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Politics

Late Changes to Mongolia's Election Law Raise Concerns Ahead of Next Week's Polls

June 22 (asiafoundation.org) On June 29, Mongolians will cast their vote for a new parliament, the State Great Khural, for the seventh time since the country's first democratic election in 1992. The election process in Mongolia has always been reasonably free and fair with no concrete evidence of electoral fraud, and with a relatively high turnout. However, since the 1992 election when voter turnout was 95.6 percent, turnout has consistently dropped in subsequent elections, reaching 67.3 percent in the last election in 2012. While low turnout is a concern, the most contentious issue surrounding next week's election are late changes to the election law that include rejecting the party list system.

The 2012 parliamentary election was contested with a mixed electoral system that included both proportional representation through a "party list" and a majoritarian system or "first past the post." On April 21, 2016, Mongolia's Constitutional Court rejected the use of party lists that determined 28 of the 76 seats of parliament in 2012. The court argued that the party list system violates the rights of citizens to directly elect their representatives. Less than two months before the election, on May 5, 2016, the parliament adopted the court ruling and amended the election law to remove the party list system and return the election system back to a full majority. Some worry that this change, coupled with a short campaign time of only 17 days, may favor incumbents or members of the major political parties and limit the space for independents and smaller political parties that will have an abbreviated time to be heard by the voters.

Changes in the law also led to the last-minute remapping of electoral districts and allocation of 76 seats. Overall, 48 mandates have been assigned to 21 *aimags* (provinces) and 28 to the capital city. When the Mongolian parliament approved the gender quota for candidates of at least 30 percent in 2012, it was praised as a progressive step. However, as part of changes to the election law, parliament decided to decrease the gender quota to 20 percent in this election, even though the change had not been included within the Court decision. Both major parties, the Democratic Party and the Mongolian People's Party, nominated 17 and 16 female candidates, respectively, as required by the law.

This year, 69 independent candidates are running – the highest number ever. According to the Sant Maral Foundation's annual Political Barometer released in March 2016, more than one-third of the public (31.9% in the countryside, 39.4% in the capital city, Ulaanbaatar) responded that none of the major parties can best solve their problems. The survey also reveals a high percentage of undecided voters, at over 40 percent, which could mean that smaller parties have a better chance at influencing voters' decisions during the campaign, which officially kicked off on June 11. One feature of Mongolia's election law is that all campaign activities must end one day before Election



Day. This clause has been strongly enforced in past elections and tends to leave everyone to wonder in amazement at how all the posters and billboards on the city streets and buildings can vanish overnight.

Coinciding with the parliamentary elections this year are elections for Ulaanbaatar's City Council. An unprecedented 286 candidates are running, vying for just 45 seats. As Ulaanbaatar's population rapidly increases, the importance of running the capital city government is becoming more pronounced. Although allocated only 28 seats in the national government, the City Council is seen as more directly representing the priorities of Ulaanbaatar citizens, who now make up nearly half of the country's entire population, given its power to manage day-to-day issues as well as develop investment, infrastructure, and environmental policies city-wide.

The Mongolian General Election Commission (GEC), which serves as the main government body to organize elections, has faced enormous challenges due to these late changes in the election system, which has resulted in an even more expensive election than planned. The GEC has done a fair job in the areas of online checks of voter registration, as well as checks of party platforms together with the National Audit Agency against their fiscal feasibility so that candidates would not include promises of large cash handouts in their party platforms. During the 2008 election, campaigns competed for who could promise the most cash to voters – two major parties promised to share the country's mineral wealth with citizens through cash handouts of \$500 and \$750. Candidates are now barred from making election promises about money or employment.

However, the GEC has struggled to sufficiently educate citizens on the electoral system and how to compare party platforms and distinguish between the different candidates. Voters currently do not have easy access to standardized information on candidate profiles, including past offices held or proposed policies. While parties technically make information about platforms and candidates available, making this information more easily accessible and publishing standardized and unbiased information through voters' guides would be a tremendous help.

Although these changes present challenges as Mongolia's democracy transforms, the country has a significant history of free and fair elections that will likely carry it forward. As Mongolians head to the polls next week to decide who will run their country for the next four years, it is important to recognize that, despite historical election day stability, reformers inside and outside government should not abandon efforts for improvements in the transparency and efficiency of the electoral process.

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Cabinet meeting in brief

Ulaanbaatar, June 20 (MONTSAME) The cabinet meeting chaired Monday Brigadier-General T.Badral, head of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), to ensure implementation and observance of the basic rule of fire safety.



- Chief of the Secretariat for Government S.Bayartsogt presented a report on settling petitions and requests from people which were addressed to officials of state administrative bodies through the “11 11” center in the first half of this year.
- The cabinet approved results of the 6th meeting of the Mongolia-Austria intergovernmental commission for the economic cooperation held on June 23, 2016 in Vienna. The Minister of Mining R.Jigjid was tasked to adopt a plan of follow-up actions and to monitor the implementation.
- The cabinet adopted a Mongolia-USA intergovernmental agreement on land exploitation for the US Embassy in Mongolia, which was signed on June 3 in Ulaanbaatar.
- The cabinet reviewed results of the official visit of John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, to Mongolia on June 5, and then ordered the Foreign Minister L.Purevsuren to approve a plan of follow-up actions, and to make certain its implementation.
- The cabinet reviewed results of the President's visit to the Republic of Korea hosted on May 18-20, which will be submitted to the National Security Council (NSC).

President's attendance at SCO meeting

President leaves to attend tripartite meeting and SCO Summit

Ulaanbaatar, June 22 (MONTSAME) President of Mongolia Ts.Elbegdorj left Ulaanbaatar on June 22 for Tashkent Uzbekistan, to partake as an observer in the 16th meeting of the heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to be held on June 23 and 24.

