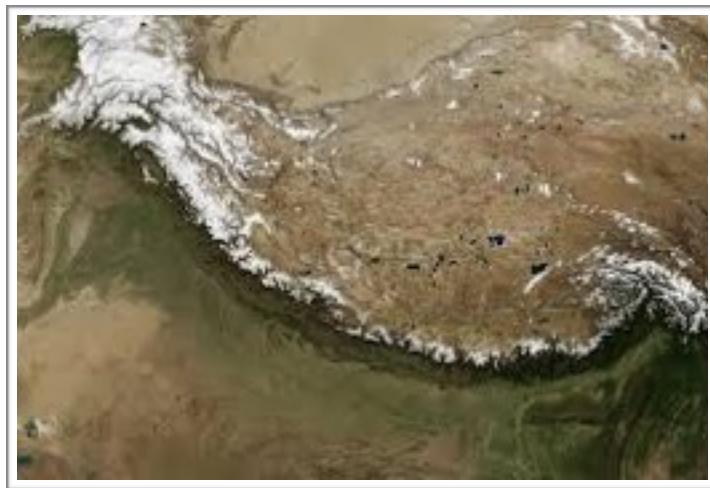


Tibet Digest

August 2015



www.fnvaworld.org

China's Minority Policies

Exiled Tibetans oppose 50th anniversary celebrations of TAR by China

Business Standard

August 31, 2015

Tibetans living in exile have opposed China's 50th anniversary celebration of the formation of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), saying Beijing has always denied basic human rights to the people.

This year marks several sensitive anniversaries for the remote region that China has ruled with an iron fist since 1950, when Communist troops marched in and took control of Tibet, in what Beijing calls a "peaceful liberation".

It is 50 years since China established what it calls the Tibet Autonomous Region and also the 80th birthday of Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in India since fleeing Tibet in 1959 following an abortive uprising.

China will wage an unceasing fight against separatism in its restive mountainous region of Tibet, President Xi Jinping said, as the government repeated it would never accept exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama's genuine autonomy proposals.

President of the Tibetan Youth Congress, Tenzing Jigme, said they were against such false celebrations as people lacked freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of press.

"It is just another sign of Chinese's attitude and they are trying to show that all is well inside Tibet but which is not the case. The case is that Tibetans are still being denied basic human rights – freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of press and so we are totally against this kind of false celebrations," Jigme said in Dharamsala.

The TAR was established on September 1, 1965 after the People's Liberation Army invaded the region in 1949.

Tibet later signed an agreement with China in 1951 after which the Tibetan government was converted into a local government.

Tibet remains under heavy security, with visits by foreign media tightly restricted, making an independent assessment of the situation difficult.

Activists say China has violently tried to stamp out religious freedom and culture in Tibet. China rejects the criticism, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development to a backward region.

Vice president of Gu-Chu-Sum (Tibetan Political Prisoners Movement), Namgyal Dolkar, proposed a worldwide campaign to spread information about ground realities in Tibet.

"We are definitely going to try to let more and more people know about it. That is very crucial not for Tibet or China but the entire world," said Dolkar.

Major policy meeting on Tibet in buildup to sensitive anniversary

International Campaign For Tibet

August 29, 2015

A MAJOR POLICY MEETING ON TIBET PRESIDED OVER BY CHINA'S TOP LEADER XI JINPING CONCLUDED THIS WEEK IN BEIJING, AS SECURITY IS TIGHTENED IN LHASA IN ADVANCE OF A POLITICAL ANNIVERSARY ON SEPTEMBER 1. The Tibet Work Forum on August 24-25, setting out Tibet policy for the coming years, is the sixth such strategy meeting on Tibet to be held since the Chinese took over Tibet in 1949-50.

Attended by the entire Politburo, the Party leadership, the emphasis of the Work Forum was on 'stability', a political term associated with a dramatic expansion of military and police powers. According to the Chinese state media, the meeting also emphasised the struggle against 'separatism', above economic development, in contrast to the last Tibet Work Forum in January, 2010. The official Global Times reported: "Stressing that national unity, consolidating ethnic unity, and realising long-term and comprehensive social stability should be regarded as the primary task for the region, Xi said that the country should "firmly take the initiative" in the fight against separatism, and adhere to the principle of governing Tibet under the rule of law." (August 27, 2015, Global Times). The Chinese authorities state that the Dalai Lama is a prime cause of Tibetan 'separatism'.

There has been an intensification of security in the Tibet Autonomous Region, including an increased number of checkpoints, stepping up of surveillance and controls, and large-scale movement of troops in July.[1] This is likely to be a part not only of the renewed emphasis on political

'stability' but also in the buildup to the 50th anniversary of the establishment by the Chinese authorities of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet said: "The sight of armed troops in trucks displaying political slogans moving through Tibet serves only to underline the failed policies of the Chinese Party state after more than half a century. These hardline measures, and the insistence of the Chinese authorities to ensure Tibetans 'celebrate' this upcoming anniversary, reveal the CCP's uncertainties over lack of its authority in Tibet. This is a leadership that needs to assert itself over a people who emphasise peace and non-violence, through tanks, 'counter-terrorist' measures and rhetoric resonant of the Cultural Revolution. The anniversary on September 1 is an empty celebration, as there is no genuine autonomy in the 'Tibet Autonomous Region', as promised by Beijing in the 1950s. There is a need for a fundamentally new approach on Tibet. International governments must signal its alarm over the priorities revealed by the Sixth Work Forum, which undermine chances of achieving a genuine stability."

China Focus: CPC's upgraded governance policy of Tibet applauded

Xinhua

August 28, 2015

The ruling Communist Party of China's governance strategies in Tibet, unveiled at a recent meeting, show improvement in line with the region's development, analysts say.

At a conference on Tibet held by central leadership in Beijing earlier this week, President Xi Jinping underlined national and ethnic unity as the key plans for the Tibet Autonomous Region, vowing to focus on long-term, comprehensive stability and an unswerving battle against separatism.

He stressed important principles such as governing Tibet according to the law and striving to make people rich and the region prosperous with long-term development. These thoughts have been put forward by the central leadership since the 18th national congress of the CPC in 2012.

"These new thoughts show our governance strategies in Tibet have been gradually perfected," said Penpa Lhamo, deputy head of the contemporary studies institute of the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences.

Rule of law is the most important means to realise a more scientific and modernised governance of Tibet, said the researcher, stressing its great significance.

Everyone is equal before the law. Monks and nuns are no exception," said Norbu, head of the administration committee of Drepung Monastery in Lhasa, the regional capital.

The administration committee will deal with lawless monks according to law to ensure the monastery and monks abide by law and religious activities continue normally, said Norbu.

With the promotion of legal knowledge, people's awareness of law and protection of their interests has seen remarkable improvement, said Zhou Yalin, a senior official of Damxung County, Tibet.

They used to turn to monasteries for help in case of disputes or simply solve them privately, but more and more people now know they can seek help from police or courts, said Zhou.

Xi Jinping underlined the policy of maintaining a prudent and steady manner in the long-term development of Tibet, requiring far-sight and sustainability in work and measures.

He stressed putting ecological protection first.

The central leadership's prudent attitude takes into account the ecological pressure of the plateau, said Penpa Lhamo.

"Each generation is obliged to protect the region's pure land," she said.

This is a required adjustment for Tibet's sustainable and coordinated development after its economic volume reaches a certain scale, said Wang Daiyuan, also with the academy.

In the past, fast development was stressed because the region was poor, he explained.

Xi also urged persistent stability for Tibet and neighbouring provinces, which are home to many Tibetan and other ethnic minorities, including Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu.

To stick to the struggle against the Dalai Lama clique accords with the interests of people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, said Penpa Lhamo.

China's Xi vows unceasing fight against Tibet separatism

Xinhua

August 28, 2015

China will wage an unceasing fight against separatism in its restive mountainous region of Tibet, President Xi Jinping said, as the government repeated it would never accept exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama's genuine autonomy proposals.

This year marks several sensitive anniversaries for the remote region that China has ruled with an iron fist since 1950, when Communist troops marched in and took control in what Beijing calls a "peaceful liberation."

It is 50 years since China established what it calls the Tibet Autonomous Region and also the 80th birthday of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in India since fleeing Tibet in 1959 following an abortive uprising.

At a two-day conference this week of the senior leadership about Tibet, only the sixth ever held, Xi repeated the government's standard opposition to Tibetan independence, saying he would fight an "unswerving anti-separatism battle," state media said in comments reported late on Tuesday.

"We should fight against separatist activities by the Dalai group," Xi was quoted as saying.

The Dalai Lama denies seeking independence, saying he only wants genuine autonomy for Tibet, something he calls the Middle Way and which Beijing believes is merely a smokescreen for independence, arguing Tibet already has real autonomy.

An accompanying commentary published by the United Front Work Department, which has led unsuccessful on-off talks with the Dalai Lama's envoys, said the government had not accepted, and would never accept, the Middle Way.

The Middle Way seeks to cleave off one-quarter of China, as it would include historic parts of Tibet in neighbouring Chinese provinces, the commentary, carried on the department's WeChat account, said.

"The so-called 'Middle Way' is in essence a splittist political demand," it said.

Activists say China has violently tried to stamp out religious freedom and culture in Tibet. China rejects the criticism, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development to a backward region.

Xi called for efforts to promote "patriotism among the Tibetan Buddhist circle and effectively manage

monasteries in the long run, encouraging interpretations of religious doctrines that are compatible with a socialist society," state media said.

There should also be more campaigns to promote ethnic unity and promote a sense "of belonging to the same Chinese nationality," he added.

Tibet remains under heavy security, with visits by foreign media tightly restricted, making an independent assessment of the situation difficult.

Dalai Lama's 'Middle Way Approach' snubbed by Xi Jinping

August 28, 2015



A Tibetan Buddhist monk walks into the Jokhang Temple on June 18, 2009 in Lhasa, Tibet. (Photo by Feng Li/Getty Images/CFP)

After the conclusion of the CPC Central Committee and State Council's 6th Forum on Tibetan Work, Chinese president Xi Jinping stated that the focus of policy towards Tibet should be centered on maintaining national integrity and unity among Chinese people, as well as ensuring the long-term peaceful governance of the region and to crackdown on separatism and maintain an unshakeable stance against the campaign of the Dalai Lama and his followers, according to Duowei News, a media outlet run by overseas Chinese.

Xi also came up with a catchy 20-character summary of his Tibet policy which roughly translates as, "Rule Tibet by law; Make Tibetans prosper and Tibet thrive; Build Tibet up over the long-term; Consolidate hearts and minds; Build a solid foundation," the first major policy announcement on Tibet since the 18th CPC National Congress.

Xi's attempt to set the basic tone of policy for the next five to ten years, comes in the run up to celebration marking the 50th year of the establishment of the Tibet autonomous region and seems largely to continue China's previous stance. This does not mean that there are no changes, as there were some new touches, including,

“ruling Tibet by law” and “insisting on people’s equality before the law.

Xi made many references to anti-separatism in his speech and stated that separatists or people attempting to disturb social stability should be dealt with according to the law.

A state-media report on the forum commented on the Dalai Lama and his “Middle Way Approach” which looks to “peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet and to bring about stability and co-existence between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples based on equality and mutual co-operation,” according to the Dalai Lama’s official website, stating that the separatist tendencies of the Dalai Lama and his followers have not changed, but that they are just adopting a new strategy to achieve the same goal. The article stated that the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way Approach does not acknowledge Tibet to be Chinese territory, is opposed to the principles enshrined in the Chinese Constitution, does not accept the socialist system being implemented in Tibet or its status as an autonomous region of China and wishes to unify the 12 Tibetan autonomous prefectures across the four provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan under an independent Tibet.

The article also stated that the “Middle Way Approach” would never be accepted by the Chinese government, suggesting a continuing hard-line stance on the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama has attempted to court Xi Jinping several times since the latter assumed power, even making reference to his friendship with Xi’s father Xi Zhongxun. The Dalai Lama has also consistently expressed a wish to visit Mount Wutai, but the comments from Xi suggest that this is unlikely.

Although the date of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet autonomous region are yet to be announced, in previous years they have taken place on Sept. 1.

Previously there had been suggestions that changes were in the air for China’s policy on ethnic minorities and Tibet, when chair of the Subcommittee of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the CPPCC National Committee Zhu Weiqun and Alai, a Tibetan writer from Sichuan, held a series of discussions on the stability and development of Sichuan’s three Tibetan autonomous prefectures and the future of China’s ethnic minorities.

Zhu stated in the discussion, “It is time for reflection and changes to policy on ethnic minorities.” Although the idea of taking emphasis off ethnic differences in order to strengthen national identity is hardly new, many interpreted the discussion between Zhu and Alai as

suggesting changes were in store for China’s ethnic minority policy, allowing them to adopt a less passive stance in Chinese politics.

After the discussion between Zhu and Alai was republished in a Hong Kong news outlet, it was criticised by seven opinion pieces in China Ethnic News, a paper run by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. The opinion pieces accused Zhu and Alai of fabricating a contradiction and conflict between ethnic differences and national identity. The pieces accused Zhu and Alai of taking a homogenous ethnic identity and homogenous culture to be the standard, in a move similar to the Kuomintang’s strategy of homogenisation and exclusion. The pieces said that differences must be acknowledged, but at the same time, they acknowledged that the use of the term “look after” was derogatory when used in reference to China’s policy on its ethnic minority peoples.

Zhu was, for a long time, vice minister in charge of daily affairs for the United Front Work Department and once served as China’s representative in negotiations with the Dalai Lama. Zhu previously discussed ethnic identity in a study report he published at the beginning of 2012, which attracted a lot of attention at the time. At the beginning of 2013 Zhu was moved to a secondary-level post, as the chair of the Subcommittee of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the CPPCC National Committee, but he is still voicing his opinion on the sensitive issue.

A state-run paper openly criticising a member of a CPPCC National Subcommittee is very rare and what’s rarer still is that Zhu has not chosen to bear the criticism in silence, mocking the paper for behaviour worthy of the Cultural Revolution. This suggests that divisions exist within the Communist Party on ethnic minority issues, specifically with regard to the governance of Tibet.

The hopes kindled by the talks between Zhu and Alai that China will reflect on its policy towards ethnic minorities and Tibet in particular appear to have been extinguished by Xi’s recent comments.

Rule of law to ensure Tibet’s future peace, prosperity

Global Times

August 27, 2015

In the just concluded sixth meeting of the work of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Chinese President Xi Jinping raised a general plan for administering Tibet. Stressing that national unity, consolidating ethnic unity, and realising long-term and comprehensive social stability should be regarded as the primary task for the region, Xi said that the country should “firmly take the initiative” in

the fight against separatism, and adhere to the principle of governing Tibet under the rule of law.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. The region has witnessed rapid development during the half century, especially after the adoption of a policy which requires different provinces to provide aid to designated areas in Tibet.

According to a report from the People's Daily, the region's gross domestic product has rocketed from 3.7 billion yuan (\$577 million) in 1993 to 92 billion yuan in 2014, while its local fiscal income reached 16.5 billion yuan, 104 times more than the figure in 1993.

All these achievements benefit from the long-term stability of society. However, under the surface of such fruitful development, separatism, led by the Dalai Lama, has been continuously causing turbulence in the region.

Be it the March 14 riots in Lhasa in 2008, or the disruption of the Olympic torch relay in London and Paris, separatist groups have brought blood, casualties, destruction and splits among different ethnic groups in the country.

Given such a backdrop, the unswerving anti-separatism battle is not only a keynote for the future Tibet policy, but also a prerequisite to future peaceful development in this Himalayan region. It also accords with Xi's strategy ideas – "governing border areas is the key for governing a country, while stabilising Tibet is the priority for governing border areas."

The rule of law is the guarantee of social fairness and justice, and only by sticking to it can we avoid conflicts and defuse tensions.

Stressing the rule of law in Tibet means the country will continue the fight against separatism, and crack down on any behaviour that disrupts social stability.

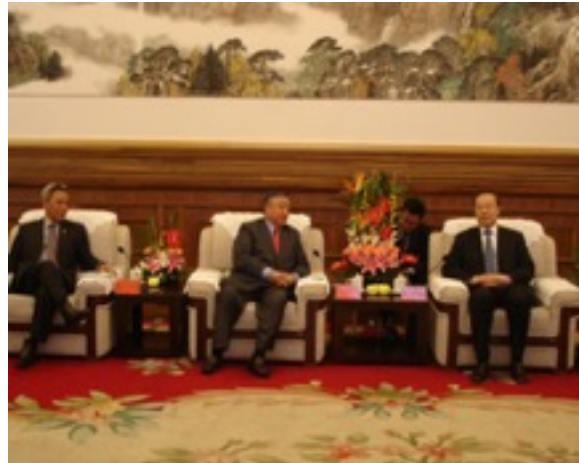
The rule of law also indicates that Tibet is guaranteed to have equal rights of development as any other regions in China. The development results, which other provinces are pursuing, are also bound to be realised in Tibet.

