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# ***JPRS Report***

# **Epidemiology**

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# Epidemiology

JPRS-TEP-90-020

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24 December 1990

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## MAURITIUS

### Malaria Figures Up for August

91WE0058A Port Louis LE MAURICIEN in French  
23 Oct 90 p 1

[Article by Vijay Shankar: "Thirty-Nine Cases of Malaria Reported for Month of August"; LE MAURICIEN introduction is: "Health Ministry Says No Reason To Worry"]

[Text] Thirty-nine cases of malaria were reported in different island hospitals during August. A comparative study of previous months' statistics shows that the figure is much higher than that generally recorded in the country during a dry spell.

However, the Health Ministry has the situation in hand and the risk of an epidemic has been ruled out for now. The campaign to eradicate malaria will continue with spraying DDT in houses and streams.

It is important that Mauritian families keep their homes and immediate surroundings clean to protect themselves from any risk of malaria. People drawing their water from any source other than Mare-aux Vacoas and Port Louis are advised to continue boiling it.

### Health Concern Raised Over Dumping Expired Drugs

91WE0058B Port Louis LE MAURICIEN in French  
17 Oct 90 pp 1, 4

[Article titled: "Medicines Expired Since 1978 Dumped in Natural Areas"; first paragraph is LE MAURICIEN introduction; italicized words published in English]

[Text] A criminal act: That was the reaction in health-care circles this morning to the discovery by LE MAURICIEN reporters of bottles of streptomycin sulfate Bp (an antibiotic with an expiration date of May, 1978) dumped out in the wild during the last few days. Alerted by the area's residents, LE MAURICIEN was led to the expired antibiotic in the vicinity of Salazie and all along the Pont Bon-Dieu road (right next to Brisee-Verdiere)...veritable poisons within the reach of children. The medicine's expiration date goes back to May of 1978! When questioned this morning, the health minister Dr. Prem Nababsing said he was surprised and outraged at this irresponsible act and immediately opened a departmental investigation on the matter.

Who pushed certain individuals to dispose of the hundreds of vials of antibiotics out in nature? Several hypotheses have been advanced from different quarters. The principal one is that, since the new health minister Dr. Prem Nababsing took over, some government hospital and clinic officials have taken fright and decided to get rid of the expired medications.

"What pharmacist do you think would keep medications for over 12 years? I am not trying to cover up for

pharmacy owners, but it is important that you know we do not have much room for storing, over years and years, a medicinal stock of that kind," hinted several pharmacists this morning.

After inquiring into the matter, we learned that streptomycin sulfate, formerly manufactured by Glaxo laboratories in Great Britain, is used primarily to treat tuberculosis patients and patients with bronchial infections. The last shipment of streptomycin sulfate from the Greenford Glaxo company was received 3 January 1979 and it was *Mauritius Pharmacy* that was Glaxo's representative in Mauritius at the time. "We stopped importing that medication in 1983-84, because the Glaxo company stopped making it," Mr. Seegobin, director of the *Mauritius Pharmacy*, told us this morning. Mauritius received some 3,400 bottles from Glaxo in 1979.

It is amazing that medication stocks were kept in storage for over 12 years and that, suddenly, over the last few days, someone is trying to get rid of them. Why?

Certainly the inhabitants of Brisee Verdiere say they are outraged that young schoolchildren might have gotten hold of bottles containing poison. Indeed, children who help their parents clean up the fields at Pont Bon Dieu are exposed to a great danger because, for them, the small vials would serve just as well for carrying water to clean their slates. It was not until yesterday that some parents began collecting the vials scattered here and there in order to destroy them.

The police and the Health Ministry would be well advised to undertake a serious investigation to uncover the real culprit of such a crime.

According to our information, there has been a quite a commotion in health-care circles over the last few days, especially after the article of our fellow newsheet WEEK-END, about expired medications being given to patients in state hospitals. "We are checking our superfluous stocks," a person close to the ministry told us yesterday.

When questioned this morning, the health minister Dr. Nababsing declared himself outraged about the way the bottles were disposed of and stressed that he would immediately demand the opening of an investigation, within the limits of his ministry's jurisdiction. As for the ministry's pharmacy chief, he was not able to say much: "I have just been informed of the discovery and we will send some people to Salazie and the surrounding areas very quickly to assess the situation. I cannot tell you anything more. We have to verify," he said.

Private pharmacies point out that there were two methods for disposing of the expired medications: in the past, pharmacies had the assistance of the *Mauritius Marine Authority*, which handled dumping of the entire stock of expired medications out at sea. But since the harmful effects on the marine environment were discovered, that practice has ceased. The other method was to incinerate the medications at GRNO [expansion not

given], but the surest way was to bury the bottles as deep as possible in the ground. "The pharmacies have empty lots where they get rid of expired medicines," pharmacy directors told us.

Questioned about the product found in the fields, they pointed out that Mauritius has not received any Glaxo "streptomycin sulfate" for quite some time. "It is a product that is rarely used in private practice, except in very small quantities in clinics, and in hospitals. We know that hospitals normally take several boxes of it. A box contains some 50 bottles."

## MOZAMBIQUE

### Reportage of Diarrhea Outbreak

#### Ribaue District

*MB2611193790 Maputo Domestic Service in Portuguese 1730 GMT 26 Nov 90*

[Excerpt] An outbreak of diarrhea killed 26 people in less than two weeks at the Iapala administrative post, in Nampula Province's Ribaue District, but it is now under control.

Health sources in Ribaue told our colleagues in Nampula Province that more than 100 cases were identified since the beginning of the outbreak, but that some of these persons are already out of danger. [passage omitted]

#### Changara, Tete Province

*MB3011192490 Maputo Domestic Service in Portuguese 1730 GMT 30 Nov 90*

[Text] Thirteen people have died of powerful diarrhea and vomiting in Tete Province's Changara District this month.

The deaths were recorded in Cuiro and (Nhaculino) hamlets. Statistical figures released by the Health Department reflect a high number of cholera cases.

Ten suspected cases of cholera were recorded in Changara District over the last four days. The patients have been transferred to the Tete provincial hospital.

#### Measles Kills 70 Children in Cabo Delgado

*MB0912135690 Maputo Domestic Service in Portuguese 1030 GMT 9 Dec 90*

[Text] A total of 70 children of up to four-years-old died of measles in some villages of Pemba-Metuge District in Cabo Delgado Province, during the first semester this year. The district's administrator said the measles vaccine arrived late at the local health center.

### 24 Cases, One Death in Tete City Cholera Outbreak

*MB2011144590 Maputo Domestic Service in Portuguese 1030 GMT 20 Nov 90*

[Text] A new cholera outbreak was reported in Tete city on 13 November. Our Tete correspondent says that 24 cases and one death have so far been confirmed by the provincial hospital. He added that the city's health department has established three teams to prevent the spreading of the disease. The teams will operate in all of Tete city's wards.

It should be recalled that 799 cases of cholera were reported in Tete city between April and August 1990, resulting in the death of 31 people.

### Health Source Reports More Than 2,600 Cholera Cases

*MB2211171890 Maputo Domestic Service in Portuguese 1400 GMT 22 Nov 90*

[Text] An Health Ministry source has disclosed that more than 2,600 cholera cases and 165 deaths have been recorded in various parts of the country.

