Nam Et-Phou Luey National Park reopens to visitors

Visitors can enjoy birdwatching and, if lucky, will hear the calls of the critically endangered northern white-checked gibbon, although these fascinating creatures rarely show themselves in the dense forest. It’s also possible to spot wildlife from an observation tower and to trek up to the highest point in the national park, where visitors can sleep in a jungle camp and swim in their own private waterfall.

The park arranges 2-5 day activity programmes, which are led by the residents of 26 villages close to the park, mainly in Hiem and Huameuang districts in Huaphan province and Viengkham district in Luang Prabang province. Villagers who work in the park and take part in visitor activities receive training from park officials.

Visitors take a trek in the park. 

---Photo Nam Et-Phou Luey National Park

The first section of the Vientiane-Boten Expressway is open to traffic.

Govt plans more expressways to improve logistics

Phomphong Laoin

The government is upgrading the country’s road network and is planning to build more expressways to improve logistics and help fulfil the goal for Laos to become a land-linked country. Deputy Minister of Public Works and Transport Mr. Lan Seng-Aphone gave a summary of the work undertaken in road development over the past three years at a meeting of the public works and transport sector.

He noted that the first stage of the planned expressway between Vientiane and Boten in Luang Namtha province, at the border with China, had been completed over a distance of 109.12 km between Vientiane and Vangvieng district in Vientiane province.

The section of the expressway between Boten and Huaxay district in Bokoo province has been surveyed and a feasibility study and detailed design plan are now being carried out. A feasibility study on construction of the Vientiane-Pakke Expressway is also being undertaken for sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 but the Memorandum of Understanding on section 5 has been cancelled because the concessionaire did not comply with the regulations. A new expressway is also planned between the 3rd Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge and to trek up to Tham Hang cave and the Hot Springs.

The province is also home to Pha Thee mountain and has a renowned city pillar in the provincial capital.

Viangxay district recently received an Asean Clean Tourism Standard award following an assessment of compliance with Asean tourism standards. The main objective of the Asean standards is to improve the quality of community-based tourism, as this is seen as important for developing tourism and increasing the number of visitors.

To receive an Asean clean tourism district standard award, a district must be able to show good standards of cleanliness at hotels, guesthouses and restaurants. Visitor attractions must also be clean and in good condition, and local residents must participate in the provision of services, according to the Huaphan Information, Culture and Tourism Department.

MOSCOW (Xinhua) -- Russia and Ukraine concluded on Monday their first round of negotiations in Belarus with no clear breakthrough. The talks are certainly a positive signal, observed analysts, but the negotiation process would be rather complicated.

No Breakthrough

The long-awaited negotiations between delegations from Russia and Ukraine was held in the Gomel region in Belarus and lasted for five hours. Headed by presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, Moscow’s delegation was formed by representatives from the defense and foreign ministries, among others.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleixy Reznikov and the deputy head of the ministry of foreign affairs were among the participants from the Ukrainian side.

Before the negotiations, representatives from the Russian side said a key aim would be to achieve peace. Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei welcomed the participants and assured safety during the first round talks.

CONTINUED PAGE 3

CONTINUED PAGE 5
Times Reporters

The government in cooperation with its partners is highlighting opportunities to transform the country’s food systems, including the sectors of agriculture, food, fisheries and environment.

Government officials and researchers collaborated in a national technical consultation held on March 1, which was facilitated by CGIAR, a global partnership of international organisations engaged in research for the development of food, land and water systems.

The focus of the meeting was on policy, market integration, and trade. Topics included harnessing the use of local agricultural biodiversity, nourishing Asian megacities and peri-urban areas, and increasing Asean food security and the Asean Food Security Framework, while helping to transform Laos’ food system in the years to come.

Food systems transformation will help us not just address current challenges, but will also give us the capacity and adaptability to respond effectively to future risks, uncertainties and partnership-driven research towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,” said Jean Balic, CGIAR Regional Director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, in a recorded message.

Also speaking at the event, Director General of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), Dr Chay Bouphounhousay, said the information gathered from this series of workshops would be used in regional research for the Asean food security programme proposal that CGIAR intends to share with the Asean Secretariat.

The proposal will be reviewed by Asean member states at the 14th Asean Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Research Development, where discussions will address the need to comprehensively tackle the needs of the country’s food, land and water systems, Dr Chay added.

Times Reporters

Mr Kikeo Singnavong addresses the national technical consultation workshop.

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Mr Kikeo Singnavong highlighted Laos’ commitment to identifying opportunities for transforming the country’s food systems within the Asean context.

Mr Kikeo said ensuring food system sustainability is a key development goal for Laos, while the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the agriculture sector and the food chain in the region.

The National Technical Consultation Meeting on the Asean-One CGIAR Research and Development Project will make a significant contribution to the implementation of the Asean Food Security Strategy 2023-2025 and the Asean Food Security Framework, while helping to transform Laos’ food system in the years to come.

10 hectares of opium poppies cut down in Oudomxay

Times Reporters

Houn district police have cleared over 10 hectares of opium poppies found growing in two villages of Oudomxay province.

Poppies were cleared from 58 sites in Sibounheuang and Namngoy villages in Houn district.

Officials cut down the plants so that villagers would be unable to harvest the latex from the poppies and plant new seeds to grow another crop, according to the Ministry of Public Security.

Police warned owners of the poppy crops and laid down the law with regard to poppy cultivation, in an attempt to slow the drug trade in Oudomxay province.

Authorities encouraged villagers to grow other crops instead and take up animal farming to augment their income.

According to the United Nations, Laos was previously the world’s third-largest illicit opium poppy producer.

However, the government’s commitment to eradication efforts has helped the country to reduce opium poppy cultivation to marginal levels.

This is an enormous success considering that, as recently as 1998, Laos had one of the highest opium addiction rates.

In 2005, it became illegal to cultivate opium poppies, leaving many farmers without the means to make a living.

Many organisations are working with the government to ensure the sustainability and continuation of alternative development projects in order to promote food security, manage the fragile environment, and provide livelihood opportunities to small-scale farmers to prevent the resurgence of opium poppy cultivation.

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Over one million UXO devices destroyed from 1996-2021

Phetphoxay Sengpasouk

Health officials around Laos are strengthening Covid-19 response measures in a bid to prevent the spread of Omicron and ensure that everyone has access to adequate healthcare. At least 108 countries have detected cases of the highly transmissible strain while more than 33 provinces in Thailand have recorded Omicron cases.

The Ministry of Health is readying government hospitals and health officials to cope with a possible widespread outbreak of the new strain of Covid-19. Target hospitals in Vientiane province have set up emergency medical teams and are fully prepared for a worst-case scenario, the director of the National Center for Disease Control under the Ministry of Health, Dr Viengsavanh said.

Everyone must play a part in protecting communities against the virus, he added, referring to two workshops on Tuesday in which he advised the media to alert the public to the possible spread of Omicron and advise caution.

Work to strengthen the Covid-19 response is based on the results of a rapid risk assessment and involves epidemic level assessment, a number of health officials in relation to treatment and knowledge around the virus outbreak, and the rate of vaccination coverage.

Since the start of the pandemic, Laos has taken the necessary health and social measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, Dr Viengsavanh said.

Everyone must play a part in protecting communities against the virus. Risk assessments are required regularly so that the ministry can assess early and a quick response can be made,” she said. The health ministry is mobilising doctors and nurses from government and private hospitals, as well as medical teams from the Lao army, to join the effort to tackle the virus outbreak.

