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Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times"

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## Health Sciences University to improve nursing standards for AEC integration

( By XayxanaLeukai)

The Ministry of Health is encouraging the University of Health Sciences to revise its existing curriculum to meet Asean standards allowing Lao medical staff to work throughout the region in the future.



A nurse checks a patient's blood pressure at a hospital in Vientiane. •

Deputy Director General of the Health Care Department, Associate Prof. Dr. Bounnack Saysanasongkham, told *Vientiane Times* on Friday that nurses and other medical staff in the country needed to be proficient in English if they wanted to work in other Asean countries. "But it does not mean the countries with English as their main language will have an advantage over others in the region," he said, adding that this was because Asean's own guidelines encouraged healthcare workers who wanted to work in any country to understand (writing, reading and speaking) the local language. For example, if doctors from Laos want to work in Myanmar, they are required to understand the Myanmar language in ad-

dition to understanding just English. "Even if a doctor is highly qualified it is useless if he does not communicate with local people in their own language. Treating patients can mean dealing with life or death situations," he said. He believed that no country would allow doctors who didn't understand the local language to practice. According to Dr. Bounnack in around two years from now Asean healthcare professionals would be working in different countries around the region. In Laos, in addition to improving the teaching curriculum, university facilities must be upgraded and sufficient teaching materials provided. Dean of Nursing Sciences Faculty at the University of Health Sciences, Dr. Chanheme Songnavong, said this year their nursing graduates would not be able to work in other Asean countries because the faculty's curriculum had not met the regional standard. However, she believed that about five years from now Lao nurses may be able to work throughout the region. To lift the curriculum up to Asean standards the faculty will begin focusing on clinical adult nursing with an emphasis on more practical training in the field and less theoretical lectures. The faculty is also keen to improve its library and teaching materials including training manikins and equipment for checking pregnant women. "We will focus on improving skills and knowledge for students," Dr. Chanheme said.

(*Vientiane Times* 08 February 2016)

## Education officials confer on higher education strategy

*(By Times Reporters)*

Ministry of Education and Sports' senior officials and involved sectors gathered on Friday to discuss national higher education development and strategic planning from now until 2025. The meeting's major goals were to draft a strategy and development plan for the higher education sector for the period up to 2025. One objective was to brainstorm the development of the framework and action plan to be implemented from now until 2025, especially in improving education quality in Laos to meet regional and international standards. Yesterday's meeting was chaired by Deputy Minister of Education and Sports Associate Prof. DrKongsySengmany. The ministry's Higher Education Department Director General DrPhonphetBoupha, senior education officials from universities in Laos and other invited guests also attended the meeting. Speaking at the meeting, Associate Prof. DrKongsy said education in Laos had improved in recent years, especially the quantity and quality of the higher education sector. But more was needed to meet human resource development demands to transform Laos into a modern and industrialised nation, the deputy education minister said. "The higher education framework has played an important role in improving national socio-

economic growth," he said. The national strategic plan contained in the resolution of the 9th Congress of the Lao people's Revolutionary Party stated that human resources development must be matched by strategy development and national economic infrastructure to bring Laos in line with other Asean members and the international community. Economic infrastructure, science and technology and quality human resources must be developed to meet the needs of an industrialised country. In order to achieve these aims, all sectors concerned needed to improve the country's capacity for development by focusing on investment in education, the press release said. The higher education plan must be related to socio-economic development, human resource development and national education reform plans to achieve the government's poverty reduction goals and ensure Laos is removed from least developed country status by 2020. The plan must also meet human resource needs of the labour market for the public and private sectors with the start of AEC integration. The higher education sector also needs to improve the capacity and knowledge of senior technical staff, researchers and scientists to contribute to national socio-economic development.

