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Tip-off Leads to Hidden Criminal

A secret tip-off led to the discovery of a wanted criminal in a tunnel he dug underneath his home in Zhangxu village, Suinan town, China.

Hui Guangwen had been avoiding local police for 17 years after he killed somebody from a neighbouring village after a minor disagreement.

"We got information that he was hiding in his home, so we made a surprise search and found the tunnel," said a police spokesman.

Hui said that he had hid in the tunnel all the 17 years and had not been out at all.

"It was really boring there," he said.

Law Restricts Dying

An old English law banning dying in the Houses of Parliament has been voted Britain's most ridiculous law.

Unbelievably, the law exists to stop people from dying in parliament on the grounds that it is a Royal palace.

Nigel Cawthorne, author of The Strange Laws of Old England, said: "Anyone who dies there is technically entitled to a state funeral. If they see you looking a bit sick they carry you out quickly."

Other ancient laws that were voted absurd were:

Putting a postage stamp bearing the monarch's head upside down on an envelope is an act of treason punishable by death.

A bye-law in Liverpool banning women from going topless in public unless they work in a tropical fish store.

The Royal Prerogative of 1324 which decrees that any whale or sturgeon found on the British coast belongs to the monarch.

Oliver Cromwell's decree from 1644 to combat gluttony which bans people from eating mince pies on Christmas Day.

A London bye-law allowing pregnant women to relieve themselves in a policeman's helmet.

Just to prove that Britain isn't the only country with strange laws, an Ohio bye-law from the US bans residents from getting a fish drunk.

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Computer Centres for Children

A huge programme undertaken by the Dominican Institute of Telecommunications (INDOTEL) has to date, invested in opening more than

400 Computer Science Training Centres throughout the country.

The Centres, or ITC's provide training and access to computers and the internet for thousands of children aged 3 years and up who would otherwise have no opportunity to gain experience in IT and communication technologies.

The chairman of INDOTEL, Dr Jose Rafael Vargas, recently announced the opening of 50 new digital rooms providing

access to equipment which will benefit thousands of children and adults in various provinces and municipalities.

The centres will help combat the divide between the few Dominicans who have access to modern technology and the many that do not. INDOTEL have a continued schedule for opening further centres in communities across the country.

Government Medicine Imports

Pharmacist Attorney Hochi Vega has been highlighting possible problems with the present importing of pharmaceuticals. Currently the government imports more than 90% of the drugs it purchases for social plans, most being brought in from laboratories in Asia and India.

Vega, a member of the board of the Association of Dominican Pharmaceutical Industries (INFADOMI) has complained that the Dominican Republic as not visited or inspected any manufacturers in India, China or other countries, in order to check under what conditions and to what standard the drugs entering the country are made. He was referring to the drugs that the government

acquires for the Essential Drugs Program (POMESE).

The pharmaceutical industry in the Dominican Republic is very competitive. Vega notes that while there is justification for having a competitive market in this industry, the government is favouring imports from countries where laboratories are unknown and have not been inspected by a Dominican Republic national. In addition, there are already a number of companies exporting products to the Caribbean, Central and South America and the United States. Vega states that importing drugs from countries such as China and India, where incentives are offered for exporting, constitutes unfair competition for the local manufacturers.

When asked to comment on the announcement that some pharmaceutical companies are closing their operations in Puerto Rico, and whether this would lead to a move here, Vega said that again

India and China would be more attractive to such companies due to the incentives for exporting medicines. He added that these two countries have also guaranteed access to raw materials for domestic production. Vega urged that before considering attracting more investment for this area, it would be wise to analyse what is being done with the investments already established in the country.

Vega feels that the current policy is not benefiting the local pharmaceutical industry, stating 'I think we are wasting time and wasting opportunities'. He highlighted concerns that an economy based on the services industry would put the country in danger as this makes it difficult to achieve the development of the nation as a whole.

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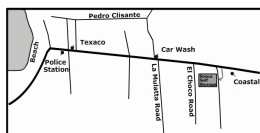
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