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Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh (centre) prepares to pull a lever to officially launch the TDP and VLP.

Thanaleng Dry Port, Vientiane Logistics Park launch grand opening

Advertorial Desk

A grand opening of the Thanaleng Dry Port (TDP) and Vientiane Logistics Park (VLP) took place on December 4, marking the start of streamlined services to facilitate and cut the cost of transport and related expenditure.

Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh was invited to pull a lever to officially launch the mega project in Dongphosy village, Hadxaifong district, Vientiane.

On this auspicious occasion, the premier also

struck a gong nine times, to symbolise good wishes for the success of the landmark project.

Soon afterwards, the prime minister cut a ribbon to send off trucks loaded with freight to destinations in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Addressing the grand opening ceremony, Chairman of Vientiane Logistics Park Co., Ltd., Mr Chanthone Sithixay, told the guests that the TDP and VLP facilities are part of efforts by the Party and government to transform Laos from being landlocked into a provider of 'Land Link

Transit Transport Services' for the region and the world.

Built on 382 hectares of land, the US\$727 million TDP and VLP will offer comprehensive facilities relating to freight transport and cross-border transport logistics. The project, which comes with a 50-year concession period, is being developed in full by the Lao-owned Vientiane Logistics Park Co., Ltd.

Construction of the dry port and logistics hub began in December 2020 with the project expected to be fully complete in the next two

years.

"When the TDP and the VLP are fully operational, it will have important outcomes for the economy, the general public, and the people of Laos," Mr Chanthone told guests.

Attending the opening ceremony were senior government officials, company executives and staff, and invited guests.

The following benefits for Laos are envisaged when the two facilities are fully up and running:

Mega-scale standardised infrastructure that delivers

'Land Link Transit Transport Services' for the region and world.

New and sustainable source of revenue.

Assured transparent revenue source.

At least 50 percent cut in transport costs.

Job creation.

Mr Chanthone expressed heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Party and state leadership for extending support for the project, which he said had made it possible.

Located in a prime location next to the Laos-

CONTINUED PAGE 4

Three killed, two injured in UXO explosion

Phomphong Laoin

Three men working as part of a survey team with UXO Lao were killed instantly and two others were injured when searching for unexploded ordnance on a coffee plantation in Pakxong district, Champassak province, on Friday.

An official with the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao) told *Vientiane*

Times the tragic accident occurred at about 9:30am as team members were undertaking routine survey and clearance operations.

The UXO Lao unit in Champassak is conducting an enquiry into the incident, he said. One of the two survivors is in critical condition.

As part of its mission, UXO Lao is carrying out UXO risk education in target provinces, with a

special focus on children, aiming to reduce the number of UXO-related accidents and victims.

The Mine Risk Educate programme provides knowledge, understanding and awareness among educators at every level, including schoolteachers, about UXO safety.

It enables trainers and teachers to be better equipped to inform children about safety and awareness with regard to unexploded ordnance.

The main purpose of the initiative is to reduce the number of deaths and injuries due to UXO accidents through a national programme of mine risk education for schoolchildren.

More than 1.6 million unexploded ordnance (UXO) items were destroyed by clearance teams in Laos from 1996 to December 31,



Bombies unearthed in a rural area.

2020, while over 70,000 hectares of land were cleared of munitions, according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

UXO operators destroyed 1,636,590 devices

from 1996 to the end of 2020, the ministry said.

Of these, 923,895 items were cluster munitions, 4,209 were large bombs, 2,337 were landmines, and 706,149 were other devices.

Railway hailed as business boon for Laos

(China Daily/ANN) – A Lao economist Phouphet Kyophilavong said he is delighted that the China-Laos Railway is now in full operation after being opened on Friday despite the difficulties that the pandemic threw in the way.

Apart from linking two countries, the first railway in landlocked Laos ushers in a new era and will benefit the country economically, including by helping to alleviate poverty, said Kyophilavong, dean of the

CONTINUED PAGE 5

Phongsavanh BANK					
ອັດຕາແລກປ່ຽນ					
Exchange Rates					
December 6, 2021					
CURRENCY	BUYING RATES	SELLING RATES	CURRENCY	BUYING RATES	SELLING RATES
USD	10,896	10,906	CNY	1,711	1,745
THB	345.19	347.80	SGD	7,679	7,833
EUR	12,231	12,322	JPY	96.03	97.95
GBP	14,121	14,403	VND	0.497	0.507
AUD	7,765	7,615	MYR	2,489	2,539
CAD	8,291	8,457	KRW	8.82	8.99
CHF	11,230	11,454	HKD	1,351	1,378



Officials at the ceremony mark World Rabies Day.

--Photo Lao National Radio

Laos marks World Rabies Day

Times Reporters

Laos has joined other countries in raising public awareness about the dangers of rabies, which kills about 50,000 people across the world each year, Lao National Radio reported.

The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the World Health Organisation, held a ceremony on Saturday to mark World Rabies Day.

World Rabies Day is an opportunity for global communities, non-government organisations and governments to connect and share actions and awareness for rabies

prevention.

Rabies is a serious infectious disease that is transmitted from animals to humans. It is caused by a pathogen known as the Lyssa virus.

Infection through the saliva of infected animals enters the wound after a person is bitten by an animal or saliva splashes into the skin, eyes or mouth.

Cases occur mostly in least developed and developing countries, with the main carriers of the virus being warm-blooded mammals, especially dogs.

According to the World Health Organisation, about

50,000 people die of rabies each year, with 95 percent of deaths occurring in Africa and Asia.

The majority of deaths are due to dog bites, with 60 percent occurring among children aged 5-14.

In 2010, the Lao government became party to a strategy to eradicate rabies in Asean countries, and also adopted a national strategy on rabies prevention and control.

From 2012 to October 31, 2021, some 298 cases of rabies were reported in Laos as a result of bites from animals, resulting in the deaths of 55 people.

Laos, China agree to extend cooperation in various fields

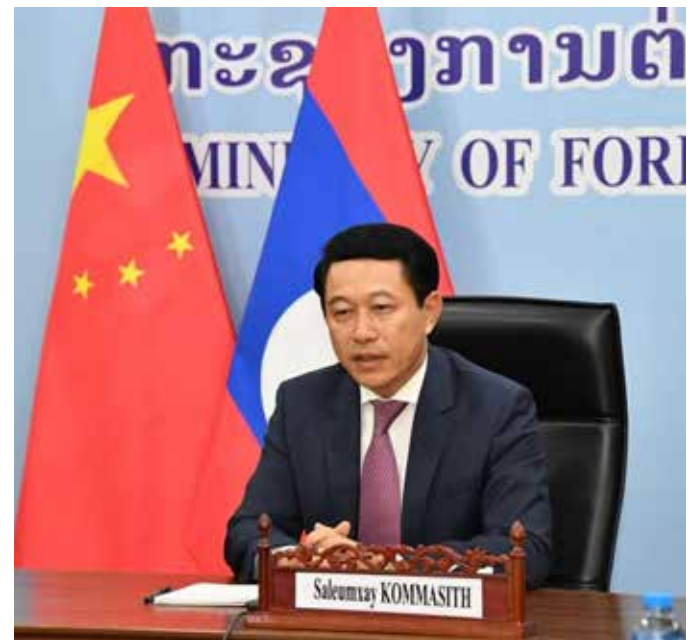
Times Reporters

Laos and China plan to continue to cooperate in many fields, especially in Mekong-Lancang Cooperation, it was stated during a recent videoconference between the two countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

During the meeting, Lao and Chinese officials reported on various aspects of social and economic development and shared ideas on ways to tackle the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as matters relating to investment, transport and education.

The meeting took place as Laos and China celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Laos' Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Saleumxay Kommasith said Laos was very grateful for China's assistance through the provision of medical experts and vaccine. He also noted that Lao students who had been awarded scholarships by the Chinese government were continuing their studies



Mr Saleumxay Kommasith attends the videoconference.

--Photo Lao National Radio

in China.

Last month, the Ministry of Health received a donation of 700,000 doses of China's Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine and medical supplies valued at 17 billion kip to assist government efforts to tackle the virus outbreak.

The vaccine and supplies will be used in Luang Namtha, Oudomxay, Bokeo,

Phongsaly and Luang Prabang provinces. The vaccine will primarily be given to people at high risk of Covid infection and those who have not yet had two vaccinations.

China has provided several shipments of vaccine and dispatched medical specialists and supplies to support the government's battle against Covid.

Interactive training teaches basics of sign language

Times Reporters

In celebration of International Day of People with Disabilities, the Australian-funded Basic Education Quality and Access in Laos (BEQUAL) Programme organised a fun and interactive session on basic Lao sign language.

Sign language is a way of communicating used by people who cannot hear well. Sign language implies using mainly hand gestures and movements, and also body language and facial expressions, instead of spoken words.

To mark the annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, the Australian-funded BEQUAL programme organised an online fun session to demonstrate ways that people can communicate and express themselves using Lao sign language.

When people can't see each other very well behind a face mask, it's good to know what signals you can pick up and communicate using sign language.

Mrs Sophaphone Heuanglith led the interactive session after collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Following a training organised in January 2021 by the Australian Embassy with support from BEQUAL, the Information and Media Centre and e-learning teams from the education ministry decided to include sign language dubbing on all the teacher training videos and documentaries produced by the BEQUAL programme.

The objective was to ensure that people with a hearing impairment could have access to these important educational materials.

On International Day of

Persons with Disabilities, it's important to continue to advocate for more inclusion.

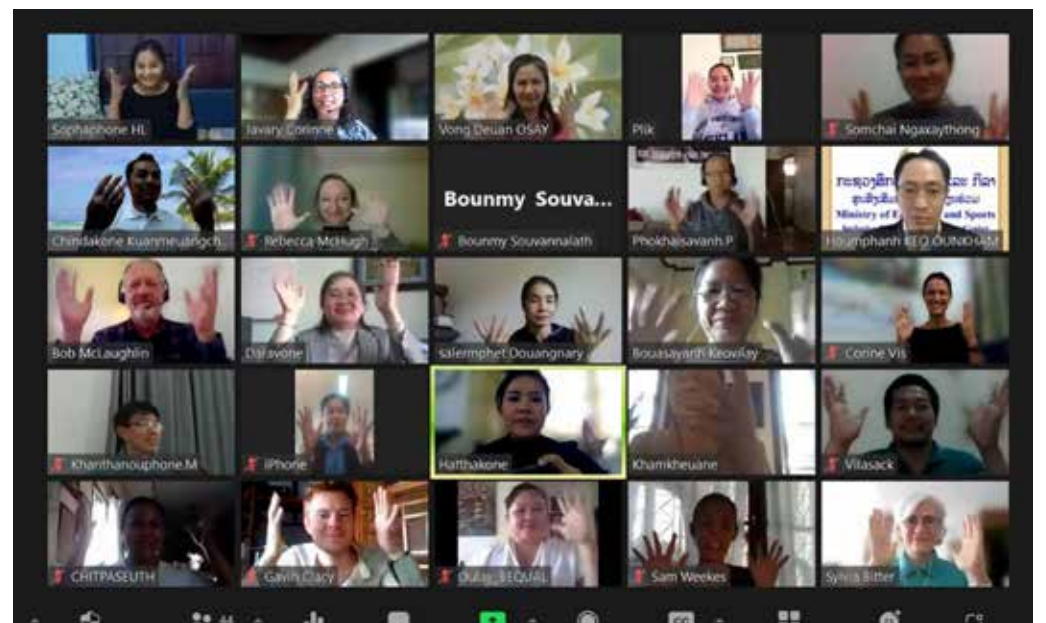
According to the BEQUAL programme, Laos has its own sign language that was first created in 1993 and then revised in 2006. In 2013, the Lao Association for the Deaf was established.

