

## Mittaphab Hospital staff get lessons in effective management

Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth

Management staff from Mittaphab Hospital last week learnt about ways to improve healthcare services through strengthened management methods that will bring the hospital in line with international standards.

Hospital administrators attended a week-long course under the Swiss Laos Hospital Project which covered patient services management, quality health services, and issues surrounding human resources development.

Participants learned about the framework of corporate culture, strategic planning, organisational leadership, good governance, financial management, human resource management, and change management.

The course aimed to enhance knowledge and competencies in hospital management and leadership and to transfer tools, checklists and guidelines for hospital management.

Participants learnt practical know-how and skills on how to manage the hospital more professionally and how to improve the quality of health care at

Mittaphab Hospital.

The hospital's Director General, Dr Sonexay Rajvong, said "It is very important for us to upgrade our management to international standards. We want our heads of units and departments to lead all hospital staff in ways that are patient-centred and quality-oriented. Those in charge need to build up the trust of their staff and patients."

The training was led by Dr Alphons Schnyder, a hospital management expert from Switzerland and President of the Swiss Laos Hospital Project.

The overall aim of the project is to share expert knowledge with Lao hospitals to improve patient care.

Dr Schnyder said "It is very important to strengthen leadership skills and to empower responsible staff at all levels of management to use resources effectively and efficiently."

"Good governance, a strong spirit of leadership, and acting as an accountable role model are key ingredients for the successful implementation of autonomy at Laos' hospitals."

He added that one major

difficulty is the management of doctors' time, as they not only treat patients but also train and teach at various institutions and healthcare centres across the country.

In addition, hospitals have other problems that need to be resolved, particularly the shortage of nurses needed to provide the daily services required at upgraded facilities, Dr Schnyder said.

Additionally, hospital staff should follow accepted medical ethics and standards of practice in order to reduce the number of public complaints about the services provided.

The Swiss Laos Hospital Project aims to create a tertiary-level hub hospital that is focused on improving the quality of healthcare and universal healthcare in the southern provinces of Laos, by bolstering the supply and installation of medical equipment and supplies and adopting Hospital Information Systems for the control of health/medical data and information.

In addition, it seeks to make hospitals more self-supporting through the introduction of human resources training and management consulting.

## Savannakhet clamps down on sale of illegally imported goods

Times Reporters

Laos continues to face challenges around the illegal import of goods across the country's various borders, with many items being imported illicitly to avoid the payment of taxes.

In a bid to stem illegal trade, the Industry and Commerce Office in Nong district, Savannakhet province, recently confiscated and disposed of defective products, expired products and prohibited products that were found in shops in several villages around the district.

The confiscated items included sweets, soft drinks, weedkiller, cigarettes and hunting equipment, worth a total of more than 30 million kip.

Last year, Nong district authorities confiscated another 22 substandard, fake and imitation products worth more than 21 million kip, and fined vendors more than 10 million kip.

Goods were removed from 115 shops, including 72 owned by Lao nationals and 43 under foreign ownership.

In 2023, the Prime Minister issued a new order



Some of the items confiscated from shops in Nong district.

instructing the Ministry of Finance to stop the illegal import of vehicles and other items specifically banned by the government.

All imported goods must enter Laos at border crossings that are equipped with scanners and modern tracking systems so they can be inspected to ensure they comply with the law and that the appropriate customs duty is paid.

The finance ministry was also ordered to ensure that all goods and cash carried through border crossings are carefully monitored.

Although Laos recorded a trade surplus of US\$1.3 billion in 2022, the illegal

import of goods at numerous border crossings continues to be a cause for concern.

The Ministry of Health is working with the Industry and Commerce Department and the departments of Agriculture and Forestry, Health, and Science and Technology in carrying out inspections at shops and markets to check the safety and validity of goods on sale.

Under Article 34 of the Law on Food, which was promulgated in 2004, it is prohibited to import or distribute food that is unsafe, of unacceptable quality or standard, or is inconsistent with the laws and regulations on food.

## International airport... FROM PAGE 1

development and will provide stronger links with other countries to facilitate investment and tourism, both domestic and foreign, enabling more people to travel within the area.

It is a big step in the development of northern Laos and will open up more opportunities for commerce and overall expansion.

To begin with, the airport will be open for domestic flights only, using ATR 72 or equivalent size aircraft, as stated in the Concession Agreement for the International Airport Project.

Dr B u a k h o n g Nammavong said Bokeo province has devised a robust development strategy, aimed at maintaining political stability, social order and order in general; creating facilities to enable social and economic development; developing transport systems for improved links to other northern provinces and neighbouring countries and regions; developing tourism



The new international airport in Tonpheung district, Bokeo province.

links with neighbouring countries and the north of Laos; and fostering clean and sustainable agriculture to meet the needs of domestic consumers and for export.

The province also aims to contribute to the generation of electricity for supply within Laos and for export; train up its workforce; and promote development of the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone as a driving force in the province's economic growth.

The new airport is a major step forward in strengthening

the province's links with cities in Laos and neighbouring countries and will bolster investment and tourism.

The airport was built quickly and its facilities comply with international standards.

Mr Zhao Wei said the airport was a large-scale project involving significant investment, aimed at improving the province's transport links so that it becomes an essential and integral part of domestic and international travel.

## Crops at risk from low temperatures next week, weather bureau warns

Times Reporters

The Meteorology and Hydrology Department is warning of another dip in temperatures next week and advises farmers to be vigilant and to protect young crops against expected chilly nights, with a special warning for smallholders in Atsaphangthong district, Savannakhet province.

A high pressure system bringing cool air will cover all parts of Laos, combined with westerly winds, showers, and thick fog in some areas.

In the northeast, minimum temperatures will range from 8-12C and maximums will be in the 25-29C range, with morning mist in many places.

Cool conditions will be accompanied by misty mornings in Luang Namtha, Bokeo, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang and Xayaboury provinces, especially in

mountainous areas, where minimum temperatures will range from 8-12C and maximums from 30-35C.

Vientiane will also experience cooler nights and early mornings with temperatures ranging from 20-34C.

The central provinces of Vientiane, Borikhamxay and Khammuan can also expect cool nights, isolated showers and wind gusts, and temperatures ranging from 8-34C.

Xaysomboun province will have cool and foggy mornings and a temperature range of 8-27C.

Temperatures will be higher in the south, although cool in the early mornings, with a predicted range of 17-35C. In plateau areas, however, temperatures will be much lower at 12-28C.

Thailand's Meteorology Department has forecast that provinces bordering

Laos, namely Loei, Udon Thani, Nong Khai, Nakhon Phanom and Khon Kaen, will be cool in the mornings with misty patches and isolated thundershowers in lower areas. From February 5-8, minimum temperatures are forecast at 15-23C and maximums at 34-37C.

Mountaintops will be cold, with minimum temperatures ranging from 10-16C, and there will be south-easterly winds with speeds of 10-15km per hour.

From February 9-10 isolated thundershowers and gusting winds can be expected, along with cool mornings due to a 2-4C drop in temperature. Minimum temperatures will range from 13-21C and maximums from 27-37C. In mountainous areas, winds will switch to a north-easterly direction with speeds of 15-35 km/hr, according to the Thai Meteorology Department.

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