

Faculty of Engineering Job Fair in its 4th year

Sisouphan Amphonephong

The 4th annual Job Fair organised at the Faculty of Engineering will take place next week on May 28th with almost 150 vacant positions on offer.

Deputy Director, Vocational Teacher Education Department, Faculty of Engineering of the National University of Laos Mr Thomas Bohlmann explained to *Vientiane Times* yesterday that besides interacting with students, many companies used the job fair to exchange ideas with academic staff of the faculty on how to improve study courses according to the needs of the labour market which was demanding a skilled labour force.

Potential employers will be displaying their organisations and there will be workshops such as instructing students on how to act appropriately during a job interview.

Mr Bohlmann said last year the job fair attracted around 30 diverse companies and organisations, ranging from mining through to insurance,

hydro power and the garment industry which offered more than 140 vacant positions. This compared with only 16 companies that offered about 60 vacancies in 2012.

Panel discussions with human resource representatives on how best to be prepared for challenging job opportunities always draw much attention from students eager to hear about first-hand experience and recommendations.

Representative of the European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Laos (ECCIL), who is responsible for the Job Fair, Ms Soupanith Lounalath said currently more than fifteen companies had registered and she expected by event time that a similar number to last year would be involved.

At the event students also had the chance to get informed about studying overseas and receiving scholarships from a broad range of organisations, she said.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) has supported the

job fair from the beginning with assistance from AIESEC (the world's largest student-run organisation), Pôle d'Activités Francophones and German aid agency GIZ.

According to a press release, Dr Ramon Bruesseler from ECCIL and Mr Thomas Bohlmann from the Faculty of Engineering initiated the first Job Fair in 2012.

The fair's main aims are to make students aware of available employment possibilities and allow companies to attract suitable candidates for vacant positions.

Around 5,000 students are enrolled at 10 different Departments within the Faculty of Engineering with about 1,300 of them graduating at the end of June each year.

The job fair initially targeted faculty graduates in 2012 with 700 visitors attending but this grew to about 1,500 students last year with vocational and high school students in general also invited to highlight to them the diverse education, training and internships options available.

New maternity hospital to open next month

Xayxana Leukai

The new Mother and Newborn Hospital, located in Nongphaya village, Xaythany district, will open next month, helping to ease the load on the existing hospital in Kaoyot village, Sisattanak district.

Director General of the hospital, Associate Prof. Dr Bouavanh Saensathit, told *Vientiane Times* last week that construction of the new hospital is now complete.

"We expect that the new facility will take in mothers-to-be who are seeking good treatment," he said.

Currently, on a daily basis, at least 300 people, including children, go for treatment at the existing hospital. Of this number about 20 mothers actually give

birth at the hospital.

The new hospital contains 250 beds. The two-storey facility will be worth about 15 billion kip and consists of three separate buildings.

Building A will contain an outpatient ward, para-clinic, intensive care unit, surgical theatre and a birthing ward.

Buildings B and C will house overnight patients and the gynaecology and obstetrics department.

Japan's Honda Foundation donated US\$500,000 towards the construction of Building C. The rest of the project was funded by the Lao government. The Swiss-Laos Hospital Project also provided medical equipment and funds for improving facilities at the building.

The existing 150-bed Mother

and Child Health Hospital is inadequate to serve the local population and lacks sufficient beds to provide quality care.

Dr Bouavanh said the new hospital is part of the government's plan to cut the mortality rate of mothers and children in Laos.

According to the Lao Social Indicator Survey in 2012, the death rate of birthing mothers is 357 out of every 100,000 births.

The death rate of children under one year is 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children under five it is 79 out of every 1,000 live births.

The new hospital will employ 350 doctors and nurses and has so far recruited 200 medical staff, many of whom have undergone training in Vietnam, France, Switzerland and Thailand.

Bokeo police uncover huge amphetamine haul



Police seized 48,000 amphetamine pills in Bokeo province recently.

Times Reporters

The police in Bokeo province confiscated a haul of 48,000 tablets of amphetamine and arrested six drug traffickers in Huaxai district of the province last weekend.

The Head of Bokeo Provincial Public Security Headquarters, Colonel Lamphai Yotphai told *Vientiane Times* yesterday that these drug traffickers were targeted for the repeated purchase and sale of amphetamines in Bokeo province.

Colonel Lamphai reported that the suspects had been under police surveillance for a long time prior to their arrest.