There are an estimated 80,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing people in Laos and less than 10 qualified interpreters in the country.

Participants in the online event learnt about basic signs to communicate and express themselves. They learnt how to introduce themselves, create their personal sign for their name and how to start a conversation. And they were able to practise their new skills in breakout rooms.

For some participants it was also an excellent way to learn Lao language.

The current Covid-19 crisis has made it a real



BEQUAL staff and others take part in an online sign language session last week.

challenge for everyone to know how others are feeling, because people's faces are mostly covered by masks.

Masks make it difficult to understand what people are saying, even for people with no hearing impairment.

For people with a

hearing impairment, who often rely on decoding facial expressions and are often skilled at lip reading, interacting with people wearing masks makes understanding how people feel and what they say even more challenging.

So, to mark International

Day of People with Disabilities, the Australian government through the BEQUAL programme launched an initiative to help people of all abilities to communicate while wearing masks, creating a fun lesson in basic Lao sign language.

Lao Press in Foreign Languages

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Representatives of the Institute of Vocational Education Development and Vetsaphong Technical-Vocational School attend the agreement signing ceremony.

Vocational training schools partner in skills development

Times Reporters

Two vocational training centres are continuing their cooperation in providing more opportunities for the improvement of essential job skills, so that more qualified workers are available to meet the needs of today's labour market.

The Institute of Vocational Education Development, under the Ministry of Education and Sports, signed a cooperation agreement with the Vetsaphong Technical-Vocational School on the development of technical personnel and skilled workers.

The agreement was signed by the Director of the Institute of Vocational Education Development, Dr Phouvieng Phoumilay, and Chairman of the Board of Vetsaphong School, Mr Yothin Vetsaphong.

The two institutions will

work together to improve teaching and learning materials relating to vocational education and training.

They will also create more opportunities for trainees to continue their studies at every level of vocational education programmes.

Other goals are to improve the quality and consistency of work in the construction industry and to improve the skills of teachers at the two schools, so that graduates are better equipped to contribute to the country's development.

A more highly trained workforce will assist Laos to gradually integrate with other countries in the region and internationally.

The partnership also aims to improve carpentry courses and broaden the skills of teachers, trainers and students, so that they are able to think creatively and develop the necessary skills to meet

customers' requirements.

It is anticipated that the agreement will result in the provision of better facilities, equipment, tools, machinery, drills, workshops and laboratories, so that both institutions can provide a higher quality education and a better learning environment.

The two bodies will also seek domestic and international funding to enhance opportunities for teaching, research and technical services to the community and society.

After signing the Memorandum of Understanding, the two partners will provide the necessary documents to facilitate the implementation of the agreement. The agreement runs for five years and may be renewed in three years' time following a satisfactory assessment of the progress made.

Lao, Vietnamese voice strong appreciation of their cooperation

Times Reporters

Top legislators of Laos and Vietnam spoke highly of the growing cooperation between their two parliaments when they met for bilateral talks in Hanoi on Monday.

President of Laos' National Assembly, Dr Xaysomphone Phomvihane, is paying an official goodwill visit to Vietnam from December 6-8 at the invitation of his Vietnamese counterpart Vuong Dinh Hue.

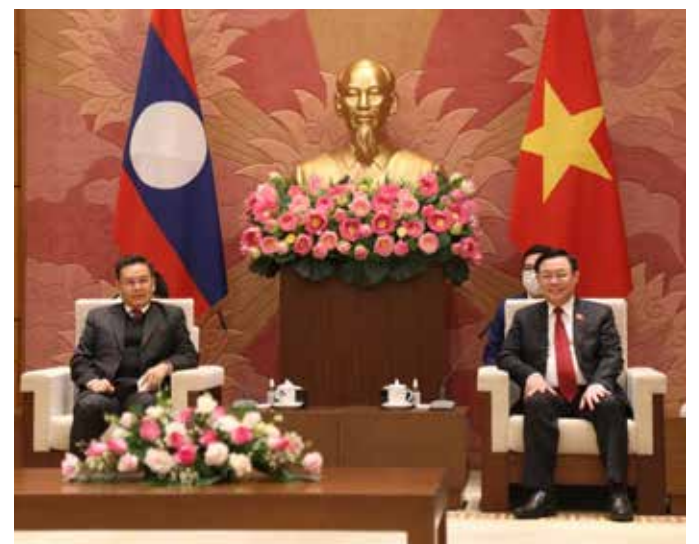
This is the first foreign trip by Dr Xaysomphone since he became the President of the National Assembly earlier this year.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Laos and Vietnam have continued to carry out reciprocal visits by high-ranking delegations and to cooperate closely in regional and international forums.

The top leaders of both countries say they are committed to strengthening the great friendship, special solidarity and comprehensive cooperation between their two countries.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed future cooperation, particularly the revision of a cooperation agreement between the two parliaments to replace the existing one, which expires in 2022.

They also agreed that activities should be organised next year to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the



Dr Xaysomphone Phomvihane (left) meets with Mr Vuong Dinh Hue in Hanoi.

establishment of Laos-Vietnam diplomatic ties and 45 years of the signing of the Laos-Vietnam Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

The two parties also discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the future and shared their experiences in the implementation of their National Assemblies' functions with regard to decision-making relating to important issues.

The two leaders discussed ways to congratulate individuals and organisations that contributed to the construction of the new National Assembly building in Laos, which was financed by a grant from the Vietnamese government worth US\$100 million (about 831 billion kip).

Legislators from Laos and Vietnam also held a seminar to share lessons and experiences

regarding questions put to government leaders during debates, the enforcement of laws to spur socio-economic development, and ways to attract more investment.

Vietnam is the third largest foreign investor in Laos after China and Thailand. As of December 2020, Vietnam's total investment in Laos stood at US\$4.1 billion.

According to the Vietnam News Agency, the value of two-way trade between Laos and Vietnam in the first five months of 2021 exceeded US\$570 million, a year-on-year rise of 25 percent.

During his visit, Dr Xaysomphone called on Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc and met with Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính to further discuss the friendly relations and cooperation between Laos and Vietnam.

Number of new Covid cases falls to 889

Times Reporters

There was a significant drop in the number of new Covid cases reported on Monday, with new infections falling to 889 after at least 1,000 had been reported each day for the past three weeks.

The National Taskforce for Covid-19 Prevention and Control also reported that three more people had died after contracting the virus.

All of the new infections were transmitted within Laos and were identified among 3,867 samples tested on Sunday.

The latest figures bring the total number of Covid cases to 80,722, including 210 people who have died.

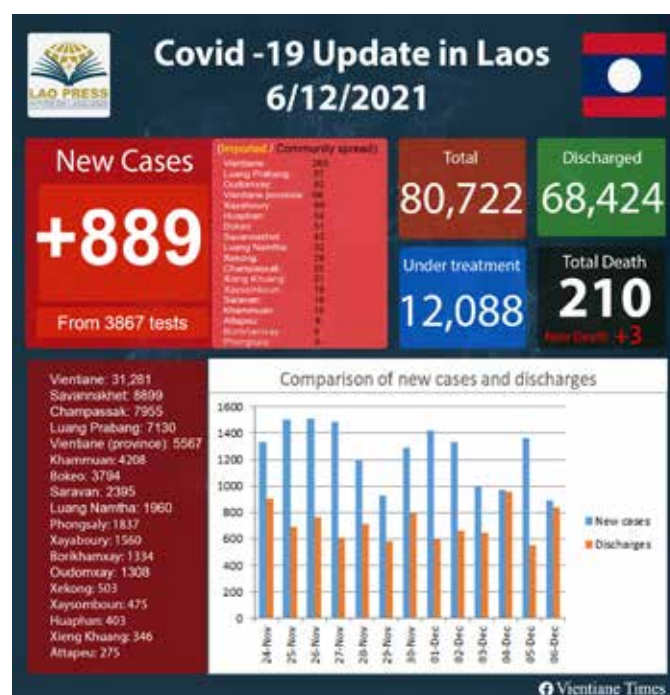
On Sunday, another 839 people were discharged from hospitals and treatment centres while 12,088 people remain under observation or are being treated for the virus. The first fatality was a 77-year-old man from Outhoumphone district in Savannakhet province. He had been paralysed for the

past four years and had not been vaccinated against Covid-19. He developed symptoms of Covid on November 27 and died on December 4.

The second fatality was a 38-year-old woman from Sanakham district in Vientiane province. She had an immunodeficiency and congenital disability and had not been vaccinated. She developed symptoms of Covid on December 3 and died two days later.

The third death was that of a 71-year-old woman from Nonsavanh village in Xaysettha district, Vientiane. She had high blood pressure and diabetes and had not been vaccinated. She tested positive on December 1 and died on December 5.

Leading a press briefing on behalf of the taskforce on Monday, Director General of the Department of Communicable Diseases Control of the Ministry of Health, Dr Lattanaxay Phetsouvanh, said that Vientiane again reported



the highest number of new cases with 263, followed by Luang Prabang with 87 and Oudomxay with 82.

Vientiane and Xayaboury provinces each reported 66 new cases, while Huaphan reported 54 and Bokeo 51.

Another 43 new cases were reported in

Savannakhet, 32 in Luang Namtha, 28 in Xekong, 25 in Champassak, 21 in Xieng Khuang, 19 in Xaysomboun, 18 in Saravan, and 10 in Khammuan.

The provinces of Attapeu and Borikhamxay each reported 9 new cases, and Phongsaly reported 6.

Asia News Network (ANN)

The Daily Star

KUENSEL

星洲日報

CHINADAILY

The Statesman

Jakarta Post

Japan News

The Korea Herald

VientianeTimes

星洲日報

SIN CHEW DAILY

ELEVEN

KATHMANDUPOST

INQUIRER

THE STRAITS TIMES

The Island

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Excerpts from the Lao Media

Tonpheung declares school 'drug-free'

Houanamkha secondary school in Houanamkha village group of Tonpheung district in Bokeo province has been declared "drug-free". On November 30, officials in Tonpheung district organised a ceremony to declare the school drug-free.

The director of the secondary school, Mr Lernxay Xayyalard, said the institution framed a plan and focused on developing the facility. The school implemented the plan for teaching and studies and preventing the use of drugs.

Besides, the school organised many activities for its students, including exercise sessions and sports activities, and gave importance to activities to prevent the abuse of drugs. The Deputy Head of the Education and Sports office of Tonpheung district, Mr Layseng Chomkham, said the Houanamkha secondary school had given importance to tackling the problem of drugs and had been declared a drug-free school in the district.

He stressed that the director and teachers of the secondary school should continue to prevent the use of drugs to ensure there are no problems in future. Mr Layseng, and other officials unveiled a sign to officially declare the secondary school drug-free.

--Bokeo Newspaper, December 5

Theft of motorcycles a major problem in Borikhamxay

The theft of motorcycles continues to be a major problem in Borikhamxay province and police must work harder to tackle this issue.

