

## President Khurelsukh: Forestry Sector Should Be Based on Partnership Between the Public and Private Sectors



The conference commemorating the centennial of the establishment of the forestry sector in Mongolia was

held at the Corporate Convention Center on November 25, 2024. At the conference, President of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa

expressed gratitude to the forestry workers who are leading the movement to grow billions of trees to reduce climate change in

an effort to create a better environment for the citizens and future generations. Noting that the people of all generations would be proud of the efforts and virtuous actions to protect Mother Earth by the forestry workers, President Khurelsukh emphasized the need to develop the forestry sector based on green technology and innovation through public-private partnerships that meet global standards to reduce climate change, sandstorms, and desertification.

The Head of State underlined the importance of replenishing and expanding forest resources through the "Billion Trees" National Movement, planting trees in urban and residential areas, and merging the forestry sector with agroforestry.

Since the launch of the National Movement, 84 million trees have been planted and the stockpiles of tree and shrub seeds reached 12 thousand tons and the number of saplings and seedlings reached 63 million. Additionally, pest control actions were carried out in 341 thousand hectares of forests and 1.9 billion trees were protected from diseases and pests.

In 1924, the People's Government Khural established the "Forestry Office" with four regiments under the Ministry of Economic Affairs. With the adoption of laws and regulations on

forestry including the "Principle on Forests" in 1925, "Law on Forests" in 1931, the "Law on Forests" of the People's Republic of Mongolia in 1933, and the "Revised Law on Forests" in 1934, it was stated that all forests in Mongolia shall be the property of the Government to value and issue permits to use forest resources. This laid the foundation for the Mongolian Government's policy on forestry. The first professional forestry workers and engineers started being trained domestically in 1944 and 1964 respectively. During this time, the forestry organization expanded into an industry, scientifically based forest protection efforts were taken, and improvements were made to utilize forest resources appropriately.

During the 1980s, Mongolia's forestry sector developed with an independent Ministry of Forest Industry with 60 manufacturing plants, and six major industrial complexes that employed over 10 thousand citizens. At the time, the forestry sector was a major sector, having produced 15 percent of gross domestic manufacturing output and made up 20 percent of exports, implementing comprehensive measures on tree planting, and preventative actions against forest fires and pests.

## Mongolia Marks the Centennial of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Adoption of the First Constitution



On November 26, 2024, Mongolia commemorated the centennial of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Adoption of the First Constitution.

On this day in 1924, Mongolia became one of the first Asian countries in the 20th century to abolish monarchy and transition to the republican system, a progressive political form of government. With the adoption of its First Constitution, Mongolia replaced monarchy with a new system of governance that allowed the citizens to establish the government electively and

introduced legal provisions based on democratic ideals.

Specifically, the country abolished feudal serfdom, declared the natural resources to be the property of the people, and guaranteed the rights of citizens to vote and be elected. Moreover, it laid the foundation for modern parliamentary governance, legislating equal rights for women and men.

The First Constitution of Mongolia consists of six chapters and 50 articles. Article 1 of the First Constitution stipulates, "From now on, the State of Mongolia shall be known as the

Mongolian People's Republic, a fully sovereign and independent state, wherein the supreme power of the state shall be vested in the people, and all the state affairs shall be carried out and decided by the State Great Khural and the Government formed by the Khural, and the people shall comply with and follow the arrangement."

**The National Flag of Mongolia Raised, Wreath Laid at the Statue of Sukhbaatar Damdin**



In commemoration of the centennial of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Adoption of the First Constitution, the National Flag of Mongolia was ceremoniously raised in Sukhbaatar Square on November 26, 2024.

During the solemn ceremony, the National Anthem of Mongolia resonated at Sukhbaatar Square, followed by a State Honor Guard raising the National Flag of Mongolia. Chairman of the State Great Khural of Mongolia

Amarbayasgalan Dashzegve, and members of the Parliament and officials of the Secretariat, laid wreath at the Statue of Sukhbaatar Damdin, paying respect to one of Mongolia's most honored national leaders.

### Inside

**Direct Flights from Ulaanbaatar to Ho Chi Minh City to Be Launched in December 2024** .....p3

**The 2025 Draft Budget of Ulaanbaatar City Submitted** .....p4

**Mongolian Students Take Oath of Citizenship** .....p5

**Mongolian Athletes Earn Gold Medal and Trophy at the WDF Asia-Pacific Cup** .....p7

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Bloomberg commodity price 2024/11/28		
GOLD	USD/t oz.	2,662.40
COPPER	USD/lb.	413.40
SILVER	USD/t oz.	30.33
BRENT CRUDE	USD/bbl.	72.58
WHEAT	USD/bu	548.50



## Mongolian Peacekeepers Awarded State Decorations for South Sudan Mission

On November 22, 2024, President of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa awarded state decorations to the military personnel of the 13th Mongolian contingent that served in the UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

President of Mongolia and Commander-in-Chief of the Mongolian Armed Forces Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, in his congratulatory speech, emphasized that the 13th Mongolian contingent successfully fulfilled a highly responsible mission under challenging conditions of time and weather, including protecting civilians of the Republic of South Sudan, ensuring the safety of the UN base and its personnel, and supporting humanitarian activities. In particular, President Khurelsukh commended the peacekeepers for their successful completion of exceptionally demanding and critical missions, such as establishing a new operational base in a village where human rights were severely violated and competently escorting a UN humanitarian convoy

over a distance of more than 1,000 kilometers in a flood-affected region. The President praised the peacekeepers for their substantial contribution to raising Mongolia's reputation on the international stage and ensuring national security, noting that their service and achievement would shine brightly in the history of the Armed Forces of Mongolia.



Mongolia, a country with a peaceful, open, independent, and multi-pillar foreign policy, has actively participated in global efforts to promote peace, security, and stability in the international community and many countries and regions. This participation is a cornerstone of Mongolia's foreign policy, reflecting its commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism. Currently,



ly, over 890 Mongolian Armed Forces personnel are serving in peacekeeping missions, and women constitute 11 percent of this force. With this, Mongolia ranks 19th among the 121 UN troop-contributing countries. Additionally, for the first time, a Mongolian general has been appointed as the Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

On behalf of the people, the State, and the Government of Mongolia, President Khurelsukh

expressed warm congratulations to the peacekeepers who, with loyalty to their sworn oath, demonstrated courage, stamina and stoicism, resourcefulness and agility, and professional skills in fulfilling their honorable and responsible duties. The President also extended heartfelt gratitude to their spouses and families, who serve as steadfast support, shouldering and carrying the burden of taking care of their children and households, and wished them happiness and success.



The State Great Khural of Mongolia held a session at the "Ikh Khuraldai Hall" commemorating the Centennial of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Adoption of the First Constitution on November 26, 2024.

At the outset of the session, General Secretary of the State Great Khural Baasandorj Bar-

suren placed the original copy of the Constitution of Mongolia on the honorary podium of the Ikh Khuraldai Hall. The session was participated by President of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai, the Constitutional Court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General, Members of the

## State Great Khural Session Honoring the Centennial of the Adoption of the First Constitution Convened

Government, Head of the President's Office, General Secretary of the National Security Council, Heads of organizations directly under the State Great Khural and other high-level government officials, Diplomatic Missions and Heads of International Organizations in Mongolia.

