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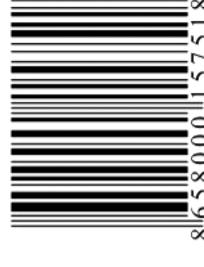
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MONGOLIA CLASSIFIED AS 'FREE' IN FREEDOM IN THE WORLD ANNUAL REPORT



The map of the world's ten best ethical destinations 2018

By B.CHINTUSHIG

Mongolia was rated as "free" with an aggregate score of 85 out of 100 in the latest Freedom in the World 2018 annual report released by the non-governmental organization Freedom House.

Freedom House rated 88 countries as "free", 58 as "partly free" and 49 as "not free" in 2017. The report takes into account the freedom rating of a country, the civil liberties, and the political rights that its citizens enjoy.

With aggregate score of 85, Mongolia was on par with countries such as Poland, Greece, the United States of America, and South Korea. In comparison, Mongolia's neighbors Russia and China had an aggregate score of 20 and 14 respectively.

According to the key findings of the report, democracy faced its most serious crisis in decades in 2017 as its basic tenets — including guarantees of free and fair elections, the rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law — came under attack around the world.

Michael J. Abramowitz, the president of Freedom House, noted in the report that "political rights and civil liberties around the world deteriorated to their lowest point in more than a decade in 2017, extending a period characterized by emboldened autocrats, beleaguered democracies, and the United States' withdrawal from its leadership role in the global struggle for human freedom."

5 Mongolian Mountaineers climb Aconcagua Mountain

By B.DIVAA

Led by State Merited Athlete G.Usukhbayar, five Mongolian Mountaineers departed Ulaanbaatar on January 18 to climb Aconcagua Mountain (6960 meters) in Argentina, the highest peak in South America.

"This climb is a preparation for climbing K2 Mountain (the second highest mountain in the world, after Mount Everest, at 8,611 meters above sea level) same as I did last year. Also the climbing is expected

to take three weeks this time," said G.Usukhbayar.

The last time he climbed Aconcagua Mountain, located in the Andes mountain range, in the Mendoza Province, Argentina was on February 10, 2017.

However mountaineer G.Usukhbayar climbed K2 Mountain last summer, he had to stop his voyage at 6,450 meters due to bad weather condition and problems with his guide. K2 is the highest point of the Karakoram Range and the highest point in both Pakistan and Xinjiang, and known as the Savage Mountain due to the extreme difficulty of ascent.

Mongolians can now apply for US visa for seasonal agricultural workers

By B.DULGUUN

The Secretary of Homeland Security has approved Mongolia for H-2A and H-2B Nonimmigrant Worker Programs which allow other nationals to fill temporary agricultural jobs and temporary or seasonal jobs in the USA when there is a shortage of workers.

This is the first time Mongolia has been included in the Identification of Foreign Countries Whose Nationals Are Eligible to Participate in the H-2A and H-2B Nonimmigrant Worker Programs along with 81 other countries. The notice will be effective until the next renewal on January 18, 2019.

The Secretary of Homeland Security determined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that Mongolia should be designated as an eligible H-2A and H-2B country because it now meets the standards set out in the regulation. Mongolia is no longer listed as "At Risk of Non-Compliance" according to ICE's year-end assessment of foreign countries that cooperate in accepting back their nationals that have been deported from the USA, and has demonstrated

increased cooperation with the USA regarding the return of their nationals with final orders of removal.

An H-2A visa allows US employers to bring foreign nationals to the USA to fill temporary agricultural jobs for which US workers are not available. An H-2A nonimmigrant classification applies to you if you seek to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature in the USA on a temporary basis. A US employer (or an association of US agricultural producers named as a joint employer) must file Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker, on your behalf.

On the other hand, an H-2B visa is required if you are going to the USA to perform a job which is temporary or seasonal in nature and for which there is a shortage of US workers. Your employer is required to obtain a Department of Labor certification confirming that there are no qualified US workers eligible for the type of employment on which your petition is based.

E.Bekhbayar participates in Pro Wrestling League 3 in India

By B.NORDOGMAA

Pro Wrestling League 3 (PWL), an Indian professional wrestling competition, commenced on January 9.

E.Bekhbayar traveled to India on January 16 to participate in PWL where six teams are competing fiercely. This is the third time he is taking part in the competition.

Athletes from 19 countries, including Mongolia, the USA, China, Russia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Tunisia, are taking part in PWL, founded by Kartikeya Sharma and ProSportify.

E.Bekhbayar joined the Mumbai Maharathi team, which has nine members (five male and four female) including Olympic and world champion Soslan Lyudvikovich Ramonov from Russia, silver and bronze medalist of the World Championships Odunay Folasade Adekuoye from Nigeria, and

other skillful Indian wrestlers (Praveen Dahiya, Sakshi Malik, Satender Malik, Satyawart Kadian and Veer Dev).

The Mumbai Maharathi team wrestled three times and has one win and two losses so far.

In PWL, the league adheres to the rules established by United World Wrestling for all weight categories. The first and second seasons host six teams, each consisting of nine players and in every season, all players participate in a bidding system.

Pro Wrestling League 3 will conclude on January 28, sources said.

An Asian champion, bronze medalist of Las Vegas 2015 and Paris 2015, E.Bekhbayar is a Stated Merited Athlete who belongs to Khangard Sports Committee. He participated in the State Adult Freestyle Championships 2018 held in Orkhon Province last week and won the 61 kg event, which was his fourth gold medal of the State Championships.

NSO summarizes socio-economic changes in 2017

By B.OCHIRJAMAA

The National Statistics Office of Mongolia (NSO) has outlined key changes in the social and economic situation of Mongolia in its latest monthly Social and Economic Report.

The report analyzes the preliminary performance last year.

POPULATION

Based on preliminary results, Mongolia's population became 3.2 million by the end of 2017, up by 59,800 people, or 1.9 percent, compared to 2016.

At national level, 75,734 Mongolian babies were born within the country and 1,406 babies overseas. The birth rate and death rate both went down, by 4.6 percent and 2.1 percent respectively. Last year, 3,648 fewer babies were born and 340 fewer people died compared to the previous year, according to NSO report.

The crude birth rate per 1,000 capita was measured at 23.8 and death rate at 4.9, indicating that the birth rate per 1,000 capita dropped by 16 live births per 1,000 individuals and death rate by two deaths per 1,000 individuals over the past year.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The latest labor force survey reported that 28,600 more people found jobs by the end of 2017.

As of December 31, 37,100 individuals had registered at labor agencies, 72.6 percent of which, or 25,500 people, were actively searching for jobs while the rest were seeking a new or extra job. The number of registered unemployed people decreased by 26 percent (9,000 people) since 2016, but increased by 13.5 percent (1,300 people) from November to December.

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26.	Orgil Supermarket in Zaisan
27.	Orgil Supermarket at Independence Palace
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29.	Bee Marche Supermarket

POLITICS

Mongolia to deepen cooperation in labor, tourism and air pollution with South Korea

Prime Minister U.Khurelsukh concluded his visit to South Korea on January 17, and as part of his visit, he held an official meeting with South Korea's Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon on January 16 to discuss some aspects of the relations and cooperation between the two nations.

As the agreement between the governments of Mongolia and South Korea on employment and labor cooperation has expired, Mongolian Minister of Labor and Social Protection S.Chinzorig and South Korea's Minister of Employment and Labor Kim Young-joo signed an extension to the agreement, as well as a memorandum on improving mutual employment and labor cooperation.

Following the signing of the memorandum, the two countries will work together to increase job creation, determine demand of the labor market, and improve the competency of Mongolian workers.

Mongolia's Minister of Finance Ch.Khurelbaatar and South Korea's Minister of Strategy and Finance Kim Dong-yeon signed an agreement for a soft loan of 700 million USD granted by South Korea to Mongolia. The annual interest of the 30-year loan will be 0.2 percent.

Some 500 million USD out of the 700 million USD will be granted under the International Monetary Fund's extended fund facility program being carried out in Mongolia, and the remaining 200 million USD is an unused portion of a loan that the South Korean government agreed to grant to Mongolia.

As the government plans to fund the 500 million USD to housing and energy projects to reduce air and environment pollution in Ulaanbaatar, the 200 million USD is projected to build power plants in 10 provinces.