The ministry advises anyone with flu-like symptoms or anyone who has been in contact with a virus outbreak area to contact the health ministry.

The media workshop was led by the Director of the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology, Dr Phonepadth Sangayarath, and Director of Information and Education for Health, Mr Visith Khamlusa, and attended by senior ministry officials and media personnel.

Govt plans more... From PAGE 1

Rising price of imports sparking surge in inflation

Somsack Pongkhao

The cost of imported goods, especially fuel, rose sharply in January, contributing to spikes in the global fuel price, rising up pressure and causing new pain for low-income earners and their efforts to improve their living standards.

Drivers in Vientiane now have to pay more per kilolitre for regular grade petrol and 12,940 kip per litre for diesel.

The surge in oil prices is due to a supply-demand mismatch, while the situation in Ukraine is also having an effect on the global fuel price.

Fuel accounts for Laos’ biggest slice of imports. The cost of diesel imported in January jumped to US$52 million, while the cost of premium and regular grade petrol was US$15 million.

The surge in fuel prices has had a big impact on consumer price index due to the fact that rising fuel prices have driven up the cost of living.

C o s t s i n t h e c o m m u n i c a t i o n s and transport category in January rose by 1.26 percent month-on-month, and 13.72 percent year-on-year, according to the Laos Statistics Bureau.

Meanwhile the price of goods produced in Laos rose by 4.36 percent year-on-year, most driven by food prices including meat.

Rising prices have sparked increasing debate among members of the public regarding the use of electric vehicles to help reduce fuel imports and reduce the amount of foreign currency needed to buy fuel.

The government aims to increase the number of electric vehicles on the country’s roads to one percent by 2025 and to over 30 percent in 2030.

The government has decided to cut Value-added Tax from 10 to 7 percent this year, and to control the rising price of fuel, to ease the cost of living for the people and the general public.
Excerpts from the Lao Media

**Commercial crops help family in Hadxaifong overcome poverty**

Translated by Meuangkham Noradeth

Growing commercial crops has helped a family in Xiengkhuan village in Hadxaifong district of Vientiane earn more than 200 million kip a year and overcome poverty.

Mrs Namfon Vongvichit is the head of this family that grows various crops, including yams, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and this has helped them have a better life.

Mrs Namfon said her parents had grown crops for many years, and this made her love farming. After she graduated in law, she decided not to work in an office and instead began growing commercial crops on two hectares in 2011. She has been growing various vegetables and it is easier for her to sell them because traders come to buy directly from her farm. Mrs Namfon said she invested 30 million kip to grow yams in November. She harvested the crop in February and sold it at a price of 20,000 kip per 12 kg.

She said the sweet tomatoes were harvested in the same month as the yams and were sold for 50,000 kip per 12 kg. Mrs Namfon added the tomatoes were grown in September and harvested in December, and sold at a price of 15,000 kip to 20,000 kip.

She said her husband works as a teacher and helps her to grow crops, and she also hired some local villagers to help her. Growing crops has helped Mrs Namfon’s family have a better life and overcome poverty, and she also saved some money to buy land to expand her farm.

Mrs Namfon’s family is a good example for others in Xiengkhuan who want to grow commercial crops and move towards eradicating poverty. --Pasaxon, February 28

**Xaythany police confiscate 12,000 amphetamine tablets**

Police in Xaythany district of Vientiane have arrested a man and his wife on charges of dealing drugs and seized 12,000 amphetamine tablets from them.

On February 28, police arrested Mr Daolin, 24, and his wife, Mrs Chanda, 37, from Donliew village in Xaythany. During questioning by police, they confessed that they had been dealing drugs since 2021. They usually bought these drugs from Ms Khemphone, 43, from Xaysavang village in Xaythany district, and sold them to teenage drug addicts.

At 11 am on February 28, Mr Daolin and his wife Mrs Chanda allegedly bought 12,000 amphetamine tablets from Ms Khemphone, and police subsequently arrested them. Later, police attempted to arrest Ms Khemphone from her house but she escaped. Police searched her car and found 14 amphetamine tablets and four small bags of crystal methamphetamine.

Police officials are now trying to arrest Ms Khemphone and to trace more drug dealers from the same group. --Lao Security News, February 28

**Keo-oudom villagers and businessmen join hands to rebuild gravel road**

The residents of Phonyaeng village in Keo-oudom district of Vientiane province joined hands with businessmen to rebuild a gravel road that was damaged.

The head of Phonyaeng, Mr Souksabai Thounruamrak, said the village has 159 families and a population of 638. Most of the people are engaged in agriculture and rearing animals.

He said that the gravel road in Phonyaeng had been damaged and was full of potholes. The village officials and local residents discussed the issue and agreed to donate money to rebuild the road. They also received assistance from local businessmen. Mr Souksabai said the work of rebuilding the road started on February 22, and is expected to be completed by March 5 at a cost of more than 35 million kip. This gravel road is 3.5 km long and four metres wide. Once it is rebuilt, the road will help improve basic infrastructure, facilitate the movement of traffic and make it convenient for local residents to transport their crops and goods to nearby markets, he added. Mr Souksabai said the rebuilding of the gravel road reflected the solidarity among the people and their desire to develop the community and to improve their living conditions instead of waiting for help from the authorities.

--Vienthanch-news.com, February 27
South-east Asia among regions hardest hit by climate change, must prioritise adaptation: IPCC

SINGAPORE (The Straits Times/Asia News Network) -- South-east Asia is among the regions of the world hardest hit by climate change, and is especially at risk of losing settlements and infrastructure to sea-level rise, a major new report published on Monday (Feb 28) has shown.

"With ongoing global warming, today’s children in South and South-east Asia will witness increased losses in coastal settlements and infrastructure due to flooding caused by unavoidable sea-level rise, with very high losses in East Asian cities," said the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report.

The report also concluded that if global warming continues above 1.5 deg C, industrial times, the impacts of climate change could be severe, and some will be irreversible.

"Risks for society will increase, including to infrastructure and low-lying coastal settlements," said the IPCC report.

But limiting global warming to the 1.5 deg C threshold will help the world avoid harsher climate impact, scientists say.

Sea-level rise expert Benjamin Horton from the Nanyang Technological University’s Earth Observatory of Singapore said the greatest effects of sea-level rise will be felt in Asia, due to the number of people living in the coastal low-lying areas.

For example, mainland China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand are home to the most people on land that is projected to be below average annual coastal flood levels by 2050, Professor Horton said.

"Together, those six nations account for roughly 75 per cent of the 300 million people on land facing the same vulnerability at mid-century," he added.

The IPCC report also found that risks to coastal ecosystems are projected to increase by “at least one order of magnitude” by 2100, if there are no significant plans to deal with the crisis.

Sea-level rise is not the only threat confronting South-east Asia.

Climate scientist Winston Chow from the Singapore Management University, one of the authors involved in the IPCC report, said Asia has already been exposed to many climate-change-related impacts, such as floods, droughts, urban heat as well as biodiversity and habitat losses.

“These current impacts are projected to worsen in the future, especially when global surface temperatures exceed the 1.5 deg C threshold,” said Dr Chow.

The world has already warmed by 1 deg C since pre-industrial times.

At this level of warming, some climate-change impacts are already locked in and considered close to irreversible in some natural ecosystems, researchers fear.

The forecast decline of coral reefs in the South China Sea, said Dr Chow.