The cholera epidemic has reached Niassa Province's Mecanhelas District for the first time. Two cholera cases have been confirmed there.

Cholera has broken out again in Tete Province, which was the first Mozambican province to be affected by the epidemic. Some two months ago, there were no new cholera cases in that province.

In addition to Mecanhelas and Tete, the cholera outbreak has spread to Beira, Quelimane, Maputo, Nampula, Nacala, Mocuba, [name indistinct], Mopeia, Gurue, Malema, and Ribaue.

Though preventive measures continue to be enforced, Beira city has been found to be free of the cholera epidemic since mid- September.

## NAMIBIA

### Hospitals Report 47 Cases of Bubonic Plague in North

*MB2111101090 Johannesburg SAPA in English 0907 GMT 21 Nov 90*

[Text] Windhoek—A total of 47 cases of bubonic plague have been reported at the Onandjokwe and Oshakati state hospitals in Ovambo, northern Namibia this month, Nambc [Namibian Broadcasting Corporation] radio news reports.

The director of health and social services in the north-western region, Dr. Nestor Shivute, said the incidence of the plague in the north since September was higher than last year.

He said 26 cases had been reported at the two hospitals in October compared with 21 cases during the same period last year.

In September this year 10 cases were reported compared with 16 last September. Dr. Shivute said 19 villages were affected by the disease but that no deaths been reported.

Officials from the Department of Health were spraying affected areas and people in surrounding areas had been given preventative medication. The public were advised to avoid contact with rats that spread the disease.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### **Anthrax Outbreak in National Park 'Over'**

*MB2811065090 Johannesburg SAPA in English  
0624 GMT 28 Nov 90*

[Text] The recent outbreak of anthrax in the northern Kruger National Park was over, SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation] radio news reports.

The chief of research at the park, Dr. Vossie de Vos, said at Skukuza that the last infected carcasses had been found in the area three weeks ago.

He said the epidemic was curbed by recent good rain in the area.

More than a thousand animals, most of them kudu and buffalo, have died from the illness.

Dr. De Vos said a number of rare animals had died, including roan antelope, white rhino, wild dogs and four elephants.

## SWAZILAND

### **Miners Repatriated From South Africa Due to Tuberculosis**

*MB2411100990 Mbabane THE SWAZI NEWS  
in English 24 Nov 90 pp 1,24*

[Report by Vusie Ginindza: "1000 Miners Got TB in SA"]

[Text] More than 1,000 Swazi miners have been repatriated from South Africa since the beginning of this year after they were diagnosed to suffer from TB [tuberculosis], the TB Control office in Manzini disclosed yesterday.

TB specialist, Dr. C. Mabuza, said that the figures were being supplied by The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) which is a recruiting agency for South African mine companies.

She said TEBA sends in sick sheets of the affected miners, describing the condition of the patient.

"All the tests are conducted at the mines, and if whoever is tested proves positive, he is promptly returned to the country," she said.

She further explained that these are cases of people who had been working in various mines in South Africa.

"The main concern on this issue is that since their return, these people should have been traced to their homes so that they get treatment in time before they spread it to others. TB is a highly contagious disease," she said.

"We cannot rely on them to report to the hospital if we really mean to control the disease. But all the same tracing them is out of question because we don't have cars," she said.

She said that the importance of reaching the homes of the patients is that the contacts (people with whom they live), have to be screened too.

"We cannot rely on all these people to report to the hospital themselves, even before they pass it to others, if we're really serious about the controlling of the programme. We need to go to them," she said.

### **Chicken Pox 'Epidemic' Worsens**

*MB2311073890 Mbabane THE TIMES OF  
SWAZILAND in English 23 Nov 90 p 32*

[Report by Vusie Ginindza: "Chicken Pox Worsen"]

[Text] A chicken pox epidemic is steadily growing worse, and spreading from the townships of Mbabane where it was first reported, to neighbouring rural areas.

The disease was first reported in surrounding areas; like Msunduza, Mahwalala, and Mangwaneni.

Now, cases have been reported from as far away as Mantabeni near Mhlambanyatsi, Siphocosini and Mpolonjeni.

Nurses at the Mbabane Government Hospital said one of the hardest hit areas is Mahwalala, about five kilometres South West of Mbabane.

So serious are some of the attacks, that they said some children have been brought for treatment almost blind, after the rash developed around their eyes.

Nurses said the rash, which initially causes a serious itching, later develops into large pimples, which burst when scratched, causing great pain, and if the rash is anywhere near the eye, renders the sufferer to be almost blind.

Nurses said figures of cases since the outbreak was reported have almost doubled.

Earlier this month when the situation was first reported, about 330 cases were recorded for the period between August and October.

However, since Mid October, 311 cases have been recorded, bringing the number of cases to 641.

Yesterday nurses warned that parents should bring cases immediately to the clinics instead of taking them first to alternative treatment, only to bring them to hospital when the cases are worse.

They said chicken pox is a highly contagious viral infection that can be transmitted by even sharing the same house with a sufferer.

It is characterised by a horrible skin rash that itches intensely. After being scratched, it becomes very painful.

Normally, nurses say, it affects all ages but records show that most cases are children.

## TANZANIA

### Over 200 Die From Meningitis

*AB2111140890 Paris AFP in English  
1346 GMT 21 Nov 90*

[Text] Dar es Salaam, Nov 21 (AFP)—More than 200 people have died from meningitis on mainland Tanzania since the disease broke out in 10 regions in July, Health Minister Philemon Sarungi said here Wednesday. Professor Sarungi said that 2,123 people had contracted the disease between July and mid-November, out of whom 202 died. The regions affected by the epidemic, which spread into the country from neighbouring Kenya, were Mara, Kagera, Tanga, Kilimanjaro, Morogoro, Dodoma, Mwanza, Tabora, Dar es Salaam and Arusha.

## ZAMBIA

### At Least Eight Dead, 30 Hospitalized in Cholera Epidemic

*MB2211180690 Gaborone Domestic Service in English  
1610 GMT 22 Nov 90*

[Text] At least eight people have died of cholera and 30 have been hospitalized in northern Zambia, as an outbreak of the disease spread from neighboring Tanzania.

Government officials said 61 out of 99 people admitted to hospital had been treated and discharged since the disease struck Mbala District and Mpulungu town on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

At least 20 people died and hundreds others were treated when a cholera epidemic, caused by contaminated water supplies, hit Lusaka and surrounding provinces earlier this year.

A separate epidemic in neighboring Mozambique killed at least 106 people since April this year.

### Kaunda Seeks International Assistance Against Cholera

*MB0412183690 Johannesburg International Service  
in English 1500 GMT 4 Dec 90*

[Text] Zambia has appealed to the international community for assistance to [word indistinct] the latest outbreak of cholera in the country. At least 24 people have died of the disease since the middle of last month.

President Kenneth Kaunda said a number of international organizations, including the European Community, had been approached.

Dr. Kaunda said that Zambia and Zaire were cooperating along their borders to contain the disease. Cholera first broke out in Zaire and then spread to Zambia last month.

