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TIBET INSIGHT JULY 22-31, 2024

TAR NEWS

Lhasa Gonggar Airport renamed

July 20, 2024

On July 19, the Civil Aviation Administration of the TAR announced that “The Civil Aviation Administration of China recently approved that the Lhasa Gonggar Airport be renamed as Lhasa Gonggar International Airport.”

TAR PSB holds (enlarged) meeting on the third Plenary Session of the 20th CCP Central Committee

July 23, 2024

The TAR Public Security Department held an enlarged meeting on July 23, and studied Xi Jinping’s speeches, particularly key points from his speech at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CCP Central Committee. Zhang Hongbo, Vice Chairman of the TAR People’s Government and head of the TAR Public Security Department, led the meeting and gave a speech.

The meeting emphasized the importance of fully supporting the leadership of Xi Jinping and the CCP Central Committee and ensuring that the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the Central Committee is fully implemented within public security agencies. It also called for a focus on the four major priorities of stability, development, ecology and border consolidation, and new initiatives to address risks, maintain stability, safeguard against threats, and strictly prevent and tackle “any separatist or disruptive activities from hostile forces and the Dalai Lama group.”

The meeting stressed the need to enhance security measures, align with new reform guidelines, and improve the local public security system using modern technology. It highlighted the necessity of strengthening the Party's control over public security, improving training and systems, and building a strong and effective police force to maintain stability and harmony.

TAR ranks first in Foreign Trade in China with Foreign Trade reportedly increasing by 132 per cent

July 23, 2024

The Statistics Bureau of the Lhasa Customs Office stated that the total value of foreign trade imports and exports in the TAR was 3.801 billion yuan, an increase of 132.4 per cent over the same period last year, making it the first ranked province in China. Exports totalled 3.209 billion yuan, an increase of 122.9 per cent while imports were 591 million yuan, an increase of 202 per cent. The trade surplus was 2.618 billion yuan. Nepal remains TAR's largest trading partner and largest export market, with a bilateral trade value of 1.793 billion yuan, an increase of 120.3 per cent. It claimed TAR's foreign trade "circle of friends" has become more diversified, with 36 more trading partners than the same period last year and trade with major countries such as India and the United States and major economies such as ASEAN and the European Union maintaining growth.

The Statistics Bureau also reported that in the first half of the year, TAR's general trade imports and exports grew rapidly, reaching 2.012 billion yuan, a growth of 144.9 per cent. Small-scale border trade imports and exports reached 1.57 billion yuan, an increase of 97.1 per cent. Kyirong port carried out border trade, with a trade value of 24 million yuan in the first half of 2024.

Chinese “volunteers” arrive in the TAR as part of the Western Development Plan Special Program

July 26, 2024

Starting July 24, 2024, the new batch of college students participating in China’s Western Development Plan as special volunteers arrived in the TAR for their “assignments.” The batch of 2024 includes 1,029 volunteers, with 129 assigned to graduate teaching teams. The Volunteers will undergo a four-day training on Xi Jinping Thought, the Party's strategy for governing Tibet, key political updates, and local culture and social knowledge. After training, volunteers will be deployed across 69 counties/Dzongs and districts in Tibet, working in diverse fields such as agriculture, healthcare, education, grassroots governance, and border management.

(Comment: Since the inception of the Western Plan Tibet Special Project, 21 batches totalling 12,877 volunteers have served in Tibet. Of these, 4,005 have chosen to remain in Tibet for employment and entrepreneurship.)

Tibet Angel Mount Everest Biotechnology Co., Ltd., a Hubei Enterprises invites employees' families to visit the company

July 26, 2024

The Tibet Angel Mount Everest Biotechnology Co., Ltd., a Hubei-aided enterprise, is reportedly preparing for the production launch of its Angel Mount Everest Plateau Probiotics Project. The company recently invited newly hired employees and their families for a visit to familiarize them with Hubei's corporate culture and prospects. Since the project's inception last year, the company has recruited 50 employees, with 85 per cent being locals from various ethnic backgrounds including Tibetans, Mongolians, Tujia, and Yi.