He added that a warmer Earth could mean that parts of ASEAN dependent on water from glacial melt - such as cities along the upper Mekong - will likely have reduced freshwater resources, due to the loss of ice.

Crop yield could also be reduced if the world gets hit by other climate-driven events such as floods, droughts and tropical cyclones could further affect vulnerable countries.

If cities and countries want to reduce such climate-related risks, it is essential to minimise future loss and damages, he added.

Adaptation refers to measures that countries can take to reduce the impacts of climate-driven events on societies, while loss and damage is a term used in climate change discussions that refers to climate impacts that societies are currently suffering which cannot be, or have not been, reduced by adaptation efforts.

For sea-level rise, for example, adaptation measures could include building sea-walls or restoring mangroves, since these ecosystems have the potential to mitigate the impacts that can keep pace with sea-level rise to an extent.

Medical expert warns against excessive use of Favipiravir for Covid infections

Medical expert warns against excessive use of Favipiravir for Covid infections

(The Nation/Asia News Network) - Thailand is using some 60 million pills of Favipiravir a month to treat patients with symptomatic Covid-19 disease, raising concerns in a medical specialist that the virus may turn resistant to the drug.

The concern was voiced on Tuesday by Assoc Prof Dr Thawee Chotiphatphaisal, a specialist in the Medical Services Department.

Thawee said about 90 per cent of people do not have symptoms or only have mild symptoms after they are infected with the Omicron strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, so they would be given the Favipiravir antiviral drug.

The doctor said statistics showed that Thailand is using about 2 million pills of Favipiravir a day or 60 million pills a month, which was very high.

"Since the antiviral drug is used in very high amounts now, specialists fear drug resistance might emerge. It can happen," Thawee said.

He said the Covid-19 virus becomes resistant to Favipiravir, the antiviral drug would become useless.

He said infected people should be treated based on their symptoms and people with no symptoms should not be given Favipiravir at all.

Thawee said the Public Health Ministry has issued new treatment guidelines for hospitals to admit only infected people with high fever above 38 degrees Celsius or people with comorbidities or the elderly who may need respirators or may see their symptoms worsen later.

Thawee said 90 per cent of infected people will be able to cure themselves in course of time. Doctors who are in charge of home isolations may consider giving them Far Talai Jone (Andrographis paniculata) herb.

"The doctors added that it was very rare for people infected with Omicron to see their condition worsen from green to red - this is the most serious condition.
New planned vehicle may help store oxygen on moon & build 'Lunar Villages' - report

(Sputnik) – While we expect that flights to Mars and the Moon will soon become a reality, access to oxygen is still a problem that plagues potential space colonists. The Moon has a sparse atmosphere, consisting mainly of hydrogen, neon and argon. So far, all hopes lie on electrolysis, a special reaction that can help extract oxygen from Moon materials.

A special device, reportedly being developed by the European Space Agency in cooperation with Thales Alenia Space, Franco-Italian aerospace manufacturer Alenia Space, Franco-Italian Thales Group and the Italian Research Council, would be able to extract oxygen from lunar rocks, according to the Mirror. The innovation may be another step towards the creation of a real “lunar village.”

“We wish to have lunar research stations which are permanent and people can go back and forwards from, rather than just go up there every 20 years,” said Roger Ward of Thales Alenia Space. “That’s when you start thinking about lunar villages and the need for resources such as oxygen to support that.” An unmanned spacecraft “would feed the rocks into the machine to be crushed to dust that would be pressed into tablets,” according to the newspaper. When heated, these tablets were said to be able to emit oxygen that could be stored in reservoirs for future use.

The European Space Agency agreed on a £840,000 (US$1.1 million) deal with Thales Alenia Space to develop “a blueprint for the device.” The project is expected to start in the next two years.

Electrolysis is a reaction that can help extract water into hydrogen and oxygen from extracting oxygen from lunar rocks. So far, all hopes lie on electrolysis, a special reaction that can help extract oxygen from Moon materials.

The Moon has a sparse atmosphere, consisting mainly of hydrogen, neon and argon. So far, all hopes lie on electrolysis, a special reaction that can help extract oxygen from Moon materials.

Lunar Crust.

China’s UN envoy calls for direct negotiations on Ukraine crisis

(China Daily/Asia News Network) -- China’s ambassador to the United Nations on Monday called for efforts to create an enabling condition for direct negotiations over the Ukraine crisis and warned against the politicisation of humanitarian assistance to the Eastern European nation.

The situation in Ukraine is changing sharply and has evolved to a point that, Zhang Jun, China’s permanent representative to the UN, told an emergency special session of the UN General Assembly, on Ukraine.

Zhang stressed that the immediate priority is for all parties concerned to exercise necessary restraint and prevent further worsening of the situation, while stepping up diplomatic efforts aiming for a political solution.

“China welcomes the start of direct dialogues and negotiations between Russia and Ukraine,” he said.

“Ukraine should serve as a bridge of communication between the East and the West, rather than an outpost for confrontation between powers. We call on direct efforts to create an enabling atmosphere and conditions for direct negotiations between the parties concerned, as this is the fundamental way to resolve the issue,” Zhang said.

The envoy said all actions taken by the UN and the relevant parties of the international community should “prioritise regional peace and stability and the universal security for all and should help de-escalate tensions and facilitate a diplomatic settlement”.

“China does not approve of any approach that may exacerbate tensions,” said Zhang. China supports relevant UN agencies’ continued work on humanitarian aid in Ukraine, said Zhang. “We believe that the safety of civilian life and property and their humanitarian needs should be effectively guaranteed,” he said.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China always earnestly fulfills its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the ambassador said.

“It is our consistent and unequivocal position that all countries’ sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected, and that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be upheld. China will continue to play a constructive role in the pursuit and realisation of peace,” he said.

The Cold War has long ended, Zhang said. “The Cold War mentality based on bloc confrontation should be abandoned. Nothing can be gained from stirring up a new Cold War, but everyone will stand to lose,” he said.

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Title: Review & Improvement of 5-Year Provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan – Spatial Planning (PSEDPs) of Saybouy and Houaphouan Provinces
Project: LMDPS, (PN. 18. 2094).001, 06, r83403939
Scopes:
Preparatory Work – 7 days
1. Planning and Consultations – 2 days
2. Meetings with National Partners, Experts & Advisers – 5 days
3. Saybouy Province PSEDPS – 25 days
4. Meetings with Provincial Partners, Experts & Advisers – 2 days
5. Review of PSEDPS 2021-2026 of Saybouy Province – 3 days
6. Sectoral Consultation Meetings – 10 days
7. Writing & Presentation of Improved PSEDPS – 10 days
8. Houaphouan Province PSEDPS – 25 days
9. Review of PSEDPS 2021-2026 of Houaphouan Province – 3 days
10. Houaphouan Provincial Sectoral Consultation Meetings – 10 days
11. Reporting – 2 days
12. Report Submission & Presentation to GIZ – 2 days

Objectives:
1. To review and revise the current version of the 5-Year PSEDPs of Saybouy and Houaphouan provinces based on agreed quality criteria and parameters
2. To align the PSEDPs with the priorities and directions under the SEDP 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 government demands and 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 Languages:
The selected consultant will work with the PSEDPS in Lao Language only

Interested qualified local consultants are invited to register to obtain more detail information of tender document by sending mail to register+.4. Quantitative4.GIZ.de
from 09.00 to 16.00, starting 01 March 2022 and deadline submission 15 March 2022, (please indicate your full address also enclosed business license + reference contract number 83403939 when request for registration)
Ekhphathana Microfinance Institution (EMI) has won an Asean Business Awards Laos 2021, namely the Special Award for Sustainable Social Enterprise Excellence.

