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Mongolia to launch a campaign to plant a

billion
trees by 2030



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present you the third issue of 'Mongolia Today' magazine for 2021.

This issue highlights the statement President of Mongolia U.Khurelsukh delivered at the General Debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September. In his statement, the President underscored that Mongolia is launching a national campaign to plant a billion trees by 2030 to contribute to the global effort against climate change.

Foreign visits of Prime Minister L.Oyun-Erdene and Minister of Foreign Affairs B.Battsetseg are also featured in the third issue alongside articles and interviews on Mongolia's relations and cooperation with the Republic of Korea, United States, Republic of Estonia, State of Israel, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The issue has many other interesting stories about the conservation of Przewalski's horses in Mongolia, local production of nitraria berries, talks over the Oyu Tolgoi project, achievements Mongolian athletes made at the 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the country's new policy on economic recovery.

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President



President U. Khurelsukh takes part in the

President of Mongolia U. Khurelsukh took part virtually and delivered speech in the plenary session of the 2021 Eastern Economic Forum, held on September 2-4 in Vladivostok, Russia. Its theme was 'The opportunities for the Far East in a world under transformation'.

In his speech, President U. Khurelsukh expressed confidence that this forum will play a major role in opening up new opportunities for overcoming the crisis and the aftermath of the pandemic in the Far East and the Asia-Pacific Region, stepping up economic and other cooperation at regional level and facilitating the launch of big mutually beneficial projects and programmes.

He also expressed sincere gratitude to the countries that are developing, producing and supplying anti-COVID-19 vaccines, including countries and organizations that are helping our country in these difficult times. "Using this occasion, I would like to express sincere gratitude on behalf of the Mongolian people to the governments of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of India for supplying us with vaccines of their own making during the worst times of the pandemic. I would also like to

thank the Government of Japan for financial support."

The President said, "I am pleased to note that this year we celebrate the centenary of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Russia. We will continue to improve our comprehensive cooperation, which has a rich historical background, with all-round strategic partnership. This cooperation will contribute to sustainable regional development.

Our foreign policy priority is the steady development of friendly relations and cooperation with our two eternal neighbours – Russia and China. It is important to note that our partnership, based on friendship and a mutual understanding between nations, is developing and expanding in all areas despite the difficult COVID-19 situation.

From the very start, Mongolia has supported the Russian initiative on the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the Chinese One

EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

Belt One Road initiative. In the context of these undertakings, Mongolia is willing to take part in the infrastructure projects of our region and in the green development and environmental recovery programmes."

"With a view to economic recovery, our country will rely on the long-term "Vision-2050" development programme that was endorsed by our parliament last year. Its priorities in terms of development include mining, processing and food industries, agriculture, power engineering, tourism, small and medium business, transport and logistics, creative production and information technology. We will be happy to cooperate with the Far East region and the Asia-Pacific countries in these areas.

"Mongolia is among the 32 countries without access to the sea. This is why we want to use the advantage of our location between Asia and Europe to become a transport, trade and service hub, the transit Mongolia.

Mongolia, like the rest of the world, faced serious trade and economic difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the trend towards gradual economic recovery can be seen as of the first half of the year.

Before the pandemic, in 2017–2019, Mongolia's gross domestic product grew six percent on average. Moreover, during this period, foreign trade was in surplus of USD 1–2 billion. The volume of foreign direct investment was stable, at the level of USD 2–3 billion. Debt management improved significantly; the credit rating rose; the volume of foreign exchange reserves increased to the proper level; the exchange rate stabilized; and favourable conditions were provided to hold inflation at the target level.

In 2020 and 2021, when global economic activities slowed down due to the pandemic, Mongolia's economy faced serious challenges too. Mongolia carried out a countercyclical fiscal policy to overcome these difficulties, and adopted a programme aimed at countering the crisis to support the economy.

We also cooperate actively with other countries, foreign and domestic investors, entrepreneurs and multinational corporations. In particular, in addition to the mining industry, which is our main economic sector, we support exports-oriented enterprises and large projects in agriculture, energy and natural gas. The construction of an oil refinery is also underway."

"The Far Eastern region is rich in natural resources and is becoming an important economic and trading centre in East Asia. Entrepreneurs and investors in many countries are interested in this region and invest in it.

Our country has opened a trade mission in Vladivostok to study the possibility of cooperation in this region and an expansion of economic activities. We hope this will make an important contribution to our further trade and economic cooperation. The

In 2020 and 2021, when global economic activities slowed down due to the pandemic, Mongolia's economy faced serious challenges too. Mongolia carried out a countercyclical fiscal policy to overcome these difficulties, and adopted a programme aimed at countering the crisis to support the economy.

trade mission's activities are aimed at expanding trade and economic ties between Mongolia and the Far East and exporting our goods via sea routes to the markets of East and Southeast Asia, importing their goods, and attracting investment as well as holding regional marketing research.

Mongolia has always focused on expanding cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union. Today we are exploring the possibility of signing a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union. We believe that such an agreement could play an important role in lifting trade barriers to foreign trade and ensuring our involvement in regional economic integration processes."

"I would also like to mention the trilateral programme between Russia, Mongolia and China to create an economic corridor in the Far Eastern region. We are actively working with our neighbours to implement large projects like the renovation of the railway and car corridor, construction of new roads and railways, and building a gas pipeline from Russia to China via Mongolia as part of this programme. In particular, active work is underway to develop the technical and economic assess-

ment of the project to build a gas pipeline passing through Mongolia, which will become the largest construction project in the Far East.

The shortest roads and railways connecting Asia and Europe pass through Mongolia. This is why the increasing volume of trade between Russia and China, the creation of a trade, transport and logistic network between Asia and Europe and a transport flow using Mongolia's convenient location, will reflect positively on regional cooperation.

Mongolia is consistently carrying out an open policy in order to simplify the conditions for trade and shipping, access to the sea and development of transit shipments. As part of this policy, we have launched major infrastructure projects, such as the construction of a new railroad network, the expansion of the road network, and the construction of a new international airport as well as a new regional transport and logistics centre.

Later on, it will be necessary to speed up works related to the economically viable strategic projects, such as the renovation of the Central Railway Corridor, which is included in the programme of creating an economic corridor between Mongolia, Russia and China; the construction of the Eastern Railway Corridor

to connect the Trans-Baikal Territory and China through eastern Mongolia; the construction of the Western Railway Corridor to connect the Republic of Tyva and China through western Mongolia; and the construction of a high-speed road that will connect all three countries.

Mongolia is open to cooperation with you and to the implementation of these regional and national highly profitable development projects."

"It is necessary to pay a great deal of attention to environmental issues and take drastic measures because environmental degradation is getting worse and extreme weather events occur more often, all of which might significantly harm the sustainable economic development of the countries and the habitat of mankind. The smoke from the wildfires in Yakutia has reached Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar, and even the Arctic Ocean. The sandstorms in Mongolia have reached not only China, Japan and Korea, but also the Pacific Ocean.

I think you will agree that, being neighbours, we need to cooperate at our regional level, hold joint projects and programmes to protect ourselves from natural disasters, preserve the environmental balance, and counteract climate change.

To meet the electricity requirements of Northeast Asian countries and increase the share of renewable energy in electricity generation it is necessary to develop trans-border connection points in the region.

Mongolia has set itself the aim of fully meeting its domestic electric energy requirements and becoming an exporter country. In this context, Mongolia has initiated cooperation with other countries of the region on using renewable energy sources in the Gobi Desert and building hydro-power plants in our country.

Such phenomena as migration, climate change, destruction of the environmental balance and mutation of microorganisms increase the risk of the transfer of diseases from animals to humans, the emergence of new diseases and an outbreak of the old ones. Nowadays, when the risk of cross-border spread of contagious diseases is growing, it is necessary to upgrade mechanisms for the exchange of experience and information as part of the efforts to expand regional cooperation. In turn, such cooperation will build our capacity to prevent pandemics in the future.

The strengthening of the healthcare system will create opportunities for ensuring economic growth and trade. In this context, I would like to ask the organizers and participants of the forum to pay attention to our proposal: to discuss biosecurity and regional cooperation in countering the pandemic at future events."





MONGOLIA-ROK: NEW STRATEGIC PARTNERS

With the collapse of the socialist system and the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a whole new era in international relations, including Mongolia's foreign and domestic policy, began. The process began to take place not only in Europe, the epicenter of the Cold War, but also in the Asia-Pacific region. The balance of power in the region has changed dramatically in terms of the economy, with strong emerging players in international relations. These were the so-called industrialized "tiger" countries of East Asia: South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. On its own initiative, Mongolia established diplomatic relations with one of the tigers - Republic of Korea on March 26, 1990.

On the eve of the one-year anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Embassy of Mongolia was officially opened on February 1, 1991 in centre of the Seoul.

In October, 1991, Mongolia's first democratically elected president P.Ochirbat paid an official visit to the Republic of Korea and the two countries put out a joint statement, highlighting the two countries' intention to expand bilateral relations and cooperation in all possible areas not only in the coming years but also in the 21st century.

In 1990, the two countries' trade turnover was only USD 2.7 million. In 2019, the total trade turnover was USD 294,780.2, of which Mongolia's exports were USD 27,815 and imports were USD 266,965.2, making South Korea the fourth largest trading partner of Mongolia. In 1990-2015, more than 2,309,000 South Korean joint ventures and sole proprietorships were registered and operating in Mongolia, with a total investment of USD 755.3 million, staying as the fourth largest investor. The main areas of cooperation between the two countries are trade, catering, geology, mining, information and communication, health and education.

During the reciprocal visits of then-Prime Minister U.Khurelsukh and former Prime Minister of ROK Lee Nak-yeon in 2018 and 2019, the sides

During the meeting, the Presidents of the two countries agreed to upgrade bilateral relations to 'strategic partnership' during the virtual summit and put out a joint declaration



agreed to elevate bilateral relations to new level in the near future. After 2 years since then or this year, as a president, U.Khurelsukh held a virtual summit with President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in with a mission to upgrade bilateral relations.

It marked the first summit between the two countries since U.Khurelsukh was elected as the President of Mongolia in June. It is also the second meeting between the two leaders since U.Khurelsukh visited the Republic of Korea in January 2018 as the Prime Minister of Mongolia.

The Presidents of the two countries agreed to upgrade bilateral relations to 'strategic partnership' during the virtual summit and put out a joint declaration. Within the joint declaration, the sides agreed to deepen and expand cooperation in five ar-

eas: politics and security; economy, trade and investment; education, science and technology, environment and health; culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges; and regional and international cooperation.

Highlighting that Mongolia and South Korea have been developing bilateral relations for more than 30 years based on their common values such as democracy, human rights and freedom, President U.Khurelsukh reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation.

President Moon Jae-in congratulated President U.Khurelsukh on his election and noted his delight with being the first foreign president to hold a summit with Mongolia's new head of state. He reiterated to strengthen relations and cooperation with Mongolia, a key partner in the New Northern Policy, and to work together in the implementation of Vision-2050, Mongolia's long-term development policy.

Emphasizing the importance of cooperation between the two countries' legislatures to strengthen the legal environment of bilateral relations, the sides agreed to further enhance political dialogue mechanisms, such as the Intergovernmental Joint Committee, and the Consultative Meetings between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

The two sides concurred to focus on developing economic priority areas such as transport, logistics, energy, mining and agriculture. President

U.Khurelsukh briefed that the plans are underway to establish a satellite city and develop free economic zone at Khushig Valley along the recently opened airport at the valley. In turn, President Moon Jae-in expressed readiness to share experience and cooperate in this direction.

The sides stressed the need to further strengthen the legal environment to boost exports, increase investment and reduce trade barriers. Underlining that Mongolia's accession to the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement has created more favorable trade conditions, they agreed to continue their efforts to launch the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) dialogues based on the results of the two countries' joint research. President U.Khurelsukh noted that the loans and grants that have been provided by the Republic of Korea over the past years have made a valuable contribution to the social and economic growth of Mongolia, while emphasizing the necessity of accelerating development projects - Solongo 1 and 2 apartment complexes, rent apartments by the Bayangol Mountain and central heating station for 10 rural aimags - in cooperation with the ROK government.

The sides agreed to bolster cooperation in the fields of environment, green development, tourism, culture and arts, and creative cultural production. In this context, it was agreed to implement the third phase of the Mongolia-ROK joint project - 'Green Belt', while underscor-

ing the project's significance in mitigating desertification and combating dust storms. It was also agreed to continue to realize scholarship programs, support the people-to-people exchanges, and further develop Mongol studies in South Korea and Korean studies in Mongolia.

The leaders also expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral ties and cooperation despite the harsh time amid the pandemic. President U.Khurelsukh thanked the government of the Republic of Korea for providing assistance to help combat the pandemic. They also agreed to expand people-to-people exchanges to strengthen friendship and deepen mutual understanding, and continue to work together to protect the interests of Mongolian and South Korean citizens living and working in the two countries, and create favorable living and working conditions.

The two sides also agreed to continue to work closely together in the international and regional arenas, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the stability of the Korean Peninsula in order to maintain peace and security in the Northeast Asian region. Moreover, both sides reaffirmed their mutual support for the 'Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Security in Northeast Asia', an initiative of Mongolia, and the 'Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative for Infectious Disease Control and Health Protection', spearheaded by the President of the Republic of Korea.

President



*President declares Mongolia's
launch of a campaign to plant a*

billion **trees by 2030**

The President of Mongolia U. Khurelsukh delivered a statement at the General Debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, on September 22, 2021.

In his statement, President U. Khurelsukh shared Mongolia's views on global peace, security, sustainable development, good governance, economy, society and health, particularly fighting and mitigating the challenges and impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.

President U. Khurelsukh stressed that Mongolia's accession to the United Nations in 1961 and ensuring the country's

independence and sovereignty, and becoming a full member in the world community was an important milestone in its history. He further reaffirmed that Mongolia as an active member of the United Nations is committed to continue its contribution towards promoting international peace and security, fostering green development, combating climate change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



From ancient times, we, Mongolians, have honored nature, blue sky as father and land as mother, worshipped surrounding mountains and waters with deep love and respect, and have been recharged by their vitality.



“THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO REDUCE DESERTIFICATION IS TO PLANT TREES. WE, MONGOLIANS, SAY THAT PLANTING TREES, WRITING BOOKS, AND RAISING CHILDREN ARE THE TOP THREE VIRTUES. THEREFORE, FOR THE CONTRIBUTION TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE, MONGOLIA IS LAUNCHING A CAMPAIGN TO PLANT A BILLION TREES BY 2030.”

The President also announced his initiative to make September 2, the day, when devastating World War II, that took the lives of millions, had ended, as an international day to commemorate “Humanity’s Victory over War” and called on member states to support it.

Speaking about climate change, the President called to combine the fight against climate change with achievements of the modern science and technology as well as best practices and the traditional experiences, drawing lessons from the Mongolian traditional “nomadic civilization” to respect and treat the nature

deferentially. In this context, he noted that Mongolia has launched a campaign to plant a billion trees by 2030.

He said, “Climate change has the devastating effects for the past decades. Proper diagnosis on the cause is the key to overcome the detrimental effects of climate change. One of the causes for climate change is oblivious human activity. This is the result of our careless behavior towards the nature and environment. People are largely debating over ethical conduct toward each other but not towards the Mother Nature, which has led to current environmental and ecological disaster.

During the pandemic lockdown, we witnessed some natural recoveries, at least for a short period, such as quick recovery of the ozone layer, reduction of environmental pollution, purification of waters, and recovery

of fauna and flora. This is a showcase that we need to change the behavior and attitude of humanity towards nature and take actual steps to achieve results.

This is evidenced by the fact that the frequency and scope of forest fires, hurricanes, floods, droughts and dzuds are increasing year by year, causing devastating damages in all corners of the globe.

From ancient times, we, Mongolians, have honored nature, blue sky as father and land as mother, worshipped surrounding mountains and waters with deep love and respect, and have been recharged by their vitality. Our ancestors thoroughly know the nature demeanor and a way that allow them to process and use their foods in a way that is environmentally friendly and human health.

We use natural blessings such

as trees, water and animals, only according to our own household needs, saving the resources for the next generation.

“The natural effort of recovering reminds us of the nomadic know-how of “leaving the pastureland for rest”. This is the Mongolian herders’ wisdom to offer the motherland an opportunity to rest awhile to recover and revive itself.

Desertification, which is threatening the livelihood of more than two billion people in the world, and the sandstorm originated in Mongolia are becoming a major problem for us. Currently, a big portion of Mongolia’s territory is affected to some extent by desertification and land degradation.