After the National Anthem was sung, Chairman of the State Great Khural Amarbayasgalan Dashzegve opened the session, emphasizing that Mongolia, an independent country with over 2200 years of statehood tradition, should remember the great deeds of the brilliant Mongol statesmen and valiant fighters in regaining independence that was lost during tumultuous times in history. The Speaker underlined that instead of comparing the First Constitution adopted in 1924 with today's Constitution with its emphasis on human rights

and democratic government, we should commemorate it for laying the foundation for a sovereign Mongolian governance and a comprehensive national legal system. During the 100 years since the adoption of the First Constitution, the Constitution of Mongolia has continuously been refined and improved, noted the Speaker.

President of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa remarked that the Day of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Adoption of the First Constitution is a day for Mongolians, as the sovereigns of their nation, to take pride in their independence. The Head of State emphasized that Mongolians should recognize themselves as guardians of the legacy of the Great Mongol Empire, established by Great Emperor Chinggis Khaan, and honor the

values of Mongolia's statehood traditions, history, and Constitution. President Khurelsukh called for concerted efforts to pass these on to future generations, strengthen national unity, and collectively advance Mongolia's development.

Chairman Amarbayasgalan presented the Resolution of the State Great Khural No.43 on Respecting the Constitution of Mongolia, which calls on Government organizations, Mongolian Diplomatic Missions abroad, and citizens of Mongolia to study and esteem the Constitution of Mongolia. The Resolution came into effect on November 26, 2024. It also calls on educational institutes of all levels to teach and promote the contents of the Constitution, Mongolian independence, national sovereignty, human rights, and freedom.

### CABINET SESSION



During its regular session on November 27, 2024, the Cabinet of Mongolia made the following decisions:

#### Policies Discussed on Supporting Youth Development and Housing Young Families

The Government of Mongolia has declared 2025 as the "Year to Support the Youth." Within this framework, Minister of Culture, Sports, Tourism, and Youth Nomin Chinbat presented a medium-term strategy for youth development, while Minister of Family, Labor, and Social Protection Enkh-Amgalan Luvsantseren outlined policies and strategies to provide housing for young families.

Minister Enkh-Amgalan Luvsantseren stated, "The Affordable Housing Finance Program has been in effect since 2013. However, during this period, the program significantly stimulated demand without increasing supply, leading to a rise in housing prices. It failed to target the intended demographic, primarily benefiting high-income individuals who could afford the down payments. Currently, there is a waiting list of over two years for loan applications, and clearing this backlog would take 40-55 months. Accelerating the process would outpace the supply of new construction, resulting in further price hikes and disproportionately benefiting sellers."

To address these challenges, several measures were discussed, including financing 50 percent of the down payment

through a Credit Guarantee Fund and incentivizing young people to save for down payments by creating a dedicated Down Payment Savings Account. This account would exclusively help young families accumulate funds for housing down payments.

Additionally, Minister Nomin Chinbat was tasked with presenting the "Youth Development Strategic Plan for 2025-2029" at the next Cabinet meeting for approval.

#### Cabinet Resolution Issued on Developing Year-Round Tourism

During its regular session on November 27, 2024, the Cabinet issued a resolution aimed at increasing tourist flow and enabling year-round tourism.

The resolution includes the following measures:

**Airfare Discounts:** Studying possibilities for discounting win-

ter air travel fares by up to 40 percent compared to summer prices, increasing the number and frequency of domestic flights in line with flight trends of tourists, and finalizing timetables.

**Airport Upgrades:** Operating airports in Khovd, Murun, Choibalsan, Dalanzadgad, Deglii Tsagaan, and Chinggis cities under 3C, 4C, and 4D classifications, and establishing 4C classification airports in the Altai Tavan Bogd and Buir Lake regions.

**Visa Facilitation:** Extending the visa-free period for South Korean tourists and increasing the number of visa-exempt countries in accordance with regulations.

**Border Tourism:** Revitalizing border tourism activities.

**International Border Enhancements:** Enhancing operations at border points such as Tsagaanuur, Borshoo, Arts Suuri, Khankh, Ereentsav, Khavirga,

Sumber, Shiveekhuren, and Gashuunsukhait. Extending operating hours and ensuring weekend availability in coordination with neighboring countries through agreements.

**On-Arrival Visa Services:** Issuing short-term visas on arrival for tourists at border points and establishing special lanes for group tourists.

**International Events:** Hosting events such as Tsagaan Sar [Mongolian Lunar New Year], the "Blue Pearl" and "Mazaalai" ice and snow festivals, "Myriad Horses of the Steppe," and "Nomadic Winter" at an international level.

**Sanitation Facilities:** Building service and sanitation facilities for tourists at appropriate locations according to standards.

The Government tasked relevant Ministers and Officials with implementing these measures to foster the development of Mongolia's tourism sector.



## Direct Flights from Ulaanbaatar to Ho Chi Minh City to Be Launched in December 2024

The 19th Meeting of the Mongolia-Vietnam Joint Government Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation was held in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, on November 19-23, 2024.

The Meeting was co-chaired by Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry of Mongolia Enkhbayar Jadamba, and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Le Minh Hoan.

Regular direct flights between Ulaanbaatar and Ho Chi Minh City will be launched in December of this year. Minister



of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry Enkhbayar emphasized

that this would notably contribute to increasing people-to-people

exchanges and strengthening cooperation between businesses and enterprises of the two countries.

Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry of Mongolia reported that an Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption signed between the two countries in 2023 created favorable conditions for increasing people-to-people exchanges.

Additionally, during the 19th Meeting of the Mongolia-Vietnam Joint Government Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation, the Vietnamese side expressed commitment to contributing to combat climate change, and

desertification and protecting the environment by jointly conducting a study on planting trees suitable for Mongolian soil under the "Billion Trees" National Movement initiated by the President of Mongolia. Furthermore, the two countries agreed to cooperate in culture, sports, and tourism to strengthen friendship, partnership, and mutual understanding.

Specifically, they will reciprocally organize cultural events, collaborate on preserving cultural heritage, and promote each other's tourism resources and attractions.

## A New Milestone for Affordable Access to Quality-Assured Medicines in Mongolia

On November 22, 2024, the Ministry of Health of Mongolia and the Medicine and Medical Devices Regulatory Authority signed a procurement contract with South Korean pharmaceutical company DongKoo Bio & Pharma. This marks the beginning of improving the quality and safety of medicines distributed in Mongolia while providing access to effective and affordable medications.

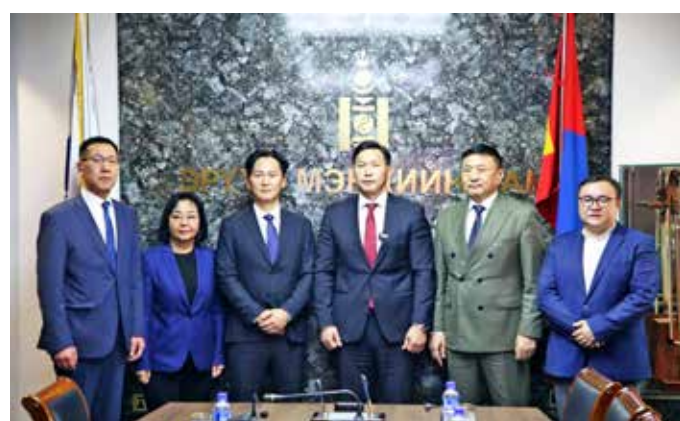
Minister of Health Munkhsaikhan Togtmol stated, "The Government is implementing a policy to purchase high-quality medicines approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) at low prices from countries with strict medicine regulations. Based on international experience, agreements of this nature both decrease future medical costs and increase the variety of medicines available to citizens. Mongolia will use this model to secure the availability of affordable quality-assured medicines."