Recently, traffic police in Borikhamxay returned a stolen motorcycle to its owner. Traffic police seized the stolen motorcycle with the number plate 1165 from an alleged thief. After checking the vehicle, they found it belonged to Mr Layly from Sybounheuang village in Pakxan district of Borikhamxay province.

The Deputy Director of the Traffic Police Department of Borikhamxay, Major Thipxomphou Chanthalangsy, said the thief allegedly stole the motorcycle on November 11. Later, traffic police found it parked along the roadside in Thasy village of Borikhan district but the thief escaped. The traffic police then checked the motorcycle and learnt it belonged to Mr Layly. Police informed him to pick up the motorcycle, added Major Thipxomphou. He urged all people to be alert to prevent the theft of their property. He said people must park their vehicles in safe places to ensure they are not stolen.

--Pasaxon, December 2

Xaythany police arrest four robbers

Police in Xaythany district of Vientiane have arrested four men who allegedly stole a motorcycle.

On November 29, police in Xaythany were informed by a person that his motorcycle was stolen from Nathom village in Xaythany district.

Police in Xaythany district coordinated with traffic police to trace the suspect and received a tip-off about an alleged robber named Mr Somphone, 16, from Sivilay village in the same district. Police subsequently arrested Mr Somphone and seized the stolen motorcycle from him. During questioning by police, Mr Somphone confessed three more persons were part of his group. Police followed and arrested Ms Malisa, 18, from Chommany village in Xaysettha district, Mr Anousone, 15, from Thatkhao village, and Mr Phouthaphong, 17, from Phonsavanh Neua village, both in Sisattanak district.

Police in Xaythany district are conducting further investigations against the four persons and they will be punished under the laws.

--khaosanlao.com, December 5

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PHOTO SCENES

Thanaleng Dry Port... FROM PAGE 1



Mr Chanthone Sitthixay says the TDP and VLP will have important outcomes for the Lao economy.



Mr Viengsavath Siphandone says the TDP and the VLP will significantly cut the cost of logistics.

Thailand railway station and the Laos-Thailand Mekong Friendship Bridge 1, the dry port acts as a border checkpoint for freight, similar to a seaport-based or airport-based transit area or international arrival zone, where procedures are streamlined to enable the smooth flow of trucks and freight.

Set to link with the Laos-China railway, which came into operation on December 3, the dry port will eventually link to global transport systems via rail to European markets.

Shipment of goods from Southeast Asia to Europe by rail will take just over 10 days. This is much shorter than transport by sea, which takes about 45 days.

The dry port will also link with a planned railway connecting Vientiane with the Vung Ang seaport in Vietnam's central Ha Tinh province. Through this route, containers could reach countries and regions such as southern China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Addressing the grand opening, Minister of Public Works and Transport Viengsavath Siphandone said the Thanaleng Dry Port and Vientiane Logistics Park and their modern service systems will significantly cut the cost of logistics.

This reduced cost, the minister added, would increase Laos' trade competitiveness and boost investment. "This will be a significant contribution to driving economic growth," he said.

Mr Viengsavath pledged that the government and his ministry would continue to further support and facilitate the project. Developed solely by the Lao investor, the project comprises five zones offering various business incentives and opportunities for investors including tax breaks.

The zones are as follows:

1. Thanaleng Dry Port (TDP) - the centre of international import and export trade with all categories of customs operations.
2. Tank Farm - a fuel distribution centre for Laos.
3. Logistics Park - a warehousing and distribution centre.
4. Free Trade Zone.
5. Export Processing Zone.



Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh strikes a gong.



Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh (centre) cuts a ribbon to send off trucks loaded with freight to Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam.

World news in brief

Vietnam wants to strengthen friendship with Russian Communist Party

MOSCOW (Vietnam News) -- Vietnam wishes to foster cooperation with Russia across fields and channels, including the traditional friendship with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), President Nguyen Xuan Phuc told the Party's chairman Gennady Zyuganov in a meeting in Moscow. President Phuc emphasised that Vietnam always attaches importance to the traditional friendship and comprehensive strategic partnership with Russia. He applauded the KPRF's role and contributions to the Vietnam-Russia relations, stressing that the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Vietnamese State always keep in mind the great support of the Russian Party and people during Việt Nam's past struggles for national liberation as well as the present cause of national development.

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A boy is inoculated with a COVID-19 vaccine at a sports complex in Marikina City, the Philippines. --Photo Xinhua

WHO calls for greater vigilance amid fast-spreading Omicron variant

MANILA (Xinhua) -- World Health Organisation (WHO) regional director for the Western Pacific Takeshi Kasai has urged people to remain vigilant against the spread of the potentially more transmissible Omicron coronavirus variant.

The Manila-based WHO regional office said many countries are reporting detection of Omicron increasing daily. "Geographic distribution is likely already wider than currently reported," warned the agency.

At a virtual press conference, Kasai stressed the need to prepare for new surges of COVID-19 infections driven by the Omicron variant, adding that information suggests that Omicron "may be more transmissible than other variants."

Several countries, including the Philippines, have imposed travel restrictions to keep the Omicron variant out of their shores. However, Kasai warned that "blanket travel bans can delay entry of the Omicron variant but will not prevent entry."

"Border controls can delay the virus coming in and buy time, but every country and every community must prepare for new surges in cases," Kasai told a virtual news

conference.

"It is clear that this pandemic is far from over, and we can adapt the way we manage this virus to better cope with the future surges and reduce their health, social and economic impacts," he added.

Kasai outlined calibrated response measures that countries can implement to avoid the "red line" or the situation where the number of critical cases exceeds the hospital and intensive care unit capacity.

He said the region can avoid the "red line" and continue to open societies and economies by vaccinating more people, maintaining the right mix of public health and social measures, and ensuring hospital beds are available for those who need them.

"With a sustainable approach to protective measures, calibrated to each context, we can avoid swinging back and forth between opening up

and going back into strict lockdowns," he added. Kasai said the set of measures he outlined "is all about adapting so that we can learn to 'live with' the virus over the long term, even when we have new surges in the future."

He clarified that the measures are not meant to give up on controlling COVID-19. "Instead, it means continuously calibrating a combination of tools and actions based on the risks in each local setting, as they evolve over time."

"This is what we need to be doing in response to Omicron, based on what we know now, and adapting our response if needed as we learn more about its transmissibility, severity and impact," he said.

"We can adapt so that COVID-19 has less impact on our lives in 2022, and we can start to regain - and hopefully retain - a sense of normality," he said.

Railway hailed...FROM PAGE 1

Faculty of Economics and Business Management at the National University of Laos in Vientiane.

On Saturday afternoon the first international freight train from Vientiane, the country's capital, loaded with Lao exports had arrived in China. By the evening, the first cross-border freight train from Kunming, Yunnan province, arrived at Vientiane South Station after traveling 1,035 kilometers.

"The China-Laos Railway runs similar to the domestic railways, and the railway conditions are even better," Zhou Yukui, 31, driver of the freight train from Kunming, fully loaded with dicalcium phosphate, was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

Though more policy support is needed for trade facilitation on both tariff and non-tariff barriers, Kyophilavong said, he forecast that the railway will create more potential for Lao business. The country should also open up more to welcome investors from China and other countries to set up joint ventures, which will create jobs for locals.

Tee Chee Seng, general manager of the joint venture Savan Park, said the railway will provide a new and convenient logistics route for trade and turn the Southeast Asian country into a regional connector.

Savan Park links Laos and the Malaysian company Pacific Streams Development to create a commercial and logistics hub for Laos by building the country's first special economic zone. About 70 companies from countries including China, Australia, Japan, Thailand and the United States have invested in the zone.

Shortening transit time

Tee's company used to depend on sea freight, which could take days to reach its destination. The railway has shortened the transit time to

just 10 hours. The railway link could reduce transport costs between Kunming and Vientiane by 40-50 percent, a reduction of about US\$30 per metric ton, a report issued by the World Bank last year said. Domestic transport costs within Laos are tipped to fall by 20-40 percent.

The railway "will not only benefit investors in the park, but will also benefit manufacturing companies in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore", Tee said. His company will also work to expand its warehouse and logistics capacity to facilitate the flow of goods between China and other Southeast Asian countries.

Countries in the region have long desired to connect to each other as well as to China, which now has the capital, technology and expertise to work with its neighbors to realise this vision, said David Lampton, senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and former president of the National Committee of US-China Relations in New York.

The Bangkok Post in Thailand reported on Wednesday that the Thai government is being advised to accelerate efforts to link its rail system with the China-Laos Railway, citing comments by Danucha Pichayanon, secretary-general of Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Council.

"Opening the high-speed rail line in Laos is a key step in realising this vision because it runs down the spine of Southeast Asia," said Lampton, a co-author of the book Rivers of Iron: Railroads and Chinese Power in Southeast Asia.

Lampton said he expects subsequent links involving Thailand, Malaysia and perhaps Singapore to emerge over time.



ບໍລິສັດ ເອັສເອັມທີ ໂລຈິສຕິກ ຈຳກັດ

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Title: Review & Improvement of 5-Year Provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan + Spatial Planning (PSEDPs + SP) of Sayaboury & Houaphan Provinces

Project: LMDP3, (PN: 18.2091.9-001.00, ref:83396292)

Scope:

Preparatory Work – 7 days

1. Planning and Consultation – 2 days
2. Meetings with National Partners, Experts & Advisers – 5 days
3. Meetings with Provincial Partners, Experts & Advisers – 2 days
4. Review of PSEDP 2021-2026 of Sayaboury Province – 3 days
5. Sectoral Consultation Meetings – 10 days
6. Writing & Presentation of Improved PSEDP+SP – 10 days
7. Meetings with Provincial Partners, Experts & Advisers – 2 days
8. Review of PSEDP2021-2026 of Houaphan Province – 3 days
9. Houaphan Provincial Sectoral Consultation Meetings – 10 days
10. Writing and Presentation of Improved SEDP+SP – 10 days
11. Report submission & Presentation to GIZ – 2 days

Objectives:

1. To review and revise the current version of the 5-Year PSEDPs of Sayaboury and Houaphan provinces based on agreed quality criteria and parameters
2. To align the PSEDPs with the priorities and directions under the NSEDP IX, particularly the 6 pillars or goals of the Lao government and priority interventions
3. To link and harmonize the sector-based SEDP with spatial-based Land Allocation Plan of government, ensuring that land and resources are allocated properly based on development demands and targets of sectors whilst ensuring conservation, green growth, balanced and sustainable development.
4. To present the improved revised version for consideration and approval by provincial authorities.

