

## "Europe Day" Celebration Fosters Bilateral Trade and Cultural Exchange in Mongolia

*The Delegation of the European Union to Mongolia organized the "Europe Day" event in Mongolia for the third consecutive year. Her Excellency EU Ambassador to Mongolia Axelle Nicaise emphasized that the 2023 celebration of European Day in Mongolia is enhanced through the participation of Ambassadors representing European Union member states residing abroad including Beijing and Seoul.*

Under the partnership and financial assistance, the projects funded by the European Union reached a cumulative sum of about EUR150 million. Numerous endeavors are underway in various fields. "The most significant undertaking was a budget support project worth EUR50 million, implemented in direct collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. Efforts are focused on implementing projects in the development of sustainable agriculture and the transition towards a green economy in 2021-2027. The overarching objectives of these endeavors are to ensure food security and promote afforestation measures for adapting to the challenges posed by climate change. Furthermore, initiatives are being implemented in alignment with the national movement and two prominent campaigns, namely the "One Billion Trees" and "Food Revolution," initiated by the President of Mongolia, Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh," said Ambassador Nicaise. Additionally, active engagement is pursued in supporting



Small and Medium Enterprises and micro-businesses, vocational training programs, enhancing students' skills, and providing employment assistance.

The agricultural projects carried out by the EU have the primary objective of ensuring ecosystem stability. Specifically, the projects are being implemented in Yeroo, Mandal and Javkhant soums in Selenge aimag, as well as Binder, Bayan-Adarga, and Umnudelger soums in Khentii aimag.

During the inauguration of "Europe Day-2023," Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr.

G. Amartuvshin, highlighted that the trade turnover between Mongolia and the European Union had experienced a notable surge of 30 percent.

"Europe Day" distinguished itself from the national days of other countries by showcasing the diverse cultures and traditions of all 27 EU member countries. This event provided an exceptional platform for presenting art performances, highlighting the achievements of projects and programs financed by the EU in Mongolia, and disseminating information to the general public. "Considering the extensive net-

work of friendship and cooperation between the capital city of Ulaanbaatar and over 40 cities across the European Union, the event's duration, limited to one day, is disadvantageous for introducing all the business opportunities and traditions, and cultures of countries. Therefore, we will consider extending the duration of this event from the forthcoming year," noted Deputy Governor of the Capital City Z. Tumurtumuu.

The EU member nations and the departments responsible for implementing the projects and programs in Mongolia funded by the EU established dedicated

pavilions at Sukhbaatar Square, as platforms for showcasing and promoting their activities, ensuring a comprehensive presentation of their representing countries. Specifically, the event presented unique traditions, culture, tourism services, and products that reflected European characteristics. Detailed advice and information were provided regarding educational opportunities, travel to EU member states, and Schengen visas. Furthermore, artists from Sweden and Romania performed captivating concerts, enhancing the cultural experience of the event.

## Foreign Minister Visits Czech and Slovenia



On May 11-12, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia B. Battsetseg paid a Visit to the

Czech Republic. As part of her Visit, the Minister held official talks with Minister of Foreign

Affairs of the Czech Republic Jan Lipavsky on May 11. The talks covered a range of issues related to bilateral and international relations.

During the meeting, both parties expressed unanimous agreement on the importance of trade, economy, and people-to-people relations in furthering the traditionally friendly cooperation between Mongolia and the Czech Republic. They proposed to increase Czech investment and work jointly on large-scale development projects.

Minister B. Battsetseg highlighted the successful implementation of the Przewalski's horse reintroduction project in Mongolia and the coordination of the "One Billion Trees" National Campaign with the "Forest

Partnership" program of the European Union. The two ministers also agreed to cooperate in bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to protect the environment and combat climate change.

Furthermore, Minister B. Battsetseg praised the expansion of relations between the two countries in the fields of education and social security, noting that Mongolian students will study in Czech universities as part of the "President's Scholar-2100" program initiated by the President of Mongolia. She also mentioned that the Social Protection Agreement between the governments of the two countries had come into effect.

The parties expressed satis-

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Website: [montsame.mn/en](http://montsame.mn/en)  
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Bloomberg commodity price 2023/05/19		
GOLD	USD/t oz.	1,996.90
COPPER	USD/lb.	372.55
SILVER	USD/t oz.	23.64
BRENT CRUDE	USD/bbl.	76.54
WHEAT	USD/bu	614.00



# Foreign Minister Visits Czech and Slovenia

Continued from page 1

faction with the fact that Czech citizens and tourists can travel to Mongolia without a visa and that the direct flight between Ulaanbaatar and Prague will provide favorable conditions for promoting relations and cooperation between businesses and citizens of both countries.

Going further, the parties agreed to reciprocally organize events and meetings, such as the regular meeting of the intergovernmental commission and Mongolian-Czech business forum in Ulaanbaatar and inter-consular consultation in Prague. Finally, the ministers briefed the press on the outcome of the meeting.

On the same day, Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg paid a courtesy call on President of the Senate of the Czech Republic Miloš Vystrčil.

Minister B. Battsetseg conveyed the warm greetings of Chairman of the State Great Khural G. Zandanshatar and highlighted the important role that supreme legislative bodies and inter-parliamentary friendship groups of the two countries are playing in expanding the traditionally friendly relations and cooperation between Mongolia and the Czech Republic.

Expressing gratitude to the Czech side for successfully implementing Przewalski's horse reintroduction project in Mongolia, the Minister reaffirmed her intention to continue the project and further develop cooperation in forestation and forest management.

People-to-people ties is the key element of Mongolia and the Czech Republic relations. To that extent, Minister B. Battsetseg asked for support in social issues of Mongolian citizens in Czech, noting the significance of the Agreement on Social Security between the two countries.

On May 12, Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg met with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labor and Social Affairs and the Minister of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic.

During the meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic Marian Jurečka, Minister B. Battsetseg highlighted the important role that people-to-people ties of the two countries have been playing. As a realization of the people-to-people ties-backed relations, the Agreement on Social Security was formalized by the Governments of Mongolia and the Czech Republic, marking the fruitful relations and cooperation maintained between the two countries in various fields.

This agreement enables citizens to pay contributions in both countries and to have their pensions calculated, aggregating the periods of insurance.

For his side, Deputy Prime Minister Marian Jurečka confirmed the participation of the delegation from the Czech side in the meeting of the Intergovernmental Joint Committee which will be held in autumn in Ulaanbaatar, noting the intention to expand the cooperation between the two countries in every possible way.

In connection with the visa exemption for Czech tourists to Mongolia, the parties emphasized the importance of public diplomacy and cultural cooperation.

At the meeting with Minister of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic

Jozef Síkela, Minister B. Battsetseg affirmed Mongolian intention to enrich the traditionally friendly relations between the two countries with economic content, focusing on expanding cooperation in the fields of mining, construction, infrastructure, and agriculture, and supporting business communities. Several forums are planned in the coming months in Ulaan-



baatar, such as the World Export Development Forum and Mongolia Economic Forum, and the Minister cordially invited the Czech delegation to participate.

The parties agreed to organize a meeting of the Mongolia-Czech Intergovernmental Commission and the Mongolia-Czech Business Forum in the third quarter of this year in Ulaanbaatar.

Going forward, the parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Mining Sector between the Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry of Mongolia and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic.

The MoU will unveil many opportunities for the two countries to conduct joint programs and projects, cooperate in the research sector, foster cooperation of the private sectors, carry out mining rehabilitation, and exchange experience and know-how on eco-friendly waste management.

The parties further reached an agreement to develop mutually beneficial cooperation by intensifying the cooperation between the two countries in the fields of geology and mining, cooperating in training and exchange of experts, and conducting joint research, using the advanced techniques and technologies of the Czech Republic.