The most effective way to reduce desertification is to plant trees. We, Mongolians, say that planting trees, writing books, and raising children are the top three virtues. Therefore, for the contribution to solving the problem of global climate change, Mongolia is launching a campaign to plant a billion trees by 2030.”

Prime Minister

PRIME MINISTER OF MONGOLIA L.OYUN-ERDENE WENT ON A WORKING VISIT TO JAPAN BETWEEN JULY 21 AND 25. THIS WAS HIS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO A FOREIGN COUNTRY AS THE PRIME MINISTER OF MONGOLIA.



THE FIRST FOREIGN VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF MONGOLIA L.OYUN-ERDENE

He was one of the 11 heads of state and government who attended the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which was organized during the difficult situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The visit of the Prime Minister demonstrated the third-neighbor policy and friendly relations, and also served as an expression of the gratitude from the Mongolian people for providing support in involving adolescents in vaccination amid the challenging circumstances posed by the pandemic.

During the meeting with

Prime Minister L.Oyun-Erdene, Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga expressed appreciation for taking the time to attend the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games under the difficult circumstance posed by the pandemic, and stressed that the visit attaches great importance for enriching the contents of friendly relations between the two countries. In addition to this, Japan's major mass media such as 'Kyodo News' and 'Mainichi Shimbun' reported that the Prime Minister of Mongolia was one of the world leaders from

11 nations that visited Japan to express solidarity with the host country during the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which was postponed for a year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

They also highlighted that Japan had invited all countries that sent their athletes for the Olympics to attend the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, however, most of them decided not to attend the ceremony due to the pandemic situation.

Within the framework of the working visit, Prime Minister

L.Oyun-Erdene held a number of businesslike meetings, and certain agreements were reached after discussing major projects that can be implemented in the short and medium term. Particularly, during the official meeting with Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga on July 22:

1.The sides agreed on the necessity to bring Mongolia-Japan relations in the fields of politics, economy, trade, and investment to the next level, and accelerate public-private partnership.

2.They emphasized the need to cooperate on developing Khushig Valley into a complex economic, information technology, and tourism region with the expansion of the new Chinggis Khaan International Airport that was recently put into operation in the valley near Ulaanbaatar city.

3.Readiness was expressed for cooperation with Japan and attract investment for the construction projects of a highway road surrounding the capital city and Bogd Khan Railway Bypass Line aimed at reducing traffic congestion of the capital city, intensifying the public-private partnership in information technology and the training of engineers.

4.The meeting covered issues including cooperation in developing a feasibility study for a hydropower plant at coal deposits and the construction

He was one of the 11 heads of state and government who attended the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which was organized during the difficult situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.



of a hydropower plant based on the practices and experience of Japan.

The sides also considered it right to utilize the active cooperation between the two countries within the framework of the activities and measures being implemented by the United Nations and other international organizations.

Furthermore, they remarked the successful implementation of the 2017-2021 Mid-term Action Plan for Mongolia-Japan Strategic Partnership and set to agree on the contents of the next mid term action plan for 2021-2025.

Regarding the visit, Director of the Department of the Asia and the Pacific of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs E.Sarantogos said, "The Prime Minister's visit to Japan was important in highlighting how the two countries will continue to cooperate in the future and what should be prioritized.

The two sides are currently faced with the challenge of returning to the level of cooperation during the pre-pandemic period, and further developing cooperation as normally as soon as possible. The discussion that took place between the two sides concerning the issue has been a

timely event that intensified the importance of the visit."

It is clear that future joint projects and programs and mutual high-level visits as well as other issues regarding cooperation that were discussed by the Prime Ministers of the two countries will be reflected in the new strategic partnership program between the two countries.

Mongolia and Japan will be marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022. During the working visit of Prime Minister L.Oyun-Erdene, the two sides agreed to celebrate the historic anniversary. In particular, PM Oyun-Erdene invited Japan's Emperor Naruhito to visit Mongolia in 2022 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Japan.

The Mongolian side also gratefully accepted the Japanese PM's proposal to declare the diplomatic anniversary being marked in 2022 as 'The year of friendship and exchange between Mongolian and Japanese children and youth'. In its framework, the parties agreed to organize exchange activities for the top 50 youths representing the two countries' politics, business, civil

service and cultural fields.

During his visit to Japan, Prime Minister L.Oyun-Erdene also met with President of France Emmanuel Macron as well as First Lady of the United States of America Jill Biden to hold a friendly discussion about Mongolia's bilateral ties with France and the U.S.

Moreover, the Prime Minister held a meeting with Japanese Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization and coronavirus response Yasutoshi Nishimura and Director-General of Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases Takaji Wakita to discuss the spread of the Delta variant of coronavirus in Japan, effectiveness of immunization, medicine use, and treatment of patients in critical condition, requesting professional assistance for Mongolian health institutions during the pandemic.

He also held meetings with Secretary-General of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party Toshihiro Nikai, Chairman of Mongolia-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group in the House of Representatives of the National Diet of Japan Motoo Hayashi, Deputy Secretary-General of the parliamentary friendship group Arata Takebe, and member and

parliamentary friendship group member Takayuki Kobayashi, and held a discussion about activities to be actively organized to further strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation.

"Japan is a third neighbor of Mongolia that has been consistently provided support for democracy and reforms in our country from the very beginning through political, economic, financial and humanitarian support. Since 1990, four Prime Ministers of Japan have visited Mongolia six times, and 12 Prime Ministers of Mongolia have visited Japan. Each high-level meeting is aimed at moving our relations forward and mutually affirming the policies towards each other.

The meeting between the two Prime Ministers, L.Oyun-Erdene and Yoshihide Suga has been an important event that mutually affirmed each other's policy, exchanging views and coming to an agreement. The side of Japan has expressed that support will continue to be provided to help improve the financial sector and economic development of Mongolia. In particular, one of the new matters that were discussed was the intention to increase bilateral trade turnover and investment, and bring cooperation to a new level by financing specific projects rather than simply providing loans and non-refundable aid. Overall, I believe that this was an important visit to further deepen the Third Neighbor Policy of Mongolia," said Former Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to Japan S.Khurelbatar.

On his way back to Mongolia, the PM held a meeting with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea Kim Bu-gyom to exchange views on upgrading bilateral ties from the current level of 'Comprehensive Partnership' between Mongolia and the Republic of Korea to 'Strategic Partnership'. He also held a meeting with the executives of the Export-Import Bank of Korea. During the meeting, they discussed accelerating the implementation of construction projects for the Solongo 1 and 2 apartment complexes, rental apartments at Bayangol Mountain, and a central heating station for 10 aimags.

Foreign Affairs

At the invitation of State Councilor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia B.Battsetseg made a working visit to the People's Republic of China. In connection with the visit, we took an interview from Minister B.Battsetseg.



cussed the plans laid out for bilateral relations in the near future, and agreed to implement high-level visits as soon as possible once the pandemic situation eases, and organize meetings in appropriate formats for the main cooperation mechanisms, such as the regular meeting mechanism for the two countries' parliaments, the joint council on mineral resources, energy, and infrastructure cooperation, the Intergovernmental Commission working group meeting, and the Strategic Dialogue between the two countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Alongside highlighting that bilateral relations continue to be kept active during the challenging times of the pandemic, I would like to note that both sides agreed to accelerate active cooperation, and issued a joint statement on strengthening cooperation to fight against the pandemic.

-Would it be correct to as-

WE REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON ACTIVE COOPERATION TO INCREASE

MONGOLIA-CHINA TRADE TURNOVER TO

-This was your first visit to China as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Could you please tell us about what the goals were for this visit?

-As Mongolia-China bilateral relations are active in many fields and sectors, it was necessary to discuss pressing issues regarding cooperation with the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China. Shortly after being appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I held a telephone conversation with the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister and had reached a certain agreement for allowing operations to be carried out as normally as possible during the pandemic - and this visit strengthened that agreement. Although the programme of the visit was relatively compact compared to how it is normally, I am satisfied with the efficient discussions that were held during the talks that took place over the course of about four hours as well as while dining.

During the talks, we dis-

USD
10
BILLION

sume that you came to an agreement with the Chinese Foreign Minister about specific details regarding what you discussed over the telephone?

-It should be noted that President of Mongolia U.Khurelsukh's telephone calls with the heads of state of the two neighbouring countries to discuss accelerating bilateral and trilateral cooperation was a significant step for the sustainable development of Mongolia-Russia and Mongolia-China relations. During the telephone conversation with President of the PRC Xi Jinping, agreement was reached for various important matters, such as to expand cooperation to create correlation between Mongolia's Steppe Road plan and China's Belt and Road initiative, actively carry out works to increase trade turnover to USD 10 billion, increase the export of mining and agricultural products from Mongolia to China, further de-

During my meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, we went into details for measures to be taken from both sides in the framework of implementing the agreements made between the heads of state.

velop cooperation in sectors such as mining, economy, agriculture, infrastructure, and environment, accelerate model projects and programs, and implement a large-scale project against desertification and dust storms.

During my meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, we went into details for measures to be taken from both sides in the framework of implementing the agreements made between the heads of state. For instance,

-Certain restrictions and limits that have been imposed as a cautionary measure against the spread of COVID-19 infections is why our country's export of mining products such as coal have decreased. The Chinese side has affirmed its readiness to increase its import of coal from Mongolia through ways such as establishing a long-term agreement on the purchase of coal on a commercial basis and introducing a new method of transportation.

increase the capacity of border checkpoints and tackle the issues and challenges currently being faced?

-For any two countries with wide-ranging cooperation, it is impossible to discuss all issues during a single session of official talks. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is only in charge of coming to a general agreement at the administrative level. Based on the successful implementation of measures taken

checkpoint, time is necessary to find the appropriate solutions and implement them.

-Were there any discussions held on soft loans and aid? In general, what are some of the joint projects that are being implemented? Will there be any new projects?

-It was agreed to have the corresponding organizations of both sides pay more attention to accelerating the progress of the projects being implemented in Mongolia with soft loans and non-refundable aid from the Government of China, and resolve the issues that have arisen in connection with the pandemic situation. Due to the pandemic, it is obvious that there are certain difficulties in continuing to make progress in implementing the projects funded by soft loans and non-refundable aid. For instance, there have been cases where the project's specialists, engineers, and experts have not been able to arrive as scheduled. As for new projects, we have put forth a suggestion to implement construction projects for general education schools, dormitories, and hospitals in aimags with non-refundable aid. Per the mutually agreed procedure, corresponding works will be carried out, with the side of China giving us a response after being provided with further details from our side and studying the matter.

-As for my final question, when will our citizens be able to freely travel to our southern neighbor?

-For any countries that usually have a significant flow of citizens traveling between them, the restrictions imposed on travel have created various issues. Thus, a suggestion has been put forth to restore scheduled flights between the two countries in phases based on the mutual acknowledgement of vaccine certifications. Regarding the matter, the side of China noted the difficulties being faced in implementing infection prevention measures as the pandemic situation is changing rapidly with the mutations of the virus. As restoring international air travel is a matter of time, the Chinese side expressed their interest in further discussing possible solutions.



deciding on the next projects of the intergovernmental cooperation plan in order to accelerate the construction projects in the framework of the Steppe Road plan and the Belt and Road initiative, and complete the work to renew the mid-term program for trade and economic cooperation. In connection with the two state heads' agreement to pay special attention to actively cooperating in the fight against desertification and dust storms, it was also decided to improve the exchange of information between the corresponding organizations of the two countries, and establish a working group to further discuss a joint project to tackle the issue.

-Did any discussions take place on increasing the export of coal from Mongolia?

In turn, I informed the side of China about the comprehensive measures being taken to limit the spread of infection in the border region as well as our suggestions for possible measures to be implemented to increase its transportation through main border checkpoints. As a result of the actions being jointly taken, the transportation of coal and copper concentrate is expected to increase. I am confident that trade turnover and transportation of goods will continue to increase if the infection spread is appropriately monitored and the situation gets better.

-To increase our country's exports, the operations of border checkpoints would have to come into discussion. Will there be any measures taken to

against COVID-19 infections, we agreed to increase the amount of goods and products being transported through the two countries' border checkpoints, such as Zamiin-Uud - Erlian, Gashuunsukhait - Gantsmod, and Shiveekhuren - Sekhee. In order to bring this agreement into realization, corresponding organizations of the two countries are continuing to hold discussions. Representatives of our country's Consular Office are working at the Gantsmod border checkpoint, and representatives of the corresponding ministries and organizations are working at the Gashuunsukhait border checkpoint to hold discussions with the corresponding organizations of China. As the situation is different at each border

WENDY SHERMAN:

During the state visit of former President of Mongolia Kh.Battulga to the United States in 2019, the country upgraded the bilateral relationship with its "close partner and a third-neighbor" to 'Strategic Partnership'. Reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Mongolia and recognizing the 30th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia, a resolution was agreed to at the 117th Congress of the Senate of the United States of America, convened April 15th, 2021.



THE U.S. STANDS READY TO HELP BUILD MONGOLIAN ECONOMY BACK BETTER

Since 1987 or establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the U.S., the high-level reciprocal visits have been held regularly. This time, despite the difficult situation of the pandemic, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy R. Sherman paid a three-day visit to Mongolia between July 23 and 25, 2021 which could be considered as the most senior visit from the U.S. State Department official since U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's six-hour official visit in 2016.

In the course of her visit, Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman has met with the Speaker of the State Great Khural (Parliament) G.Zandanshatar, Minister of Foreign Affairs B.Battsetseg,

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs B.Munkhjin, Minister of Culture Ch.Nomin, Minister of Defense G.Saikhanbayar as well as meeting members of the Mongolian Armed Forces and staff at Mongolia's LGBT center.

As part of her working visit in Mongolia, a press roundtable has been held at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Ulaanbaatar. At the outset of the roundtable, she said "This is my first time visiting Mongolia during my time in all my years of serving as a diplomat and I am so honored to be here, it is just fantastic. The U.S. is very proud to be Mongolia's strategic partner and third-neighbor. Our two countries shares strong commitment to democracy, to free

commerce and entrepreneurship, to upholding the rule of law and to protecting individual human rights and freedom."

"I had a pleasure meeting with the both the Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister, and the Speaker of the Parliament. We had open, honest and productive meetings to discuss wide range of issues, including our shared effort to end COVID-19 pandemic and our work together to ensure security in the regional issues. I also had the opportunity to engage with the Mongolian people. I was deeply moved by my visit to Choijin Lama Temple where I also see a demonstration of Mongolian calligraphy and extraordinary performances. Mongolia's respect for the freedom of religion

and for preserving traditional cultural expression is a model for the region and for the world. I am proud that the U.S Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation to help support Choijin Lama Temple and other cultural treasures in Mongolia."

"I was also glad to be able to meet with members of Mongolia's armed forces who recently returned from Afghanistan. For nearly two decades, Mongolian forces served alongside U.S troops in Afghanistan with distinction and valor and the U.S. is very grateful for their service," she added. Expressing readiness of the U.S. to help build Mongolian economy back better and create economic opportunity for the people of Mongolia, she emphasized that the USAID revitalized its presence in Mongolia last year and is already expanding its programming.

During her visit, she also announced that the USAID is putting USD 50 million towards supporting SMEs in Mongolia and another USD 12 million in technical assistance for the energy sector. Moreover, she highlighted that USD 350 million MCC has been provided to vastly increase the supply of fresh water to Ulaanbaatar. She, then, pledged to find additional ways to deepen cooperation with Mongolian people in correlation with USAID when she returns to Washington.

During her visit, she also announced that the USAID is putting USD 50 million towards supporting SMEs in Mongolia and another USD 12 million in technical assistance for the energy sector.



Following her remarks at the press roundtable, the Deputy Secretary of State answered questions asked by the reporters.

-What were the main topics of discussion during your meetings in Mongolia?

-We had a broad range of discussions about economics, regional security, human rights, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and LGBTQI+ rights. Because we are democracies, we want to emphasize the above mentioned basic human rights. The past of Mongolia and its identity is very well preserved. It is very commendable that holding on to your culture and identity while becoming a democracy. It was very moving to see how important the freedom of religion and the religious history is to the country

and to the identity of the country. It is really important for the world.

-What will the policy of the U.S. towards Mongolia be in the next four years within the framework of Strategic Partnership, especially in the sphere of trade and economy?

-I think that the Strategic Partnership between our two countries is tremendously important. Last month, President Biden wrote a letter to congratulate President Khurelsukh on his election as Mongolia's sixth president. We believe that everyone supports the Mongolia-U.S. relations based on their shared values of democracy. We are working very hard on our economic cooperation. As you know, the 'Third Neighbor Trade Act' was reintroduced into the U.S.