The award was handed over recently by Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) Ekhphathana Microfinance Institution was recognised for its excellence and outstanding business, which provides a unique and standout service for clients under the slogan “Laos’ leading provider of responsible, sustainable financial services and education.”

The institution’s CEO Mr Somphone Sisenglath said “EMI’s vision is to be a leading microfinance institution in the Lao PDR offering efficient, modern and high-quality financial services to low- and medium-income households.”

EMI’s mission is also to offer a wide range of financial education services to low- and medium-income households to strengthen family livelihoods and business sustainability.

EMI’s operations are guided by four society-led goals:

**Goal 1:** EMI offers excellent financial services enabling clients to sustainably grow their household and business assets and achieve their family goals.

**Goal 2:** EMI offers excellent financial education services enabling clients to manage their money wisely in meeting their household budget needs and growing their businesses.

**Goal 3:** EMI is an equal opportunity employer that invests in the continuous development of its employees.

**Goal 4:** EMI seeks long-term sustainability through financial viability while creating client value.

Our performance: Since 2006 EMI has issued more than 120,000 loans to low- and middle-income clients worth more than US$80 million.

Savings evolution: EMI believes that savings can help clients accumulate assets which can be used for business and household purposes while also earning interest on savings. EMI also promotes savings for younger age groups through the Smart Kids savings programme, which allows children to put away a portion of their pocket money. To date, more than 49,000 children have taken part in the programme.

Financial education for adults: EMI provides financial education for its clients on various topics relating to financial management such as saving, investing, using credit wisely, and understanding microfinancial products. EMI has a staff of 125, of whom 72 percent are female. The key management staff joined EMI more than 10 years ago. On average, employees stay with EMI for 6.6 years.

Five DNA were identified through several focus group discussions with staff at all levels. EMI DNA consist of 1. Teamwork, 2. Adaptability, 3. Accountability, 4. Ethics and 5. Customer Centric.

In 2020, the “EMI From Good to Great Institution” was formed to translate knowledge into practice. Several implemented programmes encourage staff to do great things such as provide great services to clients and co-workers, be a great team member, etc.
Exports up 20.6 percent in Feb. on robust chip, auto shipments

(The Korea Herald/ANN) -- South Korea’s exports jumped 20.6 percent in February from a year earlier as overseas shipments of chips, autos and other key products increased amid a global economic recovery, data showed Tuesday.

Customs-cleared outbound shipments stood at US$53.91 billion last month, up from US$44.71 billion a year earlier, according to the preliminary data compiled by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. It marked the highest figure for February since the ministry began compiling related data in 1956. It also marked the first time that the country’s exports volume surpassed the US$50 billion mark in February. The previous record was set in February 2012, according to official data.

Imports jumped 25.1 percent to US$4.79 billion and those of intermediate goods increased 16.2 percent to US$9.04 per barrel in February on average, up more than 5 percent from US$56.89 a year earlier.

South Korea depends on imports for most of its energy needs. Despite the spike in imports, the country was still able to make a trade surplus of US$40 million in February, a turnaround from the previous two months of a trade deficit.

“The country had faced unfavourable conditions both at home and abroad last month, such as the spread of the Covid-19 omicron variant, high raw materials prices and tensions surrounding Ukraine. But the solid growth in exports offset rising imports, which led to an improvement in the trade balance,” the ministry said in a release.

February marked the 16th consecutive month that the country’s exports have made an on-year expansion. Exports also posted a double digit growth for the 12th month in a row last month.

Shipments of the country’s major export items increased in February, with sales of high-value memory chips rising 24 percent to US$10.38 billion and auto parts moving up 9.1 percent to US$3.34 billion.

Sales of petrochemicals surged 24.7 percent on-year to US$4.79 billion and those of petroleum products spiked 66.2 percent to US$3.97 billion. The steel industry also enjoyed 40.1 percent growth in outbound shipments to US$33.1 billion last month.

The bio-health sector’s sales also rose 24.7 percent amid the continued pandemic across the world, the data showed.

By nation, exports to China went up 16 percent on-year to US$13.1 billion last month, and shipments to the United States also expanded 20.9 percent to US$7.74 billion over the cited period, accoding to the data.

Exports bound for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) surged 45.6 percent to 1.3 billion in February. Russia accounted for around 73 percent of South Korea’s total exports to the CIS region, but tensions between Russia and Ukraine only had limited impacts on trade, the ministry said.

Turkish economy expands 11 percent year-on-year in 2021

(AA) -- Turkey’s economy expanded 11 percent year-on-year in 2021 in line with market expectations, according to official data revealed on Monday.

The gross domestic product at current prices increased by 42.8 percent and reached 7.2 trillion Turkish liras (US$802.7 billion) in 2021 compared with the previous year,” the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) said in its latest report.

The gross domestic product per capita was 8,567 Turkish liras (US$935) at current prices last year.

Service activities made the biggest contribution to the country’s economy with a 21.1 percent rise, followed by 20.3 percent in other service activities recorded according to the information and communication activities.

Food and insurance activities, agriculture sector and construction sector decreased 9 percent, 2.2 percent and 0.9 percent, respectively.

A panel of 21 economists polled by Anadolu Agency on Wednesday expected that Turkey’s GDP would rise 11.1 percent in 2021.

In the fourth quarter of 2021, the Turkish economy grew 9.1 percent from the same period of the previous year, TurkStat said.

Gross domestic product at current prices increased 51.8 percent to reach 3.3 trillion Turkish liras (US$398 billion) in the last quarter of the year.

“The economists’ forecast for the fourth quarter was a 8.7 percent annual growth rate, on average, with the lowest at 6.3 percent and the highest at 10.2 percent,” it revealed that the economy boosted 1.5 percent quarter-on-quarter in October-December 2021.

Commenting on the annual figures, Treasury and Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati said Turkey became the fastest growing economy among the countries of G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and EU for which data is available.

Turkiye is committed to maintain the balanced and stable growth trend in the upcoming period, thanks to ‘Turkye Economy Model,’ Nebati said.

“Through focusing on investment, production and exports, we will achieve our target of value-added growth that provides high employment,” Nebati wrote on Twitter.

Turkiye saw a 7.5 percent growth in the third quarter after expanding 21.9 percent in the second quarter and 7.3 percent in the first quarter of 2021.

In 2020, the Turkish economy grew 1.8 percent, compared to similar items but the income from these operations increased amid the continued pandemic, according to official data released Wednesday.

The early year-2022 expansion is also due mainly to rising imports, which led to an improvement in the trade balance, the ministry said in a release.

In February due mainly to soaring global energy prices. Dubai crude, South Korea’s main import, increased by 16.2 percent to US$94.10 per barrel in February on average, up more than 20 percent from US$77.41 a year earlier.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) plans to provide technical advice and access to funding for businesses so that they can upgrade the quality of their products and develop widely-recognised brands for domestic and foreign buyers.

In Laos, a few domestic products are internationally recognised and exported to foreign countries, including coffee, tea and beverages, but the income from these goods is limited when compared to similar items from neighbouring countries.

In his opening remarks at the recent “Made in Laos” fair, LNCCI President Oudet Souvannavong said the export of Lao products has generated substantial income for the country over the past few years.

“However, Lao products face the challenge of competition from imported goods and other difficulties while entering international markets, because they are unable to meet international standards while the price remains high,” he said.