As part of this initial procurement contract, DongKoo Bio & Pharma will supply five types of medicines to Mongolia, including medicine for diabetes, hypertension, blood thinning, and antifungal applications. These medicines will be priced on average 50 percent lower than the customs value of medicine with the same composition. Additionally, citizens will be able to access these medications from the Health Insurance Fund with subsidized costs.

Recent amendments to the Law on Medicines and Medical

Devices, the Law on Procurement of Goods, Works, and Services with State and Local Property Funds of Mongolia have established a legal foundation for the direct procurement of quality-assured medicines, medical devices, bioactive products, and vaccines from international organizations and foreign manufacturers.

In September 2024, Minister of Health Munkhsaikhan Togtmol visited the Republic of Korea to meet with pharmaceutical manufacturers from countries with strict regulatory and monitoring standards, recognized by the WHO. During his visit, the Minister of Health negotiated to supply Mongolia with effective medicines at reasonable prices. Following these negotiations, the



Ministry of Health announced the finalization of price agreements with four well-known pharmaceutical companies in the Republic of Korea, where the

purchase of 18 types of medicines currently subsidized by the Health Insurance Fund would be provided to citizens.

## COP29 UN Conference Agrees to Triple Climate Finance for Developing Countries

President of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa participated in the World Leaders Climate Action Summit held in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan, on November 12-13, 2024, during the 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The 29th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the meetings of the two permanent subsidiary bodies of the Convention, were held concurrently in Baku on November 12-24, 2024. The Closing Plenary of the 29th Conference

of the Parties concluded on November 24, 2024, presenting and approving decisions on key issues. Notably, an agreement was reached to increase climate finance for developing countries and least developed countries to up to USD 300 billion annually.

The Parties have agreed to

support efforts to gradually increase climate finance, with the participation of both the public and private sectors, to USD 1.3 trillion by 2035.

Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres noted, "This agreement was crucial for maintaining global war-

ming under 1.5 degrees Celsius, but I had hoped for a more ambitious outcome, particularly regarding finance and resolving the loss and damage caused by climate change." Countries also agreed on a deal at the COP29 on the rules for a global market to buy and sell carbon credits.

## The Second Outreach Campaign "Let's Travel Responsibly" Launches

On November 22, 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, the Embassy of the United States in Mongolia, and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Mongolia jointly launched the "Let's Travel Responsibly" Second Outreach Campaign.

At the outset, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Munkhtushig Lkhanaajav emphasized, "Facilitating the conditions for Mongolian citizens to travel abroad and creating opportunities for visa-free travel is one of the priorities of the Government of Mongolia. The main requirements set during discussions with other countries to facilitate travel conditions are related to issues of personal responsibility for citizens not to violate the purpose and duration of the visa and not to get involved in any criminal case. The irresponsible action of one Mongolian citizen residing or traveling abroad hinders the interests of thousands of Mongolians, especially their relatives. Therefore, citizens' participation, awareness, and

responsibility are crucial in facilitating conditions for visa-free travel."

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States to Mongolia Richard Buangan noted, "In recent years, the number of Mongolians wishing to visit the United States has been steadily increasing. During the past 12 months, the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy issued approximately 18 thousand visas to Mongolian nationals. The visa process is influenced by historical trends of Mongolian travelers who returned, or who did not return, to Mongolia after their stay in the United States. This trend affects how Mongolian applicants are assessed today regarding their qualification for U.S. visas. The actions of individuals who overstay their visas, including working without permission while in the United States, have consequences not only for those individuals, but for their friends, family, and fellow citizens in the future. This is because the visa-issuing country is showing trust in individuals by legally granting

travel visas for a certain period of time. Therefore, it is essential for all Mongolians traveling to the United States and other countries to adhere to responsible travel practices in order to facilitate travel conditions for everyone."

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Mongolia Choi Jin-won underscored, "Mongolia and the Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations in 1990. Since then, bilateral relations between the two countries have developed rapidly across political, social, and cultural sectors. A key factor in the growing bilateral relations is people-to-people exchange. Last year, around 140 thousand Mongolian citizens visited South Korea, and a similar number of Korean citizens visited Mongolia, marking the highest record in history. This year alone, 180 thousand Korean citizens have traveled to Mongolia. On the other hand, 57 thousand Mongolian citizens reside in South Korea. All these figures highlight the need for citizens from both countries to travel responsibly.



It is important to adhere to laws, regulations, and culture of the country being visited in traveling responsibly."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Mongolia, launched an information and awareness campaign titled "Let's Travel Responsibly" in October 2017 with the aim to encourage visa applicants and visa holders to travel to the

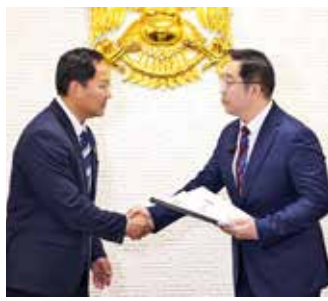
United States in accordance with their purpose of travel without overstaying. The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Mongolia joined the campaign in 2018. The campaign has resulted in reduced cases of violations related to visa overstays, with campaign dissemination works having reached a high number of citizens and increased citizens' responsibility.



# The 2025 Draft Budget of Ulaanbaatar City Submitted

In accordance with the Law on Budget of Mongolia, Deputy Governor of the Capital City Davaadalai Tumendalai submitted the 2025 Budget Draft of Ulaanbaatar City to Chairman of the Citizens' Representative Khural of the Capital City Bayar Amarbayasgalan on November 25, 2024.

Along with the draft resolution on Adopting the Capital City Budget for 2025, draft resolutions were submitted on adjusting the tax rates on transport and self-driving vehicles, road user charges, and tariffs for landfill at



centralized waste dumps.

The 2025 Budget Draft of the Capital City is aligned with the following key directions and

policies:

- Activating public-private partnerships to stimulate the economic growth of the Capital city;
- Developing the ger districts into residential districts to lower air pollution;
- Expanding the city's road system and implementing comprehensive reforms on public transport to mitigate traffic congestion;
- Completing the investment works commenced in previous years to enhance the accessibility of essential public services.

As part of the policies imple-

mented by the Government, the Governor's Office of the Capital City plans to continue to align the regional development policy with the taxation policy in the upcoming year, simplify the tax environment for businesses, increase tax compliance, improve registration and oversight to reduce the shadow economy and broaden the tax base.

Under the 2024-2028 Action Plan of the Governor of the Capital City and Mayor of Ulaanbaatar, the 2025 Budget Draft focused on five key policies, including regional development, human

development, economy, green development, and governance. Specifically, the Budget Draft outlines the expenditure for land acquisition as well as funding for major infrastructure projects such as the "Metro" high-capacity public transportation, "Tuul" highway, New Zuunmod City, and a residential complex of the Selbe subcenter. The Governor's Office of Ulaanbaatar City plans to implement 164 projects and activities related to the urban infrastructure, roads, public utilities, education, health, and green spaces.

## Foreign Exchange Reserves of Mongolia Exceed USD 4.9 Billion

As of November 25, 2024, the official foreign exchange reserves of Mongolia exceeded USD 4.9 billion, an increase of USD 38.8 million or 0.8 percent compared to the beginning of this year. This is the amount that satisfies the country's foreign exchange-paid import needs for 5.1 months, according to the Bank of Mongolia.



The increase in foreign exchange reserves was mainly due to the improvement in the USD flow into Mongolia, including

export revenues and foreign direct investment. Specifically, export revenues reached USD 13.4 billion at the end of October, an increase of about USD 800 million from the previous year. The total export is constituted of:

- 55 percent hard coal,
- 19.8 percent copper concentrate,
- 6 percent gold export.