*(Vientiane Times 08 February 2016)*

## Real Xekong mother and child mortality rates still high

(By PhetphoxaySengpaseuth)

The real mortality rate of mothers and children in Xekong province is higher than the figure recorded in previous years, officials in charge have confirmed. Since the launch of a new health scheme in 2013, health officials and village volunteers have been entrusted to collect the information directly from villages. As a result, the real mortality rates of mothers and children have been unveiled which is higher than the figure recorded by authorities in previous years. Head of Mother and Child Division under the Xekong Health Department, Dr Bounthanom Nakdouangma told *Vientiane Times* by telephone on Friday that the government's new health programme was already providing free health checks and treatment for mothers and their children under five in the province. She said pregnant women could now access more health services at hospitals and dispensaries across the province which was free of charge to the poor. Also, "We will know the real death rates particularly in newborns and children under five," she explained. The national launch of the 'Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Service on Reproductive Maternal, Newborn and Child Health' was playing an important role in implementing the health policy for all people, she added. However, many pregnant women and children in the target group were still not accessing health services as they were poor and hospitals and

local dispensaries were not always following the ministry's policy, she added. A senior official from Ministry of Health said as many deaths of mothers were related to pregnancy, giving birth and post-delivery, it was essential to encourage all expectant women to receive health checkups at least four times before giving birth. This included encouraging them to give birth at a hospital. He said there were various factors causing the deaths. Mothers-to-be having irregular health checkups was one of many reasons why mothers and their children were dying in Laos each year. "Although maternal, newborn and child death rates in Laos have continued to decline, many poor women living in remote areas of the country can't access health services because they don't have enough money to pay for a hospital visit. According to the Lao Social Indicator Survey in 2012 in Laos, the death rate of birthing mothers was 357 out of every 100,000 births, the death rate of children under one year of age was 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children under five it was 79 out of every 1,000 live births. The official (international) database showed the 2014 maternal mortality rate for Laos to be 220 deaths per 100,000 live births, with the maternal mortality rate for Xekong province to be 334 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015.

(*Vientiane Times* 08 February 2016)

## Government officials, business sector enhance AEC essentials

*(By Times Reporters)*

The Lao government is now working on promoting the understanding and importance of Asean economic integration, opportunities and challenges after the Asean Economic Community came into effect at the end of last year. Under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Foreign Trade Policy Department organised the five day-long training course on the AEC in order to enhance acknowledgement and understanding for government officials and the business sector. Speaking at the opening ceremony, the department's Deputy Director General Mr Saisana Sayakone said the participants are expected to take part in the interaction and share ideas with each other and the speakers should deliver clear messages to ensure they understand well the content involved. "Our week-long training course is required to avoid the listening mode because participants are supported to be actively taking part in discussion, interaction and to share their ideas with each other," he said. Some 40 participants from the government and business sector attended the training course and after the completion of this course, the following courses will be organised for local government officials and the business sector in various provinces to ensure they are well-prepared for the AEC integration. The training course was supported by GIZ's Regional Economic Integration of

Laos into the Asean, Trade and Entrepreneurship Development (RELATED) Project. During the training course, participants will learn about the three important principles including trade in goods, trade in services and the flow of investment. For the trade in goods, the invited instructor will go into the economics of trade in goods liberalisation, trade in goods in Asean and Lao exports to and imports from other Asean Member States (AMS). The specific issues addressed also included Asean Trade in Goods Agreements (ATIGA) as well as Tariffs and Rules of Origins (ROO). Meanwhile the trade in services in Asean also refers to the Asean Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), movement of skilled labour and Asean Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) on various specific professions. These three important parts are the main steps for integrating markets and it is essential for Lao businesses in the framework of the AEC. In addition, participants will be able to understand more about the potentials, challenges and regulations, and changing the processes of cross-border trade and investment into the AEC. Currently Laos has become part of the regional market with an approximate consumer base of over 600 million people, while the region's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) was recorded at US\$2.6 trillion in 2014.

*(Vientiane Times 09 February 2016)*

## That Luang Marsh SEZ condos have wide appeal

(By Times Reporters)

A majority of people buying condo apartments at That Luang Marsh Specific Economic Zone (SEZ) in Vientiane are Lao or of Lao origin living in France, officials in charge of the project have said.



