

ASIAN WORKERS NEWS

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'Korean dream' of an undocumented Vietnamese worker who died trying to escape

A migrant worker, who secretly worked as an undocumented worker far from his homeland, misconceived Korean workers of the same workplace to be a regulation squad, scuttled away, and unfortunately died of heart attack with Chuseok a few days ahead.

On September 13th at 12:50 A.M., a Vietnamese undocumented worker, Nguyen Chi Quet (31) was concentrating on building an ironic structure in a factory at Gyeongnam, even forgetting to have his lunch.

Mr. Quet, coming to Korea as an industrial trainee through the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Business on December 16th, 2002, worked at a company in Paju, Gyeonggi province. He sneaked out of the company on the 6th of last month, and began to live as an undocumented worker. It was the fifth day from when he eventually started to work at this factory from the 9th of last month.

It was such a nonsensical circumstance when Mr. Quet, who was totally giving himself up to his work, skipping his meal, got surprised and ran away. When he saw Mr. Han (35) and other seven workers of the same workplace taking off a van after their relaxed lunch,

Mr. Quet misconceived them to be a regulation squad, stopped his work, and began to scuttle.

Mr. Han and others misconceived Mr. Quet as a thief for his getting surprised at them and running off the factory, and started to chase after him. A few moments later, there occurred such an unexpected situation.

Though they ran after him for about 200m, Mr. Quet disappeared a nearby footpath between the rice fields. He was found beside a river, which is about 1.2km apart from the factory, without any consciousness. Mr. Han and others called 119 right away, but he died already.

"When we came back from the meal, a stranger got frustrated at us and ran away. Thus, colleagues considered him a thief and ran after him," stated Mr. Han, during the examination by the police.

The police inferred that Mr. Quet died for the heart attack, and decided to perform an autopsy on 14th in order to find out the exact reason for death.

Mr. Quet, who dreamt of a 'Korean Dream' as a lonely undocumented resident at a distant foreign country, finished his life in such a nonsensical way.

"We guess that Mr. Quet, as he was at

a state of an undocumented worker and thus worked secretly, misconceived Koreans taking off the van to be a regulation squad and ran as fast as he could," said a police officer who took charge of this case. He expressed sorry for this case and said "though this situation was a nonsense, it was still possible since he was an undocumented resident."

The body of Mr. Quet, who had no friend in a foreign country, was placed at Haman Jungang Hospital, and the police informed the Vietnamese consulate of this case.

"The problem of undocumented residents cannot be solved by the forced exile, and there would be another absurd death from now on," said Mr. Lee Cheol-seung, head of the Gyeongnam Migrant Worker's House. He also said, "the government have to admit the reality that migrant workers contribute to our labor market and economy, and have to provide plans that legalize them."

"In the long term, it is recommendable to investigate forward-looking plans that settle migrant workers in Korea," also claimed Mr. Lee. **AWN**

<Yonhap News 2005/09/14>

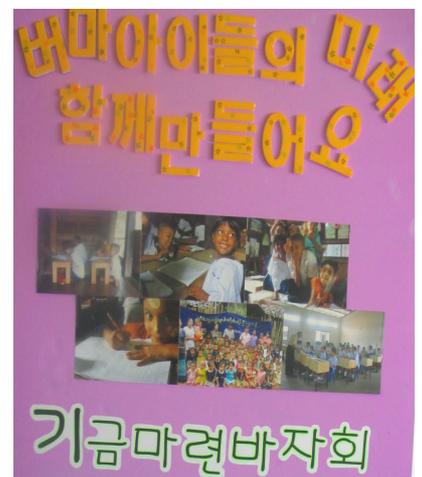
EXCHANGE RATES		
Date : October 8, 2005		
US Dollar is ;		
Country	Currency	Rate
Korea	Won	1,043
Philippines	Peso	55.78
Thailand	Bhat	41.00
Indonesia	Rupiah	10,100
Sri Lanka	Rupee	101.48
India	Rupee	45.00
Bangladesh	Taka	65.66
Pakistan	Rupee	59.71
Nepal	Rupee	71.65
Russia	Rouble	28.57
Burma	Kyat	1,365
Vietnam	Dong	15,888
China	Yuan	8.09
Nigeria	Naira	130.85
Ghana	Cedi	8,975

Make Together Burmese Children's Future

Burmese workers opened a one-day market for supporting Burmese children's school. Last September 29, some Burmese workers in Busan and Gyeongnam area sold Burmese goods to Korean citizens for collecting fund at the 'Asian Cultural Festival' in Democracy Park, Busan City.