That's why Xi also vowed to provide sustainable measures and preferential policies to promote economic growth and social progress in the area. Stability and unity are the foundation and the only way toward prosperity in Tibet.

China says it will never accept 'Middle Way' solution to Tibet issues

Tibet Post International

Aug 26, 2015



Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kasur Lodi Gyari, with Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen during their meeting with Vice Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Du Qinglin during their meeting on 30 January 2010 afternoon. (Photo credit DIIR/CTA)

Dharamshala — The Chinese central government will never accept the "Middle Way" proposed by the Dalai Lama group, China's United Front said in its official website in an article pen-named Kelsang.

The article was posted after the Chinese Central Government ended its sixth working conference on Tibet Tuesday in Beijing.

"The Central Government did not in the past, nor is now and will not in the future accept the Middle Way solution to the Tibet issue," reads the article.

The essential intent of the 'Middle Way' is to split China, " adds the commentary , saying that the Dalai group refuses to accept China's sovereignty in Tibet and wants to seize the reins of power and set up a semi-independent political regime."

In particular, China is against the Dalai Lama's proposal for a "high degree of autonomy" in Tibet, saying "the essence of 'a high degree of autonomy' is to setup 'a state within a state' free of any control from the central government.

The article recalls that the central government has attached great importance to Tibet, holding six Tibet working conferences since 1980, with the second one in 1984, the third one in 1994 , the fifth one in 2010 and the sixth conference ended just on Tuesday.

Each Tibet working conference worked out specific measures to push forward Tibet's economic development and secure social stability.

On Tibetan Buddhism, the article promotes “political unity and respecting religious belief ” saying the government is against intervening and limiting Tibetan’s religious freedom.

However, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the “Middle Way Approach” (MWA) of engaging China through dialogue to achieve meaningful autonomy for all Tibetans, saying the Middle Way Approach, which neither seeks “Greater Tibet” nor a “high degree of autonomy”, but “genuine or meaningful autonomy” for all Tibetan people under a “single administration.”

During the seventh round of talks in Beijing on 1 and 2 July 2008, the Tibetan side has presented to the Chinese leadership a Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan people and Note on the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People, seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet as enshrined in the Chinese constitution and Law on Regional National Autonomy.

China Jails 45 in Unrest-Hit Xinjiang

VoA – News
August 27, 2015



Chinese courts in the restive western province of Xinjiang have jailed 45 people, including some on terrorism-related and illegal border crossing charges, according to China’s official Xinhua news agency.

Xinjiang is home to the Uighur ethnic minority, many of whom complain of repression and are the subject of an intense anti-terror crackdown by Beijing.

Officials say several of those who had crossed the border had gathered with others to view Muslim extremist propaganda and were trying to take part in jihad. At least some of them had been captured by Tajikistan police near the border with Afghanistan.

Others were jailed on charges of organising illegal border crossings.

Xinhua said two of the individuals received life sentences.

Many Uighurs have complained of harsh cultural and religious suppression as well as economic marginalisation under Chinese rule, and have increasingly tried to flee the country. China has repeatedly accused Uighurs of joining international terror groups and has attempted to prevent them from leaving.

Following intense pressure by Beijing, Thailand last month returned over 100 Uighurs to China, in a move slammed by many human rights groups.

FILE – Suspected Uighurs are transported back to a detention facility in the town of Songkhla in southern Thailand after visiting women and children at a separate shelter, March 26, 2014.

China denies mistreating the Uighurs, arguing that it has launched a massive campaign of economic development in Xinjiang. It has also launched a massive security crackdown in Xinjiang, which has been plagued by recent violent attacks that Beijing has blamed on Islamic militants.

50 years of connecting Tibet

People’s Daily Online
August 26, 2015

Editor’s note: 2015 marks Tibet’s 50th anniversary of peaceful liberation. Located on the world’s highest plateau, Tibet used to be known for its underdeveloped transportation system. Over the last half century, the Chinese government has been dedicated to modernising the connections on the roads, on the rails, and in the air. Here are eight public transportation icons in Tibet.



for more pictures please click the link here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17074>

China Observes 50 Years of Iron Clad Grip Over Tibet

ANI

August 26, 2015

HONG KONG: China is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the setting up of its Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which represents only a stump of the original Tibetan areas in the country.

The traditionally Tibetan strongholds in modern Sichuan and Qinghai provinces have been lopped off to become part of provinces where they are now minorities, and thus, face extinction of their cultural and religious identity.

China has accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a member of the United Nations. The declaration forms the basic charter of rights for all citizens across the world.

However, over the past many decades, China's adherence to the UDHR has been minimal at best.

When it comes to Tibet, though, even those minimal standards seem to have been misplaced, and the result is an occupied area where Tibetans count for less than an average Han Chinese citizen, and have no rights worth the name.

An article-by-article analysis of what the UDHR enjoins upon governments and grants to every human being, compared to the reality in Tibet, brings out starkly how far off the expected the Chinese performance has been.

According to Article 1 of the UDHR, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

But if looked from a Tibetan's perspective, he or she would not consider being born under Chinese occupation as freedom.

To be equal in rights means being afforded equal treatment under the law, but as far as China is concerned, repression is the norm for any form of political dissent.

In TAR, there are severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of Tibetans, and inequality is ever present.

Article 2 of the UDHR says that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

But in the case of the people of Tibet, their national and social origin; political opinions, their religion, and their language have all been used to persecute them.

Every existing marker of Tibetan culture has been sought to be extinguished as rapidly as possible.

The Chinese government's repressive treatment extends to all vestiges of Tibetan culture, regardless of the source.

Article 3 of the UDHR says that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

But, when it comes to Tibet, 87000 of them were killed by the People's Liberation Army between 1959 and 1960. The 2008 crackdown reportedly led to 228 deaths and 990 "disappearances".

The liberty of people extends to their means of livelihood and living arrangements, but Tibetans have reportedly placed forcibly in New Socialist Villages (NSV), and are without any semblance of liberty.

The security of Tibetan in Tibet is also greatly under doubt, considering the predilection of Chinese authorities towards arbitrary arrest and detention.

Article 4 of the UDHR says no one shall be held in slavery or servitude, and slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

In this instance, China meets of most of the markers, but what can't be ignored is that Beijing extracts involuntary labour from arbitrarily chosen Tibetans.

Article 5 of the UDHR says, no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, but in China-ruled TAR, torture is commonplace.

Articles 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 refer to the right to recognition before the law, equality before the law, and right to remedy. They also ask for presumption of innocence, but insofar as the delivery of justice in TAR is concerned, China is extremely biased and arbitrary.

As such, these articles are currently not maintainable anywhere in China, let alone Tibet.

Article 9 of the UDHR says no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, but this is far from applicable in TAR.

Article 12 of the UDHR says no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

In Chinese-ruled Tibet, there is the practice of forced resettlement. The treatment of the Dalai Lama certainly falls under attacks upon honour and reputation. Heightened surveillance in the region constitutes interference with privacy.

Article 13 of the UDHR says, everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state and everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country, but China's two-tiered passport system severely restricts freedom of movement for Tibetans and other religious minorities.

Indeed, the Dalai Lama himself has stated that the Chinese government has barred him from re-entering his home.

Article 14 of the UDHR says everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, but in TAR, this right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes.

Finally, Article 15 of the UDHR says everyone has the right to a nationality, but Tibetans are Chinese nationals.

Xi vows unceasing fight against Tibet separatism

The Hindu

August 26, 2015

China reiterates it will never accept the genuine autonomy proposals of the Dalai Lama, exiled Tibetan spiritual leader.

China will wage an unceasing fight against separatism in its restive mountainous region of Tibet, President Xi Jinping said, as the government repeated it would never accept the genuine autonomy proposals of the Dalai Lama, exiled Tibetan spiritual leader.

This year marks several sensitive anniversaries for the remote region that China has ruled with an iron fist since 1950, when Communist troops marched in and took control in what Beijing calls a "peaceful liberation."

It is 50 years since China established what it calls the Tibet Autonomous Region and also the 80th birthday of the Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in India since fleeing Tibet in 1959 following an abortive uprising.

Against Tibetan independence

At a two-day conference this week of the senior leadership about Tibet, only the sixth ever held, Mr. Xi repeated the government's standard opposition to Tibetan independence, saying he would fight an "an unswerving anti-separatism battle," state media said in comments reported late on Tuesday.

"We should fight against separatist activities by the Dalai group," Mr. Xi was quoted as saying.

The Dalai Lama has denied seeking independence, saying he only wants genuine autonomy for Tibet, something he

calls the Middle Way and which Beijing believes is merely a smokescreen for independence, arguing Tibet already has real autonomy.

'Wont accept Middle Way'

An accompanying commentary published by the United Front Work Department, which has led unsuccessful on-off talks with the Dalai Lama's envoys, said the government had not accepted, and would never accept, the Middle Way.

The Middle Way seeks to cleave off one-quarter of China, as it would include historic parts of Tibet in neighbouring Chinese provinces, the commentary, carried on the department's WeChat account, said.

"The so-called 'Middle Way' is in essence a splittist political demand," it said.

'Bid to stamp out Tibetan culture'

Activists said China had violently tried to stamp out religious freedom and culture in Tibet. China rejected the criticism, saying its rule had ended serfdom and brought development to a backward region.

Mr. Xi called for efforts to promote "patriotism among the Tibetan Buddhist circle and effectively manage monasteries in the long run, encouraging interpretations of religious doctrines that are compatible with a socialist society," state media said.

There should also be more campaigns to promote ethnic unity and promote a sense "of belonging to the same Chinese nationality," he added.

Heavy security hampers scrutiny

Tibet remains under heavy security, with visits by foreign media tightly restricted, making an independent assessment of the situation difficult.

Xi for infusing "socialist values" in Tibetan schools to wean away kids from Dalai Lama

Times of India

August 26, 2015

BEIJING: Chinese president Xi Jinping has asked officials to alter school curriculum of Tibetan children in order to incorporate "core socialist values".

This is part of China's preparations to bring about major changes in the thinking of the next generation of Tibetans at a time when the Dalai Lama is ageing, and Beijing is getting ready to appoint a successor of its choice, observers said. The Communist Party sees the Dalai Lama

as a major obstacle in enforcing its idea of a socialist society among Tibetans.

Xi also asked officials to strive hard for in calculating “Party-loving and patriotic builders and successors of the socialist cause,” among children in Tibet and four other provinces with heavy Tibetan population. He also called for wider use of Mandarin China, which is different from the Tibetan language, describing it as “the national commonly-used language and script”.

Besides rapid development, the government wants to create more employment opportunities for Tibetans to prevent them from taking what Beijing regards as regressive steps in support of the Dalai Lama and his supporters.

“More active employment policies should be carried out to help residents of all ethnic groups to walk out of their farms and pastors to work in towns and companies and start businesses,” Xi said at an official meeting on Tibet’s development in Beijing.

He also pledged to continue with preferential policies for Tibetan inhabited areas, and bring about sustainable development. These areas have entered “a critical stage” toward fulfilling the country’s goal of building a moderately prosperous society in a comprehensive way, the president, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party said.

He said Tibetan areas in five provinces, Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai— will continue to enjoy special financial, tax and investment policies. Efforts would be made to improve living conditions for various ethnic groups, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinese premier Li Keqiang said that it is an arduous task for Tibet to build a “moderately prosperous” society over the next five years.

He promised to give top priority to improving people’s livelihood, alleviating poverty and increasing employment among Tibetans, he noted, urging more efforts to boost education, medical care and social security in the region.

“Efforts should be given to the development of agriculture and animal husbandry and related processing business, making Tibet an important tourism destination in the world, and promoting commerce and trade with South Asia to boost the Tibetan economy,” he added.

Li also called for speeding up construction of local infrastructure should be sped up, including transportation networks, water conservation projects, power grids, among others.

Xi urges promoting economic, social development in Tibet

SINA

August 26, 2015

BEIJING, Aug. 25 (Xinhua) — Chinese President Xi Jinping has asked for more efforts to promote economic growth and all-round social progress in Tibet and Tibetan-inhabited areas in four other provinces, vowing sustainable measures and continued preferential policies.

Tibet and Tibetan-inhabited areas in four other provinces have entered “a critical stage” toward fulfilling the country’s goal of building a moderately prosperous society in a comprehensive way, Xi said at a two-day meeting on Tibet’s future development, which ended on Tuesday.

Special financial, tax and investment policies should continue to be in place in the future in southwest China’s Tibet autonomous region and Tibetan-inhabited areas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, he added.

Development, which aims to improve living conditions for various ethnic groups and beef up social cohesion, should be advanced in a prudent and steady manner, and all measures taken should be sustainable, Xi said.

Xi urged bettering basic public service and adopting targeted measures to alleviate poverty, solve key problems which lead to poverty and improve living conditions for the impoverished as soon as possible.

“More active employment policies should be carried out to help residents of all ethnic groups to walk out of their farms and pastors to work in towns and companies and start businesses,” he said.

Meanwhile, Xi said, efforts should also be made to incorporate education on “socialist core values” into courses in schools at various levels, popularise the national commonly-used language and script, and strive to foster “Party-loving and patriotic builders and successors of the socialist cause.”

Addressing the same meeting, Premier Li Keqiang said that it is an arduous task for Tibet to build a “moderately prosperous” society over the next five years, together with other parts of the country.

The government should give top priority to improving people’s livelihood, alleviating poverty and increasing employment among Tibetans, he noted, urging more efforts to boost education, medical care and social security in the region.

It is key for Tibet to sharpen its self-development capability through promoting its specialty industries, infrastructure construction, and environmental protection, said the premier.

“Efforts should be given to the development of agriculture and animal husbandry and related processing business, making Tibet an important tourism destination in the world, and promoting commerce and trade with South Asia to boost the Tibetan economy,” he added.

Moreover, the building of local infrastructure should be sped up, including transportation networks, water conservation projects, power grids, among others, Li noted.

The Premier also pledged to increase financial aid and preferential policies to the ethnic minority area.

Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, asked attendees to learn from the spirit of the meeting and work out effective measures to boost the development of Tibet.

Other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee Zhang Dejiang, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli, also attended the meeting.

Murals in Tibet’s Potala Palace Digitized for Better Protection

Crienglish.com
August 24, 2015



A piece of mural in Tibet’s Potala Palace. [Photo: CFP]

Murals in Tibet’s Potala Palace have been digitised in August in a bid to better protect the cultural relics.

Around 2,500 square meters of murals have been digitised into high definition images of 5 billion pixels.

The murals present stories of historical figures, religious stories, biographies of eminent monks as well as various aspects of people’s life.

Wan Jie, leader of the digitalising project, says the high-definition digital images can not only protect the relics, but also bring new way to show more people the great art conserved in the Potala Palace.

“There are various ways to present the digital images. For example, we can print them and display the pictures, we can hold multimedia exhibition, digital exhibition and the all-round display. They will let more people enjoy the exhibitions and the cultural relics through internet.”

The Potala Palace in Lhasa, capital of southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, has a history of over 1,300 years.

It saw a total of 830,000 tourists in 2014, which means over 2,000 people paid a visit every day.

The digitising project started in 2012.

Railway line brings new life and opportunities to SW Tibet

Chinadaily.com.cn
Aug 14, 2015

Kalzang Tsetan’s family business has been benefiting from the opening of the Lhasa-Xigaze railway.

“We’ve longed for the railway. The materials we used to produce sweet garlic are all imported from Chengdu. Road transport is very expensive. The cost has reduced greatly because of the railway,” said the 27-year-old, whose family runs a garlic industry in Gyangze county, a Xigaze prefecture-level city in the southwest of the Tibet autonomous region.

The company produced 2.4 billion kilograms of garlic products last year. In March the company transported about 12,500 kg of sweet garlic products by train from Xigaze to Lhasa at a cost of about 20,000 yuan (\$3,222). It was the first time the company adopted rail transportation. By road, 12.5 tons of garlic products cost about 30,000 yuan.

“More importantly, train is much safer than trucks. If an accident happens, we would suffer heavy losses,” he said.

It will be the first anniversary of the opening of the Lhasa-Xigaze railway on Sunday. As the railway linking the two largest cities in the Tibet autonomous region, also the second railway in Tibet, the Lhasa-Xigaze railway has not only increased locals’ quality of life but also boosted tourism.

Benefit local's life

The 251-kilo meter high-elevation railway cut travel time between Lhasa, capital of Tibet, and Xigaze, the second largest city in the region, from five hours by bus to about three.

The first passenger train left Lhasa for Xigaze on Aug 16 last year. The fare ranges from 40.5 to 175.5 yuan depending on comfort.

The line, which began construction in January 2011, has 14 stations and a maximum train speed of 120 km per hour. It is capable of transporting more than 8.3 million metric tons of cargo each year.

Until June 30 the railway had transported 578,000 passengers.

Since the railway opened, Chungdak Tsering has taken the train more than 10 times between Xigaze and Lhasa.

