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BRIEF NEWS

A construction worker died and three others seriously injured after being electrocuted on a UB residential construction site last week.

The four men were helping maneuver and load a mobile crane Kraz plate No94-66 when the crane hit electrical lines.

They were working on the UB Town residential project, Khan-Uul district, Ulaanbaatar.

EVERY June 14, World Blood Donor Day is organized by the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCSS) and National Blood Center (NBC) in Mongolia.

The main purpose of the World Blood Donor Day is to inform the public about the benefits and significance of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donations and to express respect and gratitude for donors who save precious human lives.

For this year's celebrations, organizers held the campaign under the slogan of "Let's give blood constantly", focused on raising the status of blood donors among the public.

During the event, blood donors danced and sang, and over 30 people received the Honorable Blood Donor Award from MRCSS and NBC.

A 26-year-old man from the Bayan-Ongui area, Toy aimed appeared to have symptoms of the bubonic plague a week after he hunted a marmot and ate its meat, the Emergency Call Center informed the local emergency management agency on June 8.

He is running a high temperature and has swollen lymphatic glands. He is being treated at the local hospital and is awaiting laboratory analysis results for a final diagnosis. The governor has imposed strict quarantine in the area.

MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalist's Successful Appeal Victory for Fourth Estate

Mongolia's legal system tested by one reporter's fight against corruption

By SH.BATMONKH

THOSE challenging the truth of journalists' reports are generally high ranked officials. Even though journalists may have accessed reliable sources of information and published the truth, Mongolian officials threaten them with lawsuits of large fines.

On June 10, B.Javzandulam, a local reporter and editor-in-chief of Ovrkhankhai newspaper, held a press conference revealing the illegal activities of high ranked officials.

She accused officials as high up as the Governor of Arkhangai of awarding themselves or their families' lucrative contracts to service

schools with lunches. Javzandulam investigated several local complaints about how the Lunch Program was running in Ovrkhankhai, before she wrote a story about it in Ovrkhankhai.

Her research allegedly revealed that officials had set up the personal businesses and then lowered the standard of the food given to students in order to maximize profits.

She said the high-ranking officials were making money at the expense of children. The officials complained to the local court, which found her guilty of spreading untrue rumors. An Appeal Court had then upheld this decision.

The Independent Agency of Against Corruption (IAAC) inspected several schools and

found substance in the allegations.

They consequently found that suspected high officials concealed their property and misreported their personal income and property to the IAAC.

Despite the IAAC dismissing the officials from their posts, the guilty officials - including the Governor - have refused to resign and remain in their posts.

"Most people in Ovrkhankhai knew about the illegal business. But the people who are connected to corruption used their power and authority to put pressure on the local court to decide in their favor," the journalist said during the press conference. There have been numerous

complaints about how the lunch program has been implemented. According to a government decision last year, children in the first three grades in secondary schools were to have a free midday snack at school.

The Government of Mongolia pays the school Tg300 per meal for every child.

Several school authorities have been charged with giving poor quality food, even as they continue to draw money from the government. This month the Supreme Court heard an appeal from B.Javzandulam against the two lower courts, which had sentenced her to nearly two years in jail for exposing the corruption of G.Gonchigdorj, Governor of Arvaikheer soum,

and B.Monkhjargal, head of the Ovrkhankhai aimag's Education, Culture and Science Department.

Dashzeveg, a representative of the Globe International NGO, campaigned for her in the case. The Supreme Court overturned the lower courts' decision.

"I didn't ask favor from my compatriot journalists, then I could never have won at the Supreme Court," Javzandulam said.

"I feel the media and journalists have powerful voice and strength." Mongolia is currently one of the world's few countries where journalists found guilty of defamation can be sentenced to prison.

ENVIRONMENT

Mining to Destroy River System

THE head of Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Policy and Security called for the cancellation of an American company's mining license last Friday (June 13), warning that a major rivers will dry up.

After she visited the Erdene area, Tov aimag last week, B.Monkhtuya submitted her petition to the committee, saying that the world's third biggest drainage area's point of intersection is located near to the Ar and Ovor Janchivlan springs.

"Ar and Ovor Janchivlan springs will dry up," Monkhtuya said.

She also said the special exploration license permission issued to the American-invested mining company would threaten the local people.

Monkhtuya said she would campaign to cancel the mining license.

sources and several Central Asian rivers originate in the area.

Local people have complained that the inevitable use of chemicals in the mining work will endanger the quality of the water carried by all these rivers.

The US-invested Toroi Bandi mining company obtained a license from Erdene soum's legislative body.

Monkhtuya said she could not talk to the company's officials and workers said they were unsure what they were mining for yet.

"We do not know what we are searching for. It may be uranium, that's what we have heard," the workers said.