Minister of Environment and Tourism N.Tserenbat pointed out that 500 million USD from the loan will be used to implement the National Program to Reduce Air and Environment Pollution that was approved by the government, and noted that the sides will discuss implementation of the projects which will be funded by the loan at the next meeting of the Mongolia-South Korea intergovernmental commission in March.

During the prime minister's meeting with members of the South Korean government, led by Member of the South Korean National Assembly and Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Northern Economic Cooperation Song Young-gil, the officials discussed future cooperation between the two countries.

Both sides agreed that there are a wide range of opportunities for the two countries to cooperate in the transport sector to develop Mongolia's tourism industry, and noted that they will seek possible opportunities to implement this project.

FOR RENT

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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MEETS HEADS OF STATE AGENCIES TO DISCUSS 2018 WORK PLANS



Deputy Prime Minister U.Enkhtuvshin holds meeting with heads of state agencies

By T.BAYARBAT

Deputy Prime Minister U.Enkhtuvshin met with heads of the General Agency for Specialized Inspection, National Emergency Management Agency, Agency for Standardization and Metrology, Agency for Fair Competition and Consumer Protection, and Altanbulag, Zamiin-Uud and Tsagaannuur free trade zones at the same time on January 17 to review their 2017 work performances and 2018 action plans.

The deputy prime minister highlighted that as this year will be an important year to implement the main part of the government's 2016-2020 action plan, the government agencies need to focus on improving their performances this year.

He noted that state agencies should provide legal, inspection, emergency response, and other recommendations to enterprises that could potentially violate laws due to lack of legal knowledge.

U.Enkhtuvshin told the agencies' heads that they should pursue ways to bring investment

from overseas by collaborating with international organizations that are similar to the Mongolian agencies rather than seeking funding from the state budget. He underlined that the government is keen to promote the agencies' proposals to expand their international cooperation.

The deputy prime minister pointed out that he will concentrate on opening the Zamiin-Uud free trade zone within this year as scheduled since this is his key focus for the year.

OSCE election observers present GEC with their mission final report

Representatives from the short-term observer mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) met with Head of the Mongolian General Election Commission (GEC) Ch.Sodnomtsuren on January 17 to present him with the observation mission final report for the 2017 presidential election, which took place in July.

ODIHR delegates stated that during the June 26 election day, 66 observers including a 22-member delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and a nine-member delegation from the European Parliament, who arrived in Mongolia from 30 OSCE participating states, observed the election process throughout Mongolia. During the run-off voting on July 7, 11 experts in the capital and 19 long-term observers worked in Mongolia, and they came from 23 OSCE participating states.

Steven Martin, a senior adviser of ODIHR, underlined that despite the short time between first and second rounds of the election, GEC made "successful" efforts to organize the election well.

The report notes, "The mission

concluded that the June 26 presidential election was competitive and well-organized, featuring a short yet fierce campaign. The freedoms of assembly and expression were generally respected. The protracted resolution of complaints, as well as pending court cases, led to uncertainty regarding candidacies. Media coverage was extensive but devoid of analytical reporting. The election administration was effective despite the perception of partisanship in the appointment of mid-level election commissions."

The second round concluded by the mission said that "the first-ever presidential run-off took place against the backdrop of legal uncertainty. Positively, GEC issued clarifying regulations and, against the time constraints, administered the election in an efficient manner. The period between the two rounds was tainted by instances of blurring the line between governing and campaigning, as well as widespread allegations of vote-buying. Calling on voters to cast blank ballots in protest was a distinct feature of the runoff. The election day itself was orderly, and polling station staff efficiently facilitated voting."

Speaker M.Enkhbold attends Asia-Pacific parliamentary forum

Speaker of Parliament M.Enkhbold is participating in the 26th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF), which is being held in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, from January 18 to 21. The speaker will also be paying an official visit to the country from January 21 to 23, at the invitation of Chairperson of Vietnam's National Assembly Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan.

The forum is taking place under the theme of "Parliamentary partnership for Peace, Innovation and Sustainable Development", and the meeting's attendees are discussing the development trend of international relations, ways to promote regional economic and cultural cooperation for peace, security, prosperity, inclusive and sustainable development.

As part of this meeting, Speaker M.Enkhbold will address regional development cooperation to Asia and Pacific parliamentary delegates, and hold meetings with heads of some countries' parliaments in attendance.

The speaker will meet with Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Vietnamese Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Chair of the Mongolia-Vietnam intergovernmental commission Nguyen Xuan Cuong to discuss upcoming cooperation projects between the two nations.

As this visit of the speaker is the first time in eight years since former Speaker of Parliament D.Demberel's visit to Vietnam in the February of 2010, the two countries believe it will promote cooperation between inter-parliamentary groups and help in moving forward with economic cooperation projects, as well as pursuing mutual collaboration opportunities under the proposed regional cooperation initiatives.

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BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

OYU TOLGOI ANNOUNCES FORCE MAJEURE AS CHINESE COMPANIES BLOCK BORDER IN PROTEST



Oyu Tolgoi factory

By B.CHINTUSHIG

Turquoise Hill today announced that Oyu Tolgoi has declared force majeure in connection to customer contracts for concentrate due to a protest by Chinese coal transporters in the area of the Gants Mod border crossing.

On January 8, 2018, protesters used a large number of vehicles to obstruct the main access road within China to the Chinese-Mongolian border. The main border crossing for goods and supplies is open.

The protesters are Chinese companies who are opposed to having to pay the social and health insurance of the Mongolian drivers employed by the companies. A letter containing 12 demands to the Mongolian side was sent by the companies, including exemption from Mongolian laws.

In order to resolve the issue of the logjam of trucks that had reached 150 kilometers at its peak, Cabinet approved decree No. 320.

Negotiations began on January 12, but so far there have been no signs of any compromises being made.

"The placement of protesters' vehicles prevented any traffic from safely traversing the border, both inbound and outbound, and has continued to do so. As a result, while the obstruction remains in place, Oyu Tolgoi convoys are unable to cross through the Chinese-Mongolian border to deliver concentrates to customers," Turquoise Hill stated.

Several NGOs unite to protest decision to distribute 10 percent of Erdenet to citizens

Protesting the government decision to distribute 10 percent of Erdenet Mining Corporation to Mongolian citizens, several NGOs including Independence Movement, Just Citizens Front, National Khas Movement, and Reform Movement held a press conference on January 18.

The NGOs are specifically protesting the decision to distribute 10 percent of shares to citizens while floating the remainder on the stock exchange.

"In 1976, with the help of the Soviet Union, Erdenet Mining Corporation (EMC) began its operations. For 42 years, Erdenet has been the sole cash cow for Mongolia. With recent developments, EMC will be wholly owned by the Mongolian government. EMC belongs to the Mongolian people," said Head of the Just Citizens Front G.Arslan.

For the Just Citizens Front and G.Arslan, the concern lies within the government decision to float the remaining 39 percent on the stock exchange.

"The shares being sold on the stock exchange will

only result in a few corrupt officials gaining ownership. Regular Mongolians do not have the money to buy stock in Erdenet. We will not tolerate this," G.Arslan added.

The National Khas Movement NGO has said that the government has gone back on its decree passed in April of 2017 to distribute all of the 49 percent to citizens.

"We demand that Cabinet implement their previous decision. When he was appointed Prime Minister, U.Khurelsukh stood in Parliament and said that he is not afraid to die in his effort to maintain justice and fairness. Yet, he went back on all of this very quickly," said Head of the National Khas Movement D.Nanjid.

The NGOs have made it clear that they support the fact that the 49 percent will be purchased by the government and are happy. However, the main issue lies in the fact that only 10 percent will be distributed to citizens. During the press conference, the representatives of the NGOs stated that it was correct to implement an article in the constitution supporting civil ownership in strategic mines with Erdenet.

Shares in Turquoise Hill took a hit on January 16 after it revealed its massive Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine in Mongolia has been imposed a 155 million USD tax bill.

The company said in a statement that the amount relates to an audit on taxes imposed and paid by Turquoise Hill from 2013 and 2015.

"Turquoise Hill is of the firm view that Oyu Tolgoi LLC has paid all taxes and charges required under the Investment Agreement (and reconfirmed in the Underground Mine Development and Financing

Plan) and Mongolian law," the company stated.

Shares of the company were almost five percent down on Tuesday in Toronto at 11:03 a.m., and had lost 2.7 percent of their value on the New York Stock Exchange.

