers for products over 98 percent to 99 percent, meanwhile Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) will be ready in 2018 with a total of more than 600 product items having their tariffs removed," Dr Laohoua said. At the same time, the total of more than 600 lines of protected products in Laos are mainly agricultural commodities.

*(Vientiane Times 21 September 2015)*

## Don Sahong project to begin construction in November

(By Times Reporters)

The 260-MW Don Sahong hydroelectric project is anticipated to begin construction before the end of this year after a number of agreements related to the project have been signed to guide the project's go ahead.



Don Sahong project in Khong District, Champassak province.

The Lao Ministry of Energy and Mine's Policy and Planning Department Director General Dr Daovong Phonekeo told *Vientiane Times* on Monday that “I think that the construction of the project is expected to commence in November.” “Our National Assembly has approved the project's go ahead and the concession agreement between the government and developer have been inked but the purchasing agreement related to the project has yet to be signed.” Dr Daovong said electricity generated by the project in the Hou Sahong Channel of the Mekong River in southern Laos would be sold to Laos' state-owned Electricité Du Laos (EDL) under a power purchase agreement which will soon be signed. The construction of the run-of-river project will come at the cost of about US\$500million and the concession period has been set at 25 years. Mega First announced to its shareholders at the stock market in Malaysia last week that it has secured a power plant project in Laos following the signing of the concession agreement. The project, signed on a build, operate and transfer basis, is capable of generating

about 2,000 GWh of electricity per year. It is expected to start commercial operation in early 2020. According to online Malaysian business media The Edge Markets, Public Investment Bank Bhd (PIVB) expects the hydropower project to generate an annual revenue of US\$120 million or nearly double its current annual revenue once commercial operation begins. In March, Mega First signed an agreement with state-owned utility Electricite du Laos (EDL) to regulate its participation in developing the hydropower project. Under the agreement, EDL will hold 20 percent in the Laos-incorporated Don Sahong Power Company Ltd (DSPC) while Ground Roses and Silver Acreage will hold 79 per cent and one percent respectively. The Don Sahong Hydropower Project is a run-of-river hydropower project located at the Hou Sahong channel of the Mekong River in Khong District, Champassak province. The feasibility study for the project began in 2006. The government began sharing information with neighbouring countries when it gave notification to the MRC in September 2013. In 2014, the government agreed to elevate the dialogue to a formal six-month Prior Consultation process as stipulated in the Mekong Agreement signed by the member countries. The six-month prior consultation process ended on January 25, 2015. The Lao PDR is committed to keeping alive the spirit of the 1995 Mekong Agreement, which aims to promote comprehensive cooperation for sustainable development in the region. Mega First has spent some RM57 million (over US\$13.3 million) to date to conduct a feasibility study on the project as well as construct basic infrastructure such as access roads and a bridge to the site.

(*Vientiane Times* 22 September 2015)

## Japanese dentists deliver free oral healthcare for children

*(By Phaisythong Chandara)*

A team of dentists from Japan's Kanagawa Alliance of Dental Volunteers Overseas (KADVO) yesterday provided free dental checks for children at Syvatthana and Saphanthong-neua primary schools in Vientiane. The two-day project from September 21-22, named "4th Save the Teeth" was a cooperative effort between KADVO and the Saitama-Lao Friendship Association, aiming to encourage better oral healthcare among Lao people, especially schoolchildren. It also took place at Napho Primary School in Phonhong district, Vientiane province. Under the project, around 900 children at the three schools will likely have better overall health as a result of the checks. Principal of Syvatthana Primary School, Ms Siphone Sichanthavong, said having healthy teeth and gums contributed to good overall health, saying "Our children brush their teeth after eating in the afternoon, using toothpaste that contains iodine and fluoride." Ms Siphone encouraged children who have dental problems to see a dentist and to avoid eating food or drinks that are high in sugar. "People who use toothpaste containing fluoride and salt are less likely to have dental problems in the

future," she added. A 2010 survey found that 84 percent of children aged 3-6 and 65 percent of young people aged 15-19 have poor dental hygiene. KADVO representative Mr Taketo Tokue said the organisation ran similar projects in other countries in cooperation with local dental associations. "For Laos, this is an important project that marks a key milestone for the progress of oral health, especially for children," he said. Mr Tokue stressed that encouraging children to have free check-ups was a key activity that would help identify problems in the early stages and facilitate effective treatment. A major aim of the project is to offer professional advice and product samples to promote good oral healthcare at home and at schools. Mr Tokue said the organisation was pleased to help support the project and provide free samples. "Together we will reduce the incidence of cavities, improve oral health in Laos, and make a difference," he added. The five-year project was launched in 2012 at the same primary schools in Vientiane, with now over 27,000 children benefiting from the scheme, according to Syvatthana Primary School.