House of Representatives during the current session. It is not appropriate for me to comment on what the Congress will do. But there is a strong bipartisan support in Washington for our Strategic Partnership and for developing stronger economic and trade ties between our countries. We are also working to support Mongolia in developing cashmere industry and promote value-added manufacturing of cashmere in Mongolia. USAID recently supported 'cashmere industry development study' that recommended actions to increase brand recognition and improve sustainability. U.S. consumers like Mongolian cashmere because it is such a high-quality. I know more can be done to make Americans more aware of Mongolian-made cashmere. Obviously, the Millennium Challenge Compact which works on the water supply is an important piece of infrastructure for economic development.

-What measures are the U.S. government is taking to ensure the normal flow of bilateral trade and economic cooperation amid the pandemic?

-Mutual support to combat the COVID-19 pandemic is a key part of our Strategic Partnership. We are very grateful for Mongolia's donation of personal protective equipment worth USD 1 million for hospital workers. The donation was used for Navajo Nation, which was hit hard by the pandemic. It had an immediate impact for specific group of people. The help is going both ways. The U.S. have provided USD 4 million in COVID-19 assistance, including a donation in December of 50 ventilators. We are also the largest donor to the COVAX facility in global

fund. We are glad to see several COVAX vaccine shipments have arrived in Mongolia. We also discussed at G7 on the concept of 'Building back better world', which is a way to leverage private investment to help all countries recover from this very difficult time. I don't think we are through the pandemic yet as we are seeing surges of the delta virus. Mongolia has worked really hard to be able to move forward and I want to congratulate Mongolia for their hard work it's done to be able to recover. We will work with Mongolia to build back better world.

-What is your opinion on result of the recent presidential election of Mongolia? What could the new President of Mongolia bring to the bilateral relations?

-We think it is wonderful that Mongolia has its sixth president and the democracy continues to thrive. President Biden sent a letter of congratulations. We would, in fact, sent a delegation to the inauguration and for your 100th anniversary of People's Revolution. However, we totally understood how COVID-19 prevented that. That was very thoughtful of Mongolia to not have foreign delegations for your own security and for everyone else's. I think that we see this relationship as incredibly important. As you know, I have gone to Japan, South Korea, and Mongolia, the countries all with democracy and shared values. President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken see our strategic partnership with Mongolia as a demonstration of the power of democracy and the fact that democracy can deliver for its citizens. I know that President of Mongolia expects do to so.



Mongolia and Rio Tinto: *Talks following the independent review*



Experts projected that copper price will reach USD 10 thousand in 2025 as the global use of electric vehicles increases and a large number of wind power plants are built, but it has reached that amount this year, four years prior to that time. Unfortunately, we may fail to use this period when the copper price is high. The reason for that is that in July 2019 Rio Tinto informed the Government of Mongolia that a 22-month delay in the development of Oyu Tolgoi underground mine, which was due to open in January 2021, caused by geotechnical conditions, would increase the mine's development cost by USD 1 billion 450 million.

As the more than one occurrence of cost overruns raised the doubts of the Mongolian side, the

investor side set up a special committee to investigate the reason for the cost overrun and schedule delay to have international independent experts draw a conclusion and the committee presented its review to the government on August 9.

According to the report, the cost overrun and the schedule delay in the development of Oyu Tolgoi underground mine were not caused by geotechnical conditions. In other words, the cost overrun significantly due to the mismanagement of the project management team. The internationally renowned Financial Times wrote that the 157-page report discovered that only USD 12-90 million of the cost overrun could be attributed to geotechnical issues. Financial institutions

in the United Kingdom and the United States are also examining Rio Tinto's statements about the cost and schedule overruns.

According to a statement Minister of Justice and Home Affairs Kh.Nyambaatar, who chairs the government's working group tasked with negotiating with Rio Tinto, made shortly after the experts' conclusions, the Mongolian side made two demands. The first demand was to respond to the experts' independent review and second one was to immediately start underground mining. Since the experts made the abovementioned conclusion, the government is unable to approve the feasibility study, so the Mongolian side believes that underground mining should begin immediately using the old

feasibility study, taking advantage of the high copper price. To be clear, the government intends to start underground mining by September and Rio Tinto said that is 'technically fully feasible', but has not yet started it. Seeing as how the company has so far been reluctant to give official response to the review, the abovementioned 'negative' conclusion seems to be harmful to the reputation of the Anglo-Australian company Rio Tinto, one of the world's leading mining companies. Meanwhile, Australia's Financial Review wrote about Mongolian officials arriving in London to discuss the Oyu Tolgoi issue with the British government and about them being understood to be planning a visit to Canberra early next year as they seek to put pressure on Rio



Tinto to resolve the issue.

Rio Tinto appears to take the position that it will start underground mining once the feasibility study is accepted. If the government accepts the reserve report and feasibility study, quite some time could be lost as they will have to be submitted to a professional council and thoroughly studied. However, opening the underground mine, which accounts for 80 percent of Oyu Tolgoi's total reserves, as soon as possible and leveraging the high copper prices would increase Oyu Tolgoi's value.

A few days after the experts' report was released, a letter was sent from Rio Tinto Copper Chief Executive B.Bold and the management of Turquoise Hill Resources to Prime Minister of Mongolia L.Oyun-Erdene.

In the letter, Rio Tinto made an apology for difficulties caused in the relationship between the two sides due to impediments in the development of the underground mine and proposed reducing the interest rates on loans to Mongolia to fund its share of the construction costs and generating USD 350 million or MNT 1 trillion additional revenue for Mongolia over the next three years. This is the advance payment of the dividends for the government's 34 percent stake and the Mongolian side would annually receive MNT 350 billion.

This amount could undoubtedly help reduce the growing budget deficit caused by the pandemic and stabilize the exchange rate of MNT against USD. However, Deputy Chief of the Cabinet Secretariat, member of the abovementioned working group B.Solongo stated that the proposals will not be hastily accepted as it is uncertain under what conditions the advance payment will be made. Moreover, member of the Board of Directors of Oyu Tolgoi company E.Bayasgalan takes the position that it is not necessary to hurriedly accept the proposals when Rio Tinto has not yet given its response to the independent review.

Here I try to predict what key issues will be discussed at the forthcoming talks between

the government and Rio Tinto. First of all, it should be noted that repeated large overruns in the underground mining investment cost would reduce the amount of dividends and taxes to be given to Mongolia as much. This is because the government borrows its 34 percent share of investment from Turquoise Hill Resources with an annual interest rate of LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) plus 6.5 percent. It was agreed that the loans would be repaid in the future with dividends the Mongolian side will receive from the Oyu Tolgoi project. The government asked to cut the interest rate during talks over interest rates in 2018, but Rio Tinto did not accept it. Working group member B.Solongo said that now, options beneficial to the Mongolian side will be studied through talks with Rio Tinto and Turquoise Hill Resources over the issue. The working group mentioned here is the one chaired by Minister of Justice and Home Affairs Kh.Nyambaatar, which was set up to oversee the implementation of the 92nd parliamentary

resolution on 'ensuring interests of Mongolia in the exploitation of the Oyu Tolgoi mine'.

Furthermore, in Rio Tinto's letter, the Mongolian government was asked to withdraw its counterclaim regarding tax dispute in the London Arbitration Court and to put off the dispute process. Currently, Rio Tinto and Turquoise Hill are opposed to being parties to the dispute, while the government has asked to have them as parties to the dispute, and the tax dispute is ongoing in the London Arbitration Court. It should be noted that the 2009 Investment Agreement stipulates that the parties shall resolve any tax dispute in an international arbitration court, according to which Oyu Tolgoi, disapproving the two tax bills from the Mongolian Tax Authority, filed a lawsuit in the London Arbitration Court.

Seeing as how Rio Tinto group, in its letter, included the idea that the government could consult with the company on what to do with the 34 percent stake it owns, experts have speculated that Rio Tinto may



The project can be successful, provided that the interests of Oyu Tolgoi's shareholders are equally satisfied. If the sides sit down at the negotiation table and thoroughly address the abovementioned issues, it will benefit both Rio Tinto and the people of Mongolia in the long run.



be interested in buying the stake. According to the Deputy Cabinet Secretary, there are no plans to discuss this issue with Rio Tinto.

Another important issue for the government and Rio Tinto to discuss is the energy sale and purchase agreement. Oyu Tolgoi currently buys more than USD 100 million worth of electricity from China annually, and the electricity consumption will certainly soar with the opening of the underground mine, which will increase production by 3-4 times. According to the Investment Agreement signed between the parties in 2009, Oyu Tolgoi has been required to purchase energy from Mongolia since 2017, but it has not been doing that. Rio Tinto and Oyu Tolgoi have previously carried out studies to build a power plant with their own funds. However, they seem to be not in a hurry as the project's investment cost is high and investors would not like a coal project. The government has launched an energy project

based on the Tavan Tolgoi coal deposit. When the power plant is commissioned, Oyu Tolgoi will try to buy USD 250-300 million worth of energy domestically at a lower price than China, but the Mongolian side is interested in recovering the cost of building the power plant as soon as possible. This makes the energy issue as important as the loan interest rates and the tax dispute.

This time, thanks to the hard work of the government's working group, the project stakeholders seem to be ready to discuss long-standing issues including overruns and delays. Therefore, if the problems arose due to project management and procurement errors, it is crucial to discuss with Rio Tinto and Turquoise Hill the corporate governance issue, in particular, how to improve the management of Oyu Tolgoi. It is commendable that Rio Tinto has made definite proposals to address the issue. The company manages Oyu Tolgoi for a considerable fee. For example, it charges management

fees equal to 3 percent of the underground mining investment cost and 6 percent of operational and recurring costs, which amounts to over USD 200 million per year. In addition, Oyu Tolgoi reimburses all management costs incurred. This time, both Rio Tinto and the investor side said it is possible to reconsider the management fee issue, which is an important step towards reaching an understanding. This was definitely made possible with the skills and insights of the highly educated young officials including Deputy Cabinet Secretary B.Solongo, and Board Members of Oyu Tolgoi Z.Gan-Ochir and E.Bayasgalan.

As the Oyu Tolgoi project is expected to be implemented over the next 100 years, it is clear from all this that the issue of cost overruns will arise in the process. Therefore, it is in the interest of all project stakeholders to monitor and take action to address any issues without delay.

The successful completion of talks with Rio Tinto is expected

to provide a favorable opportunity to have foreign investment in mining and geological exploration flow into Mongolia. Deputy Cabinet Secretary B.Solongo emphasized that discussing issues related to the project and seeking mutually beneficial solutions does not mean that the project will be terminated, that there is no need to terminate or suspend the project and that the independent review is not a reason for investors to leave Mongolia. As mentioned above, it is possible to open the underground mine, which accounts for 80 percent of Oyu Tolgoi's total reserves, as soon as possible to increase sales at a time when copper price is high and that will increase Oyu Tolgoi's value.

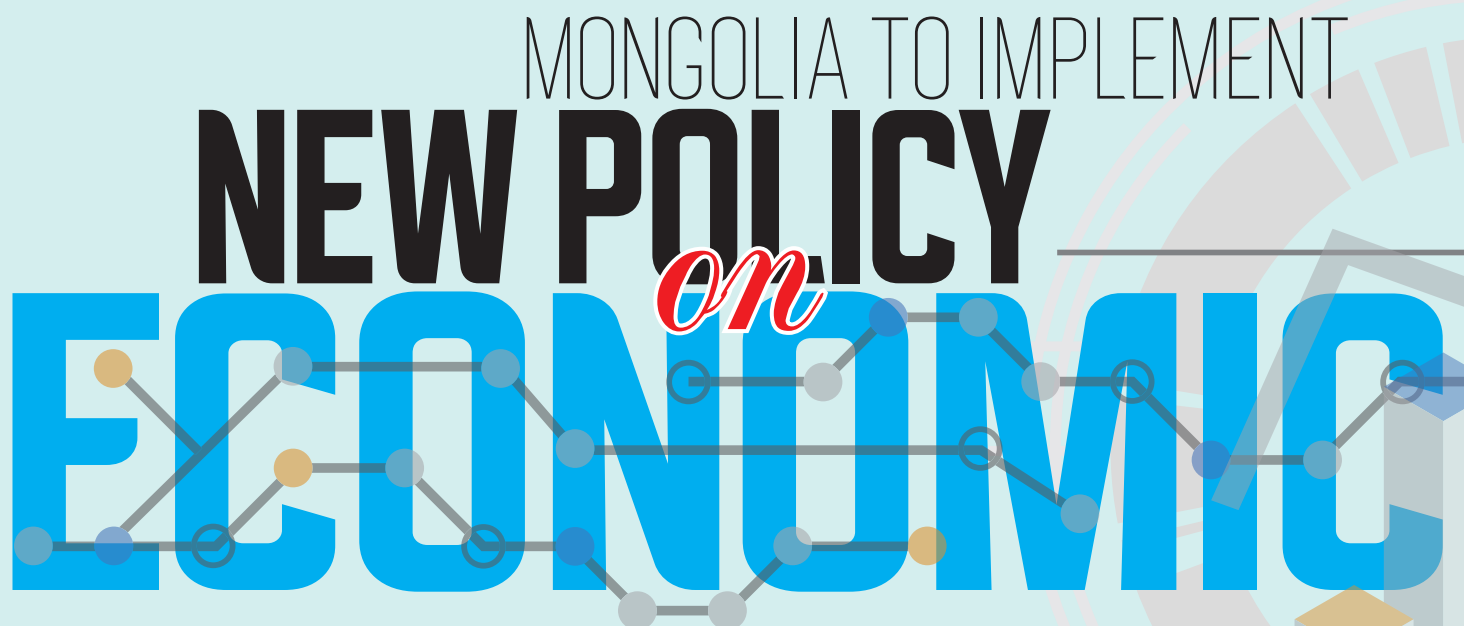
The project can be successful, provided that the interests of Oyu Tolgoi's shareholders are equally satisfied. If the sides sit down at the negotiation table and thoroughly address the abovementioned issues, it will benefit both Rio Tinto and the people of Mongolia in the long run.

Economy

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mongolian economy contracted by 5.3 percent in 2020, its worst contraction in the past 30 years. In 1992, the country's economy was shrunk by 9.3 percent. However, according to the research, the economy is gradually returning to its pre-COVID level as a result of the government's right policies and phased measures to stop this decline.

and programs due to political instability and lack of a unified position. A clear example of it is the "Gashuunsukhait Railway Project," which was firstly launched 13 years ago. In his several speeches, the Prime Minister stressed that the government is making effort to prevent such a situation from happening again. He also mentioned it during his presentation on the economic recovery policy.

MONGOLIA TO IMPLEMENT NEW POLICY on ECONOMIC



The purpose of the economic recovery policy

The Prime Minister of Mongolia emphasizes that although the economic situation is improving, the government aims to achieve substantial growth together with the private sector. Therefore, the government has recently announced its intention to implement a new policy to recover its pandemic-hit economy.

Economists see the policy as a way to revitalize the economy, which has been hit hard by COVID-19 impact, and as a turning point in many unresolved socioeconomic issues. Basically, it can be said an opportunity to bring positive results in many things in need of renewal.

The economic recovery policy aims at

- ensuring political and macroeconomic stability,
- accelerating public-private partnerships and creating a favorable business environment,
- improving the environment for foreign and domestic investment
- implementing fiscal reforms.

The PM stressed that it is time to

pay great attention to get rid of red tape, digitize public services, increase exports, promote import-substitute manufacturing, revitalize capital market development as well as expand the scope of economy.

The advantage of having no political conflict, and the economic recovery policy

Establishment of "political and macro-economic stability", the first goal of the policy, will have a significant impact on long-term projects and programs. It will also have a positive effect on economic stabilization and growth. Investors will be possible not to take political risks. Observers believe that current top officials' being from one political party and having the same position and ideology is advantageous in many ways. In other words, it is good that there will not be political conflicts and disagreements in the decision-making process; particularly it is crucial for its rapid and constant implementation during the pandemic.

In this sense, the Prime Minister noted, "Members of the National Security Council (President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of Parliament) are on the same position." In our country, there are examples of delays and disruption of many long-term projects

Outcomes of the mass vaccination and economic recovery plan

About 70 percent of the Mongolian population has received the second dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 as well as the third dose started being administered. It is a key indicator of a positive impact on overcoming the pandemic. According to economists and researchers, the higher vaccination coverage opens up wider economic opportunities.

