



DHI chairman slashes own salary

Nidup Gyeltshen

While civil servants expecting an upward revision in their salaries, the new chairman of Druk Holding and Investments, Dasho Sangay Khandu, slashed his salary by 33 percent.

WAGES

The chairman said, yesterday, that he has decided to cut down his total financial package by 33 percent.

"While I won't be forcing my employees to follow suit, I'm setting an example as the chairman," Dasho Sangay Khandu

"There's a huge gap between the salaries of civil servants and DHI employees, and my idea is to narrow the gap"

Dasho Sangay Khandu
Chairman
DHI

said. But I expect some of them to follow my lead, the chairman added.

While the chairman declined to share how much he earned in salary and perks, he said the decision was made to limit the amount of criticism the institution (DHI) has faced over the last few years. Most of the criticism, the chairman said, was on the remuneration employees of DHI enjoyed.

"There's a huge gap between the salaries of civil servants and DHI employees, and my idea is to narrow the gap," he said.

"We don't want people to criticise and resist us, we want them to support and encourage us in our attempt to fulfill the mandate that we've been given, which is to protect, manage and generate more resources for the country."

He added that it became difficult to work when being criticised from all corners.

The chairman said he also expected the employees of DHI subsidiary companies to follow his example.

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One location to another: River guides of Panbang and desuups carry the search boat (Picture courtesy: Kinley Dorji, Panbang)

Body found in Assam

It is yet to be confirmed if that was one of the people that went missing following the tragic boat incident of May 10

Tashi Dema

Three days after the tragic boat mishap in Zhemgang, a body has reportedly been found in Bansbari, 21km away from Manas towards Assam.

Whether that was one among the six people that went missing on May 10 is yet to be confirmed.

Police officials and relatives who lost their men in the accident were

sent to Manas to confirm.

Home minister Damcho Dorji, who is in Panbang, coordinating the search, said they were going to focus their search in India today.

"Possibilities are that the swollen river on May 12 washed the bodies away towards India," he said.

He also said talks were being held with counterparts in

Assam to conduct the search in their area.

The rope that was supposed to anchor the wooden boat on which were boarded 18 men from Bardo and Shingkar gewogs of Zhemgang on the afternoon of May 10 snapped as swollen river currents swept it away.

Some men jumped off the boat before it capsized.

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BOAT MISHAP

IN BRIEF »

Zorig day

» To celebrate the country's skilled workers, the national zorig day will be observed today at the National Institute of Zorig Chusum. The day is celebrated every year since 2002 coinciding with the 15th day of the 3rd month of the Bhutanese lunar calendar.

DZONGKHAG

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DZONGKHAG

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Detainee escapes

Dechen Tshering, Mongar

The 47-year-old man, who was detained for allegedly vandalizing the agriculture minister's car on April 13, has escaped from detention.

CRIME

The detainee escaped on May 8, while he was escorted to toilet around 6:30 am.

Lhuentse police detained the man, from Tshenkar gewog, on April 15 for allegedly vandalising agriculture minister's car while the minister was visiting the dzongkhag.

The man allegedly broke the left door glass of the

Toyota Prado SUV when the vehicle was parked at the road head in Brawa village.

The driver and security personnel had left to Brawa village for dinner when the incident happened. The suspect had used a stone to break the wind shield of the vehicle and took away a Zhabshay *phob* (cup), a bag belonging to the minister's personal secretary, which contained two *ghos*, socks and a hand set battery, charger and an adapter.

However, all the stolen items were recovered on April 15 when the man was arrested with the help of local people.

Kuensel learnt that Police is conducting massive hunt for the escapee.

Two Indians busted in gold case

Gyalsten K Dorji

Two more Indian men were detained at Paro international airport for attempting to smuggle Nu 1.4M worth of gold, some even hidden in their underwear, into the country, yesterday.

SMUGGLING

This comes one day after another Indian was apprehended for attempting to smuggle Nu 2.9M of gold, disguised as components within stereo speakers, past Paro airport authorities.

Customs officials found a combined 490g of gold on the two men after receiving a tip-off.

Both of them had arrived from Bangkok wearing gold jewellery, and with one of them even carrying some in his underwear, according to airport sources. Some of the gold was also found hidden under one of the men's shirt, said sources.

