

Fireworks injure 13

Mom Kunthea

A CACHE of fireworks exploded during a celebration in Kampong Chhnang province's Rolea Ba'ier district on Tuesday night, injuring 13 people, including several children, police and hospital officials said yesterday.

District police chief Soeng Pisith told the *Post* the villagers had gathered at the Ang Metrei pagoda, in Rolea Ba'ier's Svay Chrum commune, for a Buddhist ceremony celebrating the end of the rainy season and were setting off fireworks as part of the festivities.

The owner of the fireworks was setting them off in the pagoda area when sparks from one rocket fell on 200 other fireworks sitting nearby, igniting them all and burning several bystanders, Pisith said.

"They did not inform the police authorities about setting off the fireworks, and I only knew when they got injured because of the explosion," said Pisith.

"[The injured] were sent for treatment at the provincial hospital immediately after we got information about the accident," he said.

Sorin Tiravuthy, chief of the



People receive treatment at a hospital after a cache of fireworks exploded during a celebration at a pagoda in Kampong Chhnang province's Rolea Ba'ier district, injuring 13 bystanders. PHOTO SUPPLIED.

provincial hospital, said yesterday 13 people had been sent to his hospital on Tuesday night, including three young girls who had been sent on to Kantha Bopha Hospital in Phnom Penh because of the severity of their injuries.

"After we treated them on Tuesday night, four people left for their homes and three girls were sent to the hospital in Phnom Penh. But this

morning, we prepared to send [another] two girls to Phnom Penh, because their injuries were serious," he said.

Tiravuthy said the girls sent to have their burns treated in Phnom Penh ranged from six to 13 years old.

Four others remained in hospital so staff could continue to monitor their condition, but their injuries were not too severe, he said.