

STD exposes plight of migrant children

By XINHUA in Zhuzhou, Hunan

The poor living and school conditions of the children of migrant workers hit the spotlight again on Thursday after it was announced that a 6-year-old girl in Central China had contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

Doctors are still puzzled how the girl, who they referred to by the alias Qianqian, contracted gonorrhea.

On March 1, teachers at the Jinbeier Kindergarten, a private boarding kindergarten in Zhuzhou, Hunan province, found that the girl was ill.

An initial police probe ruled out foul play at the kindergarten after a mandatory screening of the school's 16 staff members found that none was a carrier of the disease.

The city's education authorities have ordered a probe into the cause of the disease, and they are cooperating with health authorities to determine if other children have also been infected.

Kang Naning, head of the kindergarten, said none of Qianqian's 40 classmates has shown symptoms of gonorrhea.

Meanwhile, the police investigation indicated that the girl was not sexually molested.

Qianqian's parents are migrant workers from rural Hunan.

Although she was staying at a boarding school, Qianqian left the school's premises after enrolling, and stayed with her aunt at a migrant workers' dorm at a local garment factory.

Qianqian's aunt was her primary caregiver until she was old enough to be checked into a full-time boarding kindergarten on Feb 13.

The girl's mother has only visited her once, but her aunt

took Qianqian from the school on two Sundays to spend the night at the garment factory dorm.

School unlicensed

Though the cause remains unknown, the kindergarten has come under fire for operating without a license for more than a year, defying a shutdown order from the city's education bureau.

"We ordered it to be shut down as early as March 14, 2011, but we cannot enforce the order unless we go to court," said Zhang Guangming, head of the education bureau of Hetang district, which supervises the kindergarten.

"All we could do was to notify the public that the school was unlicensed," Zhang said.

The government notice, however, was ignored.

There are an estimated 10,000 preschool-aged children of migrant workers concentrated in Hetang district, but the district's sole public kindergarten can only enroll 200 children.

About 120 children attend Jinbeier Kindergarten.

Many migrant workers recently said they would not know where to send their children if unlicensed private kindergartens like Jinbeier were forced to close.

Kang, the head of Jinbeier Kindergarten, said she refused to close because she started the kindergarten after being laid off and she had not yet seen a return on her investment.

"For another thing, the 120 children would have nowhere to go once the kindergarten was shut down, and their parents had expressed hope that the school could keep running," Kang added.

Only one of the eight teachers at Jinbeier is certified, officials said, forcing them to con-



HUANG ZONGZHI / XINHUA

Pupils play table tennis at Limin School, which enrolls children from migrant workers' families, in Jiaojiang district, Taizhou, Zhejiang province, in February.

sider how a license could be issued to such a substandard school.

Children suffer

The tragedy is a microcosm of the plight of the children of China's 240 million rural migrant workers in cities and factory towns. Migrant children are usually left at home with their aging grandparents. Those who follow their working parents may get a taste of city life, but often struggle to enroll at good schools.

Migrant workers face difficulties educating their children

as they do not hold a household registration, commonly known as *hukou*, in the area they've moved to. The lack of *hukou* also prevents them from enjoying other social benefits when they relocate, including access to medical services.

Migrant workers also generally lack funds to buy their children's way into the best schools, and do not often have time to attend to their children's legitimate needs, including schooling.

Facilities in many of the kindergartens for migrant children are basic, the education

resources limited, and most teachers unqualified, as the schools usually operate on very tight budgets.

Abruptly shutting down schools for migrant children can also cause other problems.

Last year, about 2,300 children, mostly from migrant families, were forced to return home as the government closed 31 illegal kindergartens in Xihongmen, a suburb of Beijing.

Most of the shuttered kindergartens were built without permission from local land authorities and others

had become dilapidated. The closure was part of Beijing's intense crackdown on illegal and unsafe buildings after a fire at a garment workshop dorm killed 18 people in April 2011.

Education experts say the emergence of schools for migrant children is a result of scarce public education resources, and they suggest the government help these schools improve their facilities and the quality of education.

Education Minister Yuan Guiren pledged last month that China would make further

efforts to improve compulsory education for the children of migrant workers in 2012.

He said that children who follow their parents to study and live in cities will be included in the financial security system and considered in the regional education development plan.

In affluent towns like Shaoxing in coastal Zhejiang province, where private enterprises are struggling through a severe labor shortage, wealthy employers are offering to transfer migrant workers' children to better schools.

Int'l competition bringing Haiyang world recognition

By JU CHUANJIANG AND ZHAO RUIXUE in Haiyang, Shandong

Haiyang, a sunny coastal city in East China's Shandong province, will become the first county-level city in China to host an international sports competition when it holds the third Asian Beach Games in June.

In December 2006, the city won the right to host the games at 25th congress of the Olympic Council of Asia.

"The Asian Beach Games not only brings international attention to Haiyang but also promotes the city's economy, tourism and quality of life," Haiyang Mayor Jiang Shili said.

"It accelerates Haiyang's internationalization," he said.

The city has enjoyed rapid development in recent years as it prepared to host the games.

Haiyang has won various titles, including China Excellent Tourism City, National Garden City, Best Cultural and Ecological Tourism City in China, and the Shandong Province Prize for Residential Environment.

Years of preparation have not only earned various titles for Haiyang but also promoted the city's overall economic development. Last year, the coastal city generated 25.55 billion yuan (\$4.04 billion) in GDP, double the amount of 2006.

During the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2006-2010), 110 projects were built in Haiyang using 28.43 billion yuan



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JIANG SHILI
HAIYANG MAYOR

domestic capital and \$370 million foreign capital.

Last year, the city secured 39 new projects involving 9.09 billion yuan total investments.