## Expanding Relations Between Mongolia and Slovenia



Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg paid a Visit to the Republic of Slovenia on May 15-16. Over the course of the Visit, the Minister held official talks with her counterpart and paid courtesy calls on the

President and the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia.

On May 15, Minister B. Battsetseg held official talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and exchanged in-depth views on the relations and cooperation between the two countries and other regional and international issues.

The parties expressed their delight that the relations between Mongolia and Slovenia have expanded rapidly in recent years and that the mechanism of Political Consultation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs has been established. The parties further agreed to strengthen the achievements and successes of the past 30 years of cooperation, establishing an "Air Relations Agreement" between the Governments, regularizing "Business Meetings" between the private sectors, and extending the cooperation to other domains such as forest management, artificial intelligence, and information technology.

Moreover, the two Ministers talked about the "Women Foreign Ministers Meeting", which will be held in Mongolia in June in Ulaanbaatar, covering issues on human rights, women participation in politics and women in diplomacy.



On the same day, Minister B. Battsetseg paid a courtesy call on President of the Republic of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar.

At the outset of the meeting, the Minister conveyed the warm greetings of President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh and noted the significance that Mongolia has been attaching to its relations with the Republic of Slovenia.

The parties exchanged views on opportunities to expand the relations between the two countries in the fields of politics, economics, trade, tourism, and IT, noting the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Slovenia, which marks this year.

After the parties agreed on the importance of supporting the cooperation between the business communities and increasing the trade turnover of the two countries, President Nataša Pirc Musar pledged support for fostering the relations in all spheres of cooperation.

Moreover, President Nataša Pirc Musar expressed delight with the mutual support of the two countries in the international arena and the expansion of the relations and cooperation, anchoring in our shared values of democracy, freedom, and human rights.

As part of the Visit, Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg paid a courtesy call on President of the National Assembly of Slovenia Mrs. Urška Klakočar Zupančič, and exchanged views on the possibility of expanding relations and cooperation between Mongolia and Slovenia.

At the beginning of the meeting, Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg conveyed the greetings of Chairman of the State Great Khural of Mongolia G. Zandanshatar, and talked about expanding economic cooperation between Mongolia and Slovenia and working together in the fields of tourism, forest management, information technology, water management, and renewable energy.

President of the National Assembly Urška Klakočar Zupančič informed about the establishment of the Slovenian-Mongolian parliamentary friendship group in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia.

The parties exchanged views on the measures taken to increase the participation of women in the politics and business sectors and strengthen their position and noted the importance of cooperation between the supreme legislative bodies in the relations between the two countries.

## Foreign Minister Attends MLA Diplomatic Conference

Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg attended the Opening of the MLA (Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition) Diplomatic Conference and delivered remarks as a member of the core group on May 15.

In her statement, the Minister highlighted that Mutual Legal Assistance serves as a practical tool that facilitates the cooperation between countries in the investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and

other international crimes, and bringing perpetrators to justice, and extended her appreciation for 80 supporting countries for joining and supporting the adoption of this new international instrument.

More than 260 representatives from 70 countries and international organizations are participating in the Diplomatic Conference, which is taking place on May 15-26 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The MLA Initiative is an initiative led by Slovenia, Argentina, Belgium, Mongolia, the Netherlands, and Senegal for the adoption of the Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes, and other International Crimes.

On the sideline of the Conference, Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Battsetseg met Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium Hadja Lahbib on May 15, and exchanged views on bilateral relations and cooperation.

Noting the fact that the traditionally friendly relations between the two countries have been developing based on shared democratic values, Minister B. Battsetseg proposed to cooperate in further intensifying the relations in tourism and strengthening people-to-people ties. In addition, the Minister extended appreciation for the decision that allowed Mongolian citizens, who are residing and working in Belgium, to replace their driver's licenses with Belgian driving licenses.

For her side, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium Hadja Lahbib expressed intention to deepen the relations and cooperation in the energy and health sector. The two ministers affirmed their plan to organize the Consultative Meeting between the Foreign Ministries, which is an important mechanism of dialogue and negotiation, within the first half of the next year.

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## WEATHER

Sunrise: 05:09 Sunset: 20:28

- Ulaanbaatar and Central Aimag: Night temps between -4 C and +6 C. Day time temps between +6 C and +22 C
- Eastern Aimag: Night temps between +2 C and +10 C. Day time temps between +13 C and +23 C
- Western Aimag: Night temps between -1 C and +7 C. Day time temps between +9 C and +19 C
- Gobi Aimag: Night temps between -1 C and +8 C. Day time temps between +10 C and +23 C



## President of France Emmanuel Macron to Visit Mongolia



President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron will pay a State Visit to Mongolia at the invitation of Pre-

sident of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh on May 21-22. It will be a historic visit as it is the first visit of the President of France.

Over the course of the visit, Mongolian President U. Khurelsukh and French President Emmanuel Macron will hold official talks and discuss advancing the relations and expanding cooperation between the two countries, with particular emphasis on increasing investment.

Issues on expanding the

relations in such fields as green energy, road transport, health, agriculture, culture, education, and humanitarianism, and implementing mutually beneficial projects are expected to be topics of the talks.

Moreover, the Heads of State of the two countries will discuss cooperation under the National Campaigns, namely "Food Revolution", "One Billion Trees" and "President's Scholar-2100" and brief the press on the outcomes of the Visit.

## Citizens Voice Their Opinions on Constitution Amendments

Chairman of State Great Khural G. Zandanshatar and Members of Parliament A. Adiyasuren and D. Ganbat worked in Bayankhongor, Uvurkhangai and Arkhangai aimags on May 12-14 to introduce and listen to citizens' opinions regarding legal reforms which the Parliament is carrying out, particularly the draft amendments to the Constitution.



On May 13, the Speaker and the MPs convened a meeting with public servants of Bayankhongor aimag. The meeting began with a presentation on measures to be taken by the State Great Khural regarding salary reform for public servants. The State Great Khural plans to discuss the issue of increasing the salaries of the 225,205 public servants, who are paid from the state budget, after discussing and making its decision on the draft amendments to the Constitution.

"The State Great Khural members consider it appropriate to tackle the problem of the salary gap of government employees taking into account the economic growth of Mongolia, external and internal factors. Reforms in governance and social policy are necessary to improve the economic situation. Improving governance, fighting corruption, and having a transparent Government are crucial to improve the economy and the quality of life of every citizen. Therefore, the State Great Khural has set a goal to carry out legal reforms for combating corruption during the spring session of 2023. Corruption elimination will naturally expand the economy, thereby solving many problems, including those concerning human development. Decentralization and reduction of congestion are also essential and these goals are regarded as

the basis of legal reforms," said Speaker G. Zandanshatar.

Subsequently, the public servants of the aimag expressed their opinions and asked questions about the public service reforms and changes to the Constitution. The public servants expressed gratitude for the adoption of the Law on Ethics of Public Servants. Additionally, the issue of raising salary and providing housing for public servants was discussed.

While some of the participants of the meeting were in favor of improving the parliament's ability to represent citizens by increasing the number of members of Parliament, others expressed their disapproval of raising the MPs number to 152, which is stipulated in the draft amendments to the Constitution.

Chairman of the State Great Khural G. Zandanshatar informed the public servants that the Parliament had approved the Law on Inspection and following the law ad hocs were established in the Parliament and raised the Development Bank case, which led to demonstrations, and three successive public hearings of evidence. Currently, the trials of the associates of the Development Bank case are running openly. An ad hoc, appointed by the Parliament also investigated the case of "coal theft" and held a public hearing on the matter. As a result, such incidents are expected

to be prevented from happening again by bringing such issues under public scrutiny. It was also considered that the state and the people should take control of the extraction, exploitation, and export of mineral resources," noted the Speaker.