In addition, the implementation of government's MNT 10 trillion comprehensive plan for health protection and economic recovery has begun yielding fruits. The issuance of a 3-percent interest rate loan to SMEs within the plan has become a real support, revitalizing a cash-strapped market. This measure of great significance to keep jobs is considered to have influenced to switch the downturn into recovery within a short period.

Public-private partnership for economic recovery

The participation of the private sector is very important in the country's economic recovery policy. The new policy on economic



RECOVERY

recovery announced by the Prime Minister focuses on working with, hearing opinions and reaching mutual understanding with the private sector, which is welcomed by businesses and investors.

The PM expressed his concern that although economy looks recovering, it is so close to get back into a difficult situation if we can not make major changes with smart solutions. The businesses consider the government's initiative to work with the private sector and recover the economy as a well-timed initiative. One of the main goals of our country is not only to export raw materials, but also to produce value-added products, expand exports and increase export earnings.

The government is holding a phased policy to support the private sector, promote import substitution projects and programs, pursue a policy towards supporting leading economic sectors and create a favorable business environment.

From welfare to employment

The government is paying attention to many issues, such as how to expand the economy, how to make major mining projects profitable and productive, and how to revive economy from tough times. Furthermore, it is seeking to reduce the growing

welfare cost and create more employment opportunities than benefits. In Mongolia, the number of social welfare beneficiaries and the spending of the welfare fund have been rising year by year, which led the fiscal burden to grow. The monthly allowance that 1.2 million children are currently benefiting has been raised to MNT100 thousand, for which MNT 1.4 trillion is spent out from the budget annually. This is just a small portion of the government's spending on social welfare during the pandemic. Certainly, it supports livelihoods to a certain extent. However, the government has announced that it will implement a policy to focus welfare policies on employment and make it more efficient.

Civil services free from red tape and corruption

In our country, bureaucracy and corruption increased at lower and middle levels of the civil service. Moreover, it needs to create a favorable legal environment for foreign investors and conduct reforms to ensure that the investment environment is not hindered.

The new policy on economic recovery has also outlined ways to address them. The salaries of government employees are

considered necessary to be fixed based on their performance and results. Digital transformation of civil services will allow citizens to receive more efficient, transparent and cost-effective services.

New policy on economic recovery - Long-term policy

The policy can be seen as a great opportunity to solve a lot of long-standing issues, rather than short-term ones that are only relevant at this time. The most anticipated things of citizens are to have stable exchange rates, prices and no tax burden. Economists say that it is a good thing that the government is taking a holistic view of monetary, fiscal and tax policies and implementing a new policy that will yield long-term results.

Furthermore, the issue of reducing traffic congestion and decentralization in the capital city has been also included in the policy. According to the government, all possible measures to solve this problem, which has been discussed for many years, will be taken. For instance, support will be provided for resolving loans, taxes, land and infrastructure issues of the facility to be built away from the capital.



MEMBER OF THE STATE GREAT KHURAL,
CHAIRMAN OF THE MONGOLIA-ESTONIA
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
GANKHUYAG KHASUURI

GREETINGS

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Republic of Estonia, I extend heartfelt greetings on behalf of the Mongolia-Estonia parliamentary group at the State Great Khural of Mongolia as well as personally.

I must express my satisfaction with how the Mongolia-Estonia friendly relations and cooperation have developed in a way that is mutually beneficial so far.

As the cooperation between legislative institutions, and especially the two sides' parliamentary friendship groups have a significant role in bilateral relations, I am confident that the close, active cooperation between us lawmakers would create more opportunities for developing bilateral relations in other main sectors such as economy, tourism, IT, and culture. I would be happy to put efforts into these works as the Head of the Mongolia-Estonia Parliamentary Group at the State Great Khural of Mongolia.

Once again, I extend my greetings to you all on the occasion of the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations - May the friendly relations between Mongolia and Estonia continue to develop and flourish.



GREETINGS

On behalf of the Estonia-Mongolia Parliamentary Group of the Riigikogu and myself, I would like to send you my good wishes and to congratulate all of us on the celebration of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Estonia and Mongolia.

I hope that we can continue the excellent work in strengthening the good relationship between Estonia and Mongolia, especially in the fields of ICT, economic cooperation, and tourism. There are wide possibilities to further develop the cooperation between our countries through education and cultural exchanges and by building deep and meaningful relations between our peoples.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express the confidence that the cordial relations and fruitful cooperation existing between Estonia and Mongolia will further improve for the benefit and welfare of our countries. I encourage you to take an opportunity and to come to visit the beautiful Estonia and its unique culture.



MEMBER OF THE RIIGIKOGU,
CHAIRMAN OF THE ESTONIA-MONGOLIA
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
KAIDO HOOVELSON

30 years - Mongolia-Estonia

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Republic of Estonia, we took an interview from Non-resident Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Mongolia to Estonia T.Janabazar.



DIGITALIZATION SERVING AS KEY FIELD OF COOPERATION FOR MONGOLIA AND ESTONIA

-This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Mongolia-Estonia diplomatic relations. How has bilateral relations and cooperation developed in these past years?

-Following Estonia's declaration of independence on August 20, 1991, Mongolia acknowledged the country's independence on August 28, and established bilateral relations on November 20. As it could be said that both countries simultaneously faced various challenges and difficulties in the transition to democracy and free market economy, bilateral relations and cooperation did not actively develop for a certain number of years.

However, relations between the two countries began to become active in the beginning of the year 2000 - and later in 2003, President of Mongolia N.Bagabandi went on an official visit to Estonia which marked the start of cooperation between organizations of the two countries in various fields such as press and media. Furthermore, relations between legislative bodies came to be more stable, and a friendship group was established at both countries' parliaments in 2003-2004, which is still active to this day. Throughout the years, the mutual visits of Foreign Ministers and parliament members have

made significant contributions to further developing bilateral relations. In 2011, the first consultative meeting took place between the two countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs, establishing a mechanism to discuss the development of relations and cooperation. Honorary Consuls have also been appointed by both sides since 2015.

I would also like to highlight that the two countries have been actively cooperating in the development of e-governance in Mongolia in recent years. In 2019, a delegation led by Prime Minister L.Oyun-Erdene, during his time as the Cabinet Secretariat, made a visit to Estonia to become acquainted with the successful practices of introducing e-governance in all social sectors including those that involve government services. As a result of the visit, relations between the two countries' professional institutions in charge of e-governance reached a new level, which led to the working visit of representatives of the Estonian e-governance academy several times to share their practices and experiences for the development of the E-Mongolia system.

On the international level, bilateral relations and cooperation continue to actively develop in the framework of the activities and measures being taken by in-

ternational organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Freedom Online Coalition.

-Could you please tell us about how Estonia came to lead in e-governance on the international level?

-Estonia created the opportunity for its citizens to digitally acquire 99 percent of government services during any time of the day. The country leads the global ranking for this specific indicator as they began to consider ICT as one of the main sectors for the country's development from the 90s. We have been told that the active efforts put in by private entities, civil society, and especially the country's citizens also had a significant impact on transitioning into the digital system. Nationwide digitalization was carried out in phases by providing all schools with computers in 1998, and developing widespread wireless broadband access. The country's private entities also created more new opportunities for development. For example, Estonian developers sold Skype to eBay for USD 2.6 billion in 2005, creating a new way of making profits for the country's business owners and investors. As of today, over 150 technology companies are running their operations in Estonia, making up 15 percent of the country's GDP.

In 2005, Estonia also became the first country to utilize electronic voting for its parliamentary election. From paying their taxi fees to doing their income tax forms, the country's citizens are able to do everything online in a matter of a few minutes. In

aims of connecting with Estonian business owners, and creating the opportunity for them to exchange knowledge and good practices, establish cooperation, and make their own contributions to their home country's development, Estonia established the Global Estonian Business Network, regularly organizing various business events. Furthermore, they became the first country to introduce the 'e-Residency' initiative, which allows anyone from all over the world to start their business online in the country. As of today, thousands of people from over 170 countries have been registered, establishing some 16,000 companies in Estonia. Further information about these platforms is available through the link <https://stockholm.embassy.mn/index.php?moduls=72> on our Embassy website.

The country also greatly provides support for the development of startup businesses. According to a study carried out by NimbleFins, Estonia ranks 5th (after Germany, the U.K, Ireland, and Switzerland) in the list of best European countries for startups. They also rank 3rd in Europe for the number of startups per capita based on the Funderbeam Startup Investment Report. Countries such as Canada and the Netherlands that lead in the digital industry have begun to study the practices and experiences of Estonia as well.

-What are some of the measures being implemented in the framework of the active cooperation with Estonia for digital governance?

-Relations between the two countries were consistently developed as a result of the contributions and efforts put in by many Ambassadors, diplomats, and Honorary Consuls as well as activists in the political and social field throughout the years.

The government's decision to focus on boosting the country's digital transition and developing digital governance from 2019 served as a boost in having active cooperation between Mongolia and Estonia. Following the establishment of cooperation between the Communications and Information Technology Authority (CITA) and the e-Governance Academy of Estonia, the two sides have been cooperating in areas, including the exchange of methodology and practices as well as in involving technicians and specialists

The government's decision to focus on accelerating the country's digital transition and developing digital governance from 2019 served as a boost in having active cooperation between Mongolia and Estonia.

in training. CITA Chairwoman B.Bolor-Erdene also participated as a speaker at the e-Governance Conference annually organized in Estonia, which is one of the largest international events organized for e-governance. The two sides continue to develop partnership and cooperate in several areas, such as preparing the sector's specialists in Estonia, and ensuring information security.

Moreover, we have also recently begun to become acquainted with their methods and practices implemented in organizing elections online.

Based on Mongolia's current necessity, the Estonian side has expressed the possibility to implement an online training program, including themed discussions on e-justice, e-health, e-business, and e-land administration.

-What are some of the other fields that the two countries can partner in?

Estonia has a population of 1.3 million, with a GDP per capita of USD 26,378. The country mainly exports electronics, wood and wooden products, processed foodstuffs, and machinery and equipment, amounting to USD 14.4 billion. Prior to World War II, Estonia mainly exported agricultural products including milk and dairy. Following the country's independence in 1991, they made new choices for developing their economy. For instance, Estonia became one of the first countries to adopt flat tax systems in 1994. By 2008, the country ranked 12th out of 162 countries for its Index of Economic Freedom, and 21st in the ease of doing business according to the World Bank.

Similarly to Mongolia, Estonia has a tradition of producing dairy products and processing wool, hide and leather. Their milk and dairy products make up a quarter of the

Presidents of Mongolia and Estonia hold meeting



On September 23, President of Mongolia U.Khurelsukh held a meeting with President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid and discussed bilateral relations and cooperation.

Thanking the Government of Estonia for supporting the launch of 'e-Mongolia' digital platform and sharing its best practices of e-Governance, President U.Khurelsukh expressed willingness to further intensify cooperation in this field. While underscoring that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the sides exchanged views on organizing cultural events to consolidate people-to-people relations and friendship.

The Presidents concurred to strengthen cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, including innovation, information technology, cyber security, education, and science. Moreover, the sides exchanged views on establishing a permanent dialogue mechanism at the government level in order to develop effective and sustainable relations and cooperation in all sectors.

income earned from agricultural products. The country also exports wool products and artisanal goods. Thus, our two countries have the opportunity to cooperate in small and medium enterprises.

We also have the opportunity to learn from their experience in reforming the sectors of education and healthcare. Estonia was ranked 3rd in the world by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015. The country also has a governmental agency named Enterprise Estonia (EAS) that runs its operations in three main areas: increase export capacity, enhance tourism income, and bring high value-added foreign investments. The organization is also tasked to support the development of business models, innovation, and attract foreign talent. Studies are regularly conducted on resolving challenges being faced in the external economic environment and improving the country's competitiveness, and introduced to the Government. With an annual

budget of over EUR 80 million, they have representative offices in 17 cities around the world.

The organization's objectives for 2023 include bringing the number of high value-added export companies to 600, increasing the number of brands to be put on the global market by 20, attracting an investment of EUR 1.5 billion, increasing the number of tourists from Asia, and organizing 100 international conferences on tourism. All these objectives have specific measurements and deadlines. If you also look at some of the past events organized for business owners, you can find seminars and discussions with themes such as 'How to enter the Japanese food industry' and 'How to research your export partner for China'. Nordic countries also operate in the same way, with some including innovation in their objectives. Thus, I believe it would be right to properly study their practices and past experiences. In September, Mongolian representatives were also planned to be involved in the international forum 'Asia Update 2021' organized by EAS - however, the event was postponed due to the pandemic situation.

-Could you tell us about what type of works are being carried out in the framework of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations?

-Despite the current global pandemic, both sides are attaching great importance to the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. We have come to an

agreement with the Estonian side about the celebration of the anniversary, and works are being carried out as planned. A virtual meeting took place between the two sides' parliamentary friendship groups in May, and a consultative meeting on politics was organized between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in July, discussing opportunities for further cooperation. For instance, the sides exchanged views on implementing mutual high-level visits in the near future, organizing a visit for Estonian parliament members to Mongolia, preparing Mongolian students in e-governance and IT in Estonia, involving Estonian students in a scholarship program for studying in Mongolia, connecting the two countries' universities, and accelerating cooperation and relations between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Furthermore, preparations are underway for organizing a historical and cultural exhibition themed, 'Mandala - the Temple of Secret Tantra' by the Choijin Lama Temple Museum. The exhibition will jointly be organized with Estonia's biggest national university, the University of Tartu, and the scholars and researchers in the field of Mongolian studies at the Center for Oriental Studies. Alongside the exhibition, other events are also being planned such as a meeting between researchers in the field of Mongolian studies, and a promotional event to introduce Mongolia's history, culture, and Thank you for making time for this interview.



ISRAEL



MONGOLIA





**GREETINGS FROM
H.E. MRS. BATMUNKH BATTSETSEG
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the State of Israel, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you and to the friendly people of Israel.

Mongolia was the first Asian country to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel on October 2, 1991. Over three decades, Mongolia and Israel have been successfully developing friendly relations and cooperation in the political, economic and educational fields. I am deeply grateful to the Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) for its generous technical assistance extended to us.

While we celebrate this anniversary, I look forward to working closely with you to find new ways to expand our cooperation even further in the fields of innovation, cyber technology, food security and hi-tech solutions for clean energy, agriculture, medicine and education.

The world is facing difficult challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and recent events are increasingly proving the importance of concerted efforts in overcoming the consequences of the pandemic. Our government is grateful to the Government of Israel for its support to combat the COVID-19 pandemic by donating 20,000 USD personal protective equipment and masks.

The friendly relations between Mongolia and Israel are not hindered by geographical remoteness, and I am confident that our cooperation will be further strengthened in the coming years for the prosperity of both our nations and well-being of our peoples.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to wish Your Excellency good health, well-being and further progress and prosperity to the friendly people of Israel on this commemorative occasion.



**GREETINGS FROM
H.E. MR. YAIR LAPID
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

I extend my sincere congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the State of Israel. Our countries have enjoyed a deep and warm friendship since diplomatic relations were established on 2 October 1991.

Over the past three decades, Israeli-Mongolian relations have enjoyed steady growth and development in various fields, including bilateral trade and investments. I look forward to working with you to further strengthen our cooperation within the framework of the United Nations and other international and multilateral organizations.

As the world is faced with significant challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of international cooperation has once again been clearly demonstrated. As part of Israel's commitment to international collaboration, I am pleased that last May, MASHAV, the Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation was able to provide medical equipment to the Mongolian people.

I wish the people of Mongolia health, success and prosperity.

30 years to Mongolia-Israel relations

montsame

OUR PEOPLE TO PEOPLE RELATIONS DATE LONG WAY BACK



(H.E. Mr. Bold Ravdan, Non-Resident Ambassador of Mongolia to the State of Israel)

-This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Israel. In correspondence with this event, can you please tell our readers about Mongolian-Israeli relations and cooperation?

-The end of the Cold War made it possible to establish diplomatic relations and realize a wish of two nations. The Israeli Minister of Infrastructure and well-known politician Ariel Sharon visited Mongolia in 1998 at the invitation of our Minister of Infrastructure, Mr. S. Zorig, which paved the way for the high-level reciprocal visits. From the Mongolian side, a visit by H.E. N. Enkhbayar, the President of Mongolia to Israel was implemented in 2008. Mongolia and Israel enjoy good political relations and have a permanent consultative mechanism between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. There are friendship groups operating in the Mongolian and Israeli parliaments. So far, up to 350 people from our public and private sectors have been enrolled in short-term training through MASHAV, the Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation. In particular, following the visit by the Foreign Minister Ts. Munkh-Orgil to Israel in 2017, it was agreed to implement the internship program for Mongolian agricultural students. The bilateral trade turnover is modest; it amounts about USD 2.5 million annually.