A number of Burmese people escape from their military government's oppression, cross the border and live in Maesot, Burma-Thai border as refugees and become undocumented workers. So Burmese children here, can't get formal education, but they study in private small schools established by overseas NGOs and some activists. But there are not enough books, notebooks and facilities for the student's education.

After the Asian Cultural Festival in Busan, the Burmese community sent all of the collected fund from the one-day market to Bucheon Migrant Workers House which has supported schools in Maesot area. **AWN**



Voice of FWR

UMWs, Increase More by Controlling, Oppressing and Self-interest of Labor Receiving Countries

By Kim Min-jung, Secretary general of FWR

A few days ago, a Vietnamese worker died while running away because he mistook a nearby factory's van for an immigration office's controlling car.

It was too absurd to be taken seriously. I felt again that migrant workers' life with 'illegal' tag is a situation so inhumane.

Since last August, all legalized migrant workers through EPS became undocumented status again and now there are over 190,000 undocumented workers, 50% of the total number of migrant workers in Korea.

Therefore, the MOJ has reduced undocumented migrants' number, especially in Busan and Gyeongnam Area. The Immigration controls undocumented workers more strongly now that the APEC summit talk is expected to opening on November 12th. The reason is they recognize undocumented migrant workers as criminals or terrorists. But oppressive crackdown and forced deportation policy not only happens in Korea, but also in other developed countries.

The United States government limits foreign immigration strongly and strengthened the crackdown on undocumented

workers after 9/11 terror, and European countries like France also build up strong control.

Moreover, about one thousand Moroccan migrants tried to enter Spain on September 29. They brushed with the Spanish army against and finally five persons died and many Moroccan migrants were hurt from this incident.

Indeed, it's a march of migration with the risk of their life. This will continue if unequal distribution of world wealth does not disappear.

There is no 'illegal' person in this world. On the contrary, excess entering control and oppression of labor in the receiving countries make undocumented workers and also creates brokers who get profits from migrants.

Labor receiving countries build a barrier blocking up migrant workers' entering and deport undocumented migrant workers who work hard and sincerely. The countries should think about how they got their economic riches and how it is maintained still now. Their richness can not be achieved without third world workers' sacrifice. **AWN**

Day breaking

Migrant Workers Scare Vans

By Park Yong-won

Migrant Workers' Human Rights Center under CLC Korea

I was embarrassed after being told of the death of a migrant worker. He died of a heart attack right after encountering whom he thought were immigration officials getting off a van. But they were just Korean workers going to their workplace after lunch. Why did this terrible thing happened to him? Was he just given a punishment since he worked for his family without a visa. I can imagine how scared they are and how much pressure they feel because of cruel regulations and constrained expulsion.

"They didn't treat me as human,"

Mr. Gobender, who often came to FWR, said at the Incheon International Airport when he left because of having been caught by immigration officers. This shows there are no rights for them in the process of regulations. Therefore these poor circumstance make them leave by themselves or by others. Many people, who once worked in and were exiled from Korea, overflow in Bangladesh. We shouldn't let it pass by. It's bitter when I thought about what they think about Korea.

The recent supervision system has many faults. Because it is just conducted to achieve their goal which is to strike the balance of the rate of undocumented workers. So they

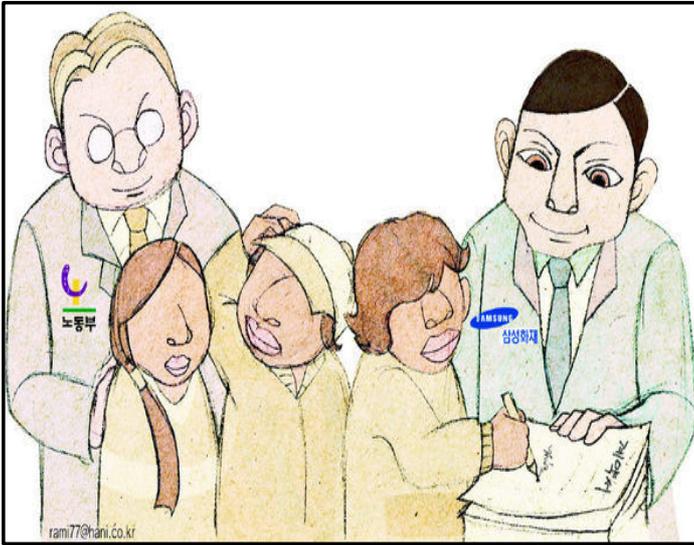
just slam into the goal without considering anything. I believe that we should make the law thinking about the workers and every effort to lower social pressure being occurred by the workers.

