

# Intensive course seeks to improve hospital management

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Management administrators from five major hospitals met in Vientiane recently to learn more about management methods in hopes of improving the country's healthcare services and human resources development.

Hospital management covered in the one-week course taking place under the Swiss Laos Hospital Project included patient services management, quality health services, and issues surrounding human resources development.

During the training, participants also learnt about a variety of other topics including framework corporate culture, strategic planning, organisational leadership, good governance, financial management, human resource management and change management in regards to project management.

Deputy Director of the Healthcare Department under the Ministry of Health, Associate Prof Dr Bounnack Saysanasongkham, spoke to *Vientiane Times* yesterday about the importance of improving hospital management in Laos.

"We need to increase our understanding of hospital management especially amongst hospital administrators across the country," he said.

Some senior officials who are undergoing training don't



Dr Ounkham Phanthaly talks about hospital management.

always have experience in human resource development or patient service management because they are specialists in other kinds of healthcare, he added.

However, these same doctors, nurses and other medical staff still cannot provide sufficiently high standards of certain medical services.

This means they do not always look after their patients as well as they should. This is because they lack adequate knowledge of management practices, Associate Prof Dr Bounnack said.

For several years, the Ministry of Health and hospitals in Vientiane have held meetings and workshops to boost understanding among doctors, nurses and other medical staff about the importance of

providing quality healthcare services, he added.

Unfortunately, hospital administrators still lack the capacity and knowledge to manage these services and their related problems.

Associate Prof. Dr Bounnack said the hope is that this latest course will be successful in bridging the gaps and lay the foundations for a Lao model of hospital management. The ministry could then expand this model to other hospitals in the country.

Deputy Director General of Mahosot Hospital, Associate Prof. Dr Ounkham Phanthaly, said he thought the workshop had an important role to play in the development of capacity and knowledge of hospital administrative staff.

"We think that if we want to solve problems in healthcare services we should start with hospital administrators because they are the ones who will make the decisions on most issues within their organisations," he said.

Hospital management aims to protect the rights and benefits of members of the public when it comes to the provision of medical treatment and reducing the number of complaints.

The broader policy also aims to ensure that people of all ethnic groups receive good quality treatment on an equal basis.



Laos' Minister of Public Security Major General Somkeo Silavong (left) and Vietnam's Minister of Public Security Lieutenant General To Lam (right) sign agreements on crime prevention.

## Lao, Viet police extend partnership in prevention of cross-border crime

Times Reporters

Laos' Ministry of Public Security and Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security will continue to support each other in protecting national security and preventing cross-border crimes.

During a visit to Vietnam from March 15-17, Lao Minister of Public Security Major General Somkeo Silavong signed an agreement to extend cooperation with Vietnam.

The action plan for 2017 was signed by Major General Somkeo together with Vietnam's Minister of Public Security, Lieutenant General To Lam.

The two ministries agreed

to continue mutual support in protecting national security, social security and political security and in preventing cross-border crimes such as drug trafficking, as well as ensuring security along the two countries' shared border.

The two ministries also agreed to support capacity building through the provision of technology, technical equipment and experts to bolster security and public order.

The two sides also discussed issues related to public security and reviewed their cooperation over the past year, in particular in the prevention and monitoring of drug trafficking and other crimes.

The two sides placed a particular focus on the trade in illegal drugs and shared ideas on how best to suppress the illicit trade.

Police from the two countries share their ideas and working methods every year, hoping to combat crime.

This year Laos and Vietnam mark the 55th anniversary of their diplomatic ties and the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Vietnam-Laos Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

While in Vietnam last week, Major General Somkeo also paid a courtesy visit to President Tran Dai Quang and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phu.

## Rice exports to China still facing challenges, official says

Times Reporters

The trade in rice products between Laos and China still faces challenges due to the demand for high quality by Chinese buyers, according to a senior trade promotion official.

This means Lao producers will have to try a lot harder to produce high quality rice products, depending on the deals made between the exporter and producer.

"We [the Ministry of Industry and Commerce] will keep encouraging active cooperation between the various government sectors, the owners of rice mills and rice farmers, urging them to meet the standards demanded by the Chinese market," the ministry's Trade Promotion Director General Mr Somvang Ninthavong told *Vientiane Times* yesterday.

In 2015, Xuanye (Lao) Co., Ltd. was approved by China's National Development and Reform Commission to be

the sole exporter of rice to China with a quota of 8,000 tonnes but Laos was unable to meet the deal and was able to export only 4,000 tonnes of rice including sticky rice and non-glutinous rice.

The Chinese company also ordered 7,200 tonnes of rice last year but producers were unable to supply this amount.

"In 2015 and 2016, we could supply only 5,000 tonnes of rice to China; this was because the standard required by the Chinese buyers was really high," Mr Somvang said.