-Are Israelis properly informed about Mongolia?

-Mongols reached the territory of today's Israel in the 13th century, and there were some Jews living in the capital Khuree city

in the early 20th century. Considering these, it could be said that our people-to-people relations date long way back. Currently, there are some scholars in Israeli universities, who are already engaged in Mongolian studies and maintain contacts with their counterparts in Mongolia. There are even people specialized in the history of the Khalkhin Gol Battle. Today, Israelis have more access to information about Mongolia than before. The citizens of our two countries have been able to travel visa free since 1996, which positively affected it. Over a thousand Israeli tourists visit Mongolia every year. Furthermore, a large number of Israelis immigrated from the former Soviet Union, who have been to Mongolia and knows about the country, may have contributed as well. I would like to mention that Ami H. Orkaby, the Honorary Consul General of Mongolia in Israel, is actively promoting Mongolia to the people of Israel. There is a small community of Mongolians in Israel, too.

-Please tell us about the opportunities for further development of Mongolian-Israeli cooperation. Is there anything to pay special attention to?

-Israel is a country with great experience in advanced technology, agriculture, and water resources management. There is no doubt that Israel is the nation of innovation and start-ups. Even in the face of the pandemic, Israel's exports of technological products and services continue to grow. In bilateral relations, we tend to grasp every sector, however we do not have to. Our delegation from the telecommunications and cyber sectors visited Israel in 2019 and witnessed the country's

achievements gained in cyber technology. Some connections and networks have been established then. The Communications and Information Technology Agency of Mongolia and the National Cyber Security Agency of Israel have agreed to start a collaboration and are ready to sign the relevant document. However, the signing has been delayed due to the situation caused by the pandemic. A total of 36 students in the field of agriculture underwent an internship in Israel under the Israeli organization 'Agrostudies', two groups each a year during 2018-2020. And it proved to be very fruitful. We are sincerely thankful to the Israeli Government for that, and keen to continue the program. Therefore, cooperation in the agricultural sector is essential to us.

Despite its small size, tourism in Israel is highly developed. Due to the large number of historical and religious sites they have, archeological and cultural heritage tourism is leading. In 2019 alone, they received 4.5 million tourists. It's rare for tourists to travel to Israel by land. In order to develop tourism, Israel strives to connect with the outside world through as many air routes as possible. In connection with this Israeli practice, I think we also need to reconsider whether we have reliable air connections to the outside world or not. Personally, I believe that it is a priority direction for us to have active and regular bilateral cooperation within the United Nations. Taking into consideration some similarities between Israel's particular circumstance in comparison to Mongolia's unique situation, we should continue mutually supporting each other within the multilateral fora. It is important to understand that Israel cooperates with other countries on a pragmatic basis. Gone are those days of always asking others for help. Hence we must focus on cooperating with others on the basis of mutual benefit. This way, any bilateral relationship can move forward.

-What would you like to emphasize about the development of the country you are accredited to?

-Israel is a small, but strong country with the capacity to defend itself. Despite its young age, it has reached a high level of development. All this is related to the population's high level of education, strict discipline, patriotism and well organized crisis management system for overcoming any difficulties, so there is a lot to learn for a small country like Mongolia.



THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY HOLDS GREAT IMPORTANCE, AND THUS WE ARE PLANNING TO CELEBRATE IT IN A FESTIVE MANNER



(H.E. Ms. Irit Ben-Abba Vitale, Non-Resident Ambassador of the State of Israel to Mongolia)

-This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the State of Israel. In connection with this anniversary, could you tell us about Mongolia-Israel relations and cooperation?

-In October 1991, Mongolia and Israel have first established diplomatic relations and ever since, our friendship has deepened extensively. The Mongolia-Israel relationship holds great importance for both of our nations and the exchanges of high-level visits and dialogues over the years have had positive impacts on our bilateral ties. This year we hope to promote the sixth political Consultative meeting between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and the State of Israel and to further strengthen our bilateral relations.

Moreover, since the establishment of the relations, we have witnessed a significant increase in the bilateral exchanges within numerous fields; the tourism sector, with many Israelis traveling to the unique landscape of Mongolia, profound cooperation in the academic field, in which Mongolian students have arrived in Israel to pursue their academic studies, mainly in the agricultural field, as well as a constantly growing cooperation in the technological and the medical fields.

-How is the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations being celebrated? What activities have been or being planned to be organized to celebrate the 30th anniversary?

-The 30th anniversary holds great importance, and thus we are planning to celebrate it in a festive manner. Due to the current

circumstances, we have adjusted our celebration plans accordingly. In the cultural field, cooperation between Mongolian and Israeli dance groups and orchestras is planned, as well as the inclusion of Israeli films in the reputable Ulaanbaatar International Film Festival. In addition, we are also looking into establishing an agricultural demonstration unit based on Israeli technology, amongst other projects. Within the realm of possibility, I would of course be glad to visit Mongolia myself and take part in some of these events.

-How well do Israelis know Mongolia?

-As two ancient nations with a rich historical and cultural background, Mongolia and Israel share a meaningful cultural connection. Despite the vast distance between our two nations, many Israelis are familiar with the rich history of Mongolia, including the great legacy of Genghis Khan and the powerful Mongolian Empire. Not many Israelis know this, but the Mongolian empire successfully captured parts of the land of Israel between the years 1260-1300.

Furthermore, a steadily growing number of Israeli tourists have visited Mongolia and many today, are still waiting for the reopening of normal international air travel in order to visit the beautiful land of Mongolia and experience its people's unique culture and customs. Following the warm hospitality of the Mongolian people, Israelis heartfully welcome Mongolians to visit the State of Israel.

-What opportunities do you see to further expand bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries? In what other sectors/areas can the two countries cooperate?

-As a Startup nation, Israel is home to some

of the most commonly used inventions and technologies which benefit the lives of people around the world daily, such as the dripping irrigation system, solar panels, the cherry tomato, Waze, disc-on-key and many more. It is interesting to note that both our countries face many similar challenges; over 50% of Israel's land is a desert, and so technological adjustments were implemented in Israel's agricultural field. In addition, Israel predominantly uses reclaimed and desalinated water for its agricultural sector. These Agri-Tech and Water-Tech solutions Israel has to offer can similarly suit the landscape of Mongolia and benefit its agricultural sector. Following this, there are numerous fields in which Mongolia and Israel can expand their cooperation. This includes fields such as medicine, education, agriculture, Hi-Tech, and of course the efforts to overcome the pandemic. Future cooperation between the young generations of both countries can pave the way to further advancements of these solutions and technologies.

Moreover, Mashav, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conducted various projects in different countries according to their needs. Just this year, it has donated medical supply to Mongolia to combat the pandemic. The humanitarian assistance from Israel is an expression of the friendly relations between the two countries, and more projects are planned to be implemented in the future.

-What are some of the most interesting information/ facts about Mongolia you would like to highlight as a concurrent Ambassador to Mongolia?

-This is my second term as a diplomat in Beijing, and I have visited Mongolia back in the 1990s as the Deputy Head of Mission of the embassy of Israel in Beijing. I can say that still today; I remember the exceptional hospitality of the Mongolians. Every person who visited the country can stress this based on their personal experience. Secondly, Mongolia is also known as "The Land of the Eternal Blue Sky", as Mongolia's sky is clear for over two-thirds of the year, which also characterizes the Israeli weather. I sincerely hope I will be able to pay a visit to your wonderful country again soon and to meet with the wonderful people of Mongolia. Availing this opportunity, at the outset of the anniversary for the establishment of relations, I wish to thank wholeheartedly all civil servants, diplomats, students, entrepreneurs, and all of those who have contributed to the strengthening of the Mongolia-Israel bilateral relations.



MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY CONSUL GENERAL OF MONGOLIA IN ISRAEL

On this occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the State of Israel, it is my great pleasure and honor to convey my warmest congratulations.

Looking back on the past 30 years, since the establishment of Mongolia-Israel diplomatic relations, we are pleased to reveal a friendly cooperative relationship between our two countries that has been continuously developing and becoming more mature with each passing day. In spite of geographical and cultural differences, our two unique nations appreciate an ancient history of civilizations that has maintained its traditions for thousands of years.

Needless to say, Mongolia and Israel are truly like-minded democracies with geopolitical challenges, and share the same values and goals.

Mongolia's recognition in recent years of Israel's security needs and challenges, led the latter to change its pattern of voting at the UN General Assembly when anti-Israel resolutions are adopted. This act of friendship is not taken lightly in Jerusalem and places Mongolia as one of Israel's most important friends in Asia.

Our two countries, sharing common denominators and special relations, have developed a robust partnership in a wide range of areas including politics, economy, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges. A vivid example is the close cooperation between the countries National Security Councils, ongoing political dialogue, high-level visits, student exchange programs in the fields of agriculture and medicine, young leadership, cyber security and collaboration in fighting Covid-19 and more.

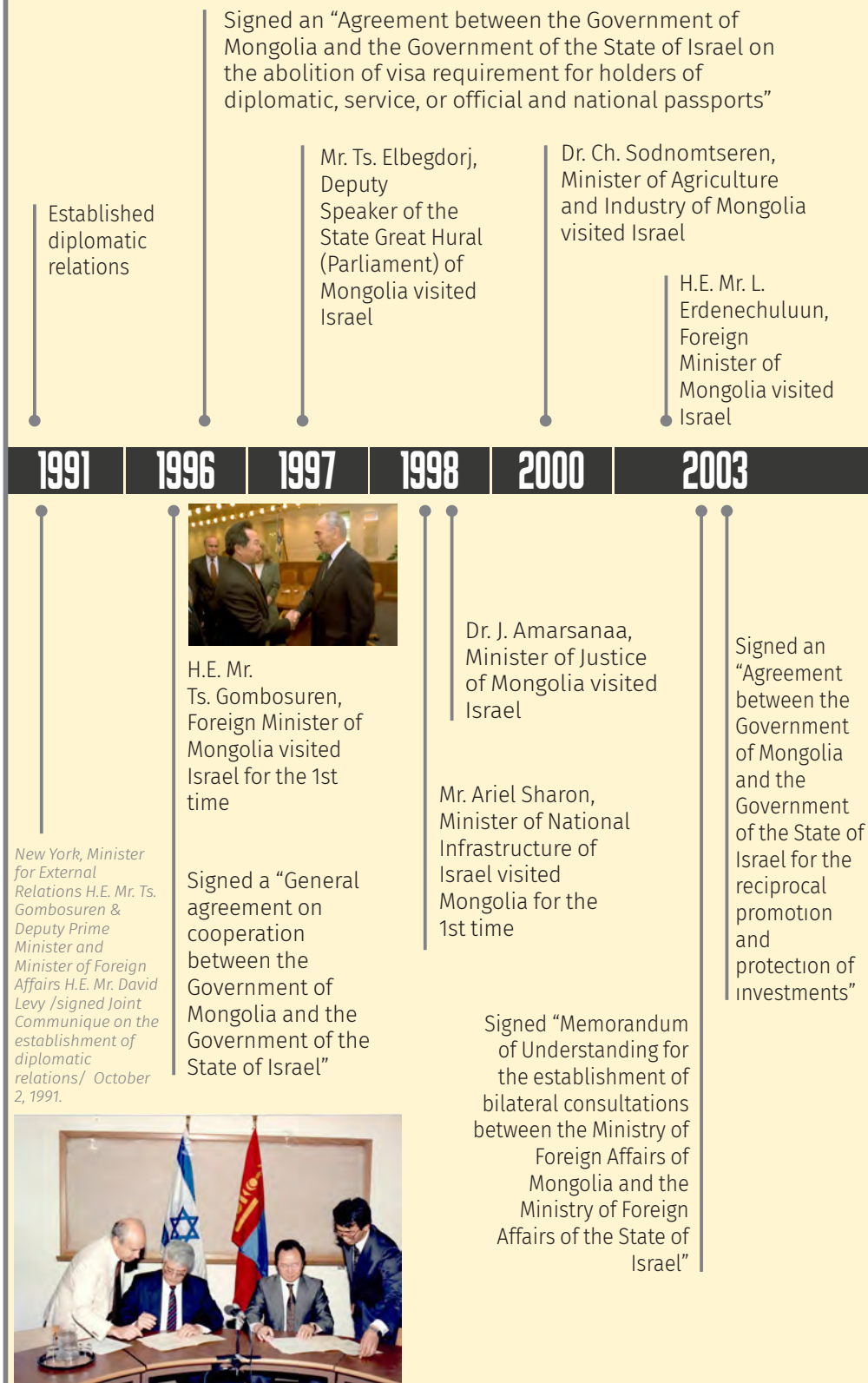
Last but not least, people-to-people ties are another key area whereby Mongolia and Israel will strive to foster closer partnership, building on initiatives in such areas as technology related investments, agro-tech, fin-tech, medical devices and other cultural activities. The growing friendship and understanding between Mongolians and Israelis will serve as a solid foundation for many more areas of our future cooperation that will mutually benefit our countries and peoples in the years to come.

I am committed to working closely with our governments to further strengthen our bilateral relationship and push forward the long-term constructive and cooperative relationship between Mongolia and Israel.

Ami H. Orkaby, Adv & Notary
Honorary Consul General of Mongolia in Israel
Vice Dean of the Israeli Consular Corps



CHRONOLOGY OF MONGOLIA-ISRAEL RELATIONS





Mr. B. Terbishdagva,
Minister of Agriculture
and Industry of Mongolia
visited Israel

Mr. L. Gansukh,
Minister of Nature,
Environment and
Tourism of Mongolia
visited Israel

Signed an "Agreement between the Government of Mongolia
and the Government of the State of Israel on Cooperation in the
field of education"

Third political Consultative meeting
between the Ministries of Foreign
Affairs of Mongolia and the State of
Israel

H.E. Mr. Daniel
Ayalon, Deputy
Foreign Minister
of Israel visited
Mongolia

Fifth political Consultative meeting between the
Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and the
State of Israel



Israel's Agency for
International Development
Cooperation (MASHAV)
donated 20,000 USD
protective equipment to
Mongolia to combat
COVID-19 pandemic

2006

2008

2009

2010

2012

2017

2018

2019

2021

First political
Consultative
meeting between
the Ministries of
Foreign Affairs of
Mongolia and the
State of Israel



H.E. Mr. N. Enkhbayar,
President of
Mongolia visited
Israel for the 1st time

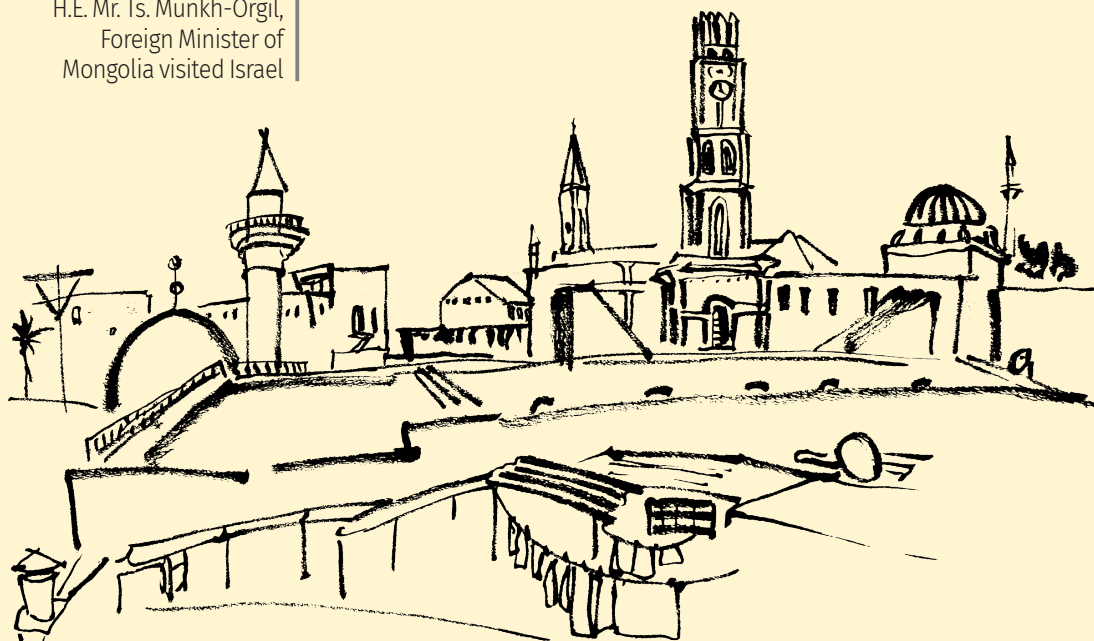
Second political
Consultative meeting
between the Ministries
of Foreign Affairs of
Mongolia and the State
of Israel



H.E. Mr. Ts. Munkh-Orgil,
Foreign Minister of
Mongolia visited Israel

Fourth political
Consultative meeting
between the
Ministries of Foreign
Affairs of Mongolia
and the State of Israel

Mr. G. Bayasgalan, First
Deputy Chief of the Cabinet
Secretary of the Government
of Mongolia visited Israel



The following is an interview with J.Sereejav, who has been appointed as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to Vietnam.