Furthermore, a number of anti-corruption legal changes are scheduled to be made during the upcoming spring session, such as the approval of the Law on the Legal Status of Whistleblowers and the discussion of the National Anti-Corruption Program. The Speaker added that the statute of limitations for office and corruption cases was abolished, and the policy of sentencing for corruption cases was tightened by changing the criminal law.

Later that day, Speaker of the Parliament G. Zandanshatar and the MPs met citizens of Kharkhorin Sum of Uvurkhangai Aimag, where one citizen expressed her gratitude for listening to people's opinion on the changes to the Constitution as people had not had the opportunity before.

The citizens, who attended the meeting expressed divergent opinions on increasing the number of members of Parliament to 152 and some of them suggested that rural representation should include farmers and herdsmen, teachers and doctors, instead of only business representatives.

## CABINET SESSION



At its session on May 17, the Cabinet made the following decisions:

During the Cabinet session on May 17, the Prime Minister issued an order to take measures aimed at equalizing the salaries of employees in the culture, sports, and health sectors with those in the education and science sectors. In accordance with the Culture Law, the Cabinet has approved a procedure for providing cash benefits equivalent to six months' basic salary to cultural sector employees working in rural areas once every five years. The Minister of Culture Ch. Nomin, and the Minister of Finance B. Javkhlan were tasked with coordinating and financing these measures within the 2023 budget and reflecting the financial source in the annual state budget in the future.

Currently, Mongolia has 4,470 employees working in 432 local-owned cultural organizations. According to the regulation, 70 percent of these employees will receive cash benefits. It is worth noting that wages in the cultural sector are lower compared to other public sectors. Consequently, highly skilled and experienced professionals in rural cultural organizations are leaving their jobs and transitioning to other sectors. For instance, music teachers from cultural centers are moving to secondary schools, and 78 out of 325 employees at 24 locally owned museums have already pursued alternative career paths.

During the Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister stressed the need to address the salary disparity among public servants and to establish parity between the basic salaries of employees in the culture, sports, and health sectors and those in the education and science sectors.

The Ministry of Culture has consistently submitted proposals to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Finance, the Cabinet Secretariat, and the Standing Committee on Education and Culture of the State Great Khural, advocating for an increase in the basic salary of cultural sector employees. Minister of Culture Ch. Nomin has stated that salaries within

the cultural sector will be gradually increased within this year.

**A Special Permit to Construct the Rail Infrastructure of the Shiveekhuren-Sekhee Port Granted to "Nariinsukhait Railway" LLC**

A special permit for the construction of the rail infrastructure of the cross-border railway of Shiveekhuren-Sekhee port has been granted to "Nariinsukhait Railway" LLC. It is planned to be commissioned by the third quarter of 2023.

"Shiveekhuren Railway" LLC was established according to Government Resolution No. 232 of 2018, and 51% of the shares will be owned by "Mongolian Railway" LLC and 49% by "Nariinsukhait Railway" LLC. The mining products from the Nariinsukhait coal deposit, located in the territory of Gurvantes soum of Umnugobi aimag, will be transported to the port of Shiveekhuren by road and transferred to the railway for export to China, and further, to the third market through the territory of China.

With the construction of the railway at the Shiveekhuren border port, it will become possible to implement projects for the construction of cargo terminals to increase the capacity of the border ports in cooperation with the private sector.

### Brief News

- Within the framework of the "Years to Visit Mongolia", the "Nomads" World Cultural Festival is planned to be organized in August, and at the Cabinet Session, the organization committee's structure was approved.
- In order to facilitate trade and increase the export of non-mining products, line ministries were tasked to take required measures to design an information technology system for "Single Window Services for Foreign Trade" to facilitate the process of the digital transition of the Government services related to foreign trade.
- Minister of Mongolia, Chairman of the National Committee on Reducing Traffic Congestion J. Sukhbaatar presented the implementation of projects and measures to reduce traffic congestion in Ulaanbaatar.

## Founder of Transparency International Discusses Anti-Corruption Efforts

On May 11, 2023, Chairman of the State Great Khural of Mongolia G. Zandanshatar hosted a meeting with Mrs. Herta Däubler-Gmelin, the former Minister of Justice of Germany, and P. Aigen, the Founder of "Transparency International".

During the meeting, Mrs. Däubler-Gmelin and Mr. Aigen expressed their pleasure in meeting with the Speaker again and acknowledged the efforts made by the State Great Khural and the Government of Mongolia in combating corruption in the past. They also pledged their readiness to offer any support and assistance from Transparency International's headquarters in



Ulaanbaatar and Berlin.

In response, Speaker G. Zandanshatar expressed his gratitude for their willingness to help and wished Professor Herta Däubler-Gmelin and Mr. Peter Aigen to enjoy their visit in Mongolia. He also shared that the ongoing spring session of the State Great

Khural of Mongolia would focus on legal reform against corruption. Mentioning the Comprehensive Partnership relations between Mongolia and the Federal Republic of Germany, the Speaker highlighted the approval of the Law on Inspection by the State Great Khural of Mongolia, which established legal norms for public hearings and parliamentary investigations.

During the meeting, the parties discussed various issues, including the legal regulation of supervision in the parliaments of Mongolia and Germany, parliamentary academic and research services, and other topics of mutual interest. Professor Herta Däubler-Gmelin presented

the Research section in the Bundestag as playing a crucial role in supporting the German Parliament in making informed decisions. The research section's primary goal is to provide scientifically backed answers to every question asked by a member of the Bundestag.

According to Mr. Peter Aigen, the Founder of Transparency International, the organization produces a vast array of analyses, studies, and conclusions on the request of the Bundestag. Instead of attributing blame for individual corruption cases, they focus on conducting systemic research to identify and address all potential theoretical and practical avenues for corruption within a

country's larger framework. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of CARE Germany, which supports humanitarian and development programs.

Professor Herta Däubler-Gmelin who formerly served as the Chair of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid Committee of the German Parliament, played a leading role in the development of German criminal legislation during her time as Minister of Justice in 2002. Later, as a parliamentarian, she conducted a campaign to raise awareness and promote effective implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court at the parliamentary level.



# Preparation of National Tripartite Agreement on Labor and Social Consensus

Prime Minister of Mongolia L. Oyun-Erdene has held his regular Monday morning meeting with representatives of the Trade Unions and Employers Association.

The Prime Minister delivered a speech on the topic of "New Revival," and highlighted the world and economic situation, and the progress of implementation of the "New Revival Policy." Minister of Labor and Social Security Kh. Bulgantuya made a presentation on "Cooperation and policy direction of social partnership organizations." She emphasized that the Government has eliminated the disparity in base salary, reduced the pay hierarchy, pursuing a performance-based pay policy.

For example, Base salaries varied in total of 222 positions. However, now the number has reduced to 53, compensating employees depending on their years of employment in public organizations. Performance-



based pay system has been introduced in the health, education, and culture sectors. Furthermore, various bonuses to the salary of government employees will be combined into the base salary and a productivity-based pay system will be introduced.

This year, MNT 15 billion will be spent on measures to support employers. For example,

wage support of MNT 800,000 will be provided every month for four months to enterprises that employ citizens for permanent vacancies who have difficulty finding jobs in leading sectors of the economy, as well as in local and remote areas.

President of the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry O. Amartuvshin: It is necessary to drastically reduce

the number of public servants. The state should be only in charge of regulation and transfer business to private sector. Private sector can hardly find labor force. Besides, the graduates of the TVET centers do not meet the job requirements.

Executive Director of the United Employers' Association Kh. Ganbaatar: This year we should resolve the policy issues when conducting the national tripartite agreement on labor and social consensus. Let's solve the problem in labor valuation and employment. We need to solve the salary issue not only in public organizations but also in the private sector.

