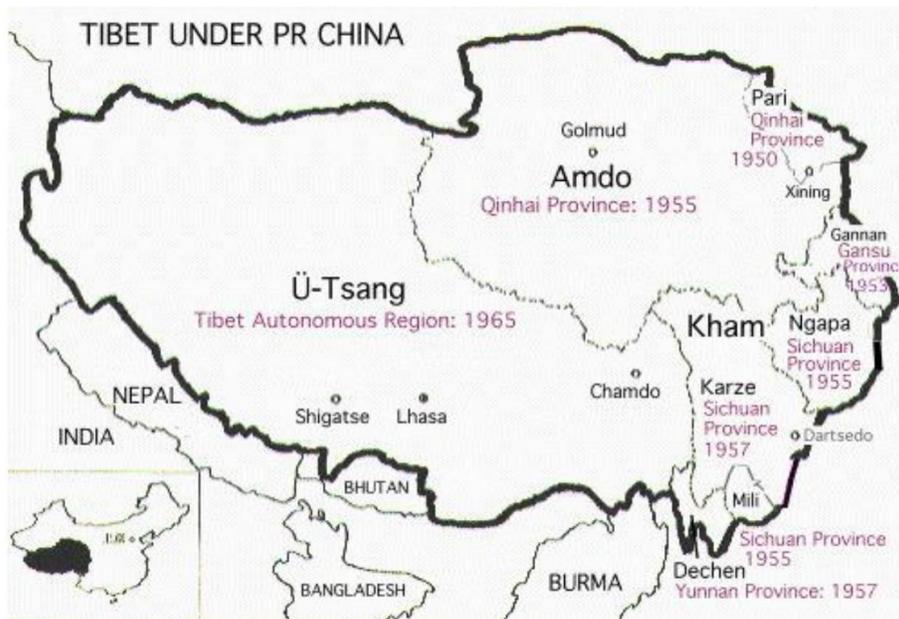
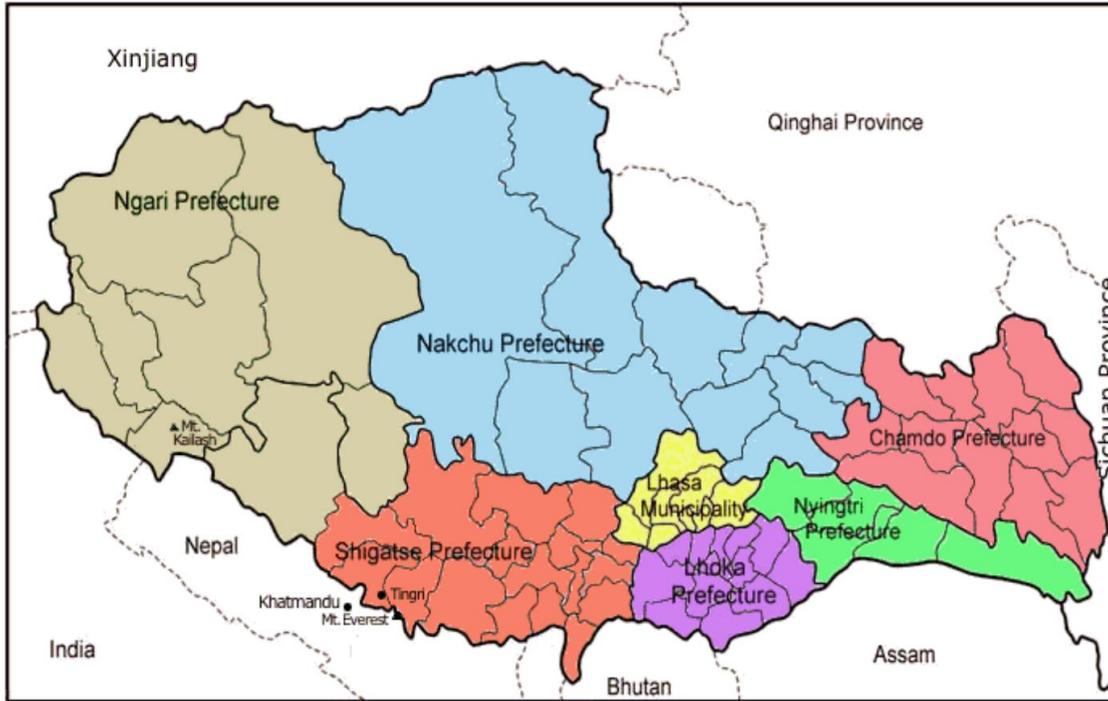