In this context, LNCCI continues to provide technical advice and other suggestions to producers to ensure their production standards are aligned with the demand of buyers, he said.

Mr Oudet said the hosting of various fairs and expos, including the “Made in Laos” fair, the “Lao Thieaw Laos” (Lao visit Laos) campaign and other important events, are aimed at promoting local products.

“This year’s Made in Laos fair had a lot of domestic products on sale. Entrepreneurs from 17 provinces were able to join several seminars on digital marketing so that they can access e-commerce or online markets amid the Covid-19 pandemic,” he noted.

Prime Minister Phankhum Viphavanh and other high-ranking government officials attended the opening ceremony of the “Made in Laos” fair that was held during February 19-28.

The presence of the premier at the event provided inspiration and encouragement to entrepreneurs who are keen to improve their production capabilities under the promotional guidelines and policies of the government.

One of the most important promotional plans framed by LNCCI is a move to prioritise an increase in the quantity, quality and standards of product to meet the requirements of domestic and international buyers as this will gradually reduce the import of foreign products.

LNCCI eyes branding promotion for domestic products in foreign markets

Times Reporters

Laos hopes to beef up the promotion of its domestic products to attract foreign buyers in order to generate more revenues and contribute to socio-economic development in line with the LNCCI’s five-year strategic plan for 2021-25.

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Our partners consist of news agencies and media groups.


2. Asia News Network (ANN) members comprising 25 media outlets in 21 countries.

3. The Belt and Road News Network (BRNN) Council comprising 25 media organisations.
HA NOI (The Vietnam News Agency) – Escalating geopolitical tensions between Russia and Ukraine would have a short-term impact on the Vietnamese stock market, but the market still has positive growth prospects in the long term thanks to stable macro factors.

The VN-Index closed last week, the 9th week of 2022, with three gaining sessions, two decreasing sessions, losing 5.95 points, or 0.4 percent, closing at 1,498.89 points.

Particularly on February 24, when the tension between Russia and Ukraine reached its peak, along with many other global stock indices, the VN-Index lost more than 17 points, with many stocks plummeting.

Bui Hoang Minh, senior analyst for individual clients at Ho Chi Minh City Securities Corporation (HSC), said that geopolitical tensions often had a short-term impact on the stock market.

Regarding the impacts, the Russia-Ukraine tension caused energy prices to rise, leading to rising costs, resulting in inflation in countries around the world.

The Russia-Ukraine tensions only impact Vietnam’s stock market in the short-term.
Sports doctors, the unsung heroes of Vietnam’s success

HANOI – Vietnam News/ANN – PHNOM PENH — Doctor Duong Tien Can had a high temperature and cough, and a test proved his suspicions – he was a Covid-19 patient. But Can could not rest for he still had work to do, taking care of the U23 football players who won the AFF Championship title on Saturday in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Can was one of two doctors assigned to follow the U23 team. He worked on a range of issues, such as dealing with injured players and helping with recovery after high-intensity training games. His goal is to get players back in action as quickly and as safely as possible.

But on this working trip, apart from his normal duties, Can had to deal with a big problem; the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected many of his duties.

“We discussed the matter before we left for Cambodia, but I could not imagine that it would spread so fast among our team,” said Can, whose second son was born a few days ago in Hanoi.

The doctors’ day started at 6am when they sanitised the hotel area where the Vietnamese team stays. They had to clean the elevator and the stairs that led players from their rooms to the restaurant.

They kept reminding players to keep a safe distance and suggested foods that are good for their physique.

They also took charge of doing quick tests for players, once every three days.

But they could not stop Covid-19 from attacking the team. The first players tested positive on February 17, just a few days after the team landed in Phnom Penh.

The doctors’ workload increased. They had to continue their normal duties while carrying out a care programme for the sick members.

“It was a really big worry because more cases would come out soon. Our duty was doubled. We had to take care of players on the field, giving them energy drinks, preparing ice packs and giving treatment to players’ injuries. Then, we prepared medicine and traditional herbs and food for the patients. We were overloaded with work,” said Can, who himself tested positive 10 days later.

Can however could not rest – almost 30 patients needed him.

He was not allowed to work on the field but he took care of players at the hotel and supported his colleague by phone when necessary.

“It was the most memorable trip. Luckily, we received help and encouragement from the Vietnam Football Federation, Vietnam Anti-Doping Agency, and the team’s coaching board. We were tired but knew that it was a national task so we had to do our best,” said Can, who did not tell his wife about the situation.

“Players’ strong determination and their iron mindset to play for Vietnam moved me. They got injuries, they were exhausted but they did not give up. We, the doctors, also fought hard,” he said.

He added that being a sports doctor is a glorious profession, because he often stands in the background, witnessing first-hand the great moments of victory. Doctors are not an important part of the tournament but not many people have the chance to see the national flag flying high and sing the national anthem together with winning athletes.

F0 caring for F0

Last month, doctor Tran Thi Trinh of the women’s football team was also in the same situation.

She followed the team to Spain for a training camp and then to India for the Asian Cup, which saw Vietnam overcome a Covid storm to earn a spot at the 2023 World Cup.

“My most memorable moment was when 14 players tested negative and were allowed to fly from Spain to India. We all cried with happiness,” Trinh said.

“Covid-19 attacked our team. Seven players and two doctors tested positive after the last friendly match in Spain. We were shocked to hear the news. However, we did not think about ourselves, but players.

“We worried because they had high temperatures and coughed a lot. It would strongly affect their lungs and may cause respiratory failure. Luckily, as sportswomen they had a good physique and quickly recovered,” said Trinh.

In India, Trinh and her colleague also worked as chefs to cook Vietnamese food to make sure of the nutrition regime for players.

“Players recovered but they were still weak, and so could be easily injured on the field. The diets of the players also did not have beef and pork, so they lacked good nutritional food. We had to cook for them,” Trinh said.

Trinh said it was a tough trip but she will never forget it.

Our job is hard but the players work 10 times harder. They practised regardless of the weather, rain or shine. Looking at them, I find my job is nothing and I love them more. I think I am lucky to have the chance to contribute my humble labour to the success of the team,” she said.

On February 27, National Doctor’s Day

“I wish all the best for my colleagues, especially those who are sports doctors and physicians. I hope they will stand strong in the pandemic and contribute more to national sports. Happy National Doctor’s Day!” said Trinh, whose next task is to accompany the Vietnamese Team at the 31st SEA Games this May in Hanoi.

The successful candidates will be selected in accordance with the competitive method of individual consultant set out in the Procurement Regulations, dated July 14, 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018.

In order to apply for the position, interested applicants should provide information indicating that she/he is qualified to perform the services (description of experienced similar assignments on Expressions of Interest) and detailed CV to the address: koumoto@gmail.com, Gr. Santorini 551/18, Tel: 030 5158124, Mobile: 090 591 7838. Applications will be accepted from 08:00 to 17:00 hours, from Monday to Friday (Lao PDR time) by postal mail or e-mail by 11 March 2022. Only Short-listed candidates will be contacted, we are looking forward to seeing your response soon.

Sixty Years, Hand of Cabinet Officer
Beyond counting sheep

KOHO BEE KHIM CNA
(Borneo Bulletin/ANN) – It’s time to sleep but there you are in bed, with eyes wide open and a brain filled with myriad thoughts. You might have had a particularly busy day earlier on and your head is still buzzing. Perhaps you had a disagreement with someone at home and the unsettled feeling is keeping you up.