*(Vientiane Times 22 September 2015)*

## Officials confer on women's and child rights

*(By Times Reporters)*

Officials from the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao National Commission for Advancement of Women and other related sectors met yesterday to discuss advancing women's, child and human rights. The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism at Green Park Hotel in Vientiane with the main objective to disseminate results of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Beijing+20 Declaration in

New York, Proposal for implementation of the two additional protocols of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Universal Periodic Review. Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Mr Savanhone Razmountry, presiding over the opening ceremony, said the meeting would allow government and organisations working on women's and child related issues to understand the outcome of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Wom-

en. It also updated on the progress implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Laos and the Lao National Work Plan on Protection and Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Children by focusing on government policies, laws and implementation of international convention obligations that Lao is party to, in order to ensure women and children access their basic rights. Mr Savankhone said the meeting demonstrated the clear intention of the ministry to execute government policies and international obligations

especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Laos, achieving the third Millennium Development Goals by promoting gender equality and empowering women, readying women for the coming Asean Economic Community integration and eliminating discrimination against women in the family and society. Through the meeting, participants would gain more appreciation of gender equality and child rights and share information on achieving outcomes in their sector, he said.

*(Vientiane Times 23 September 2015)*

## Officials hurry to solve road collapse in Vientiane

*(By Souknilundon Southivongnorath)*

Transportation officials and workers moved quickly to prevent road accidents and solve transport problems after a section of No. 11 road collapsed yesterday. Vientiane Public Works and Transport officials together with local authorities and workers from a contracting company went to kilometre 24 on the road between the border of Samphanna and Ang-yai villages in Sangthong district of Vientiane after the collapse was reported.



**The 60-metre stretch of No. 11 road between Samphanna and Ang-yai villages in Sangthong district, Vientiane which collapsed yesterday. --Photo Khamphan**

The section of road that was lost was approximately 60 metres long and six metres

wide. An official from Ang-yai village Mr Khamphout Khotchantheuk, who saw the start of the problem, said that the day before he could only see a few cracks which had appeared on the road's surface but never thought it would break down like this. "It occurred early in the morning of September 23 when the sky was lightening, which is why there were no road accidents because the motorists could already see it. This is the second time that there has been a collapse in the area since 2008 and it was in the same place," he said. "This particular stretch of road is at the bottom of a mountain in the lowest area in the district. When we get heavy rain over such a long period, as we did the day before yesterday, water runs down off the mountain and goes under the road heading for the Mekong river which is on the other side." Deputy Director of Vientiane Public Works and Transport department, Mr Nuanta Hompathoum, said it was just a normal incident which can occur in the mountainous areas of Laos when there is heavy rain for so many hours which undermines the surface and can cause landslides and road collapses. "What we can do now is

to make the flow of traffic as smooth as possible as well as protect against road accidents in the area,” he explained. Once notified of the problem transport officials immediately got in touch with the contractor to discuss and solve the problem. The first thing they did was to stop the spread of any further cracks before clearing an area of the foothills to allow vehicles to pass through. “The collapse had already spread across half the road’s width and if we allowed single file traffic to use the other half there would have

been a great risk of increasing the collapse. So we needed to clear a way through the foothills to allow traffic to get through,” Mr Nuanta explained. The department said that they would discuss the situation with the contractor and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport for the restoration of the road because this is already the second time this has happened. “We will await the decision of the ministry before continuing to restore it to 100 percent,” he said.