Chinese workers of the company have already cut down hundreds of young trees at the source of the river that feeds the Ar Janchivlan hot spring, famous for its medicinal properties.

The area is a junction point of three freshwater

New Library Revives Intellectual Resources

SOME of Mongolia's highest profile dignitaries, including the President, last week attended the official ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone for the new State Central Library building.

The library is in front of the US Embassy and is expected to become a key intellectual resource for students and scholars.

It was attended by the President N.Enkhbayar, Ulaanbaatar Mayor T.Bileg, President of Mongolian Academy of Sciences B.Chadma, Minister of Education, Culture and Science N.Bolomaa, scholars and other

officials.

During the event, Enkhbayar said over 50 volumes of world literature would be translated into the Mongolian language and Tg495 million will be spent for the expense of publishing and translating the volumes.

The 50 volumes of the world literature will be distributed to libraries in all secondary schools, vocational colleges and production centers, according to the Education Minister N.Bolomaa.

"Mongolians are a nation who creates books and sutras of gold, wraps them with silk,

and puts them on the most honorable places," Bolomaa said.

"This new building is one of the greatest investments ever made to the education and culture sector since the beginning of transition period.

"I hope that everyone who wants to come over there constantly," said N.Bolomaa. The US\$20 million aid that will be used to construct the new State Central Library building has come from the Government of Kuwait and any extra charges will be provided by the Government of Mongolia.

Illegal Medicine Crackdown

IN CONNECTION to the fake medicine crack down in Mongolia, the State Professional Inspection Agency last week conducted a national investigation and found several pharmaceutical manufacturers and pharmacies producing and selling drugs failing to meet acceptable standards.

They inspected 272 pharmacies, three hospitals, six medicine-manufacturing plants, and 40 medicine supply companies.

As a result of the investigation, they confiscated 27 various drugs as being of low quality, shut down the

operations of two companies and demanded 39 medicine supply companies improve their sanitary conditions.

In total, 62 officials and 25 companies were fined with a total of Tg4 million. The Agency also found that several pharmaceutical laboratories do not follow the hygienic and safety regulations.

Many such factories are not even in authorized buildings. The Agency decided on the inspection after receiving numerous complaints about the poor quality of medicines produced and sold in Mongolia.

DEVELOPMENT

Swiss Doctors' Decade in Mongolia Delivers Results

IN 1996, adventurous Swiss surgeon Dr. Pierre Tschantz set out on horseback across Mongolia.

During his travels he came to Kharkhorin, the ancient capital of the Mongol Empire, 365 km from Ulaanbaatar.

There he visited the local hospital, where he soon realised the dire situation facing hospital staff: a lack of working equipment, a lack of up-to-date medical training; and medical practices that fell far short of the 20th century standards.

In short, the Mongolian doctors had been left to their own devices to do as best they could with the little they had.

Alarmed by what he saw and wanting to provide his struggling Mongolian colleagues with better equipment and training, Dr. Tschantz decided to mobilise support among the Swiss medical fraternity.

On his return to Switzerland he asked the Swiss Branch of the College of Surgeons to help improve the desperate conditions in Mongolian hospitals and to help develop the skills of the local surgeons.

He also challenged other doctors to join him on his next



journey to Mongolia during their vacations.

His efforts paid off, and the following summer he and five other surgeons travelled to Mongolia and began working with Mongolian surgeons and anaesthetists at the National Central Hospital and the National Cancer Centre.

1998 marked the start of the Swiss Surgical Team (SST) in Mongolia, which this year celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Each year since then, the SST has grown, attracting an increasing number of volunteer surgeons and anaesthetists, and recently nurses.

Their main goal is to train their Mongolian counterparts in surgical techniques and

patient management.

The training they provide is hands-on, with Swiss and Mongolian surgeons working together as a team with patients from diagnosis through to post-operative care.

Each year they treat more than 200 patients with a wide range of medical conditions.

The Swiss surgeons instruct the Mongolian doctors on the different surgical procedures and techniques that can be used for particular conditions, and then supervise them throughout those procedures.

The same approach is taken by the Swiss anaesthetists and nurses.

Dr. Kehrer, one of the doctors involved in this

project from the outset and its present leader, emphasises the importance of working as a team with anaesthetists and nurses to produce the best results and provide the best patient care both before and after surgery.

"In the past, this was not the case in Mongolian operating rooms," he said.

The addition of nurses to the SST came about when team members realised the need to provide specialised training for nursing staff.

Since 2007, the SST has included surgical nurses in the team. There are also plans to link the Nursing School of the Health Science University of Mongolia (HSUM) with the Nursing School of the Geneva Medical University to improve overall nursing care in Mongolia.

In 2002, the SST established a new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the National Central Hospital of Mongolia, for which they contributed all the necessary equipment at a cost of US\$300,000.

The head of the ICU Dr. Ganbold said the assistance has improved services

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