"It is much more convenient now and only takes three hours. In the past, it took five hours by bus, often longer because of traffic jams and the speed limit, and train is safer. I can either buy tickets online or at the station," the 29-year-old said, adding that this time, he went to the station a day before the trip and bought tickets in five minutes.

Chungdak's trip to Lhasa was to close a deal on a house loan. He is a government employee in Xigaze and bought an apartment in Lhasa.

"Lhasa is a better planned city with a friendly environment, more parks and other resident friendly civil constructions," he said, adding that the railway makes the commute more convenient.

Chungdak is the youngest son in his family. Born and raised in Xigaze, he went to school outside Tibet since middle school at 13, and finished middle school, high school and university there. He returned to Xigaze in 2011.

Compared with the old days when he traveled between home and schools, he has found transportation much more convenient now.

Boost tourism

The railway has also boosted local tourism. As the home of Mount Qomolangma's base camp and the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, Xigaze has its unique charm to attract tourists from China and overseas.

Yang Heng, 24, traveled from Daliang, China's northeast Liaoning province to Tibet by train. "I spent about three entire days on a train...I love the views. It is almost the same as the view at scenic sites, both making me feel so close to nature," Yang said.

His destination is the base camp of Mount Qomolangma in Xigaze. "First of all, I traveled to Lhasa by myself and met some outdoor enthusiasts there. I decided to join them for the adventure trip at the last minute. I did not really have a specific travel plan before," Yang said. He worked as a staff member in a university and enjoyed his summer vacation by traveling to Tibet.

"Travel by train is less expensive," he said, adding that the Lhasa-Xigaze railway made his trip easier.

The Lhasa-Xigaze railway is the first extension of the 1956-km Qinghai-Tibet railway, the first railway in Tibet, which began operation in 2006. The new line plays an important role in the rail network in Tibet.

To the east, it connects the Qinghai-Tibet railway and also links Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway, a part of Sichuan-Lhasa railway, which is now under construction. To the west, it plans to link Jilong and Yadong pass neighboring Nepal.

Apart from the railway, road and aviation networks have also been improved in the past 50 years, as a small part of government investment spent on Tibet's transportation infrastructure.

Massive security beef up reported ahead of TAR 50th anniversary

Phayul

August 14, 2015



Troops moving through Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) in Qinghai in July/ ICT

With the speculation rife over Chinese president Xi Jinping's probable visit to Tibet for the 50th anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, unusual movement of troops have been witnessed in Lhasa and Shigatse, two major cities of TAR, and Rebkong in a build up to the celebrations, according to the Washington based International Campaign for Tibet.

Massive influx of convoy of more than 200 vehicles with heavy weaponries and tanks have been reported by the ICT which added, "The purpose of the troop movements is

not known, although it is likely to be a combination of conveying propaganda, overt intimidation and involvement in major military exercises.”

Top leaders from Beijing are expected to attend the founding anniversary of the “Tibet Autonomous Region” to be held in Lhasa, the capital, on September 1.

Chinese state media announced this week that a joint military drill entered “live fire stage” “in a plateau area” in Sichuan, organised by the People’s Liberation Army Chengdu Military Area Command, which oversees Tibetan areas including the sensitive border with India.

The images and footage gathered by International Campaign for Tibet show movement of troops in Shigatse starting July 27. The ICT said it received images that show trucks in front of Potala palace with banners with slogans on the sides of the trucks, such as: ‘To defend security and stability in Tibet’; ‘A healthy civilian and peaceful society is the will of the people’.

According to a source, no troop movements of this scale had been observed in the areas before.

Sources have indicated that the tightened security is felt in every sphere, including instructions on the importance of ‘stability’ conveyed to Tibetan trade organisations, business and tourist agencies and an increase in police checkpoints. Travel permits to the TAR are not being issued for at least the first week of September, the ICT said citing prweb.com.

China celebrated September 9 as the founding day of TAR until the death of Mao on the same date in 1976. The celebrations were shifted to September 1 after Mao’s death.

The ICT believes that the Beijing leadership’s strong emphasis to Tibet is reflected in editorials published in the state media and its renewed criticism of the exiled Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama for commenting on his reincarnation recently. A meeting of the Chinese Politburo on July 30 presided over by Xi Jinping asserted the continued “anti-separatist” hardline approach by the authorities in Tibet.

“The CCP prioritises development, infrastructure construction and resource extraction as key elements of its strategic objectives in Tibet, casting Tibetan support for the Dalai Lama and protection of Tibetan national identity as obstacles to its ambitions to re-shape the Tibetan plateau for its own purposes and ensure its dominance,” added ICT.

China to intensify public security patrols

*Xinhua,
August 13, 2015*

Vice Minister of Public Security Huang Ming has called for strengthened public patrols to deter crimes and respond to emergencies.

At a meeting held on Thursday, Huang called for more efficient patrols that would “prevent, spot, control and handle” crimes and emergencies in a timely and effective manner.

“Joint patrols by police and paramilitary police will be a key measure in intensified social security,” Huang said, stressing that patrols should be intensified at major events and key meetings.

During the meeting, paramilitary police were told to step up exercises and hone their professional skills to fulfil patrol missions and handle emergencies with better cooperation and information-sharing with police forces.

On Thursday noon, a 25-year-old suspect, Gao, attacked a Chinese woman and a French man with a samurai sword in Sanlitun, an upscale shopping district in Beijing, killing the woman and injuring the man.

13th Mt. Qomolangma Cultural Tourism Festival to kick off

*China Tibet Online
August 13, 2015*

With the approach of the 13th Mt. Qomolangma Cultural Tourism Festival in Shigatse, Tibet’s first tourism promotion outside the region was successfully held in Chengdu, Aug. 11, 2015.

Tibetvista.org, together with 18 travel agencies and 25 news media from Sichuan, attended the event.

The Mt.Qomolangma Cultural Tourism Festival this year will be themed as “Truth Eternal, Auspicious Shigatse” and aims to display Shigatse’s unique culture and history. Meanwhile, by hosting the festival, organisers hope to further explore the local tourism values and boost economic development.

The Mt.Qomolangma Cultural Tourism Festival this year centers centered around “Eternal Love, Auspicious Shigatse” and aims to display cultural and historical development of Shigatse. Meanwhile, by hosting this cultural tourism festival, the organisers hope to further explore the local tourism values and boost local economic

development. Rong Xinlong, minister of Shigatse Publicity Department, was introducing the The 13th Mt. Qomolangma Cultural Tourism Festival. During the promotion, Rong Xinlong, minister of Shigatse Publicity Department, along with Phurbu Tsering, head of Shigatse Tourism Bureau, expressed their sincere welcome to all the visitors and gave a brief introduction of local tourism development.

China to scrutinise mails to be sent to Tibet ahead of parade

PTI

August 13, 2015

Beijing: China will strictly scrutinise all mails and parcels to be sent to Tibet as part of the stringent scrutiny measures ahead of the 70th anniversary of its victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression on September 3.

China's State Post Bureau (SPB) said that between August 20 and September 12 the real names of both receiver and sender must be submitted before packages and mails can be sent to the Tibet Autonomous Region.

A series of celebrations will be held from August to mid-September to mark the 70th anniversary of victory in World War II and the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression besides events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region which will be held in Tibet in early September.

The authorities need to step up checks for illegal packages, especially for guns, flammable materials and explosives, illegal knives, hazardous chemicals and banned political publications, state-run Global Times reported.

China is also turning capital Beijing into a veritable fortress ahead of the parade by shutting down airports, roads and close subway stations for night rehearsals.

Streets surrounding Tiananmen Square and Chang'an Avenue, where soldiers will march, will be closed during the rehearsal.

Night parking will also be banned on several roads. Officials have already announced that the international and domestic airport here will be closed for several hours every day during the day time from August 20 to September 3.

Beijing will also ban half the cars from the road by temporarily implementing an odd-even license plate scheme from August 20 to September 3 as part of its measures to guarantee good air quality during the parade.

Eighty per cent of government vehicles in Beijing will be kept off the road during that period, according to an official announcement.

Tibetans forced to wear wild animal furs, official in Tibet denies

Tibet Post International

August 12, 2015



New images show some local Tibetans with animal furs, standing on a huge red carpet during a Chinese official event in Driru County, eastern Tibet. Photo: TPI

Dharamshala — Chinese authorities have reportedly forced Tibetans to wear animal furs and pelts at a recent official event in Driru County of eastern Tibet.

“The new policy demanded that local Tibetans should organise and take part in a cultural performance during a recent official celebration in Driru County,” sources said.

“It also required them to wear traditional costumes made out of animal furs and pelts to show “economic prosperity” with happy life under Chinese Communist rule.”

“Chinese officials brought the animal pelt costumes with them and forced Tibetans to wear them during their performances on stage,” Samdup, a Tibetan living in Belgium told the Tibet Post International (TPI).

“Authorities have instructed those Tibetans not performing to attend an event to mark the founding of the People's Liberation Army of China on August 1,” he added.

“The policy threatening that any Tibetans not taking part will be punished by not being able to harvest the fungus for 5 years,” Samdup said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Local Tibetans say “the performances are not an expression of their happiness of the seasons, rather it is a

forceful imposition by the Chinese government which portrays the absence of any freedom and human rights”.

Animal pelts and furs were used in traditional Tibetan attires in the past. But, the practice almost completely stopped in Tibet, in support of a comment made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the 2006 Kalachakra initiation.

Images from the the annual legislative and political advisory sessions in Tibet, show some delegates who appeared to be wearing furs and pelts from wild animals as part of their attire.

“The local government did not issue such an order, and that there were no performances on the August 1 anniversary,” Chinese state-run media “Global Times” reported, citing Zhou Zhanping, head of the county publicity department.

In response to the report, Samdup said that “the Chinese media should present an unbiased information. “If the Chinese authorities do believe that the claims they made are true, they should allow international media to find out the real situation in Driru County.”

“China should ease the de facto ban on international journalists wanting to visit Tibet,” he told TPI, urging “China to end the restriction on use of information communication technologies, including social media related to Tibet issue.”

TPI sources also said that under a new policy, Tibetans are also banned from harvesting caterpillar fungus for five years.

“The policy imposed under various conditions that must be fulfilled in order for Tibetans to harvest caterpillar fungus, which is a mainstay of family incomes,” sources said.

The caterpillar fungus is known in Tibetan as Yartsa Gunbu, with the long history of medicinal use, became a main source of income for the local Tibetans.

According to sources “it’s a new threat as a way to force the Tibetans” to accept that they are happy under the government rule.

Police beat Tibetans after cultural show

FreeTibet.com
Tuesday, 11 August 2015

Tibetans told to perform in expensive costumes to show “economic prosperity”

Authorities in Nangchen County, Yushu Prefecture, ordered 10 Tibetan townships to prepare for a summer cultural show, wearing “traditional expensive costumes” to show economic prosperity.

Police threaten Tibetans

The preparations were to take place between 1 and 3 August.

On the third day four police vehicles arrived with armed police, who threatened the people organising the event.

After the event took place, for unknown reasons police started to violently beat the Tibetans, injuring over 30 people.

Many of the victims required to be hospitalised after the assault.

Beijing seeks hearts and minds with Tibetan resettlements

THE JAPAN TIMES
AUGUST 9, 2015



A guest house owner stands in front of his property with posters of late Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong and leader Deng Xiaoping on the wall, in Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, at the end of July. | REUTERS

NGABA, CHINA – Nineteen-year-old Longsel Tsondre sees nothing romantic about the itinerant life his Tibetan herder family left behind when the government in his remote corner of southwestern China offered to resettle them a few years ago.

“It was pretty tough out there. There was no development and we were quite poor,” he told reporters on a rare government-organised trip to Ngaba, a heavily Tibetan part of Sichuan province traditionally strongly defiant of Chinese rule.

“Now it’s better. We don’t go to the mountains to herd the yaks and horses. Now we dance every day,” he said after

performing a Tibetan dance for a busload of Chinese tourists.

It is a positive image China wants the world to see, one aspect of a controversial program to resettle into permanent homes Tibetan herders who have wandered these parts for centuries.

China has ruled Tibet with an iron fist since troops took over the region in 1950, and those controls often extend to ethnic Tibetan areas in other parts of China.

The government rejects criticism that it has repressed Tibetan religious freedom and culture, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development to a backward region. The government says resettlement gives herders access to health care and schooling and lets them benefit from China's booming economy by offering new job opportunities, like working in tourism.

Ngaba, known as Aba in Chinese, erupted in a wave of anti-China self-immolation protests in 2011, becoming one of the most serious challenges against Chinese rule in years.

While not officially off limits to foreign reporters, unlike what China calls the Tibet Autonomous Region, where all reporting trips need government permission, visits are very difficult due to tight security.

Late last month, the government took a small group of foreign journalists to Ngaba, arranging interviews with officials and resettled herders, though all interviews were conducted in the presence of government minders.

None of the herders spoke out against the resettlement program during interviews with reporters.

Shuke Sonam, 27, whose family now runs a guest house, said Tibetans living in tents previously would often be soaked by rain. "Now we have such nice houses, and because we're taking in guests from other places, it's improved our awareness about life," she said.

Bai Yingchun, deputy head of the Ngaba prefecture's propaganda office, said "absolutely nothing was forced" in the resettlement program. "The lives of the herders in the Tibetan areas are very free. It's not like what the outside world says," he said. "They don't have any restrictions at all."

Activists have expressed concern that China's main aim with such programs is to control a restive population, and that Tibetans have been given little option but to cooperate.

"It's much easier to enforce administrative control over settled communities than over nomads in the grasslands, and also the Chinese authorities have aligned the policy with specific political objectives of eliminating separatism

and eliminating expressions of Tibetan nationalism," said Kate Saunders, spokeswoman for the International Campaign for Tibet.

Officials stuck to the government line in criticizing the exiled Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, whom China regards as a dangerous separatist. The Dalai Lama denies espousing violence and says he only wants genuine autonomy for Tibet.

Robbie Barnett, director of modern Tibet studies at Columbia University, said it was misguided policies like banning worship of the Dalai Lama that negated any support the government may get from improving services like education for Tibetans.

"It does seem in a general way that the (Communist) Party has put support of Tibetans from all social areas in jeopardy with the number of policies that have been seen as remarkably culturally insensitive," he said.

Over 800 volunteers to work in Tibet

Xinhua

August 3, 2015

More than 800 volunteers have been sent to southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region this year to support education, medicine and agricultural production in underdeveloped areas.

A total of 820 volunteers, most of whom are university graduates, were selected from more than 10,000 applicants, since the recruitment was launched in May from 134 universities nationwide, the Tibet regional committee of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) announced Monday.

Their volunteer service usually lasts one to two years. They work in education, medical care, agriculture, poverty alleviation and other areas, the committee said.

The committee arranged a three-day training for the volunteers ahead of their mission to the region in order to help them adapt to the work and life there. The training will focus on health and hygiene on the plateau, history of Tibet, and briefing of the region's current situation.

Duan Zehua, a volunteer from the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication, said grassroots work experience in Tibet will provide a good chance for volunteers to improve themselves and realise the value of life.

China initiated a campaign in 2003 to encourage more university student volunteers to work in China's underdeveloped western regions to promote development. To date, nearly 3,702 volunteers have

served in Tibet since 2003, and 1,035 of them have stayed to work in Tibet after their services.

Detention and Self-immolation

Tibetan Woman Self-Immolates in Protest Burning in China's Gansu

Radio Free Asia
August 28, 2015



A framed photo of Tashi Kyi is placed on an altar following her death. (Photo courtesy of an RFA listener)

A Tibetan woman died early Friday, a day after she set herself ablaze in northwest China's Gansu province in an apparent protest against the demolition of her home by police and officials, sources inside and outside the region said.

Those who witnessed Tashi Kyi, a resident of Ngulra village, Sangkok town, Sangchu (in Chinese, Xiahe) county in Kanlho (Gannan) prefecture, self-immolating tried to save her by putting out the fire, said a Tibetan source, who declined to be named.

"She passed away around 3 a.m. Friday," he told RFA's Tibetan Service. "Chinese security officials arrived in the morning and took away her body by force."

On Thursday before the incident occurred, more than 150 Chinese police and government officials had raided a Tibetan house believed to be Kyi's in Ngulra and completely demolished the structure, the source said.

The London-based advocacy group Free Tibet said the woman set herself on fire after 150 police and officials began demolishing houses in Ngulra with bulldozers.

"A number of the house owners protested, with some physically hanging on to the demolition equipment," Free Tibet said in a statement. "Ngulra residents believe Tashi Kyi's self-immolation was motivated by witnessing the destruction of her village."

The statement quoted one unnamed source in the village as saying officials said the houses were being demolished because they did not have valid permits.

A Tibetan source, who lives in Europe but maintains contact with area residents, told RFA that locals confirmed that authorities who raided the houses claimed their owners lacked proper documents.

"This was one of the reasons that Tashi Kyi set herself on fire and died in protest," he said.

Others told him that China's overall policy of suppression in Tibet could have been the main reason for Kyi's actions, he said.

Kyi's self-immolation brings to 143 the total number of burnings by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama began in 2009.