Secretary General of the Mongolian Trade Unions Kh. Buyanjargal: There are things to be grateful to the Government actions and also frustrating issues. Workplace pressure is common in Mongolia. In particular, public servants are deprived of their right to unionize.

Head of Dornogobi aimag Trade Union S. Azjargal: The

policy of "transition from welfare to labor" is not working. There are households living on welfare, i.e., child support, pensions, and allowances totaling some MNT1 million. There is a tendency not to work, but to live on welfare. It is also necessary to pay attention to the increase in prices of consumer goods.

Executive Director of KHAS Bank G. Tsevegjav: We ought to restore the confidence of young people in the future. To this effect, we should comprehensively solve the issue. We need to reduce welfare and motivate citizens to work.

At the meeting, Prime Minister L. Oyun-Erdene instructed to thoroughly prepare for the national tripartite agreement on labor and social consensus. In doing so, he emphasized the need to align salaries and pensions with inflation, improve salary scales, increase the minimum wage, and conduct a survey on the preparation of human resources for the labor force market.

# IT Companies Consortium to Take Part in Online Coal Trading

Given the Mining Exchange Law will come into effect on July 1, stakeholders to be involved in online coal trading of the Mining Exchange are identified.

One of them is the "Erdenes IT Consortium," an association of information and technology companies. They intend to work together to create an eco-system in the mining industry by developing transport logistics, payment, and IT modules in online coal trading. To this end, a joint forum, "Mining Ecosystem," was organized under the theme "Ensuring the participation of parties in the operation of the Mining Exchange" on May 10.

The information and technology consortium participating in online coal trading includes 11 companies such as "Itzone," "iTools," "Gerege systems," "Cody," "Digital Finex," "Utility so-

lution," "InnoSolution," "Itaico," "DPS" (Digital Payment Solution), and "Anicar" which have a long history of operating in the field of information technology in Mongolia. Executive Director of "Erdenes IT Consortium" B. Buyannemekh clarified, "Currently, in the mining ecosystem of our country a complex platform for product spot, forward and futures trading, option transactions, their payment and tracking of transport logistics has been developed." He said that national IT companies within the Consortium propose to invest and cooperate in activities of the Mining Exchange without taking any funds from the state budget.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Consortium D. Davaa said, "There are many problems in the current exchange trading. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the participation and

cooperation of the public and private sectors, focus on forming the structure of the eco-system by introducing transport logistics, payment, and IT modules in the coal trade, and further develop it. In this way, the national mining eco-system could compete internationally."

He underlined that information and technology companies, coal suppliers, transporters, and logistics companies are enabled to participate in the digital trade of the coal exchange, which has already started in our country, with their own systems or the system of IT companies' consortium. In addition to major "players," small enterprises and individuals can participate in online coal trading through professional associations in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Representatives of brokerage companies also participated in the



Forum. The introduction of the Mining Exchange in Mongolia will bring a number of outcomes including:

- Make exchange trading reliable, transparent, and controlled,
- Create accredited laborato-

- ries, warehouses, and carriers,
- Facilitate participation of professional investors and investment funds, custodians, brokers, and traders,
- Increase state and local budget and tax revenues.

# Fitch Affirms Mongolia at 'B': Outlook Stable

Fitch Ratings has affirmed Mongolia's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'B' with a Stable Outlook.

**Strong Growth,** External Vulnerabilities: Mongolia's ratings are underpinned by favourable medium-term growth prospects and high per capita income relative to 'B' rated peers. The ratings are constrained by the country's high reliance on external funding and commodity exports to China amid high external debt and low foreign-exchange reserves. Mongolia scores well on World Bank Governance Indicators relative to 'B' peers, but has suffered from political volatility around issues of resource nationalism.

**Growth Rebound:** We forecast real GDP growth of 5% in 2023, similar to 2022, on stronger mining activity and steady domestic demand. Growth will likely accelerate in 2024. Coal exports are rebounding after China's removal of border pandemic controls. Export capacity will rise

further once cross-border rail links become fully operational in the next one-two years. The strategic Oyu Tolgoi copper mine's underground phase started production in March 2023, although most of the volume gains will only come from 2025. Other mining and infrastructure projects could support medium-term growth.

**External Finances Stabilising:** The export rebound is helping rein in the current account deficit (CAD), which we expect to shrink to about USD1.7 billion-1.8 billion (about 9% of GDP) in 2023-2024, from about USD2.3 billion (over 13% of GDP) in 2022. We expect inflows of FDI to cover the CAD. Official foreign-exchange (FX) reserves recovered to USD3.7 billion in April 2023, from a trough of USD2.7 billion in August 2022, while bank deposit dollarisation stabilised at 37% of total deposits in March 2023, having risen from 24% at end-2021.

**External Finances Remain Precarious:** Net external debt,

at 160% of GDP in 2023 will be around 6x the 'B' median, although over 30% of this is intercompany lending (FDI), and over 20% is the government's bilateral and multilateral loans on concessional terms, both of which we expect will continue to be stable sources of funding. Reserve coverage ratios, though improved, remain weaker than the 'B' median. Gross reserves are supported by about USD1.7 billion in swap liabilities to the People's Bank of China, which we expect to be rolled over, and similar amounts of FX liabilities to domestic banks.

**Maturity Management:** Just over USD150 million in government external debt is due in the rest of 2023, with the proceeds of a USD650 million issuance in January mostly used to repay and exchange bonds maturing in May. The Development Bank of Mongolia (DBM) has set aside reserves to repay a JPY30 billion (USD220 million) government-guaranteed bond in December.

The government is authorised to guarantee DBM bonds maturing in October (about USD437 million outstanding), which we assume will be used to roll them over. Government external debt maturities in 2024 are USD680 million.

**Narrow Fiscal Deficit:** We forecast general government fiscal deficits at under 1% of GDP in 2023-2024, after a surplus of 1% of GDP in 2022, reflecting our expectation that higher spending will offset the boost to revenue from the mining sector and inflation. Last year's fiscal outturn marked a significant turnaround from the 3% of GDP deficit in 2021. The government originally budgeted a deficit of under 2% of GDP in 2023, but has since raised its projection for mining revenue by over 1% of GDP.

**Commodity Dependence, Risks:** The outlook for external finances is highly sensitive to commodity revenues, which account for 90% of total external receipts and 30% of government

Inflation Peaking; Monetary Stance Mixed: We expect headline inflation to average 12% yoy in 2023, from an average of over 15% in 2022, before moderating to 9% in 2024, slightly above the BOM's 4%-8% target. Full normalisation of trade with China and lower global commodity prices should exert a downward pull on inflation, although international sanctions on Russia are still leading to elevated import costs. The BOM raised its policy rate to 13% in December, bringing cumulative hikes in 2022 to 700bp.

**Banking System Stable:** Non-performing loans have remained steady at about 10% of total sector loans, although underlying asset quality issues may be masked by high nominal growth, ongoing subsidised lending programmes and a moratorium on mortgage repayments, which only ended in December 2022. The BOM completed an asset quality review of domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs), and three of the five D-SIBs have already launched IPOs to reduce shareholder concentration, meeting a BOM requirement to do so by June 2023.



# International Collaborations at a High Level: TDB's Partnerships with Prominent Organizations

■ Domestic systemically important banks (DSIBs) of Mongolia commenced their initial public offering (IPO) successfully, leading to their transformation into public companies. The Trade and Development Bank (TDB), the first bank of Mongolia, has announced its IPO, having attained authorization from the Bank of Mongolia, the Stock Exchange of Mongolia, and the Financial Regulatory Commission. O. Orkhon, the TDB Executive Director was interviewed pertaining to this matter.

