

## Upgrade of Lao-Thai border crossing in Vientiane province opens doors to growth

The Banvang border crossing between Meun district in Vientiane province and Loei province in Thailand has been upgraded to a full international checkpoint.



The upgrade will facilitate the growth of tourism, investment, and trade, which will be a huge boon to Vientiane province's economy.

The increase in commerce, expected to generate greater revenue, will spur Laos' socio-economic development and provide more opportunities for businesses and the people of Laos and Thailand, specifically those in Vientiane and Loei provinces.

The government of Vientiane province on Tuesday hosted a ceremony to announce the upgrade of the border crossing, attended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Phoxay Khaykhamphithoune, the Governor of Vientiane province Mr Khamphan Sitthidampha, and a delegation from Thailand.

Speaking at the event, Khamphan said he hoped the opening of the Banvang border crossing to all forms of international traffic would benefit business operators and citizens of the two countries and foster closer ties, increased cooperation, tourism, and trade.

He added that enhanced cross-border interaction would tap the potential for development and yield numerous benefits to bolster Vientiane province's social and economic progress.

Broader use of this border crossing will accelerate Laos' overall growth and support efforts to graduate from Least Developed Country status and eliminate poverty, Khamphan said.

The opening up of the border crossing comes during Visit Laos Year, enabling Vientiane province to serve as a link for people visiting world heritage sites in Luang Prabang and Xieng Khuang provinces, and tourist destinations in Xaysomboun province. It provides an easier connection to the northern and central provinces, as well as to Vientiane and the southern provinces.

Khamphan advised local officials to upgrade roads in the area so they could withstand the weight of large trucks using the border crossing.

The checkpoint should be equipped with modern equipment, and officials should ensure that transport from the checkpoint to nearby towns is convenient, he added.

The Governor of Vientiane province invited Lao and foreign businesses to invest in agriculture, industry, trade, services and tourism.

According to the Department of Immigration, there are now 31 full border crossings between Laos and its five neighbouring countries, which comprise Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, Thailand to the west, and Myanmar and China to the north.

The Banvang International Border Checkpoint is expected to become an important trade gateway between Vientiane province and Loei province. Its opening up will not only bolster tourism and economic growth in Vientiane province but also symbolise the enduring friendship between Laos and Thailand.

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