

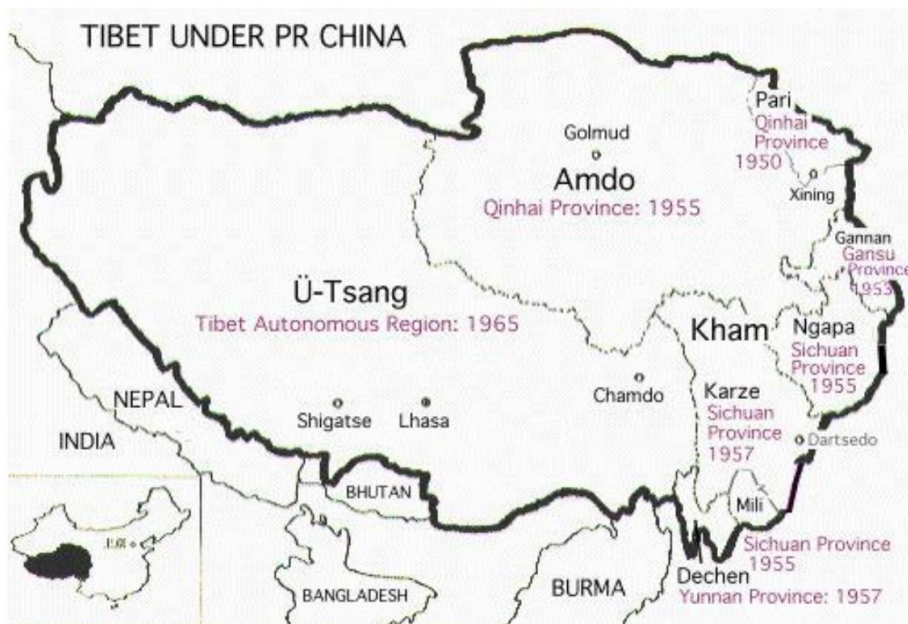
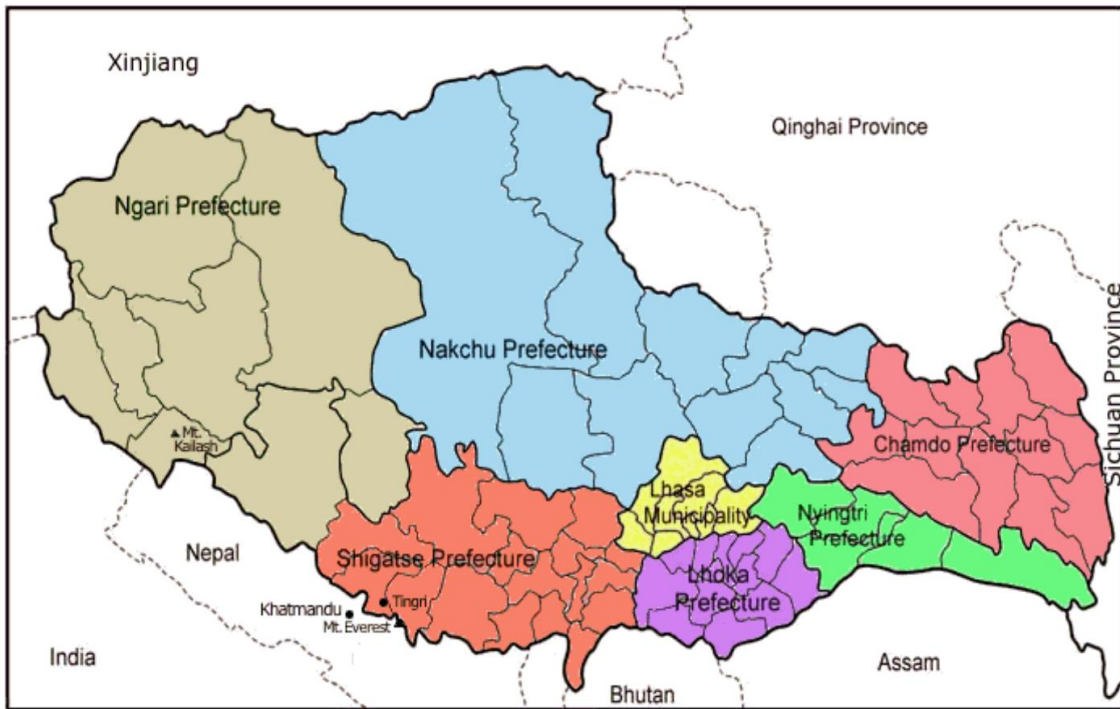


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TIBET INSIGHT, JANUARY 15-31, 2019



TAR NEWS

TAR Government Executive Vice Chairman Jiang Jie visits Lhasa Gongga Airport to preside over on-site office meeting

January 25, 2019

Jiang Jie, Member of the TAR Party Committee and Executive Vice-Chairman of the TAR People's Government went to Lhasa Gongga Airport on December 23, and met cadres and workers of the Operational Command Centre under the auspices of the TAR Regional Bureau of Civil Aviation.