From the left, Ambassador J.Sereejav and President of Mongolia U.Khurelsukh

MONGOLIA HAS LONG-STANDING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

-First of all, congratulations on being appointed as Mongolia's Ambassador to Vietnam. I heard you have finished preparing for your departure to your host country.

-Thank you. I have been appointed as Mongolia's Ambassador to Vietnam and received my letter of credence from president Khurelsukh Ukhnaa. Any official who has been appointed to a diplomatic mission devises a preparatory plan and gets ready to depart for their host country by finishing official and personal preparations. I am pleased to have been appointed as the Ambassador to an important partner in Southeast Asia, with which Mongolia has long-standing friendly relations, Vietnam. I have worked for the diplomatic service over 30 years. It is my pleasure to recall myself playing a part in the development of relations with Vietnam since my role as the Director of the Department

of Asia.

-You said the countries have long-standing friendly relations. How many years has it been since the two countries established diplomatic relations? What areas will you mainly focus on during your tenure as the Ambassador?

-Mongolia and Vietnam established diplomatic relations on November 17, 1954, so this year marks the 67th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. I plan to work towards elevating relations between the two countries to strategic partnership. In other words, the long-standing friendly relations will be advanced. Secondly, during my tenure as the Ambassador, I have to give focus to expanding economic cooperation by implementing the proposal to export deep frozen meat from Mongolia, which has been discussed at the meetings of the intergovernmental commission

over many years, and increasing the type of products that can be exported while boosting trade. The Prime Minister attaches great significance to strengthening economic relations. Thirdly, I plan to make my contributions to deepening humanitarian and

cultural cooperation between the two countries.

-Could you elaborate on your choice of humanitarian and cultural cooperation as one of key areas of your activity?

-Of course. The people of the two countries have had friendly



Mongolia and Vietnam established diplomatic relations on November 17, 1954, so this year marks the 67th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

relations where they help each other over many years. I see humanitarian and cultural relations as key to ensuring that the youth, who are the future of their countries, continue that tradition and the younger generations of the two countries are connected. The increase in travel between Mongolia and Vietnam signifies that the people of the two countries are interested in exploring the history, arts, culture, and traditions of



I plan to mostly focus on attracting Vietnamese investors to invest in Mongolia's food and agricultural industries, especially the textile and leather industries, and introducing Vietnam's experience in its leading light industry of textiles to Mongolia in addition to exploring opportunities for establishing a joint plant in that field and providing businesspeople with information about that.

each other's country. Moreover, cooperation in other areas can be developed further with the expansion of humanitarian and cultural relations.

-Could you tell us more about the current state of trade and economic relations between the two countries?

-I believe it is completely feasible to strengthen trade and economic relations and cooperation between the two countries. At a meeting of the intergovernmental commission, the two sides set a goal to bring trade between the two countries to USD 100 million. Trade between the two countries has been increasing in recent years. In 2020, for

President of Mongolia meets with the Vietnamese counterpart



On the sidelines of his participation in the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, President of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa September 23 held a meeting with President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

President U.Khurelsukh said he is satisfied with the ever-expanding traditional friendly relations and cooperation, and expressed support for the further intensification of political talks and strengthening of the scope of bilateral cooperation.

He added that an official visit Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc paid to Mongolia as a Prime Minister during the 11th Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2016, was an important impetus to the expansion of the bilateral relations.

In turn, the Vietnamese President said, "We are countries with brotherly relationship and have fond memories of assistance and support rendered by Mongolia during the hard times of the war."

During the meeting, the sides exchanged their views on the possibilities of increasing trade and investment, improving condition of transportation, and cooperation in the sectors, including food, agriculture, light industry, mining and industry sector.

example, bilateral trade reached USD 58 million and 233 thousand. With that, Vietnam became Mongolia's second largest trading partner among the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, after Singapore. We are interested in a number of products of each other's country. There have been proposals for a partnership as well. There are

some tariff and non-tariff-related impediments and the transit issue, but we will work to mitigate and solve them.

-What are your plans for attracting investment?

-During my tenure as the Ambassador, I will take the initiative to intensify trade and economic cooperation with Vietnam. I plan to mostly focus on attracting

Vietnamese investors to invest in Mongolia's food and agricultural industries, especially the textile and leather industries, and introducing Vietnam's experience in its leading light industry of textiles to Mongolia in addition to exploring opportunities for establishing a joint plant in that field and providing businesspeople with information about that.



H.E. MR. ARIUNBOLD YADMAA
EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY AMBASSADOR
OF MONGOLIA TO CANADA



Mongolia and Canada signed the Canada-Mongolia Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement which provides a more transparent and predictable regulatory environment for Canadian investors in Mongolia. The strong reciprocal protections in the agreement help Mongolian and Canadian companies deepen commercial ties.

MINERAL RICH MONGOLIA AIMS TO DIVERSIFY ITS EXPORT

Investment related laws and regulations of Mongolia render equal rights and opportunities to both foreign and domestic investors to run business in Mongolia. There are no restrictions on trading foreign currencies and returning profits from operations to their home country. The tax environment is internationally competitive and certain taxes can be stabilized through the issuance of a stabilization certificate as well as investment agreements.

Mongolia is a mineral rich landlocked country encountering its biggest challenge of diversifying the economy with non-mining export products and accessing new market destinations. Earlier, Mongolia's economic growth averaged at 5.4%, it is forecasted to recover gradually in 2021, and accelerate in 2022 as the post-pandemic global recovery strengthens, reaching 6% by 2023.

Canada is the top-tier investor in the mining sector of Mongolia. One of the world's largest copper-gold deposits was discovered by a junior Canadian exploration company

in Mongolia, and it is now being developed into a multi-billion-dollar world-class mine, known as Turquoise Hill (Oyu Tolgoi). During the underground mine construction for this project, the bilateral trade between the countries reached CAD \$260 million, which was boosted by the import of machinery and equipment from Canada.

Several other TSX-listed Canadian companies are developing their projects in Mongolia. Mongolia-Canada ties in the mining sector are also bolstered by a cross-listing of TSX listed companies' shares on the Mongolian Stock Exchange.

However, the volume of bilateral trade in other goods and services is far behind the above-mentioned mining related cooperation. Our trade in 2020 accounted at CAD \$27.7 million, which is 50 % lower than the previous year. The total value of exported goods was CAD \$0.85 million. Mongolia exported cashmere products and prefabricated Mongolian yurts to Canada, and imported vehicle, machinery and their parts from Canada.

Mongolian yurts, the traditional dwelling of Central Asian nomads, are very popular in Canada. More than a tent, the yurt is the result of ancient know-how and has been developed over hundreds of years. Made to resist extreme climates, this circular domed abode is warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Mongolian cashmere is well known as one of the softest fibers in the world. Despite supplying 45% of the unprocessed cashmere in the global market, only 10% of the final cashmere products labeled 'Made in Mongolia' enter the global market.

Recently, the Mongolian Wool and Cashmere Association developed and introduced the 'Mongolian Noble Fibre' certification mark, which certifies that the product is made with 100 percent high quality wool and cashmere sustainably sourced from Mongolia, that meets Mongolian and international standards for textiles and woven products, and fully complies with quality standards in environmentally friendly manufacturing. The cashmere sector supported



Photo source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

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MONGOLIAN CASHMERE IS WELL KNOWN AS ONE OF THE SOFTEST FIBERS IN THE WORLD. DESPITE SUPPLYING 45% OF THE UNPROCESSED CASHMERE IN THE GLOBAL MARKET, ONLY 10% OF THE FINAL CASHMERE PRODUCTS LABELED 'MADE IN MONGOLIA' ENTER THE GLOBAL MARKET.

10,000 employees in 2020, of which 90% were women. 52% of total registered entities are women-led enterprises. It reflects the Government policy that pays particular attention to give women more equitable access to business.

Similar weather conditions provide entrepreneurs of the two countries with cooperation opportunities in construction and agriculture. Given the importance of the bilateral trading relationship with Canadian wooden structure building materials and technology, we are working closely with the Standards Council of Canada and other standards developing organizations to adopt more Canadian standards.

Mongolia's farmers are interested in importing seeds of crop varieties (e.g. wheat, barley and buckwheat etc.) suitable in the climate conditions of Mongolia and learning best practices of establishing feedlots, developing quality beef production, supply chain and export. Canadian agricultural advanced technologies will be needed to assist us in

diversifying our export.

In accordance with the recent amendments to the Banking Law, commercial banks in Mongolia will be publicly-traded companies by 2022-2023 with shares of each owner not exceeding 20%. Canadian institutional investors are most welcome to the banking sector of Mongolia. Transport, logistic services, aviation, online trading, information technologies, health, education, agriculture, forestry, wooden construction and tourism are all potential areas for prosperous business and sustainable investment.

In addition to domestic laws and regulations, friendly political and economic relations established with our main market countries such as Russia, China, Japan and Korea as well as the agreements signed with these countries can be advantageous for investors operating in Mongolia. Mongolia remains committed to welcome Canadian investors for doing business in the country and having easy access to the Asian region.

Interview

This is L.Kherlen, a cabin crew member at Emirates Airline - one of the many Mongolian youths currently employed at the world's top companies. The tasks of flight attendants are not only limited to bringing food and refreshments to passengers as they typically spend about 100 hours flying each month. Thus, we took an interview to learn about some of the unique sides of the profession as well as the region Kherlen is currently living in and what she typically does during the free time between long flights.



L.Kherlen:



I have
traveled to
more than



150

destinations



-There must be no girl who never dreamt of becoming a flight attendant dressed in elegant uniform. In your case, was it a coincidence or a childhood dream too?

It was my childhood dream too. I've always had passion for Aviation. After graduating from the University in Mongolia I headed to Japan to start my new journey. I went to Japanese Language School and Airline College. During my college year, I did job hunting and got to work at Narita International Airport as a ground staff. There I first saw Emirates crew walking through the airport. Their red hat, uniform, multinational team looked spectacularly beautiful.

I just admired about this Middle Eastern Airline and wanted to fly with them. So, I applied and made my childhood dream come true.

-It is obvious that stringent criteria must be passed to become a cabin crew member. Especially, it must require hard work and diligent efforts to

work for a world-class airline. What qualifications are there to become a cabin crew member?

-Qualifications to become a cabin crew member are, positive, confident, flexible, friendly and very keen to help others. Other things Emirates look for its candidates are; fluent in English, at least 21 years old, arm reach 212 cm, minimum 160 cm, high school graduate, no visible tattoos, can adapt new people, places and situations and physically fit for this demanding role and should be determined to always perform well. Also working for an International Airline requires to be culturally aware.

-When did you start working for the Emirates Airline?

-On July 8, 2016 I flew from Osaka, Japan to Dubai, United Arab Emirates. That is my date of joining, when I came to become a cabin crew for the Emirates Airline. It was midsummer in Dubai, the temperature was hitting over 40 degrees. I was



excited and bit worried at the same time coming to a place that I know no one. I have been assigned to the company accommodation located in downtown. I was so blessed to have wonderful girls to live together. They became like my sisters. After two months of training, my first-ever flight was to London.

-What challenges do you face when working at high-altitude for prolonged periods?

-Working up in the air for many hours is very physically demanding, especially flying at night, long flight across different time zones, from summer to winter. I do what my body feels like after the flight, sometimes I sleep for 14 hours to recover my body. We all have our own way of staying fit and healthy. During the flight, I try to drink as much water as possible, and use face spray for skin hydration and compression stockings to reduce swelling.

-How do you prepare for flights? What do the typical schedules of a cabin crew member look like?

-My main principles to perform well are to sleep well, eat well and exercise. Before the pandemic, flying 100 hours per month and crossing three continents weekly were very normal for our schedule. Every month, we get different schedule such as Jeddah, Birmingham, Los Angeles, Rome, Paris and Bangkok in one month, and New York, Tokyo, Kolkata, Seattle and Narita next month. For about short flights, we come back at the same day to Dubai, but for longer flights we stay at the destination for 24 hours or more. Sometimes we have standby duty to wait at the company or at home to get called for a flight. Normally we have 12 days off in a month.

-How do you spend your leisure time?

-I try to spend my days off actively as much as possible to maintain good physical and mental health. Yoga is one of the most important part of my daily life. I start my day with at least 20 minutes of yoga practice. Dubai has many beautiful beaches. Going to the beach with friends for swimming, getting some sun or just for a walk does good for my soul. There's always something new to do in Dubai. I also love being a tourist in Dubai, going to the souk, exploring Global Village, road trip to Hatta. I often visit my Mongolian friends live in other Emirate such as Fujairah and Al Ain.

-The job of air cabin crew members carries a great amount of responsibility, requiring a various set of skills and qualities, not just limited to serving meals and beverages to passengers, but also providing first aid medical assistance when necessary. How would you describe your job? What do you like most about your job?

-The most important aspect of my job is safety. Before every flight in the briefing we get asked safety question, we call it "Safe Talk". We all went through eight weeks of intense training at Emirates training college to be able to handle various situations that could happen on board. We have trained for fire-fighting, emergencies and evacuation, medical assistance, CPR, emergency childbirth, for security as well. I would describe my job delivering the best inflight service for our customers while maintaining the safety, security and overall wellbeing of all our passengers on board each flight. Emirates is truly Cosmopolitan company with over 140 nationalities. Besides travelling the world to over 150 destinations what I love about my job

WE HAVE TRAINED FOR FIRE-FIGHTING, EMERGENCIES AND EVACUATION, MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, CPR, EMERGENCY CHILDBIRTH, FOR SECURITY AS WELL. I WOULD DESCRIBE MY JOB DELIVERING THE BEST INFLIGHT SERVICE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS WHILE MAINTAINING THE SAFETY, SECURITY AND OVERALL WELLBEING OF ALL OUR PASSENGERS ON BOARD EACH FLIGHT. EMIRATES IS TRULY COSMOPOLITAN COMPANY WITH OVER 140 NATIONALITIES.

is being part of this Cosmopolitan family. We all came from different background of knowledge,

education and traditions. But we share the same experience and have each other to support and became friends for life. I also enjoy living in modern cosmopolitan city where people of many cultures and religious backgrounds live and work in harmony.

-Clearly, a person who works for an airliner must visit many places on earth. Do cabin crew members have a chance to see the countries they fly to? Please share with us your experiences with the most memorable countries or cities?

-Yes, we do have a chance to see the countries we fly to. Flying with Emirates for almost five years, I've been to 95 cities in 50 countries. Before the pandemic, if we stay at the destination a day or more, I always went to explore the city. Some new places we make a group and book for the tour. One of my most memorable



Interview



layover was in Cape Town, South Africa. I'd never been to Africa and it was my only second flight. Few hours after landing in Cape Town went for a tour to explore the Cape Point UNESCO World Heritage Site and Penguins at Boulders Beach. It was a breathtaking view with cliffs and oceans and green hills and valleys. I felt my body and mind refreshed and energized. Another great experience was New York. It was during Christmas and it was snowing. I felt like if I was in a movie scene, and the Christmas tree in front of Rockefeller center was magical. Now I have favorite things to do in every city.

-How did the job of a cabin crew member change your life?

-Seeing the parts of the world, living abroad by myself and working with international colleagues truly changed my life and brought so much positive changes. Personally, I've grown mature, self-disciplined, understanding and learned to enjoy little things in life. I know how to take care of my wellbeing. I became more grateful for my family, friends

and people in my life. Financially, I've become more independent. More than anything I'm living in the moment and collecting beautiful memories.

-Does your family live in Dubai? Tell us about your family.

-My family live in Mongolia. My grandparents were nomads but eventually settled in one place. I used to live in a countryside of Mongolia with my grandparents from the age of 5 when my parents got separated and my mother went to the city to find a job and settle down. When I was 7, my mother took me with her to the city to enroll in school. My mother is the role model of my life. She is a hardworking and diligent person. I've grown very close to my mother's siblings and kids. Every year, we spent summer in the countryside with grandparents. I had my own white horse gifted from my grandfather. My childhood life in there was beautiful. Sometimes I dream about it.

