

Teacher says she got fired because son's cancer cost \$1 mn

Yemen's cholera epidemic likely to intensify: WHO

RIYADH, Feb 27, (Agencies): The World Health Organization warned on Monday that a cholera epidemic in Yemen that killed more than 2,000 people could flare up again in the rainy season.

WHO Deputy Director General for Emergency Preparedness and Response Peter Salama said the number of cholera infections had been in decline in Yemen over the past 20 weeks after it hit the 1 million mark of suspected cases.

"However, the real problem is we're entering another phase of rainy seasons," Salama told Reuters on the sidelines of an international aid conference in Riyadh.

"Usually cholera cases increase corresponding to those rainy seasons. So we expect one surge in April, and another potential surge in August."

A proxy war between Iran-aligned Houthis and the internationally recognised government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, which is backed by a Saudi-led alliance, has killed more than 10,000 people since 2015, displaced more than 2 million and destroyed much of the country's infrastructure, including the health system.

Yemen relies heavily on food imports and is on the brink of famine. The United Nations says more than 22 million of Yemen's 25 million population need humanitarian assistance, including 11.3 million who are in acute need.

Ghanaian 'superhero' awarded for work to end 'spirit child' killings

LONDON, Feb 27, (RTS): When Angela was born without lower legs, her father believed she was an evil spirit and should be taken to a "concoction man" - a traditional herbalist who would kill the baby and bury her.

But Angela survived after a midwife put her mother in touch with charity worker Joseph Asakibeem, who has devoted his life to saving Ghana's "spirit children".

In parts of northern Ghana, babies born with disabilities are traditionally seen as bringers of bad luck, said Asakibeem, who on Monday won the Bond Humanitarian Award that recognises hidden "superheroes" for his work with the charity AfriKids.

Until recently, many spirit children were taken to a concoction man who would lock them in a room after administering a poisonous potion.

"The local belief is that if you survive it's proof you are not a spirit, but if you die it's confirmation that you are a spirit," said Asakibeem, a project manager at AfriKids.

"Unfortunately, most times the child dies. They then bury the child in an isolated place away from the village."

Babies whose mothers die in childbirth, or who are born after something bad has happened to the family, also risk being labelled spirit children.

Angela, now a bright seven-year-old, is one of 110 children rescued by Asakibeem and his team at AfriKids.

She has learnt to walk with prosthetic limbs, helps her mother with chores, and is thriving at school. Angela's parents separated after her birth but her father has begged for a reconciliation after seeing her progress, AfriKids said.

"She's a very strong girl, she's smart and a fast learner," Asakibeem told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by Skype.

"My hope is one day she will become a nurse or teacher and serve as a role model to the community."

Asakibeem, 41, grew up in the Kassaena Nankana region in northern Ghana, where the belief in kinkirigo, or spirit children, was deeply embedded.

In 2005, up to 15 percent of babies who died were thought to have been killed as spirit children, according to AfriKids.

Asakibeem began talking to parents, village elders and concoction men to change mindsets and dispel superstitions by informing them about the medical reasons for disabilities and promoting healthcare.

Asakibeem said many disabilities in the region were linked to poor nutrition and healthcare during pregnancy, and a lack of access to medical help during labour complications.

AfriKids has set up a centre in Asakibeem's home village, Sirigu, and another in nearby Bongo district, providing help for disabled children, a support group for their mothers and antenatal care for pregnant women.

Tribune that her son's treatment cost Andover Public Schools about \$1 million before she lost her job at West Elementary School in 2016. Her son was 3 at the time.

Silvani says she was told that federal funding for the position had been cut, but her complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination says the district later hired someone else.

KANSAS CITY, Mo: A Kansas couple is celebrating after become parents to a rare set of identical triplets.

Dr Josh Petrikin says the boys are "doing wonderfully" while under observation in Truman Medical Center's neonatal intensive care in Kansas City, Missouri. Researchers say identical triplets occur only about once per 20 million to 30 million deliveries.

The boys — **Ron, Elkanah, and Abishai** — were born Thursday.

THE HAGUE: More than 36,000 animals have been slaughtered after an outbreak of highly contagious bird flu was detected at a Dutch poultry farm, the agriculture ministry said on Monday.

"An outbreak of a variant of H5 bird flu has been detected in a poultry farm in **Oldekerk, Groningen** province," the ministry said in a statement, adding that it is "likely a highly pathogenic variant".

To prevent the virus spreading, the ministry ordered an immediate ban on the transportation of poultry, eggs, meat and manure within a ten-kilometre (six-mile) zone around the farm in the north of the country.

Babies born with disabilities seen as bringers of bad luck

Salama said the country had also had an outbreak of diphtheria, a vaccine-preventable disease that usually affects children and which has largely been eliminated in developed countries.

Both cholera and diphtheria outbreaks are a product of the damage to the health system in the country, he said, adding that less than half of Yemen's health facilities are fully functioning.

However, Salama said that despite more than 2,000 deaths from cholera, the fatality rate has been low, at around 0.2 to 0.3 percent.

Also:
ANDOVER, Mass: A teacher who says she was fired from a Massachusetts elementary school because of the high cost of her son's cancer treatment has filed a discrimination complaint.

Jacquelyn Silvani tells the Eagle-

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