During the action, Ts.Elbegdorj will attend the 3rd tripartite meeting of the heads of state of Mongolia, Russia and China.

He will also have bilateral meetings with the President of Russian Federation V.V.Putin and the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping and the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov.

The tripartite meeting is of great importance in intensifying economic cooperation, identifying the future partnership areas, and mobilizing the deals agreed on high level.

The three sides intend to sign key cooperation documents on matters such as transit transport, economic corridor and etc.

Xi Jinping Meets with President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj of Mongolia

June 23 (fmprc.gov.cn) On June 23, 2016 local time, President Xi Jinping met with President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj of Mongolia in Tashkent.



Xi Jinping pointed out that at present, China-Mongolia relations enjoy a sound momentum of development with close exchanges and continuously deepening practical cooperation between the two countries. The two sides should work together to accelerate the implementation of each important consensus reached, enrich the connotation of comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Mongolia, and promote bilateral relations to a new and higher level. The two countries should strengthen exchanges at all levels, consolidate the foundation of mutual trust, and understand and support each other on issues concerning respective core interests and major concerns. Both countries should accelerate the strategic docking between the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Prairie Road initiative, expand practical cooperation, and strive to reach the goal of 10 billion USD in bilateral trade volume by 2020. Both sides should drive major cooperative projects between the two countries for substantial progress and strengthen cooperation in transit transport and other fields. China is willing to work with Mongolia to enhance cooperation within multilateral mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and stands ready to promote China-Mongolia-Russia cooperation with Mongolia and Russia, and support Mongolia to hold the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting next month.

Tsakhagiin Elbegdorj expressed that Mongolia is glad to see the flourishing development of Mongolia-China comprehensive strategic partnership and appreciates China's long-standing assistance to the social and economic development of Mongolia. Mongolia is willing to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with China in all areas and expand cooperation in the construction of border ports, transit transport and other areas. Wang Huning, Li Zhanshu, Yang Jiechi and others attended the meeting.

President addresses SCO meeting

Tashkent, June 24 (MONTSAME) On June 24, President of Mongolia Ts.Elbegdorj addressed the meeting of the Council of heads of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The Mongolian President extended congratulation on the 15th anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and thanked his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov for successful organization of the SCO Summit.

He also congratulated India and Pakistan for stepping onto the road to becoming full members of the organization which is conducive to enhancing SCO both political and economic potential and giving SCO more energy to cope with regional challenges and problems.

Over 12 years, Mongolia has taken active part in SCO meetings of all levels stating its willingness to participate in SCO multilateral economic cooperation. In view of this, Mongolia considers building a cooperation mechanism between SCO member states, observers and partners is important.

The Mongolian part finds "6+5" meeting of national coordinators of SCO member states and observers as an important mechanism for promoting interactions between them. For this, Mongolia is proposing to hold the mechanism on regular basis.

Ts.Elbegdorj noted that SCO development strategy until 2025 which was adopted in Ufa last year, has shaped SCO development prospects for the next decade. Mongolia



welcomes the strategic document which ensures consolidation of real cooperation between SCO and observer states and their participation in project activities.

Mutually beneficial collaboration of the countries comes to be a vital pillar for ensuring regional security and stability. Mongolia gives priorities to promoting cooperation within SCO in the fields of infrastructure, trade, economy, agriculture, environment and combating natural disasters, said the President.

With a huge transit transport potential Mongolia is establishing with its neighbors agreements which are essential in this area. There are opportunities to combine efforts in studying feasibilities for constructing oil and gas pipelines as well as road constructions through the territory of Mongolia.

On June 23, Mongolia, Russia and China held a top level meeting to reach trilateral cooperation agreement. Signed by the three parties the Program on building trilateral economic corridor was an important step towards creating a new cooperation dimensions through coordinating regional multilateral cooperation, particularly, SCO, Eurasian economic union, Mongolian Steppe Road and Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt initiatives.

In informing that leads-up to the ASEM Summit to be held in Ulaanbaatar on July 15-16 and to celebration of the 20th anniversary of ASEM are underway, the Mongolian President thanked SCO members, observers and partners for providing their support in organizing the upcoming event and wished them to take active part in it.

Ts.Elbegdorj meets his counterpart of Uzbekistan

Ulaanbaatar, June 26 (MONTSAME) On the sidelines of the Meeting of Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization /SCO/ in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan, the President of Mongolia Ts. Elbegdorj met with his counterpart of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov.

The Mongolian President Elbegdorj congratulated Islam Karimov on successfully organizing the international important event. The Presidents of the countries exchanged views on works to enhance the bilateral relations and partnership between the two countries.

President Ts.Elbegdorj returns home

Ulaanbaatar, June 26 (MONTSAME) President of Mongolia Ts.Elbegdorj arrived home on Saturday after taking part in the Meeting of Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization /SCO/ in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

In frames of the SCO Meeting, President Elbegdorj held the third trilateral meeting with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping. He also held individual meetings with his counterpart of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping and the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov.

The President of Mongolia also delivered remarks at the extended meeting of the SCO.



Foreign Relations

Ambassadors of Italy and India present their credentials to President Ts.Elbegdorj

June 20 (UB Post) Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Italy to Mongolia Andrea De Felip and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Mongolia Suresh Babu presented their credentials to President of Mongolia Ts.Elbegdorj last Friday.

After the credentials presenting ceremony, the Mongolian President received the ambassadors to discuss and exchange views on cooperation and relations.

Beginning his meeting with the Italian ambassador, President Ts.Elbegdorj congratulated Ambassador De Felip for being appointed the first Resident Italian Ambassador to Mongolia and wished him good luck in his work.

The President noted that opening an embassy in Ulaanbaatar means that Italy places great importance on its relations with Mongolia, and underlined that Mongolia will also prioritize its relations with Italy.