Reported by Lhuboom and Lobe Socktsang for RFA's Tibetan Service. Translated by Karma Dorjee. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

Tibetan Prisoner in Failing Health Three Years Into 10-Year Term

RFA
August 26, 2015

A Tibetan man jailed three years ago for preventing Chinese police from seizing the body of a self-immolation protester is in failing health in prison and has been refused family visits from his ageing parents, sources said.

Washul Dortruk, age unknown, was handed a ten-year term in December 2012 after returning the body of Lobsang Gendun to his monastery in Qinghai province's Pema (in Chinese, Banma) county, a local source told RFA's Tibetan Service this week.

“Since then, he has been serving his sentence in a prison located in the eastern part of [provincial capital] Xining,” RFA’s source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“He has completed almost three years, and has another seven years to serve,” he said.

Lobsang Gendun, 29, set himself ablaze on Dec. 3 to protest China’s rule in Tibetan areas and walked about 300 steps with his hands folded in prayer, shouting slogans, before he collapsed and died, sources said in earlier reports.

Though Chinese police arrived quickly at the scene to remove his remains, local Tibetans struggled with them for possession of the body and took it to Pema county’s Penak monastery, where Gendun had lived before staging his fiery protest, sources said.

Failing health

Dortruk, one of those who returned the dead monk’s body to his home, is now in poor health in prison, RFA’s source said.

“His parents were allowed to meet with him some years back, but they are now in their 80s and have been refused permission to see him again,” he said.

When other family members were allowed to visit him this year, they could see and speak to him only through a glass partition, the source said.

“At that time, they saw that he was very weak, and he appeared to have suffered a serious injury to his leg while in detention.”

“His family has appealed for a commutation of his sentence, but the authorities have not responded positively to their request,” he said.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 142 Tibetans to date setting themselves on fire to oppose Beijing’s rule and call for the Dalai Lama’s return.

Ten Are Detained in Tibetan Protest March in Nangchen



Radio Free Asia
August 26, 2015

Authorities in northwestern China’s Qinghai province on Wednesday detained at least ten Tibetan protesters calling for an equal distribution of benefits provided by the government to local families, sources said.

About 100 families living in Yulshul (in Chinese, Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’s Nangchen (Nangqian) county had been ruled ineligible for support because family members had moved from the area to find work or schooling for their children, a Tibetan living in India told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“On Aug. 26, about 100 Tibetans from families not listed as beneficiaries gathered at the county center to appeal the decision, and later staged a protest,” Choenyi Woeser said, citing contacts in Nangchen.

“However, county officials refused to listen to their grievances, and about ten protesters were detained,” Woeser said.

During their protest, marchers carried banners bearing the slogans “Prosperity, Democracy, Development, Harmony, and Truth” written clearly in Chinese, he said.

Housing, scholarships

Recently, the Nangchen County Economic Development Council had announced a project to build new houses and provide scholarships for students in Chumey village in Nangchen’s Nyakla township, Woeser said.

“However, Tibetans from that town who had traveled out of the area for work, and also family members? who had moved elsewhere to find better schools for their children, were not included in the list of beneficiaries of the project,” he said.

Separately, the India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)—

“As a result, these Tibetans held a protest march to request the authorities to reconsider the decision and allow equal treatment of all irrespective of their current location,” CTA said in a statement on Wednesday.

No word was immediately available regarding the names of those taken into custody, or on their present condition or whereabouts.

Young Tibetan Woman Detained Following Solo Protest in Ngaba

RFA

August 25, 2015



Dorjee Dolma in an undated photo. Photo courtesy of an RFA listener

Police in southwestern China’s Sichuan province have detained a young Tibetan woman after she launched a brief protest on a central street in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county, calling out for Tibetan freedom, sources said.

The solo protest “against Chinese policy” by Dorje Dolma took place at about 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 20 in the seat of Ngaba, a Tibetan source who witnessed the incident told RFA’s Tibetan Service, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“She shouted in protest for some time before a group of police arrived at the scene and took her away,” the source said.

“Dorje Dolma is the daughter of Dorab (father) and Tamding Tso (mother), and they are residents of Meruma township’s Village No. 2, in Ngaba county,” he said.

A second Tibetan source told RFA that only a few people saw Dolma’s protest because it was held so early in the morning, but authorities were quick to shut it down and take her into custody.

“Not long after her protest began, a group of ten police arrived at the site and took her away,” said the source, who also declined to provide his name.

“Her slogans could not be heard and there is no information about her place of detention or current condition.”

Dolma’s protest follows one held a week earlier in Meruma township by a 23-year-old Tibetan nomad named Woekar Kyi—the mother of a four-year-old son—who had called out for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Kyi was taken into custody on Aug. 15 by local police in Meruma shortly after beginning her protest, and her condition and whereabouts are currently unknown.

In December, two other Meruma residents were also taken into custody—one a student and the other a monk—apparently on suspicion of involvement in activities opposing Beijing’s rule in Tibetan areas.

Detained Tibetan identified

Meanwhile, a young Tibetan man detained by police last week in Sichuan after he held a protest in a public square calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama, has been identified as Lobsang Thubten, 17, sources said.

Thubten’s protest on Aug. 18 in Lithang (in Chinese, Litang) county in the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, took place near a Chinese police post in the county seat, and he was quickly bundled away in a small black car.

The young man, who is a native of Lithang’s Yonkor village, is now being held at a police station in the county seat, Sermay Loga, a Tibetan monk now living in India and originally from Lithang told RFA’s Tibetan Service, citing local contacts.

“There are lots of restrictions in place in Lithang and nearby—the main reason for this is because of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche’s death,” Loga said, referring to a popular Tibetan monk who died last month amid unexplained circumstances in a Chinese prison.

“Also, authorities tightened restrictions around the Aug. 1 anniversary of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the recent release of Runggye Adrak,” he said, referring to a Tibetan nomad who was freed from prison last month after serving eight years for holding a protest similar to Thubten’s in August 2007.

Authorities have yet to confirm Thubten’s detention.

Reached for comment last week, an officer on duty at the Lithang police station said he had no record of the protest and hung up the phone.

Restive region

Tibetans living in Kardze prefecture, in which Lithang county lies, are known for their strong sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism and frequently stage protests alone or in groups opposing rule by Beijing.

Earlier this month, sources told RFA that authorities in Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's Nyagchuka (in Chinese, Yajiang) county in Kardze have ordered residents to stop discussing the circumstances surrounding his death, and had deployed security personnel and restricted communications there.

Rinpoche, 65, died on July 12 in the 13th year of a life sentence imposed for what rights groups and supporters have described as a wrongful conviction on a bombing charge. He was widely respected among Tibetans for his efforts to protect Tibetan culture and the environment.

The India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has called for an "independent and impartial investigation" into the death of the monk, saying the Chinese government has a legal obligation to determine whether his death was caused intentionally or by negligence.

Runggye Adrak's detention following his 2007 protest drew hundreds of Tibetan protesters into police and government office compounds in Lithang, prompting police to threaten to shoot when tensions were at their height.

Authorities managed to negotiate an uneasy truce, but security forces then converged on Lithang in large numbers, and local Tibetan Communist Party officials in the area were replaced with Han Chinese.

Sentenced in November 2007 to an eight-year term for "inciting to split the country" and "subverting state power," Adrak was severely beaten and tortured in detention, and was later confined in Sichuan's Mianyang prison before his release on July 30, according to TCHRD.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 142 Tibetans to date setting themselves on fire to oppose Beijing's rule and call for the Dalai Lama's return.

Reported by Chakmo Tso and Lobe Socktsang for RFA's Tibetan Service. Translated by Karma Dorjee. Written in English by Joshua Lipen.

Tibetan Youth is Detained After Staging Solo Protest in Lithang

Radio Free Asia

August 19, 2015

Police in southwestern China's Sichuan province detained a young Tibetan man this week after he launched a brief protest in a public square, calling out for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, sources said.

The protest by the still-unidentified youth took place at about 9:40 a.m. on Aug. 18 in Lithang (in Chinese, Litang) county in the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a Tibetan monk now living in India and originally from Lithang told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"He was seen carrying a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and heard shouting 'Free Tibet,'" the monk, named Sermay Loga, said, citing contacts in Lithang.

"He also called out for the return of His Holiness to Tibet," Loga said.

The young man's protest took place near a Chinese police post on White Crane Square in the Lithang county seat, and he was quickly detained and taken away in a small black car, Loga said, adding that though few Tibetans were present to witness the incident, "everyone is now aware of it."

Details on the young man's identity and present whereabouts and condition were not immediately available due to communications blocks imposed by Chinese authorities in the area.

Reached for comment on Wednesday, an officer on duty at the Lithang police station said he had no record of the protest and hung up the phone.

Tibetan national identity

Tibetans living in Kardze prefecture, in which Lithang county lies, are known for their strong sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism and frequently stage protests alone or in groups opposing rule by Beijing.

Tibetans opposed to Chinese rule frequently turn to solitary protest to express their views, Tenzin Nyinje—a researcher at the India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy—was quoted as saying by the Tibetan news service phayul.com on Wednesday.

"In occupied Tibet, the right to assembly and freedom of expression doesn't exist at all," Nyinje said.

"Hence, the solo protests that we see every now and then."

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since

widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 142 Tibetans to date setting themselves on fire to oppose Beijing's rule and call for the Dalai Lama's return.

Reported by Tenzin Wangyal for RFA's Tibetan Service. Translated by Dorjee Damdul. Written in English by Richard Finney.

Tibetan Prisoner Linked to 2012 Self-Immolation is Moved to Hospital in Qinghai

RFA
Aug 19, 2015



Map showing location of Themchen county in Qinghai's Tsonub prefecture.

A Tibetan prisoner linked to a 2012 self-immolation protest in northwestern China's Qinghai province has been moved to an emergency care facility in the provincial capital Xining after complaining of severe stomach pain, sources said.

Phuntsok, believed to be in his 50s, was one of three nonmonastic tantric practitioners, or ngakpas, taken into custody during mass detentions following the self-immolation of Damchoe Sangpo, a monk at the Bongtak monastery in Themchen (in Chinese, Tianjun) county in the Tsonub (Haixi) Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Sangpo, aged about 40, set himself ablaze and died on Feb. 17, 2012 after protesting Chinese security intrusions at his monastery, sources said in earlier reports.

Phuntsok and fellow ngakpas Jampa and Sherab—all affiliated with the Sang-ngak Tengye Norbu Ling practice center in Themchen—were detained along with other

Tibetans shortly afterward on suspicion of involvement in the protest or of spreading news of it abroad, and were later sentenced to prison terms of from four to six years.

"Recently, Phuntsok, the oldest of the three, has suffered from severe problems with his stomach, and he has been transferred from prison to the Qinghai Red Cross Hospital in Xining," RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"He is guarded there by armed police, and his family members are not allowed to visit him," he said.

Damchoe Sangpo's fiery protest was the 22nd of the now 142 self-immolations committed to date by Tibetans protesting Beijing's policies and rule in Tibetan areas of China.

He had objected to the cancelling by Chinese authorities of a traditional prayer festival held by the monastery and to the presence at the monastery of Chinese security forces, sources said at the time.

Security measures had already been tightened at Bongtak following an earlier protest by a monk protesting Chinese mining operations in the area.

Reported by Chakmo Tso for RFA's Tibetan Service. Translated by Rigdhen Dolma. Written in English by Richard Finney.

China arrests young Tibetan mother after calling for freedom in Tibet

The Tibet Post
August 15, 2015



Undated photo of Wokar Kyi, a young Tibetan mother who called for freedom in Tibet. Photo: TPI

Dharamshala — Source coming out of Tibet says a young Tibetan mother had disappeared in Ngaba County of north-eastern Tibet after staging a protest calling for

“freedom in Tibet” and “return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet”.

Wokar Kyi, approximately a 23-year-old Tibetan mother was arrested and disappeared after staging a protest against Chinese rule,” Ven Kanyak Tsering, a monk from India based Kirti Monastery with close contacts in the Tibetan region told the Tibet Post International.

“She raised slogans calling for “freedom in Tibet” and “return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet,” Ven Tsering said.

“Wokar Kyi took to the Meruma township of Ngaba County, protesting against the Chinese government, around 3:00 pm on August 17,” Ven Tsering said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Ven Tsering added that “Chinese authorities arrived at the scene within minutes and arrested her. The current condition and whereabouts of Wokar Kyi remain unknown.”

“Wokar Kyi grew up with her nomad parents,” the source said, adding that “she never attended formal schooling.

She hailed from 1st village of Meruma in Ngaba County and her father’s name is Kunpo and mother’s Khakpa. Her husband’s name is Tashi and they have an four year-old son.

On July 15, Wangmo, a 22-year-old Tibetan girl from Meruma in Ngaba County was for staging a lone protest against the repressive policies of the Chinese government on 15 July.

“Wangmo was released recently after several days’ detention. She returned home and was given a hero’s welcome on arrival,” the source said.

On December 29, 2014, Soepa, 21-year-old Tibetan writer and blogger, was arrested from a bus on his way from Meruma township to Ngaba County. Sources said though the exact reasons for Soepa’s arrest is not clear, local Tibetans say it might be linked to the various articles and essays published on his blog.

Hundreds of Tibetans, including writers, bloggers, singers and environmentalists, have been detained or are imprisoned, after attempting to express their views or share news of the situation in Tibet with the outside world, and provides further evidence of a widespread crackdown against free expression in Tibet.

Clampdown Amid Questions Over Death of Tibetan Monk in Custody

Radio Free Asia

August 13, 2015

Authorities in southwestern China’s Sichuan province have launched a clampdown in the home county of a popular Tibetan monk who died last month amid unexplained circumstances in a Chinese prison, deploying security personnel and restricting communications, a Tibetan source in exile said Wednesday.

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, 65, died on July 12 in the 13th year of a life sentence imposed for what rights groups and supporters have described as a wrongful conviction on a bombing charge. He was widely respected among Tibetans for his efforts to protect Tibetan culture and the environment.

In recent weeks, authorities in Rinpoche’s Nyagchuka (in Chinese, Yajiang) county in the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture have ordered residents to stop discussing the circumstances surrounding his death, Lobsang Yonten, a Tibetan exile living in south India, told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“After his death, the Chinese authorities started conducting political re-education activities in the area, instructing people not to talk about it, saying it could lead to riots,” Yonten said, noting that many local residents are affiliated with Rinpoche’s Kham Nalanda Thekchen Jangchub Choling monastery.

“The authorities also tried to impress upon the public that Rinpoche had died a natural death and had received all possible medical treatment,” he said.

According to Yonten, young men in the county have been “forced to engage in military training and exercises,” while those who do not comply are “detained for several days” and subjected to re-education.

Local Tibetan devotees who wanted to attend a ritual prayer for Rinpoche at the Kham Nalanda Thekchen Jangchub Choling monastery were not permitted to do so, he said, adding that residents are required to obtain special permission from authorities before they can even go near the site.

“A large contingent of security forces is still deployed in the area and Rinpoche’s monastery is also surrounded by police and armed paramilitary units,” he said.

Sister and niece

On July 30, authorities freed the sister and niece of Rinpoche after holding the two women in custody in a secret location for nearly two weeks, the India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD)

said last week. No charges were filed against them, the group said.

Dolkar Lhamo, 55, and Nyima Lhamo, aged about 25, had been detained in Sichuan's provincial capital Chengdu on July 17 on suspicion of having shared information related to the death of Rinpoche with contacts outside the area.

TCHRD said that family and friends living outside Tibet feared the two women had been subjected to beatings, intimidation and possibly torture during their detention.

Yonten said Wednesday that they have been under police monitor since their release.

"Although the sister and her daughter were released, they are confined in their home without a phone, which the authorities took away," he said.

"They were told not to meet or talk with their relatives and friends, nor are they permitted to travel away from their house."

Call for investigation

Before being detained, Dolkar Lhamo had appealed to authorities for an explanation of the circumstances surrounding Rinpoche's death, also submitting abstracts from China's constitution on required procedures following the death of a prisoner belonging to a minority national group, one source told RFA in an earlier report.

"But the authorities refused to accept those representations," the source said.

In its statement last week, TCHRD called for an "independent and impartial investigation" into the death of the widely respected monk, saying the Chinese government has a legal obligation to determine whether his death was caused intentionally or by negligence.

Despite protests from his family, Rinpoche's remains were cremated by prison authorities on July 16.

Reported by Sonam Wangdu for RFA's Tibetan Service. Translated by Karma Dorjee. Written in English by Joshua Lipes.

Solo Tibetan Protester Freed From Second Month-Long Detention

Radio Free Asia
August 10, 2015

A Tibetan businessman held since last month by authorities in China's Sichuan province for the second time in less than a year has been freed after being warned of "severe punishment" if he speaks out about his detention, according to Tibetan sources.

Pasang Wangchuk, 37 and a father of three, was detained on July 7 after making offerings in public to mark the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday a day earlier in defiance of Chinese bans, sources said.