Working Language:

The selected consultant will work with the PSEDP document in Lao Language only

Interested qualification local consultant are invited to register to obtain more detail information of tender document by sending mail to register: LA_Quotation@giz.de_ from 08:00 to 16:00 starting 06 December 2021 until dead line submission 16 December 2021. (please indicate your full address plus enclosed CVs + reference contract number 83396292 when request for registration)



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Environment Protection Fund
Office

No: 1800/EPFO
Vientiane Capital, Date: 03 DEC 2021

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

In late 2019, the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) submitted a proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to be accredited as a Direct Access Entity (DAE) of Lao PDR and also submitted a proposal for technical assistance (TA) from the GCF Readiness Program aiming to build capacity of EPF Office (EPFO) to complete the accreditation process and also assist in building GCF portfolio and preparation of GGF projects. On 21 January 2021, the proposal namely "Completion of the Accreditation of the Environmental Protection Fund as DAE for Lao PDR" or "the Project") was approved by GCF and the United Nations Offices for Project Services (UNOPS) has been assigned to manage this TA on GCF behalf. A Grant Support Agreement (GSA) has been signed between EPFO and UNOPS. To implement the Project activities, EPFO is seeking qualified candidate to fill the following positions:

1. International Proposal Preparation Consultant (Part time)

Key Academic and Professional Qualifications:

- At least a Master degree in environmental management, environmental science, climate change, or other related fields;
- A minimum of 10 years' experience in Natural Resource and Environment field and excellent and practical knowledge and understanding of the GCF proposal and pipeline development and review processes, especially as regards climate resilience and adaptation; proven working experience in supporting developing countries such as Lao PDR and/or other countries to develop GCF Concept Notes and project pipelines;
- Solid interpersonal skills and willingness to work with EPFO as part of a team.
- Fluent in the English language and ability to analyze legal and policy documents in English language, knowledge of Lao would be an asset.
- Additional skills/experience may include, but not limited to, (a) Experience in working with EPFO and/or MONRE would be an asset; (b) Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of international climate policy and climate finance as well as the management of environment and social safeguards policies and requirements including risk & compliance management of GCF and/or those related to fiduciary standard practices, and M&E and respective tools and systems; (c) Ideally, knowledge of planning tools of international donor organizations including knowledge in climate fund management, COPs and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) such as NAPs, NAMAs, NDCs, etc.; (d) Sound knowledge on environment/climate change project programs design and implementation and/or Experience working with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund (AF), and other Climate/Environmental Funds; and (e) Experience in both public and private sectors, working with public and private institutions in developing countries, preferably in Asia and/or experience, with large or medium scale projects/programs supported by WB, GIZ, ADB, UN system, multi-donor development projects, and other international organizations.

2. National Proposal Preparation Consultant (Full time)

Key Academic and Professional Qualifications:

- At least Master's degree in business administration, economics, social science, development, urban planning, environmental science, water resources management, climate change or a related field;
- At least 5 years' relevant experience in project management and development projects;
- Demonstrated experience working with projects with bilateral or multilateral funding;
- Demonstrated experience of work in a coordination role and managing teams;
- Proficiency in Lao and English;

3. National Accreditation Consultant (Full time)

Key Academic and Professional Qualifications:

- Master degree or higher preferably in areas related to environmental conservation/management, forest, ecology, rural/community development, social and environmental, engineering or similar;
- A minimum of 5 years of working experience in the development field preferably on natural resources management issues;
- Solid interpersonal skills and willingness to work with EPFO as part of a team. Fluent in English writing and communications is required;
- Experience in both public and private sectors, working with public and private institutions in developing countries, preferably in Asia. Some work experience in Lao PDR is a strong advantage;
- Experience, with large or medium scale projects/programs supported by international funding agencies such as WB, GIZ, ADB, UN system, multi-donor development projects, and other international organizations. An understanding of operational and procedural issues of GCF, UNOPS, and other donors supported projects has a strong advantage. Fluency in English writing is required.

Interested individual consultants shall provide their updated curriculum vitae indicating personal and technical skills, academic qualifications, experience in similar assignments along with the name of at least three (3) referees with contact information (e-mail address, telephone or fax numbers) Consultants may obtain the detailed Terms of Reference from the EPF's website and the address below during office hours 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday to Friday. Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by December 17th, 2021. **Only shortlist candidates will be contacted for an interview.**

Environment Protection Fund



Phakkavanh PHISSAMAY

Attn: Mr. Kinnakone Chittavong, E-mail: kinnakone.c@laeopf.org.la
CC: Mr. Phicksaway Vongsaly, E-mail: phicksaway.vongsaly@laeopf.org.la
Address: 2nd floor, Building No 100, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, P.O. Box: 7647, Tel: 021 252739; Fax: 021 252 741
<http://www.laeopf.org.la>

China-Asean Science Popularisation Contest focuses on dam safety

Times Reporters

The first China-Asean Dam Safety Science Popularisation Contest was recently held at Nanjing in China, and three contestants from China, Myanmar and Laos won the first prize at the two-day competition.

According to the Lao Ministry of Energy and Mines, the contest was over Centre of Department of International Cooperation, Science and Technology of China's Ministry of Water Resources (MWR), and jointly organised by Nanjing Hydraulic Research Institute (NHRI), Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Centre and Dam Safety Management Centre of MWR.

The year 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of dialogue relations between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

President Xi Jinping chaired a special summit in Beijing to commemorate the 30th anniversary of China-Asean dialogue relations via video link. China and Asean also announced the establishment of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

As an effort to implement the spirit of the special summit and to promote practical cooperation, the contest was aimed at publicising the role dams or reservoirs play in comprehensively managing water resources, sustaining social and economic development, improving the communication capacity



Participants of the first China-Asean Dam Safety Science Popularisation Contest.

of water practitioners in disseminating science and technologies on dams, and exchanging achievements in planning, construction, maintenance and management of dams in China and the 10 Asean member states.

The Head of the Joint Working Group on Water Resources of LMC of China, Mr Zhong Yong, said "In recent years, with the support of the Chinese government, the MWR of China and water

authorities in Asean countries have stepped up practical cooperation under the framework of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism."

He said the contest was an important campaign to enhance public awareness on dams, and called on all contestants to spread professional knowledge in words that can be easily understood by the public.

The President of the Nanjing Hydraulic Research Institute, Dr Chen Shengshui, said his organisation has had comprehensive and fruitful cooperation with Asean countries in the field of dam safety.

The contest served as a platform for water practitioners to exchange knowledge and experiences and to promote dam construction and safety management.

A senior official with the Asean Centre for Energy,

Mr Nuki Agya Utama, said "The topic of the event is very critical for us in the Asean region, considering that the hydropower plan contributes significantly to the power mix of the region. Looking at the various

national power development plans of countries in the region, hydropower will be increased and continue to play a major role in supporting the transition of the region towards more renewable energy. Hence, we believe the event will provide benefits for the region."

During the contest, 28 participants gave lectures on optimising the design of the dam foundation of hydropower stations, the impact of climate change on dams, the operation and maintenance of hydropower stations, green small hydropower, the important role of reservoir dams in promoting economic and social development, the development of photovoltaic power stations on the surface of reservoirs, water resources management, dam safety management, dam function construction, irrigation, hydropower development, electronic transformation of dam management, impact of dams on fish and countermeasures, and impact of dams dam construction on water cycle.

The performances of the contestants were highly praised by the judges.

The Secretary General of the Lancang-Mekong Resources Cooperation Centre, Mr Hao Zhao, said dam safety is crucial

for people's livelihood, especially amid climate change.

"Overcoming the impact of the pandemic, all 28 participants in the contest have presented their findings in various aspects of dam safety and every participant has made careful preparations. Their speeches covered a wide range of topics and had clear logic," he said.

A lead water resources specialist of the World Bank, Mr Marcus J Wishart, described the event as positive and successful. Despite the serious pandemic situation, youngsters responded to issues such as innovation of technology interrelationships with the environment, economic suitability and development.

The Deputy Secretary General of the Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat, Mr Oudomsack Philavong, said "Water science is especially valuable in Asean and the Mekong River Basin, and it's highly expected the event will be continued every year to encourage young people and experienced professionals."

The competition's awards will be given away at the Second Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Forum.

Danish company wants to rent a Russian Kuril Island to make 'Green' hydrogen for Japan

(Sputnik) -- The island is not part of the decades-long territorial dispute between Moscow and Tokyo and hence the construction of a hydrogen-fuel plant is unlikely to trigger a scandal. Yet, the project is still not guaranteed to come to fruition.






The Danish firm Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners is planning to rent an entire Russian island, Shumshu, to build a renewable energy power plant to produce "green" hydrogen, the Governor

of the Sakhalin region, Valery Limarenko, has revealed in an interview with the Russian news outlet RBC. Shumshu is a part of the northern Kuril Islands.

Limarenko explained that Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners are focusing on investments in green renewable sources of energy and want to generate 1.5 GW of power and produce 120,000 tonnes of hydrogen using the wind energy on Shumshu. The project is

estimated to have a price tag of US\$2-2.5 billion.

The governor noted that implementation of the project is not yet guaranteed, but "serious talks" are continuing between the company and the regional government. Limarenko stressed that the island Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners wants to rent is not subject to the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan – the primary market where the company plans to sell the hydrogen produced.

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 US Dollar	USD	10.869	10.906
 Vietnamese Dong	VND	0.5003	0.5103
 Thai Baht	THB	345.12	347.70
 Euro	EUR	11.980	12.071
 Renminbi Yuan	CNY	1.688	1.722

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Food, Beverages price grow 5 percent in Q3, marking 5th-steepest among OECD



A woman shops for groceries at a traditional market in Seoul on Thursday.

S.KOREA (The Korea Herald/ANN) -- Prices of groceries and nonalcoholic beverages in Korea rose 5 percent on-year in the July-September period, marking the fifth-largest increase among OECD nations, data showed on Sunday.

According to data from Statistics Korea and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, prices of food and beverages grew even higher last month on-year at 6.1 percent on the back of strong price increases of agricultural and processed products.

The quarterly price growth of food and beverages

was higher than overall consumer prices, which rose 2.6 percent from the previous year. The growth in consumer prices was the highest quarterly jump in the past nine years, the statistics agency said.

While Korea's consumer price increase was relatively stable, coming 23rd among OECD nations, signs of inflation were evident when narrowed down to only prices of foods and nonalcoholic beverages.

According to data from the OECD, Korea, along with Chile, came in fifth among 38 surveyed member nations in the rate of increase of food and drink prices in the third

quarter.

Prices of such goods saw the steepest rise in Turkey, up 27.6 percent on-year. Trailing behind were Colombia, Australia and Mexico, up 11.2 percent, 10.6 percent and 8 percent, respectively, from the previous year.

By item, prices of eggs jumped the highest in Korea, increasing by 51.6 percent on-year. Prices of pear and apples rose by 45.2 percent and 34.6 percent, respectively.

Meat has also become more expensive -- pork by 12.4 percent, chicken by 7.9 percent, domestically raised beef by 7.7 percent and imported beef by 7.3 percent from the previous year.

Food and nonalcoholic beverage prices have been on an upward trend for seven consecutive quarters amid a rise in international oil prices, as temperature changes also push up prices of local agricultural goods.

The figures are ringing alarm bells for households, as they feel more sensitive to price changes in food and beverages than price hikes in other products and services.

Philippines, Cambodia sign cooperation agreement

PHNOM PENH (Philippine Daily Inquirer/ANN) -- Cambodia and the Philippines have reaffirmed their commitment to boost bilateral trade and increase the volume of investment, to further enhance economic relations between the two Asean countries.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was virtually penned on December 2 by Cambodia Chamber of Commerce (CCC) president Kith Meng and his counterpart at the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Benedicto V Yujuico, to shore up trade, business and investment cooperation.

The signing took place during the 3rd Meeting of the Cambodia-Philippines Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC), which was presided over by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Prak Sokhonn and his Philippine counterpart Teodoro L Locsin Jr.

The CCC said in a statement that the MOU "aims to contribute to the promotion and strengthening of economic and business cooperation between Cambodia and the Republic of the Philippines".