Exports of mining and mineral products are expected to continue to grow by the end of the year. International credit ratings agencies such as Fitch and Moody's have upgraded Mongolia's credit rating outlook to "B Stable." Due to the improvement in the country's credit rating, the ratings of commercial banks have also improved, and they are starting to attract affordable business and green loans from international markets.

Due to major projects to be implemented by the Government, investment in Mongolia is anticipated to increase. Official sources have reported that the country's foreign exchange reserves are expected to exceed USD 5 billion by the end of 2024.

## Mongolia to Establish an Eco-Labeling System

Ahead of the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Forum-2024, organized under the auspices of the President of Mongolia, a business meeting on the theme "The Path to a Green and Circular Economy: International Experience and Cooperation" took place on November 27, 2024, at the "Ulaanbaatar Gallery."

The first national business meeting on the establishment of an eco-labeling system in Mongolia, or a system for conducting and certifying environmentally friendly production, was jointly organized by the Office of the President of Mongolia, the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association, "People in Need" NGO, and Khaan Bank.

As a guest speaker for the meeting, Gareth Johnston, Secretary of Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) shared international experience and the importance of eco-labeling and potential. GEN is a leading network of the world's credible ecolabels that covers more than 60 countries and 40 members around the world.

The participants of the meeting highlighted a national strategy of Mongolia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 22.7 percent by 2030, noting that



greenhouse gas emissions from industries account for a significant portion of this pollution. Therefore, shifting industries to a circular or environmentally friendly model, which would be a major step towards achieving this goal was a focal point of the meeting.

Internationally, industries that have implemented environmentally friendly practices such as saving water and energy, reducing waste, sorting, and recycling can obtain an "Eco-Label" by becoming certified according to standards. This would be a marketing tool that helps consumers recognize the value of the products, as well as providing

a guarantee for obtaining green financing and launching products in the global market, emphasized Mr. Gareth Johnston.

According to GEN Secretary Gareth Johnston, the importance of "Eco-Label" in accelerating sustainable development in the world includes:

- Determining environmental impact through "Eco Label",
- Supporting sustainable and green government procurement,
- Mutual recognition of "Eco Labels" and boosting foreign trade and exports through the label.

Mongolia is taking phased actions to establish this scheme and five sets of national standards were approved in October 2024.

## Renewable Energy Projects Ongoing in the Western Region of Mongolia

The Government of Mongolia and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are jointly implementing new projects to increase renewable energy sources in the western region of Mongolia.

Specifically, energy storage stations have been constructed and commissioned to connect solar and wind power plants with a total capacity of 40.5 MW to the Altai-Uliastai energy system. Moreover, a 5 MW solar power plant constructed in Uliastai generated about 18 million kW of electricity over the past two years. Due to the collaboration of the Government of Mongolia with the ADB, 10 MW solar power plants in Yesunbulag soum, Gobi-Altai aimag, and Murun soum, Khuvsgul aimag, while a 0.5 MW hybrid system has been installed in Altai soum, Gobi-Altai aimag, which are all generating stable electricity. Furthermore, a 135 kW ground-based heat pump system has been installed to cover the heat supply of Kindergarten No. 1 in Jargalant soum, Khovd aimag, which serves as an environmentally friendly and energy-efficient solution by reducing

coal consumption and carbon emissions.

Project Coordinator and Engineer B. Sugar emphasized, "As part of the projects to increase renewable energy sources in remote areas far from the Central Energy System implemented by the Government of Mongolia and the Ministry of Energy, solar power plants are being built and put into operation with the concessional loans from ADB. These power plants serve as the second largest energy source of the country, generating 17.2 million kWh of electricity annually and providing clean energy to the residents of the western region."

•Could you introduce the technology that utilizes geothermal energy in the western region? What makes it a distinctive energy source?

Ground temperature increases with depth. For example, the temperature rises as we drill 2-3 km deeper. In general, the soil heat is about 2-5 degrees Celsius, however, the soil does not release or store heat. Therefore, to absorb the heat, a heat-conducting object should be inserted into

the ground. Afterward, the object is put into a fluid to be boiled at a certain temperature. The efficiency of this process depends on the heat pump and absorption pressure. Heat condensed at 40-50 degrees Celsius is used for heating buildings. Basically, the initial cost, expenses, and investment for this technology are high.

•This technology seems important as it abolishes the traditional brown energy. How could this technology be further improved?

Geothermal energy is already being utilized in several areas in Mongolia, including residential areas like the "ASEM Villa," near Dulguun Nuur and Nogoon Nuur, as well as in Tuv aimag. In some areas, the system is working well, but in our conditions, there is a high risk of freezing. Currently, pilot projects are being implemented in the western region.

In addition to the projects in the western region, the Government of Mongolia and the Asian Development Bank are collaboratively implementing a Project on the "Large-Scale Energy Storage for Grid Use." The total cost of



this Project amounts to USD 114.95 million, of which:

- USD 100 million- concessional loans from the ADB;
- USD 3 million- grant aid from the ADB- USD;
- USD 11.95 million- allocations from the Government of Mongolia.

With the Large-Scale Energy Storage project implemented, about 20 thousand households in the Capital city will be prevented from electricity shortages during

peak hours.

Under the Project, 51.1 million kWh of electricity was supplied to the Central Energy System through the Songino substation from December 2023 to October 2024. According to Project Coordinator M. Naranbat, the Large-Scale Energy Storage, with a capacity of 80 MW/200 MWh, will be installed and operated in the 32nd khoroo of Songinokhairkhan district by December 2024.



# Mongolian Students Take Oath of Citizenship



The Government of Mongolia, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism, and Youth of Mongolia, and the Mongolian Youth Union NGO jointly organized the “Mongolian Citizenship Oath-Taking Ceremony” for the 22nd year.

The event is organized under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Mongolia on November 26 of each year, the historic day of the Proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Adoption of the First Constitution, to “install

patriotism, respect for the state, and be loyal to and proud of the nation's history and culture while realizing the responsibilities to the country and people.”

Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai congratulated the citizens of Mongolia who received their citizenship certificates on this day, saying, “We are the continuation of the heroic history of the Great Mongol Empire, stretching from Siberia to India, from Vietnam to Hungary, and from Korea to the Balkan Peninsula. We also must not forget the bitter history of our empire being divided into parts, losing our independence, and suffering under the rule of the Manchu Qing Dynasty for more than 200 years. Citizens who devote themselves to the development of their country and protect and cherish their freedom, independence, history,

culture, and heritage will remain in history over centuries.” The Premier recalled the great deeds of Da Lama Tserenchimed, Chin Van Khanddorj, Sain Noyon Khan Namnansuren, Manlaibaatar Damdinsuren, Khatanbaatar Magsarjav, and the leaders of the People's Revolution and the brave patriots of the past.

“On this day in 1924, with its first Constitution, we became the second Republic in Asia to prioritize the rights of the people, and one of the first countries in the world to grant women the right to vote. The Constitution stipulates that natural resources are owned by the people, state institutions are established on the principle of democratic elections, as well as keeping the right to practice religion open and separating religious affairs from state affairs. Mongolia became the 101st full member of the United Nations

on October 27, 1961. Since then, Mongolia established diplomatic relations with all UN member states and has become an “Oasis of Democracy in Asia,” noted the Prime Minister in his address to 16-year-olds, calling on them to contribute to the development of their country, honor and promote its history, culture, and independence.

This ceremony of taking the oath of citizenship of Mongolia coincided with the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the first Constitution. There are 62,668 young people in Mongolia, turning 16 this year.

The oath-taking ceremony for Mongolian citizenship was held in the “Ikh Mongol Hall” of the State Palace of Mongolia and in nine districts of Ulaanbaatar and 21 aimags with the participation of around 850 student representatives.

