

President of India to address the closing ceremony of International Conference on “Buddhism in the 21st Century – perspectives and responses to global challenges and crises” tomorrow

President of India to address the closing ceremony of International Conference on “Buddhism in the 21st Century – perspectives and responses to global challenges and crises” tomorrow

UN forum helps China tackle ageing problems



UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Zhongshan College based in China’s Nanjing City hold a Regional Expert Forum on Integrated Care for Older on March 17, 2017, with an aim to enhance the access of older persons to services in China, including health and long-term care services. [Xu Lin/China.org.cn]

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with Zhongshan College based in Nanjing City, launched a forum on

Friday aiming to help older people gain better access to health and long-term care services in China.

The three-day Regional Expert Forum on Integrated Care for Older People is organized within the framework of a project entitled “strengthening national capacity for promoting and protecting the rights of elders.” It particularly focuses on the provision and financing of long-term care.

Dr. Nagesh Kumar, director of ESCAP’s Social Development Division, said population ageing was now a major problem facing the whole world, and one of the key challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

The number of older persons in the region is expected to almost triple from 514 million in 2015 to more than 1.31 billion by 2050. By then, one in four people will be over 60 years of age, out of which number those over 80 year will constitute about one-fifth.

This demographic phenomenon will have a profound impact on the wellbeing of all generations. Older persons are among the groups most likely to be left behind if no adequate policies are adopted. Increasing numbers of elderly will require long-term care, and it is increasingly difficult for their needs to be met by family care alone.

Therefore, Kumar said, population ageing requires innovative policies, especially to address the increasing demand for healthcare services. Using Information and Communication Technologies is one possible approach to increase healthcare access .

One good thing was that the expanding care sector can become a growth sector and a sector driving employment opportunities. “If we train people adequately to provide care for older persons, we can achieve two goals: we increase the quality of care that older persons receive and we increase the potential for them to find decent jobs in the care sector.”

At the forum, Zhongshan College was appointed as the INIA (International Institute on Ageing) Zhongshan Satellite Center by the United Nations. Chen Yi, Chairman of Board of Zhongshan College, told China.org.cn that the college is working on the project of Human Resource Development Center for Elderly, featuring a student internship base, a rehabilitation hospital, a nursing home, a training center and a research center of ageing development. The college has provided training in elderly care for more than 15,000 persons so far.

China now has less than 300,000 paramedics, and only 40,000 have qualification certificates, said Professor Jiang Fuxin, president of Zhongshan College. Based on the international standard, China needs a total of 10 million paramedics.

To fill in the gap, the college is offering eight majors of elderly service and management, community-based rehabilitation, community management and service, rehabilitation treatment technology and nursing, etc. A major of rehabilitative engineering technology will be introduced within this year.

Officials, experts, scholars and entrepreneurs from 21 Asia-Pacific countries and regions attended the forum.

Questions for the SNP to ponder

When I as a young man was on the losing side in the 1975 referendum on EEC membership, I did not think we should have a second referendum soon afterwards to try again to get us out. Indeed, more than 25 years past before I and others called for referenda on the Euro and the growing political union that the EEC had become. A referendum is designed to answer a question and make a decision for a decent period of time when it is about these fundamental constitutional matters.

The SNP will have time to consider what went wrong with their last case for so called independence, and what has gone wrong for them since that event. At current oil prices, with the rapid run down in oil output, their economic arithmetic needs reworking over what a Scottish budget would look like.

The rest of the UK would clearly insist on an independent Scotland leaving the pound. Being in a currency union requires each part of the Union to underwrite all parts of the Union socially, economically, and the banking system. English, Welsh and Northern Irish taxpayers would no longer be willing to do this for an independent Scotland.

Scotland would be out of the EU whether the UK is still in or out itself. The EU does not wish to encourage separatist movements within EU countries by offering them easy membership. Spain is insistent on this point given its refusal even to allow a referendum in Catalonia. Nor would Scotland as an applicant country be likely to be offered opt outs from the Euro and Schengen, nor a contribution rebate as the UK currently enjoys.

I was interested to read that the SNP now think maybe seeking to join EFTA would be better, so their argument that this is mainly about EU membership has not lasted a couple of days debate about a second referendum.