However, these must not destroy like an above instance. That makes sense with 'Too much is as bad as too little'.

There's a word 'A burnt child dreads the fire'. It is similar to the reality of today that workers are frightened even the very moment they see a van. I hope such a horrible thing does not happen again and pray for the repose of the deceased. **AWN**



MOL Gives Samsung Insurance Company Monopoly Right from MWs Insurance



Illustrated from Hankyoreh

The Board of Audit and Inspection found out the fact that the Ministry of Labor offered a preference to Samsung Fire so that only Samsung can sell 'Exclusive Insurance for Migrant Workers', which will presumably earn 0.2 trillion yearly. There have been several criticisms that Participatory Government has lukewarmly responded to suspicions, such as illegality and evasion of law of the Samsung Group. However, this is the first time to cause a wrangle because the central Ministry gave the monopolistic right to Samsung subsidiary company.

The auditor concerned with the Board of Audit and Inspection said on Sep. 8, "before enforcing the Employment Permit System (EPS) of migrant workers, the Ministry selected Samsung Fire as the sole business proprietor in August last year, without legal reasons relevant to developing and operating the exclusive migrant workers insurance. The Samsung Fire violated some regulations related to the law of insurance business, but the government ignored it. I, as a auditor, took measures against the minister to make the Ministry scrutinize related regulations thoroughly and get work done completely."

The Samsung Fire wrote the unreasonable rate of insurance on bid paper and handed in to the Ministry, even though the rate is unacceptable according to the related rules of the law of insurance. The Ministry accepted this illegal bid paper as it is, and didn't properly carry out necessary measures based on the law of national contract. The auditor explained, "when the Samsung Fire handed in the bid paper, it violated three legal clauses; the signing requirements of group insurance based on the supervision regulations, applications of the rate of insurance, and related clauses (Sub-section 54, Section 7)."

The Insurance is a package including the departure expiration insurance equivalent for retirement allowance,

welcome-home expense insurance, accident insurance etc. According to EPS, bosses and migrant workers who come to Korea have an obligation to pay 1.6 million~1.8 million yearly for a capita. The Ministry offered the bid to develop this insurance in May last year, and it got suggestion papers from Samsung, Hyundai, Dong Bu Insurance Company, but it only chose the Samsung Fire.

However, a trouble was caused when the government allowed only Samsung Fire to exclusively sell the insurance.

The Ministry designated the Human Resources Development Service of Korea (HRDS), which is the subsidiary organization of the Ministry, as group contractor of the Insurance. The HRDS adopted the policy that migrant workers and bosses should contract the Insurance of Samsung Fire in bulk. After enforcing EPS, migrant workers who come in Korea, while getting working training from HRDS, have obligatorily signed up with the Samsung Fire without other options. During the investigation of audit, it turned out that Samsung Fire handed in the bid paper to the Ministry, saying it would adopt the cheap rate of accident insurance at the time of group contracting in bulk.

However, the rate of the insurance has been raised 25% by applying individual rate of insurance since the contract started to be concluded from August last year.

The insurance community estimated the Exclusive Insurance for Foreign Workers will earn 0.2 trillion~0.28 trillion won yearly. The income accounts for 8~10% of incomes that 10 domestic insurance companies can earn from general insurance market. The Samsung Fire, which the rate of its market occupation is 28% and already the top class in insurance community, will have more power over the market. Therefore, 4 insurance companies coming under the second class, such as LG, Hyundai, Dongbu, Dongyang, jointly presented a petition to the Ministry and are strongly requesting that the exclusive sale of Samsung Fire be rectified.

The Ministry responded to their requests, saying "Because of management expenses, early excessive expenses to develop the insurance, and high rate of risk bearing of migrant workers, most insurance companies hesitated to develop and operate the insurance. Owing to a compelling reason, we chose Samsung Fire as a single proprietor. The oppression that EPS should successively settled down made business management to be unskilled, and I admitted it."

However, there were no critical flaws in the process of choosing the proprietor and standards."