### Cholera Kills 46 People Since 19 November

*MB0512064090 Lusaka Domestic Service in English  
1800 GMT 4 Dec 90*

[Text] Forty-six people have died in the country since 19 November after yet another cholera outbreak that has (? since hit) the region.

According to a Ministry of Health spokesman, about 412 people have been hit with the killer disease, out of which 46 died, 275 discharged, while 91 are still undergoing medical treatment.

He said so far (? seven) district and three provinces, Northern, Luapula, and Copperbelt, have been affected. He [words indistinct] the public to observe strict hygienic standards and ensure that all drinking water is boiled. He called on the people from nonaffected areas to avoid going to cholera-affected areas and remain where they are until the situation is brought under control.

The spokesman said all public gatherings, including funerals of cholera victims, (? will) be called off and cautioned all persons who have been to the affected areas to report themselves to the nearest institution for check-ups.

### Cholera Outbreak Kills Eight in Ndola

*MB0512191690 Lusaka Domestic Service in English  
1800 GMT 5 Dec 90*

[Text] Latest reports from Ndola say eight people have died from cholera there since the outbreak began. At the same time about 70 people admitted to the special isolation ward at Ndola Central Hospital are suspected to have caught the disease.

These figures were revealed by Ndola Senior Governor Henry Mule when he received 1,000 drugs and some disinfectants from Johnson and Johnson Limited.

**Ndola's Cholera Death Toll Increases to 19**

*MB0812094690 Lusaka Domestic Service in English  
1800 GMT 7 Dec 90*

[Text] The death toll from cholera in Ndola has risen to 19 after 16 more people died this morning. Ndola's Central Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr. Clement Musoe said this when he briefed Copperbelt member of Central Committee Alexander Kamalondo.

Dr. Musoe, who is chairman of the Ndola cholera surveillance committee, said 130 people have been hospitalized while eight have been discharged. Dr. Musoe said most of the deaths recorded were of children.

**Northern Zambia Cholera Death Toll Increases to 60**

*MB0812143490 Umtata Capital Radio in English  
1400 GMT 8 Dec 90*

[Text] The death toll in an outbreak of cholera in northern Zambia has risen to 60.

The official newspaper, THE DAILY MAIL, reports that most of those dying are children. The paper says hundreds of cases of the disease have been reported. SAPA reports that the cholera epidemic caused by contaminated water supplies killed at least 200 people in Lusaka and the surrounding area earlier this year.

**Beijing Children Vaccinated Against Hepatitis B**

*OW2211192690 Beijing XINHUA in English  
1610 GMT 22 Nov 90*

[Text] The Beijing Epidemic Prevention Station announced today that over 115,000 new-born babies in Beijing have received Hepatitis B vaccine (HBV) in the past four years.

The project was carried out mainly by Beijing Epidemic Prevention Station. The suitable HBV dose it has determined will serve as a basis for a national vaccination program.

The vaccinations have prevented over 5,000 infants in Beijing from becoming Hepatitis B virus carriers.

The Hepatitis B vaccine is the fifth type used to inoculate Chinese children, in addition to the BCG vaccine, DPT vaccine and measles and infantile paralysis vaccines.

The prevention station reports that additional Beijing children will receive the HBV vaccine in the following years.

**Chinese Who Emigrate to North America Suffer More Cancer**

*OW2711093390 Beijing XINHUA in English  
0852 GMT 27 Nov 90*

[Text] Hangzhou—An investigative report shows that the Chinese who have migrated to North America are four to seven times more likely to have large intestinal cancer than their compatriots at home.

The research, which was jointly sponsored by China's Zhejiang Medical Sciences University and Stanford University in the United States, was carried out in the two Chinese cities of Hangzhou and Ningbo and among Chinese migrants in three North American cities in the U.S.A. and Canada.

The report attributed the increase to the migrants' changes in food constitutions and life style.

They consume more animal fat and less vegetables than they did in their home country; the reduction of physical activities and long sitting hours also contributes to the incidence of cancer, according to the research team.

Professor Zheng Shu from Zhejiang Medical Sciences University suggested that the migrants should eat more food with coarse fiber, calcium and carotene, as well as more vegetables in order to reduce their chances of getting the large intestinal cancer.

**Scheme for Early Detection of Breast Cancer Formulated**

*OW0112133890 Beijing XINHUA in English  
1201 GMT 1 Dec 90*

[Text] A scheme for detecting breast cancer on a mass scale has been worked out recently in Beijing after more than a decade of research.

The plan includes establishing an efficient checking network equipped with up-to-date infrared technology. A criterion for detecting small breast cancer has also been set up for the first time.

With the help of the new scheme, local experts on cancer discovered that 74 of the 98,059 persons who were suspected sufferers actually have breast cancer. Of these, 85 percent are in the early stage of the cancer's development.

According to specialists, the new method can help doctors detect breast cancer within minutes.

It was learned that breast cancer has now become the leading form of cancer that has led to the death of urban Chinese women.

**Research Work on Snail Fever Completed**

*OW2811195890 Beijing XINHUA in English  
1302 GMT 28 Nov 90*

[Text] Shanghai—Research work on the causes and regular patterns of snail fever, one of the state's key projects during the Seventh Five-Year-Plan Period (1986-90), was completed recently.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, scientists have spent dozens of years attempting to wipe out snail fever. However, in recent years, the disease is prevalent along the country's rivers, lakes, islets and beaches.

Yuan Hongchang, Zhuo Shangjiong and Zhang Shaoji were among a group of experts who spent four years conducting systematic research on snail fever which is prevalent in the disease-stricken Dongting Lake area of Hunan Province, and at Poyang Lake in Jiangxi Province.

The experts suggested that health education must be strengthened and that changes must be made in unhealthy living habits.

**Health Official on Development of 3-Tier Care Network**

*OW0112133990 Beijing XINHUA in English  
1147 GMT 1 Dec 90*

[Text] With the establishment and development of the 3-tier medical care network in its urban and rural areas, China has set up sound medical, health care and referral system services.

According to an official of the Ministry of Public Health, the 3-tier medical care networks in China's urban areas include municipal departments of public health, district hospitals and sub-district health centers.

The 3-tier medical care networks in China's rural areas include county departments of public health, township hospitals, and village health centers.

What's more, most Chinese cities and counties have set up hospitals of traditional Chinese medicine, specialized hospitals, epidemic prevention centers, substance abuse centers, and schools of secondary medical education.

Prevention, treatment, and the control of diseases can now be conducted at the grass-root level. However, difficult cases are referred to the county, municipal, or provincial medical institutions.

The extensive services of primary health care are working to decrease and eventually eliminate the incidence of malnutrition and infectious and epidemic diseases in the country.

The incidence of 19 infectious diseases in China has dropped from 3,200 per 100,000 people at the beginning of 1960s to 337.71 per 100,000 by the end of 1980s. In addition, the mortality rate of 19 infectious diseases has dropped down from 20 per 100,000 people to 0.76 per 100,000 during the same period.

Along with the improvement of medical and health care services and peoples' living standards, the health conditions in the urban and rural areas has been greatly improved. (The death rate of the country has been decreased from 20 per 1,000 people in 1949 to 6.28 per 1,000 at present.)