In 2014, Oyu Tolgoi was hit with a 130 million USD tax act for incomplete payment of taxes during its first phase of development. After negotiations, the amount to be paid to the government was reduced to 30 million USD.

Turquoise Hill Resources also recently announced

Mongol Bank purchases 682 kg of gold in first eleven days of 2018

The central bank purchased 682 kilograms of gold from January 1 to 11, a 130 percent increased compared to the same period in 2016, which saw 297 kilograms being sold to Mongol Bank.

Since the beginning of 2018, the price of gold on the London Metal Exchange has been relatively high, which has set the price of gold at 102,000 to 103,000 MNT per gram in Mongolia.

"As the price of gold increases, it is likely that the sale of gold will also increase," explained Mongol Bank. In 2017, the central

bank purchased a record amount of gold, with 20.01 tons collected. Ultimately, the bank wants to reach a point where it purchases 25 tons of gold annually."

In 2017, the main increase in the sale of gold was driven by the central bank's decision to purchase gold at prices listed on the London Metal Exchange. As the surge in the sale of gold was a major factor for the foreign currency reserve of Mongolia surpassing three billion USD recently, Mongol Bank is likely to boost its efforts to further expand gold purchases.

Mongolian Mining Corporation sold 3.6 million tons of washed coking coal in 2017

Mongolian Mining Corporation released its unaudited operational update for 2017, reporting that it had mined approximately 8.3 million tons of run-of-mine (ROM) coal and sold 3.6 million tons of washed coking coal products.

Of the 8.3 million tons of ROM coal mined, eight million tons was processed to produce four million tons of washed coking coal products.

Compared to 2016, ROM coal mined increased 179 percent, coal processed increased 166 percent, and washed coking coal products sold rose by 132 percent.

In the fourth quarter of 2017, the

company's mine production increased by 31 percent compared to the corresponding period of 2016, with quarterly ROM coal mining output reaching 1.99 million tons.

A total of 1.75 million tons of ROM coal was processed, representing a 15 percent increase compared to 2016 and resulting in the production of 877,500 tons of washed coking coal.

MMC sold a total of 810,700 tons of washed coking coal products in the fourth quarter of 2017, representing a 16 percent increase compared to the corresponding period of 2016.

Total trade turnover for 2017 reaches 10.5 billion USD



Mongolia traded with 163 countries around the world in 2017, resulting in a total trade turnover of 10.5 billion USD, of which 6.2 billion USD were made up by exports and 4.3 billion USD by imports.

Total foreign trade turnover increased by 2.3 billion USD or 27.3 percent. Exports accounted for 1.3 billion USD of the increase while imports increased by 977.3 million USD compared to the previous year. The rise in exports was mainly attributed to the increase in mineral products exports, particularly the increase of 1.3 billion USD in coal exports.

The foreign trade surplus reached 1.9 billion USD, a 307 million USD increase from 1.6 billion USD in 2016.

The increase of imports by 977.3 million USD was mainly due to 261.6 million

USD increase in mineral products imports, specifically the 173.1 million USD uptick in diesel imports and 51.1 million USD increase in petrol imports. In addition, a 240.5 million USD increase in the import of machinery, equipment and electric appliances; a 187.1 million USD increase in the import of transport vehicles and their spare parts; and a 122.9 million USD rise in the import of base metals were also major factors.

Exports of mineral products, textiles and textile articles, natural or cultured stones, precious metals, and jewelry made up to 94.6 percent of Mongolia's total exports. On the other hand, 67.1 percent of imports were mineral products, machinery, equipment, electric appliances, transport vehicle and its spare parts and food products.

Table 5. Exports & imports by some commodity groups, million US dollars

Specification	Jan-Dec 2015	Jan-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2017*
Exports	4 669.3	4 916.3	6 200.7
Mineral products	3 678.2	3 484.1	4 933.8
Coal	555.9	973.0	2 267.6
Base metals & articles thereof	72.3	86.2	101.0
Raw & processed hides, skins, fur, articles thereof	33.8	30.2	23.9
Textiles & textile articles	302.7	300.2	335.5
Natural or cultured stones, precious metal, jewellery	421.4	761.5	596.9
Imports	3 797.5	3 358.1	4 335.5
Food products	329.4	329.2	378.7
Mineral products	936.4	724.3	985.9
Petrol	274.0	192.7	243.7
Diesel	376.7	254.8	427.9
Base metals & articles thereof	372.0	210.9	333.9
Transport vehicles & their spare parts	368.1	435.6	622.7
Machinery, equipment, electric appliances	785.5	680.4	920.9

Source: www.nso.mn

Shares of Turquoise Hill fell after it was hit with 155 million USD tax bill

Shares in Turquoise Hill took a hit on January 16 after it revealed its massive Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine in Mongolia has been imposed a 155 million USD tax bill.

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Turquoise Hill Resources also recently announced

its fourth quarter 2017 production for Oyu Tolgoi.

"Oyu Tolgoi had a strong fourth quarter setting quarterly and annual records for open pit material mined as well as concentrator throughput. They also met annual production guidance, which is an excellent achievement given the grade challenges of 2017," said Jeff Tygesen, CEO of Turquoise Hill.

Material mined in the fourth quarter increased 5.3 percent over the third quarter meanwhile ore treated increased 2.1 percent over the third quarter. Higher mill availability resulted in a 20.8 percent

increase in concentrate production compared to the third quarter. Copper production also increased 22.8 percent compared to the previous quarter due to higher grades and improved mill availability. In addition, gold production increased 12.9 percent over the last quarter due to increased grades and higher concentrate production.

Oyu Tolgoi is expected to produce 125,000 to 155,000 tons of copper and 240,000 to 280,000 ounces of gold in concentrates in 2018.

DOMESTIC

CITY OFFICIALS AND SCIENTISTS DELVE INTO URBAN PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT



Ger area redevelopment under way in UB

Photo by E.KHARITSAGA

By B.DULGUUN

The Ulaanbaatar Mayor's Office and Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST) organized a joint discussion session for ger area redevelopment and road projects on Thursday.

Over 50 academicians exchanged opinions about the urban planning and land management of the capital with Deputy Ulaanbaatar Mayor P.Bayarkhuu, Head of the Ulaanbaatar Ger District Infrastructure Office Ch.Batbileg, Deputy Head of the Ulaanbaatar Road Development Office B.Indra, Head of the Ulaanbaatar Traffic Control Center D.Odbayar, Deputy Head of the Ulaanbaatar Public Transportation Office Kh.Bulgan, Director of MUST B.Ochirbat, professor at the School of Construction Engineering and Architecture of MUST D.Baasandorj, associate producer at MUST's School of Humanities B.Tungalagtamir.

The discussion session covered four key topics, which are:

- An infrastructure project to introduce partial and independent engineering supply in the middle section of ger areas

- Development plans for the Eastern Central Intersection and railway tunnel
- Solution for decentralized waste management
- Counterplan for reducing air pollution in Ulaanbaatar

Deputy Mayor P.Bayarkhuu introduced that the meeting was arranged to bring scientific solutions to upcoming development projects in Ulaanbaatar. He asked experts if building many footbridges and multi-level intersections was ideal for tackling traffic considering that most countries avoid such solutions.

He added, "There are 149 traffic lights in Ulaanbaatar right now. This is insufficient. Ulaanbaatar has a road spanning 857.9 kilometers, but traffic lights in only 30 percent of the road are functioning properly. We must regulate traffic light operations, resolve intersection and junction issues, and make necessary rearrangements as the inconsistent distance between traffic lights and pedestrian crossing are blocking traffic flow and causing congestion."

The deputy mayor stressed the need to provide better living conditions for ger area residents and initiated to reform ger areas as a whole. He plans to meet with other specialists to get ideas on ways to improve public transportation, urban planning and

land management issues.

MUST Director B.Ochirbat stated, "We, researchers and academicians, don't know much about the challenges the city administrations are facing and the countermeasures they're taking. Our school's scientists, and researchers can assist their efforts to resolve city problems by sharing their knowledge and research works. I'm happy to notify that it's fully possible to continue this discussion and work together in specific areas in a more formal, organized and responsible manner."

Around 80 percent of ger area residents are interested in getting their engineering system changed and continue living in their current residence rather than exchanging their land for a two or three-room apartment, as shown in a survey conducted by the Ulaanbaatar Ger District Infrastructure Office. Based on the result of the survey, Head of the office Ch.Batbileg believes that building an Infrastructure Service Center is the best solution for eliminating air and soil pollution in ger areas and creating a comfortable living condition for residents.