This is the third gold smuggling incident to have occurred at Paro airport this year.

Seven Indian men were arrested for smuggling gold through Paro airport in Febru-

ary. The racket was busted after customs officers apprehended four of them attempting to smuggle eight kilograms of gold into Bhutan. The four of them were found to be carrying two kilograms each in their underwear. The total value of the gold was Nu 24.4M.

The central bank permits only 50g of gold to be imported into the country. Anymore requires the bank's approval.

The current price of a gram of gold is Nu 2,870.8 according to rates available on the website of the Royal Monetary Authority.

DHI chairman slashes own salary

From Pg.1

Some of the employees of DHI interviewed said, while they have not yet decided whether to slash their salaries, they did not expect any upward revision.

Salaries of some of the critical employees must however be protected, the chairman said. Should we lose our employees to other companies, it becomes difficult for us to recruit new employees, because there aren't any in the local market, and hiring professionals from the international market was expensive.

The chairman was referring to several employees of Druk Air, including pilots and flight attendants, who left to join Tashi Air recently.

"There must be a certain level of flexibility, when it came to retaining critical employees," he said. However, DHI was overdoing this in the

last few years, he added.

When I joined, some of the criticisms that DHI had were valid, he said. The chairman said, he however did not expect salaries of the support staff to be reduced.

Also, some of the employees had taken loans from commercial banks, based on their present salary structure.

"So I leave it to them and it's not compulsory for everyone to follow suit," he said.

Reducing the salaries, the chairman said, might also affect performance of the employees. It might be demoralising for some, and could lead to negative impact on their performance, he said.

My intention is to narrow down the gap between the salaries of civil servants and DHI employees, but civil servants should not expect their salaries to be at par with that of DHI, the chairman said.

Body found in Assam

From Pg.1

Kinley, 45, from Langdurbi was one of the men who were on the boat.

Kinley said he managed to hold on to a boulder when he reached near the suspension bridge that connected his gewog with the rest.

He clung to the boulder and prayed that someone walk over the bridge and spot him.

His prayer was answered.

A shopkeeper in Rendibi, who saw the boat capsized rushed towards the bridge.

Kinley remembered shouting for help and the shopkeeper running towards him asking him to hold on to the boulder a little longer.

Before the shopkeeper reached Kinley to help him, the strong river currents brought washing another friend Rinchen Dorji, whom Kinley grabbed with one of his hands, the other firmly clasped on the boulder.

The shop owner pulled the two men to safety using a rope. Three other friends Ugyen Tshering, Karma Dorji and Sangay Dorji also managed to save themselves.

Ugyen Tshering, a retired army could swim. He pulled the other two friends to safety.

"Possibilities are that the swollen river on May 12 washed the bodies away towards India"

Damcho Dorji
Home minister

Sources in Zhemgang said the boatman from Phangkhar also swam to safety.

Of the 18 men, who were on board that fateful day, they were the only six that live to narrate the incident.

Six men, four from Langdurbi and two from Shingkar, who were found dead, sources said had suffered head injuries.

The victims from Langdurbi, Pelzang, 58, was a father of four and so was Karma Dendup, 49. Rinchen Dorji, 30, has two children and Leki Dorji, 19, was a student, going to study in Taktse.

The deceased from Shingkar, Samten Lhendup, 24, was a former monk. He was from Nimshong village. Tshering, 38, from Zangling village has four children.

Of the six still missing, five are from Langdurbi - Chedup, 32, is the Langdurbi tshogpa and he has five children, Dawa, 39, has two children, Rinchen Lethro, 27, is also a father of two, Rinchen Khandu, 38, has three children and Dorji, 24, is a father of one. One of the missing from Zangling, Leki Dorji, 21, was married two months ago.

The four men from Shingkar gewog had gone to Langdurbi to work with the 13 men from the locality as wage earners for the school maintenance work.

The 17 men went to fetch construction materials from Rendibi that day. The contractor paid the men Nu 350 a day each.

Bardo-Trong Parliament member Lekey Dorji said a detailed investigation was being carried out on the incident and that he hoped the investigation would be made public.

Zhemgang dzongda Karma Dukpa said hundreds of people were engaged in the search.

They have two rubber boats from Royal Body Guards, one boat from river guides of Panbang and two boats from Royal Manas national park.

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