Infant mortality has dropped from 200 per 1,000 newborns in 1949 to 13.8 per 1,000 in urban areas and 21.7 per 1,000 in rural areas by the end of 1980s.

In the meantime, the average life expectancy has been prolonged. It has increased from 35 years before 1949 to 69 in 1985.

### Ten Percent Increase Seen in Diseases

91WE0094A Beijing CHINA DAILY in English  
2 Nov 90 p 3

[Text] The incidence of epidemic diseases throughout China during the first eight months of 1990 was 10 percent higher than during the same period last year mainly because of a succession of natural disasters.

By the end of August, the incidence of epidemic encephalitis B increased by 140 percent, of polio by 116 percent and of hepatitis by 35 percent. Dai Zhicheng, head of the Anti-epidemic Department under the Ministry of Public Health said recently in an interview with Beijing-based HEALTH NEWS.

The incidence of some other diseases declined, said Dai.

Cholera dropped by 91 percent, and rabies by 27 percent, dysentery by 13 percent, whopping cough by 11 percent and typhoid by 6 percent.

According to Dai, more than 10 provinces across the country were hit by various natural disasters such as floods and high winds and have reported the incidence and spread of epidemic diseases including hepatitis, epidemic encephalitis B and dysentery.

In Sichuan, Jiangxi and Anhui provinces, the incidence of dysentery and hepatitis increased after serious storms.

Epidemic encephalitis B cases also occurred in Henan, Anhui and Hubei provinces because of disastrous floods.

Dai said that the rising prices of immunity vaccines have affected the anti-epidemic programme of the country.

This year, Henan provincial government has to make an additional expenditure of over two million yuan (\$424,600) for various vaccines. But still, more than one million people cannot be timely inoculated.

So far, about 10,000 people in Henan have been infected with epidemic encephalitis B, and over 500 have died from the disease.

"The central government has long been practising preferential policies in allocating budget funds to anti-epidemic departments," Dai was quoted by the paper as saying, but "many health establishments tend to neglect the work until the epidemics occurred."

### Progress in Public Health Undertakings

OW0512114490 Beijing XINHUA in English  
0850 GMT 5 Dec 90

[Text] Statistics from the State Statistics Bureau show that China has made good progress in public health undertakings during the Seventh Five-Year Plan period (1986-90).

The total number of public health care organizations in the country is expected to reach 208,000 by the end of 1990, an increase of 7,000 from 1985. The country's 62,000 hospitals represent an increase of 3,000 over the number in 1985.

The total number of hospital beds will reach 2.6 million by the end of 1990, an increase of 370,000 from 1985. The number of hospital beds available per 1,000 persons has increased from 2.14 in 1985 to 2.33 in 1989.

The number of professional health care personnel is expected to reach 4.9 million by the end of this year, an increase of 600,000 from the 1985 figure. While the number of professional public health technical staff is expected to reach 3.85 million, up 450,000. The country now has over 1.96 million senior technical staff in public health, an increase of 1.2-fold.

Hospitals treated over 2.5 billion people and admitted over 50 million patients to live in the hospitals each year during the period.

The incidence of the infectious diseases dropped from 874.82 per 100,000 in 1985 to 339.26 per 100,000 in 1989. In addition, the mortality rate resulting from infectious diseases dropped down from 2.41 per 100,000 people to 1.26 per 100,000.

China also developed rapidly in the areas of maternity and child health care, and today 93.99 percent of infants weigh more than 2.5 kilograms. This achievement is well above quota set by the World Health Organization's "Everyone Enjoys Health Care in 2000" plan.

China had 121 medical colleges and universities and 554 technical secondary medical schools by the end of 1989.

## INDONESIA

### East Timor Reports Cholera Deaths

91WE0107A Jakarta *ANGKATAN BERSENJATA*  
in *Indonesian* 8 Nov 90 p 9

[Text] Dili—The period from early September until mid-October 1990 was dismal for Ambeno Regency. Almost 600 people in 15 villages and four subdistricts were stricken with cholera. There were 65 deaths, all of them among babies and children under five.

According to information received from the East Timor Level I Region Health Service and the Regional Office of the Department of Health, the disease appeared first in Pante Makassar Subdistrict through contaminated drinking water, unsanitary practices, and a number of other contributing factors. Other affected subdistricts were Oe-Sillo, Nitibe, and Pasabe, according to an *ANGKATAN BERSENJATA* report from East Timor yesterday.

Unlike the past, East Nusa Tenggara Province [NTT], the area's closest neighbor, was also hit by the disease. According to a source in Ambeno, the disease spread because of the ease and openness of transportation between NTT, particularly TTU [North Central Timor] Regency, and Ambeno Regency.

The extensive and relatively rapid spread of the disease was also a result of lack of vigilance by both the people and the government. Water is drunk from rivers without being chlorinated, and popsicle makers give no attention to health factors at all.

Laboratory tests were made of nine water samples on 17 and 18 October. None of the nine met health standards. Both of the popsicle samples tested positive for NAG [nonagglutinating] *Vibrio cholera*. Of 14 stool samples from cholera patients, 12 tested positive for NAG *Vibrio cholera*.

The Level I Regional Government took steps to treat victims, chlorinate drinking water, and give guidance to the community, including affected locations as well as those still unaffected, such as the other 12 regencies in East Timor Province.

#### Obstacles

A health team from the Level I Regional Government, assisted by a team from the Department of Health Headquarters, has encountered a number of obstacles in treating victims in Ambeno. The problems include the fact that the community normally does not immediately report illness to local health officials but treats the sick with traditional medicines instead. Also, the people drink water that has not been boiled, and they defecate everywhere. Furthermore, transportation to the homes of the sick is difficult. Other problems are lack of coordination by the Level I Regional Government in Ambeno and the regent's delay in funding health service operations covered by the Level II APBD [Regional

Budget]. The same is true of routine funds and quarterly budget funds. Because of communications difficulties, Ambeno Regent Vicente Tilman could not be contacted for confirmation of these problems and delays.

### Dengue Outbreak in West Jakarta

91WE0088A Jakarta *BISNIS INDONESIA*  
in *Indonesian* 26 Oct 90 p 13

[Text] West Jakarta—The number of people with dengue hemorrhagic fever in West Jakarta has been on the increase since 1 October. As of yesterday, 115 people had contracted the disease, and two of those had died.

Rasyid Piarah, chief of the West Jakarta Health Service Branch, said yesterday that 115 cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever had been recorded in his area during the first 25 days of this month and that two of them, in Kemang-gisan and Palmerah Villages of Grogol Petamburan, resulted in death.

He revealed that from January until 25 October there were 906 cases in West Jakarta and that nine of the victims died.

Rasyid said his office obtained this information by monitoring the seven hospitals in West Jakarta every two days.

His office has fumigated the residences of the people who died in order to kill the dengue mosquitoes. "Each fumigation covers an area with a radius of 100 meters."

Rasyid acknowledged that the Grogol Petamburan Subdistrict is the most vulnerable to dengue fever of the four West Jakarta subdistricts and three branch subdistricts. The Cengkareng Subdistrict has the lowest incidence of the fever.