## Modern Issues of Child Development and Children's Rights Discussed

On November 21, 2024, the Governor's Office of the Capital City of Mongolia and the Mongolian Children's Palace (MCP) organized an international academic conference “Modern Issues of Child Development,” a triennial event held since 2018.

At the Conference, presentations were made on the following topics:

- “The Current Situation of Children's Rights and Development Protection” by Kh. Azjargal, an analyst at the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Protection of Mongolia;

- “Modern Early Childhood Education” by preschool education specialist at UNICEF in Mongolia Dr. T. Tsendsuren;

- “The Importance of Oral Health Education for the Healthy Smiles of Mongolian Children” by Director of “Misheel Kids Foundation” Gabriella Schmidt-Corsitto;

- “The Primary Forms of Art Affecting Children's Development and Maturity: One of the Key Directions of the Mongolian Children's Palace” by Director of the MCP B. Tsengelmaa;

- “The Role and Significance of Speech Development in Children's Growth” by specialist of the National Council of Language Policy Dr. B. Dorjderem;

- “Health Examinations for Five-Year-Old-Children in Japan-Pre-school Support and Preparations for Entering School” by



specialist at JICA Hiromi Takai.

Furthermore, research papers and presentations were delivered under themes such as “Implementation of State Policies,

Children's Development, Participation, and Protection,” “Social and Psychological Aspects of Children's Development,” “Supporting Environments and

Activities for Children's Development, Key Considerations for the Future.” Recommendations of the Conference will be delivered to state and public organizations, with the aim of aligning child-related policies and activities with scientific research and evidence-based findings, according to the Public Relations and Communications Department of the Governor's Office of the Capital City.

The Conference saw the participation of representatives from ministries, government agencies, and universities, including scholars and researchers from the United Nations, Switzerland, Japan, the People's Republic of China, and Mongolia.

## UNICEF to Provide Policy Recommendations for Mongolia's Child Protection Efforts

On November 22, 2024, Minister of Family, Labor, and Social Protection of Mongolia Enkh-Amgalan Luvsantseren met with Andrea Rossi, UNICEF Social Policy Advisor for South-east Asia, to discuss ways of further strengthening child protection and social policies in Mongolia.

At the meeting, Social Policy Advisor Andrea Rossi made a



presentation “Fostering Social Participation and Livelihoods of Children in Mongolia: Evidence-Based Decision-Making and Recommendations” during the “Social Policy and Protection-Children” consultative meeting, organized in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Social Policy of the State Great Khural, the Subcommittee on Sustainable Development Goals,

and UNICEF. The following points were made during the presentation:

- The total population of Mongolia is 3.5 million, of which 37.1%, or 1.2 million, are children.

- Over 70% of cases involving violence against children occur within the family environment.

- Although the revised Child Protection Law came into effect

on September 1, 2024, more needs to be done to effectively implement the law to ensure the safety and protection of children in any environment.

The Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Protection of Mongolia has announced plans to seek policy recommendations from UNICEF to effectively implement child protection policies and set up a national framework.

## Master Plan for the Development of Intensive Dairy Farming in Songinokhairkhan District Completed

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry of Mongolia and the “Global Civic Sharing” international organization from the Republic of Korea signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on improving the quality and productivity of livestock production, introducing scientific research and studies into production, strengthening the livestock production value chain, and promoting inclusive development by enhancing the capacity of experts and workforce in the livestock industry.

Having carried out local development activities in Mongolia since 2002, the “Global Civic Sharing” international organization has successfully implemented a number of long and

medium-term projects and programs, including the “Livestock Bank” Loan Program, the “Hay and Fodder Fund” assistance program, the “Training for Local Leaders and Citizens” project, and the “Increasing Household Income through Strengthening Cooperative Governance” project. Since 2021, the organization has been implementing the “Inclusive Livestock Farming” project with USD 5 million in grant funding from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA.)

The “Inclusive Livestock Farming” project, aimed to improve the policy environment for livestock production, support cooperatives at the governance and operational levels, enhance the capacity of livestock farmers,

sector experts, and government officials, and improve the quality and productivity of livestock production, as well as strengthen the value chain, is planned for implementation from 2021 to 2035. The first phase of the Project, running from 2021 to 2025, is currently in its fourth year of implementation.

As part of the Project, the master plan for the development of intensive dairy farming in Songinokhairkhan district has been formulated, and its initial draft has been completed. Executive Director of the Global Civic Sharing in Mongolia Mr. Hyun-Ju Cho highlighted “The adoption and implementation of the master plan stands as an exemplary model for localized production and agricultural clus-



tering to create opportunities for developing intensive animal husbandry around Ulaanbaatar city, formulating production planning based on livestock health and breeding records as well as improving the quality and yield of livestock-derived products.”

State Secretary of the Minis-

try of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry Jambaltseren Tumur-Uya expressed the Ministry's commitment to supporting the effective implementation of the Project, fostering the development of value-added livestock production, and building capacity of experts in the sector.



# Ichinkhorloo Bayarkhuu: The National Library of Mongolia is the Repository of Intellectual Heritage, and Mongol Knowledge and Wisdom



■ *MONTSAME Mongolian National News Agency spoke with Ichinkhorloo Bayarkhuu, Director of the National Library of Mongolia.*

**-The National Library of Mongolia has opened a new branch for the first time in its 73-year history. How are you organizing your work at the new branch?**

-I would like to extend my greetings to the readers of Mongol Messenger. The central building of the National Library of Mongolia was opened in 1951, and this year, for the first time since then, we have commissioned our new branch.

The central building of the National Library primarily serves academic readers, focusing on individuals aged above 18. We haven't been able to provide full services to people with physical challenges, children, mothers with young children, and the elderly. Considering all of this, we have started offering services in our new branch that we couldn't provide before. Now entire families can come and use the library together.

The new branch operates in two shifts, from 8 AM to 8 PM, and it is always full of people. Seeing the joyful faces of our visitors we, as librarians, feel accomplished and fulfilling our mission successfully. This might be the greatest joy of this autumn.

**-Internationally, libraries have become spaces for leisure and rest. I understand that smart technology and new trends have been integrated in your industry?**

-Over the past one hundred years the greatest wealth collected by our library are, first and foremost, our collection itself, and secondly, the vast intellectual benefits that flow from the library. The core of the National Library's collection consists of ancient manuscripts and scriptures-nearly 50 percent of the collection is made up of these ancient works. This knowledge

by the scholars of all times in our history represent the intellectual heritage that our library has contributed to the nation. The remaining collection, which consists of modern books and publications, reflects the scope of our services.

Now, to build the history of the next one hundred years, we are focusing on laying a solid foundation for a digital library and expanding our services beyond physical borders. Therefore, we have opened two specialized reading halls: one for academic research and one for digital access. Our Central Building holds a vast number of academic papers and theoretical materials. We now provide access to these materials through the new branch's Academic Reading Hall, where visitors can view them digitally. If we lay the foundation of our digital library correctly, the dissemination of scholarly knowledge to Mongolians living and working in every corner of the globe will inevitably expand.

**-How accessible are these manuscripts and academic works to foreign researchers, particularly Mongolists, through digital platforms?**

-When the new library building was constructed, there was public concern that the library might be demolished or privatized. However, we are proposing to make the National Library of Mongolia a Central Library for Worlds Mongol Studies, which holds 50 percent of its collection in ancient manuscripts, scriptures, and block-printed books. In other words, Mongolia should become the global center for Mongol Studies. The National Library of Mongolia has the collection and the facility, now, government policy and political support will have a significant impact.