-Do you often visit your home country? When was the last time you visited

Mongolia?

-Before the pandemic, every year I could visit home for 3 times. I usually went to Beijing or Seoul then connected with Mongolian airlines. Unfortunately, due to the Covid lockdown in the country, I haven't seen my family for one year and a half now. But I believe better time is coming and hope I could go on my summer vacation.

-How many Mongolians reside in Dubai and the United Arab Emirates? Do Mongolian expats there maintain close contact with each other?

-As far as I know, around 20 Mongolians reside in Dubai and United Arab Emirates. We all found each other on Facebook and connected. I have my Mongolian community in Dubai, we keep close contact and celebrate national events together.

-How are the Mongolians viewed by locals in Dubai, and the UAE? Because this year marks the 25th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the UAE, we would like to hear your observation

Another great experience was New York. It was during Christmas and it was snowing. I felt like if I was in a movie scene, and Christmas tree in front of Rockefeller center was magical.

on the relationship and cooperation between the peoples of the two nations...

-From my observation, people of the two nations have a tradition of mutual understanding. Hospitality, nomadic background and we both have passion for horses. In the future I hope we could easily travel each other, exchange cultures and work together.

-The coronavirus pandemic is taking a heavy toll on the aviation industry. How is the living Dubai? How is the last year of the pandemic?

-Coronavirus has had a major impact on the world. Obviously, it is not same as before but I think Dubai is coping efficiently. The UAE has one of the fastest vaccination roll-outs and operations are

and working situation in did your life change year of the pandemic?

navirus has had a major airline operations all over. Obviously, it is not same before but I think Dubai with pandemic in a really manner. The UAE has fastest vaccination in the world a -

slowly getting back to the new normal with strict measurements. Last year life changed so quickly, from the busy daily schedule to for almost three months without flying and mostly days off at home. The hardest part was seeing many of my friends leaving Dubai. We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.

-Mongolians are quite proud of their fellow citizens who worked abroad and gained experience. Do you wish to work in your homeland? Can you share with us your future plan?

-Certainly, I would like to contribute for the future of my country. For now the best I can do is to share my experiences, give positive influences to the young

people and keep developing myself as an aviation expert.

-We are holding a positive belief that Ulaanbaatar will have a direct flight to Dubai in the future. What is your expectation on this?

-I really hope so and I would love to contribute everything possible for the co-operation.

-Thank you for the interview.



Mongolian brand

Mongolia has been considered as one of 10 countries impacted by global warming and climate change. As of 2020, the depiction of desertification on the map of Mongolia shows that 120.3 million hectares or 76.9 percent of the country's total territory has been affected by soil degradation

KHARMAG:

Resources

to replace mining

There are 11 species of Kharmag of the family of Nitraria in the world, of which 5 species grow in Mongolia.



B.Bayarchimeg, the head of the 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund'. 'Galtuud' LLC, which has been running brick production



D.Turbayar

The mitigation of desertification has been a topic of discussion for many years; however, we have been looking for optimal and effective solutions so far. 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' NGO, which has been running operation in Umnugobi province, is underscoring the possibility of addressing the issue of desertification by cultivating and multiplying 'kharmag'-berry bushes (nitraria) in the framework of 'Queen nitraria cluster' development program. In 2012, the company started to develop agro-techniques for the protection and propagation of nitraria dune. As of today, 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' NGO has prepared more than 100 thousand seedlings and launched a campaign to plant kharmag-berry bushes covering 21 aimags in Mongolia. Cultivation of natural plants will not only protect the plant from future extinctions, but also preserve its gene pool.

quire a lot of skill to pick because of the thorns. Gobi people pick Kharmag and use them to make jams, drinks and sweet wines.

There are 11 species of Kharmag of the family of Nitraria in the world, of which 5 species grow in Mongolia. In general, this plant grows in more than 20 deserts around the world. "It could be considered that the plant curbs sand migration. Previously, we used to wonder how to curb sand migration. And then we realized that we need to grow kharmag-berry bushes" said



B.Bayarchimeg



As of today, 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' NGO has prepared more than 100 thousand seedlings and launched a campaign to plant kharmag-berry bushes covering 21 aimags in Mongolia. Cultivation of natural plants will not only protect the plant from future extinctions, but also preserve its gene pool.

for more than 20 years in Umnugobi province established the 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' NGO in 2012 with an aim to contribute to the environmental protection. D.Turbayar, husband of B.Bayarchimeg, runs the operations of the company. "We have initiated the 'Queen nitraria cluster' development program in aims of seeking the opportunities to rehabilitate the environment and prioritize green development, alongside contributing to the sustainable economic growth in line with the features of local conditions. The purpose of the fund is to plant shrubs in the Gobi impacted by desertification and preserve their genetic resources" said director of 'Galtuud' LLC D.Turbayar.

The beginning of reforestation of Gobi

The berries, which bloom in July and ripen in September, are rich in vitamin C, organic acids and sweetness. Fruit bushes re-



Mongolian brand

Protection and recultivation

Kharmag-berry bushes grow from the fallen seeds of its berries. However, the study conducted by the specialists from 'Galtuud' LLC and 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' suggested that the process of environmental rehabilitation has slowed down due to the fact that the bushes have been growing greatly but not bearing berries in recent years. Specifically, only four out of 1000 bushes are growing kharmag berries.

"There is a shortfall in precipitation in the Gobi, and the wind is blowing the flowers that are going to bear berries. Each plant is grown by dividing it into a technological calendar and watering it at the right time. However, the rain is not watering the plant as reflected on the technology calendar" explained B. Bayarchimeg.

According to the main climate indicators of the last 80 years, the average temperature has increased by 2.25°C, with annual precipitation decreasing by about 8 percent.

With funding from 'Galtuud' LLC, 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' NGO has fenced off and protected one hectare of land in the 'Urd gol' area in the southern part of Dalanzadgad soum, aside of planting seedlings of kharmag-berries in the nature. From 2018, the soum CRKh has supported this work and agreed to expand the protected area to 5 hectares. From 2018, Citizens' Representative Khural of Dalanzadgad soum has supported the works to be carried out by the fund and agreed to expand the protected area to five hectares. In the future, it is planned to establish a nature park in this area with the participation of local people by supporting and protecting the ecosystem restoration.

Green business and health

In the framework of 'Queen Kharmag cluster development program' 'Khatan (Queen) Kharmag' LLC was established in addition to 'Amin Khelkhee nature fund'. The company conducts study and trials on various kinds of products that can be made from kharmag berries. 'Queen Kharmag' LLC, which has developed models of more than 40 types of products, is offering to companies ideas for production. So far, more than 40 types of product models have been developed by the company are being offered to the other companies to get ideas from its models, and produce. 'Queen Kharmag' LLC itself is producing more than 10 types of products. Thus, the efforts made by the company show the possibility of participation in the reforestation of the Gobi covering a wide range.

Work of protection and planting that started with a dream of reforestation of the Gobi has expanded as small and medium enterprises. 'Galtuud' LLC was set to implement the 'Queen Kharmag Cluster Development Program', alongside running activities of the 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund' NGO and 'Khatan Kharmag' LLC.

'Khatan Kharmag' LLC has been producing tea from kharmag berries grown in the Gobi since 2017. In the past, only three types of tea were produced as models, and the importance of kharmag berries is under study.

Kharmag berries can be used to produce all kinds of food products. Moreover, kharmag berries could be an ingredient for cosmetics.

"Our goal is to introduce kharmag berries to the people as a brand product of Umnugobi aimag. Our model products can be produced by anyone who is



Kharmag-berry bushes grow from the fallen seeds of its berries.



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'Khatan Kharmag' LLC has been producing tea from kharmag berries grown in the Gobi since 2017. In the past, only three types of tea were produced as models, and the importance of kharmag berries is under study.

interested in doing business in Umnugobi aimag” said Ts. Uuganjargal, CEO of 'Khatan Kharmag' LLC. It also allows to finance environmental protection work by putting the berries into economic circulation” said CEO of 'Queen Kharmag' LLC Ts. Uuganjargal.



Mongolian brand



A vision to enter the global market

The 'Queen Kharmag Cluster Development Program' aims to introduce Mongolia's genetic resources to the world by supplying the kharmag seedlings in 21 aimags and putting their crops into economic circulation through the 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund'. S.Namuundari, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of 'Khatan Kharmag' LLC, highlighted that the door to the global market will be opened by cultivating the seedlings in 21 aimags and protecting their genetic resources.

Aside of opening a tea boutique in Ulaanbaatar soon, the company aims to produce more than 40 model products and introduce them in the market as part of the 'Queen Kharmag Cluster Development Program'. Noting that the nitraria tea has been released in the market of Shanghai, China so far, the company pointed out that the sales are going well, and costumers have been received the product with pleasure.

Currently, the tea is available in Shanghai, China, and the sales are very good, and the customers have been grateful and supportive. The company has developed long-term plans to release its products in the market of United States, Europe and Asia.



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Journalist's note...

Many types of medicinal plants that are beneficial to human health grow in the soil of our country. 'Queen Kharmag Cluster Development Program' funded by Galtuud LLC is one of the examples of the possibility to build an economy that can replace mining sector by putting these medical plants into economic circulation. As part of the program, study on the protection, cultivation and propagation of kharmag berries is being carried out by the 'Amin Khelkhee Nature Fund'. The activity being implemented by the fund is a way of preserving the genetic resources of medicinal plants that are on the verge of extinction. It is commendable that product developer company 'Khatan Kharmag' LLC is promoting the green business in our country, where groundwater resources are depleted and desertification is intensified due to mining activities. It should be noted that 'Khatan Kharmag' LLC is becoming a model example of how the company is cultivating the plant which is beneficial to human health and contains various kind of vitamins, not harming environment by picking berries from the ground. The time has come for us to introduce our Mongolian brand to the world by turning our genetic resources into value-added products, rather than following mining.



Through the trails of
Przewalski's
horses
in Hustai National Park

Przewalski's horse or Takhi is stockily built in comparison to domesticated horses, with shorter legs, though being much smaller and shorter than its other relatives. They are the only wild horses in the world that have never been domesticated.

Although categorized as extinct in 1969, the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski's Horse (FPPPH), the Mongolian Environmental Protection Association, and the Hustai National Park have jointly reintroduced the Przewalski's horse into the wild as a result of 29 years of consistency and hard work. Our team of reporters visited the Hustai National Park in Altanbulag soum, Tuv aimag, to dig deeper into the lives of Przewalski's horses.

There are seven distant relatives of the Przewalski's horse in the world today. Three of them are black and white striped zebras that live in Africa. There are also three species called - Khulan, which live in the deserts of Africa and Asia. The only wild horse is the Przewalski's horse. Like horses, males are called stallions, and females are called mares, with an average lifespan of 15-25 years.

Extinct in the wild

Sholoi Setsen Khan's journal which dates back to 1630s noted that "a wild horse that grazes on the vast steppes of Mongolia was painted on the wall of the Lasco cave in faraway France." This is probably the oldest historical source related to these wild horses.

The first person to discover the presence of wild horses in Mongolia was Colonel Nicolai Przewalski of the Russian Army of Polish descent. Historical records show that during a trip

to Mongolia in 1878, he received a gift from the commander of the Russian-Chinese border guard, the skin and skull of a horse hunted in the Dzungarian Gobi Desert of Mongolia, and first heard of wild horses. Since then, he became interested in the existence of wild horses in Mongolia and gave the skull to I.S.Polyakov, a researcher at the Museum of Natural History in St. Petersburg. The researcher compared the skull with 22 species of horses and determined that it was completely a new species, and in 1881 it was registered under the name of Przewalski.

Scientists, researchers and zoos in many countries started flocking to the Mongolian Gobi Desert after scientifically recognizing the existence of the only remaining wild horse in the world. The only reason is that since the extinction of the Tarpan wild horse in Europe, the whole world has been convinced that there is no wild horse in the wild anymore. From 1897 to 1903, 88 Przewalski foals were captured and transported by animal traders from the Mongolian Gobi, 53 of which survived the rough voyage to Europe. In addition to hunting and drought, the few remaining populations in Mongolia died after losing their grazing to domestic animals, and their numbers declined to zero in 1969. Of the 53 foals that have been brought to Europe, 13 have bred and left offspring. Today's entire population of 2,000 Przewalski's horses in the world are descended from only 13 of these ancestors.



A close-up photograph of a Przewalski's horse, showing its head, neck, and shoulder. The horse has a reddish-brown coat and a dark, upright mane. The background is a solid light blue.

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OF THE 53 FOALS THAT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO EUROPE, 13 HAVE BRED AND LEFT OFFSPRING. TODAY'S ENTIRE POPULATION OF 2,000 PRZEWALSKI'S HORSES IN THE WORLD ARE DESCENDED FROM ONLY 13 OF THESE ANCESTORS.

Back home

Scientists around the world agreed that the only way to save the remaining population of Przewalski's horse is to reintroduce as it has become extinct in wild. Therefore, in accordance with the decision of the 3rd International Symposium on Przewalski's Studies, in 1992, the FPPPH and the Mongolian Environmental Protection Association started the reintroduction of Przewalski's horses in the Hustai mountain range of Tuv aimag.

In the eight years since then, until 2000, a total of 84 purebred Przewalski's horses have been selected and brought to Mongolia from zoos around the world by five flights. For many scientists, it has been questionable whether the Przewalski's horse, which has been out of the wild for almost a century, can adapt to the harsh climate of Mongolia. But that fear soon faded, and the local winds, soil, and grass proved to be the most suitable habitat for them.

The unforgettable

Jan Bouman, the founder of the FPPPH, play a vital role in organizing this work. He has conducted a comprehensive study of Przewalski's horses, conser-

vation and ecology in Mongolia since 1974. By the decree of the President of Mongolia, he was awarded the 'Friendship' medal for his outstanding contribution.

There are people among us today who remember their deeds as if they were alive. Since his death, his wife, Inge Bouman, has continued to work to strengthen the Hustai National Park's administration in terms of facilities, management, and staff skills. She was also awarded one of the highest state medals, the Order of the Polar Star, by presidential decree in 2012.

"The FPPPH was established in 1974 and at that time there were only 275 Przewalski's horses in the world. The foundation laid foundation to the protection of Przewalski's horse, and was able to begin the process of reintroduction" said Inge Bouman on a television program.

While visiting the zoo with his wife in 1972, Ian Bouman first saw the miserable and depressed horse. It is said that the couple made up their mind to dedicate their lives to rehabilitating the poor animal after seeing the scenery. After meeting with vice president of the Mongolian Environmental Protection Association J.Tserendeleg, they started working together for the same goal.

Protection of Przewalski's horse

There are 122 protected ar-

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ACCORDING TO A 1993
PARLIAMENTARY
RESOLUTION, 50,000
HECTARES OF LAND IN
THE HUSTAI
MOUNTAINS, WHERE THE
PRZEWALSKI'S HORSE IS
REINTRODUCED, WERE
TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL
STATE PROTECTION AS
A 'NATURAL RESERVE'.
IN 1998, THE STATUS
WAS UPGRADED TO A
'NATIONAL PARK'.

eas, equivalent to 20 percent of Mongolia's territory. There are 33 protected area administrations, one of which is the Hustai National Park Administration. Located just over 80 kilometers from Ulaanbaatar, in the central region, the park aims to reintroduce the world's rarest wild horses, the Przewalski's horse, and create a natural population.

No family has lived in the 50,000-hectare Hustai National Park since 1992. When the Przewalski's horses were first introduced to the area, the families in the area were relocated to provide them with living conditions. During the winter, the rangers of the area take measures such as placing hay and mineral lick for the horses. The most pressing issue for rangers is livestock. This is because more than 100,000 livestock around the protected area overlap with the pasture of the Przewalski's horse. Therefore, rangers are faced with the task of chasing livestock out of protected areas on a daily basis.

The Hustai National Park employs 40 full-time employees and employs additional contractors during the summer. Last year, the park's conservation administration addressed the social needs of its young staff as part of the KFW international project, building 16 apartments. In the Hustai mountain range,



12 rangers and three biologists cover 50,000 hectares of protected area and conduct regular field research. In doing so, the database on the reintroduction of Przewalski's horses is updated daily and the database is enriched. Ts.Batzaya, a biologist at the Hustai National Park, said that every movement of the Przewalski's horse is monitored by satellite signals.