He said there are still five villages in West Jakarta with a high endemic incidence of the disease: Kota Bambu, Slipi, and Jatipulo in Grogol Petamburan Subdistrict; Tangki in Taman Sari Subdistrict; and Sukabumi Udik in Kebun Jeruk Subdistrict.

Rasyid feels that the number of cases in his area is on the rise and estimates that from January through December there will be 1,000 cases.

The number of cases has risen. Last year, there were 276 cases and three deaths.

Rasyid said that the spread of the disease is affected by the change of season and that there is a 5-year cycle. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1988 there were 2,168 cases and 10 deaths. The year 1988 represented the peak of a cycle covering the previous 4 years. In 1986, only 572 cases were recorded.

According to Rasyid, if rains fall constantly during the rainy season the number of people suffering this dangerous disease declines. If, however, rainfall fluctuates, the mosquitoes multiply rapidly since standing water provides places for the mosquito larvae.

Rasyid said his office will conduct massive refumigation in all areas for two or three months after the rainy season, for that is the most effective time for exterminating the dengue mosquito.

## JAPAN

### **Carcinogenic Substance Detected in Type B Hepatitis Virus**

*OW2411103590 Tokyo KYODO in English 0947 GMT  
24 Nov 90*

[Text] A joint Japan-U.S. medical research group has reported discovering a carcinogenic substance in the virus of B-type hepatitis.

An estimated 200 million people suffer from type B hepatitis around the world.

The research team led by Kazuhiko Koike of the University of Tokyo and Gilbert Jay of the U.S. National

Hygienic Institute and Red Cross Society said the findings will be reported at a meeting Monday in Kyoto of the Japan Molecular Biology Society.

The researchers said mice transplanted with a portion of genes from type B hepatitis virus developed liver cancer at a high rate of 80 percent.

Type X genes in the hepatitis virus has been suspected of causing liver cancer.

The researchers said they transplanted type X gene extracted from the hepatitis virus to 80 impregnated mice eggs. Tests later showed that the liver cancer began to develop in new-born mice starting about a year after their births.

A year and nine months after their birth, cancer was detected in 90 percent of male mice and 70 percent of female mice for an average of 80 percent, the researchers said.

The researchers said there is a strong possibility that the X type gene is also responsible for causing cancer in the human body.

## BULGARIA

### Hepatitis Epidemic From Stara Zagora

*AU0612155390 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 4 Dec 90 p 1*

[Report by Vanyo Stoilov: "Over 1,000 Hepatitis Cases"]

[Text] Stara Zagora—Since the beginning of the hepatitis epidemic this autumn, approximately 1,000 cases have been registered in the Stara Zagora area. Nevertheless, according to specialists' opinions the climax of the epidemic should be expected by mid-December. The area is one of the most severely affected in the country. The majority of patients are people under the age of 40.

The central district hospital in Stara Zagora has opened two additional departments for treating patients who are later sent to Stamovo for rehabilitation. In this alarming situation the physicians from the infectious and internal medicine departments of the hospital are working together in the struggle against the disease.

### New Health Services Regulations Introduced

*AU0612170790 Sofia Domestic Service in Bulgarian 1600 GMT 6 Dec 90*

[Text] At a news conference held today Ivan Chernozemski, minister of public health, announced the first

measures of the health care reform which are expected to be enforced as of 1 January 1991.

A National Health Protection Fund will be established, expected to be financed by the state budget and by donations. The resources will be distributed by a National Health Council in which all public and state organizations and institutions concerned with public health are to be represented.

A new method of hospital and health institutions' administration will also be introduced as of 1 January 1991. The hospitals will be administered by collective organs, namely by management and medical councils. The hospitals will be headed by chief doctors who should be appointed by the minister of public health on the basis of a competition. There will also be a hospital manager in charge of financial questions.

A High Medical Experts Council is also expected to be established under the Ministry of Public Health in charge of scientific health care forecasts.

Administrative-economic incentives for blood donors have been adopted. Blood donors will be paid 345 leva for one liter of blood.

**BRAZIL****Reported Dengue Cases Down in Rio**

91WE0057B Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese  
23 Oct 90 p 7

[Text] Brasilia—The Ministry of Health received only 65 notifications of dengue cases in Rio in the last week of September, representing an 82.5-percent decline in relation to the first week in June, when 787 cases were reported. The technicians are not venturing any explanation for the decline in the disease rate, preferring to wait a few weeks to see if this is a temporary phenomenon or a continuing trend.

Maria de Fatima Vasconcelos, director of the Yellow Fever Division of the National Health Foundation, said there were several possible reasons for the drop in dengue cases in Rio, including the intensified efforts to combat the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, which transmits the disease. She neither ruled out nor confirmed the possibility of underreporting.

According to the director, the incidence of dengue in Rio was higher in May (1,820 cases), June (2,306 cases) and July (2,164 cases); i.e., during the winter, when there is normally a decline in the number of cases. Also during this period, there was a controversy among the state government, the Rio municipal government, and the Federal Government as to where the responsibility lies for combating the vector (the disease transmitter). The administrative reform was also launched during this period, with hundreds of civil servants, including sanitary officers of the defunct Sucam [Superintendency of Public Health Campaigns], being dismissed or placed on reserve.

“We still do not know what is occurring in Rio de Janeiro. The decline expected in the winter could be happening now, or the organization of the health services could be starting to show results. We are not yet in a position to state the reason for the drop with any certainty,” concluded Maria de Fatima Vasconcelos.

## BANGLADESH

### Malaria Epidemic in Lama Upazila

91WD0152 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER  
in English 18 Oct 90 p 10

[Text] Bandarban—About 70,000 people, rehabilitated in the Lama upazila here have been passing their days in misery and affliction without work and medicare, reports UNB.

Most of these people have been rendered jobless due to incessant rain and a government ban on wood cutting and bamboo extraction.

UNB correspondent who visited the upazila found a large number of the people suffering from malaria which broke out in an epidemic form in Rupshipara, Lama-mukh, Dardari, Aziznagar Theonipara and Gosalira villages.

More than 1,500 people have been affected by malaria and at least 20 of them have died in Rupshipara alone.

Upazila Health Officer, when asked, said malaria was a common disease in the areas.

The UNO said he received no report of any death from malaria.

Local leaders have demanded emergency medical relief for the malaria affected people and withdrawal of government ban on bamboo and wood cutting which is the main source of earning for the rehabilitated people.

### Elephantiasis Spreading in Rural Areas

91WD0167 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER  
in English 27 Oct 90 p 9

[Text] Rangpur—Elephantiasis is spreading rapidly to different areas of Panchagarh district.

A survey conducted in 1979 by the Malaria Research Institute showed that 4.3 percent population comprising roughly 1 lakh were attacked with elephantiasis in the district. The institute had provided the necessary advices and treatment to the affected people at that time.

Since then no survey has been conducted in the district. There are informations from remote corners of the district that this disease has marked a gradual rise during the past few years and it is spreading to the fresh areas.

According to experienced circles, the number of the affected people has now shot to 6 percent. They believe that this figure might be swelled, if a survey is conducted.