**-Greetings. Firstly, I would like to congratulate to your esteemed colleagues who are on the verge of launching the bank's IPO, transforming into a publicly traded company subsequent to obtaining official approval. It has become a prevailing practice internationally for businesses to function as public company. In this context, I am interested to inquire whether the transition of prominent domestic commercial banks into publicly traded entities signifies a notable advancement towards aligning Mongolian banks and financial institutions with internationally recognized standards?**

-Indeed, DSIBs are actively engaging in the issuance of shares, thereby undertaking the transformative process of assuming the status of public companies, which launches a new era in the banking and financial market. Moreover, it represents a crucial stride in the advancement of the stock market. TDB holds a venerable position in banking system of Mongolia, boasting a distinguished history and extensive expertise. Upon reflection, it is evident that our bank has made substantial contributions and played a pivotal role in propelling the growth of Mongolia's economy, nurturing its private sector, and fostering a conducive business environment. Looking ahead, we will achieve DEVELOPMENT TOGETHER.

One of the noticeable attestations of it is that our bank has secured the distinction of being the foremost international bank and the largest institutional bank in Mongolia's banking sector. To illustrate, I would like to cite a specific example – in the year of 2022, our bank solely accounted for a considerable 43% of all corporate loans extended in the banking sector. We have fostered strategic partnerships with leading largest enterprises across various sectors since their inception. Notably, 94 out of the TOP 100 enterprises affiliated with the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) have chosen our bank as their financial partner. The realization that such a substantial institution operates as a public company confers numerous advantages and opportunities.

**-The entities holding the most significant stakes in Mongolia's economy are the TOP-100 enterprises as identified by MNCCI. It is noteworthy that over 90 percent of these organizations are clients of TDB. Does this substantial level of concentration, from a statistical standpoint, evoke a sense of gravity or significance?**

-It is important to clarify that

our bank's support is not limited exclusively to large enterprises or organizations. Rather, we are committed to fostering the growth and development of small and medium-sized businesses. In the year of 2022, a total of 494 clients classified as small and medium-sized enterprises became valued customers of the organization segment. Through this partnership, these enterprises will have the opportunity to expand their operations and capabilities. It is a common understanding that today's small and medium-sized businesses have the potential to become large organization of tomorrow, and their rise will have a significant impact on the economic prospects of Mongolia.

Our institution is committed to facilitating the growth and development of businesses, while also serving as a financial conduit to international markets. By providing support and resources for the expansion of businesses, we are working towards the shared goal of achieving DEVELOPMENT TOGETHER. Our dedication to this mission has earned us recognition from both our valued customers and esteemed international partner organizations, distinguishing us as the premier institutional bank in Mongolia, as well as the foremost international bank in the country. This recognition is a testament to the tangible results of our endeavors, and represents a significant competitive edge for TDB.

**-In the context of a comparatively modest stock market such as ours, is there a possibility that the issuance of shares by major banks may lead to a depletion of the already limited capital in the stock market, thereby causing risks in raising capital from public during the IPO process?**

-As you rightly mentioned, the topic of banks transitioning into joint-stock companies has been under discussion for several years, and it has been over two years since the amendment of the Banking Law. Since the approval of these amendments, both domestic and foreign customers and investors have expressed keen interest in investing in our bank. Notably, investors from South Korea have expressed their intent to explore opportunities within our shares. Therefore, I am confident that the fundraising aspect of the IPO will not be a cause for concern.

Furthermore, it is crucial to highlight that TDB has a commendable track record of successfully issuing bonds in the international market and possesses substantial experience in operating within the international capital market. Building upon this foundation, our intention is to conduct the



IPO in accordance with recognized international norms and standards.

**-I comprehend that there exists a notable interest from both foreign and domestic investors, many of whom possess extensive international experience, regarding the forthcoming IPO of TDB. Given that we have touched upon the subject of bonds, I suggest we delve further into this matter.**

-As you are undoubtedly aware, TDB holds the distinction of being the pioneer and sole commercial bank to have conducted bond issuances in the international market. To date, we have successfully issued five bonds, raising medium and long-term funding with total amount of USD 1.14 billion, which was utilized to support the business activities of our valued clientele. Notably, we have diligently honored our financial obligations, including the complete repayment of the most recent USD 500 million bond in 2020.

By leveraging both internal and external funding sources, we are committed to providing essential financing to the prominent enterprises that constitute a driving force within Mongolia's economy. Through fulfilling this crucial responsibility, we continue to play an instrumental role in fueling economic growth and development.

**-Can we conclude that TDB's accomplishments have significantly enhanced Mongolia's standing in the global capital and banking financial markets? Furthermore, you mentioned that your bank is regarded as the best international bank by your esteemed customers. Could you elaborate on this?**

-Undoubtedly, our intention is to foster extensive relations and collaboration with international organizations operating within Mongolia.

Our primary objective is to provide unwavering support to businesses. Noteworthy examples of this commitment include our partnerships with prestigious entities such as the American and Australian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Strengthening these high-level mutual relationships serves to enhance the business environment between the respective countries,

ultimately benefiting both the business community and Mongolia's overall economy.

In addition, we engage in cooperation with over 300 internationally acclaimed banking and financial institutions. Our collaborations encompass various areas, including foreign settlement, trade finance, and numerous other domains. Remarkably, by the conclusion of 2022, our bank alone accounted for 32 percent of Mongolia's foreign payments and 27 percent of trade financing, underscoring the substantial impact of our operations within the international landscape.

**-In light of the comprehensive overview of TDB's past and current achievements, should we also address any challenges encountered by the bank? Media reports have highlighted the significant level of non-performing loans at TDB. Could you shed light on the reasons behind this occurrence and the measures being implemented to address it?**

-Undoubtedly, the past few years have witnessed weak economic activity and growth, attributable to various factors such as the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, logistical challenges in transportation, and ongoing conflicts. The resultant disruptions have adversely affected Mongolia's economy and businesses, leading to a decreased demand for business loans and difficulties in loan repayment. Naturally, these circumstances have impacted a bank of our stature, responsible for 43 percent of corporate loans. However, we have intensified our focus on ensuring loan repayment quality and have taken appropriate measures to address the situation.

The banking sector holds a distinctive position as it serves as a reflection of a country's macro-economic conditions. The global economy is currently fraught with uncertainty, characterized by factors such as conflicts and inflation stemming from the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Banks in the United States and Europe are beginning to face challenges as a result. Nonetheless, the economic recovery and expansion of China present a notable advantage for Mongolia and, in turn, TDB. China

has not only relaxed its "Zero Covid" policy but also plans to make substantial investments in infrastructure to drive economic growth. This development is expected to significantly boost mining and commodity exports, thereby positively impacting commodity prices. We perceive this as a significant growth opportunity for our bank, which actively supports major projects, programs, and industries in Mongolia.

**-To make investment decisions, investors often consider the future growth prospects of a company. Could you elaborate on the projected future growth for TDB?**

-Currently, the prices of key raw materials, which constitute a significant portion of our country's GDP and export earnings, are at highly favorable levels. For instance, the price of coking coal has reached USD 160-170 per ton this year, with Erdenes Tawan Tolgoi Company reporting record production and export levels at the end of last year and the first quarter of this year. Additionally, the price of copper has surged beyond USD 8,000 per ton, while the price of gold stands at USD 2,000 per ounce. These circumstances indicate favorable conditions for a potential commodity super cycle, providing an opportune environment for high economic growth in our country.