Ts.Elbegdorj noted the President of the Italian Senate Pietro Grasso's visit to Mongolia held in April, and said that the meeting was the first high-level meeting to Mongolia paid by an Italian official. He also said that he hopes that the President of Italy will participate in the Asia-Europe Meeting Summit.

The Italian Ambassador said that he will make an effort to expand and develop cooperation between Mongolia and Italy. President Ts.Elbegdorj emphasized cultural cooperation between the two countries, and said that Mongolia plans to organize a broad scope of cultural events in 2020 on the occasion of 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Italy. He asked the Italian Embassy to actively cooperate in organizing the events, and noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the President will support the activities of the Italian Embassy in Mongolia.

At his meeting with the Indian Ambassador to Mongolia, President Ts.Elbegdorj said that he was happy and satisfied that the mutual cooperation and relations between the two countries, based on culture, historic ties, and common values of democracy, are successfully expanding.

The President noted that the number of mutual high level visits by the country's leaders has increased in recent years, and said that he was happy that defense cooperation between Mongolia and India is strengthening.

President Ts.Elbegdorj emphasized that the signing of a one billion USD concessional loan agreement between the two countries governments guarantees a broad scope of cooperation and relations between Mongolia and India. "This shows that the Government of India wants to support Mongolia's social and economic development, and guarantees friendly relations between our nations," the Mongolian President noted.



Ambassador Babu said that he was also satisfied that relations between the two countries are intensively developing to a high level, and underlined that he will work toward strengthening relations in the future.

Economy

Commerce department seeks Cabinet nod to expand Asia-Pacific Trade Pact

June 27 (indiatimes.com) NEW DELHI: The [commerce department](#) has sought [cabinet](#) approval to expand the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), focusing on areas that will encourage domestic manufacturing as part of the Make in India initiative. As part of the exercise, India is focussing on importing raw materials and intermediaries from [APTA](#) member countries and, in return, giving higher tariff concessions on more products.

The increased import of raw materials, intermediaries and components such as machine tools, chemicals and plastics will reduce costs and improve competitiveness of domestic industry. "The expansion has been done with Make in India as an objective," said one official.

This comes as various multilateral agencies have said that Asian economies are growing faster than their western counterparts. "We are waiting for the cabinet to give a date to consider the APTA expansion," said an official aware of the development, adding that the process had taken time since there were concerns related to China. The government has been seeking the inclusion of domestic manufacturing and employment generation in India's trade agreement negotiations and, if approved by cabinet, APTA will be the first pact to take these into consideration. APTA covers Bangladesh, China, India, [Laos](#), South [Korea](#), Sri Lanka and [Mongolia](#).

India has proposed duty concessions on almost 3,000 products, a sharp rise from 570 now. Duty concessions have been increased by a margin of preference of 33%, implying that duties on each of the products will be reduced by a third for the importing countries. Until now, India has been giving concessions that are 23.9% lower than the customs duty of respective products under APTA.

"The import of raw material such as minerals, industrial goods and electronics will make the domestic market competitive. Since most significant economies of the world such as India, China and Korea are present in the agreement, its membership should be expanded to central Asia as well especially because Mongolia has also joined in," said Ram Upendra Das, professor at Research and Information System for Developing Countries.

According to Das, India's exports to APTA were \$28 billion in FY14 while imports from the bloc were \$61 billion.



APTA is the only operational trade agreement linking India and China, two of the fastest-growing markets in the world. The two countries are separately negotiating the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership](#) (RCEP) agreement with 14 others.

Cabinet discusses financing for Good Shares program

June 20 (UB Post) Last week, the Cabinet held an irregular meeting to discuss the implementation and financing of the Good Shares program, a plan to buy back a portion of public shares of Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi.

Head of the General Authority for Social Allowance and Services Ts.Tuvaan reported that a total of 650,000 citizens out of 1.6 million people holding shares of Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi have submitted requests to commercial banks to sell a portion of their shares to the government. Ts.Tuvaan said that citizens who submitted their requests on June 13 will receive the first payment of 100,000 MNT for their 323 shares this week.

In order to finance the Good Shares program, the Cabinet released long-term (15 year) government bonds in the domestic market through several stages, and will repay the bond with dividends from state-owned shares of Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi .

The Cabinet says the government will purchase additional publicly owned shares when they are made available on the Mongolian Stock Exchange.

Some critics of the program have said in local media that the Cabinet is putting a burden on the state budget through the purchase of shares and that the Good Shares program is illegal.

Responding to the negative press, Minister of Finance B.Bolor addressed the public and said, "The media reports are inaccurate. They also report that the Cabinet is not able to finance its current expenses and will face difficulties in issuing salaries and pensions. I officially state that these media reports have no basis. Salaries, pensions, and other expenses are all being distributed in accordance with plans. There won't be any difficulties in the future."

Mongolia ranked 60th in leading global competitiveness report

June 21 (gogo.mn) Mongolia has slipped three places to be ranked 60 out of 61 countries in the annual World Competitiveness Yearbook 2016, recently released by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Center.

The ranking, published annually since 1989 and considered the leading assessment of the competitiveness of countries, saw the USA (ranked 3) overtaken as the world's most competitive economy for the first time in three years by China Hong Kong (1) and Switzerland (2).

Lakshmi Bojoo, Director General of the Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center (EPCRC) said that Mongolia is facing a number of challenges in the coming year to become a more economically competitive nation.



As identified by the EPCRC team in the ranking, attracting more foreign direct investment (FDI) is a significant challenge: by the end of 2015 the rate of FDI had decreased by more than 22 times compared to that of 2012.

This year the exchange rate against the USD is likely to weaken further, and improved infrastructure is needed across the country, although this is a process that will take some time.