China-appointed Panchen Lama's recent activities in the TAR

July 27, 2024

Gyaltzen Norbu, the China-appointed Panchen Lama who arrived in the TAR in late June, is reported to have conducted several “Buddhist” activities including presiding over the 11th Council of the Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association of China and the 1st Presidents’ Meeting of the Branch on July 2 and 11 respectively. Gyaltzen Norbu presided over a study meeting on the special exhibition on the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism held by the Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association of China on July 18. He emphasized the importance of thoroughly understanding the legitimacy of the Party and government in overseeing the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism according to the law. He said it is crucial to firmly uphold the decision-making authority of the CCP Central Committee regarding this matter, diligently study and implement the “Regulations on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism,” and firmly oppose secession. He added that this approach supports national unity, ethnic cohesion, religious harmony, social stability, and the proper functioning of Tibetan Buddhism. On July 22, he conducted Buddhist activities at Kangma Monastery in Damshung Dzong of Lhasa. Gyaltzen Norbu led the monks in chanting scriptures, and “offering prayers for favourable weather, national peace and prosperity.”

During a symposium on July 25, on improving Tibetan Buddhist teaching practices hosted by the Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association of China, the China-appointed Panchen Lama emphasized the importance of enhancing daily learning and thoroughly improving the adherence of monks' and nuns' to precepts. He highlighted the need for reinforcing institutional frameworks and intensifying efforts to implement the outcomes of rigorous religious governance. Additionally, he stressed the need to bolster the development of teaching practices to ensure the effectiveness of comprehensive and strict governance in religion.

Beijing funded systematic domestically-produced information-based classroom in Lhasa

July 28, 2024

The Lhasa Experimental Primary School recently inaugurated the TAR's first systematic domestically-produced information-based classroom, funded by Beijing. Beijing's Tibet Aid Command was instrumental in leveraging its technological expertise to "support Tibet along with contributions from many high-tech Beijing enterprises". The classroom features 60 domestic (Chinese) computers equipped with Loongson 3A6000 processors and Tongxin UOS operating systems, supporting the nationalization of technology across chips, operating systems, software, and teaching materials. This setup will enhance information technology education at the Lhasa Experimental Primary School. The report stated that the systematic domestic information classroom was organized by the Beijing Tibet Aid Command and donated by Loongson Zhongke and other companies.

(Note: These systematic China-produced information-based classrooms appear to be another attempt to control information flow and narratives in Tibet. In addition, the Chinese-developed operating system is designed to offer a domestic alternative to Western operating systems like Windows. It is likely these China-produced information-based classrooms may be launched in other parts of the TAR as well.)

Social Sciences and the Social Science Federation of the TAR holds Academic Seminar on the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism

July 29, 2024

On July 27, the TAR Academy of Social Sciences and the Social Science Federation held an academic seminar on the Sinicisation of Tibetan Buddhism. The seminar was held "to discuss major issues such as the theory, history and practice of the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism."

Experts and scholars from research institutes such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China Tibetology Research Center, Zhejiang University, Minzu University of China, Shaanxi Normal University, Yunnan University, Northwest University for Nationalities, Southwest University for Nationalities, Qinghai Academy of Social Sciences, Tibet University, Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, Tibet University for Nationalities, and Tibet Buddhist Academy attended the one-day seminar.

The seminar comprised three sessions titled: theory of Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism, the practice of Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism, and the history of Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism.

NYINGTRI (CH: LINZHI)

Milin City holds the 2024 geological disaster emergency evacuation drill

July 24, 2024

On July 23, Milin City (formerly county) conducted a geological disaster emergency evacuation drill in Segong Community, Dongduo Village, involving over ten departments, including the Municipal Natural Resources Bureau and the Municipal Fire Rescue Brigade. Yang Gang, Deputy Mayor and Director of the Municipal Public Security Bureau, led the drill.

The simulation involved a sudden rainstorm and mudslide affecting road traffic, electricity, and communications, posing severe risks to residents. The drill tested the response from discovery to resolution of the emergency. Teams set up a command centre, organised evacuations, repaired infrastructure, restored services, and conducted search and rescue operations. The 30-minute drill involved over 100 participants and 10 vehicles, adhering to the geological disaster emergency plan and demonstrating effective emergency response protocols.

Nyingtri’s “opening up to the outside world” initiatives

July 10, 2024

Nyingtri (Ch: Linzhi) People’s Government is reportedly speeding up initiatives to promote and advance reform and opening up Nyingtri to the world “outside of Nyingtri.” The Nyingtri People’s Government recently held a cooperation meeting with the Guangdong-Hong-Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area for cooperation in the field of economics, trade and investment.

It is reported that Nyingtri’s Tibet Qizheng Tibetan Medicine Co., Ltd., is registered as a wholly-owned subsidiary in Macau-Qizheng International One Person Co., Ltd., with a registered capital of US \$8.256 million (60.0046 million RMB), expecting Nyingtri’s export to increase by 5 million RMB.