On the other hand, the auditor concerned made an additional remark, "the insurance has sold for over 1 year. The Ministry closed a 2-year contract with Samsung Fire, without enacting any stipulations to punish it some day when illegal facts are revealed. We couldn't take any other special actions against Samsung Fire"

<Hankyoreh, September 9, 2005>

One Year Since EPS Enforcement – Part 3

Through our investigation of the Employment Permit System(EPS), which has been carried out for a year, we found out there are many problems within it. Therefore, we will examine various kinds of schemes to be implemented in order to get over these problems.

1. Reform measure for field status and conditions(Before Immigration)

A. Recruitment Process

The most important thing during recruitment process is to preclude intervention of illegal brokers and possibility of irrationality effectively. This will be made possible through "Opening of EPS information and insurance of transparency during the process."

①NEEDED: institutionalization of open-held migrant workers recruitment through EPS.

②NEEDED: unveiled system that makes applicants to be aware of the process from registration to immigration.

③NEEDED: rigorous management of personal information.

④NEEDED: minimize the charge by improving the time and methods to pay entry cost.

B. Education Process

Considering the deterioration of Korean education institutes to other broker groups and absurdities surrounding enrollment of institutes below EPS, "Nonprofitization of Korean education institutes and institutes prior to entry," should be carried out.

C. Process of Concluding Contracts

To reasonably protect migrant workers' basic rights after their entry to Korea, it is necessary to ensure that they understand the context of labor contracts and the process while they are in conclusion.

D. Reinforcement of Supervision and Management

The Korean Government should be granted mandates by corresponding governments to supervise and manage problems when executing EPS. It should dispatch adequate staffs(at least one or two specialized officers) to each country. If they don't take the responsibility to correct already outspoken problems just saying that they are field dependent, the good use of EPS will be as far as it can be.

2. Reform measure for field status and conditions(After

Immigration)

1) Substantial protection of migrant workers' rights from illegal action of employer

It must be set as a premise that migrant workers can change their company freely whenever their rights are bothered because of employers' illegal actions to shelter rights of migrant workers. Actually, too many illegal actions of employers are being done nowadays.

2) Construction of migrant workers supporting system and cease limitation of changing company

The MOL(Ministry of Labor), that controls EPS, has to construct a long term system that is able to manage 300 thousand human resources and to protect their labor rights.

① NEEDED: efficient interpretation system to support newly coming workers quickly.

② NEEDED: loosening condition of job movement.

③ NEEDED: enough places for workers who are in moving process so don't have any places to stay.

④ NEEDED: an integrated system which totally controls employment of migrant workers and staying permission. If it works, MOL would help migrant workers profitably.

However, before making the system, cease of changing company restriction will be able to guarantee labor and human rights of migrant workers substantially.

3) Rationalization of human rights education and getting employment

education about getting employment has to be reinforced strongly. It must be at least a week to provide actual education, and then workers will adjust to life in Korea easily.

The next thing is 'compulsory employer education'. Nowadays, it is not mandatory. It is only an hour talk. It means that employers are excluded from education. This dearth is resolved by making compulsory education about EPS at least once.

The last thing is making a comprehensive guide manual for migrant workers. It must include Korean laws such as labor law that workers should know, how to find their human rights, and life in Korea. It will be used to educate migrant workers efficiently. **AWN**

Against seizure of the lowest cost of living, 1,200,000 won, out of wages

The Ministry of Justice (Minister Chun Jung Bae) made a proposal of an Enforcement Decree of the Civil Affair Act, which prohibits the power to seize the four family members' lowest cost of living, 1,200,000 won, to guarantee low-wage workers' living. The Decree became effective on July 28 after the agreement of the parties and the cabinet meeting.

In the past, a creditor seized up to half of the debtor's wages regardless of the amounts of wages. According to this Decree, a creditor can seize none of the wages of less than 1,200,000 won, the excess in case of wages of 1,200,000 won to less than 2,400,000 won, the half amount of wages of 2,400,000 won to less than 6,000,000 won, and over the half amount of wages of more than 6,000,000 won.

- the revision of the Labor Standard Act
- Reduction in statutory working hours per week from 44 hours to 40 hours.
- Abolition of monthly paid leave.
- Menstruation leave without pay.
- Regulation of annual leave: 15 to 25 days of annual leave are granted (increasing by one day every two years) and

those who have worked continuously for less than one year are granted one-day annual leave for each month of service.