The Infrastructure Service Center can be independent or partial depending on the land features and current engineering and infrastructure systems, and as for its scope, it will have the capacity to meet

the needs of 200 to 300 households. The project can be carried out with public and private investments," he said.

Deputy Head of the Ulaanbaatar Road Development Office B.Indra introduced projects scheduled for 2018. He stated, "The road density of Ulaanbaatar is 0.22 kilometers of road per square kilometers, which is 26.3 to 50 times lower than the density of 25 cities in Atlanta, capital city of Georgia in the USA, where the road density ranges between 5.8 kilometers of road per square kilometers and 11.1 kilometers of road per square kilometers. The extremely little amount of road network is the main cause of traffic in Ulaanbaatar."

"The Project to Build Large Bridges at Road Intersections Connected to Railway Tracks has been included in the 2016-2020 Ulaanbaatar Mayor's Action Plan. A study showed that implementing the project will be socially and economically beneficial as the traffic movement along Peace Avenue and Ikh Toiruu will no longer overlap, allowing us to regulate their traffic flow separately, provide smoother road passage for drivers and passengers, shorten the duration of travel, save fuel, and reduce vehicle emissions."

NSO summarizes socio-economic changes in 2017

Continued from page 1

The latest Socio-Economic Report shows that the majority of the unemployed population, specifically 13,500 out of 25,500 registered job seekers, are female.

Over the last 12 months, 93,300 new people sought assistance from labor agencies, while 28,600 registered job seekers found jobs and 73,700 people were unregistered due to inactive search for employment.

SOCIAL INSURANCE AND WELFARE

The top five changes in the social insurance and welfare category are:

- The revenue of the social insurance fund reached 2.1 trillion MNT in 2017, up by 13 percent, specifically by 243.1 billion MNT compared to last year.
- The General Authority for Health and Social Insurance of Mongolia analyzed that the upsurge in the revenue attributed to the increased revenues of pension insurance fund, which rose by 163.8 billion MNT, and health insurance fund, which increased by 43.7 billion MNT.
- The expenditure of the social insurance fund rose by 5.8 percent, increasing by 103.9 billion MNT to 1.9 trillion MNT, as last recorded on December 31.
- The main cause of the increase is speculated to be the 6.4 percent rise in pension insurance spending and 7.6 percent increase in health insurance spending despite the 9.8 percent decrease in the insurance coverage of industrial accidents and occupational diseases and 9.9 percent reduction of unemployment insurance fund spending. The expenditure of pension insurance escalated by 85.7 billion MNT and health insurance expenditure by 20.8 billion MNT, while insurance expenditure for industrial accidents and occupational diseases dropped by 4.8 billion MNT and unemployment insurance fund spending went down by 3.8 billion MNT.
- Over the past 12 months, 257.7 billion MNT

was distributed as cash allowances for over 1.07 million children.

HEALTH

During the past 12 months, 73,884 women gave birth to 74,328 babies, which indicates that the numbers of pregnant women and live births decreased by five percent and 4.9 percent respectively.

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality remain at 14 and 17.

Maternal mortality rate was recorded 18 as of December 2017, which is lower by 18 mothers than the same period of the previous year. The maternal mortality rate per 100,000 births also decreased by 22, becoming 27 mothers per 100,000 births.

Last year, more than 44,300 cases of communicable disease were reported, which is 25,363 cases, or 36.4 percent, lower compared to 2016. Patients affected with measles decrease by 30,256 people (99.9 percent), those with tuberculosis by 266 people (6.6 percent), those with hepatitis by 32 people (5.7 percent), and patients with trichomoniasis became fewer by 124 people (2.8 percent).

However, the number of patients suffering from

dysentery increased by 2,809 (41.4 percent), patients with hand-foot-and-mouth disease by 482 (8.7 percent), and patients with gonococcal infection increased by 79 (5.7 percent).

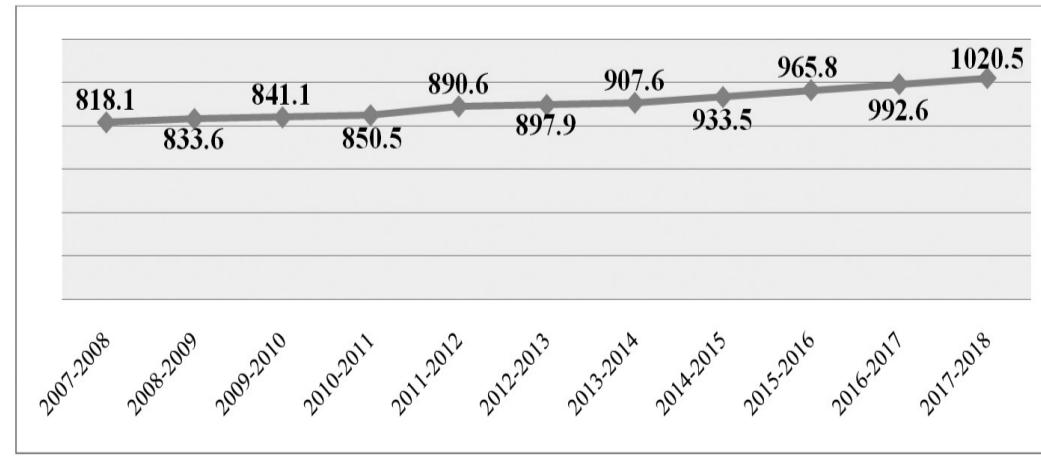
EDUCATION

NSO underlined that a record number of people enrolled in schools of all levels at the start of the academic year of 2017-2018. In particular, over 1.02 million children started their studies for primary, secondary and higher education on September 1, 2017, and statistics indicate that this is a 2.8 percent upsurge compared to the previous academic year enrolment rate.

Currently, 256,700 children are attending 1,416 kindergartens in Mongolia. NSO reported that the number of kindergartens increased by 62 (4.6 percent), accommodating 13,300 (5.5 percent) more children. Twenty new general education schools opened in the academic year 2017-2018, totaling the number of general schools in Mongolia to 798 schools. The number of primary and secondary education students rose by 20,800 to 572,800 students.

However, the number of higher education students dropped by 1.2 percent to 155,200 students, according to NSO.

The graph below shows the changes in the gross enrolment rate of Mongolia since the academic year of 2007 to 2008.



Teachers strive toward sustainable development

The second Conference for Sustainable Development and General Education attracted over 800 teachers and social workers from Tuv Province and Nalaikh, Bayanzurkh, Baganuur and Bagakhangai districts on January 18.

The conference consisted of four sub-meetings under the topics "Legal Reform", "Teacher's Development and Wage Reform", "The Quality of Education Curriculums and Evaluation Reform", and "Upbringing, Development, Growth and Protection of Children".

Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Sports Ts.Tsogolmaa gave an opening remark about some urgent

changes that need to be made in the education sector.

"Mongolian teachers have a very important and responsible job that ensures the new generation of Mongolia inherit the Mongolian wisdom, culture, tradition, knowledge and education, and that they secure the national independence and development in the future. I will proudly say that all of you have been, and still are, guides to every development stage in the Mongolian history."

"There is a need to change the financial system that provides funds based on the working hours of teachers set in curriculums. There's a need to create a space and

spare time for carrying out elective classes and various clubs, and to provide financing for such activities. There's also a need to introduce information and communication technology in curriculums, establish an e-learning system, develop accessible education sources, and meet education program targets and make them more effective using a wide range of resources."

At the conference, teachers, social workers and government workers addressed current challenges of general education schools, shared possible solutions, and discussed next steps to take to improve the quality of curriculums.

Buryatia to assist UB's anti-smog efforts

Head of Buryatia Alexey Tsydenov offered to introduce new technological solutions for fighting air pollution in Ulaanbaatar and broaden bilateral cooperation in economic, tourism, education, arts and culture, and energy sectors during Thursday's meeting with Ulaanbaatar Mayor S.Batbold.

Tsydenov is on a state visit to Mongolia with Deputy Chairman of the Government of Buryatia for Economic Development Igor Zuraev, Minister of Agriculture and Food Daba-Zhalsan Chiripov, and Minister of Industry Alexey Mishenin.