Being selected to host ASEM 2016 however shows the confidence other nations have in Mongolia's future direction.

In a year where a number of Asian countries suffered significant declines in competitiveness, mainland China dropped back three spots on last year to be ranked 25. Fellow neighbor Russia improved by one to be ranked 44.

"On the whole, there has been a significant drop in Asia's competitiveness since our last ranking," said Professor Arturo Bris, Director of the IMD World Competitiveness Center.

"This general decline has been caused by the fall in commodity prices, a strong dollar and the deterioration of balance sheets in both the private and public sectors."

Further information on Mongolia's results in the World Competitiveness Yearbook can be found on the [IMD's Mongolia profile website](#).

Source: *Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center*

960 thousand people sell their TT shares to government

Ulaanbaatar, June 24 (MONTSAME) Every Mongolian citizen possesses 1072 shares of Erdenes Tavantolgoi LLC. The Government enforced a right for citizens aged 18 and more to sell 30 percent of their shares. One million and 650 thousand citizens have the right, and some 1.2 million of them have issued requests to sell.

The first payments of the sold shares have been allocated to the accounts of the citizens since Monday. Total of 960 thousand people have received their first payments, as of today.

Business

AmCham to host 3rd annual U.S Trade Mission

Ulaanbaatar, June 20 (MONTSAME) The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Mongolia opened Monday its 3rd Annual U.S Trade Mission in Washington DC, the AmCham website published.

On the sidelines of the meeting, AmCham Mongolia delegates will engage and build relationships with key US government officials who focus on the U.S--Mongolia



commercial partnership in Washington DC and will have the opportunity to expand their networking and gain opportunities with American companies for business development. The participants will partake in the Asia Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce annual Doorknock meetings where they will develop a broader dialogue relevant to business in the Asia-Pacific region through meetings with prestigious think tanks & opinion leaders, executive and legislative branch members of the US government as well as outside experts in Washington DC. The event will continue until June 24.

US Government to support the SMEs

June 22 (gogo.mn) REACH project, to facilitate access to credit for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in ways that will lead to stronger and more sustainable businesses, have launched today. USAID in cooperation with Development Solutions NGO are implementing the project.

Project launch event was attended by the officials of Embassies from USA, Japan, Korea and European Union to Mongolia, resident representatives of the international organizations, the Ministry of Industry and Mongolian Credit Guarantee Fund experts.

The US Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Mongolia Ms Jennifer Zimdahl Galt delivered opening speech. She stated that small and medium enterprises sector in Mongolia generates 20% of GDP. However, they do not have enough financial source. 75% of them want to receive loans and REACH project will supply this demand and support them.

The goal of the project is to improve and scale access to credit for SMEs which face obstacles to receive loans, by assisting SMEs find the appropriate financial products for their specific needs and helping them qualify for the loans.

The objectives of the project is to strengthen SMEs to qualify for loan requirements and facilitate 500 loans worth of 25 million USD.

Moreover, following core activities have planned;

- identify SMEs needs on access to credit capacity building
- provide technical assistance to SMEs in preparation for loan applications
- build partnerships with government agencies and private stakeholders
- operate loan facilitation service centers in five project aimags
- organize SMEs Access to Credit annual forum

Project team to cooperate with Credit Guarantee Fund and the Ministry of Industry. The Ministry of Industry noted that loans worth of MNT 241 billion was granted to 1500 SME projects during 2012-2016. As a result, many industries have established and total of 13 thousand workplaces have created. Currently, over 7000 people are working in SME sector.

REACH project to open its branch in Bayan-Ulgii, Dornod, Dundgobi and Selenge aimags.

If you need more information on the project, please contact at 7722 2210.



Brazil-Mongolia Chamber of Commerce established

Ulaanbaatar, June 23 (MONTSAME) Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to Brazil Ch.Sosormaa has attended an official ceremony of opening the Brazil-Mongolia Chamber of Commerce as a honored guest during her working tour to Parana State of Brazil.

This chamber has opened at the Parana State Chamber of Commerce while the Ambassador is visiting Parana at the invitation of the State's governor Carlos Alberto Richa.

At the ceremony, the Ambassador Ch.Sosormaa gave details to Brazilian political and business officials about a business and investment environment in Mongolia, and exchanged views on boosting the cooperation in trade, investment and business fields. The sides reached an agreement to back specific proposals and initiatives on the cooperation.

In the scope of her tour to continue until Friday, the Ambassador will leg a meat processing factory in Curitiba city, plants of producing biofuel from garbage and ethanol from potatoes. She said Mongolia wants to cooperate with Brazilian business people in building such factories in Mongolia.

Mongolia-Japan trade facilitated under EPA

June 23 (MONTSAME) Mongolia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement came into force on June 7, 2016. According to this agreement, the customs tariff has reduced for 5,700 kinds of products made in Mongolia as well as about 9,300 goods made in Japan. Moreover, the customs tariff for 3,423 kinds of products imported from Japan and the customs tax for 8,004 kinds of products supplied to Japan were reduced to zero.

An annual turnover of Mongolia-Japan trade reaches approximately USD 300-500 million which accounts for 3-4% of the total external trade of Mongolia. It is projected that the EPA will boost the bilateral trade by 50-60 per cent in the next two years.

As of today, Mongolia is exporting to Japan certain types of products such as sea buckthorn, processed leathers, cashmere, woolen and knitted products.

Mongolian entrepreneurs to meet U.S. President Barack Obama

June 24 (UB Post) Mongolian entrepreneurs B.Khongorzul and B.Amartaivan are taking part in the seventh annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, from June 22 to 24, according to the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar.

The forum has gathered more than 700 attendees, including entrepreneurs, investors, educators, foreign government officials, and business representatives, who represent



the full measure of entrepreneurial talent from diverse backgrounds across the world. They are attending two plenary sessions in addition to breakout sessions and master classes.