"After being detained for one month, [Wangchuk] was released on Aug. 6, around 11:00 a.m.," a Tibetan living in Tibet told RFA's Tibetan Service Monday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Before his release, he was told that he cannot travel or say anything about the detention, and so on. If he does, he was warned that he could be punished more severely than what he faced during his last detention."

It was not immediately clear why authorities had decided to release him.

According to the source, on July 6, Wangchuk "put on his best Tibetan traditional dress, burnt juniper and performed an incense offering for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama," despite a ban on observing the exiled spiritual leader's birthday by Chinese authorities.

He was detained the following afternoon and taken to a prison in Sichuan's Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, sources told RFA at the time.

Wangchuk had also been detained in October 2014 after staging a solo protest in the market area of Kardze town in which he had shouted slogans calling for Tibetan freedom and the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama.

When he was released a month later, a source told RFA that "police warned him they would be watching his behaviour for a year."

The source said that his contacts could not say whether Wangchuk had been beaten or tortured during the month he spent in jail—a punishment many detained Tibetan protesters say they undergo.

Residence searched

A day after Wangchuk's release, authorities in Kardze's Sershul county raided the living quarters of detained monk Sonam Yangphel, confiscating a variety of items related to the Dalai Lama, a second source from Tibet, who also declined to provide his name, told RFA.

"On Aug. 7, the residence of Sonam Yangphel was searched in his absence and police took away photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and books written by the Dalai Lama," the source said.

According to RFA's source, Yangphel—who is a monk of Mangge monastery in Sershul—was detained on Nov. 26 last year for a solo protest in Sershul county center, during which he donned a white scarf and carried a portrait of the Dalai Lama, calling for the return of the spiritual leader to Tibet.

“Soon after that, he was detained in the Sershul county detention center,” the source said.

“His relatives have seen him performing labor at the detention center, but they have not been allowed to see him,” he said, adding that they were able to pass food to Yangphel through facility staff.

Authorities have not provided any information about whether he has been tried or sentenced, the source said.

Kardze protests

Tibetans in Kardze prefecture are known for their strong sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism and frequently stage protests alone or in groups opposing rule by Beijing.

The Dalai Lama, who is regarded by Chinese authorities as a dangerous separatist intent on splitting Tibet away from China, fled Tibet into exile in India in the midst of a failed 1959 national uprising against Chinese rule.

Chinese authorities tightened restrictions across Tibetan-populated regions this year in advance of the Dalai Lama’s birthday on July 6, posting warnings against celebrations of the politically sensitive event and blocking public gatherings that could be linked to it.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 142 Tibetans to date setting themselves ablaze to oppose Beijing’s rule and call for the Dalai Lama’s return.

Reported by Sonam Wangdu and Kunsang Tenzin for RFA’s Tibetan Service. Translated by Karma Dorjee. Written in English by Joshua Lipis.

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche’s Sister, Niece Return Home After Two Weeks’ Detention

*Radio Free Asia
August 7, 2015*

Authorities in southwestern China’s Sichuan province have freed the sister and niece of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a popular Tibetan monk who died last month in unexplained circumstances in a Chinese prison, after holding the two women in custody in a secret location for almost two weeks, a rights group said on Friday.

Dolkar Lhamo, 55, and Nyima Lhamo, aged about 25, were released on July 30 and sent back to their hometown in Nyagchuka (in Chinese, Yajiang) county in the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) said in an Aug. 7 statement.

“No charges were filed against them,” TCHRD said, citing contacts in the region.

No word was immediately available regarding the women’s physical or psychological condition, TCHRD said.

“However, family and friends living outside Tibet fear that both women had been subjected to beatings, intimidation and possibly torture during the almost two-week detention,” the rights group said.

Lhamo and her daughter were detained in Sichuan’s provincial capital Chengdu at about 8:00 a.m. on July 17 on suspicion of having shared information related to the death of the older woman’s brother, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, with contacts outside the area.

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, 65, died on July 12 in the 13th year of a life sentence imposed for what rights groups and supporters have described as a wrongful conviction on a bombing charge. He was widely respected among Tibetans for his efforts to protect Tibetan culture and the environment.

His remains were cremated by prison authorities on July 16 against the wishes of his family.

Communications blocks

Chinese authorities have now imposed communications blocks in the Nyagchuka area and confiscated family members’ mobile phones, TCHRD said, adding that police have forbidden relatives from calling meetings to discuss the situation.

“Chinese troops have also been deployed at Rinpoche’s monasteries to stop lay Tibetans from attending prayer sessions” held in the dead monk’s honour, the rights group said.

Before being detained, Dolkar Lhamo had appealed to authorities for an explanation of the circumstances surrounding Tenzin Delek Rinpoche’s death, also submitting abstracts from China’s constitution on required procedures following the death of a prisoner belonging to a minority national group, one source told RFA in an earlier report.

“But the authorities refused to accept those representations,” the source said.

In its statement Friday, TCHRD called for an “independent and impartial investigation” into the death of the widely respected monk.

“The government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has a legal obligation to carry out the investigation to determine whether the death was caused intentionally or by negligence,” TCHRD said.

“TCHRD urges the local Chinese authorities to lift the communications ban on Rinpoche’s family members and

ease restrictions on local Tibetans and the monasteries founded by Rinpoche.”

Tibetan Monk Emerges From Two-Month Stint in Sichuan Jail in Poor Health

Radio Free Asia
August 5, 2015



Tibetan monk Lobsang Tsering in an undated photo. Photo courtesy of an RFA listener

Authorities in western China’s Sichuan province have freed a Tibetan monk detained for two months for planning celebrations marking the birthday of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, releasing him to his home in poor health, sources said.

Lobsang Tsering, a monk of Kirti monastery in Sichuan’s Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, was released from custody on Aug. 4, a Tibetan living in the region told RFA’s Tibetan Service on Wednesday.

“He had been held for two months in a dark cell with only the sound of an airplane flying above his place of detention each day,” RFA’s source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“He thinks that he was kept in a detention center in the area of [Sichuan’s provincial capital] Chengdu, but he doesn’t know the exact location,” the source said.

Taken to a Chinese military post following his release, Tsering was joined by a monk named Tenzin who had been sent to escort him home, and both arrived at Kirti monastery at about 4:00 p.m., the source said.

“[Tsering’s] health is reported to be poor, and he could not walk without support,” he said.

Tsering was detained on June 11 because of his involvement in preparing celebrations of the 80th birthday of the Dalai Lama, the source said.

“He was accused of building a throne and of forming a [social media] WeChat group to encourage activities sparing animals’ lives to gain merit for the Dalai Lama’s long life,” he said.

Tightened restrictions

The Dalai Lama, who is regarded by Chinese authorities as a dangerous separatist intent on splitting Tibet away from China, fled Tibet into exile in India in the midst of a failed 1959 national uprising against Chinese rule.

Chinese authorities tightened restrictions across Tibetan-populated regions this year in advance of the Dalai Lama’s birthday on July 6, posting warnings against celebrations of the politically sensitive event and blocking public gatherings that could be linked to it.

Tsering’s Kirti monastery has been the scene of repeated self-immolations and other protests by monks, former monks, and nuns opposed to Chinese rule in Tibetan areas.

Authorities raided the institution in 2011, taking away hundreds of monks and sending them for “political re-education” while local Tibetans who sought to protect the monks were beaten and detained, sources said in earlier reports.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 142 Tibetans to date setting themselves ablaze to oppose Beijing’s rule and call for the Dalai Lama’s return.

Reported by Kunsang Tenzin for RFA’s Tibetan Service. Translated by Karma Dorjee. Written in English by Richard Finney.

Exiled Tibetans celebrate release of nomad Runggye Adrak from China’s prison

August 2, 2015

Dharamsala, Aug 02 (ANI): Tibetans living in exile in Dharamsala celebrated the release of Tibetan nomad, Runggye Adrak, after eight years of imprisonment by China. Adrak was jailed for eight years for raising slogans and calling for Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet during a festival in Lithang county in western China’s Sichuan province.

Chinese authorities arrested Adrak on August 01, 2007, and he was sentenced to prison for subverting state laws and disrupting public harmony. On Saturday, Tibetans-in-exile celebrated with pomp. However, the relatives of

Adrak were not present in the celebration due to security concerns. China has ruled Tibet with an iron fist since troops took over the region in 1950, and those controls often extend to ethnic Tibetan areas in other parts of China. Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, fled into exile in India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule.

economic and cultural developments in Tibet, and to provide consular protection and citizen services.

It urged the U.S. government to raise concerns over Tibetan human rights and political and religious freedom at the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic dialogues and other high level bilateral meetings.

More than 130 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibetan areas of China since 2009 as part of a desperate protest against China's rule and repressive policies in Tibet. China says the suicide protests are acts of terrorism.

The Dalai Lama and the Chinese government last held talks in 2010. The Dalai Lama has said he is optimistic that Communist Party leader Xi Jinping, who came to power in 2012, could resume the negotiations.

Tibetan Who Called for Dalai Lama's Return Is Said to Be Freed From Chinese Prison

New York Times
AUGUST 1, 2015

BEIJING — A Tibetan man who was imprisoned for eight years after calling for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet at a popular festival has been released, according to overseas Tibet advocacy groups.

The man, Runggye Adak, is a former nomad and father of 11 who since his imprisonment had become an important symbol to Tibetans of resistance to restrictive official policies in Tibetan areas of western China.

Exile groups said that Mr. Runggye Adak, who is believed to be 60 or 61, was released Friday from a prison in Sichuan Province, far from the high grasslands of his home county, Litang, where in 2007 he had publicly called for the return of the Dalai Lama, the 80-year-old spiritual leader of the Tibetans who is reviled by China's leaders.

Mr. Runggye Adak did that at the Litang Horse Festival, a well-known event that once drew thousands of nomads, Buddhist monks, nuns, pilgrims and tourists to Litang every August. Since Mr. Runggye Adak's protest, and a widespread Tibetan uprising in 2008, officials have canceled the festival every year.

It was canceled again this summer, after people in the area and in Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan, protested the death of another prominent Tibetan political prisoner, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, 65. Mr. Tenzin Delek, who was from the Litang area and was one of the most prominent Tibetan religious leaders in prison, died last month under mysterious circumstances while serving a life sentence for "terrorism and inciting separatism." He was arrested in 2002.

The authorities quickly cremated Mr. Tenzin Delek's body rather than turn it over to relatives to perform traditional Buddhist funeral rites. Security officials also detained a sister and a niece of the deceased Rinpoche, according to Students for a Free Tibet, which is based overseas. The group said Saturday that the two women were released late Thursday.

China's security clampdown in the vast Tibetan areas increased greatly after the 2008 unrest and has continued at a severe level since then. The intervening years have seen more than 140 self-immolations by Tibetans, most of them intended as protests against what most Tibetans call the occupation of their homeland.

Though the Litang Horse Festival has not been held since 2007, a few similar events are held on the Tibetan plateau with official approval. One, a three-day horse festival organised by the local government of the Tibetan area of Gyegudo, known in Chinese as Yushu, ended Monday. Officials said the festival in Gyegudo, which has been rebuilt since a 2010 earthquake, had been put on to show the outside world the culture of Kham, the region of eastern Tibet that includes Litang.

Days before the festival, a young monk, Sonam Topgyal, set himself on fire in the middle of Gyegudo.

At the last Litang Horse Festival, in 2007, Mr. Runggye Adak, the former nomad, said in a speech to a large crowd that the Dalai Lama was the one person Tibetans truly needed. He also said that "although we can move our bodies, we cannot express what is in our hearts," according to a translation by the International Campaign for Tibet. Chinese officials generally do not tolerate public displays of the Dalai Lama's picture, let alone speeches calling for his return.

On Friday, Mr. Runggye Adak was taken straight to his home in Litang by the authorities, having completed his eight-year prison sentence, according to a report by the International Campaign for Tibet, based in Washington.

Last year, Mr. Runggye Adak carried out a 33-day hunger strike in prison to protest the authorities' treatment of political prisoners, according to two Tibetans living in India, including Lobsang Jamyang, a monk who is Mr.

Runggye Adak's eldest son. Mr. Runggye Adak was taken to a hospital after his hunger strike, Mr. Lobsang Jamyang said last year in an interview.

Mr. Runggye Adak was held in Mianyang Prison, which is north of Chengdu, in low-lying hills that were the site of the devastating Sichuan earthquake of 2008. As of 2010, there were 42 Tibetan prisoners in that prison, according to Adig Tseten, a member of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, and a relative of Mr. Runggye Adak.

Some of those 42 prisoners have since been released, but others are still being held. Mr. Adig Tseten said there had consistently been 40 or more Tibetan prisoners in Mianyang for years.

Military and Infrastructure Development

China to deploy 3 more unmanned radars in Tibet along India border

Economic Times
August 24, 2015

BEIJING: In a move that will have strategic ramifications for India, China will soon deploy three more unmanned radars in Tibet in addition to the one already installed there to strengthen air surveillance in the Himalayan region along the Indian border.

China's first unmanned radar station has stood for eight years on top of Ganbala Mountain. This year another three unmanned radars are going to be installed in order to form a radar network with the previous ones, state-run People's Daily reported.

China completed construction of Ganbala radar station in 1965 which is the highest manned radar station in the world at a height of 5,374 metres above sea level.

However, the percentage of oxygen in the air on Ganbala Mountain, located not far from Sikkim and Bhutan borders, is only 48 per cent of that at sea level. That is why the mountain is viewed as a "life forbidding zone".

For over 50 years, this radar station has been used to secure surveillance and provide civilian air navigation services in Tibet, the report said.

To counter China, 1st of 8 new airstrips ready in Arunachal

Tribune News Service
August 23, 2015

Fifty-three years after India was "wrong-footed" due to poor infrastructure during the 1962 Chinese aggression, the first of the planned airfields in Arunachal Pradesh is ready and four more will be opened by the year-end in the state.

The advanced landing ground (ALG) — euphuism for British-era mud-paved landing strip — at Walong in Arunachal is now fully upgraded, paved and network connected with the Indian Air Forces' (IAF's) existing data network. Planes such as Super Hercules C-130-J, Globemaster C-17 and AN-32 can land there, allowing rapid movement of troops, artillery guns, armoured vehicles and tanks.

An upgraded Walong airfield was slated to be formally inaugurated on August 20, but the low-key ceremony was put off due to adverse weather conditions. Sources told the Tribune that four similar airstrips in the hill state will be ready for use by the IAF before November this year. The one at Ziro is slated for completion in October, while Along, Mechuka and Passighat will be ready in November. "Work is on in full swing," a senior functionary said.

The British had created small mud-paved landing grounds during the world war-II for their Burma and east India operations. The existing mud-paved ALGs are too small in length and allow only very small aircraft to land and have a non-existent ground support. These are rendered unusable during rains.

Other than the ones planned to be operational this year, Tuting will follow in January 2016, while Tawang (being upgraded for military helicopter operations) will be ready in September next year. These airfields dot various folds of the Himalayas in Arunachal and cover an east-west axis bring the IAF and Army's rapid deployment capabilities much closer to the 'MacMahon line' — the India-China boundary in this part of the country.

Central heating project starts construction in roof of the world

Xinhua

August 12, 2015

A central heating project began construction in Ngari Prefecture, the highest region in southwest China's plateau region of Tibet, on Monday.

Work crews began laying piping for the project in Shiquanhe Township, the seat of the prefecture with an altitude of more than 4,200 meters. They will provide heating to 25,000 local residents.

Ngari has 217 days a year with temperature below 0 degree Celsius. The lowest temperature recorded was 36.7 degrees Celsius below 0.

The central heating project, which will allow the prefecture government to close 150 small-sized boilers, will reduce consumption of 31,600 tonnes of coal, 103 tonnes of dust and 92,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

"We will not burn cow dung to warm ourselves any more," said Doje, a local resident in the town.

More than 1.4 billion yuan (229 million U.S. dollars) was invested in the project, which is expected to be completed in two years. The heating will come from a thermal power plant in the town.

The project will improve living conditions for local residents and promote environmental protection in the region, said Zhu Zhongkui, a senior official with the prefecture government.

Night Fighting Tests of China's J-11 Aircraft in Tibet

DefenseWorld.net

August 11, 2015



Chinese J-11 regiment night combat training (Photo: PLA website)

China has conducted night combat training of its J-11 regiment of the PLA air force in Tibet.

"A group of J-11 heavy fighters were seen taking off amid twilight on August 9. They were engaged in a confrontation drill carried out at night," China mil reported Tuesday.

The regiment has carried out various night training of air battle as part of its annual training plan.

The Shenyang J-11 aircraft is a single seat, twin-engine jet fighter. The aircraft's airframe is based on Sukhoi-27 and is comparable to General Dynamics F-16, F/A 18 Hornet, Euro fighter Typhoon and Dassault Rafale.

To enhance the combat capability of the air force, China began to make J-11 heavy fighters by introducing from Russia the production line of Su-27 heavy fighter in 1990s. Since 2002, the China-made J-11 heavy fighters have been among the arrays of warplanes of the PLA Air Force. The J-11 and J-11A heavy fighters are now widely serving in the aviation troop units of the Air Force and the Navy of the PLA.