Mayor of Ulaanbaatar S.Batbold welcomed the delegation and expressed his high hopes for beginning a new and higher level of cooperation between the cities.

"Mongolia and Russia established an agreement on the terms for reciprocal visa-free travel of its passport holders for up to 30 days in 2014. Since then, the tourism sector started to flourish and the number of travelers between Russia and Mongolia increased. I believe that this opened a gateway for both countries to actively advance the economic, tourism, and arts and cultural sectors," he said.

Head of Buryatia Tsydenov complimented that Ulaanbaatar has become more attractive since his last business trip to Mongolia.

"One thing I observed is that Ulaanbaatar is a beautiful city that becomes more attractive every passing year. This time, our delegation includes many representatives from the business sector in addition to agricultural, tourism and forestry specialists and eco-friendly fuel producers," he said, and briefly talked about the Baikal International Airport, formerly Ulan-Ude Airport.

"Airplanes can make transit direct flights from Ulaanbaatar to Seoul, Tokyo and Manchuria without some kind of permit or bureaucracy. This way, we can increase passenger transportation flow. However, there is a need to develop transit transportation between Mongolia, China and Russia through auto roads and railways, and increase container shipments in the future," Tsydenov noted.

The meeting enabled officials from Ulaanbaatar and Buryatia to discuss current problems, solutions, and potential cooperation opportunities.

PRIME INTERVIEW

O.TENUUN: STUDENT ATHLETE PROGRAM'S GOAL IS TO TRAIN INTELLECTUALLY COMPETENT SPORTSMEN

Trans. by M.ZOLJARGAL

Spots are indeed hard labor as they offer such limited time for athletes to develop skills and capacities other than sports training and competitions. As much as they succeed in their sport, that much of other opportunities are passing them by. Many would agree that sportsmen's future start looking rather hazy once their athletic career comes to an end, no matter how successful they might have been.

Unfortunately, because of depression, some athletes even astray from their path. Mongolia, in particular, has a poor state policy in educating the sportsmen in other subjects. However, Mongolian College Basketball Association (MCBA) has started paying more attention to the education of athletes by organizing many tailored workshops. People working in the sector have quite positive comments on the initiative as well.

MCBA's Head O.Tenuun took up his job only last November, but achieved quite a lot since then. O.Tenuun gave an interview about athletes' education.

University League used to be organized by whichever was interested between the Mongolian National Basketball Association and the Mongolian Basketball Association. I heard that MCBA has obtained the sole right to hold the league starting from this year. How did you come to an agreement with the other two associations?

MCBA is operating for its 18th year. I put my foremost effort on building a systematic coordination of the university league, and developing non-athletic competencies of the student athletes as soon as I was appointed. I believe that negotiating with the administrations of the two basketball associations, and getting a hold of the sole right to hold the league was a significant progress.

The associations accepted our request and officially approved the right. This year, University League will see competitions between 24 men's and 12 women's teams. It is right that professional basketball players

should focus solely on their training and competitions. But students can't normally dedicate all of their time and energy on basketball games when their studies are on the other end at the same time. That is why we set the competition dates according to typical course schedules among universities.

It was interesting to know that only students who have 2.2 or higher GPA are able to compete in official games. Why was this requirement set based on academic merit rather than athletic ability?

Students playing in leagues tend to succeed less in their academic studies for due to their constant training and competitions. Some even get higher grades just because they are the finest players of their university in games. I was also a student myself, so I know the pros and cons well. I still do not fully understand why students can't succeed both in their studies and sports. My observation was that those who played basketball had less progress in their future academic endeavors.

To support student basketball players in both academic and sports fields to make them intellectual individuals, MCBA is now organizing the Student Athlete Program. Those with GPA of 2.2 or higher will qualify to compete in the league. We have already hosted a workshop on introducing the program, as well as other initiatives of MCBA.

Over 200 students attended the workshop, where the national basketball team's member and MCBA's board member G.Battur and G.Ushkhbayar delivered lectures.

But what if those exceptionally talented students in basketball can't take part in the league because of their low grades? Would you consider their athletic achievements and waiver on the requirements?

I would advise them to study harder. Hearing how athletically talented students have started showing more promising grades and attendance rate soon after the renewed requirement by the league was amazing for me. One coach posted on his social media,

"When I enter the sports hall, it is always loud and busy with the students' training. But when I came closer to the hall this morning, I couldn't hear any noise. When I entered the hall, thinking there is no one there, basketball players were studying."

I still do not fully understand why students can't succeed both in their studies and sports. My observation was that those who played basketball had less progress in their future academic endeavors.



What are your plans on improving the skills of student athletes playing in provinces? How are you going to keep MCBA's reach and effectiveness balanced in rural areas?

Of course we must not exclude students living in provinces. There are many talented provincial university basketball players who have proven skills equal to professional players. The only hurdle that keeps them from competing in competitions and leagues in Ulaanbaatar is their financial conditions. But first of all, we are planning to run a smoother operation, and evenly reach out to students living in the capital. There are many works we have planned next for the university basketball players in the 21 provinces.

People know you well as the executive director of Oyunii Undra Properties LLC. What drove you close to basketball and work toward developing this specific sport?

I enjoyed basketball from a very young age. Watching NBA games without proper sleep is a typical thing for me. When I play basketball in my spare time, I feel like I'm in another world, away from everything else. All of my exhaustion and stress just vanish into thin air. I was the first Mongolian to play in a high school basketball team in Los Angeles when I studied in the States. I hope that wouldn't sound too boastful. I started this journey to support not only the youth, but students in particular, and help them raise their skills and knowledge.

Can you talk about the new team and the structure of your association?

As of today, the managing board consists of the Mongolian national basketball team's captain G.Battur, seasoned athlete in professional basketball G.Ushkhbayar, coach O.Bayartsogt, and my childhood friend who is a basketball enthusiast B.Tseleun. None of them earn from the association as they joined the association only for developing basketball and raise students' competency.

How has MCBA set its long-term policy?

Our operation will not be limited by improving university basketball players' skills and education. Apart from the Student Athlete Program, we have created a club for coaches and athletes, aimed at strengthening cooperation between coaches and students, as well as training exceptional basketball players. We will pay close attention to keeping a good balance between students' achievement and livelihood.

Our first objective was to provide internships and gradually full-time job opportunities at large companies in the country for fourth year university students who are active basketball players. So far, several companies have already expressed their interest to recruit our student athletes. This way, we trust that students will be able to have a better financial capacity and quality of life.



Students competing at a 3x3 basketball competition

Source: <http://unuudur.mn/article/102445>

SPORTS & CULTURE

B.SHIJIRBAT TALKS ABOUT HIS PERFORMANCE AT ASIA'S GOT TALENT

By B.NORDOGMAA

Graphic designer and dancer B.Shijirbat made international headlines when he proposed to his girlfriend at the final of "Asia's Got Talent". The dancer uses his graphic design to enhance his dance performance. He previously won second place in the season 2 of "Mongolia's Got Talent".

First of all, I'd like to congratulate you on your success at "Asia's Got Talent", where you won fourth place. When did you return to Mongolia?

Thank you. I came back on December 15. I really appreciated the warm welcome of my friends at the airport.

In the interview you have been quite busy preparing for the final. How long have you prepared for your performance?

I spent two weeks for the first round and one month for the semi-final. It seemed like a pretty short time actually.

You said that you mentally prepared yourself well through your Facebook page. How did you find the judgment and result?

Following the performance in the first season, three judges out of four said "Yes". And right before I got off the stage the hosts of the show Alan Wong and Justin Brattan pressed the Golden Buzzer together.

"It was more fascinating to see how your brain works than your dance," said judge David Foster. I had never expected someone to give me such a compliment, especially someone great like him.

You mentioned that the population of the country has big effect on the result. What do you think about the number of voters?

It is impossible to see the result of voting. As I noticed the Filipino dance group, one of the

best participants of the show was supported very well. Also, Indonesians seemed to support more on YouTube than Facebook. Compared to other country's population, we are really few. But the number of those who voted for me was high. That's why I seized fourth place, I think.

All Mongolians united and voted for you. How did you feel?

I realized how hard it is to express my emotions and gratitude. It also reminded me of the Olympics where all Mongolians unite together to support one another.

How did other participants and the show team receive you when you said that you're from Mongolia? Have any Mongolians ever taken part in "Asia's Got Talent" before?