This year, President Barack Obama is joining the entrepreneurs along with other high-level U.S. government officials, including Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker, Administrator of the Small Business Administration Maria Contreras-Sweet, Administrator of USAID Gayle Smith, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell, and Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel.

The GES 2016 is the seventh installment in a series previously hosted by the United States and the governments of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Morocco, and Kenya.

B.Khongorzul, representing Mongolia in this year's GES, is a feminist and advocate for women and children's rights, fighting for gender equality and all things equal and just. After graduating the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of the Tufts University with Foreign Fulbright Scholarship in 2014, B.Khongorzul worked at the Breakthrough Communications in Ulaanbaatar before getting to her current position as a public outreach and stakeholder engagement specialist at the National Secretariat for Development of the Second Compact of the Millennium Challenge Corporation in the U.S.A.

Innovative entrepreneur B.Amartaivan is a graduate of the School of Information Technology at the National University of Mongolia, who won second place in the Mongolian National Olympiad in Informatics in 2014. He previously led two IT projects, Duran Khar and MobiStadium. Currently, he is working as the project team leader of Ymoment.com product aimed to improve video watching experiences.

Banking

Mongolia's Development Bank becomes partner of SCO Interbank Consortium

June 23 (trend.az) Mongolia's Development Bank became a partner of the Interbank Consortium of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO IBC) according to a decision made at a meeting of the SCO IBC Council in Tashkent June 23.

During the meeting, chaired by Uzbekistan's National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity, the Council members also discussed the elaboration of the SCO IBC development strategy for 2017-2021, more active cooperation with the Silk Road Foundation, and the cooperation with international financial organizations operating in the SCO area.

Kazakhstan's Development Bank was elected the bank-chairman of SCO IBC for 2016-2017.



The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Interbank Consortium (SCO IBC) was established on October 26, 2005 under a decision made by the Council of Heads of SCO Member States.

The IBC incorporates the following SCO member states' authorized banks and credit institutions: Kazakhstan's Development Bank, China State Development Bank, Kyrgyzstan's RSK Bank, Russia's State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs, Tajikistan's State Savings Bank Amonatbank and Uzbekistan's National Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs.

Khan Bank Foundation implements Neonatal Unit 2 Project

Ulaanbaatar, June 20 (MONTSAME) The Neonatal Unit of the National Center for Communicable Diseases has seen no upgrades since 1986, and last year a group of young Twitter users united to initiate the Neonatal Unit Project, raising donations and furnishing the neonatal resuscitation ward and intensive care unit (ICU) of the NCCD, Khan Bank reports.

Khan Bank has fully sponsored the continuation of the initiative, the Neonatal Unit 2 Project, providing equipment and resources to another neonatal resuscitation ward and ICU.

John Bell, CEO of Khan Bank said, "We are delighted to handover this international standard, newly furnished unit to the Management of the NCCD. This is one of the major initiatives implemented within the framework of Khan Bank's social responsibility. Special thanks to the socially active young leaders for their cooperation."

D.Nyamkhuu, General Director of the NCCD noted, "Thank you very much to Khan Bank and the young leaders led by I.Batkhishig for making this contribution to the well-being of the health sector, especially children, and furnishing the neonatal resuscitation and ICU. The measles outbreak of the past two consecutive years has been a shock for families. Khan Bank saw the sensitivity of this issue and sponsored the project, which is a major contribution to the health sector."

Khan Bank made an invaluable contribution the future well-being of children by fully furnishing the resuscitation ICU of the NCCD, which receives children diagnosed with severe contagious illness from every soum, aimag, and district hospital in the country.

As a leading organization in social responsibility, Khan Bank has implemented many initiatives and projects through its Khan Bank Foundation, making solid contributions to social well-being.

Special thanks to the NCCD and the ambition young leaders led by I.Batkhishig for taking active part in the project's implementation.



Regional

China, Russia, Mongolia endorse development plan on economic corridor

TASHKENT, June 23 (Xinhua) -- China, Russia and Mongolia inked a development plan here on Thursday to build an economic corridor linking the three neighbors, pledging to boost transportation connectivity and economic cooperation in border regions.

The plan was signed after a meeting of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent ahead of an annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). While chairing the trilateral meeting, the third of its kind, the Chinese president reviewed the achievements the three countries have made in implementing their mid-term roadmap for cooperation, saying progress and positive results have been made in such areas as trade and economy, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, transit transport, tourism and sports.

"The Chinese side is satisfied with the momentum of our trilateral cooperation," Xi said. He proposed that the three countries continue to center on the aligning of China's Silk Road Economic Belt initiative, Russia's development strategies, especially its transcontinental rail plan, and Mongolia's Steppe Road program to actively advance the trilateral cooperation.

Xi called on the three countries to well implement the development plan to build the economic corridor and strengthen cooperation in transportation infrastructure connectivity, port construction, industrial capacity, investment, trade and economy, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and environmental protection, thus producing outcomes at an early date.

"We three sides should actively engage in the discussion of building cross-border economic cooperation zones, enhance industrial tie-in, boost sub-regional cooperation in our adjacent areas, and promote the common development of our adjacent areas," Xi said.

The Chinese president also urged the three countries to expand cooperation within the framework of the SCO, especially in such areas as transit transportation, food security, disaster reduction and energy.

Putin said Russia, China and Mongolia are friendly neighbors based on equality, respect and mutual benefit.

He said Russia, in light of the three countries' consensus, is committed to working with China and Mongolia to well implement the projects of transportation and infrastructure construction, speed up simplifying port procedures, and promote regional economic integration process.

Russia is also willing to increase cultural and people-to-people exchanges with the other two countries, he added.