Jiang Jie visited the control hall and Operational Command Centre of the Airport where he asked in detail about operations, safety, as well as passenger flow during the Spring Festival. The Executive Vice-Chairman asked the "Tibet Bureau of Civil Aviation to emphasise on safety, strictly manage operations and quality services including on-time flight rates, setting an example for other regional airports." He asked the Tibet Bureau of Civil Aviation to target five million passengers throughout the region. Studying the report of the preliminary work for construction of the second runway of Lhasa Gogga Airport, he emphasised 'the runway is one of the key projects that the CCP CC and TAR Party Committee consider important and is meant to improve economic development and social stability.'

TAR NPC held 11th Directorial Meeting

January 04, 2019

Lobsang Gyaltsen, Chairman of TAR People's Congress and Deputy Secretary of TAR Party Committee, presided over the 23rd meeting of the 11th Standing Committee of the TAR People's Congress on January 3, 2019. Deputy Directors, Doto, Woesser, Ju Jianhua, Nima Tsering, Ji Guogang, Wang Jun, Tenzin Yangchen and Secretary-General Liu Guangxu attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed appointments and dismissal of personnel, draft agenda for the NPC to be held in Beijing, list of the Presidium and Secretary General (draft) of the second meeting of the 11th National People's Congress, list of executive chairs of

the presidium (draft), list of executive chairmen (draft)), list of deputy secretary-generals (draft), list of candidates (draft), the election method (draft), the voting proposal (draft), the decision on the deadline for the bill (draft), etc.

The Chairman presented the annual report of the TAR People's Congress and said that a total of 9 meetings of the Standing Committee of the TAR NPC were held, 12 legal matters were reviewed, 8 rules and regulations examined, 22 special work reports and 4 research works evaluated and 6 resolutions were passed in the past year.

Returned Tibetans encouraged to promote ethnic unity

January 19, 2019

TAR People's Government has encouraged returned "overseas" Tibetans and relatives of Tibetans living abroad to help promote ethnic unity and oppose separatist activities.

A tea party was held on January 27, in Lhasa, where returned overseas Tibetans and relatives of Tibetans living abroad were invited to greet the Spring Festival and Tibetan New Year.

Lhakpa Dhondup, Party Secretary of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau of Lhasa Municipality, attended the tea party where, according to Tibet Daily, he encouraged the returned "overseas" Tibetans and relatives of Tibetans living abroad to 'support the policies of the Communist Party of China, uphold national unity and resolutely oppose separatist activities'. Lhakpa Dhondup also encouraged them to support reform and development in Lhasa and urged them to help promote the Party's policies among overseas Tibetans so that they can learn about the real Tibet. A representative of returned overseas Tibetans who came back with his family in 1986 said that he had witnessed Tibet's economic and social changes in these years and had enjoyed the fruits of these development.

Zhu Weiqun, former head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), told Global Times on January 20, that "the situation of overseas Tibetans

is complicated, including the reasons why they left Tibet and their living conditions. Some Tibetans left to earn money, and some had blindly followed the Dalai Lama, but then returned due to China's economic development and improvement in living conditions." Zhu Weiqun noted that "returned Tibetans should tell those who are abroad that the living conditions of Tibetans in Tibet have improved and that they still don't know the true conditions of Tibet."

Meng Xiaolin, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government, attended and spoke at the Tea Party. He claimed "the TAR Party Committee has been holding this meeting of returned Tibetans for the past three years and has yielded great result."

Tibet Daily highlighted that Tibet's GDP grew about 10 percent in 2018, the twenty-sixth year that Tibet has recorded double-digit GDP growth. Tibet's GDP was estimated at more than 140 billion yuan (US\$ 21 billion) last year.

Official statistics of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of China's State Council reported in 2014 that there are about 200,000 Tibetans living overseas, mainly in 40 countries such as India, Bhutan, the US and Switzerland.