Buzzing construction

The first two nuclear reactors using advanced AP1000 technology are being built in Haiyang and are scheduled to start operation in 2014.

Four berths in Haiyang's port were completed at a cost of 7 billion yuan, which has raised the port's annual goods throughput to 2 million tons, 11 times more than 2006 figures.

Currently, eight berths, with capacities varying from 10,000 tons to 50,000 tons, are under construction, enabling the port's throughput to reach 10 million tons after they are completed in 2014.

The 4.7-kilometer cross-sea



JU CHUANJIANG / CHINA DAILY

A South Korean-invested factory in Haiyang. The host city of the games is attracting attention from more overseas investors due to its rising fame.

bridge connecting Haiyang and Qingdao is set to open at the end of April. The bridge cost 600 million yuan.

The 80.3-kilometer Haiyang-Yantai expressway is scheduled to go into use at the end of May.

Upgraded image

The urban area of Haiyang has expanded to twice the size it was in 2006. Now the city is 34 square kilometers and home to 250,000 residents.

Infrastructure, including pipelines, sewage systems, heating systems and roads, has been updated.

Around 30 new roads are being built, and green coverage has expanded to an area of 6 million square meters.

To improve the environment, the city closed 44 heavily polluting factories involved in such industries as paper production, printing and dyeing.

Haiyang also organized 36 activities designed to help locals welcome international guests, such as the English training, etiquette training and a knowledge competition.

Sports and tourism

The improvement in facilities and environment has laid a solid foundation for the development of the city's sports and leisure industry

The city has held China's

Olympic Day long-distance running event three times and the Haiyang International Sand Sports and Arts Festival twice. It has also undertaken a series of national sports events for beach volleyball, soccer, handball, dragon boat racing, rock climbing, roller-skating, power paragliding and an environmentally friendly cars challenge.

Local authorities are also busy working to make the city a popular tourist destination famous for beach leisure.

The city launched four major tourism products focusing on mountain landscapes and ecology, coastal recreation, history and culture, and beach sports.

More than 10 big tourism projects were initiated, including the Zhonglong Film and TV Industrial Park, the Oriental Ocean project of leisure sports, the Luneng international top resort, the Lianliao Islands project, and an international yachting club.

In May 2011, Haiyang was named a national base of beach sports and fitness. The city generated 2.6 billion yuan in tourism revenue last year, 4.2 times more than that of 2006.

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City ready for Asian Beach Games

By WANG QIAN in Haiyang, Shandong wangqian@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2012 Asian Beach Games organizing committee announced recently that all preparations are proceeding as planned for the upcoming event, which is scheduled to begin on June 16 in Haiyang, Shandong province.

"Preparations involving venue construction, athlete registration, volunteer recruitment as well as rehearsals for the opening and closing ceremonies are well underway," said Jiang Shili, director-general of the executive bureau of the organizing committee and mayor of the host city.

"All will be carried out in accordance with the standards set by the Olympic Council of Asia," Jiang said.

Haiyang, a coastal city in the eastern province, is one of the most desirable places in China for beach sports and vacationing due to its a 230-kilometer-long coastline and more than 10,000 meters of fine sandy beaches. It will host the third Asian Beach Games, which will last until June 22.

Together with the Asian Games, it is one of the five major multi-sport events in Asia. The games feature 49 events from 13 sports, including beach volleyball, soccer and basketball.

The biennial event is the latest in a series of high-level international sporting events to be hosted in China following the 2008 Beijing Olympics Games and the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games. Its first session was held in 2008 in Bali, Indonesia and the second was in Muscat, Oman.

"It is the first time for a county-level city to host such a high-level sporting event.



Jiang Shili, Haiyang mayor

It poses a great challenge, but we will spare no effort to fulfill our commitment," Jiang said.

So far, more than 1,700 athletes and 500 technical officials from 44 Asian countries and regions have confirmed their participation, far exceeding the previous two sessions.

Wang Zhen, deputy director of the Main Operation Center for the games, said construction of the major venues is now nearing completion and all the venues can be put into operation by next month.

Venues for cliff climbing, powered parachuting, high-way skating, dragon boat racing as well as beach soccer, handball and volleyball have already been selected and tested through warm-up events.

To house the opening and closing ceremonies, the city is constructing an open-air theater in the shape of a wave. The theater covers an area of some 14,000 square meters and can hold more than 20,000 spectators.

Other supporting facilities, such as the International Convention Center, the International Television and Broadcasting Center, the Athletes Village and the International

Security Safeguarding Command Center, have also been basically completed.

To date, more than 4,000 volunteers have been recruited for the games. They will provide such services as language translation, food, accommodation, transportation and travel information.

"Currently, all the volunteers are receiving training in spectator organization, sport rules, etiquette, safety and rescue work to impress athletes from China and other Asian countries with their warmth, kindness and thoughtful service," Wang said.

Wang also expressed his determination to fight doping. "We will try our best to make sure the beach games is a clean and fair event."

The organizing committee has signed an agreement with the China Anti-Doping Agency, which conducted drug screenings for the 2008 Olympics. A total of 300 urine samples will be sent to the agency's world-class laboratory in Beijing and tested in accordance with Olympic standards.

With "Share the Joy" as its slogan, local officials hope the games will not be just about fighting for medals but focus on sharing happiness on the beach.

"During the games, I hope everyone can enjoy themselves as an athlete or a spectator," said Jiang Xuening, head of the publicity department of the city. "I also hope that hosting the games will get more people involved in beach sports and enhance awareness of keeping fit through sports."

Jiang said the city will keep most of its venues open to the public for free after the games, including the beach soccer and volleyball fields as well as the cliff climbing center.

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