The reason of the spreading of the diseases was said to be due to absence of certain items in the ground water and foodstuffs available in the district. Mosquito bite is also another reason.

In the vast areas of Nilphamari district, the diseases has registered similar rise mostly among rural masses. [as received]

In the remote areas of the Rangpur, Gaibandha and Lalmonirhat districts a few patients of elephantiasis were found and gradually the number of patients is increasing.

The elephantiasis is an odd and painful disease. The affected people is isolated from the public places due to odd looking. [as received]

The government should take a proper measure to root out the disease and save the people from its curse.

The survey team observed that the government owned ponds have been left uncared for.

In case of the private ponds dispute among the co-shareholders over the ownership of these ponds stand in the way of utilisation. These private ponds which are bulk in number, are left in an abandoned condition.

These derelict ponds have become ideal places of mosquito breeding centres resulting in outbreak of different diseases.

The experienced circles are of opinion that a proper step should be taken to bring these ponds under pisciculture programme which will help solve present crisis of fishes in the country.

## INDIA

### 58 Die in Ahmedabad City Malaria Epidemic

BK2411034990 Hong Kong AFP in English 1829 GMT  
23 Nov 90

[Text] New Delhi—A total of 58 people have died in a raging malaria epidemic in a western Indian city, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) said Friday. The deaths, in Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat, had occurred in the last three months, Gujarat health minister, Babubhai Vasnwala, was quoted as saying. Mr. Vasnwala reportedly said in a statement in Ahmedabad Friday that steps were being intensified to check the disease.

### Gastroenteritis Epidemic Spreads in West Bengal

91WD0136 Calcutta THE SUNDAY STATESMAN  
in English 14 Oct 90 p 7

[Text] Mr Kanti Biswas, West Bengal School Education Minister, said in Writers' Buildings on Friday that information had been received that during the last two days about 20 people had died of gastro-enteritis in Bongaon, Bagda and Gaighata. The Director of Health Services has been asked to send doctors, medicine and health officials to the affected areas in North 24-Parganas immediately.

Dr A.K. Halder, the Director of Health Services, said the Minister had told him that he would visit the affected subdivision. Meanwhile arrangements were being made to despatch adequate quantity of medicine and a team of doctors to the affected areas. The Chief Medical Officer of North 24-Parganas would supervise the preventive steps.

The DHS admitted receiving reports of deaths from gastro-enteritis in North and South 24-Parganas. Earlier reports of gastro-enteritis deaths were reported from Malda, Hooghly, Midnapore, Nadia and Murshidabad. Altogether 105 people had died till Friday in the State. According to Dr Halder, 762 people were affected and 19 people died in Malda, 62 people were affected and five died in Hooghly, 370 people were affected and 15 died in Midnapore, 36 died in Nadia, 26 died in Murshidabad, two died in North 24-Parganas and two died in South 24-Parganas.

Mr Manas Bhunia, Congress(I) MLA from Sabang in Midnapore District, said in Writers' Buildings that between 9 July and 12 October in the flood-hit areas in his constituency, 12 people died of gastro-enteritis and seven people died of snake bite.

### **Tuberculosis Termed Nation's Prime Health Problem**

91WD0138 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA  
in English 9 Oct 90 p 10

[Text] Declaring tuberculosis as the 'number one' health hindrance in India, "a disease related to socio-economic status," the Maharashtra State Anti-Tuberculosis Association's studies reveal that there are 160,000 suspected cases of T.B. in Bombay alone. Of these, 40,000 cases are infectious.

Dr N.C. Puri, chairman of the association, informed newsmen at the inauguration of the '41st T.B. seal campaign' on Thursday, that there were ten million T.B. patients in India before the discovery of drugs to cure the disease and around the same number even today.

The sale of the T.B. seal is aimed at spreading awareness that T.B. still remains the most serious communicable disease in India, linked with poverty. It is also an appeal to the government and other organisations to come forth in terms of financial and moral support.

Mr Homi Taleyarkhan, a member of the minority commission, government of India, noted that the MSATS was the most active organisation throughout India. "In spite of frustration, there is determination."

He said all the association asked of the government was "a fund of goodwill," and of course assistance by way of expediting grants. "Sometimes too much analysis leads to paralysis of action," he quipped, when referring to the municipal corporation of Bombay delaying grants to the association.

There is great scope of recovery for T.B. patients provided it is detected early, he said. The B.M.C. should intensify its BCG (Bacillus Calmette Guérine) vaccination scheme for prevention.

"Hospitalisation is no longer the answer. Domiciliary treatment is in now," he added. For the 14-15 million T.B. patients the requisite detection facilities are lacking, he observed.

Mr Kantipudi Padmanabhaiah, Bombay's municipal commissioner, was the chief guest at the inauguration. He admitted he was 'personally involved' in the drive.

"I met Dr Deshmukh (Dr M.D. Deshmukh, association's secretary) 30 years ago when I went to his Sewri hospital on the advice of someone who told me I was suffering from T.B." he recalled. "One look at me and Dr Deshmukh told me I had nothing to fear."

Responding to Dr Deshmukh's complaints of "lack of official patronage in the anti-T.B. movement," Mr Padmanabhaiah said the BMC would extend its support wherever possible: "I want to involve all the primary school children in this campaign," he announced. Ward agencies would also be roped in.

Dr Deshmukh remarked that there was a waning of interest towards T.B. in this country, even doctors placing it way down in their priority list. The municipal commissioner agreed.

He blamed the disinterest on the following reasons: "The mortality rate has gone down, so people tend to believe the incidence has gone down. But we cannot be complacent. Nearly 55 percent of our population lives in insanitary conditions. Besides, we do not have the necessary detection facilities. So we cannot assume that T.B. has been eradicated."

Every year, 45,000 new cases are recorded. However, hospitalisation cases have been reduced due to domiciliary treatment and the number of beds has been cut down giving the impression that the incidence has reduced.

Mr Padmanabhaiah said his conservancy staff, who worked in insanitary conditions, also had a very high incidence of T.B.

Dr K.C. Mohanty, director of the association, said the myth that T.B. has been controlled in India was untrue though it was a curable ailment.

## **IRAQ**

### **1,416 Children Reportedly Die Because of Medicine Embargo**

JN0312163790 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic  
1510 GMT 3 Dec 90

[Text] Health Minister 'Abd-al-Salam Muhammad Sa'id has announced that 1,416 children under 5 years of age

have died in the past months because of the embargo on medicines imposed on the people and children of Iraq.

The health minister told INA today that because those children had not received the necessary medication for their treatment, this caused a deterioration in their health and they were afflicted by suffocation, which led to their deaths.

The health minister said that because the deceased had not received proper milk in the amounts required for balanced, sound nourishment, they suffered malnutrition and their health deteriorated. Consequently, their bodies were no longer able to resist microbes. They were therefore infected by contagious and inflammatory diseases, in addition to the fact that they did not receive the necessary medication.

The health minister pointed out that failure to vaccinate children and complete the vaccination cycle due to the lack of vaccines subjected their health to diseases known to afflict children.

The health minister wondered about the agreement on children's rights approved by the UN General Assembly during its 44th session, which provides for protecting and looking after children at all times and circumstances, in peacetime and wartime alike.