If you could have spent the whole day (and night) Netflixing on the couch – and now you’re mentally edgy as the zombies in your latest K-drama fix. Sometimes, your brain might, on a whim, pull out an embarrassing memory from way back in school.

Whatever your thoughts are, there’s one commonality: We tend to ruminate just when it’s time for bed. But why is that?

According to experts, your brain is constantly collecting new information and data all day long. The lull period before you drift off to sleep is when your brain has the opportunity to process the information, said a clinical psychologist in Manhattan Beach, California, Professor Lynn Ng, a coach and counsellor, who has also a private practice at A Space Between. “You can fix your heightened attention onto the guided visualisation exercises, which will gradually calm and relax your mind, and help you drift off to sleep.”

As for drinking more water to flush caffeine out of your system, it doesn’t really work.

“Limited research has been done on that,” said Reutens.

However, staying hydrated can reduce the caffeine-induced jitters caused by dehydration and help to keep the blood flowing smoothly. More water also helps the urinary tract to increase urine output, but it won’t hasten caffeine elimination.

Your best bet to neutralise the stimulating effects of a late-afternoon cuppa? “You’ll just have to wait it out,” said Reutens. Or try these methods: Get moving by briskwalking or jogging; stop caffeine intake six to eight hours before bedtime, or eat high-fibre foods to help slow down the release of caffeine in the bloodstream.

You’re expecting a big social event this evening? “It’s time to sleep but there you are in bed, with eyes wide open and a brain filled with myriad thoughts. You might have had a particularly busy day earlier on and your head is still buzzing.”

“Just stop thinking about it!” said Reutens. “I’ll give you a tip – just the very last thing you think before you drift off to sleep.”

“Listen to the guided visualisation videos on YouTube, this is the time to put it to good use, suggested Yvonne Yew, a coach and counsellor, who also has a private practice at A Space Between. “You can fix your heightened attention onto the guided visualisation exercises, which will gradually calm and relax your mind, and help you drift off to sleep.”

If you had caffeine a little too late in the day and now, you can’t fall asleep.

How long does it usually take our bodies to break down caffeine? It takes at least five hours for the effects of caffeine to wear off by 90 percent and could take 10 hours for it to be eliminated,” said a clinical dietitian and founder of Apta Nutrition & Sports Consultants Jyclyn Reutens.

And each time you drink a standard cup of espresso-based coffee (late, cappuccino, macchiato and espresso itself), you’re introducing about 60mg to 65mg of caffeine into your body, she said. Here’s a look at how each type of coffee and tea, based on a standard drink, stack up in terms of caffeine content, according to Reutens and the BBC Good Food website.

Espresso/Latte: 70mg to 140mg
Instant coffee: 30mg to 90mg
Decaf: 0mg to 7mg
Black tea: 47mg
Green tea: 33mg
Matcha green tea: 35mg
Herbal tea (chamomile, ginger, peppermint, rooibos and fruit teas that aren’t derived from the tea plant): 0mg

For starters, “Wherever possible, try to make up with your spouse or family member before bed,” said Ng, “as going to sleep with rumination over the incident is not healthy.”

If you can’t bring yourself to have a calm discussion with the affected party, try to accept that you won’t be able to sleep through it.

“However, staying hydrated can reduce the caffeine-induced jitters caused by dehydration and help to keep the blood flowing smoothly,” said Reutens.

You have some cash flow problems.

Find a time in the day to organise the bills to pay in a systematic manner (that is, how much money is needed, when payment due, etc, suggested Chua). “List down the possible steps you can take, people you can speak to, services you can apply for.”

Williams added: “If possible, talk to a trusted friend or family member as this will help you organise the bills to pay in a systematic manner.”

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What do you think about the way train tickets are sold?

After it was learnt that touts were buying up train tickets to sell on at inflated prices, in addition to the inconvenience of people having to travel 10 kilometres out of the city centre to buy tickets at the station, the rail operator has opened a ticket office at the Vientiane Center. But passengers must pay an additional 20,000 kip per ticket as a service charge. Vientiane Times asked members of the public for their thoughts on the sale of tickets.

Mr Brian Vorarath, an employee in Naxaithong district, Vientiane: I’m glad that the rail operator has opened the ticket office at the shopping mall as this will make things easier, and tickets can be purchased up to three days before the date of travel. In the past people had to start queuing up at 4am and might wait until noon only to be told all the tickets were sold. This is a huge annoyance as well as wasting a lot of time. But I don’t agree with the 20,000 kip service charge. If the rail company is going to charge this much extra, it’s not much different to buying a ticket from touts at the train station. I’d like to know why they can’t use the same system as airlines and sell tickets at several agencies where they all cost the same price.

Ms Phoutsay, an employee in Luang Prabang province: To improve the ticket sales system and protect passengers from cheating, I think the rail company should have an online booking system so that we can buy tickets that have our name on them. This would prevent unscrupulous individuals from hoarding tickets. It would also reduce crowding at ticket counters, which is important if we want to keep Covid in check.

Ms Phissamai Kaiyasith, a resident of Sithottabong district, Vientiane: I’m pleased that the rail company has provided the ticket office but I don’t think it’s fair that passengers have to pay a service charge in addition to the basic ticket price. All costs should be included in the cost of the ticket. It would be better if the authorities improved the way tickets are sold so that the whole process is fair and quick. This would make passengers satisfied and enjoy train travel even more.

Mr Bounmy, a government official in Saiyattanak district, Vientiane: I’m very happy that tickets can now be purchased in the middle of Vientiane instead of people having to drive all the way out to the station. If the rail operator is going to slap on a service charge to run this service, I think it would be better to set up an online system, and also to run more trains.

Domestic Subscription (5 issues/week) and online fee

| Regular price | 132 issues (6 months) | 2,971,000k +200,000k | 794,000k | 794,000k |
| Home Delivery (City Centre) | 264 issues (1 year) | 1,188,000k +200,000k | 386,000k | 386,000k |
| Total + Online fee | 264 issues (1 year) | 1,452,000k +200,000k | 452,000k | 452,000k |

Domestic Subscription for Provinces (5 issues/week), inclusive of postage cost

| Deliver to Provinces + online fee | 132 issues (6 months) | 1,320,000k +200,000k | 328,000k | 328,000k |
| 264 issues (1 year) | 2,640,000k +200,000k | 640,000k | 640,000k |

Overseas Subscription (5 issues/week) and online fee

| Total + Online fee | 132 issues (6 months) | 3,086,000k +200,000k | 776,000k | 776,000k |
| 264 issues (1 year) | 6,171,000k +200,000k | 1,771,000k | 1,771,000k |

Outside Subscription (5 issues/week) and online fee

| Total + Online fee | 132 issues (6 months) | 4,918,000k +200,000k | 918,000k | 918,000k |
| 264 issues (1 year) | 9,936,000k +200,000k | 2,436,000k | 2,436,000k |

Online Subscription Fee

- The website is updated four (4) times a day and every issue is published on our website in HTML and PDF.
- Payment in advance: Please make all checks payable to our office or transfer your payment to the Vientiane Times Bank Account at the BCEL (Wpp) 0101000099471001 or (US$) 0101010099471001 via website of www.vientianetimes.org.la by using the following cards: BCEL China UnionPay, VISA, MasterCard, JCB, American Express, China UnionPay and QR Codes: BCEL OnePay, UnionPay, WeChat Pay and AliPay.
Asia-Pacific countries poised to transform agrifood systems through innovation and digital technologies — FAO ready to support members in the region

The current nutrition situation in Asia and the Pacific is difficult in many areas across the region. About 40 percent of its inhabitants cannot afford a healthy diet, and in some areas the fight against hunger has seen reversals rather than advances. Progress toward meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of defeating both poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2) has been thrown off track amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has devastated both lives and livelihoods.

