

**Speech by Ambassador of India at the signing ceremony of  
Memorandum of Understanding for “Construction of clean drinking  
water facility” at Pha Oh temple, Pha Oh Village, Pakxueang, Lauang  
Prabang Province under at Quick Impact Projects of India in Lao  
PDR**

**[Vientiane, 10 December 2021]**

His Excellency Mr. Khampheuy Boutdavieng, Member of the Party Central  
Committee and Vice President, Lao Front for National Development;  
Her Excellency, Ms Khamchan Phomsengsavanh, Vice President, Lao  
Front for National Development;  
His Excellency, Dr. Chanpheng Southivong, Vice President, Lao Front for  
National Development;  
Most Venerable Monk Vet Masenai, Vice President of Luang Prabang  
Buddhist Fellowship Office;  
Most Venerable Monk Onkeo Sitthivong, Chair of Luang Prabang  
Buddhist Fellowship Office  
Representatives from Lao Buddhist Fellowship  
Representatives of Lao Front for National Development;  
Representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs;  
Other Senior Lao Government officials;  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Sabaidee, Namaskar

I am happy to be here today for the ceremony for signing of  
Memorandum of Understanding for a project on “Construction of drinking  
water facility at a school in Pha Oh temple, Pha Oh Village, Pakxueang,  
Lauang Prabang Province”.

2. The project is being undertaken as a Quick Impact Project - QIP -  
under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation framework. Under this, a grant  
assistance of US\$ 50,000 is provided by the Government of India and the  
disbursements are in phases on the basis of the progress or milestones  
achieved in implementation. Friends, as you may know, QIPs are projects  
with short gestation period that directly benefit local communities, with  
results that are immediate and visible, which contribute significantly to  
economic and social development and improvement of public welfare.

Most importantly, the projects will give impetus to the bilateral relations between our two friendly countries.

3. It gives me great satisfaction to note that after the construction of the drinking water facility is completed under this project, clean drinking water will be available to about 500 students of the school, teachers and to many villagers living close to the school. I am also happy to note that the drinking water facility being created will be a sustainable drinking water system.

4. Excellency, India and Lao PDR share long-standing religious, cultural, and people-to-people linkages going back long into history. Diplomatic relations between the countries, as modern sovereign nation-states, were established in 1956, and they have exchanged several high-level visits over the decades. India and Laos are partners on the basis of equality, respect for national sovereignty, and mutual benefit in their pursuit of development and upliftment of their peoples. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi reiterated India's commitment to continue its development partnership with Lao PDR in a telephonic conversation with the then Prime Minister Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith in June 2020.

5. This year, we are also celebrating 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. The Embassy of India has held many programmes in cooperation with our Lao friends to mark this important occasion this year including at the premises of Lao Front for National Development. On 12 March this year a talk was held on Buddhist Linkages between India and Lao PDR at the LFND. Earlier, a tree plantation event was organized on October 9, 2020, which was graced by H.E. Dr. Xaysomphone Phomvihane, the then President of LFND and Mr. Thongsavanh Phomvihane, the then Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, along with other distinguished guests.

6. Excellency, India's development cooperation portfolio in Lao PDR stretches across a broad spectrum, that is, capacity building through Indian Technical and Economic (ITEC) Programme and long-term scholarships for higher studies, Quick Impact Projects for socio-economic development under grant assistance, projects under lines of credit or soft loans, joint Lao-India centres for English language training and entrepreneurship development as well as heritage conservation projects, including restoration of a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Vat Phou (an ancient Shiva temple, originally), by experts from the Archaeological Survey of India deputed under the ITEC Programme.

7. As we talk of QIPs in Laos, I would like to mention that MOUs for three Quick Impact Projects, each with provision of grant assistance of US \$ 50,000 in the field of agriculture, were signed in October 2017, of which the project on 'Establishment of Fertilizer Analysis Laboratory' at Department of Agricultural Land Management has been completed and handed over to the beneficiary department of Lao government. The remaining two projects are in different stages of implementation. And, out of these two projects, one relates to 'Promotion of Goat Raising in Lao PDR' in Jieng Village, Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province; and the other one is 'To Promote Green Cardamom Cultivation in Paksong District, Champasak Province'.

8. Further, in the month of August, MoUs were signed for three more projects under the QIP scheme of Government of India. Out of these three, two projects relate to the construction of buildings for two primary schools in Luang Prabang and the third project is for the construction of a 5-room dormitory at LIEDC for which the ground breaking ceremony took place on 26 November.

9. I am also especially happy to be signing the MoU as we are celebrating 75 years of India as an independent modern sovereign nation-state. Our Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav means Immortal Festival. It is to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

10. Before I conclude, I take this opportunity to wish you and your families good health and happiness. Let us all follow Covid protocol and stay safe.

Thank you.

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