*That Luang Marsh Specific Economic Zone will open restaurants, a shopping centre and night market in May.*

Vice President of the zone's management board Mr Pheng Inthilath told *Vientiane Times* on Tuesday that six of the seven completed 19-storey blocks have been sold out. "One businessman from Guangzhou, China has bought one building with about 128 apartments aiming to run a hotel business. But overall I would say that not many Chinese nationals have come to buy our condos," he said. "Buyers can move in to the first seven condos by December this year and the rest are slated for completion in June 2017." Mr Pheng said a number of services will open in May this year including restaurants, shopping centre and night market. The restaurants will feature a variety of foods including Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese dishes. "Our night market will initially open on Fridays only and if there is good demand, we can open it on other nights. Concerning our shopping centre, it will sell goods produced in all countries including Thailand,

China and Vietnam," he said. Currently the zone is open for the general public to cycle and jog around the 50-hectare lagoon into which tonnes of fish have been released. That Luang Marsh SEZ is one of the mega projects built in Laos with investment coming from Chinese developer, Wan Feng Shanghai Real Estate Company. The developer has decided to increase its investment capital from US\$1.6 billion to US\$5 billion. So far, over US\$200 million has been spent on building infrastructure, facilities and condos at the zone. The Chinese developer is also working to attract other entrepreneurs to operate businesses in the zone. That Luang Marsh SEZ began construction in December 2012, covering an area of 365 hectares. The government intended to promote the development of this project as a model for SEZ development in Laos aiming to attract more foreign investment to the country. Wan Feng Shanghai Real Estate Company has said it expected to spend between 15 to 20 years working on the project. When finished the project will include a large residential area, public parks and green spaces, a lake, roads and drainage, a sports complex and a commercial centre. There will also be five-star hotels, shopping centres and entertainment venues. The government said That Luang Marsh SEZ would contribute to further boosting the country's economic growth and generate job opportunities for local people. The Chinese developer said it aimed to turn That Luang Marsh into a liveable town that has an environmental friendly atmosphere with various tree species to be planted in the zone.

(*Vientiane Times* 10 February 2016)

## Ancient vine draws crowds in Attapeu

(By Times Reporters)



*The huge (yanang) TiliacoraTriandra vine in Phonxay village, Xaysettha district, Attapeu province.*

Attapeu authorities are planning to make a special tourist attraction out of a huge *yanang* (TiliacoraTriandra) vine that grows in Phonxay village, Xaysetthadistrict. Local people believe the vine has been in existence for almost 200 years and its fame has spread due to its unusual size. People pick the leaves to use in bamboo soup and other dishes. Head of Office at the Information, Culture and Tourism Department in Xaysettha district, MrKhamkhien-Boudsomsy, told *Vientiane Times* on Wednesday that the vine had been known about for many years but had only become a tourist attraction since 2005. Now many Lao people and foreign visitors are curious about

the vine with no fewer than five people a day turning up to look at it. Sometimes tour buses stop by as well. It is the biggest *yanang* (TiliacoraTriandra) vine in Xaysettha district and is entwined in a 20 metre high tamarind tree. Its woody stem is the thickness of an adult's arm. Locals cut the bark of the vine to boil in water for children to wash in as it is thought to cure some skin diseases. MrKhamkhien said that normally this particular vine is small, but the specimen in Phonxay village is unusually large. Some people believe the vine is almost 200 years old and it is considered to be truly amazing. Now the authorities are taking steps to preserve the vine and encourage more people to come and see it. They have plans to entice the crowds by building a restaurant, hotel and other tourist facilities nearby. Head of the province's Information, Culture and Tourism Department, MsBounnanBounnaseng, said they have other plans to attract tourists as Attapeu is also home to the King Saysetthathiratstupa, the Sakhæ temple, the Ongseng Buddha, and other places of cultural interest. MsBounnan said that in 2015 over 50,000 tourists visited Attapeu, with most being Lao nationals. This year the province is expecting more tourists due to improved infrastructure and better advertising of local attractions.

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