For his part, Elbegdorj said the development plan on the economic corridor linking the three countries is very important, adding that Mongolia stands ready to join hands with



China and Russia to advance the construction of transportation infrastructure and strengthen economic cooperation in border regions.

Mongolia also hopes to enhance cooperation with the other two countries in agriculture and disaster relief, he said.

After the meeting, the three heads of state also witnessed the signing of a trilateral agreement on the mutual recognition of the customs supervision results on certain commodities.

The 16th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State is scheduled to be held in Tashkent on Thursday and Friday.

Agriculture

Food and Agriculture Ministry to develop greenhouse farming

June 20 (UB Post) The Ministry of Food and Agriculture reported that this year the ministry plans to increase greenhouse farming throughout the nation to see yields of 6,000 tons in domestically grown fruits and vegetables.

The ministry believes that by developing winter greenhouse farming, Mongolia will be able to produce cucumber, tomato, peppers, strawberry and other produce beyond summer growing seasons, and replace around 20 percent of vegetables and fruits currently being imported.

Last year, Mongolia harvested around 4,400 tons of vegetables from greenhouses, approximately six percent of domestic vegetable consumption. The ministry reported that there are around 1,000 entities and individuals engaged in greenhouse farming, over 100 of which are located in Ulaanbaatar and Tuv Province.

A total of 150 entities requested 311.5 billion MNT in loans for greenhouse farming projects, and 27.3 billion MNT in financing has been issued to entities from Chinggis Bond funds.

Oil & Gas

Mongolia to consider oil industry cooperation with Russia's Tatarstan Republic

Ulaanbaatar, June 22 (MONTSAME) Prime Minister of Mongolia Ch.Saikhanbileg received June 21 Mr Rustam Minnikhanov, the president of the Russian Republic of



Tatarstan, on the sidelines of the latter's working visit here, to discuss the bilateral economic cooperation.

In the margin of the strategic partnership between Mongolia and the Russian Federation, the government of Mongolia is interested in development intensified economic cooperation with Tatarstan, the PM noted. He also put forward an offer for experiences investors and businesspeople from Tatarstan to cooperate with Mongolia in oil processing industries.

The first oil project can be the foundation of Mongolia-Tatarstan friendship, as Erdenet Mining Corporation has become the eternal symbol of Mongolian-Russian economic ties, said Mr Ch.Saikhanbileg.

The Premier told Mr Minnikhanov that our business people have gotten au fait with the successful free trade zone and industrial park developments in Tatarstan, and that they are eager to supply meat and meat products to the republic.

President of Tatarstan applauded the cooperation offer of the Prime Minister in oil industry, and noted that it is possible to supply petroleum to Mongolia, to organize Mongolian-made product fair and exhibitions, and invite Mongolian business representatives in Tatarstan, as well as to increase the flow of tourists to Mongolia.

Present were at the meeting, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr D.Gankhuyag, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Mongolia Mr I.K.Azizov, and the accompanying delegation of the president of Tatarstan.

Mining

Aspire and ETT work together to add value to Mongolian met coal

May 23 (worldcoal.com) Aspire Mining Ltd has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi JSC (ETT), a Mongolian Government controlled entity that owns the Tavan Tolgoi coal mine, to cooperate on further technical and commercial assessments of blending Aspire's Ovoot metallurgical coal with various coals from the Tavan Tolgoi deposit.

In 2014, Aspire conducted a number of blending tests with various coals, including non-coking coal from the Tavan Tolgoi mine that demonstrated the capacity to blend Ovoot coking coal and upgrade the coking ability of other coals. It is expected that, over the current life of mine plans, there are very significant quantities of non-coking coal to be produced at Tavan Tolgoi without a current viable market to sell into. The test work showed that blending relatively low proportions of Ovoot metallurgical coal (as low as 25% in the blend) resulted in a blended primary coking coal product under the Chinese system.

Under the MoU, Aspire and ETT have agreed to share data and samples for further evaluation, as well as establish a technical and commercial working group to prepare a



feasibility study into the blending of Ovoot coking coal, Tavan Tolgoi non-coking coals and potentially other suitable Mongolia coals in a coal blending facility with a capacity of 8 –10 million tpy. In the event that the feasibility study is positive to jointly enter into commercial negotiations to establish a blending joint venture and to work together to attract necessary funding.

Aspire's Managing Director, David Paull, welcomed this cooperation with ETT to add material value to Mongolian coking coal. He said: "Tavan Tolgoi is by far the largest coking {metallurgical} coal deposit in Mongolia with Ovoot being the second largest by reserves and it appears that there are numerous technical and commercial synergies in working together to improve the value of exported Mongolian coking coals".

Bayan Khundii, Mongolia: 8.3m grading 14.3g/t Au from 0.7m depth (BKD-44)

June 23 (mining-journal.com) While Rio Tinto is getting all of the attention for its high-grade underground development at its Oyu Tolgoi copper-gold mine in Mongolia, Nova Scotia-based Erdene Resource Development is proving up a precious metals prospect in the country that is much closer to surface.

Its Bayan Khundii project in the southwest of the country has already caught investors' attention with intercepts showing off good continuity and grade, but its latest hit has shown off the project's high-grade potential from just below surface.

The highlight of the last batch of results from the June quarter drill programme came from an intercept at the aptly named Striker Zone, which hit 8.3m of mineralisation grading 14.3g/t Au from 0.7m depth. This was part of a larger width at hole BKD-44, which intersected 70m averaging 0.4g/t Au from 39m depth at BKD-44.

With the company having already unveiled a 63m intercept grading 5.3g/t Au from about 35m depth – including a 3m section averaging 49.4g/t Au from 40m depth – management knows this hit is not a fluke.

Over the next 60 days, the company will complete 3D modelling work on the project, get a structural geologist to complete a structural mapping and interpretation programme, and complete a spectral mineralogical study.