The areas of cooperation include research and development, sales of Chinese patent medicines, medical and health products, western medicines, biological products, daily necessities, cosmetics etc. In April this year, Nyingtri’s first local enterprise Linzhi-Yunnong Supply Chain Management Service Co., Ltd., invested US \$ 1 million (7.1 million RMB) in Nepal with shareholder Surjit Babu Shrestha and investments have been filed.

Nyingtri plans to host 15 major events in 2024, both international and domestic, to promote the integration of sports and tourism. The events are to take place between April and December in various locations including Cogao Township, Kongpo Gyamda, Lulang International Tourism Town, and Biri Tianbian Ranch in Bayi District. The events include 3 international competitions (International Rafting Open, China-Nepal Plateau Dragon Boat Friendship Race, and International Road Cycling Extreme Race), 6 national (Chinese) events (Linzhi Half Marathon, Nanyue Ancient Post Road Orienteering Race, Mountain Bike League, China Leisure Sports Challenge, Pasang Tso Hiking and Camping Conference, and Namchen Bawa Mountain Marathon), 2 regional events (Namchan Bawa Peak Cup Plateau Basketball Invitational Tournament and Nyingtri Archery Competition), and 4 Nyingtri

Municipal events (National Fitness Day activities, national traditional equestrian competition, education system basketball game, and Gonpo Ada Cup archery competition).

(Note: *Sujit Babu Shrestha is a Nepalese Business who runs a chain of supermarkets across Tibet, and has experience of working with leading international retailers from the United States, Europe and Asia. He is said to have “deep knowledge of the Chinese market, people and culture, gained over three decades of living” in China, and is fluent in spoken and written Chinese. Married to a Chinese woman, Xiumei Ye, from Guangdong province, He is one of the first foreigners to have obtained a Chinese green card. He is reported to have travelled extensively throughout China and has been actively promoting Nepal among the Chinese people, he has built a vast network of connections with Chinese entrepreneurs and investors and has been able to attract Chinese investment into Nepal.*)

Nyingtri Party Secretary visits border areas in Metok Dzung on army day

July 24, 2024

On China’s Army Day on August 1, Ao Liuquan, the Party Secretary of Nyingtri went to the border areas of Metok Dzung and met front-line border defence troops. Along with officers and soldiers, Ao Liuquan conducted border patrols and inspections and paid tribute to the officers and soldiers of the border defence force who have been “stationed at the border of the motherland for a long time overcoming many difficulties such as harsh climate, weak infrastructure, and being far away from their families, and used their loyalty and responsibility to protect the peace of the border and the happiness of the people.”

He stressed abiding by the “Five Communists and Five Solids”, which state that the party, government, military, police and civilians should work together to strengthen border defence. He also pointed out that all along, the officers and soldiers of the garrison have resolutely implemented the decisions of the

CCP Central Committee and the Central Military Commission, “persisted in carrying forward the tradition of supporting the government and loving the people, and have always been on the front line and at the forefront, undertaking special missions, conducting special battles, and enduring special tests.” He also commended the border troops for their service for border stability.

SHIGATSE (CH: RIKAZE)

Shigatse’s Youth Military Academy holds its first military-themed exercise

July 17, 2024

The Shigatse Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Shigatse Detachment of the Armed Police and the city’s “Double Support Office”, recently organized 50 youngsters to carry out the first youth military school-themed education activity of “Strive to be a Good young man with a national defense dream in mind.”

During the exercise, the youngsters observed demonstrations of assassination and enemy capture scenarios, also visited the internal affairs and weapons and equipment of the army officers and soldiers, and participated in the "Building the Chinese Dream Together" national defence education knowledge lecture.

The Communist Youth League of Shigatse plans to continue to rely on the "Youth Military Academy" concept to hone the will and quality of the youngsters, strengthen their ideals and beliefs, and continuously enhance the patriotic awareness of the youngsters through military-themed exercises and build Shigatse into a patriotic education base.

Samdrubtse People's Procuratorate introduces new mechanisms to handle crimes

July 26, 2024

The People's Procuratorate of Samdrubtse District, Shigatse of has introduced several new mechanisms aimed at “improving the handling of minor crimes” and streamlining the criminal justice process. On July 3, 2024, the 46th meeting of the Third Procuratorial Committee reviewed and approved new guidelines for a "relative non-prosecution" system and optimized reporting procedures for dangerous driving cases. The new "Guidelines for the Application of Relative Non-Prosecution" set out criteria for non-prosecution in cases such as traffic accidents, intentional injury, theft, and fraud, ensuring that such decisions are made based on voluntary confessions and specific case conditions.