Actually they didn't pay that much attention on it. There were many talented participants from many different countries. Who is talented is more important than where we are from. But when I said that I was from Mongolia, most people think about the Mongolian ger and horses automatically. "You could show Mongolia from a different angle with high tech", judges said.

What did you do after participating in "Mongolia's Got Talent" to advance your career?

Right after the show "Mongolia's Got Talent" finished, Mongol TV worked hard to promote me to the world. They managed to make a deal with many TV shows and competitions. And I started making a plan of shows and competitions that I will participate in 2018 with executives of Mongol TV. In 2017, I took part in "Asia's Got Talent", "America's Got Talent" and other concerts in over 10 countries, including the USA, Mexico and Thailand, through "Mongolia's Got Talent" of Mongol TV.

I guess there are many difficulties when you perform in many other countries, especially when



B.Shijirbat, proposing to his girlfriend at the final of "Asia's Got Talent"

It comes to choreography. How did you manage it?

I realized that it is a big deal to perform in such big events. There was always one person who managed all the tours and one producer who manages the contracts and tech with me. Introducing and promoting my performance to famous producers and companies plays a big role in performing on big stages. The team of Mongol TV managed every necessary step.

Many people were amazed by the marriage proposal at your final performance. When did you make this decision? Did anyone else know about it before?

I found this idea before taking part in the first season of "America's Got Talent" in March 2017. I planned to do it if I could remain in the final. And because I couldn't remain in the final, nobody knew about it. When I came back to Mongolia, the executive director of Mongol TV, Ch.Nomin, told me that they did all the preparation to have me take part in "Asia's Got Talent" and asked me to participate. Then I started my preparation of the performance with the marriage

proposal.

Could you share your memories about how you met your girlfriend for the first time?

I met her for the first time when we were students. Because I had a lot of interest in dancing, I took a yearlong break from my studies. And when I came back as a fifth year student, my girlfriend had just enrolled at my university. Also, I used to run a club called "Anime" where we started talking and dating. We both majored in graphic design. I think that one year gap helped me to find my wife.

When are you going to get married? May I ask if you are planning to have a baby in the near future?

We are planning to get married and have a baby in two to three years. These days, we want to focus on studying more.

Do you consider yourself a romantic person? What kind of memories do you want to make with your girlfriend?

That's an interesting topic. In my opinion, men see things from a broad perspective. For example, the proposal during the performance on "Asia's Got Talent" stage was something that meant a lot to me. On the other hand, women seem like they make their best memories through little things in daily life. It's been four years since we started living together.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I see myself as a producer in 10 years. First and foremost, I need to learn a lot, such as graphics, sound engineering, stage composition and programming.

How do you want to test yourself in the future? Were you asked to take part in any shows?

I am not planning to participate in many competitions. I think I tested myself quite enough.

Mongolian movie to be represented at the 16th Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum

"Twist of Fate", a Mongolian movie, will be represented at the 16th Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) for the first time.

On January 17, the 16th HAF announced its lineup of 25 film projects to be presented from March 19 to 21, 2018 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center. The projects were selected out of more than 360 submissions from 41 countries and regions, including Mongolia, Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong,

India, Kazakhstan, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the USA and Vietnam.

This year's selections also include projects from three countries that will be represented for the first time at HAF, which are Mongolia, Cambodia and Russia. Being represented at this forum brings many advantages such as more chances for sponsorship, becoming able to co-work with other famous productions and filmmakers, and compete in the

international market.

In "Twist of Fate", director O.Baasanjargal and producer B.Usukhbayar of Mongolia seek to genuinely portray the "true reality" of nomadic Mongols in his drama about a woman who marries twin brothers, and whose unconventional life leads to conflict and death.

HAF is one of the most prominent film-financing platforms in Asia and provides a forum to connect filmmakers and their new projects with internationally

established film financiers, producers, bankers, distributors, buyers and funders for potential co-production ventures. The successful shortlisted projects come from a richly diverse field of filmmakers – young and established alike – seeking partners and funding.

In addition, filmmakers competed for 14 awards with the fund of 204,600 USD at the 15th Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum last year.

SPORTS

WRESTLER G.MANDAKHNARAN CLAIMS VICTORY AT STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS



G.Mandakhnaran, taking his seventh gold medal from the State Championships

By B.NORA

The State Adult Freestyle Wrestling Championships was held at Khangard Sports Palace in Orkhon Province over last week.

State Merited Athlete G.Mandakhnaran, 32, was one of the best wrestlers that took part in the championships. He participated in the 74 kg category and took the victory.

This is the seventh gold medal from the State Championships for G.Mandakhnaran. He is the first man to win the State Championships in four different weight categories.

The following is an interview with G.Mandakhnaran, who is a two-time bronze medalist of the World Championships, and placed fifth at the Rio 2016 Olympics.

Who do you want to name as a tough opponent at the State Adult Freestyle Championships 2018?

The State Adult Freestyle Championships is getting fierce year by year. All the opponents have prepared well as usual. I'd like to name G.Iderkhui from Avarguu Academy who wrestled against me.

How does it feel to wrestle in a new weight division?

I had to lose weight. The State Adult Freestyle Championships was held in the new weight categories announced by United World Wrestling this year. Also, a weight in is held on the morning of the competition day. I like this new rule actually. Because the Olympics also has the 74 kg category, I'd like to carry on wrestling in this weight category.

Are there many international competitions these days?

At the end of January, there is one international tournament called Golden Grand Prix Ivan Yarygin in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, which I am training to take part in.

There is an issue relates to the bronze medal you were supposed to win at Rio 2016. How was it concluded?

I approached to the Permanent Court of Arbitration. I guess it will take one to two years to be concluded. I encountered the referee at the World Championships last year. We have normal relations.



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Finance Admin Assistant for People in Need Mongolia
Full time position 1 year contract - based in Ulaanbaatar
Starting date: ASAP

People in Need is looking for a new team member to join our Mongolia office. As a European based International NGO, People in Need focuses on delivering Relief & Development Aid, Education and Human Rights projects in almost 30 countries. Current projects in Mongolia include rural economic development, Dzud relief and response, urban energy efficiency and urban air quality projects. PIN is active in Mongolia since 2010 and involved in various fields such as humanitarian assistance, economic development, education, governance and climate related actions. PIN currently is managing a steep growth in its activities in Mongolia and strives to contribute to sustainable changes in the society, with the help of national civil society and NGOs.

We are looking for a Finance Admin Assistant to work with the Finance Officer and Head of Mission to assist in overseeing the mission finances and reporting to HQ in Prague. Responsibility includes cash management, processing invoices, oversee vehicle expenses and other administrative duties assigned.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assist the Finance Officer with the daily financial responsibilities
- Cash administration, cash operation, preparation of pertinent cash documents,
- Input financial documents into MICROSOFT DYNAMICS NAVISION.
- Scan all accounting documents, contracts, cash receipts and invoices, saving records in soft copy(pdf) in ELO database
- Assist in invoicing and procurement documentation
- Ensuring the vehicle documents are up to date, properly saved and archived. Ensuring the repair and maintenance expense table of PIN vehicles and Fuel consumption table are up to date
- Draft, deliver and archive all official correspondence.
- Assist with HR documentation, such as timesheets, vacation allocation, document archiving
- To check and update the contract templates in PIN-Admin according to ELO updates.
- Assist in the translation of financial documents, Mongolian and English
- Other tasks as assigned.

REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree or higher, preferably in Accounting, Finance or Business Administration
- Strong English and Mongolian language ability, written and verbal
- Minimum 1 year finance or office administration experience
- Accounting or bookkeeping experience an asset
- Experience working in non-profit sector and asset
- Attention to detail, organized, team player
- Able to manage time to meet deadlines

WHAT PIN OFFERS:

- Full time contract
- Stable position in international NGO with multinational staff
- Capacity building and possibility of career growth
- Performance based financial bonuses paid half-yearly according to the performance evaluation

How to Apply?

Please send you CV, a cover letter and at least 2 work references by email to marc.tasse@peopleinneed.cz. Mention as reference **Finance Admin Assistant Mongolia** in the email header.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted, thank you for your understanding.
Deadline for submission of applications: 22 Jan 2018

EDITORIAL

CRIPPLING POLITICAL SYSTEM IN MONGOLIA

By T.BAYARBAT

It has been almost three decades since Mongolia started moving along the course of its democratic reform, transferring from a centrally-planned to a free market economy. Looking from all angles of the political, economic and social spectrum, the country is still facing a lot of challenges.