During periods of robust economic growth, the income of companies and individuals tends to rise, leading to an increase in bank resources. This, in turn, fuels a higher demand for investment and credit financing, including business credit. Consequently, the quality of loans and repayment improves, significantly impacting the profitability of our institution-based bank. A noteworthy example is the period of 2010-2014 when Mongolia experienced rapid economic growth. During this time, TDB witnessed the highest growth in the sector across indicators such as assets, equity, and net profit. In essence, the growth of a bank is intricately linked to various macro factors, both on a global scale and within Mongolia.

Continued on page 6

# International Collaborations at a High Level: TDB's Partnerships with Prominent Organizations

Continued from page 5

**-Is it possible for investing in bank stocks to completely mitigate risks, given the fact that all major banks are included in the TOP-100 list of Mongolian companies based on their commendable financial efficiency?**

-Investors should be aware that investing involves certain risks. Perhaps if you have deposited your money in a large bank with a good financial record, the returns you will receive are clear.

However, the shares listed on the stock exchange are freely traded on that exchange market, and anyone can buy and sell them.

The price of a stock at any given time depends on many factors. It is impossible to predict with certainty what the price will be. In addition to the knowledge, experience and skills of the investors, emotional factors can also move the market in the short term. Therefore, there is always risk for investors.

**-If I recall correctly, the idea that investing in commercial bank stocks is a risk-free endeavor has persisted for a considerable period. What are your thoughts on this?**

-As you may recall, there was an instance last year when oil prices plummeted to negative, which appeared illogical since

buyers were being paid to accept the oil. However, this was a result of various factors that influenced the commodity market. Although this is a mere example, commodities can be freely bought, sold, and traded, similar to the stock market. As a result, individuals who partake in this market are reminded to collaborate with professional organizations and teams, as well as undertake risks that align with their risk tolerance levels.

Conversely, while there are risks associated with investing in the stock market, there are also potential rewards. Investors who purchase shares may receive returns in two ways: firstly, through the appreciation of the stock price and secondly, through the payment of dividends. Therefore, it is critical to conduct thorough research on companies with real assets, legitimate business models, and strong returns on investment. Selecting such investments can result in substantial returns in the long run.

**-What opportunities and advantages does TDB offer to investors?**

-TDB is dedicated to preserving its traditional advantages while concurrently pursuing a strategy to expand its presence in the retail banking market and the small and medium-sized banking market. With this approach, we possess the potential to achieve long-term growth and generate

favorable returns for investors.

To realize these mid-term strategic goals, we have identified and implemented several initiatives. Since 2020, our focus has been on becoming a

- customer-centric bank,
- a platform bank,
- an international bank.

We are diligently executing various tasks in a step-by-step manner to progress towards these objectives. As a testament to our efforts, we have witnessed tangible outcomes. For instance, the introduction of the Britto card has led to a notable increase in our market share of Visa cards, rising from 14 percent to 25 percent in 2022. Moreover, through the "Mongolia with Savings" campaign, more than 43,000 individuals have opened new savings accounts in 2022, marking a five-fold increase compared to previous years.

Furthermore, we have developed and implemented a new business strategy, structure, and model. Substantial investments have been allocated to enhance our e-migration capabilities and technology infrastructure. By integrating world-leading systems that streamline internal processes, reduce costs, and leverage artificial intelligence for informed decision-making, we aim to further elevate our operational efficiency and deliver superior customer experiences.

**-What will the funds raised**

**through the IPO be utilized for?**

-One of our bank's key medium-term strategic objectives is to establish ourselves as a Green Bank. The funds obtained through the IPO will serve as a valuable source of green and sustainable financing. We will focus on supporting both large enterprises and small and medium-sized businesses, with particular emphasis on empowering women entrepreneurs. These funds will be directed towards financing energy-efficient products and services, promoting low-carbon transportation, facilitating the development of green buildings, and enabling the construction of affordable housing for citizens.

TDB has been a pioneer in introducing the concept of sustainable financing within Mongolia's financial system since 2012. We established the Mongolian Sustainable Financing Association and have made significant progress in this domain, setting industry standards. Additionally, we have obtained accreditation as an organization of the Green Climate Fund, an initiative under the United Nations. This accreditation provides us with opportunities to implement various projects and programs. In collaboration with the government and private sector clients, we are currently developing proposals for projects and programs financed by the fund.

These initiatives encompass large-scale national projects focused on energy conservation, renewable energy, food security, agriculture, and regional green development. The funds raised from the IPO will serve as substantial support for the expansion and intensification of these activities, allowing us to make a significant contribution to sustainable development in Mongolia.

**-That sounds highly promising, particularly considering the global shift towards sustainability. With that in mind, I would like to leave the final question open for you.**

-As TDB transforms into a joint-stock company, we anticipate enhanced governance and control mechanisms. Simultaneously, our equity will increase, enabling us to expand our operations further. As a result, we will continue to DEVELOP TOGETHER with each of our valued customers, fostering mutual development.

**-Thank you for dedicating your time to this conversation. We have engaged in a fruitful discussion encompassing topics such as the Mongolian and global economy, banking, and capital markets. I extend my best wishes for the successful endeavors in making TDB a publicly traded institution.**

*Interviewed by B. Od*



## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ULAANBAATAR

### Theatre Technician

*Starting on August 9, 2023*

#### NATURE OF WORK

The Theatre Technician shall take responsibility for all technical areas within the school's theatre performances and IT activities. It provides appropriate proactive and creative technical production support for the school's performances and IT activities. The scope of this work will be in Theatre and IT.

#### POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's and/or related degree in Theatre Studies and/or IT field
- Good level of English language skills – both written and oral
- Ability to effectively interact, verbally and in writing, with people from different backgrounds and nationalities
- Ability to take part in school service activities and events
- Ability to play musical instruments is desirable
- Willing to learn how to operate the lighting, sound, and led screen

#### APPLICATION

If you would like to take up this challenge and be part of the ISU team and please submit the following in English:

- A formal letter of application
  - A formal curriculum vitae (CV) / resume detailing: Your employment history; your education background; and your contact information (including both e-mail and phone number)
  - The names and contact details of at least three direct supervisory references
- All applications should be addressed to:  
Deputy Director  
International School of Ulaanbaatar  
Four Seasons Garden, Khan-Uul District, Khoroo 18  
Phone: 70160010  
Email: depdirector@isumongolia.edu.mn

#### TIMELINE FOR APPLICATIONS:

Submit applications by 02 June, 2023  
Shortlisted applicants will be contacted and interviewed 05-16 June  
Final appointment will be made after the 16 June.

### Educational Assistant

*Starting on August 9, 2023*

#### NATURE OF WORK

The role of the Educational Assistant is essentially to assist the Teacher in the delivery of the IB program within the classroom. Supporting the activities within and outside the classroom to ensure students are safe, happy learning in a positive and nurturing environment. The scope of this work will be in a primary homeroom class.

#### POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Teaching Diploma degree as well as teaching permit
- At least 1 year of experience in working with children
- Teaching experience
- Fluency in English and in Mongolian
- Able to use computer programs
- Able to work in multi-cultural environment

#### APPLICATION

If you would like to take up this challenge and be part of the ISU team and please submit the following in English:

### Performing Arts Educational Assistant

*Starting on August 9, 2023*

#### NATURE OF WORK

The role of the Performing Arts EA is essentially to assist the Teacher in the delivery of the IB program within the classroom. Supporting the activities within and outside the classroom to ensure students are safe, happy learning in a positive and nurturing environment. The scope of this work will be in primary performing arts (music, drama and dance). Therefore, a background in performing arts is preferable, but not essential.

#### POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Teaching diploma degree as well as teaching permit
- At least 1 year of experience in working with children
- Teaching experience and teaching music is desirable
- Fluency in English and in Mongolian
- Able to use computer programs
- Able to work in multi-cultural environment

#### APPLICATION

If you would like to take up this challenge and be part

#### •A formal letter of application

•A formal curriculum vitae (CV) / resume detailing: Your employment history; your education background; and your contact information (including both e-mail and phone number)

•The names and contact details of at least three direct supervisory references

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A formal letter of application  
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Submit applications by 02 June, 2023  
Shortlisted applicants will be contacted and interviewed 05-16 June  
Final appointment will be made after the 16 June



# More Readers Expected to Visit National Book Festival



*The long-awaited National Book Festival, organized by the "Nomiin Soyolt Yertonts" NGO under the auspices of the Chairman of the State Great Khural is around the corner. The 33rd festival is scheduled to be held on May 19 in Gobisumber, on May 21 in Dornogobi, and on May 26-28 in Ulaanbaatar. MONTSAME, Mongolian National News Agency interviewed B. Suvd, the initiator of the book festival and the head of the "Nomiin Soyolt Yertonts" NGO.*

**-What is the theme of this year's National Book Festival and how well have you prepared?**

-Since 2019, the National Book Festival has been celebrated under the auspices of the Speaker of the State Great Khural. In previous years, we encouraged people that "Let's read daily," "Let's read five pages a day," and "Let's read more." This time, instead of changing the theme, we decided to reuse "Let's read more" to establish reading habits. The preparations for the festival began in February, contacting foreign countries and seeking cooperation.

**-The significance of the Book Festival appears to be increasing each year. What can you say about this?**

-The Book Festival encom-

passes more than just book purchases; it involves multifaceted cooperation. During the festival, the results of readers' survey conducted in 2011 will be announced, enabling readers to compare the content of books they were reading 12 years ago. This will provide librarians and professionals with insights into changing reading trends and content.

Since last year's Book Festival, we have compiled a list of 50 inspirational books for women, as 63 percent of festival visitors are women, according to a study. Additionally, a list of 50 children's books will be announced. In collaboration with the School of Culture of the Mongolian National University of Arts and Culture, we conducted a survey and shared it with the Department of Sociology and Social Work of MSU for analyzing the data and drawing professional conclusions.

We have also studied the age, gender, education, and purchasing habits of the attendees. The majority, 75.4 percent, are young people aged 15-35, with 49.6 percent being elementary school students. A crucial aspect of this event is to address children's inquiries about their future aspirations, as they tend to acquire knowledge from books. The activities we are conducting today will have

a lasting impact on the reading habits and preparation of readers in the coming five to ten years. Consequently, we anticipate the number of attendees, currently at 180 thousand to increase to 200 thousand to 500 thousand.

**-I have heard of the unique aspect of opening ceremony of this year's book festival. Could you elaborate on this?**

-This year, the book festival is commencing with a distinctive feature. Our plan is to initiate the festival in rural areas, specifically in the Gobi provinces. Thus, on May 19, during the blooming period of the Mongolian Sakura trees under the theme "Let's read more," the Borjigon Music and Dance Ensemble will inaugurate the Book Festival at the Central Library in Gobisumber aimag. Subsequently, on May 21, the Book Festival will continue in the central square of Sainshand, Dornogobi aimag. This year holds significance as it marks the 220th anniversary of the birth of Noyon Khutagt D. Danzanravjaa. This commemoration adds a joyful atmosphere to the book festival, acknowledging the remarkable story of a man who, at the age of six, astonished the local community by reciting a philosophical poem titled "Khurmast Tenger" at a nobleman's gathering. For the authors and publishers participating in the book festival tour to Sainshand, this serves as an inspiration, providing them with beautiful narratives to contemplate and significant ideas to incorporate into their works.

Following these events, a collaborative program will be held at Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar on May 26-28. We are diligently working to offer a multitude of captivating programs to our readers. Among these, we have BookCon, book fan meetings, book networking, "Change my mind" sessions, quizzes, reader-author meeting, fireside chats, "Read to Win" and "Khavriin Nairag" activities, the "Delhii" band performance, shows by the "Book World" club students, and many other engaging events. We also anticipate considerable interest in the books we will be highlighting, the informative guide section, and overall organization of the Festival. Additionally, students from rural

book clubs will join the festival and volunteer for organizational tasks. The festival's duration is extended by one hour, continuing until 8 pm.

This spring book festival will wrapped up with the book fair in Mandalgobi, Umnugobi on June 3. Then, we will start straight away the preparation for the autumn festival.

**-How many publishing companies, publishers, and authors will participate in this year's book festival?**

-Over 300 writers and publishers will be participating in the book festival. Notably, there has been a consistent rise in the number of new publishers over the past three years. Guests from over ten foreign countries will be expected to attend the Festival.

**-How is the progress in the pursuit of the goal of becoming the "Book Capital of the World," which was set in 2011?**

-When setting a goal, it is important to approach it methodically and gradually. The first criterion for attaining the esteemed title of "Book Capital of the World" is a strong emphasis on reading. To achieve this, we are promoting good reading and book lovers who are avid readers and exemplify reading habits. Rolling back the wheel of history of the Book Festival, the "Book World" magazine and program, we have witnessed a remarkable increase in public participation and viewership since their inception. This success signifies the growing recognition that books hold a vital position within society and deserve utmost attention.

**-Could you outline the outcomes and vision of the Book Festival, what aspects would you emphasize?**

-Reading proficiency profoundly shapes a nation's capabilities. Hence, it is crucial to assess the progress made in developing a society with a solid foundation in reading. The efforts we dedicate today are geared towards shaping the future. Presently, it is not possible to ascertain the immediate outcome or provide a definitive answer. However, by observing how social dynamics transform over the course of ten or 20 years, we can determine the impact and significance of reading.

## MONTSAME Agency—Official Media Partner for National Book Festival

*MONTSAME Mongolian National News Agency of Mongolia will serve as the official media partner for the 33rd National Book Festival, scheduled to commence on May 19-21 nationwide and continue on May 26-28 at the Sukhbaatar Square.*

To broaden the reach of the National Book Festival, which is held annually every spring and autumn at Sukhbaatar Square, and to promote the festival's traditional characteristics both domestically and internationally, MONTSAME Agency has entered into a new memorandum of cooperation with the organizer of the festival, "Nomiin Soyolt Yertonts" NGO.

The memorandum was signed by T. Enkh TUYA, the Deputy Director of the MONTSAME,

Mongolian National News Agency, and B. Suvd, the Head of "Nomiin Soyolt Yertonts" NGO.

Under the memorandum, as an official media partner for the National Book Festival, MONTSAME Agency disseminates information on the event in five languages through their website, [www.montsame.mn](http://www.montsame.mn), and weeklies "Mongol Messenger," "Menggu XiaoXi Bao," "Novosti Mongolii," and "Mongoru Tsushin" as well as through videos and photos. In addition, the Agency's correspondents in 21 aimags will also report on local book festivals.

On the other hand, the "Nomiin Soyolt Yertonts" NGO is responsible for providing MONTSAME Agency with accurate and factual information.

During the festival, more than 300 tents are set up at Sukhba-



tar Square, with over 200 publishers and more than 300 authors participating. The event attracts over 180 thousand visitors, with 95 percent of them purchasing books.

In 2021 the Law on Public Holidays and Celebrations was amended to declare the National Book Festival as a Government-supported activity to be celebrated nationwide.