Luckily, the picture is not all bleak and there are signs of optimism and dynamism. Advances in the region’s agrifood systems are changing the ways in which food is sustainably produced, marketed and consumed. This transformation reflects a greater awareness by Asia-Pacific producers and a growing demand from consumers for healthier, more nutritious foods.

Crop and livestock farmers, fishers, pastoralists, other producers and retailers – large and small – are successfully turning to innovative ideas and digital technologies. These improvements in production and sustainable resource management keep more money in their pockets, while also helping to reverse environmental degradation.

All this is helping to create a paradigm shift that is taking shape in other parts of the world too. In Asia and the Pacific, there is a clear and growing movement toward innovation and digitalization along the entire agrifood value chain. Retail grocery and food shopping is an important example. This is not only a phenomenon of well-developed economies, with four out of five sales of online food and grocery purchases taking place in the Asia-Pacific region.

This is just one aspect of the agrifood systems overhaul that is reshaping countries rapidly across Asia and the Pacific, from West Asia, all across South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia to the Pacific island countries.

In the Pacific’s Small Island Developing States (SIDS), grassroots entrepreneurs are increasingly stepping forward. Their innovative smart phone apps help producers and consumers to make informed, nutritious choices. The private and development sectors are also leveraging increasingly available data to make the supply chain of agricultural commodities to markets more efficient and timely, and to map areas vulnerable to extreme weather events. Several of these innovations were showcased at the ‘SIDS Solutions Forum’, the first of an event to be held biennially, co-convoked in August 2021 by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Fiji.

There are still some challenges in accessing data on demand and without interruption, as we saw when Tonga’s undersea communications cable was severed during the eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai volcano. But these setbacks will bring forth the new ideas needed to overcome them!

At FAO, we are working with our Members across Asia and the Pacific region to transform agrifood systems to be MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable - to the benefit of all. Through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, we are assisting policy makers in their plans to further leverage data, technology and innovation to meet the SDGs targets by 2030.

We are proactively identifying and supporting digital villages across the region as part of FAO’s 1,000 Digital Villages Initiative. We are continuing to nurture and promote country-led SIDS solutions and Hand-in-Hand partnerships, which includes advising on climate event mitigation and adaptation, and helping to overcome the damage caused to lives and livelihoods by the pandemic and climate crisis. These are among the topics that will be discussed at the 36th Session of the FAO Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 8 to 11 March. FAO Members from the region – 46 in total – will come together to build on the transformational agenda and actions under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, along with the recommendations of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.

Working with our Members in Asia and the Pacific, we will create even stronger partnerships with academic and research institutions, civil society organisations, cooperatives, parliamentarians and the private sector, with the inclusion of women and youth, as part of our commitment to the global efforts to build back better.

FAO is supporting the region to think big and act concretely. We are providing a constructive hand, but we need many more hands to reach our collective goals. For a better world with a better future for our children, we need better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all – leaving no one behind.

For this, we need strong political will and efficient, effective and coherent multilateral actions.

The article is written by QU Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

QU Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).
Entertainment

‘Squid Game’ bags three trophies at SAG Awards

SOUTH KOREA (The Korea Herald/ANN) -- Netflix megahit drama series “Squid Game” won three awards at the 28th Screen Actors Guild Awards, held in Santa Monica, California, Sunday night.

The series was nominated in four categories.

Two actors -- Jung Ho-yeon and Lee Jung-jac -- won awards for their roles. This marked the second consecutive year of Korean actors winning at least one SAG award. Last year, veteran actor Youn Yuh-jung won for her role as a feisty grandmother in the film “Minari.”

Jung, who played Sae-byeok, a North Korean defector who participates in the bloody survival game to win 45.6 billion won ($38.9 million) in the Netflix series, won the award for outstanding performance by a female actor in a drama series. The series marked her debut as an actor. She is better known in Korea as a model.

At the awards ceremony, Jung began her acceptance speech in Korean, expressing gratitude toward other actors at the event, adding that she was honored to be there with people she looks up to. Then she started speaking in English with tears in her eyes.

“Thank you for letting me dream and open the door for me. And I love you ‘Squid Game’ crew,” Jung said in her acceptance speech.

Jung was nominated in the category alongside Jennifer Aniston for “The Morning Show,” Elisabeth Moss of “The Handmaid’s Tale,” Sarah Snook of “Succession” and Reese Witherspoon of “The Morning Show.”

Top star Lee, who played Gi-hun, a down-on-his-luck middle-aged man who also takes part in the deadly “Squid Game,” was named the winner for outstanding performance by a male actor in a drama series.

“Oh my, thank you so much. This is truly huge,” Lee said during his acceptance speech in Korean. “Thank you SAG Awards. And thank you to the global audience for all of your love for ‘Squid Game.’”

Lee was nominated along with Brian Cox of “Succession.” Billy Crudup of “The Morning Show,” Kieran Culkin of “Succession” and Jeremy Strong of “Succession.”

The outstanding acting performance by a stunt ensemble in a comedy or drama series prize also went to “Squid Game” on Monday. Other works that were nominated in the category were “Cobra Kai,” “The Falcon and the Winter Soldier,” “Loki” and “Mare of Easttown.”

The Korean drama series was also listed for outstanding performance by an ensemble in a drama series, but “Succession” took home that prize.

Director Hwang Dong-hyuk’s “Squid Game” is a story about hundreds of cash-strapped players who risk their lives to compete in children’s games where the final winner gets 4.6 billion won.

Following its release in September, it quickly became the most-watched Netflix show of all time, reaching the No. 1 spot on the show charts of 94 countries.

The “Squid Game” team also won multiple awards at other US awards events.

Job Vacant

Vientiane Capital, 28 February 2022

Dear Sir, Madam,

1. The Ministry of Justice, the People Supreme Court, the Office of the Supreme People’s Prosecutor and the Lao Bar Association (hereinafter called “Clients”) have received financing (hereinafter called “the funds”) from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) toward the cost of the project, entitled “Training of Judicial Services, Institutions and Capacity Building Project” (JUSTICE Project). The Clients intend to apply a portion of the funds for the recruitment of an Administration and Finance Manager of the project.

2. The Project Management Unit, piloted by representatives of the concerned authorities under the coordination and leadership of Ministry of Justice (MoJ), on behalf of all the Clients, now invites candidates (individual consultants) for the position “Administration and Finance Manager”. More details on the services and criteria of selection are provided in the Terms of Reference (TOR) that could be requested for free at the below address.

3. For the people who are interested in the vacant position, all the candidacy documents consisting of a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae (CV), at least two recommendation letters, a financial Proposal and the signed Statement of Integrity, and must be submitted by person to the Project Management Unit (PMU) no later than 4:00PM on the 31 of March 2022 at the following address.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Khamphone SIPASEUTH
Chief of Cabinet AND JustICE Project Director
Ministry of Justice
Project Management Unit
B.O. Box: 08, Ban Don Nok Khom, Siisattanak District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR
Phone number: 020 5511 8399
Email: vvilbounmany@hotmail.com

International School and Wattanakorn International School and one student from Phisavat secondary school who were among the top ten finalists.