(Comment: Meng Xiaolin, an ethnic Han, was born in 1964 in Sichuan and enjoys "special allowances" from China's State Council for his journalistic contributions and awards. He was Editor-in-Chief of Tibet Daily, Executive Deputy Minister of the Propaganda Department of the TAR Party Committee and started Tibet Business Daily (September 1, 1999) and China Tibet News Network. He is the second generation of Tibetan cadres and has been studying in Tibet since his elementary education. His article titled "The Dalai Lama slapped himself again" and published in 2011 received TAR's China News Award.)

Shigatse Commission for Discipline Inspection dismiss Official over corruption charges

January 28, 2019

The Shigatse Commission for Discipline Inspection was reported on January 28, to have conducted a "serious investigation" and concluded that Dhondup, an official of the Supervision Commission of the Xietongmen County Education Bureau, had

violated the spirit of the eight central regulations and deceived the working group; violated national laws and regulations; misused compulsory education facilities and equipment procurement funds; and embezzled funds for personal use. The Shigatse Commission for Discipline Inspection charged him with using public office for private gain and committing a heinous crime by violating law and violation of party discipline” and dismissed him from the Party and transferred his case to the procuratorate for review and prosecution according to law.

Jokhang Temple to be closed for Public during the Tibetan New Year

31st January 2019

The TAR Public Security Bureau announced (January 31) that the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa will be opened only on the 1st day of Tibetan New Year (Losar), Earth-Pig year (February 05-07) at 7am for a brief period of time for religious rituals and ‘tourists’. The Jokhang will be closed on other days of Losar, i.e. on 6th -7th.

TAR Official inspects Main monasteries ahead of Tibetan New Year

February 01, 2019

Executive Vice-Chairman of TAR Party Committee, Party Secretary of TAR CPPCC and President of the TAR Party School, Ding Yexian (Ethnicity: Han) inspected the Drepung and Gaden Monasteries in Lhasa on January 29, ahead of the Tibetan New Year, Losar. Ding Yexian met Temple Management cadres, police forces for stability maintenance, monastery administrators and monks at these monasteries and emphasised that “Tibet’s stability is vital to national stability, and maintaining Tibet’s security is akin to safeguarding national security.”

The second meeting of the 11th National People's Congress of the Autonomous Region held a group review

January 11, 2019

The 11th TAR People’s Congress in its second meeting held on January 10, reviewed the TAR People’s Government Work Report, reviewed implementation of the 2018 National Economic and Social Development Plan and the draft proposal of National

Economic and Social Development Plan for 2019, budgetary review of 2018 and the proposed draft of 2019. TAR Leaders Wu Yingjie, Lobsang Gyaltsen, Qi Zhala, Ding Yexian, Zhuang Yan, Norbu Dhondup, Danke, Jiang Jie, Penpa Tashi, He Wenhao, Pema Wangdue, Lia Jiang and Chen Yongqi were among those who attended.

Qi Zhala presented the TAR People's Government Work Report and reaffirmed the importance of 2019 being the 70th anniversary of the founding of a "New China and 60th anniversary of the democratic reform in Tibet." He said "2019 is a crucial year for building a well-off society in an all-round way and as such, these anniversaries will pan out as great opportunities and favourable conditions."

Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government inspect Tibet Branch of Buddhist Association

January 25, 2019

On January 23, a team led by TAR Vice-Chairman Meng Xiaolin inspected the Tibet Branch of the Chinese Buddhist Association and attended a seminar. The team examined office space, and reviewed work reports of the Buddhist Association in recent years. Drupkhang Thupten, Vice-Chairman of the CPPCC, Chairman of the Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association, and Dean of the Tibet Buddhist College, attended the meeting. The Inspection Team acknowledged the "achievements" of the Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association and stressed that the Branch should continue to spearhead the monks and nuns for in-depth study of Socialism with Chinese characteristics in the New Era and the spirit of the 19th Party Congress. The team reiterated that religion related work and stability should "be the prime and fundamental task of the Tibet Branch and that they should work to unite the Party with the religious believers, and strengthen Temple Management system.

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE TAR

Qinghai-Tibet has the largest increase in the national high-altitude feeder airport

January 18, 2019

The China High-altitude Regional Airport Development Research Report (2018) issued by the Civil Aviation Science and Technology Research Institute of China, for

the period 2011-2018, stated that China has added 9 high-altitude regional airports, or an average of 1.5 new ones per year. Since 2014, four high-altitude feeder airports have been built in Delingha, Huatugou, Guoluo and Qilian.