The deal will focus on "areas such as information technology and innovation, agriculture, manufacturing, business, franchising, tourism, services and small-and medium-sized enterprise development", it said.

The CCC's Meng said he was "strongly convinced" that the MOU would form a new basis of cooperation that would strengthen Cambodia-Philippine business and economic partnerships and opportunities for expansion.

The two commerce chambers will regularly exchange information, organise trade and investment missions and exhibitions, hold seminar and conferences, and arrange business matching sessions,

he said.

The MOU also agrees to set up the Philippine-Cambodia Business Council in the Philippines, and the Cambodia-Philippines Business Council in the Kingdom, to discuss future investment plans.

On February 17, Prime Minister Hun Sen had called on the Philippines to invest in Cambodia's rice sector, suggesting they export the commodity back home and to the rest of the world.

He made the plea during a courtesy call paid by Philippine ambassador to Cambodia Maria Amelita C Aquino at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh.

"The Philippines can invest in Cambodia by financing rice millers, building paddy warehouses and establishing a network to buy paddy for stock and for export to the Philippines," he said, adding that the Kingdom has about six million tonnes of milled rice in its stockpiles each year.

Car registration fee reduced to boost market



An auto assembly line at a company in Quảng Nam province.

HANOI (Vietnam News/ANN) -- A 50 percent reduction in registration fees for domestically-assembled cars is forming part of a push to help the auto market grow in the next six months.

Deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai signed Decree No 103/2021/ND-CP of the Government stipulating the registration fee for cars, trailers, or semi-trailers pulled by cars and similar vehicles manufactured and assembled domestically.

The decree clearly states that the registration fee rate for domestically manufactured and assembled cars will be 50 percent compared to the previous one, applicable from December 1 to the end of May 31 next year.

Experts said that the Government's agreement to reduce the registration fee tax by 50 percent for a period of six months for domestically-assembled cars would be a

great motivation to promote domestic automobile production and assembly.

The fee reduction will also restrict imported cars and stimulate consumer shopping needs, which are impacted negatively by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only that, the policy is also expected to increase budget revenue from this important industry.

As proof of this, when the Government reduced the registration fee by 50 percent in the second half of last year, the out-the-door price decreased from VND14.95 million (US\$650) to VND298 million, helping to double the number of newly registered cars.

Therefore, although the registration fee revenue decreased by VND7.3 trillion, the total state budget revenue nearly doubled to VND14.1 trillion.

Economic expert Ngo Tri

Long said that authorities who want to have a source of income must nurture and generate revenue because in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as if prices and fees were high, people would not have money to buy.

Therefore, the 50 percent reduction in car registration fees will stimulate consumer demand, thereby promoting production and circulation of goods, restoring growth momentum and earning a return.

An expert in the automobile industry said that the reduction was a good opportunity for consumers to shop after the pandemic and an opportunity for businesses to release inventory vehicles.

At the same time, it also allows businesses to produce again after being affected by the pandemic, which caused many factories to close because of social distancing.



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- Assist Senior Admin Officer with administrative filing.
- Assist the management of driver logistics and transport for staff, update the whiteboard and arrange taxi as required.
- Record daily mileage and personal use of vehicles on in the vehicle log daily.
- Record letters in and out and manage DHL pouch pickup/drop off as required.
- Assist with the administration of security (keys), electrical (lights, batteries, reporting faults), monthly mosquito spraying service.
- Assist Senior Admin Officer with government protocol for Visas and work permits.
- Assist Operations Team with gathering quotations for goods and services.
- Track stationery stock and list required items to order. Support inventory stock take for office equipment.
- Maintain telephone log and check mobile bills – personal use record for submission to Senior Admin Officer.
- Assist with hotel and transportation bookings and arrangement of daily administrative work.
- Make and record petty cash payments and inform Senior Administration Officer of cash levels in line with Petty Cash Policy.
- Maintain and record car logbook, telephone log personal using.
- Maintain COVID data logs to support office operations.
- Carry out other tasks as requested by Operations Manager and CR.

Qualifications

- Minimum of a bachelors' degree (or college degree with 3 years' relevant workplace experience)
- Minimum 2 years of relevant work experience ideally in an international work environment
- Strong English-language skills
- Good organizational skills
- Cross-cultural understanding and interest
- Record Keeping and documentation skills
- Computer ability (Word, Excel, etc.)

Application Submission

Qualified candidates should submit a CV and a letter of application to country.laos.general@asiafoundation.org before the deadline: 11th December 2021.

The Asia foundation's **Lao PDR Office in Vientiane** is seeking to recruit a qualified and motivated **Lao national** for the **Administration Officer** position. This position will work with the Administration and Operations Team to support the office in Lao PDR. The position will be based in Vientiane Capital.



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Currently we work in Bokeo, Oudomxay, Saravan, Vientiane and Luang Prabang Provinces, in basic education, early childhood development, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, youth economic empowerment and adolescence. Plan has no religious or political aims or affiliations. Visit www.plan-international.org for more information.

Plan is currently implementing the SUSTOUR Laos project, a sustainable tourism project financed by European Union and implemented through a partnership between The European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism (ECEAT) and The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC). The project target areas are Vientiane Capital, Vientiane Province and Luang Prabang. The project will support tourism businesses and their supply chains obtain to adhere to Travelife certification standards and practices as promoted by ECEAT. The project utilizes a business-led approach to promote sustainable practices, integrate micro, medium and small enterprises (MSMEs) into supply chains, support local communities involved in tourism, develop eco-friendly solutions and create positive and lasting change for the Lao tourism industry.

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Plan Laos is looking for a Lao National for the following position:

Project Officer (based in Vientiane Capital)

Responsibilities will include

- Support the execution of the project as necessary, including project planning, implementation and monitoring at the National, Provincial and District levels;
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- Mobilize and mentor tourism businesses to adopt and promote sustainable practices with local communities and throughout their supply chain through adoption of Travelife standards;
- Integrate local MSMEs into tourism supply chains by enabling business-to-business linkages and developing "green" solutions;
- Develop project communications and marketing initiatives to promote Lao tourism businesses, their suppliers and Laos as a green destination among tourists and international travel agents;
- Support local project partners with project implementation and build their capacity to advocate for sustainable practices and administer Travelife;
- Represent the project in various national/regional forums, within sector working groups and to government and external stakeholders;
- Implementation of a comprehensive COVID-19 response strategy;
- Translate project documents from Lao to English (or vice-versa) and ensure that project documents produced are of high quality;
- General administrative tasks as required (e.g. preparing documents, making travel arrangements, supporting procurement processes, etc.).

Requirements:

- Bachelor Degree in tourism, hospitality, international development or related field;
- A minimum of 3 years' experience working in the tourism and/or international development sector. Private sector work experience in the Lao tourism industry is a significant advantage;
- Capacity to collaborate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders including, private sector, service providers, government and other development agencies;
- Ability to be a "connector": a people person who has the ability to bring people together, develop and maintain long-lasting relationships and make change happen through people;
- Strong organizational skills and competencies in project planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation;
- Excellent command of Lao and English languages (spoken and written);
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills;
- Skills in facilitating workshops/training and capacity building is an advantage;
- Creative abilities in marketing and promotion is an advantage;
- Excellent computer skills (including Word and Excel).

FOR ALL PLAN POSITIONS:

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- Short listed candidates will be required to attend panel interviews and other selection procedures.

This position will be based at the SUSTOUR project office and will be required travel frequently to target Provinces and Districts (up to 40%).

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: December 22nd, 2021

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Please state in cover letter how you learned about the job – through emails, INGO Directory, 108 Jobs, or friends.



About 30 factories and workshops have been closed temporarily and five factories permanently have been closed.

35 factories already closed in Ygn's Shwelinban Industrial Zone

YANGON (Eleven Media of Myanmar/ANN) -- Since the beginning of 2021, 35 factories already have been closed in Shwelinban Industrial Zone only in Yangon Region, according to the report of Shwelinban Industrial Zone Committee on September 27th.

In doing so, nearly 20,000 workers have lost their jobs.

"About 30 factories and workshops have been closed temporarily and five factories permanently have been closed. The owners of 35 factories closed only after paying salaries and wages to their workers. So, the closure of 35 factories left at least 20,000 workers jobless," said an unidentified officer from Shwelinban Industrial Zone Committee.

There have been 35 factories in Shwe Linban Industrial Zone which closed temporarily or permanently.

He added that a least 10 garment factories were among the 35 closures. Thousands of workers became unemployed after the factory and business closures.

Similarly, there have been closures of 38 factories in Hlaingthayar Industrial Zone and Shwe Than Lwin Industrial Zone in Hlaingthayar Township. In doing so, factories closure left nearly 10,000 workers jobless, according to relevant Industrial Committees reported on September 23rd.

The closure of 29 factories in Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone alone left about 7,000 workers unemployed, said a zone official.

Similarly, nearly 3,000 workers lost their jobs after nine factories closed down in Shwe Than Lwin Industrial Zone while around 10,000 workers became unemployed

after the closure of 35 factories and businesses in Shwe Linban Industrial Zone, according to the respective zone committees.

On September 21, Myanmar Unique Garment Factory in Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone closed temporarily after operating for five years due to a lack of orders. The factory is owned by a Myanmar citizen.

"The factory operation has been suspended. It is partly due to the Covid-19 crisis. We received few orders since 2020. The political issue is also one of the reasons. We stopped operation because we received no orders. But, it is only a temporary closure," a factory official said.

In Myanmar, there have been increasing closures of factories and businesses which harmed the wellbeing of workers.

Turkish coffee consumed in 144 countries

Saudi Arabia, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Netherlands main destinations for Turkish coffee exports.



ANKARA (AA) -- Turkey exports coffee to 144 countries, including the US, Belarus, the Netherlands and Russia.

The nation's exports amounted to US\$65.5 million in the last five years while annual coffee exports more than doubled in 2021 versus 2016.

Turkey's coffee exports totaled US\$9.2 million in 2016, US\$10.7 million in 2017, US\$12.1 million in 2018, US\$13.3 million in

2019 and US\$20.2 million in 2020.

Coffee exports totaled US\$18.7 million in the first 10 months of 2021.

The main five destinations for the exports were Saudi Arabia, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Netherlands, US and Iraq from 2016 - 2019. The US replaced Russia in 2020.

Coffee imports were US\$891.25 million during from 2016 - 2020,

US\$130.5 million in 2016, US\$191.8 million in 2017, US\$186.6 million in 2018, US\$194.7 million in 2019 and US\$187.6 million in 2020.

Import reached US\$165.3 million during the first 10 months of 2021.

Top coffee sellers to Turkey were Brazil, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland and Germany from 2016 - 2018.

Switzerland replaced Colombia in 2019 and 2020.

Feature

Train travel restores Luang Prabang's popularity

Times Reporters

The World Heritage-listed old quarter in Luang Prabang, nestled between the Mekong and Khan rivers, is no longer quiet now that people can travel to this much-loved place by train.

For the past 18 months and more, Luang Prabang and other tourist hotspots across Laos have fallen silent due to travel restrictions imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

But now thousands of people have been vaccinated and the Laos-China railway is finally opening up northern Laos to travellers once more.

Tickets for the first train run by the railway operator sold out on Saturday, with long queues forming at Vientiane station.