- Extension of the unit period of the Flexible Working Hour System

up to 3 months.

- Regulation of maximum overtime hours and remuneration rate for overtime work: maximum overtime hours are increased to 16 hours per week temporarily for three years and 25% remuneration rate is applied to the first four hours of overtime work temporarily for three years.

-Financial insurance, public sector, workplaces with 1 000 or more workers: effective July 1, 2004.

- Workplaces with 300 or more workers:effective July 1, 2005.

- Workplaces with 100 or more workers: effective July 1, 2006.

- Workplaces with 50 or more workers: effective July 1, 2007.

- Workplaces with 20 or more workers: effective July 1, 2008.

- Workplaces and state/local organs with less than 20 workers: an enforcement period should be set by a Presidential decree by 2011. **AWN**

Thai Workers Uprising in Kaohsiung, Wake Up Call

By Gi Estrada, Taiwan Coordinator Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants

It took a riot of 300 Thai workers in Kaohsiung on August 21 and 22 for Taiwan society to realize that the human and labor conditions of its foreign blue-collar workers are very exploitative. This incident resulted into the resignation of Chen Chu, the chairperson of Taiwan Council of Labor Affairs (CLA) and the setting up of a special committee to protect the human rights of foreign workers in Taiwan. The CLA on its part did a consultation with NGOs on the management system of foreign workers.

The Thai workers vented their pent up anger on their broker after an electric truncheon was used on a Thai worker for using his cell phone and the others berated for drinking alcoholic drinks. All hell broke loose after this. It was later found out that their broker and employer were treating the Thais inhumanely.

Hua Pan Manpower Corp. managed the workers for the employer, Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Corporation (KRTC). The KRTC is a government owned corporation. Besides disallowing the workers to use their cell phones and prohibiting them from drinking even during their off hours, the broker did not provide them with enough living space in their dormitories. It was reported widely in the newspapers that prisoners have bigger living spaces than the Thai workers.

Other than this, the migrants were not paid fully for their overtime work and were short changed when they exchanged their coupons for cash and were getting only NT\$3,000 to NT\$4,000 a month. They could hardly eat the food served them and were not provided with Thai channels in their television sets.

Initially, it was also portrayed in the media that Hua Pan Manpower Corp. was not supposed to be a brokerage firm but a management and consultancy one and as such was not allowed to handle foreign workers. It purportedly was hired because of the intercession of an influential person rumored to be the father of the Kaohsiung City government.

On Aug. 30, Vice President Annette Lu announced that a human rights committee for foreign workers would be formed. This will be under the Presidential Office's Human Rights Committee. One of the functions of the committee would be to investigate private companies employing foreign workers in the whole of Taiwan and to see how they are treated.

On September 5, CLA chairperson openly announced her resignation over the Kaohsiung incident. The reasons she cited were to take responsibility for the riot and the severe violation of the Thai workers' human rights

Publicly, the exploitation of the broker and the corruption stemming from its hiring were the only ones highlighted in the press. But the startling revelation of the CLA in a meeting with migrant and human rights NGOs on September 6 tell something else. The CLA admitted that what the migrants are paying to the brokers every month is not a service but is actually a management fee. Essentially it is the migrants who subsidize the employers' management expenses.

In effect there was no irregularity in the hiring of Hua Pan Manpower Corp. by the KRTC because it was a management firm. It also shows that the CLA is biased towards the employers and the brokers. It does not give a damn to the rights and welfare of the migrants.

At the same time, the management expenses are being charged to the foreign workers to entice employers especially local and foreign manufacturers to invest in Taiwan. This is because the pay of the migrants is lower and the management's responsibility and accountability of these employers are being passed on to the brokers.

Essentially, the CLA favors and protects the interests of the employers especially the big ones owned by local and foreign capitalists rather than ensure protection for the foreign workers. It is thus very clear that the labor import policy of Taiwan is geared in using the migrants to work in the dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs and to serve the greedy interests of foreign and local corporations to earn super profits.

On the other hand employers of individual caretakers and domestic workers do not need brokers to manage his/her employee. They are very capable of doing that by themselves. A number of them are also paying the brokers NT\$25,000 ?NT\$30,000 a year. It is very clear that the CLA is coddling and protecting the brokers by making them charge the migrants unnecessarily.

The CLA has stated that it might reexamine the possibility of employers paying for the monthly management fees imposed on migrants as supposedly the latter have more bargaining power vis a vis the brokers. But as earlier stated this should be only imposed on big firms and not those employing individual or even few foreign workers.