He pointed to the unjust, void resolutions issued by the Security Council under the pressure of the United States and its allies, describing them as illegitimate and inhuman because they totally contravene international resolutions approved by countries of the world.

The minister underlined a number of world conferences which affirmed the rights of children, including the WHO conference held in 1978 in the USSR, which issued a well-known document providing for the broad, basic concept of health for everyone in the year 2000. The minister added: How can health be for everyone while there are unjust resolutions that deny the children of Iraq vaccines and medicines? The minister also referred to the world summit conference for childhood which was held in New York last September, with the participation of 165 countries, noting that the conference upheld children's health and nutrition to reduce the mortality of infants and children and stressed the importance of motherhood for providing the basic needs of children. The conference also considered this issue to be an indispensable need at all times. The health minister highlighted other recommendations adopted by this conference, which held that the recommendations concern not only the children of the current generation, but future generations as well, and that most diseases suffered by children which cause death at present can be prevented by vaccines or treated effectively by medicines.

The health minister concluded his statement to INA by saying that the number of children who died in the past period since the enforcement of a blockade on Iraq provides strong evidence of [words indistinct] of the United States and its allies and of the human duty which

calls for serious solidarity with Iraq against this irresponsible behavior, which will inevitably result in woeful consequences and human losses, not only for the children of Iraq, but also for all the sons of Iraq.

The health minister called on medical organizations and human societies and the Red Cross and Crescent in the world to work in order to end the injustice done by the U.S. medicine and food blockade on Iraq and its people, including children.

INA has also learned that the Ministry of Culture and Information will issue a special brochure in the five international languages which includes detailed information on cases of children's deaths caused by a lack of medicine since the unjust U.S. blockade was enforced on the people and children of Iraq.

### Minister Meets Medical Assistance Organization Official

JN0212212790 Baghdad INA in Arabic  
1650 GMT 1 Dec 90

[Text] Health Minister 'Abd-al-Salam Muhammad Sa'id met today with Dr. Johans Linman, head of the international medical assistance organization [name and title as received], and his delegation. They discussed spheres of cooperation between the ministry and the organization and ways of promoting it. They also reviewed the economic blockade of Iraq and preventing medicine and baby milk from reaching Iraq.

The minister also reviewed aspects of the aggressive U.S.-Zionist plan against Iraq, especially the international medical and food siege imposed on it.

He pointed out that the UN Security Council resolution on the economic blockade violates the recommendations of the international conference on child protection held in New York in September 1990. The conference was attended by a number of leaders, including U.S. President Bush. The conference recommended child protection and limiting child deaths.

Johans Linman pointed out that he will urge international humanitarian organizations to lift the food and medicine siege on Iraq.

## LEBANON

Health Minister on End of 'Disease' in North  
NC2411133190 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon  
in Arabic 1145 GMT 24 Nov 90

[Text] Minister 'Abdallah al-Rasi has said that there are no longer any cases of diarrhea in 'Akkar. Al-Rasi attributed the disease to the destruction by heavy rains of sewage systems for about 20 highland homes, which resulted in the pollution of drinking water supplies.

### Sewage-Contaminated Water Supply Poisons 2,000

*PM2611162990 Moscow IZVESTIYA  
in Russian 24 Nov 90 Union Edition p 2*

[Correspondent Yuriy Perepletkin report under the rubric "Direct Link": "Anxious Days in Langepas"]

[Text] Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug—It happened suddenly. The city fell ill. Just so—the entire city. People by the dozens went along to consult their physician and received the identical diagnosis: poisoning. Some had to be hospitalized.

What was the reason? Locally made sausages came under suspicion. A check was made—everything seemed normal. But the number of cases was growing. The taiga city of petroleum extractors was turning into a vast field hospital.

Finally, the source of infection was discovered: Somewhere in the tangle of underground pipes a water main "had come into contact" with a sewer... The dangerous sections were found and isolated. Pure drinking water from artesian wells began to be trucked in for the city dwellers. It took 72 hours to find chlorine. And then water which had been rendered harmless by chlorination was supplied to apartments.

"Sanitary physicians came to us urgently from Moscow, Tyumen, and Khanty-Mansiysk," V. Aseyev, chairman of Langepas City Soviet Executive Committee, said. "And also specialists in municipal services. The situation has now stabilized, but we have an acute shortage of domestic water purifiers of the Rodnichok type."

A natural question arises: Who is to blame? Prosecutor's office organs are tackling the extraordinary occurrence. So far one thing is known: There were flagrant deviations from the plan when the pipes were laid. As a result, not counting those who have recovered at home, more than 2,000 people were referred to the hospital with an intestinal infection, more than 100 were hospitalized, and 13 city dwellers were in a very grave condition. Today their lives are out of danger.

### Five Cases of Brucellosis in Tula Oblast

*PM2611094590 Moscow IZVESTIYA  
in Russian 22 Nov 90 Union Edition p 2*

[Report by Arnold Pushkar: "Infection of Negligence"]

[Text] Tula—Five cases of brucellosis in humans have been registered in Tula Oblast.

It emerged at a session of the anti-epizootic and anti-epidemic commissions that this is the result of the disregard of veterinary norms. The most striking thing is that pedigree livestock raised in stockraising conditions of a high standard which were purchased in the FRG last September and which had been through quarantine were the source of the infection. But the foreign heifers were obviously unable to adapt to our conditions even in an

agricultural association like the "Novomoskovskoye." Four cases of disease in humans have been recorded here.

Back on 15 March the Uzlovaya veterinary laboratory discovered three heifers which tested positive for brucellosis. But they were sent to slaughter without making the fact public. Later a state farm veterinary service discovered a further 65 cattle with brucellosis. But they too were sent to the meat combine. The silence of the workers at the state farm and the above-mentioned agro-industrial association led to infections among humans. Several anti-epizootic and anti-epidemic teams including over 200 veterinarians, infectious disease specialists, immunologists, and pediatricians have been sent to the Novomoskovsk region. About 18,000 people, including 3,000 children, have to be examined.

### 'Chernobyl Alliance' Conference Ends in Ukraine

*LD2511230090 Moscow TASS in English  
2030 GMT 25 Nov 90*

[Article by UKRINFORM-TASS correspondent Aleksey Petrunya]

[Text] Kiev—An all-Union conference of the Chernobyl Alliance ended on Sunday in the resort city of Vorzel, near Kiev. This massive public organization, that united participants in the Chernobyl clean-up operation and those who were affected by the catastrophe, has set itself the priority task of protecting the interests of those people and ensuring proper living and working conditions for them.

For two days participants in the conference, who represented some 100 primary organizations of the Alliance from about all the regions of the country, discussed problems dealing with the elimination of consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the goals and tasks of the Alliance.

It was pointed out that many primary organizations had done much to improve the situation of Chernobyl victims since the holding of a constituent congress last June. However, they should further step up their activities for protecting the rights and interests of the Chernobyl victims. It is necessary to ensure real guarantees of normal living conditions for them, acting jointly with the federal and republican governments and local councils.

The conference elected a new board and a central council of the Alliance. It adopted appeals to the Soviet parliament and the Council of Ministers.