We have commissioned

"Altan Duulga" company to complete the design work for the renovation of the old building, and the budget has already been approved. The work of a library is never "finished" because there are no limits to human thought and intellect. Library policy should keep pace with human development, and ideally, it should even lead the way. This is the speed our times demand from us.

**-What sets the National Library of Mongolia apart from other libraries around the world? How many manuscripts and scriptures are there that have not been studied yet?**

-Mongolia is world-renowned for its collection of the "Ganjuur" [In the Mongolian language means "Concise Orders"- the words of Buddha in particular.] It is held in high esteem by the Mongolian Buddhists. They worship the Ganjuur at temples and recite the lines of Ganjuur in daily life as a sacred ritual], one of the main scriptures of Buddhism. Therefore, we can proudly say that the collection of the National Library of Mongolia is one of the noblest, richest, and most significant for Buddhists around the world, as well Daoists. Secondly, many people think that the Tibetan language collection consists only of Buddhist teachings. However, it preserves the intellectual treasures of the Mongolian people. For instance, our ancestors recorded many achievements in natural sciences, medical sciences, poetry, art, and culture in Tibetan. The Tibetan scriptures hold a wealth of knowledge about the characteristics of the sky, the land, water, the human body, and herbal plants. We can trace back much of our lost Mongolian traditions through these Tibetan manuscripts.

In other words, the intellectual heritage of Mongol traditions that were lost has been preserved in these Tibetan texts. The Sumbum and Ganbum [Buddhist manuscript], written

by Mongolian monks, and other intellectual works by Mongolian scholars are kept in the National Library of Mongolia in Tibetan, some in Tod Script, and sometimes even in Soyombo Script. The reason why we haven't made these texts readily available to the public is that we need to study them ourselves first. We must approach the intellectual heritage of the Mongolian people carefully, systematically, and methodically. We are keen to foster Mongolian scholars who will make new discoveries from the works written by our monks, like Sumbum and Ganbum, and other Tibetan manuscripts. It is often foreigners who are more interested in studying these works than our own youth. Our ambition is to open up this vast collection to the Mongolian people and to encourage research on it.

Eventually, we will extend to an international level. As I mentioned earlier, we aim to become the Central Library for Mongol Studies. This goal involves promoting research based on our collection. We hope that scholars will be able to unlock the mystery of how Mongolia, with its small population of three million, has maintained its independence without succumbing to the influence of larger empires. For Buddhist scholars, our Tibetan manuscripts offer a great source of knowledge.

**-Mongolians have a history of creating manuscripts and books using nine precious elements. The Tibetan manuscript collection is considered as unmatched in the world. How extensive is the Tibetan manuscript collection?**

-There are over a million manuscripts. However, we cannot give an exact number yet because when we unwrap a manuscript, we sometimes find four or five different texts from various periods inside, or a Cyrillic version of the Altangerel [Swarna prabhāsa – Golden Beam] sutra. Sometimes, a beautifully written story on notebook paper appears. So, there can be multiple types of writings within a single barintag [cotton or silk cloth for wrapping the manuscript]. We count these as manuscripts because they are elements preserving Mongolian writing culture. If you ask whether they are subjects of study, the answer is yes.

**-The Library of Congress, a source of pride for the world, works with the mission of acquiring the best books from around the world. How does the National Library of Mongolia enrich its collection?**

-Ongud Jamiyan Sangajav Gun, along with his like-minded friends, played a historic role in building the intellectual and memory-based treasure of Mongolia. The foundation laid by the Institute of Manuscripts of Mongolia expanded into organizations like the National Archives of Mongolia, the Mongolian Language and Literature Institute, and the National Library of Mongolia, all of which have

contributed to the 100-year modern history of Mongolia. The efforts of successive Heads of State and the public have been vital to enriching the National Library's collection.

We have a history of preserving Mongolia's independence and Mongol intellectual heritage at the cost of 3,000 temples and 30,000 monks. The hidden treasures and the repository of intellectual heritage left behind by scholars and monks were gathered from family altars and even from caves and ravines. Scholars from the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia and Mongolian Language and Literature Institute played an important role in collecting these works, traveling across the country. Additionally, once the Cyrillic script became the norm, people would bring books and manuscripts they could no longer read to the National Library of Mongolia.

According to the Law on Libraries, more than three copies of every book published nationwide must be donated to the National Library of Mongolia. However, not all publishers fully comply with this provision, and the number of books received is insufficient. On top of this, we are allocated a budget of MNT 20-40 million per year to "buy books." Given the current cost of books and publications, it's easy to see how little MNT 40 million really is. For this reason, we have organized donation campaigns annually. In recent years, the collection of the National Library has exceeded its capacity, which led to the opening of our new branch. Now, we are focused on collecting academic publications. We have signed Memorandums of Understanding with 13 institutes of the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia, ensuring that every book published by their scholars enriches our collection. The primary goal is to ensure our readers are well-served with research materials.

**-Mongolia now has two National Libraries. I'm sure there are many books, manuscripts, and ancient texts you would love to exhibit. How much more space do you think is needed to accommodate these collections?**

-Having two branches has made me think about opening a library in every district of Ulaanbaatar city. When the scope of services expands and more people visit the library, it brings a lot of joy and fulfillment to a professional like me. Mongolia needs happiness. It needs laughter and love. All of this can be found in the library. The library is a place where one can find peace, meet with his or her ownself, and more than just meet a book discover oneself within a book. That's why the library is a second home for many people. It's essential to help authorities, and especially donors, understand that the library is a place of genuine humanity, morality, and intellectual service.

Continued on page 7



## Mongolian Freestyle Wrestlers Claim Eight Medals at the 37th World Military Wrestling Championship



The freestyle wrestlers of the "Aldar" Sports Committee under the Ministry of Defense of Mongolia achieved remarkable success at the World Military Wrestling Championship held in Yerevan, Armenia, with 18 wrestlers representing Mongolia.

On the final day of the championship, International Master of Sports and State Falcon Batmagnai Enkhtuvshin triumphed in the men's 125kg freestyle category, securing a gold medal that made the National Anthem of Mongolia resonate on the world

stage. Meanwhile, International Master of Sports and State Hawk Gankhuyag Ganbaatar claimed a bronze medal in the same category. In the women's division, Otgontuya Bayanmunkh earned a silver medal in the 57kg category, while Munkhnar Byambasuren claimed silver in the 50kg category, and Oyundari Ganbat won bronze in the 53kg category.

As a result, the freestyle wrestlers from the "Aldar" Sports Committee successfully competed in the championship, bringing home an impressive total of eight medals: two gold, four silver, and two bronze. Notably, the championship featured over 200 athletes from 22 countries, with Mongolia represented by 18 wrestlers.

## Mongolian Athletes Earn Gold Medal and Trophy at the WDF Asia-Pacific Cup



The 20th WDF Asia-Pacific Cup was held on November 3-6, 2024, in Taipei, Taiwan, where the Mongolian National Darts Team clinched the first gold medal and an overall team trophy.

The Mongolian team consisted of 13 athletes who competed in men's and women's singles as well as junior categories. Specifically, Telmen Maidar emerged as a Champion of the WDF Asia-Pacific Cup Boys' Singles, whereas Batbold Jadambaa secured the bronze. In Women's Singles, Ankhiulun Munkhbayasgalan claimed the bronze medal. In addition, in Mixed Doubles and Singles, the Mongolian team earned the silver

medal, winning the overall junior team trophy. Additionally, Oyun-Erdene Dugersharav and Odonchimeg Namsraijav won the bronze medals in the Women's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles and Singles. In the Men's category, Altantulkhuur Myagmarsuren claimed the silver. With overall points, Altantulkhuur Myagmarsuren and Jargalsaikhan Ulziibayar got second place, winning the trophy in the Men's Doubles.

medal, winning the overall junior team trophy.