China is building the world's largest solar plant in the Gobi desert

The Asian Correspondent

August 11, 2015



The Delingha solar thermal power plant is already under construction. Image via news.com.cn.

China's smog may be infamous, but its [Gobi desert is quickly becoming known for soaking up solar rays](#) that could make blue skies the new norm.

Last weekend an article on Discovery's website described an ambitious, 10-square-mile solar thermal power plant being built in the Gobi desert in the northwestern province of Qinghai. Dubbed Delingha, the facility is expected to provide power to one million households and is set to go online in 2017.

The Discovery article also touched on the broader proliferation of solar facilities in the region. It cited National Geographic's recent publishing of NASA satellite photos to show how photovoltaic panels have sprawled across the Gobi as of late, covering triple the desert's land mass compared to three years ago.



These images from NASA (via National Geographic) show the massive growth of solar in China in just three years.

But apparently Delingha will up the region's already impressive power production. According to the *The Inquisitor*, it is on track to be the biggest solar power plant in the world, measuring as large as many of the cities that it will provide green energy to. Discovery noted that Delingha will be a solar thermal project. That's an important distinction— according to solar-thermal.com solar thermal facilities capture sunlight to heat liquids that can easily be stored to later run electricity generating engines. This is more practical than using mere photovoltaic solar panel technology that directly converts sunlight to electricity, which can not be stored for later use as easily as a thermal system's heated liquids.

Wu Longyi, the board chair of the Qinghai Solar-Thermal Power Group that is heading up Delingha, told Chinese state media outlet Xinhua that "designed heat storage is 15 hours, thus, it can guarantee stable, continual power generation." However, China has by no means abandoned photovoltaic technology — in fact, a recent *Take part* article says China has become the world's biggest developer of those PV panels.

The ambitiously gargantuan Delingha facility is part of President Xi Jinping's lofty goal to slash 20 percent of the country's fossil fuel usage by 2030. An Aug. 8 article in *The Independent* said the recent rampant growth of such sun soaking power facilities shows that China is "quickly becoming a world leader in solar power." The story also cited studies by the International Energy Agency and the UN Environment program that detailed, respectively, how the PRC attained the globe's highest level of solar capacity last year and how it became the world's top renewable energy investor, devoting \$83.3 billion to green power in 2014 alone.

But not all environmental experts have been dazzled by China's solar initiatives. Earlier this year, Bloomberg reported on subpar technical standards in 23 percent of sampled PRC's panels. Worse still, an alarming curtailment issue has wasted 28 percent of solar electricity in Gansu and 19 percent in Xinjiang, according to a more recent *Green Tech Media* article. The story went on to quote Adam James, an electricity grid expert and senior analyst at GTM Research, who said that China's laudable gains in solar plant construction will be hampered until its power infrastructure is up to par. He added: "Despite solar receiving strong incentive support and installations reaching record-setting highs, the Chinese electricity market is still grappling with serious structural challenges."

Sky Road in Tibet

August 11, 2015

CRIENGLISH.com

A highway transportation network has been completed to connect southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region with its surrounding areas, which has largely promoted the local traffic conditions.

The transportation network, with Lhasa, capital city of Tibet Autonomous Region as the center, connects southwest China's Sichuan Province, Yunnan Province, northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, west China's Qinghai Province, as well as neighbouring countries of India and Nepal to its south.

By the end of 2014, the total highway mileage in Tibet had reached 75,000 kilo meters, with 5408 villages, or 99.2 percent of the local villages, accessible to highway transportations. [For Photos of the Sky Road please click the title of the article or click here: http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16759](http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16759)

China Focus: 50 years of flights to Tibet bolsters tourism, economy

English.news.cn

August 11, 2015

LHASA, Aug. 11 (Xinhua) — Flying a plane over the "roof of the world" is no easy task.

High terrain and severe weather once made Tibet, with an average altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level, off-limits for aircraft.

Stories of daring American pilots in the 1940s who flew along the Hump Route over the Himalayas to transport military supplies still resound. More than 500 aircraft and 2,000 pilots were lost to the mountains during World War II.

As Tibet marks the 50th anniversary of regular flights this year, aviation professionals explain how the industry has transformed life on the plateau.

50 YEARS: LEAPFROG DEVELOPMENT

Gyazhugling Village in Lhasa, capital of Tibet, is a perfect example of how planes can change lives.

Located just outside Lhasa Konggar Airport, Gyazhugling was once wild marshlands with only a few herdsmen. Since 1966, it has grown into a community of 1,000 residents, with two schools, a clinic, and a cluster of hotels and supermarkets.

With a 4,000-meter runway, Konggar airport transports thousands of passengers every day. For many tourists, Gyazhugling is their first stop.

Tibet now has five airports, one in Lhasa, and another four in Shigatze, Chamdo, Nyingchi and Ngari, which operate 58 flights to other Chinese cities, and also to Kathmandu, capital of Nepal.

In the past 50 years, Tibet's airports had 206,000 takeoffs and landings, and a total of 24.71 million passengers and 330,000 tons of cargo have been transported via the region.

Planes have brought tourists, boosted spending, carried agricultural produce to buyers thousands of miles away, and provided medical evacuation for herdsmen who live in the plateau hinterlands.

Aviation officials who have witnessed these changes credit the progress to strict attention to aviation safety and heavy investment.

In 1955, the Central Government decided to open an air route between Beijing and Lhasa, but it took another decade to make the flight happen.

"I remember there were endless tests and training. No one dared to put a plane and passengers over Tibet unless it was 100 percent safe," said Li Shunhua, former Party Secretary of the Tibet Civil Aviation Bureau.

Li recounted the challenges: heavy clouds, thunderstorms with turbulence severe enough to damage aircraft, sand and dust that could lower ground visibility to zero, and a lack of oxygen for ground staff.

"In the 1990s, there were sandstorms every afternoon in Lhasa. We had to plant thousands of trees around the airport to keep the air clean," said Li, who headed the bureau during the period.

The first flight from Beijing to Lhasa was made by an Il-18 aircraft on March 1, 1965.

"Over the decades, people working in aviation in Tibet have made great contributions and sacrifices to ensure the industry's safety and development," said Li, adding that better navigation technology also improved safety.

Aviation helped Nyingchi, in eastern Tibet, earn 1.11 billion yuan (177 million US dollars) in tourist revenue last year. The figure jumped 11 times compared to the number ten years ago.

"Tibet's tourism, express delivery and other industries wouldn't have flourished if it were not for the air connections," said Li Hancheng, the current director of the Tibetan aviation bureau.

GROWTH BRINGS CHALLENGES

According to a national plan for Tibet's development, in the next five years, the number of flights between Tibet and other cities will increase to 95. Annual passenger volume will reach 6.6 million by 2020.

Officials told Xinhua that passenger volume has reached twice the designed capacity at Konggar and Nyingchi airports.

"The infrastructure is in urgent need of further expansion and upgrades," Li said.

"Brain drain" is also a challenge. Dissatisfied with harsh work conditions, some pilots and airport staff have chosen to work elsewhere.

"It takes at least eight years to train a seasoned captain, because we have stricter requirements for flying the Tibetan route. We need to recruit experienced pilots to expand business," said Bai Weisan, vice manager of Tibet Airlines.

"We will improve wages for staff to keep them working here," he said.

Development of transportation in Tibet over past 5 decades

Photo news. For photos please click the title of the article of click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16778>

Spring water factory produces pure water, new Tibetans

China Tibet Online

August 10, 2015



5100—This isn't some secret project code number, it's the name of a factory located at an altitude of 5100 meters above sea level.

Industry moving onto the plateau

The full name of Factory 5100 is Tibet 5100 Water Resource Holdings Limited, which was built in 2005 in the Nyainqentanglha mountains, with a total investment of 500 million yuan, and all of the factory's machinery is imported from Germany.

According to some references, the origin of the spring water used by Factory 5100, was found in 1986, however what enabled them to make extensive use of this water source was the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway in 2006.

Before this, due to the inconvenience of transportation in Tibet, enterprises were only able to ship spring water by air or by truck, both of which have relatively expensive shipping costs which eventually increased the price of the spring water.

After the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, spring water became one of the few things Tibet could ship to inland areas of the country, and by using the railway, they also prevented sending empty railcars back down the plateau.

In 2008, the cooperation between Factory 5100 and the China Railway progressed, and the 5100 glacier spring water became a complimentary gift for passengers taking the trains. According to a report by Xinhua news, the amount of money the China Railway put into purchasing spring water has already grown to 1.592 billion yuan, and in 2013, China Railway spent 323 million yuan on spring water alone.

Over the past six years, Factory 5100's revenues have increased six fold, and net profits have increased 40 fold. In one of their better years, 90 percent of all spring water sales came from the China Railway.

The area that Factory 5100 is located in, Lhasa's Damxung County, is one of the plateau's grassland farming county. Previously, the town's average annual revenue was approximately two million yuan; However, after the cooperation was formed between Factory 5100 and China Railway, Damxung's annual tax revenue exceeded 100 million yuan.

New ideas of Tibetan workers

A new, modern factory is something that Tibetans living in this area are relatively foreign to.

Losang, a Tibetan girl, is one of the first civilians that started working in Factory 5100, and she stated that before the construction of the factory, young Tibetans had to decide whether they wanted to work in the livestock industry, or become a waiter/waitress in Damxung County, where they would be able to earn a monthly salary of 2,000 yuan.

Comparatively, people who have been working in the factory for a sufficient amount of time and have more experience would be able to earn a monthly salary of about 5,000 yuan, whereas new workers could expect to earn around 3,000 yuan. Additionally, workers can also strive to achieve monthly bonuses of a couple thousand yuan, or even year end bonuses of more than 10,000 yuan. Although living expenses in Tibet are quite pricy, the wages earned by workers is already comparable to workers in the more developed parts of eastern China.

High wages have enticed Tibetans to change their lifestyles around. Information provided by Damxung government has shown that out of the 221 workers employed at Factory 5100, 81.46 percent are Tibetans, and 69.37percent are children of Tibetans who work in the livestock industry.

The person in charge of the logistics department of Factory 5100 stated that making Tibetans who work in the livestock industry change their lifestyles and accustom themselves to the rigid working hours of a factory is not an easy task, even some workers with positive attitudes like Losang have shown up to work two hours late. Losang believes that the reason behind tardiness isn't only that some Tibetans don't have a sense of time, but is also due to the fact that the factory is very far away from the homes of workers, and if a worker encounters even the slightest problem during their commute to work, it is difficult to guarantee that they will be able to show up for work on time.

Language is also one of the major barriers that many Tibetans face in the workplace. When Tibetans entered the workplace about 10 years ago, there were very few workers who were educated in Mandarin, so they had difficulties comprehending manuals on how to operate factory machinery, and they also ran into difficulties communicating with their superior.

As of today, these problems no longer hinder Tibetans in the workplace. Losang stated that most of the workers live in the dormitories provided by the factory, and the factory also provides Tibetan workers with Mandarin and other vocational classes.

Factory 5100 will also occasionally organise groups of workers to enter inland China and experience social and conceptual differences and gaps. These so called “differences and gaps” these workers may encounter while in the inland are actually decreasing and becoming less prominent.

In Factory 5100, many workers like to gather around the billiards tables for entertainment. There are television sets in the dormitories, so workers have the opportunity to see what the world is like outside of Tibet. Recently, Losang’s favourite thing to watch on TV are Korean dramas.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and Losang’s life is the epitome of what freedom and autonomy can provide Tibet with. The meaning behind “ethnic autonomy” is not only to preserve ethnic minority culture, but also to provide minorities with the freedom to create new culture. Development is truly the ultimate freedom.

Train to Tawang brings China border 50km closer to India

Hindustan Times
August 10, 2015



Union Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sarbananda Sonowal along with RS Birdi GM NF Railway flagging off the Murkongselek- Guwahati Inter City Express and Murkongselek- Dekargaon Express at Murkongselek Railway Station (PTI Photo)

India’s train to Tawang, a Buddhist pilgrimage at the core of Beijing’s claim on Arunachal Pradesh, might be years away from reality. But the inauguration of a passenger service to the frontier state has brought the dream project 50km closer to the disputed border with China.

On Monday afternoon, railways minister Suresh Prabhu inaugurated a new broad gauge train on the Dekargaon (Assam)-Bhalukpong (Arunachal) stretch. Bhalukpong is the gateway to Tawang 330km uphill by road.

Last year, China opened a railway line connecting Tibetan capital Lhasa to Shigatse 257km west. More importantly for New Delhi, Shigatse is north of Sikkim and a show of Beijing’s intent to expand the Chinese railway network to the politically charged border with India and Nepal.

This made the NDA government plan railway connectivity to areas bordering China. Earlier this year, the Railway Board cleared a proposal for final location survey of a proposed 378km track from central Assam’s Sonitpur district to Tawang. The alignment envisaged starts with the 52km Dekargaon-Bhalukpong stretch laid in the last five years.

“There used to be a metre gauge line on this stretch but it was more or less defunct. The first passenger service to Bhalukpong should take our achievements to Himalayan heights,” a Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) engineer said, alluding to Tawang’s perch at 10,000 feet in the eastern Himalayas.

NFR’s general manager RS Virdi said the proposed line to Tawang is likely to follow the road to Bomdila (between Bhalukpong and Tawang) and have an elevation of 3,048 metres. “The survey will be conducted jointly by the railways with the defence ministry and the government of Arunachal Pradesh for identifying the best alignment,” he added.

Virdi said regular service for a pair of passenger trains to and from Bhalukpong will begin from Tuesday. This train – proposed goods trains too – is expected to be more crucial for defence personnel than locals.

“This should take care of the movement of our troops and provisions to some extent,” an officer in the army’s 4th Corps based in central Assam’s Tezpur town said.

The Dekargaon-Bhalukpong passenger service was inaugurated along with a train on the newly-laid 512km Rangiya (western Assam)-Murkongselek (eastern Assam, bordering Arunachal) broad gauge track. This line is expected to improve connectivity to central Arunachal Pradesh.

Deepest Underground High-speed Rail Station Completed in Tianjin

The world's largest and deepest underground high-speed rail station has been completed, shortening the trip from Beijing to Tianjin's Yujiabao Financial Zone to only 45 minutes, Xinhua reports.

The Yujiapu Station in Tianjin is between 60 to 65 meters below ground, stretching the Beijing-Tianjin high-speed rail to the coastal areas of Tianjin. The highest speed of the rail is expected to reach 350 km/h.

As the station is built in saline and alkaline soil, a one-meter thick, 1,435 meter long wall was built to prevent water penetration.

China's People's Liberation Army Turns 88

The Diplomat
August 3, 2015

China's military celebrates its 88th anniversary as it prepares for new threats.

On Saturday, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) turned 88, a particularly auspicious number given the connotations associated with the number eight in Chinese culture. As the PLA celebrated 88 years since its founding on August 1, 1927, its official newspaper, the PLA Daily, reportedly stressed growing threats to the integrity of China's borders, including its disputed maritime claims in the East and South China Seas.

According to Reuters, the PLA Daily ran a front page editorial emphasising a growing risk environment for China. "The situation surrounding our country is generally stable, but the risks and challenges are extremely severe, and the possibility of chaos and war on our doorstep has increased," it said. "The maritime security environment is more complicated, and the undercurrents in the East and South China Seas have been gushing up," the PLA Daily editorial continued.

The editorial echoed some of the sentiment expressed in China's recently released 2015 defense white paper, which The Diplomat covered in more detail earlier this year. While that white paper noted the PLA's growing role as a global military, it emphasised the need for China to pay heed to its immediate strategic environs, including in China's near seas. Critically, the white paper noted the continued relevance of Taiwan as the PLA's primary war-fighting scenario.

As Reuters notes, the PLA Daily also highlighted comments by General Chang Wanquan, China's defense minister. In his remarks, Chang notes that "the Taiwan question concerns the core interest of the Chinese nation." He continues, "People across the Taiwan Straits belong to one family. We will continue to promote peaceful development of cross-Straits relations. We firmly oppose and will deter any attempt to separate Taiwan from China, and will resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

While Chang's remarks emphasised the importance of the Taiwan issue for the PLA, the organisation has transformed considerably over the past decade. Particularly in the maritime domain, the PLA Navy is beginning to take on a special importance in China's national security strategy. As China's 2015 white paper noted, the PLA is beginning to leave behind "the traditional mentality that land outweighs sea," a significant change in how the country thinks about the role of its military. In turn, the PLA Navy is swiftly turning into an expeditionary force, capable of projecting power far beyond China's borders.

China's military wants more teeth to counter India, US, Japan

PTI
August 3, 2015

BEIJING: Bracketing India along with the US, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam as "threats" to China's airspace, the PLA in a study has sought the broadening of its air surveillance and attack capabilities with high-speed cruise missiles and a new generation of bombers.