What the CLA or the Taiwan government should really reexamine though is its whole migrant policy. The situation of the Thai workers in Kaohsiung is not an isolated one. It is very common like the beating up of four Filipino workers in Formosa Plastics in Mailiao, Yun Lin County on Aug. 2. This was done in retaliation for their refusal to work with hundreds of others for two days on July 14 and 15 because of similar exploitative and dehumanizing conditions.

Other job categories of foreign workers like individual caretakers and domestic helpers are not even covered by the Labor Standard Law and many of them do not even have days off. On the other hand, majority of those working in nursing homes that have been covered by the said law since 2 years ago are not paid for their overtime work. It is also very hard for workers to transfer freely to other employers and there is a limit of six years to their stay in Taiwan.

The Taiwan government through the human rights committee that it has formed should have the political will to review its whole migrant policy and effect changes for the better. If it is not really serious in this, it might be necessary to have another riot of a similar and even greater magnitude to make this possible. **AWN**

Married foreign women to be granted permanent residence

Korea's culture and welfare ministers gathered yesterday to address the mounting hardships of foreign females who married into Korean families.

At a conference for ministers overseeing social and cultural issues, officials pledged to draw up a master plan for supporting foreign female immigrants married to Koreans.

The blueprint will include granting permanent residence to individuals who have lived here for two years or more. And beginning this month, the government will give tax breaks for families that include a foreign female and place the women on a list of beneficiaries for national welfare even if they fail to achieve Korean nationality.

Free medical care will also be provided for the immigrants, along with programs for learning Korean and local customs, officials said.

"We need to realize the gravity of the issue and come up with appropriate policies to deal with it," said Kim Keun-tae, Minister of Health and Welfare who presided over the meeting.

In addition to the women, the families of international marriages, including those between foreign males and Korean women, will be provided with counseling.

The government's moves come amid snowballing criticism that many of the women who immigrated to Korea for marital reasons are being mistreated, even suffering physical abuse by their Korean spouses and families.

At the moment, one out of 10 marriages in Korea are between Koreans and foreigners. Out of the 128,000 women who married Koreans since 1990, nearly half say their family income was less than the minimum allowance. Another 15.5 percent were found to be skipping meals, while one fourth do not have health insurance.

More than two-thirds say they work long hours to help put food on the table.

Stumped by such financial woes coupled with language barriers, many of the women were found to be enduring abusive marriages.

These victims of marital violence will now be offered relief at shelters and counseling programs. Interpreters are to be provided to better communicate with the victims, while hotlines will offer services in Thai and Vietnamese in addition to Chinese and English.

A growing number of brides are arriving from countries other than China, such as the Philippines and Vietnam.

To provide more economic help for them and their families, the government plans to set up a task force this year to focus on mid and long-term strategies.

Part of it will involve detailed surveys on welfare and living conditions to detect and remedy nagging problems, officials said. **AWN**

<Korea Herald 2005, 8. 17>

Job Brokerage Bribery Scandal Implicates 35 Men

The latest corruption scandal involving lawmakers, prosecutors, police officers and journalists allegedly taking bribes from a job broker has sent shockwaves throughout the country. Investigators said Friday that 35 men, including politicians, prosecutors, policemen and journalists, are suspected of having received bribes from a job broker, identified as Hong, 64, in return for helping him cover up the scandal.

On Thursday, police arrested Hong on charges of taking 125.8 million won (about \$122,000) in kickbacks from a Nepalese job brokerage from November 2002 to October 2003 to turn the firm into an agency that supplies Nepalese workers to South Korea.

The case surfaced as the brokerage reported its provision of kickbacks to Hong because of his failure to keep his promise.

Hong is suspected of having provided bribes of 1 million won to more than 10 million won to two lawmakers, five former and incumbent prosecutors, six senior police officers and seven reporters and broadcasting station officials.

Hong also allegedly bribed four bank managers, two soldiers, two customs officials, a prison guard, a tax official and an official of the Korea Food and Drug Administration.

The Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency seized a diary at Hong's house that reportedly contains a list of the people he paid off.

The Supreme Prosecutors Office also launched a probe into the case.

Police said they are working to confirm allegations that two reporters and five officials of a local television station received a total of 34.95 million won in return for reporting about the irregularities of a Nepalese job brokerage that was in competition with the agency that Hong worked for.