TIBET INSIGHT, 15-31 JANUARY 2021



TAR NEWS

Chinese Foreign Ministry stresses village construction is in “southern Tibet” and a sovereignty matter

January 22, 2021

The Chinese Foreign Ministry, in response to NDTV India's report on construction of a village in Arunachal Pradesh, stressed that China's position on the eastern sector of the China-India boundary, or Zangnan (the southern part of China's Tibet), is consistent and clear and China has never recognized the so-called "Arunachal Pradesh" illegally established on Chinese territory. Construction of the village is in China's territory, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said on January 21 at a press conference.

Zhang Yongpan, a research fellow of the Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), told Global Times (January 19) that Indian media reports were "a blatant attempt to stir up troubles on the China-India border" and added, "the report distorts facts, which jeopardizes the two countries' efforts to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas." He said "Indian media's provocation shows the country aims to continue its ambition: constantly provoke disputes and advance toward the Line of Actual Control area." Zhang said the area has never been recognized by the Chinese government and Chinese ethnic minority groups such as the Moinba, the Lhoba and Tibetan people live in the area. He reiterated that Indian media's provocation shows the country aims to continue its ambition i.e. constantly provoke disputes and advance toward the Line of Actual Control area.

TAR People's Congress concludes fourth session

January 22, 2021

The TAR held its two political sessions, the fourth session of the 11th Tibet Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the fourth plenary session of the

Standing Committee of the 11th Regional People's Congress of Tibet, from January 19-24. Before the sessions, Lin Qingzhi, Deputy Secretary of the Standing Committee, said the sessions will cap the work of the region during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period and discuss development plans for the coming five years. The fourth session of the TAR People's Congress concluded on 24th January in the presence of 379 representatives including TAR Party Secretary Wu Yingjie, Chairman of the TAR People's Government Qizhala, Executive Deputy Secretary of the TAR Party Committee, and Secretary of TAR PPCC, Ding Yexian, Vice-Chairman of TAR People's Government and Deputy Secretary of TAR Party Committee Zhuagyuan Cai, Deputy Secretary of TAR Party Committee and Secretary of Lhasa Municipal Party Committee ,Yan Jinhai, Deputy Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee and Executive Deputy Mayor, Zhang Xiuwu, Zhang Xuejie, Commander of the Tibet Military Region Wang Haijiang, Deputy Secretary and Standing member of TAR Party Committee, Norbu Dhondup, Member of the TAR Party Committee, Deputy Secretary of TAR PPCC and head of TAR United Front Work Department Danke,

Member of the TAR Party Committee , Jiang Jie, He Wenhao, Member of the TAR Party Committee and Party Secretary of Lhasa Municipality Baima Wangdui, Standing Committee Member and Secretary-General of the TAR Party Committee Liu Jiang, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Chen Yongqi, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Pasang, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Dotoe, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Woeser, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Xu Xueguang, Vice-Woman of TAR People's Congress, Samding Dorjee Phakmo Dechen Choedon, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Chime Rinzin, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Nima Tsering, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Ma Shengchang, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Wang Jun, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Xu Chengcang, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Tang Mingying, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Congress Liu Guangxu, as well as members of the presidium of the assembly and provincial leaders of the autonomous region.

The concluding session passed the work report of the TAR People's Government, charted blueprints for the 14th Five-Year Plan and the outline of long-term goals for 2035. It also,

discussed implementation of the economic and social development in 2020, resolutions on the same for 2021, and fiscal budget of 2021.

Chairman of TAR People's Government, Lobsang Gyaltsen attributed the session's "success" to the joint efforts of all representatives, their strong political enthusiasm, responsibility and good mental outlook. He commended the TAR Party Committee's deployment of and adherence to the spirit of the Seventh Work Forum on Tibet, and for "unifying people's approach" towards the party.

He emphasised that a blueprint for a stable, united and mobilised people of all ethnic groups in Tibet has been drawn for a new socialist Tibet and emphasised the importance of its implementation. He asked the representatives to "unify their thoughts and actions at par with the decisions and deployment of the TAR Party Committee, and towards the overall party's strategy to govern Tibet in the New Era".

He reiterated the need to "maintain stability, carrying out strong actions against separatist activities including cracking down on activities risking stability maintenance" and to ensure national security and long-term stability. The propaganda activities on "Regulations on establishing a model for ethnic unity and Progress in TAR" and the promotional campaigns to sinicize Tibetan Buddhism to Chinese socialist society, must continue rigorously, he added.