Through these past three decades, under leadership of the two major political parties, the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) and the Democratic Party (DP), the country has not succeed in its economic and social development. But compared to our neighbor countries, there is not much criticism from the West aimed towards Mongolia with regard to poor human rights record even though, in reality, essential needs of human rights to a healthy and safe environment; to learn and to receive education; and health protection are still poor among people of low and middle classes.

Numerous people across Mongolia place the blame for corruption and bureaucracy amongst officials from the highest level of government to lower ranks. Many Mongolians are disappointed in politicians and governments.

A couple of weeks ago, President Kh.Battulga announced that unless Parliament makes a better effort to reduce air pollution in Ulaanbaatar after Tsagaan Sar, he will call for Parliament's dissolution. In response to the president's threat, MPP's caucus chairman D.Khayankhyarvaan warned the president that Parliament has the authority to start an impeachment process.

During Prime Minister U.Khurelsukh's visit to South Korea this week, the government of South Korea agreed to grant

a soft loan of 700 million USD to Mongolia, and the government said it will be spending 71 percent of this loan to fund projects to reduce air pollution. This decision has led to opposition on social media, people don't want a government that spends more money again for fighting air pollution as previous governments spent substantial funds to address this issue, but air pollution in Ulaanbaatar is still the biggest threat to people's health and lives.

People want the current government to make smarter decisions that create job opportunities, promote manufacturing, increase exports from Mongolia to overseas, and support small business through loans. They really want the loans to fund profitable projects that will help promote to the nation's economic growth and prosperity in the nearest future.

If the government distributes "smokeless" coal-burning stoves and "clean" fuel to households again through the loan granted by South Korea, many will protest U.Khurelsukh's Cabinet.

Let's come back to the potential impeachment of President Kh.Battulga and the fall of this Parliament. Section 22.2 of the Constitution states that Parliament may decide on its dissolution if more than a two-third of legislators consider that Parliament is unable to carry out its mandate or the president and the speaker of Parliament both agree to dissolve Parliament. Many believe that in case of such a decision, Speaker of Parliament M.Enkhbold will say no to dissolving Parliament, this is why dissolving this Parliament will be an impossible attempt, but calling for the impeachment of the president will be easier for MPP, which holds 85 percent of the seats in Parliament.



Photo by G.ARGUUJIN FOCUS/N

election that aren't being put into practice.

For example, some politicians vowed during their 2012 parliamentary election campaigns that as an industrial park would be opened in Sainshand, the capital of Dornogovi Province, it will become the most developed province in Mongolia as its economic relationship with China will rise dramatically. But this was a lie to the people of Dornogovi to gain votes for them.

After a feasibility study for a project to build this industrial park was carried out, this initiative was stopped due to lack of water resource and infrastructure.

Another example is a politician's claimed that Mongolia will become an information technology center in Asia, which makes a ton of money from Russia and China during the 2008 parliamentary election, but this was his trick to become a lawmaker. There are ample examples of Mongolian politicians tricking people to gain office.

In his speech at TED talks, former British Prime Minister David Cameron said, "Someone said to me that politics is show business for ugly people," and this phrase got big laughs from TED's audience.

Actually what he said is true in Mongolian politics.

The main reason why Mongolia is still bogged down by this terrible political cycle can be attributed to the poor education of voters, inconsistent political system, outside influence and other factors.

Many people and media are reporting that the public's trust in the two dominant parties already soured, and people will not vote for these two parties in 2020, and instead elect another political party made up of young people, but we have to remember that there are enough examples of new young politicians within the state who break people's trust.

The process of fighting for political control in the Mongolian state from 2020 to 2024 between politicians and political parties begun this January, and of course, it will continue until 2020, but we will get no victory through their battles.

Mongolians are uncertain and apprehensive about what the country will look like in a few year's time, and what we should do to maintain the prospects of a better life in the future.

SOME SENSITIVE CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENHANCING COLLABORATIONS

By IVAN G. SOMLAI

Director of ETHNOBUREAUCRATICA

Pursuant to an article of mine on August 14, 2017 (Synchronicity of Donor Supported Projects Within Local Life Rhythms), the unexpected number of supportive comments and queries about how to accomplish workable improvements in collaborative projects motivated me to put a few more relevant thoughts on paper. Interestingly, the only critical comment was voiced by a diplomatic counsellor to someone who then relayed the information to me. It should be understood that many diplomats' rationalization of their work relies on demonstrating keen involvement in the continuation of development projects, regardless of their related experience, understanding of issues, efficacy of interactions, or relevance of the project. So, for the benefit of those sincerely keen on enhancing their collaborations, here are a few sensitive and infrequently discussed aspects that can make or break a project.

EXTRAPOLATION

Many foreign consultants come from the private sector. However, the political and sociocultural complexity of the host culture often does not allow for automatic understanding or transference of overseas knowledge and skills to its public service. Moreover, single subject experts may find it impossible to work in an environment requiring holistic understanding. Hence a financial manager in North America may not be able to adapt to leading a multisectoral intercultural team in Asia. Likewise, experience in Mali does not translate to automatic effectiveness in Mongolia or Kashmir.

Another popular approach is to initiate "pilots" that, ostensibly, would or might be later transferred to additional locations. The efficacy of this has been amply proven to be fallacious without several caveats: adequate project time horizon (most projects are grossly miscalculated in what is achievable within the proposed

timeframe); comprehensive reflection on why the particular work was successful; due diligence in new locations prior to introducing whatever worked elsewhere, as there could be a vastly different ground reality; and the ability to rejig and customize pilots to the different circumstances at a proposed new site.

RESEARCH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Researchers – be they doing baselines, technical assessments, sociocultural or gender studies, etc. – provide valuable service in discovering, clarifying and suggesting workable solutions to identified issues. But researchers come and go; they are frequently completing academic requirements or professionally contracting from one project to another. The people who remain and are responsible for post-research implementation of suggested remedies often may not fully understand the research implications; these are the local people and their respective government officials and services (e.g. extension workers and officials of various sectors, such as education, forestry, transport, mining, health) within a particular administrative boundary. Hence there is need for participatory collaboration among researchers, beneficiaries, their government and non-government interlocutors, including any locally involved industries.

Sub-central bureaucracy (aimag, soum, bag, city, district, khoroo) must be supported in its conviction of the need, ability, and responsibility to effectively interpret, advocate, support and facilitate changes in response to apparent or proven issues brought to light by researchers. Trusting relationships are essential to enable local populations and their governing systems (rules, regulations and customary guidelines) to effectively interpret and address research in the local vernacular.

As a supplement, project staff must assiduously review, analyze and extract from reports of other projects in order to confirm whether there be any duplication or unnecessary overlapping of proposed

activities. This is an essential but often neglected research aspect, a comparative mechanism, as well as a window on sustainability through the lens of others who may have tried similar undertakings.

CAREFUL TALENT SELECTION

Donor organizations must resist the temptation to knowingly hire staff eminently unqualified but for their friendship with the home office or of the project director or because of other faulty human resource habits; similarly, one can expect progressive difficulties with host country staff who are not properly vetted because of difficulty in accessing or communicating with provided references. Foreign and host staff must also be thoroughly assessed and then oriented to expected intercultural sensitivity, collegial work habits, interpersonal skills in addition to sector-specific knowledge, skills and acumen.

BUSINESS-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

I recall that famous line from former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair referring to then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, "We'd better Kofi this," meaning "we had better obscure this bit of military planning with a good coat of humanitarian waffle". This is an apt analogy to various donor projects masquerading as social development initiatives while paying inordinately high salaries to inadequately qualified staff; or multi-year technical and bureaucratic "capacity building" providing essential assistance that, after training is completed, is rarely followed up, thus allowing results to evaporate.

This is not to disparage business, as such, and certainly there are exceptionally managed domestic and international ventures in Mongolia; however, when social development projects are planned without sufficient local knowledge and expat salaries are so much higher than local ones for similar (or even better) skilled individuals, it becomes awkward to explain the disparity (my mortgage and demand

for my services elsewhere can go only so far), and business and profit trump true development.