Investigators summoned four of the suspects to question whether they took kickbacks from Hong in exchange for the news coverage dispatched from Nepal in January 2004.

However, the journalists denied the allegations.

Sources close to police said that the television station is Munhwa Broadcasting Corp. (MBC).

There have been many corruption cases involving the recruitment of foreign workers.

In June, the Ministry of Labor has decided to suspend the recruitment of Indonesian workers under the work permit system following improper job-brokering activities in the Southeast Asian country.

The decision was made as Indonesian authorities failed to send some 500 workers who obtained Korean work visas on schedule in March, with some of them arriving in Korea up to three months behind schedule.

Foreign workers usually enter Korea about one month after visas are issued, but it takes 50-60 days for Indonesian workers to enter the country.

The delayed entry creates hardships for local companies that applied for Indonesian workers but failed to secure manpower on time.

The Korean government introduced the work permit system last August to gradually replace the decade-long industrial trainee system, under which many migrant workers suffered from low wages and human rights abuse due to their unstable job status as "trainees."

It is designed to guarantee transparency in the foreign workforce employment process and compiles lists of workers from six Asian countries - Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Foreigners willing to work in South Korea are required to learn the Korean language and culture in advance and are permitted to work for up to three years. They receive the same treatment as local employees, enjoying a variety of rights, including membership in labor unions, industrial accident insurance and a guaranteed minimum wage. **AWN**

<koreatimes 08 19 2005>

MW's Death Mainly Caused by Industrial & Car Accidents

The main causes of migrant workers' death in Korea was revealed to be industrial accidents and car accidents aside from diseases. These accidents especially happened to migrant workers who did not fully understand Korean culture and did not receive proper training.

Ali, a 27-year-old Pakistani worker, had an accident while he was working with a press machine in a factory in October 2004. His finger was cut off and he had an operation ten times for a year. No one had explained to him how to use the machine or had given him any warnings since he started to work.

According to a research, migrant workers who were not able to communicate fully like Ali were not trained properly and died by industrial accidents, which occupies 15 percent of the total migrant workers' death causes.

Cha Seung Man, a graduate student of the School of Health in Seoul National University, said in his paper that industrial accident is the main cause of migrant workers' death except death from diseases.

14.5 percent of their death was caused by car accidents because they did not fully understand the Korean transportation system or culture. He suggested that proper education would reduce those accidents.

According to his paper, a third of murdered migrant workers were killed by Koreans. Many migrant workers suffer from diseases in their digestive system regardless of their age, sex and nationality because of too much stress. However, there was no increasing trend of infectious diseases among migrant workers.

To prevent other migrant worker's heartbreaking death who came to Korea to earn money and returned home with a cold body, social and culture education is desperately needed by migrant workers. **AWN**

<NoCut News September 21, 2005>

"Demand to Withdraw Migrant Workers' Corporation"

Small &medium sized companies opposed the MOJ's plan to establish a migrant workers support corporation.

The Industrial Training Companies Council of Small &Medium Sized Manufacturing Business revealed on September 28 that they presented a petition to the Blue House, the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court of Korea and the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea. In the petition they tried to inform the irrationality of establishing a migrant workers' support public corporation which the Ministry of Justice plans to launch in 2007, and asked them to withdraw this plan.

According to the Council, "The MOJ's annual budget for the Corporation reaches 50 billion won and its board members are up to ten people. The Ministry of Labor introduced the employment permit system which lays burdens on both entrepreneurs and workers in order to secure its portion. Now the MOJ also tries to take its portion."

The Council also pointed out, "Transferring work which was dealt in a private organization to a public organization is an attempt to go backward and it will cause a waste of huge

budget".

President Han Sang Won of the Council criticized that the government tried to lay a burden of migrant worker's entry fee and management cost after his entry which so far migrant workers themselves covered on small &medium sized companies and the national treasury. "It is an excessive protection for migrant workers who gain five to ten times higher wage than that in their own countries", he added.

The MOJ decided to establish a public corporation for supporting migrant workers and organized a task force team which consisted of five professors. At present the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Business (in charge of Industrial Trainee System) and the Human Resources Development Service of Korea (in charge of Employment Permit System) take charge of introduction and management of migrant workers.

The task force team was known to submit a report by the end of September to establish a public corporation with 300 employees and 10 board members and with annual budget of 50 billion won.