He said the Rural Revitalization Strategy must be carried out with the theme, "Guardians of the holy land and Builders of Happy Homes", implementation of preferential policies to further enrich living standards of the people in the border areas, and speeding up of infrastructural development in border areas must be taken note of.

According to the Work Report, TAR has placed nearly half its land area covering 539,000 sq kms under the "strictest ecological supervision", "strictly controls sand excavation" in 56 key rivers and 22 ecological reserves have been built. The Work report presented by the

Chairman of TAR People's Government, Qi Zhala, also stated that TAR has spent 12.2 billion Yuan on ecological protection projects in recent years.

Main power grid covers all 74 county-level areas in Tibet

January 22, 2021

According to Xinhua (January 22) the Work Report of the Fourth TAR People's Congress on January 22, stated that the main power grid in TAR has covered its 74 county-level areas, marking the beginning of a unified power grid in the region and that electricity supply has reached 3.3 million people in Tibet, an increase of more than 1.1 million over the end of the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015), as grid upgrades in the region's rural areas conclude. The total installed power capacity in Tibet has reached 10.2 million kW. Tibet has generated more than 9 billion kWh of electricity, with over 1.8 billion kWh of electricity sent to other regions. The power grid project in Ngari (Ch: Ali) was completed and became operational in 2020.

TAR Public Security Bureau holds first People's Police award

January 29, 2021

The TAR Public Security Bureau (PSB) on January 27 held its first award ceremony to honour "People's Police", among retired police representatives of all prefectures, reportedly to boost morale and instil a fighting spirit. Director of TAR PSB and Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government, Zhang Hongbo attended and spoke at the ceremony.

Zhang Hongbo presented the retired officers and veteran cadres their honorary medals.

New Nepalese Consulate General in Lhasa meets TAR Leader

January 17, 2021

The new Nepalese Consulate General in Lhasa, Navaraj Dakar met Jiang Jie, Member of the TAR Party Standing Committee and Executive Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government in

the afternoon of January 15 in Lhasa, reportedly to “promote exchanges and cooperation” between TAR and Nepal. Jiang Jie expressed his gratitude for his contributions and Nepal for the long-term commitment of successive Nepalese governments for good-neighbourly friendship between China and Nepal. He acknowledged Nepal’s firm adherence to the one-China policy and the “prohibition of external forces from using Nepal’s territory to engage in anti-China activities”. He added that, under the joint promotion and efforts of the two heads of state, China and Nepal have established a generational friendly strategic cooperative partnership oriented towards development and prosperity and that the TAR People’s Government has earnestly implemented the consensus reached by the two heads of state, firmly promoted opening up to Nepal, and smoothly advanced a series of major projects. He assured smooth flow at the relevant ports, assistance in containing Coronavirus and cooperation in Nepal’s opening up and development.

Nyingtri holds review meetings to evaluate progress in the fight against “evils and criminals”

January 26, 2021

Officials of TAR High Law Party Group, Deputy Dean, Deputy Director of the TAR Anti-triad Office, and Evil Examination and Acceptance Team attended a meeting on January 23 to report and review the work report from a grassroots inspection trip to Nyingtri’s (Ch: Linzhi) Drayib Chu(Ch: Bayi) district, Lulang Management Committee, Pomey County and Metok County to investigate the prefecture’s fight against “evils and criminals”. The inspection teams inspected the county’s anti-crime office, Public Security Bureau on January 18. These inspections were led by Nyingtri Group leader, Sonam Tashi.

The review meeting, presided over by Zhang Xiuwu, Deputy Secretary of Nyingtri Municipal Party Committee, was also attended by Zhu Jiang, Member of the Municipal Party Standing Committee, Secretary of the Political and Legal Committee, Director of the National Security Office, and Secretary of the Municipal Public Security Bureau, Fu Yongbo; Member of the Standing Committee of the Municipal Party Committee and Executive Deputy Mayor, Zhang

Ming; Deputy Director of the Standing Committee of the Municipal People's Congress Cui Xiaodong; and the Vice Chairman of the Nyingtri PPCC.

In addition to the inspection report, a video was shown to those attending to showcase progress on the fight against “evils and criminals” in Nyingtri. After watching the video, Sonam Tashi acknowledged improvement and asked them to do even better the next time. He spoke on the need to strengthen daily inspections, understand key loopholes, improve social governance, consolidate border controls and maintain stability in the border regions, conduct “patriotic education”, instil ideological consciousness, and eliminate breeding grounds for “evil forces”.