A crowd of people arrived hoping to get a seat on the very first journey on the railway, which departed Vientiane at 7:40am. All of the seats to Vangvieng, Luang Prabang and Boten were fully booked.

According to China Radio International, the price of a ticket from Vientiane to Phonhong is 86,000 kip for a first class seat on an EMU train, 56,000 kip for a second class seat on an EMU train, and 40,000 kip for travel on an ordinary train.

Prices from Vientiane to Vangvieng are 164,000 kip for a first class seat on an EMU train, 103,000 kip for a second class seat on an EMU train, and 74,000 kip for travel on an ordinary train.

From Vientiane to Luang Prabang the cost is 313,000 kip for a first class seat on an EMU train, 198,000 kip for a second class seat on an EMU train, and 140,000 kip for travel on an ordinary train.

Tickets from Vientiane to Xay district in Oudomxay province cost 443,000 kip for first class EMU travel, 279,000 kip for second class EMU travel, and 198,000 kip for a seat on an ordinary train.

From Vientiane to Boten, tickets cost 529,000 kip for first class EMU travel, 333,000 kip for second class EMU travel, and 238,000 kip for a seat on an ordinary train.

Before the pandemic struck and hotels and most other tourism-related businesses closed, Luang



People queue up to buy tickets at Vientiane train station on Saturday.

--Photo Lao Pattana

Prabang experienced an unprecedented surge in popularity as thousands of Chinese flocked to the small town, causing some organisational and communication problems for hotel and restaurant staff.

When large groups arrive, communication can be somewhat troublesome because the Chinese do not speak English, although they are accompanied by tour

guides.

The influx of visitors from China began in 2019 during Visit Laos-China Year, when people descended on the town in large numbers, with some travelling in groups of hundreds of vehicles.

Thai and Chinese nationals have been arriving in Luang Prabang in ever-increasing numbers to sample the scenic delights and ancient temples.

Now that China's rail network stretches over a distance of more than 1,000 kilometres from Kunming in Yunnan province to Vientiane, slashing travel time between the two cities to just half a day, there will be even greater interest among Chinese citizens in visiting Laos.

The Lao section of the railway links the Boten border crossing in the north

to Vientiane over a distance of 422 kilometres, with trains able to travel at a top speed of 160km per hour.

Despite its increasing popularity and the inevitable changes resulting from mass tourism, the people of Luang Prabang are keen to preserve longstanding traditions, such as the morning almsgiving ceremony when monks parade through the streets. The town's temples remain

hallowed places and continue to be used for prayer, merit-making and the chanting of scriptures by monks and novices.

Popular events throughout the year include the lively Lao New Year celebrations, the boat racing festival, festivals to mark the start and end of Buddhist Lent, and the lighted boat festival.

Luang Prabang was formerly the capital of the Lane Xang Kingdom and has been variously called Meuang Swa, Meuang Xiengdong and Meuang Xiengthong over the years.

In 1353 King Fa Ngum brought the sacred Prabang statue to Meuang Viengkham and in 1489 the revered Buddha image was moved to Meuang Xiengthong for public worship.

The name of the town was then changed to Meuang Luang Prabang in acknowledgement of the presence of the statue and has remained unchanged ever since.

As proof of its popularity, in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015 Luang Prabang was voted 'Best City' by readers of the British travel magazine Wanderlust.

And there is every sign that this former royal capital will continue to be a great favourite among travellers of all nationalities.



Two passenger trains pull up at the station in Vientiane.

--Photo Vientiane Times

Streetwise

What can be done to help new graduates find jobs?

Many young people are faced with a bleak situation after obtaining a degree. Some say this is because of a lack of information about job opportunities and that their skill levels don't match the needs of the job market. Vientiane Times talked to some of the city's students to learn their thoughts on this chronic problem.

Lamphone Pasanthing

Ms Chanmee, a student at Lao International College: I would like to suggest that universities and colleges do more to prepare students for the workplace before they graduate by arranging for them to work as interns



somewhere. This would enable them to get work experience and discuss their situation with people who have more experience. This would really boost their chances in the job market because most employers are looking to hire people with work experience. And the government

should try to advertise more jobs on social media, especially Facebook, because most people now seek information online. Some people are now finding jobs online so they should be able to get more information this way.

Mr Bounkhen Chanthavong, a recent graduate from Pakpasak Technical College: Employers tend to want people with good qualifications and experience in a particular



field. But unfortunately this rules out young graduates who don't have

any experience. I think it would be helpful for both employees and employers if state organisations and private companies provided more opportunities for graduates by giving them short-term internships. This would enable students to develop their strengths and weaknesses in particular skills, and it would allow employers to find the right people to hire. This would help to remedy the problem of providing decent work for more people and I think this would be a win-win situation for both sides.

Ms Veomany Vongsa, a recent graduate from the Academy of Economics and Finance: What the government has been doing so far is good, but other issues need to be fundamentally addressed. Most important is how the government is going to lower the unemployment rate. I would like to request the government and the

authorities in charge to further spur investment in an attempt to bolster domestic productivity and drive up the employment



rate. If state and private companies could enlarge the size of the young workpool, this would help new graduates to find decent employment. I also think it's good to have more training centres that teach vocational skills, as these are urgently needed in the current job market.

Mr Mone Thammalungka, a student at the Banking Institute: The government

and related sectors should cooperate with each other in holding more job fairs as these generate a lot of publicity among both students and employers. They allow students to meet face to face with potential employers and possibly find a job. Another thing that should be considered is more advertising on social media by setting up a web page with information about job opportunities. Given that most people use social media, they could get useful information this way.

Ms Khampout Vonsanid, a student at the National University of Laos: I think the government and other sectors should set up a special unit to act as a liaison centre between employers and people who are job hunting. In addition, I'd like to ask the public and private sectors to make it easier for entry-level job

applicants by lowering their demands in terms of work experience. They should provide more opportunities



for new graduates to show their potential in the workplace because if they aren't given that opportunity they will never be able to prove themselves, and this could cause the unemployment rate to skyrocket. The government should also consider creating a web page about available jobs as nowadays most people tend to look for jobs online. So it would be good to have a web page onto which information could be uploaded.

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Paper subscription boasts a home delivery service in Vientiane, postage within Laos or internationally for minimum period of three months at selected prices. Additionally, our readers can purchase a copy of the Vientiane Times at minimarts and shops in Vientiane and from our branches in Luang Prabang, Champassak and Savannakhet provinces.

2. Online Subscription

We offer two ways to read the Vientiane Times digitally. Subscribers can log on to our website, which is updated three times a day, or register for daily email updates. After you have paid a subscription fee, you will be sent a username and password which will give unlimited access to the content of the newspaper every day, including advertisements. You can also access back issues for up to seven days. Special discounts are given for longer subscriptions.

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Advertisements in the Vientiane Times can reach hundreds of thousands of readers, including online subscribers, both within Laos and around the world. Sizes ranging from 1/20 to full page black-and-white and colour display ads are on offer at reasonable prices.

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Advertising via the Vientiane Times website will give your business international exposure. If you have your own website we are able to assist you by linking it with our web site, and your logo will be placed on our home page, www.vientianetimes.la/; www.vientianetimes.org.la/

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6. News Message Service via mobile phone (SMS)

Our breaking news message service in English is updated at least 5 times a day from Monday to Friday and on Sundays. Lao Telecom (LTC) customers should send 'R' to 1135 for news in English, while Telecom Lao (ETL) subscribers type 'ON' and send to 2246.

7. Newspaper boxes

We now offer newspaper delivery boxes for use in homes and offices. The boxes, each of which is equipped with a lock and key, help protect your daily newspaper from the perils of inclement weather.

8. Dictionary

Vientiane Times Lao-English-Lao and Lao-Lao Dictionary Software is available at our office.

The dictionary has been compiled over years from many sources, and consists of contemporary Lao words and some older forms derived from ancient Pali and Sanskrit. The names of government agencies, trees, animals, fish and prominent locations in Laos have been added to this dictionary.

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Partnering with persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world

As the world observes the International Day of Persons with Disabilities today, we honour the leadership of persons with disabilities and their tireless efforts to build a more inclusive, accessible and sustainable world. At the same time, we resolve to work harder to ensure a society that is open and accommodating of all.

An estimated 690 million persons with disabilities, around 15 percent of the total population, live in the Asia-Pacific region. Many of them continue to be excluded from socio-economic and political participation. Available data suggests that persons with disabilities are almost half as likely to be employed as persons without disabilities. They are also half as likely to have voted in an election and are underrepresented in government decision-making bodies. Just about 0.5 percent of parliamentarians in the region are persons with disabilities. Women with disabilities are even less likely to be employed and hold only 0.1 percent of national parliament positions.

One of the main reasons behind these exclusions is a lack of accessibility. Public transportation and the built environment in general -- including public offices, polling stations, workplaces, markets and other essential structures -- lack ramps, walkways and basic accessibility features. Accessibility, however,

goes beyond the commonly thought of physical structures. Barriers to access to services and information and communication technology must also be removed, to allow for the participation of persons with diverse types of disabilities, including persons with intellectual disabilities and hearing and

their organisations were among the first to respond to the immediate needs of their communities for food and supplies during lockdowns in addition to continuing their long-term work to support vulnerable groups.

ESCAP partnered with several of these organisations to support their work during

access auditing, accessible e-publishing and strategic advocacy. NCBM hopes to support participants in forming a social enterprise for web auditing and accessible publishing, creating employment opportunities and enabling persons with disabilities to lead efforts to improve online accessibility.

inclusive Employment in Asia and the Pacific." The report highlights some innovative approaches to making employment more inclusive, as well as recommendations on how to further reduce employment gaps.

Adjusting to a post-COVID-19 world presents an opportunity for governments to reassess and implement policies to increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment, decision making bodies and all aspects of society. Accessibility issues impact not only persons with disabilities but also other people in need of assistance, including older persons, pregnant women or those with injuries. Implementing policies with universal design, which creates environments and services that are useable by all people, benefits the whole of society. Governments should mainstream universal design principles into national development plans, not only in disability-specific laws and policies.

As a global leader in disability-inclusive development for over 30 years, the Asia-Pacific region has set an example by adopting the world's first set of disability-specific development goals in the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real." Meeting the Incheon Strategy goals will require governments to intensify their efforts to reduce barriers to education, employment and political participation.

At ESCAP, we know that achieving an inclusive and sustainable post-COVID-19 world will only be possible with increased leadership and participation of persons with disabilities. To build back better -- and fairer we will continue to strengthen partnerships with all stakeholders so together we can "Make the Right Real" for all persons with disabilities.

The author of this article is Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

The COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns has exacerbated existing inequalities. Many persons with disabilities face increased health concerns due to comorbidities and were left without access to their personal assistants and essential goods and services.

vision impairments.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns has exacerbated existing inequalities. Many persons with disabilities face increased health concerns due to comorbidities and were left without access to their personal assistants and essential goods and services. As much of society moved online during lockdowns, inaccessible digital infrastructure meant persons with disabilities could not access public health information or online employment opportunities.

Despite these challenges, persons with disabilities and

the pandemic. Samarthayam, a civil society organisation in India led by a woman with disabilities, has trained many men and women with disabilities to conduct accessibility audits in their home districts. With these skills, they are becoming leaders and advocates in their communities, working towards improving the accessibility of essential buildings everywhere.