'Endangered'

Przewalski horse weighs about 300 kg and is an herbivore, so it needs its own habitat. According to a 1993 parliamentary resolution, 50,000 hectares of land in the Hustai Mountains, where the Przewalski's horse is reintroduced, were taken under special state protection as a "Natural Reserve". In 1998, the status was upgraded to a "National Park". "Mongolia has the highest population of Przewalski's horse, out of four countries where Przewalski's horses have been reintroduced. Since the last shipment of Przewalski's horses to Mongolia in 2000, the number has increased to about 800", said D.Usukhjargal, a researcher at the Hustai National Park. Specifically, the horses are being reintroduced in three places in Mongolia, including the 390 in Hustai Mountains. There are about 290 Przewalski's horses

in Bugat soum of Gobi-Altai aimag and more than 90 Przewalski's horses in Durvuljin soum of Zavkhan aimag. The Hustai National Park has 46 breeding herds, and more than 100 offspring, which totals to 400 Przewalski's horses, and is home to the world's largest population.

Przewalski's horses, which were categorized as "extinct in the wild" in the world from 1969 to 1996, became "critically endangered" in 2008 and "endangered" in 2011. In other words, researcher D.Usukhjargal emphasized that Mongolia has made a valuable contribution to lower the status of the animal by reintroducing and protecting them.

According to international standards of ecology and conservation, a naturally extinct population is considered to have successfully regenerated when it reaches 500 or more. The Hustai National Park Administration has set a goal of increasing the number of Przewalski's horses to 500 by 2025-2030. The park now houses the International Center for Przewalski's Horse Studies and has become a major research base for many scientists around the world.





The story of Boloroo

We traveled to a conservation area to see wild horses at the time of their descent from the mountain to drink water, which coincides with the sunset. This year was a rainy year, so the grass and vegetables grew thickly. On our way, we often came across signs prohibiting the car horns. This is because loud noises are not tolerated by wild animals. If you don't make a lot of noise, you can easily see the Przewalski's horse. We managed to capture a few pictures as a herd of Przewalski's horses approached the well, making a roaring, dusty noise. On the way back, we came across a lame stallion walking alone. His name is Boloroo.

The Przewalski's horse can be named by travelers and tourists. Biologist Ts.Batzaya explained that this is a unique conservation management and it is possible to see the location of your adopted horses as a locator.

As for Boloroo, he lost his harem of 13 Przewalski's horses to another stallion last year and was left alone. Now that he is old, it is near impossible to take the harem back, and for a stallion it is like the end of life. There are 46 stallions and more than 90 Przewalski's horses without harems. Breeding harem is a relatively stable structure consisting of one stallion, several mares, young Przewalski's horses and foals, ranging in size from 2 to 20.

The most dangerous stallion for a



Biologist Mr. Ts. Batzaya



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THE MOST DANGEROUS
STALLION FOR A
BREEDING HERD IS A 7-8
YEAR OLD ADULT STALLION.
DOMESTICATED HORSES ARE
SELECTED AS THE BREEDING
STALLION WITHOUT A
COMPETITOR. AS FOR
PRZEWALSKI'S HORSES,
THEY FIGHT TO BECOME THE
BREEDING STALLION. AS A
RESULT OF THIS BATTLE,
2-3 STALLIONS ARE INJURED
AND KILLED EVERY YEAR. IT
IS IN THE HARSH
SELECTION OF NATURE THAT
THE STRONG SURVIVE AND
LEAVE FOR POSTERITY, THE
WEAK DIE, THE OFFSPRING
ARE CUT OFF, AND THE
POPULATION BECOMES
HEALTHIER.



breeding herd is a 7-8 year old adult stallion. Domesticated horses are selected as the breeding stallion without a competitor. As for Przewalski's horses, they fight to become the breeding stallion. As a result of this battle, 2-3 stallions are injured and killed every year. It is in the harsh selection of nature that the strong survive and leave for posterity, the weak die, the offspring are cut off, and the population becomes healthier.

In terms of behavior, the Przewalski's horse is considered a very old-fashioned animal. This is because the new stallion, which has won the battle for the breeding herd, considers the mares as its own, while the old stallion, which has been defeated, still considers it as its own. That's why they try to get their old harem back. The battle lasts for 2-3 years. Przewalski's horses are very strong in their legs and can attack other animals.

An adult stallion struggles to find a mate and steals a favorite mare from the herd. Przewalski's horses reproduce between May and July, and the mare gives birth as far away from the herd as possible. This is a sign of protection for the foal. The stallion recognizes its offspring by the smell.

Tourism and Protection

Environmental protection is a virtuous and good deed, but there is a financial need. Financial stability is paramount to effective conservation work.

Therefore, researcher D.Usukhjargal



Researcher
Mr. D.Usukhjargal



emphasized that Hustai National Park is used to develop environmentally friendly tourism and protect its income. He said, "This protected area administration is unique in that it earns its own environmental funding. The main source of funding is nature tourism. The park administration is the closest to Ulaanbaatar and serves tourists as a comfortable resort with water, electricity and food security. Of course, it allows visitors to see the world's only wild horse, along with its protected deer, gazelles, marmots and endangered birds of prey. Thus, we receive 15-30 thousand tourists a year and raise MNT 1.5-2 billion."

There are two camps in the national park, 'Hustai' and 'Moit' that receive tourists.

However, due to the global pandemic, tourism has stalled and no tourists have arrived in the last two years. As a result, the source of income decreased to MNT 700-900 million. Researcher D.Usukhjargal said that despite the large amount of losses expected, the violations are still being spent on environmental protection. Every day, 12 rangers and three biologists travel around the protected area by car and motorcycle, which costs a lot of money, starting with gasoline and oil.

The park administration is responsible not only for endangered species, but also for the protection of Mongolian historical and cultural monuments registered in the region in cooperation with the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. For example, more than 30 Turkic-era man-made stones from the 6th-



8th centuries, the Ungut complex with 550 balbal stones in a row, and deer stones and hirgisuur dating back to the 2nd-1st millennia BC are being restored and protected.

Other neighbors in the habitat

The protection of Przewalski's horses in the Hustai National Park has led to a rapid increase in the number of other animals in the habitat in a short period of time. For example, in 1992 there were about 50 deer, but now there are 1,300. That's a 26-fold increase over the past 29 years. At that time, there were 7-8 thousand marmots, but now there are 14-15 thousand. There are also some animals that did not live here.

For example, only a small number of Mongolian gazelles migrate from Dundgovi to Tuv aimag. Today, there are 400-500 Mongolian gazelles in summer and 1000-2000 in winter. There are about 150-170 argali sheep that passed through spring and

The park administration is responsible not only for endangered species, but also for the protection of Mongolian historical and cultural monuments registered in the region in cooperation with the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.



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IN ADDITION TO PROTECTING THESE ANIMALS, THE HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN WORKING TO RELOCATE THEM TO MONGOLIA SINCE 2000. TO DATE, MORE THAN 400 RED DEER AND MORE THAN 700 MARMOTS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCED TO 15 SOUMS IN FIVE AIMAGS. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS RELOCATED THE ANIMALS TO ANOTHER REGION, AN ECOLOGICAL INVESTMENT OF THREE BILLION MNT.

autumn in the early 2000s.

In addition to protecting these animals, the Hustai National Park Administration has been working to relocate them to Mongolia since 2000. To date, more than 400 red deer and more than 700 marmots have been successfully introduced to 15 soums in five aimags. The administration has relocated the animals to another region, an ecological investment of three billion MNT.

Przewalski's horse and domesticated horse

Like zebras the Przewalski's horses have short bristly manes. The manes are dark, accentuated by lighter hairs. Contrary to the domestic horses Przewalski's horses shed their short-haired manes every summer, so they keep short forelocks and manes. Some people mistake Przewalski's horses for Fjord ponies or vice versa, because of the resemblance in colour and short manes. However, Fjord manes



have trimmed manes otherwise they would grow longer. Przewalski's horses have 66 chromosomes; domestic horses have 64. Mixed offspring is viable and able to reproduce. However, cross-breeding has to be avoided at all times, because it would undeniably lead to the loss of the unique features of the much endangered wild horse.

In its behaviour the Przewalski's horse bears some resemblance to the zebra. Like the striped horse of the savanna, it cannot be handled, mounted nor haltered. When it needs to be transported or treated it has to be fully tranquilized. In captivity Przewalski's horses are very stress-sensible and may react very aggressive.



TOKYO 2020



MONGOLIAN ATHLETES RETURN HOME FROM TOKYO WITH **FIVE** MEDALS



43 athletes from Mongolia successfully clinched their spots and competed in 10 sports category at the Tokyo-2020 Summer Olympic Games which was held from July 23 to August 8, 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.

The Mongolian national team won 1 silver and 3 bronze medals at the Olympic Games, ranking 71st out of 206 countries in terms of quality of medals and 47th in terms of number of medals. On July 24, Mongolian judoka M.Urantsetseg faced off against Portuguese judoka Catarina Costa in the bronze medal match for the women's 48 kg weight class, coming out victorious with 10-0 by applying the

kansetsu-waza (joint lock) technique.

With this, State Honored Athlete M.Urantsetseg has won the bronze medal at the Tokyo Summer Olympics, winning the first medal for the National Olympic Team. In 2020, she achieved the Guinness World Record for the most medals won on the IJF World Tour.

The gold medal match took place between Funa Tonaki of Japan and Distria Krasniqi of Kosovo, with the Kosovar judoka defeating her opponent by scoring a waza-ari. Meanwhile, on the same day, on Tokyo's tatami, IM Ts.Tsogtbaatar came out victorious over Canadian

judoka Arthur Margelidon, grabbing the bronze medal in the men's 73 kg weight class at the Tokyo Summer Olympics, winning the second medal for Mongolia.

Following Tsogtbaatar's medal winning performance, Iranian-born Mongolian judoka Saeid Mollaei stepped onto the mat against Japanese judoka Takanori Nagase in the final match of the men's 81 kg weight class. He was defeated by the Japanese judoka by waza-ari in Golden Score overtime, claiming the silver medal. Few days later, on August 6, IM B.Bolortuya was matched against Joseph Emillienne Essombe Tiako of

Mongolia ranks 135th in the world in terms of population and has a relatively small population, but to date it has won 2 gold, 11 silver, 17 bronze and a total of 30 medals at 14 Summer Olympics.



Cameroon for the bronze medal in the women's 53 kg weight class.

Despite losing two points in the first minute of the match, she successfully executed a leg lace and turned her opponent 4 times, getting 10 points at 4:16. Shortly after, Bolortuya lost another 2 points at 3:59 - however, she was able to finish the match with two decisive moves that won her 4 points, which put her 10 points ahead of the Cameroonian wrestler. Mongolia ranks 135th in the world in terms of population and has a relatively small population, but to date it has won 2 gold, 11 silver, 17 bronze and a total of 30 medals at 14

Summer Olympics. Thus, Mongolia ranks 65th out of 133 countries in terms of Olympic medal winning.

In the 57-year history of Mongolian athletes participating in the Olympic Games, there have been a total of 15 Summer Olympics, of which two came without medals from the Olympic Games (Tokyo 1964 and Sydney 2000). As for the Paralympics which was held from August 24 to September 5, 11 athletes successfully participated, of whom 2 in taekwondo, 1 in powerlifting, 2 in archery, 3 in judo, 2 in athletics and 1 in shooting.

In the Paralympic Games which

organized for 13 days in the Japanese capital, State Honored Athlete E.Sodnompiljee successfully lifted 245 kg in the men's -107 kg weight class at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, setting a new Paralympic Record.

Having previously won the bronze medal, the two-time world champion has become the first Mongolian powerlifting athlete to become a Paralympic champion. Moreover, G.Bolor-Erdene, in men's 61 kg, and Kh.Enkhtuya, in women's 61 kg, successfully competed in taekwondo and received honorable mentions respectively.



E.Sodnompiljee:

On August 30, State Honored Athlete, Mongolian powerlifting dynamo Sodnompiljee Enkhbayar successfully lifted 245 kg in the men's -107 kg weight class at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, setting a new Paralympic Record.



Competing in World Championships of normal athletes helps me reach higher

He entered the Tokyo Paralympics as the favorite in his weight class and fulfilled expectations with an all-out effort in the nine-man final at Tokyo International Forum on the final day of the powerlifting competition.

The 35-year-old's second attempt (each powerlifter gets three) produced the top lift of the day: 245 kg, a Paralympic record. He failed to lift 248 kg on his final attempt.

He successfully lifted 241 kg on his first attempt, and nobody else in the division successfully lifted more than 237 kg.

Having previously won the bronze medal, the two-time world champion has become the first Mongolian powerlifting athlete to become a Paralympic champion.

"I am very happy to have competed in the Paralympics. I haven't participated in any tournament in the last two years, but I've been training hard and consistently. Although I did not manage to renew the world record I had set, I am very happy to break the Paralympic record. I would like to express my gratitude to the people of Mongolia. Thank you to everyone who supported me. Ultimately, I wish the people of the world good health and all the best," he said in an interview after his victory.

At the 2019 World Para Powerlifting Championships, he became the world champion by lifting 247 kg, setting a new Guinness World Record.

"I think the most important thing for athletes is to listen their coaches very well. All I have understood in the last few years is that you have accept your coach and be faithful. An athlete who

doesn't listen to his coach can never be a good athlete. It is essential to follow these principles and ethics in order to reach the pinnacle of an Olympic athlete. I don't think anyone who hasn't learned to listen to people will ever succeed. One of the most important things I've done to improve my success is not only to compete in the World Para Championships, but also to compete in the World Championships for normal athletes. Only by competing with an athlete better than yourself can you improve your strength, skills, and success."

Looking ahead to the Tokyo Paralympics, Sodnompiljee said in July 2019 that he wanted to win a gold medal here and dedicate it to his ex-coach Sharav Enkhsaikhan, who died in 2017.

"After the 2016 Paralympic Games I'd promised him I'd do my best in Tokyo, and get the gold medal for him," Sodnompiljee was quoted as saying by paralympic.org. "He was a very good trainer. He believed that I could do it. Now I want to win for him. He pushed me, he was very proud of me. I want to make his wish come true in Tokyo."

As it turned out, Sodnompiljee set the standard of excellence on his first try. By doing so, he claimed his second Paralympic medal. He took home the bronze in the under-88 kg weight class from the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympics.

Malaysia's Yee Khie Jong lifted 237 kg, which secured his silver medal 16 years after a motorcycle accident resulted in his right leg being amputated above the knee.

Jong was a seventh-place finisher in the under-97 kg division at the 2016

Paralympics.

Iran's Saman Razi, who had a top lift of 231 kg, collected the bronze medal. Like Jong, Razi also competed in the under-97 kg division in Rio, where he finished fourth.

Sodnompiljee is a prime example of how hard work and dedication can lead to success. He trains twice a day in Mongolia, where he began participating in the sport in 2009. His involvement in powerlifting began 10 years after his right leg was amputated following an illness. Before the illness, he competed in judo and weightlifting.

"We will go back to training immediately as soon as we are home. He will compete in the World Powerlifting Championships for normal athletes on October 21-31, 2021. Then he will compete in the World Para Powerlifting Championships from November 27 to December 5. There will be many celebrations, awards and receptions to celebrate the success of Sodnompiljee when he returns to his homeland. But when we return, we will go straight to the training and start preparing for the next competition. That is the mindset we have right now" said his coach, Tulga.

His rise to stardom included the aforementioned bronze medal at the Rio Paralympics.

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In 2017, he was the runner-up in the second-heaviest weight division at the World Para Powerlifting Championships in Mexico City. In 2018, Enkhbayar grabbed the gold at the Asia Para Games in Jakarta, with a winning lift of 240 kg. It was a sign of things to come.

In 2019, he set a world record of 247 kg in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, at the world championships.

In describing the basic details of the sport, Olympics.com summed it up this way: "Powerlifting is all about

the bench press. Athletes lie on their back on a bench to lower the bar to their chest, hold it motionless then press it upwards to arm's length with locked elbows. Using just their upper body, the athletes often can lift more than three times their own bodyweight."

In the Tokyo Paralympics, 11 Mongolian athletes have successfully participated and ranked 59th out of 168 countries.

There are 10 weight categories for men and 10 for women in Paralympic powerlifting, with over-107 kg as the heavyweight category for men and over-86 kg for women.

Powerlifting replaced traditional weightlifting, which requires athletes to stand while competing, on the Paralympic menu for the 1992 Games. The sport has been held in conjunction with weightlifting since 1984. Weightlifting made its Paralympic debut at the 1964 Tokyo Games.

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