However, out of five professors of the task force team, the MOJ, the MOL and the Office for Government Policy Coordination who are in favor of the plan each recommended one professor, and the Small &Medium Business Administration who has a negative opinion on the plan recommended two. So it has been criticized as a calculated strategy from the beginning. **AWN**

<Herald Economy September 28, 2005>

If Only I Could Cut Off Patient's Pain

"I felt refreshed when I saw a patient smiling after having a haircut, whose face was distorted with pain while he was being treated", Dr. Ryu said. Dr. Ryu Deok Ki, 50, who runs 'Ryu Deok Ki Hospital for Internal Diseases' in Banghak-dong, Dobong-gu, Seoul, is well known as Hand with Scissors. That's because he not only provides poor neighbors and migrant workers with free medical treatment but also cuts their hair.

While Dr. Ryu ran his hospital for sixteen years, he provided voluntary medical service. In 2001 he decided to cut his patients hair when he was fascinated by volunteer hair stylists who cut people's hair on Ganghwa Island.

He said, "I felt sorry whenever I treated migrant workers with dirty messy hair. So I decided to cut their hair myself and practiced by myself."

After realizing that there was a limit to learn by himself, he went to a hair stylist institute and got a test. He had to learn various hair cutting skills and learn all types of hair style.

"After finishing working, I had to learn even how to apply make-up with difficulty in an institute. I received a certificate of qualification in June 2003 after having failed tests several times. My heart was fuller than when I became a doctor", he said.

Since receiving the certificate, he has visited paralytics and cut their hair. Every second Sunday he provides his haircut service for migrant workers in Seocho-gu Health Clinic. Dr. Ryu smiled saying, "People who once thought me very strange became my customers. If I can help other people, I don't care if it's with a stethoscope or scissors". **AWN**

<Seoul Daily September 30, 2005>

Women Migrants Human rights Center



-Counselling

We offer counselling and practical help in matters of domestic and sexual violence. Also, we provide medical and legal support.

-Protection of maternal care

We support programs for migrant women's right to maternal care during and after being pregnancy and their newborn infants. We also provide education about pregnancy and delivery, maternity leave before and after childbirth, and providing goods for the baby.

-Shelter

We provide shelter for migrant women who are victims of domestic physical and mental abuse.

We do this by offering board, lodging and necessary personal goods. We also provide free medical service.

-Education/ Culture

We provide Korean language classes, computer classes, education on the sexual violence against women, Korean nationality law as if pertains to the marriage of migrant women and various cultural activities.

-Medical Care

We provide medical care to migrant women who are sick and cannot afford to pay for expensive medical services.

-Inter-cultural marriage

We organize several programs and meetings to discuss and resolve domestic problems caused by cultural differences.

-Policy and Public relations

We publish books, brochures, and pamphlets on alternative proposals for the improvement of the unfair treatment of migrant women.

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by hyo-ju **AWN**

I want to transfer to another company

Q I'm Edie from Indonesia. In December Last year I came to Korea through the EPS, and I have worked at a company in Kimhae. I work only 8 hours per day, as my company production is not much. My salary is not enough to support my family. My company also seized my ID card and passport, I just have their photocopies. So I want to transfer to another company after my 1 year contract expires in Dec. Is it possible for me to do that?

A Migrant workers who came to Korea through the EPS usually ask if, after their 1 year contract expires, they can change the company. Actually it is not possible unless the employer agrees to release you. According to the EPS, these are possible grounds for change of company:

1. In case when the employer refuses to extend the contract when it expires any duly reason for termination of contract.

2. Any reasons that migrant workers can not work in the company without their fault such as shut down or bankruptcy of the company.

-Due to suspension of work, the company does not reopen within one month.

-Violation of working condition such as low payment etc.

-Any proof of violation of labor relation by the employer.

3. In case of nullification of employment permit or any restriction of employment for the company.

4. In case of injury, the worker can not work in the company but is recognized fit to work in other workplaces.

In addition, according to the Immigration Control Law, employers shouldn't seize migrant worker's ID card or passport. So you can appeal this case to the Immigration office or Employment Security Center.

In your case, your salary is not much, but it is not violation the Minimum Wage Law. If you appeal about seizing your ID card and passport by employer, it will be improved. So then if you can change the company, you have to take your employer's agreement. You try to talk with your employer about your situation, and ask your employer to agree to your changing company.

ASIAN WORKERS NEWS

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