The high-altitude feeder airports are those situated at an altitude above 2400 with an average of 2 million passengers annually. Up to now, there are 19 high-altitude airports in China, distributed in 6 provinces including Qinghai, Tibet and Sichuan. Among them, Qinghai has 6 high-altitude airports, accounting for 32% of the total, and ranking first in the country. It is expected that by the end of the "Thirteenth Five-Year Plan", Qinghai will also promote the construction of airports such as Qinghai Lake. The airport layout of "one main and eight auxiliary" is being formed, which will provide a broad "patrol road" for the convenience of people of all ethnic groups in Qinghai Province. The report mentions that the Civil Aviation Administration of China gives great importance to the development of the air transport industry in the plateau region, and has introduced a series of support policies from subsidy funds, airline access, and implementation of basic aviation service pilots. With this impetus, Qinghai has also set up a special fund for civil aviation transportation development in 2011, and begun to provide fixed subsidies for newly opened flights at regional airports. Each state and city where regional airports are located will also provide a certain amount of route subsidies according to the relevant proportions each year to jointly accelerate the development of Qinghai branch airport and general aviation business.

China considers the "Thirteenth Five-Year Plan" period as the key stage in China's strategy of building a strong transportation system and promoting a 'new civil aviation power'. Among all the provinces, Qinghai has the highest altitude plateau airport. It intends to speed up the construction of airport projects such as Xining Airport Phase III, Qinghai Lake Airport, Yushu Airport Reconstruction and Extension and Comprehensive Transportation Hub, and develop airports in the provinces gradually forming Xining airport as the centre with Golmud and Yushu as the sub-centers. Others like Delingha, Huatugou, Guoluo, Qilian and Qinghai Lake are the nodes.

31 projects in Ganzi, Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture includes in 2019 provincial key projects

January 18, 2019

In 2019, a total of 31 projects in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province were included in the list of 700 key projects in Sichuan Province. Among 31, three of the projects were included in 100 key promotion projects in the Sichuan Province. They are: Sichuan-Tibet Railway (Ya'an to Linzhi Section), National Highway Science and Technology Observation Project of High Altitude Cosmic Ray Observatory, and Lianghekou Hydropower Station.

The other 27 projects are mostly independent projects with a total investment of 171.6 billion yuan and an estimated investment of 14.02 billion yuan. These are the Sichuan-Tibet Railway (Ya'an to Linzhi Section); Luding to Shimian Expressway; other cross-regional city and county projects; Sichuan Province 500 kV grid new construction project; the fourth batch of universal service communication towers and infrastructure facilities; construction projects, etc. and 2 more provincial bundling projects.

According to the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Development and Reform Commission, Ganzi is quietly undergoing fundamental and historical changes and many key construction projects of railways, airports, highways, national and provincial trunk roads, energy development, and people's poverty alleviation projects are being promoted.

Nomads Relocation continues under the pretext of the Environment Protection

January 23, 2019

Speaking on January 10, at the opening of session of the TAR People's Congress, Qi Zhala, Chairman of TAR, said, "Tibet still remains one of the best ecological environments in the world." Tsonyi County located in the northwest of Lhasa has an average attitude of 5,000 meters above sea level, and covers about 120,000 square kilometres. As part of ecological protection in the region, the government intends to relocate 3,900 villagers from this area to a new place. Zhang Jianhua, the Head of

Tsonyi County said, "The County will strictly follow the regional government's ecological protection policies to safeguard the pristine land". Zhang Jianhua claimed, "The relocation policy is not coercive, it's optional, we want to return pure land that belongs to nature and wildlife, and we want the people to be healthy. Living in the highest parts of the county is bad for people's health, with many people developing heart and lung diseases and arthritis while they are still young". He said "the new mantra of the relocation is 'returning the land to nature and saving the nomads from harsh weather'. The annual ecological subsidy paid to locals who give up their land, and agree to conduct ecology patrols, was increased to 3,500 yuan (US\$ 518). The region reportedly invested more than 10 billion yuan in ecological construction projects last year, forest coverage increased by 12%, and greening of land continues with trees planted on 742,000 hectares of land.