### The lawyer's advice



In cooperation with Hanns Seidel Foundation

*The Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) as a political foundation is active in 60 countries worldwide under the motto of Democracy, Peace and Development. In Mongolia, HSF is active since 1993 and supports the transformation and establishment of the rule of law.*

**-What is regulated by the Law on Protection of the Personal information?**

-New edition of the Law on Protection of the Personal information has been in force since 1 May 2022. This law provides for the regulation of such matters as collecting, processing, using personal information and its security. The law does not cover the following relations:

-collecting, processing, using confidential information related to the person and his and his family members and its security without infringing the right to freedom and inviolability of the person;

-a person can set or install audio, video, audio-video recording tools in order to protect moveable and immovable property that he owns, possesses and uses as well as his own and his family members' lives and health;

-a person can use his own biometric data in order to protect moveable and immovable property that he owns, possesses and uses;

-information required by law to be made public;

-issues related to privacy of a person that are specially regulated by the Law on Executive works;

-for the purpose to prevent crimes and offences, issues related to setting/placing video recording tools in order to ensure the safety of public streets, roads, squares, public places, or traffic.

**-What does private information of a person refer to?**

-According to this law "private information of a person" refers to sensitive information of a person and the name of a person's parents, his own name, date of birth, place of birth, residence address, location, citizen's registration number, property, education, membership, electronic identification, information to detect a person directly or indirectly, or other identifiable information.

"Sensitive information" of the person refers to information of the person's nationality, origin, religion, beliefs, health, communication, genetic and biometric information, personal key of the digital signature, information on current or past criminal record, sexual and gender orientation, expression, and sexuality.

**-How state organizations can collect and process private information of a person?**

-State organizations shall collect and process private information of a person only in cases specified in the law. In particular:

-on permission of the owner of information;

-on the grounds specified in the law;

-in cases of exercising rights and performing obligations in the course of labor relations;

-in cases of concluding contracts, ensuring the implementation of concluded contracts;

-in implementing of obligations under international agreements of Mongolia;

-the exercise of the functions specified by law applies in the above cases provided rights and lawful interests of the owner of information are not violated.

Address: Sukhbaatar District, Khoroo 6, Sukhbaatar Street 11-1, Hanns Seidel Foundation Mongolia (inside the court of the Children's Art Center, in the right side)  
Tel.: 321294  
<https://mongolia.hss.de/mn/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/HSFMongolia>  
info@hssmongolia.mn



# Astonishing Glimpse of "One Day of the World" in Abu Dhabi

■ The World's Longest Gouache Painting "One Day of the World" of Honored Cultural Figure of Mongolia N. Sergelen is being showcased to the public at the prestigious "Manarat Al Saadiyat" gallery in Abu Dhabi for the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM Global 2023), which was held on May 8-10.



Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Justice Abdullah bin Sultan bin Awad Al Nuaimi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani bin Ahmed

Al Zeoudi, Undersecretary of the Department of Economic Development Rashid Abdul Karim Al Balushi, and other high-ranking officials entered the captivating world of the painting and feasted their eyes upon the enchanting

display of art that portrays the essence of humankind and culture.

The "One Day of the World" was painted with traditional art techniques using gouache and watercolor on a 52.5 square meter canvas (with a ratio of 21 meters x 2.5 meters).

Artist Sergelen dedicated over two decades to research and painting, pouring his effort into every brushstroke of this remarkable artwork. The painting encompasses various aspects, including the ways of life, diverse wildlife and plants, breathtaking natural formations, vibrant cultures, cherished values, and iconic structures that symbolize each of 193 countries. This magnificent work, imbued with unmistakable Mongolian essence is composed of over five thousand illustrations, expertly created using the distinctive techniques of Mongolian art.

Under the Mongolian Government's policy to promote Mongolia internationally and the "Years to Visit Mongolia," "One Day of the World" will astonish the vision of visitors until May 20, 2023.



## Mongolian Boxers Clinch Medals at World Championships



The IBA Men's World Boxing Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, was thrilled on April 30-May 14 with 538 boxers from 107 countries vying for the top spot.

Mongolians rounded off the championships with two medals – silver and bronze.

B. Chinzorig bagged the silver medal with a prize of USD 100 thousand. In the 63.5kg division final, he fought against Ruslan



Abdullaev from Uzbekistan. Following the two intense rounds, Abdullaev led with a slight advantage, was stronger in the third round, and won Chinzorig by a unanimous decision.

Another Mongolian boxer, who has impressed at the championships is Misheelt Battumur, the Bronze Medalist of the Asian Championship. Misheelt clinched a bronze medal, which comes with a prize of USD 50 thousand.

## Ankhtsetseg Places Third at Asian Weightlifting Championships

In the Asian Weightlifting Championships 2023 on May 3-13, Asia's top lifters converged at the Jinju Arena, the Republic of Korea, to compete for the top spot in the ten weight classes for men and women.

On May 10, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medalist of the World Championship and the State Honored Athlete of Mongolia Ankhtsetseg Munkhjantsan captured the Bronze Medal, lifting 243 kg (108/135) in the women's 81 kg category.

Additionally, to be eligible to

participate in the next Summer Games, weightlifters must participate in a minimum of three major competitions (in addition

to fulfilling other prerequisites), with the Asian Weightlifting Championships being one of those competitions.



## Mongolian Memory Athletes Excel in WISF Championships

The World Intellectual Sports Federation (WISF) successfully organized the "Mental Arithmetic," "Speed Cubing," and "Spelling Bee" Championships in Antalya, Türkiye, on May 7-8. The competition attracted participation of over 100 athletes from four countries.

Representing Mongolia, eleven memory athletes of the Mongolian Intellectual Academy and the "Yazguur" elementary school, which implements the academy's program, successfully competed in their respective age groups. The team achieved outstanding results, with nine athletes earning first, second, or third places in their categories, and two athletes securing special recognition. In total, the team earned 12 out of the 15 possible medals.

Specifically: "Mental Arithmetic" competition—Under 8 "Higher" level: /1st place/ S. Chingim ("Yazguur" Elementary school); /2nd place/ B. Garid ("Yazguur" Elementary school); /3rd place/ U. Amin-Erdene (Uvurkhangai branch); /Special recognition/ B. Temuulen (Yarmag Branch); 9-10 age category "Upper" le-

vel: /1st place/ E. Munkhbaatar (Ulaankhuan branch); /2nd place/ D. Chinguun ("Yazguur" Elementary school); 9-10 age category "Basic" level: /1st place/ T. Manlai ("Yazguur" Elementary school); Over 11 years category "Higher" level: /1st place/ M. Buyanjargal (Huvsgul

Cubing" competition: /2nd place/ O. Tuvshin (Gobisumber branch); /3rd place/ B. Garid ("Yazguur" Elementary school).

Thus, the Mongolian Intellectual Academy successfully participated in the 63rd intellectual sports competition held in several countries, inclu-



ding America, England, Germany, India, China, Sweden, Türkiye, Singapore, Japan, and Korea, won 117 trophies and 1208 medals, setting many world records and continues, and successfully promoting Mongolia internationally.



## Gobi-Altai Aimag Plants 21,000 Trees in a Day

According to the Governor's Office of Gobi-Altai aimag, over 21 thousand trees were planted in Yusunbulag soum in a single day. This tree planting event was organized as part of the National Tree Planting Day (May 13) and the "One Billion Trees" National Campaign, aligning with Gobi-Altai aimag's plan to plant 108 million trees. Specifically, this tree-planting event involved more than two thousand representatives from public and private organizations, enterprises, and citizens of Yusunbulag soum.

To prepare the sites for tree planting, the Employment Promotion Fund, the Department of Environment and Tourism, the Governor's Office of Yusunbulag soum, and Forestry Units collaborated to dig over 20 thousand holes for the trees in 12 locations a week prior to the planting event.



Since the beginning of 2023, significant progress has been made in the construction of Abyssinian wells, water ponds, fences, and an irrigation system in the 12 locations. Abyssinian wells and water ponds have been constructed, supplying water for the irrigation system, which covers an area of 8 km. To facilitate the transfer of water from the wells to the ponds, three solar-powered pumps have been installed, ensuring an efficient and sustainable irrigation process.