This marks the first time Mongolia has won the prestigious Asia-Pacific Trophy, which has been rotating between the champions of 19 countries. The Mongolian Classic Darts Association emphasized that Mongolian athletes have achieved success in darts unprecedented in the last three decades.

In the elimination stage,

## Suldkhuu Olonbayar Becomes World Military Champion

The 37th CISM World Military Wrestling Championships took place on November 20-22, 2024, in Yerevan, Armenia.

The Championships saw participation from more than 200 athletes representing 22 countries, with 18 athletes representing Mongolia. As of the first two days, the Mongolian team has secured one gold and two silver medals. Specifically, athlete of "Aldar" sports club Suldkhuu Olonbayar claimed the gold medal in the men's 79 kg category, making the National Anthem of Mongolia resonate on the world stage, while Inter-

national Master of Sports Davaabandi Munkherdene won the silver medal in men's 57 kg category.

Military Champion Suldkhuu Olonbayar won 5th place at the Seniors World Championships-Non-Olympic Weight Categories and gained bronze at the Asian Championships just a few days ago.

Moreover, Youth Olympic Games silver medalist and International Master of Sports Dulguun Munkhbold grabbed Mongolia's first medal from the 37th World Military Wrestling Championships.

## Mongolian National Team Captures Bronze at the FISU 2024 3x3 Basketball World University League



The Mongolian Team secured the bronze medal at the FISU 2024 3x3 Basketball World University League held in Xiamen, the People's Republic of China, on November 22-24, 2024.

Representing Mongolia under the guidance of Honored Coach of Mongolia S. Tulga, the "Bayankhairkhan Mon-Altius," team consisted of four members: A. Batkhuyag, B. Altangerel, U. Chinguun, and L. Avirmed. The team secured a victory against Ecuador but was defeated by France in Group "B," finishing second in the group.

In the elimination stage,

the Mongolian team triumphed over Uganda and China before losing to Lithuania. In the bronze medal match, they once again faced and defeated the Chinese National Team with a score of 22:19, earning their place on the podium.

Having previously claimed the silver in 2017 and the gold in 2018, the Mongolian team has received a full set of medals at the FISU 3x3 Basketball World University League. The team has qualified to participate in the 2025 Summer World University Games (Universiade) to be organized in Germany in July 2025.

## Ichinkhorloo Bayarkhuu: The National Library of Mongolia is the Repository of Intellectual Heritage, Mongol Knowledge and Wisdom

Continued from page 6

In doing so, the private sector can share the weight with the state. We should call for libraries to be built within residential complexes, and ensure that a small book corner should always be included in the planning.

Many valuable collections that we want to show to the world are still stored in the two wings of our old library building. Based on these collections, we have the ambition to become the world's Central Library for Mongol Studies. Our scholars and readers support this vision. Why shouldn't we be able to become like the Library of Congress? New generations of scholars and writers, who will become our pride like Damdinsuren Tsend and Rinchen Byamba, will be born from the libraries.

The National Library of Mongolia is very much like the country itself. Just as our nation faces the challenges of being a small population under the strong influence of global culture, our library, with a limited number of readers, bears the same burden. The Mongolian language, too, stands amidst the dominance of many languages. If the country's territorial integrity is vital

for its existence, the most crucial safeguard for Mongolia's national security is its people. The primary feature that distinguishes us globally is our language. That's why the National Library of Mongolia stands firm against the encroachment of multiple languages and cultural influences. The library holds both the intellectual treasure and the key to development, a point we keep emphasizing.

Therefore, in order to ensure that Mongolian children grow up as true Mongolians and bring them closer to the magnificent literary, historical, linguistic, and cultural heritage of our country, over 100 of our staff work tirelessly in two shifts, day, and night.

**-Who was the person who donated the rarest manuscript or book in the history of the National Library of Mongolia? Could you share some interesting historical facts that might be interesting for our readers?**

-As for the donors, this tradition dates back quite far. One notable example is the Danjuur Stone Stele Monument, which is registered as part of the World Cultural Heritage. It's a Monument that was created when the volumes of Danjuur sutras were

transferred to Mongolia, and a written agreement was made. From this, we can see that the most valuable works have been entrusted to the National Library of Mongolia. Moreover, we have unique works such as the sutras offered by the Dalai Lamas, and palm-leaf manuscripts in Sanskrit script, all of which have been donated. The most recent donation was a portion of the personal library of poet Nyamaa Dolgor, a Laureate of State Premium and Honored Cultural Worker of Mongolia, donated by his children in accordance with his will. Another example is the public's participation in the "Save the History" Project, through which Barintag [cotton or silk cloth for wrapping the manuscript] are donated. As a result, our library no longer has unwrapped manuscripts, and we have preserved the tradition of binding books in the finest silk. This all was made possible thanks to the kindness of donors. It's a reflection of the dedication of the Mongolian people who strive to keep the library alive.

**-For several years now, the National Book Festivals are held at the Central Square of Ulaanbaatar city every spring and autumn. Meeting the wri-**

**ters, publishers, buyers, and children attending the event, the future of the book market of Mongolia looks promising?**

-The National Book Festival, first initiated by the National Library of Mongolia, is a testament of how collaboration between the public and private sectors can succeed. The initiative we began has since been carried forward by the "Nomiin Soyolt Yertunts" (World of Book Culture) NGO, turning it into a regular public event. We also have an ambition to make Ulaanbaatar the "Book Capital." Of course, it's hard not to view this event with optimism. At this moment, it is one of the most energetic and timely cultural events. I'm especially pleased that this celebration has expanded beyond the capital and reached provinces and districts. It's a great way to showcase our identity as a book-loving nation to the world. Following this, private libraries have also begun to open. When people read, in one way or another, they are filling their minds and enriching their intellect with new knowledge. That's why I wholeheartedly support and celebrate everyone who contributes to the growth of book culture and serves the true purpose of books.

**-You mentioned that the National Library aspires to become the global Center for Mongol Studies. How far-fetched is this ambition?**

-Let me share a story. Once, I visited Taiwan. While I was there, I expressed my wish to pay my respects to "The Secret History of the Mongols", so I asked the staff at Taiwan's National Library for permission. They led me through several layers of doors into a fortress-like space. An elderly man who had worked there his entire life, responsible for the Mongolian manuscripts section, was present. He opened a steel safe, and inside the safe was a white sandalwood box from which he took out "The Secret History of the Mongols". The moment I saw it, my eyes filled up with tears-it was a profound experience. When I bowed to "The Secret History of the Mongols", the library staff were completely astonished. They couldn't understand why a person would bow to her own historical artifact. From that moment, they started treating me with deep respect, almost as if I were someone with magical powers. But in Mongolia, bowing to a sacred text is a common practice.

Looking at the current state of Mongolian intellect and the knowledge level of our readers, I believe this goal of becoming the global Center for Mongol Studies is not far off.



# Ki-Chul Oh: Nowhere in the World has the Average Air Temperature Increased by More than Two Degrees Celsius except in Mongolia



■ The "Daily News" newspaper of Mongolia interviewed Ki-Chul Oh, former Chair of the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Network of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and founder of the Green Asia Network international nongovernmental organization.