China's Air Force Command Academy in its report last year identified the United States, Japan, Taiwan, India and Vietnam as "threats" to its military airspace until the year 2030, Japanese news agency Kyodo reported.

While the massive expansion of Chinese navy with a second aircraft carrier and a new bomber to operate from its decks attracted worldwide attention, the new study showed that the airforce has started developing a similar expansion strategy, the report said.

The study called for nine types of strategic equipment to counter the threats, which included high-speed air-launched cruise missiles, large transport planes, an airship that moves in the upper atmosphere, a next-generation fighter, unmanned attack aircraft, air-force satellites and precision-guided bombs.

It said the 2.3 million-strong People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest, needs to broaden its air

surveillance and attack capabilities to the western Pacific, including the areas near Japan to ensure its command.

The PLA operates with an annual budget of about USD 145 billion, over three times India's USD 40-billion budget.

The Beijing-based academy, a think-tank of an air force leadership training organisation, prepared the report in November last year.

Studies by the academy have previously served as policy guidelines, the report said.

The academy report proposes broadening the scope of surveillance from a "first island chain" linking Okinawa, Taiwan and the Philippines and one of China's defence lines in the open ocean to a "second island chain" linking the Izu Island chain, Guam and New Guinea.

The study affords a glimpse into the Chinese military's confidence in thwarting the US military, which is critical of China's controversial land-reclamation in the South China Sea.

It mentions enhancing the ability to attack US bases on Chinese side of the second archipelago line with strategic bombers and "deter US military intervention" in the event of a defence operation involving Chinese islands.

The academy report proposed cooperation between airforce and navy to enhance air-defence capability in the Air Defence Identification Zone China established over the East China Sea two years ago, and stresses the need to boost joint training.

The report also places emphasis on the developments of space and missile programmes.

It said the airforce would be put in charge of a space unit to be established in the future and that careful examination was needed regarding the form it would take.

China starts 2015 military recruitment

English.news.cn

August 2, 2015

BEIJING, Aug. 2 (Xinhua) — China has begun a two-month drive to recruit young people, especially those with education, to its army.

The Ministry of National Defense is looking mostly for people educated to high school level or above, it said on Sunday.

The ministry also said it is seeking recruits from ethnic minorities who have bilingual skills or other specialties.

People aged 18 to 22 can apply to join the military, with the maximum recruitment age for college graduates extended to 24.

The army also welcomes high school graduates aged 17 or above.

In order to help the military recruit more college students, the country's top legislature amended the Military Service Law in 2011, raising the maximum age for recruits to 24.

Strict discipline of PLA key to victory: People's Daily

English.news.cn

August 1, 2015

BEIJING, July 31 (Xinhua) — The expulsion of former military leader Guo Boxiong has once again demonstrated the Chinese leadership's determination to run the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with strict discipline, said a commentary to be carried Saturday by the People's Daily, the flagship newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Guo, former vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), was announced to have been expelled from the CPC for suspected discipline violations and taking bribes.

There is no hiding place for corruption within the Party, and it is even more so with the PLA, which holds the weapons to guard national security, the article said.

There are no exceptions in an army ruled in accordance with the law and guarded by strong discipline, it said.

The influence of Guo Boxiong's and Xu Caihou's activities has profoundly damaged army-building efforts, but will not taint the loyal nature of the PLA, it said.

Since its founding 88 years ago, historical experience has made it clear that the PLA has become and stayed invincible due to its strict organisation, management and discipline.

Since the conclusion of the 18th National Congress of the CPC, strict regulations and rules have been rolled out to tighten the management of the army, leaving no space for corruption.

The negative impact of Guo's and Xu's cases should be fully eradicated, while the proud tradition and sound work style of the PLA will be continued to enhance the combat capacity of the army, the article said.

China's military wants more teeth to counter India, US, Japan

PTI

August 3, 2015

BEIJING: Bracketing India along with the US, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam as "threats" to China's airspace, the PLA in a study has sought the broadening of its air surveillance and attack capabilities with high-speed cruise missiles and a new generation of bombers.

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Environment

50 Years of Chinese Rule has Pushed Tibet into Ecological Disaster

August 29, 2015

HONG KONG: The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 led to efforts to greatly expand agricultural production in China.

The ensuing proliferation of irrigation wells sped ahead of the natural rate of replenishment of aquifers that were their source.

As a result, regions of China, particularly the arid north, have accumulated a considerable water deficit. This deficit has been further worsened by industrialisation and the pollution of groundwater tables.

Considering that the Tibetan Plateau is home to some of the world's most extensive underground aquifers, China's interest in the exploitation of these resources is obvious.

Since the completion of the Golmud-Lhasa Railway in 2006, many such projects have been planned.

A Wilson Center report points out that China's South-North Water Diversion Project has a 'Western Route' planned that will tap three tributaries of the Yangtze on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

While the route has received extensive criticism from Chinese and foreign academics alike, the line remains planned.

The project is "definitely not meant to develop Tibet", according to Tibetan natural resources expert Tashi Tsering, as it takes water from rivers dependent on

glaciers that are receding, and will hurt the availability of water in Tibet itself.

In 2014, the Tibet Autonomous Region produced 300,000 tons of bottled water, including the premium brand Tibet Spring 5100 which, as per the Wall Street Journal, has overtaken Evian and Perrier as the most coveted premium water seller in Chi.

Lobsang Gyaltzen, Chairman of the region, has disingenuously claimed that Beijing wished to “strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection” in the development of the bottled water industry.

As if this was not enough, several concessions have also been offered to water manufacturers in the region, with authorities hoping to raise bottled water output to five million tons by 2017.

Concerns have been raised by academics as to the impact on environmental protection.

Canadian water activist Maude Barlow says that “The bottled water industry is one of the most polluting industries on earth, and one of the least regulated.”

An article in the Vermont Law School journal reveals that the industry in China has “antiquated and lax regulations”, and highlights the energy intensive nature of bottled water production.

Considering that the mega dam projects are routinely being pushed through without adequate environmental impact assessments, it is not a stretch to assume that bottling plants may be getting past with even more lax controls.

Known as the world’s Third Pole, the glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau feed the Salween, Mekong, Yangtze, Yellow River, Indus, Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Collectively, these rivers directly sustain 1.3 billion people.

Relentless pollution by the expanding footprints of Chinese industry has led to climatic change and to average temperatures on the plateau rising thrice the global speed.

Even according to Chinese scientists, 95 percent of these glaciers are now receding. The retreat and melting of these glaciers will first lead to massive flooding along each river, and then rapidly lead to chronic and devastating water shortages for billions.

While the development of several hydroelectric power plants in the area is lowering reliance on thermal energy, concerns have arisen over the magnitude of the new construction – and its effect on the paths of the great rivers.

Many countries downstream have already protested such development.

For Tibetans, more dam construction will lead to a reduced rate of flow of the rivers that sustain them, making subsistence farming unpredictable for those dependent upon it.

A 2003 report on “Ecological Improvement and Environmental Protection in Tibet” published by the Chinese authorities, mentions that Tibet before 1950 was “in a state of passive adaptation to natural conditions and one-way exploitation of natural resources”.

The Chinese are being disingenuous at best, and malicious at worst, by ignoring the sustainable agriculture practices that existed among nomadic Tibetans.

Historically, Tibetan Drogpas have been the protectors of the great Tibetan grasslands. Development policy expert Gabriel Lafitte says that: ‘nomadic knowledge of how, when and where to graze, and the nomadic willingness to live in portable woven yak hair tents, summer and winter, with their animals, kept the pasture free of invasive toxic weeds, erosion, shrub invasion, and infestations of pests’.

Under the commune system, starting in 1958, Chinese authorities moved the herders into small communes and stripped them of their possessions. They were forced to adhere to quotas of production, leading to greatly expanded herd sizes.

Ignoring nomadic advice as backward and irrational, the authorities pressed forward until the late 1970s, when the communes collapsed, with depleted grasslands and unsustainably large herds.

Land reform in the 1990s offered a glimpse of hope in that it gave nomads long-term leases over pastures, encouraging the same traditional modes of care.

However, other policies gradually encroached on the mobility of the nomads, and limits on family and herd size were made compulsory.

These concurrent policies failed spectacularly due to a lack of understanding on part of the authorities, who promptly scape goated the nomads, pushing through the Restore Grasslands Policy in 2003.

This nullified the traditional biodiversity conservation skills of the nomadic people. Nomads were forcefully resettled into villages.

The overuse of the 1950s continues to affect the ecological situation today, which is now being worsened by minWhile the development of several hydroelectric power plants in the area is lowering reliance on thermal energy, concerns have arisen over the magnitude of the

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A 2003 report on “Ecological Improvement and Environmental Protection in Tibet” published by the Chinese authorities, mentions that Tibet before 1950 was “in a state of passive adaptation to natural conditions and one-way exploitation of natural resources”.

The Chinese are being disingenuous at best, and malicious at worst, by ignoring the sustainable agriculture practices that existed among nomadic Tibetans.

Historically, Tibetan Drogpas have been the protectors of the great Tibetan grasslands. Development policy expert Gabriel Lafitte says that: ‘nomadic knowledge of how, when and where to graze, and the nomadic willingness to live in portable woven yak hair tents, summer and winter, with their animals, kept the pasture free of invasive toxic weeds, erosion, shrub invasion, and infestations of pests’.

Under the commune system, starting in 1958, Chinese authorities moved the herders into small communes and stripped them of their possessions. They were forced to adhere to quotas of production, leading to greatly expanded herd sizes.

Ignoring nomadic advice as backward and irrational, the authorities pressed forward until the late 1970s, when the communes collapsed, with depleted grasslands and unsustainably large herds.

Land reform in the 1990s offered a glimpse of hope in that it gave nomads long-term leases over pastures, encouraging the same traditional modes of care.

However, other policies gradually encroached on the mobility of the nomads, and limits on family and herd size were made compulsory.

These concurrent policies failed spectacularly due to a lack of understanding on part of the authorities, who promptly scape goated the nomads, pushing through the Restore Grasslands Policy in 2003.

This nullified the traditional biodiversity conservation skills of the nomadic people. Nomads were forcefully resettled into villages.

The overuse of the 1950s continues to affect the ecological situation today, which is now being worsened by mining, agriculture and road construction in the region.

Indeed, the resettlement of nomads has also led to negative consequences. Research has shown that a certain sustainable amount of grazing is better for the grasslands than leaving them completely open as was done after 2003.

The actions of the authorities in the region have exposed the once-vibrant grasslands to desertification, further damaging the ecology of Tibet.

Chinese practices in Tibet can be seen at best as damaging, and at worst as actively exploitative.

The massive water transfer projects will lead to the diversion of important riverine resources; the bottled water industry is essentially unregulated.

Mining projects continue unchecked, with foreign firms invited to participate in the plundering of Tibet.

Dam construction threatens local ecosystems and the flow of rivers that sustain billions of people – and is done without environmental impact assessments.

The forced resettlement of nomadic tribes has led to the degradation of grasslands and the encroachment of deserts into once-living areas.

All of these threaten the people of Asia, dependent upon Tibet as a water source.

More acutely, however, they represent the Chinese attitude to Tibet and Tibetans as a people. The lack of respect for native customs is indicative of the disdain with which Tibet is treated; the eager seizure of natural resources shows a lack of willingness to understand Tibet itself.

Indeed, the manner in which China is administering Tibet in regards to ecological issues is similar to the way European powers once exploited their colonies for their natural bounties.

It would be wise now to remember that those colonies were, and continue to be, ravaged by the damage perpetrated on their environment and their cultures.

So, the 50th anniversary of Tibet Autonomous Region on September 1 will be an occasion of pride and self-congratulation for Beijing, but for Tibet, only another opportunity to count what it has lost and might never regain – the autonomy of its ecology, of its culture, and its way of life.

The trade-off is scary, but who in Beijing is listening?

Tibet builds national ecological security barrier

China Tibet Online

August 27, 2015

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, also known as the “Third Pole”, is “the source of rivers” and “the source of ecology” of China, South Asia and Southeast Asia. For more than 50 years, Tibet has made tremendous efforts for building an important national ecological security barrier.

The river valley of Lkoka and Shigatse in Tibet has the most serious sand storm. However, through a series of measures including natural forest protection, afforestation, construction of ecological public welfare forests and sand control testing demonstration zone in 2014, the forest area of Tibet has reached 16.85 million hectares, and Tibet’s forest coverage rate had increased from 12.37 percent in 2002 to 14 percent. Tibet’s forest area has increased by 1.95 million hectares over more than ten years; in the meantime, all kinds of desertified land area has decreased by 65,700 hectares.

Nagqu is the largest pastoral area in Tibet, whose prairie had suffered a lot from excessive grazing. Learning from these lessons, Nagqu started the implementation of grazing prohibition and increasing livestock, increasing the proportion of the female animals in season and fine breeds, giving subsidies to grassland where the ecology is protected well for breeding balance. Tsering, head of Tibet Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Bureau said that since 2011, the prohibited grazing grassland area has reached 3.78 hectares, with the “balanced breeding ” grassland area of 27.54 hectares.

Lhalu wetland is worthy of the name “lung” of the city with Lhasa residents all benefit from it. Puebla Tsering, head of the Lhalu Wetland National Nature Reserve Administration said: “Lhalu wetland absorbs 78,800 tons of carbon dioxide a year, while releases 60,000 tons of oxygen.”

Since the “Ninth Five-year Plan”(1996-2000) has been carried out, the Lhalu wetland has been listed as a key environmental protection project in Lhasa. In 2013, it planned to invest 700 million yuan(109 U.S. dollars) for its protection. Now the Lhalu wetland covers an area of 12.2 square kilo meters. At present, the Tibet wetland area has increased to 6.53 million hectares, which ranks the first in the country.

Tibet has unique natural environment, and its ecosystem has a higher sensitivity to external influence than places of the same latitude. Losang Jamcan, chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region said: “the environmental and ecological protection is the priority in Tibet’s economic

development no matter whether it is resource development, major construction or industrial development.”

The Tibetan antelope is first-grade animal under state protection in China. In order to ensure their smooth migration and breeding, every year at this time, the public security police and wildlife conservation staff patrol all day, and the armed police officers and soldiers carry out a “plateau sword” protection operation to develop the safest life channel for the animal.

Due to poaching occurred in the 1980s and the 1990s, nearly a hundred kinds of wildlife out of 125 species have been endangered under special state protection in Tibet. A crackdown on this crime has been carried out to save the plateau treasures by setting up nature reserves and special protection agencies and law enforcement teams. There are more than 3,700 full-time guards to protect wildlife of various types and 84,000 part-time personnel to patrol, manage and protect the area so as to build up an iron wall to protect wild animals. Mt. Qomolangma National Nature Reserve built an animal protection monitoring system by the traditional and modern scientific and technological approaches combined.

“Now with 24 hours of monitoring, once any suspicious circumstance appears, we will give photographic forensics, then send our people out to check,” said the Reserve Deputy Commissioner Phurjung.

After decades of efforts, the wildlife population of Tibet is of restorative growth. The Tibetan antelope population has increased from 50,000-70,000 in 1995 to more than 200,000. The black-necked cranes increased from 1,000-3,000 in 1995 to almost 7000. The now area plateau is becoming a animal paradise.

In 2006, the Tibet wildlife accident damage compensation project has been started, and up to 2014 the cash compensation has reached 420 million yuan, which is a win-win situation of maintaining public interests and protecting wild animals.

“In the environmental protection work in Tibet, the most important is the ecological protection instead of pollution prevention,” said Zhuang Hongxiang, deputy director of Department of Environmental Protection of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Tibetan industrial pollution is small mainly concentrated in the mining and building materials industries.

Tibet cleaned up 12 cement enterprises and its backward technology to redevelop the cement production line. In 2014, the district cement output reached more than 3,42 million tons among them. At present, the new production technology is fully replacing the backward one.

Unlike other provinces, Tibet has rarely negated environment protection projects. The reason is very simple. If a project does not conform to the environmental protection criteria in Tibet, even it is a huge and beneficial investment, eventually they cannot even apply for the qualification, said Zhuang Hongxiang. “Tibet refuses to eliminate the highly polluting, energy intensive and highly polluting projects from the very beginning.”

This is an attitude and a kind of determination. It is the same for industrial projects and those major projects who promotes economic and social development. We adhere to the principle of preventing pollution and protecting the ecological environment facilities must be designed together with the main part of the project, constructing and putting into use at the same time, and conducting daily audit in the county, weekly audit in the city and monthly audit in the province.

In 2013, in order to implement the spirit of the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Tibet put forward that by 2030 it will build a strong ecological area with beautiful ecological environment, ecological economic development, comfortable home, and with the harmony between man and nature, for the basic realisation of the goal of building a beautiful Tibet.

In 2014, Tibet officially started to carry out an environmental protection assessment in its 74 counties, while the assessment results relate to the promotion of the main officials at the county level. This measure has brought dynamic to environment protection in the county.

By 2014, Tibet has established 22 ecological reserves, nine national forest parks, 10 national wetland park, four state-level scenic spots and three state-level wetland parks. Establishing ecological reserves is not enough. In 2014, Tibet explores to establish the ecological protection “red-line system”.