Shareholders need not worry, though. The drill rigs should start up again in the September quarter for a third round of drilling.

Xanadu Mines Ltd raises \$12.2M for copper gold discoveries in Mongolia

June 20 (Proactive Investors) Xanadu Mines Ltd (ASX:XAM) has raised \$12.2 million through a placement of shares at \$0.20 to continue developing the Kharmagtai copper-gold project and Oyut Ulaan gold project in Mongolia.

The raising received strong support investors and saw new well-regarded institutional investors join the register.

Dr Andrew Stewart, CEO commented: "Xanadu is in a privileged position with a growing JORC-compliant gold-rich copper resource and new bonanza gold grades.



"The yield from our counter-cyclic approach highlights that now is the time to be leveraged to exploration upside and our discoveries are ready for the next boom."

Mongolia to cooperate with Chile in mining

Ulaanbaatar, June 20 (MONTSAME) The Mongolian Ministry of Mining will cultivate cooperation with the Chilean Copper Commission (Cochilco).

A letter of intention on the cooperation has been signed by Ch.Sosormaa, the Non-Resident Ambassador of Mongolia to Chile; and Alex Matute Johns, Cochilco's head, the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported Monday.

Following the signing ceremony, the Ambassador exchanged views with Aurora Williams, the Chilean Minister of Mining on activating the bilateral cooperation in the mining industry.

The sides reached agreements to boost the mining cooperation, especially in the copper sector, to exchange experiences and information and to introduce new technologies. The countries will realize a joint program after identifying priorities in the mining sector cooperation as well.

Railway

Agreement approved on terms for railway transit transport

Ulaanbaatar, June 20 (MONTSAME) In backing Monday a draft Mongolia-Russia intergovernmental agreement on terms for rail freight transit transportation, the cabinet authorized the Foreign Minister to sign the agreement.

It is expected that the agreement will be signed during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit to be held June 23-24 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

When signed, the document will allow Mongolia and Russia to pursue a flexible policy on the railway transportation through their territories, and will ensure a tariff competitiveness of railway transportation for a longer period. Plus, the agreement has a significance for facilitating the process of passing freight through the national borders and creating a favorable condition for transporting freight to seaports in smoother manner.



Railbus to serve in Khushig Valley Airport route

June 22 (gogo.mn) Governor of capital city E.Bat-Uul, Mongolian-Russian joint institute "Ulaanbaatar railway" director L.Purevbaatar have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on building "Aero-Express" railways to develop railways in close vicinity of capital city.

The cooperation will enable the construction and utilisation of new railways, reduce freight volume passing through city center, and stop transportation of dangerous cargos. Within the cooperation, sides will work on expansion of train station, connecting Nalaikh, Partizan settlements to capital infrastructures by having double-track railway lines that passes through city.

Railbus to run between Ub to New International Airport in Khushig Valley, procurement of new railbus to support continuous service, and building maintenance workshop are reflected on MoU.

The cooperation will start this fall and first phase is expected for implementation in 2017. Establishment will be fully completed by 2030, reports **Press and Public Relations department of the Governor's Office**.

Energy

Draft investment agreement on TT Power Plant finalized

Ulaanbaatar, June 20 (MONTSAME) On Monday, cabinet considered the draft Investment Agreement of the Tavantolgoi Power Plant, which was prepared by the working group headed by Minister M.Enkhsaikhan. The cabinet assigned corresponding officials to prepare signing of this agreement with the selected investor, Marubeni Corporation of Japan.

Marubeni has been selected as the key investor in the project that requires total of USD 1 billion investment, 30% of which will be provided in a form of the direct investment from the key investor and 70% is to be raised from international banks and financial institutions.

Tavantolgoi power plant is designed to have 450 MW per annual capacity, with Oyu Tolgoi as the main consumer.



Erdenes Mongol and General Electric to cooperate on mining, energy and infrastructure projects

June 22 (Mongolian Economy) Ulaanbaatar, 22 June 2016 - Erdenes Mongol, a state-owned investment company with operating assets and projects in energy, infrastructure and natural resources, and GE Mining, a division of GE Transportation with history of innovation in mining, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to form a strategic relationship with regard to the development of mining, energy and infrastructure projects in Mongolia.

GE Mining will work with Erdenes Mongol to explore the possibilities of applying suitable GE's mining equipment in different mining projects including the Oyu Tolgoi underground mine expansion project to maximize the value of Mongolia's world-class mining assets, and jointly explore the possibility to improve capacity and efficiency of Erdenes Mongol's mine sites with GE Digital Mine Solutions. Both parties will also seek for the extended cooperation in the areas of power generation, coal bed methane projects, coal and wind projects, coal gasification projects, railways, water infrastructure projects, and executive training and development.

"With the combination of GE's domain expertise in global mining industry and Erdenes Mongol's strong presence in the country, our partnership will be strategically valuable for the sustainable growth in Mongolia. We are pleased to launch the strategic cooperation with General Electric, global leader in infrastructure technology and financial services." said Bayanjargal Byambasaikhan, CEO of Erdenes Mongol, at the MoU Signing ceremony in Ulaanbaatar.

Commenting on the projects, Mohamed Butt, GE Transportation Asia Pacific CEO, "We are pleased to play a role in developing Mongolia's resources and infrastructure by providing technology and capabilities to our customers, who is committed to maximizing the potential of natural resources to improve the living standards of the Mongolian people".

World Energy Council welcomes Mongolia as its newest member committee

Ulaanbaatar, June 23 (MONTSAME) The World Energy Council has announced that it welcomed Mongolia as its newest member committee, bringing the number of the Council's committees to 95 with our four direct memberships. The Council now has a presence in 99 countries.

