Beat: Business

Texas to run out of execution drug pentobarbital in September

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USPA News - The U.S. state of Texas, which has executed more than four times as many people as any other state in the country, will run out of its execution drug by the end of next month if no alternative is found in the coming weeks, the state`s prison system confirmed Friday. Jason Clark, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, said the department`s supply of pentobarbital will expire in the month of September.

"The agency is exploring all options including alternate sources of pentobarbital or an alternate drug for use in the lethal injection process," he said. Most states use a 3-drug combination to carry out executions by lethal injection, starting with an anesthesia drug such as pentobarbital before administering a paralytic agent and a drug that stops the heart and causes death. Pentobarbital, which is also used by veterinarians to put down animals, has been increasingly used after a U.S. judge barred authorities from importing sodium thiopental. Texas began using pentobarbital sodium injections for one-drug executions in July 2012, but an increasing number of drug manufacturers have since announced they would no longer supply their medication to U.S. prisons where they are to be used to carry out the death penalty. Clark refused to say whether the department`s supply of pentobarbital will expire before September 19, when the state is scheduled to execute convicted murderer Robert Garza. A week later, on September 26, prison officials are scheduled to execute Arturo Eleazar Diaz who was convicted of killing a man by stabbing him 94 times during a robbery. Texas has executed eleven prisoners so far this year, and at least five more are scheduled to be executed in the coming months. According to the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), Texas has executed more than four times as many people as any other state since the United States reinstated the death penalty in 1976.

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483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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