Additionally, a "Work Mechanism for Handling Cases with Criminal Expedited Procedures" has been implemented, involving various local authorities to separate simple from complex cases, optimize resource allocation, and establish a "one-stop" law enforcement model. The creation of the Shigatse City Criminal Expedited Court is reportedly part of this initiative, aimed at speeding up the trial process for minor crimes. In future, the Procuratorate plans to refine pre-trial procedures, align practices with police and court standards, and implement measures such as criminal reconciliation and public hearings.

Shigatse holds press conference on combating telecommunication and internet “fraud”

July 28, 2024

The Information Office of the People’s Government of Shigatse held a press conference recently to report on the fight against telecommunications and internet fraud in 2024. It was disclosed at the press conference that in the

first half of 2024, Shigatse's public security organs investigated 78 telecommunications fraud cases with losses exceeding 8.4176 million yuan and solved 80 cases, arrested 50 suspects and recovered 2.7547 million yuan of defrauded funds. The press conference added that Shigatse's public security organs worked with communications and financial departments to review bank card activities, handle 193 fraud-related bank card clues, and address 3 cases involving the mailing of fraudulent "two cards." They also intercepted 142 overseas phone cards.

LHOKA (CH: SHANNAN)

The 32nd Taklung Border Trade Fair in Nakartse District of Lhoka

July 28, 2024

On July 27, the 32nd Taklung Border Trade Fair was held in Nakartse District of Lhoka (Ch: Shannan). The seven-day fair will include cultural performances, song and dance competitions, horse racing, bicycle racing, sandbag holding competitions, arbitrage competitions, tug-of-war competitions, matchmaking conferences, etc. The fair also set up special commodity exhibition areas and live animal trading areas to facilitate display and promotion of products by merchants and customers to shop.

NGARI (CH: ALI)

Ngari holds the Fourth Mountain Bike Cross-Country Competition

July 27, 2024

On July 26, 2024, the Fourth Ngari (Ch: Ali) Mountain Bike Cross-Country Competition was held in Ngari "Holy Tibet, an outdoor paradise; the secret land of western Tibet, the heavenly Ngari." The event featured 42 participants and 20 teams from across the country. The competition was organized and hosted by the Sports Bureau of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Administrative Office of Ngari Prefecture, the Sports Industry and Facilities

Development Management Center of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Education Bureau (Sports Bureau) of Ngari Prefecture, and the People's Government of Purang County of Ngari Prefecture, and co-organized by the Education (Sports) Bureau of Purang County of Ngari Prefecture and the People's Government of Hol Township of Purang County of Ngari Prefecture, and exclusively operated, executed and promoted by Beijing Xintaiming Sports Culture Development Co., Ltd.

The race comprised three categories: men's individual, women's individual, and team competitions and spanned approximately 62 kilometres, circling Lake Mansarovar and Mount Kailash, with contestants starting in Hor Township and finishing in Jiwu. Participants faced high-altitude conditions (4500-4700 meters), not only having to overcome the lack of oxygen caused by the high altitude of 4500-4700 meters but also the winding track, gravel, wading, climbing and other track layouts.

The traditional Border Trade Channel of Tangga in Ngari Prefecture restored

July 26, 2024

The Tangga Border Channel point in Burang District/Dzong of Ngari Prefecture managed by the Burang border police station recently reopened its traditional border trade channel. The historic trade route situated about 4,900 meters above sea level with challenging terrain and variable climate, was once a key passage for trade between Tibet and Nepal. Reopening of the trade route facilitated entry for the first batch of Nepalese border trade personnel this year. The Burang border police station's responsibilities include monitoring border crossings, checking luggage, and maintaining order. The Tangga trade route has historically been used for exchanging goods like salt, grain, and medicinal materials between Tibet and Nepal.

On the first day, 27 Nepalese trade personnel entered Tibet, having travelled approximately 27 kilometres from Nepal. They needed a border resident certificate for entry.

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE OF TAR

Huanglong Jiuzhai Station of Sichuan-Qinghai Railway completes

July 11, 2024

Xinhua (July 10) reported that the Huanglong Jiuzhaigou Station was completed as the final station on the Zhenjiangguan to Huangshengguan section of the Sichuan-Qinghai Railway. Located in Chuanzhusi Town, Songpan County, Sichuan Province, at an altitude of 2,977 meters, the station is positioned between the Huanglong and Jiuzhaigou Scenic Areas. It is about 26 kilometers from Huanglong and 90 kilometers from Jiuzhaigou.