The Mongolian member committee hosted by the Mongolian Federation of Engineering Organizations aims to promote and support safe, affordable, and reliable energy transformation in the region. As part of its work, it will provide a platform for all



stakeholders to discuss and work on the future of energy while representing the Mongolian perspective within national, regional and global energy debates.

Originally existing as a member committee in the past, Mongolia has now re-joined the Council's network as a new entity with O.Erdene-Ulzii of the Mongolian Federation of Engineering Organizations appointed as Chair and Mungunchimeg as its new Secretary. Mongolia currently ranks at 94 among 130 countries on the World Energy Council's 2015 Energy Trilemma Index and achieves an energy balance score of BCD, with 90% of its population having access to electricity. The Index measures countries' energy sustainability performance based on the three pillars of the trilemma: energy security, energy equity, and environmental sustainability.

A recent report by the International Renewables Agency (IRENA) suggested that Mongolia's mostly untapped renewable resources could be used to kick-start a major cross border power corridor between Russia, Mongolia, China, South Korea and Japan. Excellent solar and wind resources in the Gobi Desert, some of which is in Mongolia and the rest in China, mean that the country has a vast renewable energy potential of 2.6TW.

Mongolia's installed power-generation capacity is currently made up of just 7% from renewables, mainly from hydropower. However, the government has set a target of 20% renewable by 2023 and 30% by 2030. Having had to rely on Russian energy imports to cover short-term contingency needs and on China to power its southern towns, Mongolia aims to use its huge renewable resources to become a net exporter of energy in the future.

Mongolia's parliament recently adopted broad measures aimed at future sustainability including the Green Development Policy and the Law on Energy Conservation and Efficiency.

Christoph Frei, Secretary-General of the World Energy Council said: "We are delighted to welcome Mongolia as our newest member committee. Over the last three years, Mongolia has continued to improve on its overall trilemma ranking. While its energy security rating is steadily rising, among its main challenges lies environmental sustainability. In this context, balancing the trilemma will remain a challenge with national and international dimensions. We look forward working with its energy leaders and hearing their vision for the future at this year's Congress in October."

Infrastructure

Cabinet supports Mongolia-Russia freight transit transportation

June 22 (UB Post) On Monday, the Cabinet discussed a draft intergovernmental agreement on terms for rail freight transit transportation between governments of Mongolia and Russia, and permitted Minister of Foreign Affairs L.Purevsuren to sign the agreement with the Russian side.



The Cabinet believes that it needs to create pleasant conditions for freight transportation in order to export mining products to foreign markets, ensure export price competitiveness, attract foreign investors to the Mongolian mining industry, create possibility for operating sustainably over long periods of time, and ensure the nation's economic growth.

Mongolia and Russia have been negotiating on rail freight transit transportation conditions since 2009. The agreement is expected to be signed during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, set to take place from June 23 to 24 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Aviation

Air Busan opens Busan-Ulaanbaatar route

Ulaanbaatar, June 24 (MONTSAME) Air Busan began flying the Busan-Ulaanbaatar route on June 24, becoming the first Korean carrier to operate the route between the two cities.

For Air Busan, this is the 17th international route. Air Busan is a budget carrier subsidiary of Kumho Asiana Group's Asiana Airlines.

Air Busan operates Busan-Ulaanbaatar flights on Tuesdays at 10:35 a.m. and Fridays at 8:35 a.m. Ulaanbaatar-Busan flights will take off at 3:40 p.m. on Tuesdays and 1:40 p.m. on Fridays, reports koreaherald.com

Animal Husbandry

Livestock population reaches largest ever number

Ulaanbaatar, June 24 (MONTSAME) Ministry of Food and Agriculture reported Friday that the number of livestock has reached 73 million heads after the country received 18.8 million heads of baby animals this spring.

As of today, 19.3 million heads or 81% of total 23 million heads of dams have given births nationwide, thus the number of baby animals has become 18.8 million heads. 55 thousand heads of them were baby camels, 568 thousand--foals, 954 thousand--calves, 9.4 million--lambs and 7.9 million--baby goats.



Ulaanbaatar

UB city participates in Hong Kong's “International Travel Expo”

June 22 (news.mn) The Capital's Tourism Department and the national airline MIAT have participated in the International Travel Expo 'ITE-2016', which was held in Hong Kong last week (June 16-19). 'ITE-2016' involved more than 300 institutions, cities and country representatives. The Capital's Tourism Department participated in 'ITE-2016' for the second year running as part of the Friendly Ulaanbaatar Program. Hong Kong passport holders have been granted visa-free access to more than 140 countries; they are now being allowed to stay for an additional two weeks in Mongolia. With a population of seven million, Hong Kong spends more than 20 billion dollars a year on travel. In recent years, the number of Asian passengers travelling to Ulaanbaatar for business has also increased. According to the Capital's Tourism Department, MIAT is providing five direct flights from Ulaanbaatar to Hong Kong per week during the summer months.

Statement on study Land Administration and Management in Ulaanbaatar

Ulaanbaatar, June 24 (MONTSAME) The World Bank report titled Land Administration and Management in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia was completed and publicly released sixteen months ago in February 2015.

The purpose of this important report was to assess how land is managed in Mongolia's largest city, home to nearly half of the country's population. The report covered the institutions governing land management, the means of managing urban expansion, and the potential for land as a source of revenue, among other topics. The study was one of many that have been produced since the 1990s, in cooperation with successive city administrations, on topics including energy, air pollution, and city finances. These studies are paid for by the World Bank's own resources.

To draw attention to the cost of allocating land at prices below market values, the report included several estimates of foregone revenues stemming from those practices. Three different estimates, using three different sets of assumptions, were presented. The study provides a detailed explanation of the methods, the assumptions underlying each of the estimates, the data sources used for the computations, and the reasons that certain assumptions were adopted. Such transparency ensures that the estimates can be easily replicated.