### Turkmen Supreme Soviet Members Visit Aral Disaster Zone

*PM2311144190 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian  
21 Nov 90 Second Edition pp 1-2*

[PRAVDA correspondent report: "Expedition to Aral Zone"]

[Text] Turkmen SSR—The entire Turkmen SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet flew to the Aral zone

in Tashauz Oblast to discuss in situ problems of ecology and people's health and social protection.

"This is not for the sake of show," Turkmen SSR President S.A. Niyazov, first secretary of the Turkmen Communist Party Central Committee, commented in conversation with me. "We need a purely practical result. Where can we obtain it, if not here, right in the Aral region?"

The situation in the oblast is truly catastrophic. According to the assessment of an expert commission from the USSR State Committee for Environmental Protection, the population of 800,000 people drink the worst water in the world. On average three members of each family are ill and four in every five women and children suffer from anemia. Bowel disorders have grown by a factor of three in the last five years, and there are three times more cases of tuberculosis in Tashauz Oblast than in the country as a whole. The mind reels at the infant mortality figures...

A more than unprepossessing picture. The causes of this situation, I think, have been precisely defined by the Turkmen SSR Supreme Soviet Committee for Ecology and the Protection of People's Health. Above all, the destruction of the Aral Sea—the area of which has decreased by 34 percent—which is an inexhaustible source of emissions of toxic salts.

A. Tsygankov, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers Commission for Emergency Situations, who was invited to the session, probably did not feel very comfortable. The deputies veritably inundated him with extremely frank questions. And this was no mere chance.

After all, in September 1988 the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a resolution "On Measures for Radically Improving the Ecological and Health Environment in the Aral Sea Region, and Raising the Efficiency of Exploitation and Strengthening the Protection of the Land and Water Resources in Its Basin." Now at that time only one-thirtieth of the resources allocated to neighboring oblasts of the Uzbek and Kazakh SSR's were allocated to Tashauz Oblast for the construction of water resources facilities, water supply, drainage and sewerage, and purification installations.

It was not easy for Tsygankov to answer the question why people are receiving sizable pay supplements in the Aral zone of the neighboring republics, while in Tashauz Oblast there were no such supplements. The session took on trust the claim made by the deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers commission that as of 1991 the oblast would receive more than 115 million rubles for ecological needs.

The visiting session of the Turkmen SSR Supreme Soviet drew up an extensive resolution by which the territory of Tashauz Oblast is recognized as an ecological disaster zone. A special regime of economic activity will be established there. The deputies decided to send a delegation to Moscow to submit an appeal to USSR President M.S. Gorbachev. They intend to insist on the financial aid essential for the introduction of pay, benefits, and pension differentials in the Turkmen Aral zone and for the construction of a plant producing pure drinking water.

The Union treaty concept was approved in the main at the visiting session.

## FRANCE

**Bacteria in Water Affects Le Havre Area**

91WE0071A Paris LIBERATION  
in French 3, 4 Nov 90 p 16

[Article by Nathalie Castetz: "Le Havre: The Bacteria Is in the Groundwater Table"—first paragraph is LIBERATION introduction]

[Excerpts] One hundred seventy people in the metropolitan area of Le Havre have been infected since Thursday and 20 others hospitalized. A bacteria, probably Shigella, is making its way from the groundwater tables to the water tap. Despite strong treatment with chlorine, the water is not always drinkable.

The metropolitan area of Le Havre has taken on the look of a fortress besieged by a mysterious epidemic the last three days, because of a bacteria lurking in the tapwater. The hospitalization of seven people last Thursday triggered a state of alert, the creation of two crisis units, and a general mobilization. A number of analyses pointed to a bacterial source for the pollution—an entero-bacteria originating in the digestive tract called "shigella." Shigella sonnei, carried by the rains to the groundwater tables, is thought to be the culprit behind the gastroenteritis cases diagnosed. [passages omitted]

One hundred thirty cases of infection were reported in the afternoon. The Emergency Center informed the subprefecture, which in turn set up a crisis unit that afternoon...[passages omitted]

Around 1700 hours on Thursday, an initial assessment was made: The source of the pollution was microbial, according to the Le Havre municipal laboratory. "The dry spell followed by the recent heavy rains caused considerable leaching of soils which, because of their calciferous nature, quickly carry the bacteria to the groundwater tables, and from there to treatment stations." A shock treatment was applied: an extra heavy dose of chlorination in the water, bringing it from 0.1 microgram a liter to 0.7. When sterilization failed to eliminate the viral breeding ground, a second chlorination treatment was effected, transforming the tapwater into something like a swimming pool, at three micrograms a liter.

A water sample, co-procultures (bacteriological examinations of stools in the hospital): It is too early to say with certainty that Shigella sonnei is responsible for the contamination. Of the 170 people affected, 20 have been hospitalized, including six children and two pregnant women. Their condition is not alarming. Yesterday evening at 1800 hours, the Le Havre subprefecture stated in a communique that, since the situation had not returned to normal despite chlorination of the water and flushing of pipes, the population should continue to follow official directives.

## SPAIN

**30 Percent of Overdose Deaths Due to Cocaine**

91WE0052B Madrid DIARIO 16 in Spanish  
20 Oct 90 p 16

[Text] Cocaine was found in 29.2 percent of all samples taken from persons dying of a drug overdose in 1989, according to data from the National Drug Addiction Information System (SEIT) of the National Drug Plan.

Santiago Torres, assistant government representative for the National Drug Plan, said yesterday that for the first time, three indicators are available: deaths, medical emergencies, and the demand for treatment, providing a more precise idea of the magnitude of the problem of drug addiction in Spain.

For Santiago de Torres, SEIT data indicate that increasing numbers of heroin addicts are seeking treatment and they are older than before.

He also emphasized that there are still too many emergencies due to withdrawal, which situation should not be handled by hospitals.

**Outbreak of Type A Hepatitis in Leon**

91WE0052C Madrid DIARIO 16 in Spanish  
20 Oct 90 p 17

[Text] Nearly 30 cases of hepatitis have recently been detected in Bembibre, Leon, an alarming outbreak of the disease.

Social Welfare departments of the Junta of Castile and Leon are doing tests to learn the precise causes resulting in development of the disease, although there is strong suspicion that the prime factor is water from a public fountain in the town.

Drinking water from that source, known as the "sewer fountain," was recently prohibited by a municipal ban published by Mayor Jose Eloy Garcia Iglesias after learning the results of bacteriological analyses of the water. The notice warned the population of the danger of using water from that source for domestic purposes.

Gonzalo Mateos, chief of social welfare of the Junta of Castile and Leon, said that despite the fact that 25 cases of Type A hepatitis have been confirmed so far, plus three suspicious cases, a few more days will have to go by since, in his opinion, "this week more cases, possibly five, will be declared."

However, news about the existence of the cases of hepatitis is not certain, in the opinion of the head of research of the Menendez Pidal National College, who said that cases reported by parents only numbered six and that the six children involved had never stopped going to school. The chief of research could not understand the source of such news.

In addition, one internist working in Bembibre said it is normal to find 25 or 30 cases of Type A hepatitis in such a community this season of the year. The disease generally has a favorable prognosis.