Ahead of International Day, UN and Smurfs team up to promote happiness

and sustainable development

18 March 2017 – Every person – no matter how big, small or blue – can make the world more peaceful, equitable and healthy, the United Nations today told young people at a special ceremony for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that included the Smurfs and a handover of the key to Smurfdom.

Voice actors from the upcoming animated movie Smurfs: The Lost Village joined 1,500 students from the international Model UN conference to celebrate the upcoming International Day of Happiness, which focuses on personal well-being, and the SDGs, which include decent work for all, education and health services.

In a special blue carpet presentation, the United States stars of the movie – Demi Lovato, who voices Smurfette, Joe Manganiello who is Hefty and Mandy Patinkin or Papa Smurf – honoured three young students promoting the SDGs in their communities with a symbolic key to the Smurfs Village in recognition of their work.

On behalf of all Smurfdom, thank you for your work in awakening everything, in your community, through you social media, all over the world, in the ways that you have chosen to encourage people everywhere to make this world a better place for those who are so vulnerable in every way imaginable, Mr. Patinkin told Karen Jerath, Sarina Divan and Noor Samee.

VIDEO International Day of Happiness 2017 – Small Smurfs Big Goals

Ms. Jerath, who is 20 years old, invented a containment device that could prevent offshore oil spills and ensure the protection of marine life. She was joined by Ms. Divan, 17, who expanded a UN Foundation girl empowerment initiative at her high school and beyond, and Mr. Samee, also 17, a UNICEF blogger and advocate on social justice issues.

Given a giant key with the SDG multi-coloured logo by UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Cristina Gallach, the students were told “the world needs you to continue.”

“Never be afraid to speak up and to make this world a wonderful, beautiful, hopeful, optimistic place full of freedom, joy, justice and dignity, good food, good water, good opportunities for people everywhere, forever,” said Mr. Patinkin.

The “Small Smurfs Big Goals” campaign was created to encourage people to visit SmallSmurfsBigGoals.com to find out how to contribute to achieving the SDGs, and to share information, ideas and images on social media.

As part of today’s festivities, the UN Postal Administration unveiled a

special edition stamp sheet featuring the Small Smurfs Big Goals campaign.

The stamps, which feature images of the Smurfs and the SDG logos, were presented by UN Assistant Secretary-General for Management, Stephen Cutts, and the Belgian Ambassador to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve.

The event, held at the UN General Assembly in New York, was organized by the UN, UNICEF and UN Foundation, ahead of the International Day of Happiness marked annually on 20 March.

In 2015, the UN launched 17 SDGs that seek to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet – three key aspects that lead to well-being and happiness.

Along with New York, celebrations were held around the world to mark the campaign and the SDGs.

On Monday, the film cast along with the UN, UNICEF and UN Foundation will be at the Empire State Building to turn the iconic tower blue in honour of the International Day of Happiness and the Small Smurfs Big Goals campaign.

[China creates world's 1st coal-to-ethanol production line](#)

China has successfully created the world's first production line to turn coal into ethanol, or drinking alcohol, the Chinese Academy of Sciences said on Friday.

Created by Shaanxi Yanchang Petroleum and the academy's Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics in Liaoning province, the production line went into operation in January and has the capacity to make more than 100,000 metric tons of pure ethanol every year, according to Liu Zhongmin, the institute's deputy director.

By 2020, China will build a factory capable of producing 1 million tons of ethanol each year using the same technology, he said.

The country currently produces 7 million tons of ethanol each year using other methods, which can "hardly satisfy" its industrial and energy needs, according to Liu.

"Most countries produce ethanol using food, such as corn or sugar cane, but this is not a viable option for China given its massive population," he said.

"By turning China's abundant coal resources into ethanol, the technology will help safeguard our energy and food security,"

Moreover, ethanol is a green fuel and versatile ingredient. "Utilizing it could reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, and make our industrial production and energy structure more environmental friendly," Liu said.

In addition to alcoholic beverages, ethanol can be used to produce thousands of everyday products from plastics to detergents. It can also replace more toxic ingredients, such as methanol, during industrial production.

Other uses include mixing it with petroleum to increase its fuel efficiency and reduce pollution. An abundant supply of ethanol would also make ethanol-fueled vehicles more viable, Liu said.