Another ESCAP partner, the National Council for the Blind of Malaysia (NCBM), is working to improve digital accessibility by training a group with diverse disabilities in web

Women and men with disabilities have been leaders and champions to break barriers to make a difference in Asia and the Pacific. Today, ESCAP launches the report "Disability at a Glance 2021: The Shaping of Disability-

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BTS members return home, loaded with honors in LA

KOREA (The Korea Herald/ANN) -- Three members of the K-pop superband BTS returned home Monday from Los Angeles where it secured a top music honor and had four sold-out live concerts.

Jimin, Jin and Jungkook arrived amid a flurry of camera flashes from their fans and journalists at Incheon International Airport at about 5 am and returned home after

undergoing a quarantine procedure.

BTS took home the artist of the year, considered the top honor, at this year's American Music Awards, one of the three major music awards in the United States, on November 22 (US time). The group also had its first in-person concerts in two years amid the COVID-19 pandemic in the US city.

The K-pop septet raked

in US\$33.3 million, with 214,000 tickets sold for the four concerts at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles held between November 27 and December 2, according to the US music magazine Billboard.

The revenue from the gigs marked the largest gross for a run of shows at a single venue since 2012, when British rock band Pink Floyd's Roger Waters earned



This composite photo shows three BTS members - Jin, Jungkook and Jimin (from left) - arriving at Incheon International Airport from Los Angeles where it had its first in-person concerts in two years. *-PhotoYonhap*

US\$38 million over nine shows at Estadio River Plate in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Billboard added.

Upon their return, the

three members entered a 10-day self-quarantine mandated by the government for all international arrivals in order to stem the spread of the

omicron variant of the new coronavirus.

Four other members - RM, Suga, V and J-hope - are reportedly staying in the US.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Industry and Commerce
Lao PDR Competitiveness and Trade Project (LCTP)
Project: P164813 Sector: General Industry and Trade Sector
(National Consulting Firms)



Assignment Title: Consulting Firm to Support Launching Promotion Communication on Land Property Registration Reform
Reference No.: A3.2.2.3

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC) of the Government of Lao PDR has received financing from the World Bank, Australia and Ireland toward the cost of the Lao PDR Competitiveness and Trade Project (LCTP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services. Through the support of LCTP, the National Implementation Unit (NIU), MOIC is seeking to recruit a consulting firm to support launching promotion communication on land poverty registration reform of Department of Land (DOL), Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE).

The overall objective of this assignment is to assist the Department of Land, at the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE) in the implementation of the PM Order No.02. In particular, the project supports land/property registration reforms by developing a communication strategy, designing and developing various communication tools to raise public awareness on land/property registration and facilitate public access to land information and registration services e.g. new changes of land registration legislation, regulations and new public services that are offline and available on DoL's website. The project aims to design and deliver communication materials such as posters, short video clips and raise public awareness on land registration reform via Facebook, local newspaper, television and radio to provide information on land registration and steps taken to access to land information and other service provided via DoL's website. Estimated time inputs for this assignment is five months. The selected consulting firm will be based in Vientiane. The estimate start date for the assignment is the first date after the Service contract is dually signed. Detailed ToR for the assignment can be found here: <http://www.t4dlaos.org/vacancies/>

The National Implementation Unit (NIU) now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. The interested firm should have competence, expertise and track record in conducting assignments of similar nature in Lao PDR. The following experience criteria shall apply in shortlisting the qualified firms:

- At least 5-year professional experience in PR and communications field in particular in public communications, commercial marketing, social media and etc.
- At least 5-year professional experience in promotional/marketing materials design such as A4 Leaflet, poster graphic design and short video-production.
- Working experience on communication strategy and outreach activities for the development projects funded by the World Bank Group is an asset.

Consulting firms / association are hereby requested to submit information on past assignments demonstrating experience against the above requirements, providing sufficient details e.g. assignment description, date / period, contract amount, client and contact details etc. Please note that staff qualifications and their CVs shall not be evaluated at this stage.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraphs 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's Regulations - Procurement in Investment Project Financing - Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services (July 2016, revised November 2020 edition), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultants Qualification-based Selection (CQS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours - 08:00 to 16:00 o'clock.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by **December 8, 2021, 16:00 o'clock**.

Attn: Mr. Phouvieng Phongsa, NIU Program Director
 CC: Mr. Thanakone Oudomvilay, National Procurement Consultant.
 Ministry of Industry and Commerce, National Implementation Unit (NIU)
 Ban Phonxay, Xaysettha District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR
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Vietnamese beauty crowned Miss Grand International 2021

VIETNAM (Vietnam News/ANN) -- Nguyen Thuc Thuy Tien has been crowned Miss Grand International 2021 - beating off models from 59 countries from across the globe.

The 23-year-old is the first-ever Vietnamese beauty queen to win the title of Miss Grand International.

She won the top spot after the final round of the competition in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday night.

Besides receiving the title of Miss Grand International 2021 and the crown from her predecessor - Evelyn Abena Appiah of the US, she also received a cash prize of US\$40,000. Representatives of Ecuador, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and South Africa respectively won the four runner-up prizes.

Tien beat the Ecuador contestant in a Top 2 final-question round with her smart answer in English and Thai, when they were asked why they think they should win the title.

"I have to be honest that I didn't think I would be standing here. I'm very nervous right now. I just want to say that I'm ready to work. I'm ready to be in Thailand for one year," the Vietnamese beauty answered.

Earlier that night, she had been asked: "With the current world situation there are many problems such as those related to human rights and economy, if you choose one person to discuss the problem in order to make the change, who will you choose and why?"

Thuy Tien said she chose to meet Prof. Sarah Gilbert,



Nguyen Thuc Thuy Tien is the first-ever Vietnamese beauty queen to win an international pageant. *--Photo courtesy of the organiser*

the inventor of the Astra Zeneca vaccine, to spread gratitude to her for creating a great vaccine without profit.

Her answer was appreciated by the judges and the audience for its intelligence and humanity.

During the contest, she was constantly praised by beauty experts for having a bright smile, outstanding beauty, and for being a formidable candidate for the crown of Miss Grand International 2021.

Nguyen Thuc Thuy Tien was born in Ho Chi Minh City. She attended HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanities and can speak many languages such as English, French, and Thai.

Prior to competing in Miss Grand International, the Vietnamese took part in the Miss Southern Vietnam 2017 pageant where she was named as first runner-up.

Tien also placed in the Top 5 during Miss Vietnam 2018 and went on to represent the country at Miss International 2018. However, she was unplaced.

Miss Grand International was founded in 2013. It's one of the six major global beauty contests held annually, the others being: Miss World, Miss Universe, Miss International, Miss Earth, and Miss Supranational.

The scale of this year's contest was narrowed in both the number of contestants and side activities because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the contestants were praised for their uniform beauty and the organisation was highly appreciated. On the final night, the organiser of the contest also announced that Miss Grand International 2022 will be held in Indonesia.

SPORT

All change at top in Premier League as Newcastle claim first win

LONDON (Xinhua) -- Manchester City are the new leaders, while Liverpool moved into second place after winning their respective matches in the Premier League this weekend, while Chelsea lost 3-2 in a thrilling game to West Ham United.

Manchester City's 3-1 win over Watford was rarely in doubt in a game they controlled ruthlessly, with Raheem Sterling opening the scoring in the fourth minute and Bernardo Silva doubling the lead just after the half-hour.

Silva added a third in the 63rd minute to assure the points before Cucho Hernandez scored a consolation for the hosts.

Newcastle United claimed their first win of the season after a bad mistake from Burnley keeper Nick Pope allowed Callum Wilson to score the only goal of the game at St James' Park.

Divock Origi doesn't score many goals for Liverpool but they tend to be important, such as the 94th-minute winner that gave his side a 1-0 win in a tight game against Wolves, where Jorgen Klopp's men did enough to deserve all three points.

A freak goal when Arthur Masuka's cross fooled

Chelsea keeper Edouard Mendy condemned Thomas Tuchel's men to their second league defeat of the campaign away to West Ham.

West Ham showed resilience to twice come back from behind with Manuel Lazini's penalty canceling out Thiago Silva's opener for the visitors and the impressive Jarrod Bowen leveling again after Mason Mount had put Chelsea back in front just before the break.

Ralf Rangnick got off to a winning start at Manchester United thanks to Fred's 77th-minute goal, which he curled in from the edge of the penalty area after being set up by Mason Greenwood.

The goal came two minutes after Jordan Ayew missed a great chance for visiting Crystal Palace and overall United failed to impress.

Goals from Lucas Moura, Davinson Sanchez and Son Hueng-Min gave Tottenham their most convincing win since Bruno Conte was named as first-team coach. Moura's early strike was just what Tottenham needed against a Norwich City side that had traveled to North London

on the back of a three-game unbeaten run.

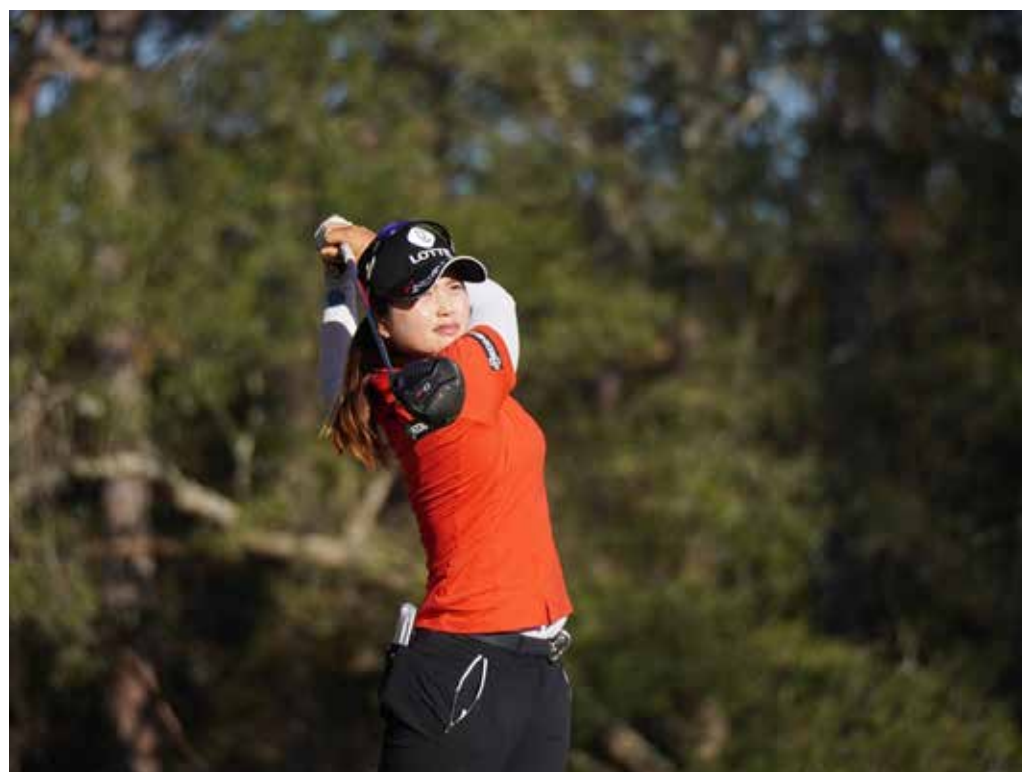
Patrick Bamford came back from injury after 11 games out with a 95th-minute goal to save a point for Leeds United in a 2-2 draw at home to Brentford.

