



AROUND ASIA

LAOS

Numerous transport infrastructure projects northeastern Thailand are in the pipeline to establish links between the country and Laos, Transport Minister Arkhom Termpit-tayapaisith said. The first project is the sixth Thai-Lao friendship bridge, linking Ubon Ratchathani with Salawan, he said. The Thai cabinet on Tuesday gave approval for the Department of Highways to construct the bridge, which would cost 2.63 billion baht on the Thai side plus another 400 million for land expropriation. The Lao option of the projects will cost about 1.3 billion baht. According to Mr Arkhom, the Lao government has sought a loan for the project from Thailand's Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (Neda). Negotiations about loan conditions are continuing.