While presiding over the meeting, Zhang Xiuwu requested all concerned units to follow the requirements of the CCP Central Committee, further strengthen their political consciousness, study and implement the feedback from the evaluation team, and improve rectification of issues.

Nyingtri Propaganda Minister visits local households in Bayi District

January 26, 2021

Zhang Haibo, Member of the Nyingtri Municipal Party Standing Committee and Minister of the Propaganda of Nyingtri recently went to Tashigang village, a rural village, a couple of km east of the small town of Lulang in Drayibchu (Ch: Bayi) and also met officials of the Village Work Committee Team.

The Minister went to the work station of the Tashigang village, in Dongka Town, Nang County and asked about Coronavirus prevention and control measures, grassroots party-building measures, and (s)election of the village’s ‘Two Committee’ members. He met the village Mayor, Party Secretary of the village and village cadres, and told them to develop the trust and relationship between the party and the masses and build strong and young party members with good “thinking approach”. Zhang Haibo told the officials to propagate the “four stresses, Four loves” mass re-education campaigns embedding those with the tales of

“care and strong leadership of Xi Jinping as the core” and achievements in Tibet. He said grassroots party members must appreciate the party’s “achievement” and be appreciative of the party's care with special emphasis and comparison between “old and new Tibet” and must feel the party’s favour, listen to the party and follow the party, and in turn convey the same to the masses. He also urged grassroots party members to help the village’s “Two Committees” implement the tasks and criteria in selecting officials of the “Two Committees” including, but not limited to, political standards, strict selection criteria, and emphasised that the selected official must be a party member and selected as per law and procedures. After meeting these officials, Zhang Haibo went to visit several households and met families in the village.

A special session held to study Xi’s speech on “higher political standards” and stronger organizational discipline

January 28, 2021

On January 28, the Propaganda Department of Nyingtri Municipal Party Committee held a “special study session” on levelling higher political standards, stronger party spirit and stricter organizational discipline, as per the speech given by Xi Jinping at the fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CCP. Zhang Haibo, Member of the Nyingtri Municipal Party Standing Committee and Minister of the Propaganda Department chaired the study session.

The meeting studied Xi Jinping’s call for efforts to firmly uphold the centralized and unified leadership of the CCP Central Committee and always be loyal to, have trust in and safeguard the leadership core. Focussing on the three main themes of higher political standards, stronger party spirit and stricter organization discipline, the session mandated party cadres to have a “deeper understanding of the significance of the three” and strictly abide by the party's various disciplines, and ensure that orders and actions are unambiguous.

China builds over 2,800 5G base stations in Tibet

January 22, 2021

According to local authorities more than 2,800 5G base stations have been built in TAR. The region has achieved full mobile phone signal coverage at all its grade-A scenic spots, local officials said at the fourth session of the 11th regional people's congress. Construction of other tourist facilities has also been stepped up in the region, with facilities at an average altitude of over 4,000 meters and in a harsh natural environment. TAR currently has a total of 116 grade-A scenic spots, five of which are ranked 5A, including the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

PLA plateau special forces adopt low-visibility Starry Sky camouflage uniforms

January 18, 2021

Plateau special forces of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Tibet Military Command have been equipped with the latest combat uniforms with a camouflage pattern that can perfectly hide them in the surroundings. Analysts said (January 16) that the low-visibility camouflage will have practical use in border defence missions. The Shanghai-based news outlet eastday.com reported on January 17 that CCTV footage showed that the troops were equipped with a new type of individual soldier combat system, including a high-cut helmet and night-vision goggles, as well as the latest 'Starry Sky' combat uniform that makes a soldier blend perfectly into an environment where he is difficult to spot with the naked eye. Senior Colonel Wu Qian, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense, disclosed at a regular press conference in June 2020, that some soldiers used the uniforms on a trial basis in mid-2020, including service members of the Chinese PLA Support Base in Djibouti. While the camouflage pattern used by the plateau special forces seems to be designed for the wilderness, the Starry Sky uniform has other patterns for jungles, woodlands, deserts and urban warfare, the Ordnance Industry Science Technology, a Chinese defence industry magazine, stated on January 15.

