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China court hears first HIV discrimination suit

BEIJING: A Chinese court yesterday heard the case of a man who alleges he was denied a job because he is HIV-positive, in the nation's first such discrimination case, his lawyer said.

The plaintiff, who has only been identified by his alias Xiao Wu, filed the suit against the education department of Anqing city in the eastern province of Anhui.

The lawsuit alleges city officials denied the plaintiff, a recent college graduate, a teaching job after a medical screening for illnesses including syphilis and hepatitis C revealed he had HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The screening was conducted after he had already passed written tests

and interviews, state media has reported.

"We're quite optimistic about this case ... because this is the first case related to HIV and guaranteeing employment rights," lawyer Li Fangping told AFP, adding that the judgment would only be announced after a 10-day period.

"If we lose the lawsuit, then the very authority of the Employment Promotion Law will be challenged because it contains a clear rule that (employers) cannot violate a person's employment rights because he or she carries a disease."

The plaintiff is asking for the education department to give him the job, state media has said. — AFP