**-When did you first arrive in Mongolia? Why did Green Asia Network choose to implement its projects and activities in Mongolia?**

-The first time I came to Mongolia was with a group of others in 2000 to research climate change. When I saw the climate change situation in the countryside, the change was getting very serious. According to climate research, due to global warming, the average air temperature in other countries has increased by +0.6 degrees. But in Mongolia, the average air temperature has risen by two degrees. As our group traveled through the countryside, most of the land was under desertification. Also, there were many cases where the rivers and lakes ran out of water and dried up. Since that experience, I have felt a strong need to be involved and to take action against desertification in Mongolia. Mongolia's struggles with climate change are not solely due to its actions. Neighboring developed countries like China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan engage in significant industrial production and agriculture, which greatly contributes to global warming. As a result, Mongolia is one of the countries most adversely affected by these activities. Therefore, 24 years ago, I established the Green Asia Network's Mongolian branch and started planting trees and launching initiatives to improve people's livelihoods.

**-How many projects is the Green Asia Network implementing in Mongolia? Where are they being implemented and what is the duration of each**

**project?**

-First, we started with a tree-planting project in Ulaanbaatar City. The reference model plantation sites for afforestation and combating desertification were established in 10 soums, such as Baganuur district, Saintsagaan soum in Dundgobi aimag, Bayannuur and Dashinchilen soums in Bulgan aimag, Ugiinuur soum in Arkhangai aimag, and Erdene, Argalant, Bayantsogt, and Bayankhangai soums in Tuv aimag. Our latest project started this year in Gurvanbulag soum, Bulgan aimag. The first five years of the project are usually dedicated to infrastructure preparation work. One plantation site should be supported and managed for at least 10 years. Moreover, empowering and capacity-building among local people is very important. For example, a model of best practices plantation site and afforestation area was established in 2007 in Bayannuur soum of Bulgan aimag, and it has been supporting and empowering local people to this day. A short-term project lasts for five years, while a long-term project lasts longer.

**-"Green Asia Network" is hiring, training, and providing local jobs for individuals of all ages and genders. Could you tell us more about this process?**

-In the beginning, in cooperation with Japan, we planted only trees in Mongolia for three or four years. Unfortunately, all the trees died. The main reason was that herders in the countryside broke the fences, allowing their animals to enter the planting areas and feed on the saplings. I deeply regret the loss of those trees, and

I realized that I couldn't continue with this approach. During the first plantation site establishment in the Baganuur district, we began involving local people in the project and offered them paid work. As a result, 95 percent of the planted trees thrived. Since then, we have decided to engage local communities not only by providing paid employment but also by emphasizing that the plantation site will always be available to them and that collaboration is beneficial for everyone involved. We are an international NGO, and upon completing the project, we will eventually transfer ownership of the plantation sites to the respective local organizations or communities.

Before 2007, one individual now working in the afforestation area of Bayannuur soum in Bulgan aimag was a herder with over 1,300 livestock. Unfortunately, he lost all his livestock during the severe winter "dzud" of 2007. At that time, many young herders left their aimags to find work and earn a living in Ulaanbaatar. However, this man, being older, chose to remain in the countryside instead of relocating to the capital.



That summer, over 20 people joined us to work because they had also lost their livestock, and we began our efforts in an empty, barren area. Planting trees, farming, and cultivating the land proved to be incredibly challenging for the former herders. Fortunately, Green Asia Network provided them with training, guidance, and support, helping them transform the area into a beautiful afforestation site today. These individuals not only planted and nurtured the trees but also established mutual aid groups and cooperatives.

In Bayannuur soum, Bulgan aimag, we have established four afforestation areas, resulting in the planting of trees across a total of 127,000 hectares. In 2013, more than 40 hectares were handed over to the Ministry of

Environment, while the remaining 80 hectares are currently managed by Green Asia Network. Of the 80,000 trees planted, approximately 56,000 have successfully grown and are being cared for and protected. Some of these trees are cultivated as a source of income, and the afforested area includes about 25,000 sea buckthorn trees.

Green Asia Network is a non-profit organization combating climate change. The individuals responsible for caring for and protecting the sea buckthorn trees also process the fruits, turning them into a source of income through sales. Members of the cooperative in the Bayannuur afforestation area have proposed that 50 percent of the profits from fruit sales be distributed as dividends. They suggest that 30 percent should be allocated to a risk fund, and the remaining 20 percent should cover operating expenses.

**-What are the main challenges faced when implementing projects locally? How does the Mongolian Government or local government provide support?**

-Thank you for your impor-

tant question. The support and cooperation of central and local government organizations are essential for the project's successful implementation in combating desertification in rural areas. We have established a general Memorandum of Cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and are also signing related cooperation agreements with the local government organizations involved in our projects.

These organizations are responsible for granting land use permits for afforestation activities. For foreign organizations, land permits are typically issued for five years. If the land permit is not renewed upon expiration, we may not be able to continue our operations, posing a significant risk to our project and the trees we planted.

The closure of the project would negatively impact the local environment and community, as over 20 people would lose their jobs and sources of income, affecting their families and children. Fortunately, it has become easier to work with local government agencies lately. In the past, we faced significant challenges, but we often did not address them effectively. However, local people have taken the initiative to solve their problems. A notable example of this is how they identified their issues and presented solutions during meetings

with the Citizens' Representatives Khural.

The government has permitted us to plant trees in the afforestation area of Erdene soum, Tuv aimag. However, a mining company suddenly claimed that it had received its permit before us. Their permit was only for mineral exploration. The company informed us that it would conduct exploration activities simultaneously with our tree-planting project. For several years, we have been involved in litigation with this mining company regarding their sand exploration rights in our project area. This ongoing conflict is causing disruptions to our operations, partly due to a lack of coordination among government agencies.

**-What is the purpose of your visit to Mongolia this time? What aspects of tree planting should Mongolia focus more on?**

-I came to Mongolia to conduct research. In the past, Mongolia was a country where very few trees were planted. However, recently, there has been a significant focus on tree planting due to the "Billion Trees" National Movement. This initiative is part of the government's efforts to combat global warming and can be considered one of its effective policies.

As part of the "Billion Trees" National Movement, Mongolia should collaborate with various countries, not just the Republic of Korea. Many developed countries have obligations to the United Nations to support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Potential funding sources for the "Billion Trees" National Movement could be greatly enhanced by selling credits based on the amount of greenhouse gas that can be absorbed by creating green structures per hectare. It would be very effective for researchers to conduct research in this area and provide validated data on greenhouse gas absorption.

We have conducted preliminary research in limited afforestation areas. However, these results are not fully confirmed, and ongoing research is necessary. It is estimated that each hectare can absorb approximately six tons of greenhouse gases annually, indicating a significant opportunity to plant over a billion trees. A tree thrives when it is cared for but can die if neglected. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain sustainable practices moving forward.

**-What are the benefits of planting trees?**

-The United Nations evaluates our work from various perspectives. It recognizes not only the establishment of green structures but also the importance of additional actions, such as tree planting and the cultivation of protective windbreaks using sea buckthorn or fruit trees. From an ecological standpoint, tree planting is effective in restoring soil health, preventing sand migration, and mitigating desertification to some extent. Trees absorb water, and areas with tree cover can reduce dust storms by as much as tenfold. Furthermore, trees protect against floods, not just dust storms.

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## WEATHER

Sunrise: 08:17 Sunset: 17:09

■ Ulaanbaatar and Central Aimags: Night temps between -19 C and -8 C. Day time temps between -16 C and +1 C

■ Eastern Aimags: Night temps between -21 C and -8 C. Day time temps between -12 C and +2 C

■ Western Aimags: Night temps between -22 C and -18 C. Day time temps between -13 C and -6 C

■ Gobi Aimags: Night temps between -19 C and -8 C. Day time temps between -8 C and +4 C