The world's third-largest glacier, the Purog Kangri, is in Tsonyi County and it is a haven for many rare species such as the Tibetan antelope, wild yak, Tibetan brown bear, argali mountain sheep, Tibetan wild donkey, Mongolian gazelle and black-necked crane. The local authority has prohibited mining and other businesses activities that are harmful to nature and banned tourists from visiting the Purog Kangri glacier and other sacred mountains and lakes since last year. Tsonyi County head Zhang Jianhua said "We would rather slow down or give up our economic development than harm nature. It is important to ensure that future generations can also see the green mountains and pure rivers." According to him, the county's key ecological protection mechanism is relocation of the residents and return of their ancestral land to nature and moving them away to a new place allocated by the government. He added that with climate change the hibernation period of the brown bear is shorter and incidents of bears causing trouble have increased. There is an increase risk to the lives of nomads living at the higher altitude. The forest patrols take place at night to make sure residents and their animals are safe.

Ban on monastery for taking Tibetan classes, Qinghai

January 26, 2019

The Nangchen County Party Committee's United Front Work Department and the County Ethnic and Religious Bureau issued a two-page notice on December 25,

prohibiting Tibetan language classes or tuitions in and around the monastery during the winter vacation. Titled “Urgent notice concerning stopping illegal study classes in monasteries”, the notice describes informal classes run by monks as “ideological infiltration” among the young and “dangerous,” and “harmful.” It calls on local officials and Chinese Communist Party cadres responsible for managing monasteries to “understand the harmful nature of monasteries running open schools,” and to stop them from doing so. All monasteries and villages in the county were notified that “no group or individual can hold Tibetan language tuition classes for students during the winter vacation period. The offenders will be punished according to the law.” It orders officials to expel any monks from monasteries who are found to have organized informal classes in monasteries for local children “in the name of Tibetan classes or extra tuition.” The notice also pointed out that if any monastery is found violating the order, the monastery will be listed as ‘problematic’ and ‘illegal’, and the relevant individual will be removed from the monastery register and the identity documents of religious persons will also be confiscated.

In the February of 2018, another similar notice was issued in the Tibet Autonomous Region where educational institutions were ordered to prohibit students from participating in any form of religious activities during the holidays. Parents were required to sign the notification document and comply with the same. In May 2018, during Sakadawa month, a school in Chamdo issued a notice ordering parents not to carry out any form of religious activities and banned them from taking children to religious functions.

While the previous notices were issued either by the individual school or county educational bureau, this time the notice was issued from the office of the County’s United Front Work Department which oversee ethnic minority policies.

Nyingchi won title of Second Batch of Demonstration City for Ecological Civilization Construction in China

January 22, 2019

Nyingchi was awarded the title of ‘Second Batch of Demonstration City for Ecological Civilization Construction in China’ due to “continuously strengthening the ecological civilizational construction, consciously implementing the concept of green

development, and actively exploring high-quality development model". Official Chinese media reports said Nyingchi has taken the lead in 2008 of building a national-level ecological region in TAR. In 2009, the leading group for ecological construction of Nyingchi City entrusted the Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment (IMHE), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) to compile a series of Regional Ecological Construction Plans, which were implemented successfully in 2012. In 2013, the Implementation Plan (2011-2018) for Ecological Region Construction of Nyingchi as well as the Ecological Township Construction Plans for 38 villages and towns in Nyingchi was formulated. By the end of 2017, 6 counties, 41 townships and 384 administrative villages in Nyingchi got the title of ecological counties, townships and villages at the autonomous regional level. In August 2017, Bayi District acquired the title of "National Demonstration Zone for Ecological Civilization Construction". In 2016, Nyingchi was voted the most popular eco-tourism destination in China according to China National Travel. Relying on its unique cultural resources, Nyingchi has cultivated a series of projects to integrate eco-tourism agriculture and animal husbandry, Tibetan medicine and cultural industry, so as to realize long-term development. They added that the Chinese government encourages combining ecological environment protection projects and poverty alleviation work to build a civilized and low carbon city. The media highlighted that Nyingchi presently has four ecological reserves, three national forest parks, three national wetland parks and one national geo-park in the city. In addition, 46 ecological security barrier construction projects have been carried out with an investment of 463 million yuan RMB from the government.

2nd Symposium on 10th Panchen Rinpoche held in Beijing

January 29, 2019

On January 28, a symposium on the 10th Panchen Lama's 'patriotic thought' was held at the China Tibetology Research Center in Beijing. This is the second symposium held on the 10th Panchen Lama. Damdul, Director General of the China Tibetology Research Center, presided over the symposium which was attended by Sitar from the CCP CC United Front Work Department, Yan Jue, Vice President of the Chinese Buddhist Association, the 11th Panchen Lama, Phurba Tendar, Vice President of the Chinese Buddhist Association, Thutop Sengde, Vice President of the

High-level Tibetan Buddhism College of China, Professor Penpa Dorje, Minzu University, Zhang Yun, a researcher at the China Tibetology Research Center, Gonpo Yugyal, a senior translator from China National Radio and more than 100 other experts, scholars and representatives. Relatives of the 10th Panchen Lama also attended the meeting.