Built by China Railway No. 8 Engineering Group, the station features Tibetan and Qiang architectural styles, with a blue roof and white edges. Covering 4,000 square meters, it can accommodate up to 800 passengers and includes an underground heating system to handle temperatures as low as minus 20 degrees Celsius. The Zhenjiangguan to Huangshengguan section of the railway is a Class I double-track line with a designed speed of 200 kilometres per hour and includes the operational Zhenjiangguan Station and the newly completed Songpan, Huanglong Jiuzhaigou, and Huangshengguan Stations.

Chinese authorities in Ngawa force monks to disrobe and join government school

July 26, 2024

Over 300 young monks studying in the Buddhist school of Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Dzoge County were forced to disrobe and join a government school as lay students this month. Their school remains at the risk of a shutdown in the fall this year. The order was issued by the Dzoge County government.

A local source told Tibet Watch that the authorities are planning to close the monastic school in September. Parents of the affected children were asked to sign a document that cited Chinese law on the protection of minors and stated that those who receive this admission notice must prepare to send their children to school when the school year restarts on 1 September 2024.

The document signed by parents further stated that they would not enrol their children in the monastery until they reach 18 years of age, a requirement set by the Chinese government that breaks the age-old tradition of giving Buddhist training to monks and nuns from a young age.

The mass expulsion of the student monks comes a month after the authorities of Dzoge County denied parents' requests to allow monastic education with accusations of brainwashing.

The Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery has been giving special courses to young monks before teaching them Buddhist studies since 1986. In 1993, the monastery built the Taktsang Lhamo School of Tibetan Culture but it was forcibly closed by Chinese authorities in 2003. The monastery afterwards managed to establish Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery's Elementary Buddhist school. Restrictions however continue to be imposed as with all monasteries in Tibet since 2008.

China destroys monastery to expand world's tallest 3D-printed hydropower dam in Tibet

July 27, 2024

Chinese authorities have demolished the 135-year-old Atsok Gon Dechen Choekhorling Monastery in Tsolho Prefecture, Qinghai, to make way for the expansion of the Yangchu hydropower dam, the world's tallest 3D-printed hydropower dam. Despite pleas by local Tibetan to preserve or relocate the monastery, which they view as sacred, the demolition proceeded after the Department of National Heritage deemed its artefacts and murals of "no significant value."

By early July, the monastery, including its main prayer halls and stupas, had been destroyed. Authorities had promised to rebuild the monastery within two to three years, but only a small amount of funding has been allocated, and the monks are currently living in makeshift shelters. The promised alternative housing has not yet materialized. Tibetan locals have been prohibited from photographing the demolition site. The expansion of the dam, which began in 2022, is expected to be completed later this year, with the authorities focused on ensuring the project's success as a key part of their clean energy initiatives.

EXILE TIBETAN NEWS

China imposes sanctions on US Senator

July 31, 2024

China has imposed sanctions on U.S. Representative Jim McGovern in retaliation to his sponsorship of the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which aims to address human rights abuses in Tibet and encourage dialogue between Chinese leaders and the Dalai Lama. Sanctions include freezing McGovern's Chinese assets (though he has none), barring interactions with him and Chinese entities, and banning him and his family from entering China. McGovern's bill, signed into law by President Biden, seeks to counter Chinese disinformation and promote international advocacy for Tibetan rights. In response to the sanctions, McGovern criticized China's human rights record and described the sanctions as an attempt to suppress dissent. This action follows similar sanctions against other U.S. representatives over issues related to Taiwan and China's territorial claims.

Dalai Lama making great progress, physical therapy to continue year-- Long

August 06, 2024

"His Holiness is recovering well," Dr David Mayman, MD, Chief of the Adult Reconstruction and Joint Replacement Service at the Hospital for Special

Surgery, New York, said after visiting the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet on over the weekend (August 3-4). The 1989 Nobel Peace Laureate had a successful knee replacement surgery at the hospital on June 28 morning and was discharged the next day. He has since been on a course of physical therapy to optimize his full recovery. “He is working diligently with physical therapy and making great progress. This will continue over the next 6 to 12 months to optimize his recovery. His Holiness has made significant improvements to date, and we expect this to continue for a full year after surgery,” dalailama.com June August 5 quoted Dr Mayman as saying.