The top five finalists of the Toyota Dream Car Art Contest will be announced in the next two weeks.

Mr Phonepaserd also appreciated that Mr Kanhaka Sitthirathphanleudet of Jouse-Hoffe International School was declared the winner of a dream city drawing competition recently organised by the European Union in Laos.

Mr Phonepaserd congratulated four students from Jouse-Hoffe International School and Wattanakorn International School on Monday. He was happy that several of his students had entered the top ten in the contest.

He said the organisers of the contest, which had three main categories, encouraged students from all over the nation to send in their art works.

The organisers selected the top ten artists from each category to join the contest last week.

Group exhibition by female artists opens in Shenzhen

Exhibition Metaphor and Gaze features 17 female artists and includes works of installation, video, performance art, painting and fabric art.

--An exhibition entitled Metaphor and Gaze opened in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Sunday. The group exhibition, running until March 21, features 17 female artists and includes works of installation, video, performance art, painting and fabric art. "As a female curator, I have always wanted to provide more opportunities for women artists to showcase their work and creativity," exhibition curator Zhu Yue said. “Only by exhibiting works by female artists and writing about them can female artists be known by more people and be written in art history.”

The exhibition also features a reading room section entitled “Writing Her Power – Women’s Situation and Writing”, displaying books from 19 publishing houses on themes like female power, self-identity and relationships.

Artist Wen Qwen was invited to create works of paper art for the reading room that explore the relationship between human and society.
What’s on

Video portrait contest

As part of La Francophonie week, the French Institute is running a video competition on the theme of French-speaking personalities from around the world. The objective is to make the most interesting video presentation possible so that it can be shared in colleges, high schools and universities. The competition is aimed at secondary school students in bilingual classes, and students of ENS and universities in Laos. Candidates must create a video, alone or in groups of 2 to 3 people maximum. The maximum length of the video should not exceed 2 minutes.

When: The contest is open until March 7.
Where: Send the video in MP4 format and the participation form to: cooperation.education@gmail.com

Phanmaly Garden, Manivalan Garden

Flowers, potted plants, trees, garden landscaping
Ban Souanemone Thadou Road, KM-5 Turn left a Souanemone Market.
Tel 02057166555, W/A 02056409559

Hor Phakeo Museum

This ancient temple was first built in 1565 during the reign of King Saysetthathirath to house the Emerald Buddha and was the king’s personal place of worship.
When: Open daily 8am-12noon; 1pm-4pm
Where: Saysetthathirath Road, Chanthabouly district, Vientiane

As an image of one page of a document, the content includes:

- Classified advertisement for a house for rent.
- Advertisement for a print press.
- Advertisement for a house for rent.
- Advertisement for Phanmaly Garden, Manivalan Garden.
- Advertisement for Hor Phakeo Museum.
- Advertisement for a photo contest.
- Advertisement for ASEAN China young leaders scholarship.

These advertisements are for various services and products, and they are formatted in a clear and concise manner, with all necessary contact information provided.
**SPORT**

**U-23 footballers to play in Lao League 2022**

Members of the national U-23 squad will be able to rejoin their clubs for training in preparing for the Lao Premier League 2022, which starts on March 12, after they test negative for Covid-19.

A Lao U-23 player tries to wrest the ball from a Malaysian player at the AFF Under-23 Championship in Cambodia last week. --Photo Lao Football Federation

Times Reporters

Heritage Flame for Beijing Paralympic Winter Games lit at Stoke Mandeville

LONDON (Xinhua) -- The Heritage Flame for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games was lit at Stoke Mandeville, U.K. on Monday.

As the birthplace of the Paralympic movement, Stoke Mandeville, a small village about 80km northwest of London, welcomed hundreds of guests to attend the Heritage Flame Lighting Ceremony.

British Paralympians Angie Malone and Aileen Neilson brought the Beijing 2022 Paralympic torches on their wheelchairs with Malone lighting the cauldron to spark the rainy night.

“I feel so honored and so proud,” said Malone who was visiting Stoke Mandeville for the second time. “It’s an absolute privilege to be here in Stoke Mandeville. The last time I was here was 40 years ago when I was 16 years old and the wheelchair sport here opened my eyes.”

Malone injured her spine at 16 and was introduced to a variety of sports during rehabilitation. She tried wheelchair curling when she was 36 and took part in four Paralympic Winter Games since then.

“We had amazing memories, we had fantastic time at every Paralympic Games,” said Malone.

After the 2008 Paralympics, Beijing will once again become the center stage of the Paralympic movement with the Winter Games set to be held from March 4 to 13.

“Your flame signals the arrival of historical games. Beijing is the first ever city to host both the summer and winter editions of the Paralympic Games,” said Andrew Parsons, president of the International Paralympic Committee.

“I was fortunate to be in Beijing for the 2008 Games, and China set new standards for how Games could be delivered and create support structures to allow Para athletes to reach their full potentials,” Parsons added.

A flame gathering ceremony will be held on March 2 at the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, where sparks collected from eight places across the three competition zones will be joined by the flame ignited in Stoke Mandeville.

Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Lao PDR is looking for Dynamic and Motivated Professional to fill in a position of Programme Assistant for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) unit as per details below:

**Position details**

- **Programme Assistant - SRH**
- **Job Opening ID:** 41170
- **Contract Type:** Fixed Term Appointment
- **Level:** G5
- **Nationality:** Lao National only
- **Duration:** One year (renewable)
- **Duty Station:** Vientiane, Lao PDR

**How to apply**

Find out the details of the position and apply today at this link: https://bit.ly/3H21A1P

Closing date: 10th March 2022 (5 pm Vientiane time)

Attractive compensation package and benefits

If there is problem accessing to the links, please email to lao.office@unfpa.org

UNFPA provides a work environment that reflects the values of gender equality, teamwork, embracing diversity in all its forms, integrity and a healthy balance of work and life. We are committed to maintaining our balanced gender distribution and therefore encourage women to apply.

UNFPA promotes equal opportunities for all including persons with disabilities. UNFPA does not change any application, processing, training, interviewing, testing or other fee in connection with the application or recruitment process.

**Request for Quotation**

Inspection and Sampling Equipment, Lab Consumables, Test Kits for Department of Agriculture

**To:** Eligible Suppliers

1. The Government of Lao PDR has received financing from the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA), Australia, Ireland and USAID for the cost of Lao PDR Competitiveness and Trade Project in the amount of 15.72 Million USD and intends to apply part of the proceeds of these funds towards payments under the Contract for Supply of Inspection and Sampling Equipment, Lab Consumables and Test Kits for Department of Agriculture under this Request for Quotation.

2. The NIU now invites eligible Company to submit the sealed Quotation for the Inspection and Sampling Equipment, Lab Consumables and Test Kits as specified in section 5 Schedule of Items and Prices. The delivery period is Sixty (60) Calendar days after the date of signature, including assembly, installation and setup service.


4. A complete set of the Bid Documents is available on http://www.mofplan.proclamation. notice/ for free for the interested bidders to register and upload the application (Request letter with official stamp) online beginning 22 February 2022. The Bid Documents will be sent via email after the online registration is completed.

5. The Quotation shall be delivered before 14:00’clock, 09 March 2022 to National Implementation Unit (NIU), 3rd Floor, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Phonay Road, Sayeththra District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, Tel: 021 413916, and all Quotations will be opened at 14:05’clock, 09 March 2022 in the presence of the Tender Committee and the Bidder’s representatives who choose to attend.