Exhibition trip organised for monks of Sera and Drepung monastery on reincarnation

January 31, 2021

The Propaganda Department and Civil Affairs Bureau of Doelung Dechen District, Lhasa organized trips for almost 200 hundred monks of the Sera and Drepung Monasteries on January 26 and January 28 respectively to the Lhasa Archives Thematic exhibition of the reincarnation of living Buddhas of Buddhism as part of efforts to “deepen patriotic (re)education campaigns on the “four standards to become model monks and nuns” and on China’s regulations “reincarnation of living Buddhas”. In addition to the monks, 56 officials from the District United Front Work Department, Federation of Industry and Commerce, and Monastic Management Committees joined the exhibition trip.

The Exhibition on “Regulations on the reincarnation of the Living Buddhas” consisted of historical pictures in ‘easy-to-understand’ language, cultural relics pictures etc, exhibited mainly through display panels and explanations by the people-in-charge. The Chinese narrative on the formation and development of the reincarnation system including the procedures, rituals, golden urn method and requirement of approval from the Central government was emphasised.

TAR Ethnic and Religious Committee held its pan-TAR Conference

February 03, 2021

The TAR Ethnic and Religious Committee held its all-TAR conference on February 2 in Lhasa and focussed on the proceedings of the Fifth Plenary Session of the CCP CC, the Seventh Tibet Work Forum and the deployment of the task in 2021.

Chaired by the Vice-Chairman of TAR People’s Government, Meng Xiaolin it was attended by TAR leaders including Danke (Tib: Tenkho), Member of the TAR Party Standing Committee and Minister of TAR United Front Work Department (UFWD). Danke stated that the TAR managed not only to contain the spread of Coronavirus but also exercised great control over maintaining stability in the region and achieved “remarkable results’ in ethnic unity and

strengthening overall governance. He further directed that the UFWD's Ethnic and Religious Committee should work under the guidance of Xi Jinping's thoughts on socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era, improve political stance and work towards building unity in 2021.

Lhoka's Phungyal County mobilizes non-party members

January 31, 2021

The United Front Work Department (UFWD) of Phungyal (Ch: Qiongjie) County of Lhoka (Ch: Shannan) organized a symposium on 29, to mobilize non-party members from all walks of life into "friendship" and discuss stability maintenance.

The Symposium was attended by Phungyal County's PPCC Chairman, Rinzin; Deputy Director of the County's People's Congress, Pema Gyatso; Vice Chairman of Dechen Monastic Management Committee Rewu; Deputy Director of the Dechen Monastic Management Committee, Gelek Gyatso; Executive Vice Minister of the United Front Work Department of the Qiongjie County Party Committee Yangchen; and other county leaders. It was presided over by Norbu Tsering, a Member of the County's Party Standing Committee, Minister of the County's Propaganda Department, and Director of the County's Civil Affairs Bureau. A total of 50 persons attended including Representatives from the County's PPCC, Buddhist Association, Religious circles, Representatives of the children of the non-party members, Representatives from economic and social classes, etc.

At the meeting, Yangchen, Executive Vice Minister of the County UFWD spoke on the management of religious affairs in the County, status of patriotic reeducation in the county, the maintenance of stability, management of cadres in the religious institutions, ethnic unity and so on. She presented a summary report of the County's UFWD work and outlined the works ahead in 2021.

Tashi, Head of the County's Education Department reiterated Wu Yingjie's speeches including his speech at the Forum of Religious Representatives on "Regulations of the

UFWD”. Rinzin, Deputy Director of the County People’s Congress, reviewed achievements of the County in the economic and social fields during the 13th Five-Year Plan and asked the non-party members to be role models, take responsibility to share the party’s policies, achievements, and asked non-party member religious representatives to continue to comply by the “Four Standards to become model monks and nuns” and work towards sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism to Chinese Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. He said that the County’s Ethnic and Religious Committee will further intensify “activities” of the UFWD and build unity and stability in the county.