This year, Xuanye (Lao) Co., Ltd. is targeting the export of 20,000 tonnes of rice to China and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, notably the Trade Promotion Department, is now gearing up to cooperate with other ministries to ensure the quality of the rice is adequate.

"To meet the export target, several challenges have to be solved, especially in terms of cultivation methods, the

milling process, and packaging. The Chinese buyers must be satisfied when they buy our products," Mr Somvang said.

The Trade Promotion Department recently met with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, mill owners and farmers to seek solutions to the quality issue.

According to Mr Somvang, seven mills are targeted for the processing of rice for export to China but they will be inspected and technically certified by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Next month, the Xuanye (Lao) Co., Ltd. and the Lao government will begin the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding for rice trade cooperation under this year's agreement for 20,000 tonnes of rice, he said. Since 2000, Laos has exported over 300,000 tonnes of rice a year to Vietnam, Thailand, China and other countries.

Laos also plans to produce about 5 million tonnes of rice by 2020 to ensure food security in the country.

Last fiscal year, Laos' rice production reached 4.12 million tonnes and is predicted to increase to 4.35 million tonnes this year.

More than 778,000 hectares of wet season rice and over 126,600 hectares of dry season rice are grown annually in Laos. However, about 226,000 hectares of rice fields in flatland areas are totally dependent on rainfall because irrigation channels have not yet been built in those areas.

## Phongsaly's charms... FROM PAGE 1

according to Mr Khamphanh, who often arrive in large convoys to see the spectacular views along the road from Oudomxay to Luang Prabang.

Older Vietnamese make up another segment of tourist arrivals. Mr Khamphanh said they were interested in tracing the trail of history along the road from Vietnam's Dien Bien Phu province to Oudomxay province.

Thais riding big motorbikes also pass through the province. They typically ride through Laos' northern provinces starting in Bokeo and finish up in Dien Bien Phu.

The increase in tourist arrivals is partially attributed to improved roads.

Mr Khamphanh said the road between Bounneua and



A tea plantation in Phongsaly province. --Photo Phongsaly province Department of Information, Culture and Tourism

Bantui at the Chinese border had yet to be upgraded but was the main crossing point for visitors from China, while the road between Khua district and the Vietnamese border carried

tourists through the Pang Hok-Tay Trang crossing.

There are also flights between Vientiane and Phongsaly every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, operated by Lao Skyway.

## Govt seeks to regulate... FROM PAGE 1

It offered a monthly dividend of 6 percent on money invested, which led more than 50,000 people to contribute what is believed to be a huge amount of money. Public contributions to the partnership started at a minimum of 500,000 kip with the largest by an individual reportedly one billion kip.

Such an incredibly high dividend triggered concerns that

the company, which produces a number of products including drinking water and vegetables, would struggle to survive and repay its partners.

One of the enterprise's business partners told *Vientiane Times* yesterday she received her monthly dividend regularly. However, the monthly dividend was cut some time ago from 6 percent to just over 4 percent. The enterprise's management

could not be reached for comment.

Dr Chaleun admitted there were concerns regarding the unsecured guarantee over funds contributed by the public to PS Lao Enterprise.

He said that while the enterprise had produced legitimate products such as drinking water and vegetables, its operation needed to be in line with the regulations and laws.

## Five-day holiday announced... FROM PAGE 1

partner with the relevant sectors to ensure a sufficient supply of foods and goods in local markets at this time of high demand. In addition, the government asked the relevant authorities to ensure that merchants do not raise food prices unreasonably.

The government told the Ministry of Information,

Culture and Tourism in collaboration with provinces across the country to encourage people to celebrate Pi Mai Lao in line with Lao traditions and customs.

During the holiday, a number of activities will be organised around the country with highlights taking place in major towns and at popular

tourist sites. These draw a huge number of domestic and foreign visitors, who enthusiastically take part in water battles and other associated events.

Traditionally and as the New Year approaches, local authorities will announce the details of activities to be organised in specific locations.



Lao rice products are in demand by domestic and international buyers.



Lao students of French from the University National of Laos pose together on Monday after taking part in an online French speaking contest.



Nam Theun 2 Power Company Ltd (NTPC) organised the annual NTPC Friendship Golf Tournament at Long Thanh-Vientiane Golf Club on Saturday to strengthen the working relationship among its stakeholders including government counterparts, shareholders, customers and staff. The highlight of the day was the hole-in-one made by Mr Chanthaboun Lattanavong (second left).



Administrators of the five main hospitals in Vientiane yesterday pose together with the Deputy Director General of Mahosot Hospital, Associate Prof. Dr Ounkham Phanthaly (seated, centre), after an intensive hospital management course under the Swiss Laos Hospital Project.



Twenty-eight young women take part in the first round of the 2017 Miss Champassak contest before 20 contestants are chosen for the final round which will take place on March 31. The contest is organised by the Champassak provincial Department of Information, Culture and Tourism.

--Photo Champamai newspaper

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