Tyler Roberts had put Leeds ahead in the 27th minute only for goals from Shandon Baptiste and Sergi Canos to overturn the score and Brentford looked set for all three points until Bamford's late finish.

Ezri Konsa Ngoyo scored twice as Aston Villa came back after conceding an early goal to Leicester City to give Steven Gerard his third win in four matches as Aston coach.

Harvey Barnes put Leicester ahead in the 14th minute, but Konsa got a touch on Emi Buendia's header just three minutes later to beat Kasper Schmeichel and his powerful header from a corner in the 54th minute was enough to win the game for the home side.

Brighton rode their luck before Neal Maupay scored a ninth-minute equaliser away to Southampton, who had led through Amando Broja's 29th-minute strike and missed enough chances to have won easily.



Choi Hye-jin of South Korea watches her tee shot during the third round of the LPGA Q-Series on Falls Course at Magnolia Grove Golf Course in Mobile, Alabama, last Saturday, in this photo provided by LPGA. --Photo LPGA

KLPGA star Choi Hye-jin among 5 S. Koreans to survive 1st cut in LPGA qualifying event

(The Korea Herald) -- South Korean tour star Choi Hye-jin has made the initial cut at the LPGA Tour's qualifying tournament in Alabama.

Choi, a three-time Korea LPGA (KLPGA) Tour Player of the Year, was one of five South Koreans to finish inside the top 70 and ties after the first phase of the LPGA Q-Series concluded in Mobile, Alabama, on Sunday (local time).

After the first 72 holes, Choi is in second place at 17-under 269, two strokes back of Pauline Roussin-Bouchard of France.

Another KLPGA player, An Narin, is alone in third place at 14-under.

In all, 74 players out of 110 will move on to the second and final phase, which tees off in Dothan, Alabama, on Thursday.

And 144 holes, the top 45 players and ties will receive LPGA status for the 2022 season. Other players who complete all eight rounds but do not receive LPGA card will instead earn status for the second-tier Symetra Tour for next year. Scores will be cumulative over these two weeks.

Choi, who has won 10 times on the Korean tour, had four consecutive rounds in the 60s at Magnolia Grove Golf Course, and closed with a 66 that included five birdies and an eagle.

An, a two-time KLPGA winner, also carded a 66 on Sunday with seven birdies against one bogey.

Hong Yae-eun, a 19-year-old rookie in KLPGA this year, was the third-best Korean at nine-under 277, which put her in a five-way

tie for 11th.

Park Kum-kang, who won a Symetra Tour event this year, tied for 52nd at even-par 286. Kim Min-g, a fellow Symetra Tour player, was another stroke behind, in a tie for 62nd.

A two-time LPGA champion Lee Mi-hyang missed the cut by one shot at two-over 288. She had three straight rounds in the 70s, including a disastrous 76 on Saturday with two double bogeys and three bogeys, and her closing round of 69 wasn't enough.

Jang Hyo-joon, the only South Korean amateur in the tournament, tied for 98th at seven-over. Kwak Min-seo will not be back in LPGA after playing the past two seasons there, with her four-round total of 13-over in the Q-Series.

Medvedev-led Russia wins Davis Cup after 15-year wait

(China Daily) -- MADRID -- Russia's 15-year wait for a Davis Cup title ended Sunday after another clutch performance from Daniil Medvedev. Medvedev capped his amazing year with a 7-6 (7), 6-2 win over Marin Cilic in the second singles match to give Russia an insurmountable 2-0 lead over Croatia and its first Davis Cup title since 2006.

"It feels amazing," Medvedev said. "But I'm more happy for the team than for myself. We have an amazing team, amazing atmosphere. I'm happy to be part of it and bring the points

we need."

It was the fifth consecutive straight-set victory in the Davis Cup for the No. 2 Medvedev, who three months ago defeated Novak Djokovic to win the US Open for his first Grand Slam title.

"Pretty amazing two weeks," Medvedev said. "It's never easy to come here at the end of the season but they were some of the best weeks of my career." Andrey Rublev earlier had beaten Borna Gojo in straight sets to put the Russians ahead at the Madrid Arena.

Russia's other Davis Cup title was in 2002. Croatia also

was seeking its third title after triumphs in 2005 and 2018.

"I still can be proud with the effort," Cilic said. "We are just sorry we couldn't get one point to get the doubles guys in the court."

The doubles, where Croatia has the top-ranked pair, were not played. Russia, which had four top-30 players on its team, completed a sweep of team events after the women's team won the Billie Jean King Cup Finals in Prague last month. The last nation to do the double had been the Czech Republic in 2012.

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Request for Expression of Interest —
Firms and Consultants



The World Bank Lao PDR Clean Cook Stove Initiative requests expressions of interest for **three contracts** under the Gender-Inclusive Entrepreneurship & Resilient Recovery from COVID-19 in the Clean Cooking Sector, financed by World Bank Group SDG Partnership Fund.

1) Selection #:1277889: Gender-inclusive entrepreneurship skills development program in the Lao clean cooking value chain. **The firm** will deliver: 1) Pre-intervention needs assessment on entrepreneurs in the clean cooking value chain, with a focus on women entrepreneurs; 2) Adapt a skills development program to the Lao context, with pilot training; 3) Provide the skills program to 50 female entrepreneurs; 4) Post-intervention needs assessment.

2) Selection #:1277892: Development, delivery, maintenance and training for a virtual mentorship and coaching platform for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. **The firm** will deliver: 1) A user-friendly cost-effective online platform for the entrepreneurship skills development program, including mentoring, networking and career opportunity events; 2) Delivery of the platform with a stakeholder presentation; 3) Platform maintenance, including customer service, for the program duration; 4) Training of stakeholders to take over the platform long term.

3) Selection #:1277891: In-country support and coordination for gender-inclusive entrepreneurship and resilient recovery from COVID-19, in the clean cooking sector. **The consultant** will oversee project management and : 1) Ensure coordination among stakeholders; 2) Monitor deliverables from the entrepreneurship skills development program and the virtual platform for mentoring and knowledge exchange; 3) Develop a case study on successful business models led by women, developed as a result of the program.

Deadline for submissions: 22 December 2021. **Details:** <https://wbgeconsult2.worldbank.org>.

For **assistance** with the eConsultant2 system, email: wbgeconsultant@worldbank.org

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What's on

Photos from the Lao amphibians and reptiles exhibition



Everyone is invited to visit an exceptional exhibition featuring photos of Lao amphibians and reptiles titled: "An overview of the rich biodiversity of amphibians and reptiles in Laos". The exhibition is presented by the French Institute in Vientiane and the IRD (French Institute of Research for sustainable Development). The splendid photographs on display are the result of the astonishing work of Nathanaël Maury, a French reptile specialist who lives in Laos, and his Lao wife. Nathanaël's objective is to show the diversity of amphibians and reptiles with never seen before images, in order to better preserve them. The exhibition is open to all ages free of charge. A maximum of 5 persons are allowed per visit; health safety precautions are strictly respected.

When: November 11-30, from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm (except Sunday).

Where: At the French Institute, Lane Xang Avenue, Vientiane.

Free online computing and programming

Those interested in computing and programming are invited to apply to join this free course. The course is a self-paced and provides an introduction to computing and programming.

Where: For more information visit <https://bit.ly/3bXsu9i>

When: Available now.

Photo contest



The Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment invites entries to a contest with the themes "the Montreal Protocol - keep the world cool" and "the storage of food and vaccines". Entries can be in the form of a photo, painting or graphic. The winner will receive a tablet and smart watch.

When: Applications accepted until March 2022

Where: Apply at www.ozone2climate.org

Blood donation

The National Blood Transfusion Centre is in need of blood urgently because less people have donated during the recent Covid-19 spread. The centre invites members of the public to take part in blood donation.

When: Daily from 8:30 to 6pm.

Where: The second floor of the new building of National Blood Transfusion Centre, Lao Red Cross, Xiengyeun village, Chanthabouly district, Vientiane. For more information call 021 214763; 030 5487539

Online Chinese cultural activities



Members of the public are invited to take part in an online Chinese cultural activities programme with a chance to win a prize! The events are hosted by the China Cultural Centre, throughout Laos to mark the countdown to the end of 2021 and welcoming the new year. The audience can follow the activities on Facebook or Wechat provided by the China Cultural Centre in Laos. For more information call 020 54522828.

What and When:

- Workshop and tutorial on Dunhung Dance (a traditional Chinese folk dance) held by a Chinese artist. Anyone interested can send their photos demonstrating their rendition of the Dunhung Dance choreography for a chance to win the prizes. This event will be held between November 12 to December 12.
- Taste of the Chinese canteen of the China Cultural Centre (learn about Chinese cuisine with a Chinese chef). From November 19 to December.
- Laotian making Chinese desserts. From November 26 to December.
- Online Chinese techniques learning, teaching by Mango (Chinese teacher). From November 15 to December.

Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bid Information Systems (Design, Supply and Installation of Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS)) (Two Envelope Bidding Process Without Prequalification)

Purchaser: Ministry of Finance, Lao PDR

Project: Enhancing Public Finance Management Through Information and Communication Technology and Skills (E-FITS) Project

Contract title: Design, Supply and Installation of Integrated Financial Management Information System

Country: Lao PDR

Credit No.: 6377-LA

RFB No: E-FITS-G-06

Issued on: 24 November 2021

- The Ministry of Finance, Lao PDR has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Enhancing Public Finance Management Through Information and Communication Technology and Skills (E-FITS) Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design, Supply and installation of Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). **For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing, except for those payments, which the contract provides to be made through letter of credit.**
- The Ministry of Finance, Lao PDR now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Design, Supply and Installation of Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). The installation period for the IFMIS is 12 months. The scope of services to be provided by the supplier during the lifecycle of implementing IFMIS in Lao include: (i) Functional, Architectural & Performance Requirements of IFMIS (ii) Service Specifications for IFMIS Application Development & Implementation (iii) Technology Specifications for IFMIS Cloud Infrastructure & Software (iv) Support Services Requirements post IFMIS implementation.
- Bidding will be conducted through international competitive procurement using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018 ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Project Implementation Unit, Fiscal Policy Department, Ministry of Finance and inspect the bidding document during office hours 09:00 to 16:00 hours at the address given below.
- The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **USD 50**. The method of payment will be **cash or direct deposit to specified account number**. The document will be sent by **email**.

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SWIFT Code: PNBPU33NNYC

Account with Institution:

Name: BANQUE POUR LE COMMERCE EXTERIEUR LAO PUBLIC
SWIFT Code: COEBLALA

Beneficiary:

Account Number: 010110100339453001
Name: National Treasury Department (NTD)
Information Detail (If Any): Vientiane Capital
Purpose Transfer: BUDGET / IFMIS Laos_Request for Bidding Documents

- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 14:00 pm on 10 January 2022. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on FPD Meeting Room, Department of Fiscal Policy (FPD), Ministry of Finance, at 14:00 on 10 January 2022. All envelopes marked "SECOND ENVELOPE: FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public opening.
- All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid-Securing Declaration.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The address referred to above is:

Project Implementation Unit

Mr. Chittakone Savathdy, Deputy Head of Project Implementation Unit

Ministry of Finance

23 Singha Road, P.O Box 46, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR

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