*(Vientiane Times 25 September 2015)*

## **Government, ADB strengthen gender equality plans**

*(By Times Reporters)*

The International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Planning and Investment in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) organised a “Strengthening Capacity for monitoring Gender Action Plan” workshop in Vientiane yesterday. The workshop was aimed to strengthen government officials’ capacity to prepare, implement, monitor and report on gender action plans in ADB-supported projects. The one day workshop’s objectives were also closely aligned with the Lao National Strategy for the Advancement of Women covering 2011-2015, which seeks to mainstream gender equality into all sectors. There are 22 ADB-supported projects in Laos with gender action plans, which seek to ensure that both women and men have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from the assistance. Director General of the International Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ms Sisomboun Ounavong and Senior Portfolio Management Specialist at the ADB-Lao Resident Mission, Mr Steven Schipani co-chaired the workshop. Over 60 participants joined, including project managers and representatives from the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women and sub-commissions for the advancement of women in the sectors of agriculture and forestry, natural resources

and the environment, education, tourism, public works and transport, health, governance, and industry and commerce. During the workshop, the participants discussed and shared their experiences and practical lessons on gender integration in their projects and agreed on steps to further enhance the capacity of project managers and staff to implement and monitor gender action plans. In her speech Ms Sisomboun Ounavong said this is the second such workshop, after the first was held in Vientiane last year. “Gender development is growing but there are some things still facing trouble which should be resolved such as the lack of expertise and cooperation to serve gender development works” Ms Sisomboun said. “The International Cooperation Department and the ADB have agreed to organise this workshop to support gender development.” Ms Sisomboun also spoke on gender importance, noting that both males and females are of equal importance when it comes to doing something successfully, so the authorities have focused on promoting skills for women to upgrade their gender in society. Most women in rural areas of Laos cooperate in generating income and taking care of their families, for which the Strengthening Capacity for Monitoring Gender Action Plan will help relieve their daily ac-

tivities, Ms Sisomboun said. "The greater proportion of the Lao population is female, so Laos will not escape least developed sta-

tus if the authorities don't support women's development activities" she added.

*(Vientiane Times 25 September 2015)*

## **Laos deal with Singapore signed next month**

*(By Souksakhone Vaenkeo)*

A deal through which Laos will export electricity to Singapore is set to be signed next month by the relevant parties, the Minister of Energy and Mines said yesterday. Dr Khammany Inthirath spoke to local media at a press conference yesterday during his attendance at the three-day meeting between the government cabinet, Vientiane Mayor and provincial governors. The three-day meeting will end today. The deal is set to be signed next month in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during the meeting of Energy Ministers of Asean – the 10-member regional bloc. "I myself will attend the meeting," he told the local media. The pilot project is set to export 100MW of electricity from Laos to Singapore via the Thai and Malaysian power line network. Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Mr Viraphonh Viravong said previously that Singapore had agreed in principle to purchase the power from Laos. Officials said the Lao power line network is already connected to Thailand's, the Thai network is linked to Malaysia's and the Malaysian network is connected to Singapore's. It was reported in January last year that Laos exported electricity at a unit price of just over US\$0.07 per kwh to Thailand and just over US\$0.06 per kwh to Vietnam and Cambodia, while the unit price in Sin-

gapore was about US\$0.20 per kwh. Laos has a large potential to produce hydro electricity for sale as it is rich with an abundance of rivers across the country. Currently, Laos has 29 hydropower dams that each has an installed capacity of 1MW or more. The 29 dams have a combined installed capacity of 3,329MW, which are able to produce more than 16 billion kwh annually, of which between 10 -12 billion kwh is exported. In recent years electricity has been the main revenue earner for Laos. Total income generated from electricity sales in fiscal year 2013-14 hit more than US\$880.9 million (more than 7.1 trillion kip), a remarkable increase compared to the year before. Of the total, income generated from electricity exports amounting to more than 11,332 million kwh reached US\$535.47 million (more than 4.316 trillion kip), an increase of 6.62 percent compared to the year before. Laos has strong potential to build hydroelectricity plants and plans to achieve a combined installed capacity of about 28,000MW, including the existing dams. Dr Khammany said the state enterprise, Electricite Du Laos is entrusted to sign contracts with various hydropower plants to purchase power from them in order to centralise the export management of power.

*(Vientiane Times 25 September 2015)*