Fake 'Living Buddhas' use Tibetan Buddhism to defraud, rape women

February 02, 2021

Global Times (February 2) published an article claiming that with the rise in popularity of Tibetan Buddhism over the years, many people including some television celebrities have been worshipping “Living Buddhas.” Wang Xingfu, who claimed to be a “Living Buddha” and used the name Lhosang Tenzin, swindled hundreds of millions of dollars and even raped several women over the past decades. He set up classes in cities including Ji’nan, Chengdu and Shenyang, earning more than 5,000 yuan (\$773) or even as much as 7,000 yuan a month, a high income in the late 1980s and early 1990s in China. He claimed to have studied Buddhism in temples for many years and be the reincarnation of a “Living Buddha.” It said that apart from Wang’s case, police also cracked down a “fake living Buddha” case in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. Yang Hongchen, the main suspect in the Shenzhen case, became a monk in a small Hongye Temple in Hebei Province in the late 1990s. To “cheat” people, he claimed to be the former head of the Chinese Buddhism Association and the reincarnation of a respected nationalist monk Sherab Gyatso. Hypnotised by Yang, the violated women were either afraid of being cursed by the “living Buddha” or believed it was for religious progress. Wang was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment and fined 20 million yuan for crimes of organizing and utilizing a cult to undermine laws, illegal operation, rape and indecency. He was jailed for 18 years and fined 150,000 yuan for using superstition to undermine law enforcement, fraud, rape and embezzlement.

Appointments and Dismissal of Officials in TAR

(Adopted at the 25th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region on January 17, 2021)

Appointments:

- Pema Wangdue as Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government
- Sonam Nima as Director of the Development and Reform Commission of TAR. He was earlier the Director of the Housing and Urban-Rural Development Department of TAR
- Kelsang as Director of the Housing and Urban-Rural Development Department of TAR
- Pemba as Director of the Department of Commerce of TAR. He was earlier the Director of the Justice Department of TAR
- Xia Keqin was appointed Deputy Chief Procurator of the People's Procuratorate
- Yonten was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Ethnic and Religious Committee

Removals:

- Norbu Dhondup was removed from the position of the Vice-Chairman of TAR People's Government. He was earlier the Party Secretary of Chamdo
- Ma Jinglin was removed as the Director of TAR Development and Reform Commission
- Dawa was removed from the position of Deputy Chairman of the Finance and Economic Committee of TAR
- Sonam Rinzin was removed as Deputy Director of the Internal Affairs and Judicial Work Committee of the Standing Committee of TAR People's Congress
- Kelsang Rinchen was removed as the Director of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Environmental Resources Working Committee
- Tang Mingying dismissed from the Education, Science, Culture and Health Committee of TAR People's Congress

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE TAR

Curfew Imposed in Tibetan Areas of Qinghai Ahead of Lunar New Year

February 02, 2021

Tibetan sources quoted by Radio Free Asia (RFA) say that authorities in Qinghai province are restricting travel in Tibetan-populated areas ahead of the start of Lunar New Year, called Losar by Tibetans, from later this month. The move includes a 10:00 p.m. curfew in the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture's Golog (in Chinese, Guoluo) and Matoe (Maduo) counties imposed in the name of "social stability" and "sanitation".

Matoe county, in particular, is an important hub of local transportation and travel by Tibetans in Qinghai, Swiss-based former Tibetan political prisoner Golog Jigme said, adding, "And armed police and other security personnel are often stationed there ahead of important cultural and religious festivals." RFA also quoted one Jigme as saying that authorities in Gansu province have imposed restrictions on travel to and from the important Labrang Tashi Kyil Tibetan monastery ahead of the major annual Monlam Chenmo festival, due to begin on February 15. The festival, which typically draws large numbers of participants, is barred this year to visitors not wearing face masks and entry is forbidden to private vehicles. Authorities have cited fears of a spread of COVID-19 for imposing their restrictions, Jigme said "but in reality, the crackdown is aimed at the soon-to-be-observed great Monlam Chenmo religious festival itself."

(Comment: Buddhist monasteries in Tibet and Tibetan-populated provinces of western China have frequently become the focus of efforts to promote not just religion but Tibetan cultural values, and Chinese security forces often monitor and sometimes close down events involving large crowds.)

DIASPORA TIBETAN NEWS

UN questions Nepal on the plight of Tibetan refugees in a review of its rights record

January 26, 2021

Nepal has claimed, when the issue was raised at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, that it protects from refolement and treats well the around 20,000 Tibetan refugees living in the country without any official status. Nepal was asked to “implement” and uphold its Agreement with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and ensure “safe passage” of Tibetan new arrivals “through its territory” and “implement any legal agreements with China consistent with the principle of non-refoulment”. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Nepal’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, has expressed his commitment to address the genuine concerns and the implementations of UPR recommendations in a “coordinated, cooperative and result-oriented manner.”

(Comment: Under pressure from China, Nepal often cracks down severely on Tibetans whenever they are deemed as carrying out perceived anti-China activities, including activities such as celebrating the birthday of the Dalai Lama.)

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