Reports on the symposium said that on June 3, 1949, 'the National Government approved the recognition of Gonpo Tseten as the 10th Panchen Lama and sent an official to the Kumbum Monastery in Qinghai to preside over his enthronement ceremony on August 10'. They said that on the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, the "10th Panchen Lama sent a telegram to Chairman Mao Zedong and Commander Zhu De from Qinghai, expressing his support for New China and the central government as well as his stance on upholding state sovereignty and territorial integrity". They projected him as leading figure of devoting his whole life for safeguarding national unity and ethnic solidarity and said he worked hard on developing Tibet's economy and culture. He died of a heart attack on January 28, due to overwork at the age of 51 when he visited his monastery Tashi Lhunpo.

A Tibetan postman was awarded "Role Model of the Times"

January 28, 2019

The CCP CC's Publicity Department awarded postman Chime Dorje as a "role model of the times". Chime Dorje, a postal car driver, has delivered mail for 30 years for two counties in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, on the Sichuan-Tibet postal route, at an average altitude of 3,500 meters.

Nyingchi Police Detachment carries out the training of second adaptation period for the new recruits

January 31, 2019

The armed police detachment of Nyingchi carried out the training of the second adaptation period for the third squadron. In order to ensure that the recruits of the third squadron successfully pass the "second adaptation period", the Nyingchi police

department told the new recruits “to adapt to the new environment as soon as possible, ‘love their new positions’, and make new contributions”. The third squadron of the Armed Police Linzhi detachment has been scientifically planned, meticulously organized, and multi-pronged, and successfully carried out the "second adaptation period" of the recruits. The recruits were inspected and provided medicines in time for their cold and cough, ensuring them the warmth of a big family of troops, and guided for psychological and ideological adaptation. They were also taught how to relieve psychological pressures, and the regular system of ‘cadre backbones’ and tracking and control of the dynamics of recruits were implemented. The scientific group imparts strong skills to the squadron and carefully formulates training plans for ensuring the military quality of the recruits and comprehensively improves their ability to handle and deal with emergencies.

DIASPORA TIBETAN NEW

Karmapa still waiting to hear from New Delhi on his visa application

January 25, 2019

Contrary to previous Indian media reports which cited government officials as saying he had not responded to offers to grant him visa, Ughyen Thinley, claimant to the position of the XVII Karmapa, says he has continued to remain in contact with New Delhi and was still waiting for a response to his application. In a wide ranging video message at the end of the annual Kagyu Monlam prayer festival at Bodh Gaya, Bihar, Ughyen Thinley Dorje said he applied for a visa on his newly acquired Commonwealth of Dominica passport and sought to surrender his Government of India-issued Identity Certificate (IC). However, the Indian mission in USA expressed its inability to accept the surrender of this travel document without consulting New Delhi. IC is issued to Tibetan residents by the government of India for overseas travel and has only limited international acceptability.

Ughyen Thinley Dorje said this situation had prevented him from making a short visit to India in October 2018 to firstly meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama after a long time and to hopefully meet some concerned Indian government officials to discuss certain matters. He had spoken of his resolve to attend the meeting of top Tibetan

religious leaders, which was scheduled to be held at Dharamshala in Nov 2018. The meeting, being organized by the Central Tibetan Administration, was later put off indefinitely due to the passing away in Nepal of the head of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

Ugheyen Thinley Dorje said since the matter dragged on and he was not in the best of health, he decided to get a medical check-up and go into “retreat”. He expressed his disappointment at not being able to attend this year’s Kagyu Monlam at Bodh Gaya, noting that he has been able to attend only two of them so far.

Dalai Lama saddened by passing of George Fernandes

January 31, 2019

The Dalai Lama on January 29 expressed sadness at the passing away of George Fernandes, a former trade unionist, journalist, agriculturist and member of Parliament who later served as India’s Communications, Industries, Railway as well as Defence minister. The Dalai Lama called him “a great humanitarian and believer in truth.” He said “he was a voice to millions of poor and needy people of the country” and “a steady friend who was sympathetic to the Tibetan cause right from the beginning.” Lobsang Sangay, President of the Central Tibetan Administration, also expressed his condolences.

-----End of Report-----