RUDDERLESS AND UNPREPARED DONOR

Rarely would donor management admit to deficiencies which might require major overhaul or even cancellation of the project. This is because the overhead charges received from a project contribute to the lifeline of a non-profit agency or even a for-profit development firm.

When unnecessary purchases are pushed through because it's year-end; when hiring is encouraged for no other reason than to be able to claim more overheads; when bribes are offered for favourable decisions; when a project director sends "experts" on illegitimate trips to claim overhead and justify unnecessary project involvement; when a donor prefers to blame host country bureaucrats and staff for shortcomings in results; when personal ambitions override ethics; when an overseas headquarters miscalculates recruitment problems for both paid staff or volunteers; and when the head office sends staff or volunteers incompatible with the required level of sectoral intelligence, an unsavoury portrait emerges of an executing agency and even of its diplomatic overseers.

Of staff that are aware, few would counter superiors responsible for fear of losing one's job; instead we convince ourselves that our efforts are sound and results attainable by continuing the original process.

CHANGE

Increasing attention must be paid to the process of development, over and above the intended results and planned activities themselves. But beware of what I call "chameleon processes", wherein individual experts blow with the wind in their adherence and propagation of the latest jargon, fads and multimedia presentations without the least chance of

any improvements over previously used processes. "Change management" has itself become quasi science. New ideas can, of course be adapted, but could produce results different from what may have been expected. Thorough field discussions and analyses are imperative.

IMPROVING COLLABORATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

There is a difference between a company, donor or nongovernment agency committing to improve sundry social services, technical skills or organizational reforms, and its having the actual wherewithal to practically reach those goals.

Innate cultural and spiritual connections to local sociocultural environments and ecosystems require the changing of practices only with deep understanding of local histories, cultures, religions, languages, social structures, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, laws and authority, customs, norms and rules, economic realities, politics and other intersectoral influences. This obligates sustained learning and consultation among civil society, civil servants, academics and independent subject specialists. Limited understanding and sensitivity comes from the confines of comfortably heated sixth floor offices with photogenic views.

Before recommending particular projects, a country or organization should ascertain that the values and goals to be enhanced by the proposed intervention are altruistically, not politically, motivated; and that the advocated new vision be understood within the country, jointly planned, implemented and monitored by expatriate and Mongolian counterparts and, therefore, be likely practicable without floundering in mismanagement.

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WHAT'S ON

NOTICE

If your organization has an event that you would like to be featured in our "What's On" section, please send us an email with the time, date, location, and a brief description of the event. We also appreciate general feedback about our paper. Please forward any questions or comments to ubpost@mongolnews.mn.

Faxe Kondi Debut GIG



Faxe Kondi is having their debut gig at Republik!

The band is from Manchester and Bristol and their music is described as "experimental and raucous".

Come and enjoy live music and DJ set for free.

Details
When: January 20, at 8:00 p.m.
Where: Republik, Seoul Street
Admission: Free
More Information: 77004040

Winter tire sale

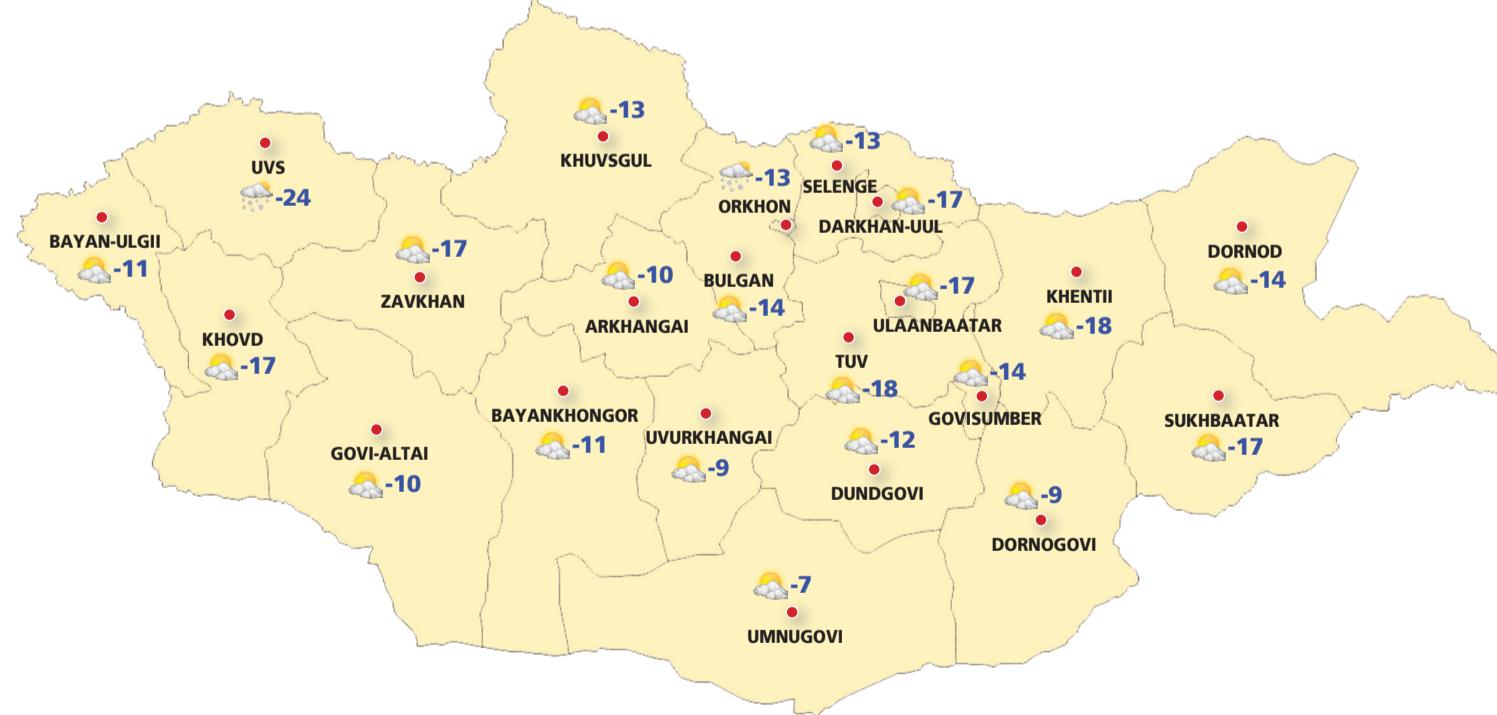


Sebotse LLC is holding a winter sale for all tires from January 20 to February 15.

All types of tires will be sold at cost and will come with special gifts. Don't wait to buy spare tires and purchase them with a discount now.

Details
When: January 20 to February 15
Where: Sebotse LLC
More Information: 99088876, 318182

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST



Women for change - Welcoming new members



Women for Change NGO has announced an open house for women who wish to join the movement for gender equality, meet like-minds, and develop their abilities.

Attendants will be introduced to the organization's activities, objectives, values, programs and projects, membership details, and other activities.

Details
When: January 20, at 11:45 a.m.
Where: Women for Change NGO at Union Building in Sukhbaatar District
Admission: Free
More Information: 94354963

The Voice of Mongolia



Mongolia's first season of The Voice will be broadcasted every Sunday from January 21 on Mongol TV channel.

Don't miss out the emergence of new powerful singers in Mongolia!

Details
When: January 21 to May 27
Channel: Mongol TV
Admission: Free

SUDOKU

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CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

Mongol Bank – January 17, 2018

Currency	Buy (MNT)	Sell (MNT)
USD	2,422.78	
EUR	2,957.49	
CNY	376.85	
RUB	42.68	
GBP	3,351.19	
JPY	21.78	

Naiman Sharga – January 18, 2018

Currency	Buy (MNT)	Sell (MNT)
USD	2,425	2,430
EUR	2,960	2,985
CNY	376.5	377.5
RUB	42.9	43.5
GBP	3,250	3,330
JPY	21.75	21.9

ADVERTISEMENT RATES OF THE UB POST (MNT)

SIZE		Page 1		Page 2		Page 3		Page 5		Other		Back page	
Size in Centimeters		Black & White	Color	Black & White	Color	Black & White	Color	Black & White	Black & White	Color	Black & White	Color	
3x6	Poster	160,000	240,000										
46.5x28	Whole Page								1,120,000	1,520,000			
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5.5x9.0 11x4.3	1/32.	120,000	180,000	70,000	70,000	110,000	50,000	52,500	80,000				
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