The police received a tip-off that a quantity of illegal drugs was being moved from the northern areas to the capital Vientiane so they set up a plan for a bust operation.

Those arrested were Mr Onkeo, 33, of Thongchai-Neua village, Luang Namtha district, Luang Namtha province along with Mr Lar Sipaserd, 41, and Mr Ou, 22, of Sidonmy village, Tonpheung district, Bokeo province,

Also detained were Mr Somlit, 50, of Dongnathong village, Sikhottabong district, Mr Phai Thavy, 47, and Mr Sounan, 56, of Thamuang village, Hadxaifong district, Vientiane.

During the police investigations the pair confessed that they were planning to transport the drugs via Vigo pick-up to the capital Vientiane.

The police are continuing their investigations into the pair and trying to ascertain the identities of other figures involved in the drug ring before sending the suspects to court.

Bokeo provincial police are working with neighbouring countries and other provinces in Laos to further drug eradication efforts, especially in the Golden Triangle region on the upper Mekong as it flows out of China.

The police in Bokeo are working hard to further cooperation with interprovincial counterparts as well as with police in neighbouring countries.

He added that since the drug eradication operation began in early January, joint patrols from Laos, China, Thailand and Myanmar have arrested three

big-time drug traffickers who will subsequently be put on trial.

Colonel Lamphai reported that during the period from the end of last year and the beginning of this year they have seized 12 cakes of heroin weighing 700 grammes each (totalling 8.4kg) and 10,200 amphetamine pills.

Meanwhile in the second joint operation they seized almost 600,000 amphetamines pills.

Lao police will continue to work with neighbouring countries to patrol the shared river border, coordinating law enforcement efforts with Thailand, China and Myanmar.

Colonel Lamphai said that every month they convene a meeting at police headquarters in Mom village, Tonpheung district, Bokeo province, to discuss the drug situation in the border regions and measures to tackle the problem.

Besides that, in March Bokeo provincial police partnered with Luang Namtha provincial police to arrest three large scale drug traffickers at a guesthouse in Huayxai district, Bokeo province, where they discovered seven kilogrammes of crystal methamphetamine.

Oudomxay bus stations in conflict

Khonesavanh Latsaphao

A bus station in the Oudomxay provincial capital of Xay is complaining that a more recently established rival is taking away passengers from the old bus station.

Phanmixay Bus Transportation in the province (the old bus station) is not pleased because it believes it was granted an exclusive concession in the town for 15 years by the province for both north and southbound passengers.

A senior staff member from Phanmixay Bus Transportation, who asked not to be named, told *Vientiane Times* that the concession ends in 2018 but they have an option to extend the agreement.

"The former governor allowed us to operate the service alone and we signed the concession with the provincial Public Works and Transport Department, but now the provincial authorities have

allowed a new bus station," she said.

Under the concession agreement, Phanmixay Bus Transportation is not allowed to upgrade the facilities or install a gas station inside the old bus station or buy new buses to service routes. It can also only provide services on existing passenger routes.

"We've operated Phanmixay bus station for over 11 years, but the new station opened last year and it's now taking away our customers," she complained.

She pointed out that she sent a petition letter to the government who in turn relayed it to provincial authorities asking them to carry out a review of the agreements signed.

The old bus station opened in 2003 servicing all passenger routes arriving and departing. They would make way for the new bus station, but needed to be paid compensation of four billion kip to recoup their investment, she said.

Meanwhile, some bus operators are avoiding picking up or dropping off passengers at the new bus station as they don't want to pay the additional parking fees.

According to officials from the provincial Public Works and Transport Department, Phanmixay Bus Transportation doesn't understand the need for developing the new transportation facility.

The provincial authorities also allowed the new bus station to provide services to passengers heading both north and south.

In Vientiane and many other provinces authorities have allowed the establishment of separate terminals to service northern and southern buses.

The provincial Public Works and Transport Department made a submission to the National Assembly who replied saying the department should divide the provincial development plan for bus services into a southern terminal and northern terminal.

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Correction

Vientiane Times apologises for giving the wrong name of the Ambassador of Vietnam to Laos as stated in the fourth column of the article on Page 1 of the May 20 issue titled 'Meeting commemorates birthday of Ho Chi Minh'. The correct name of the Vietnamese Ambassador to Laos is Nguyen Manh Hung.