The system is the guarantee while the law is weapon. In recent years, Tibet speeds up the environmental legislation steps, has enacted the Environmental Protection Regulations of the Tibet Autonomous Region and a series of environmental protection laws and rules. The regional ecological construction and environmental protection has been going on a legislative path.

“Tibet is one of the world’s cleanest regions in the world,” said Yao Tandong, academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences, director of the Research Institute of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. “Its overall plateau ecosystem is good, and its environment quality keeps improving.”

Tibetan crane's winter habitat under threat from Indian hydroelectric project

The Guardian
August 27, 2015



Hydropower project in eastern Himalayas will destroy migration site of 'vulnerable' black-necked cranes, conservationists claim.

A hydroelectric project in India's eastern Himalayas will soon destroy one of the winter habitats of the magnificent Tibetan crane, a vulnerable bird regarded by local Buddhists as the reincarnation of the sixth Dalai Lama, scientists and environmentalists have warned.

The Tibetan, or black-necked, crane, a species unique to Asia, has already disappeared from Vietnam, and can now be sighted only in parts of China, India and Bhutan, besides its main breeding grounds on the Tibetan plateau. It is listed as vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List.

Now, however, its existence is expected to become even more perilous. Despite protests from indigenous Monpa people and conservationists, Delhi is going ahead with the construction of the 780MW Nyamjang Chhu hydroelectric project that it is feared will destroy the migration site of the black-necked cranes.

A dozen other hydroelectric projects are also planned in the region, part of a massive plan to generate electricity from Himalayan rivers to meet India's rising energy requirements.

"The hydroelectric projects will totally destroy natural habitats in the region," said Asad Rahmani, scientific adviser of the Bombay Natural History Society. "When planning such projects, we're not paying attention to their impact on local culture. The electricity is for people like us in the cities, but all the damage is suffered by the local people."

Every winter, eight black-necked cranes migrate from Tibet to the flood plains of the Nyamjang Chhu river in the

Tawang district of India's north-eastern Arunachal Pradesh state. The arrival of the birds is awaited with great anticipation and anxiety by the indigenous Monpa tribe, a 45,000-strong Buddhist community congregated around the famous Tawang Buddhist monastery.

"Whenever the Monpa sight these birds, they take it as a sign of good fortune and prosperity," said WWF-India's Pankaj Chandan, an expert on the black-necked crane. "If the birds don't come, they fear a catastrophe. You will find the birds depicted in paintings in several monasteries in the region."

Tsangyang Gyatso, the colourful sixth Dalai Lama, was a Monpa by ethnicity and was born close to the Tawang monastery. He was abducted from Lhasa by the Chinese emperor in 1706, but while leaving Tibet he is said to have composed a poem that led to the Monpa legend about the black-necked crane. "White crane, lend me your wings. I will not fly far. From Lihang [in China] I shall return."

Govt eyes tunnel under Brahmaputra: PM

The Financial Express
August 21, 2015

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina said on Thursday her government was actively considering construction of a tunnel under the Brahmaputra river to link Balashighat in Gaibandha district with Bahadurabadghat of Jamalpur district, according to our correspondent from Gaibandha.

"Feasibility study has already begun and it is going on in full swing to construct the tunnel under the river aiming to improve the communication system and reduce the pressure of traffic on the Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna", she said.

She was speaking through video conferencing from the Ganabhaban marking inauguration of the Baradaha Bridge over the Karotoa river on the Gaibandha-Nakaihat Gobindaganj Road under Gobindaganj upazila.

Sheikh Hasina said the then Awami League government started the construction work on the bridge in 1997 aiming to mitigate sufferings of the people.

But later the development work was stopped during the tenure of the last BNP government ignoring the interest of the people, she alleged.

After assuming office for the second time in 2009 her government took an initiative to finish the incomplete work under the project, she said. Due to pragmatic measures taken by her government the seasonal joblessness locally called 'monga' and poverty had already

disappeared from the district, she said. The 'monga', she added, would not visit the district any further, if the Awami League-led government remains in power in future.

Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad and local lawmaker Mahabub Ara Begum Gini and Principal Abul Kalam Azad, elected MP from Gaibandha-4 constituency (Gobindaganj upazila) also took part in the discussion through the video conference.

Information of Tibet's Largest Lake to be Recorded

Xinhua

August 24, 2015

Serling Tso Lake, the largest lake in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, is being surveyed by Yangtze River Water Resources Commission's hydrological bureau and Tibet regional hydrological bureau, sources with the commission said on Sunday.

This is the first comprehensive field study on the lake, said Tan Liang, a vice chief engineer with the commission.

Basic information, including the lake's depth as well as its underwater and bank terrain will be recorded, according to Tan.

With an altitude of over 4,530 meters, Serling Tso Lake reportedly replaced Namtso as the largest lake in Tibet in 2014 as a result of melting glaciers and increased rain resulted in its rapid expansion.

Serling Tso measured 2,391 square kilo meters in June 2014, 369 square km larger than Namtso, making it the second biggest salt lake in China.

The project, which began in early July, is still ongoing.

China Focus: New rules on officials' environmental responsibility

Xinhua News Agency

Aug 18, 2015

BEIJING, Aug. 18 (Xinhua) — A new regulation on holding officials accountable for environmental hazards will better define their professional responsibilities, according to Communist Party of China (CPC) experts.

The general offices of the CPC Central Committee, and the State Council on Monday published the regulation, which

promises to trace environmental problems to whoever was originally responsible.

Officials will be held accountable for serious environmental problems resulting from improper implementation of central authorities' policies, as well as violations of laws and regulations.

Central- and local-Party officials, and governmental officials at county level and above will be subject to a lifelong-liability system, meaning any corruption or dereliction of duty that caused serious environmental harm can be punished retroactively, according to the document.

Officials will be held responsible if they fail to effectively carry out supervision, or approve environmentally disqualified projects, or attempt to shirk the responsibility of protecting the environment.

Moreover, the regulation banned promotion for officials found guilty of misconduct, and officials will receive an unfavourable appraisal in their performance assessment.

Xia Guang, director of the Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy under the Ministry of Environmental Protection, said the new regulation clearly defines the official "dos and don'ts".

Moreover, according to Zhang Yuxing, a chief engineer with the Survey Scheme Designing Institute under the State Forestry Administration, the conduct of both Party and government officials will now be under equal scrutiny.

"This will force officials to give environment issues greater consideration," he said.

It was noted that the new regulation not only promises retrospective punishment but will also identify violations before too much damage is done.

However, observers have warned that the regulation needs more specifications if it is to be effectively enforced.

Wang Yi, director of the Institute of Policy and Management under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, stressed that detailed issues such as basic data collection and verification needed more attention.

Published on Monday, the new regulation took effect on Aug. 9, just days before massive warehouse explosions in Tianjin, which are thought to have contaminated the surrounding area with dangerous chemicals.

China's State Council on Tuesday announced a team had been assigned to "investigate the cause of the explosions" and "determine liability."

Chinese Police Beat Tibetan Women, Elderly Over Dam Protest

Radio Free Asia
August 18, 2015



Mining trucks move along a road in Yadzi county, Qinghai, in an undated photo. Photo courtesy of an RFA listener

Security forces in northwestern China's Qinghai province attacked and beat a group of elderly Tibetan villagers and women who were blocking construction of a dam last week, injuring an unknown number and later detaining several, according to a local source.

The group had sought since the beginning of the year to halt the work near Seching village in the Yadzi (in Chinese, Xunhua) Salar Autonomous County amid concerns it could be linked to mining operations in the area, an area resident told RFA's Tibetan Service on Monday.

Chinese police, including about 100 members of a special task force, arrived at the construction site on Aug. 10 to attack the group when younger protesters were away working in the fields, RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"They took them away to a secluded place and beat them, and a few were detained," the source said.

The beating was reported to be "severe" and several protesters were injured in the assault, but detailed information on the number or names of those hurt was not immediately available.

When villagers went next day to county offices to protest, the county chief refused to meet with them, the source said.

"Instead, he sent two officials out to rebuke the crowd," he said.

Mining operations in Yadzi, including the extraction of copper and gold, may have never been approved by authorities above the county level, the source said, adding

that local officials and businessmen are profiting together from the work.

Tibet has become an important source of minerals needed for China's economic growth, and Chinese mining operations in Tibet have often led to widespread environmental damage, including the pollution of water sources for both livestock and humans, experts say.

Reported by Chakmo Tso for RFA's Tibetan Service and by Dan Zhen for the Mandarin Service. Translated by Rigdhen Dolma and by Ping Chen. Written in English by Richard Finney.

Take up dam issue with China: Gogoi again urges PM

Daijiworld.com
August 13, 2015

Guwahati, Aug 12 (IANS): Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi on Wednesday once again urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take up with China the issue of its constructing big dams on the Brahmaputra river.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Gogoi expressed serious concern over Modi's silence on the issue and said the dams will adversely affect downstream areas of Assam and the northeast.

"In spite of the knowledge of the government of India regarding construction of large dams by China on the Brahmaputra, I fail to comprehend why the government is not taking the matter seriously," he said.

India conveys concerns to China over Brahmaputra hydropower projects

Economic Times
August 13, 2015

NEW DELHI: With indications that China has approved three more hydropower projects on the main stream of Brahmaputra River, India today asserted its user rights as a lower riparian State, saying it has conveyed its "concerns" to the Chinese government at the highest level.

In her reply to a question in Lok Sabha, Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti said that India has urged China to ensure that the interests of downstream states are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas.

According to her, the government has ascertained that one power-generating unit of the Zangmu hydroelectric project has been operationalised in November, 2014.

The outline of the 12th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China' indicates that three more hydropower projects on the main stream of Brahmaputra river in Tibet Autonomous Region have been approved for implementation by the Chinese Authorities, she said.

"As these projects are considered to be Run of River (RoR) hydro-electric projects, detailed data in this regard is not available to be able to assess the likely impact," she added.

Government of India, she said, "carefully" monitors all developments on the Brahmaputra river.

"As a lower riparian State with considerable established user rights to the water of the river, India has conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities, at the highest levels of the Government of the People's Republic of China and has urged China to ensure that the interests of down streams States are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas," the Minister said.

74 Tibetan medicine materials identified as endangered species

China Tibet News
August 12, 2015

After the collection and choice of endangered Tibetan medicine materials on southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) by Tibetan medicine experts, botanists and some companies, 74 species are on the list of endangered Tibetan medicine, which are divided into three levels for protection. Besides, according to the demands of local pharmaceutical factory and markets from inside and outside TAR, these endangered Tibetan medicine species are further classified.

"The research of artificial culture will be carried out, which is the most effective way for endangered Tibetan medicine species protection," said Tashi Tsering, the director of the biology institute in Tibetan Hospital of ATR. The Tibetan Hospital will focus on the collection of Tibetan medicine seeds, the quality seeds control, the seeds breeding and other research works. Besides, a variety of artificial culture will be attempted to promote cultivation.

It is reported from the Cheezheng Tibetan Medicine Co., LTD in Tibet that three kinds of Tibetan medicine bases—protection base, wild nurturing base and Tibetan medicine growing base were built. The protecting base mainly conserves the producing areas of Tibetan medicine with biodiversity of Qinghai-Tibet plateau and lays the found bases for ensuring the sustainable development of Tibetan medicines.

With the development of tourism in Tibet, the Tibet-specific medicines, such as rhodiola root, soussurea, gentianfuttereridiels and other precious natural drugs, are promoted blindly. Most tourists have no idea that only through special processing can some drugs benefit people. Selling Tibetan medicine blindly not only wastes the natural resources but also misleads the customers. "We are appealing to the relative departments of protecting the Tibetan medicine to issue regulations for protection and using of Tibetan medicines," said Tashi Tsering.

China Pushes India to the Wall on Brahmaputra

The New Indian Express
August 8, 2015

On July 30, the usually combative Uma Bharti, the union minister for water resources, exhibited a diffident demeanor in the Lok Sabha when she gave out that China may construct three more hydropower projects on the Brahmaputra in Tibet (called Yarlung Tsangpo there) under its recently announced 12th Five Year Plan.

The minister added two other important facts. First, she indicated that an earlier such power project at Zangmu, other than the proposed three, is a run-of-the-river type. Secondly their effects and significance cannot be judged at the moment due to non-availability of data.

The minister's statement, instead of clearing the air of confusion and apprehension, is however likely to cause more doubts. There is an existing agreement between India and China which covers exchange of hydrological data between the two countries on the Brahmaputra. Has this agreement fallen into disuse? Secondly, the said projects being run-of-the-river type does not hold out any assurance because even these types of projects entail creation of storage dams.

The aforementioned hydro power projects will be located at Dagu, Jiexu and Jiacha, all in the middle reaches of the Brahmaputra. Another one at a place called Zangmu, whose existence was long denied by China but ultimately conceded in 2010 after repeated Indian protestations, has already been partly commissioned. In spite of Uma Bharti's apparent calm and nonchalance in the Lok Sabha, doubt persists in New Delhi's corridors of power. During the time of the previous UPA government it was decided that the ministries of defence, external affairs and the department of space would take up the matter jointly with China. Was it really done? An answer is necessary.

Ominous warnings are close at hand. On March 1, 2012, the river Siang (the local name of the Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh) had run completely dry at a place

called Pasighat where it normally used to be very wide. Although the river picked up momentum later on, it has not yet attained its former virility.

Moreover, all the four hydro projects will be situated very close to each other and this complicates the matter further as large amounts of water will be stored within a narrow geographical expanse leading to the possibility of depriving northeastern India of not only water but also the much-needed silt which makes the Assam plains fertile. There may also be floods in the region if China decides to arbitrarily release water from these dams during the monsoon.

How many hydroelectric dams has China been constructing in Tibet? There is a great divergence of opinion on the matter. Some say the number adds up to more than 100. However Jana Jagriti, an Assam based NGO, thinks that 26 are coming up. According to its estimate, Assam will get 64 percent less water during the monsoon season and 85 percent less water during the rest of the year due to China's dam building activities.

But the real cause of concern for India is the widespread report that China would construct a giant hydro power project at a place called Medog which is very near the Great Bend, a great U turn which the mighty Brahmaputra takes before entering India after a 2,000-metre fall. It is slated to generate 38-49 gigawatts of electricity, which is more than India's installed hydro capacity of 33 gigawatts. If it materialises, the dam will be twice as big as the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze river. That China is serious about the Medog plant is borne out by the development and upgradation of the Bome-Medog highway, a kind of infrastructural development which generally precedes beginning of such projects. There are reports that China has constructed two huge water reservoirs at the Great Bend area with storage capacities of 42 million and 31 million cubic metres.

All these projects are situated in an earthquake-prone area and very close to the geological fault line where the Indian Plate collides with the Eurasian Plate. According to many experts, the massive earthquake in 2008 breaching parts of the Three Gorges Dam was caused by the stupendous weight of water of the nearby Zipingpu Dam which was just half-a-kilometre from the geological fault line. If such a catastrophe occurs again, vast areas of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh will go under water.

The crux of the problem is that there is no water sharing treaty between India and China covering trans-national rivers and using the international law that existing usage of water will determine respective shares of countries, Beijing has pushed New Delhi to the wall. India has only itself to blame.

Nepal quakes caused minimal damage to Everest trails – study

F. World.

August 7, 2015

KATHMANDU Most lodges and hiking trails near Mount Everest suffered only minimal damage during two devastating earthquakes in Nepal this year, according to a government-commissioned report that will offer some hope to a battered tourism industry.

The quakes struck Nepal in April and May, triggering avalanches on the world's highest mountain and killing 8,900 people, including scores of foreign climbers and trekkers.

"The majority of accommodation structures and trails have sustained minimal damage from the April and May earthquakes," said the report by California-based engineering firm Miyamoto International.

The paper seen by Reuters on Thursday added that Nepal must now carry out a detailed assessment of the region after the ongoing rainy season to manage further risks to trekkers.

The government commissioned the report into the safety of the Everest region and the Annapurna trekking circuit after Western insurance firms hiked premiums for travellers after the quakes.

Nepal's tourist industry, which contributes about four percent to the economy, could see a 40 percent decline on last year, officials have said.

Around 140,000 trekkers and climbers visit the Annapurna circuit and Everest region every year, about 70 percent of all hikers to the country.

Tibet to strengthen eco-environmental protection by law

China Tibet Online

August 7, 2015

Multiple measures will be taken to step up environmental protection in Tibet, including the law. In future, all kinds of measures may be explored to take legal actions against ecological violations to protect public interests, Xinhua reported.

According to the People's Procuratorate of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the procuratorial authority will seek to establish a criminal justice protection mechanism for ecological resources. The mechanism shall be based on prosecutor's prosecution functions, integrate criminal prosecution resources, and focus on the comprehensive application of such means as arrest, prosecution, litigation

supervision, and investigation and prevention of job-related crimes.

“Tibet’s ecological resources have always been maintained at a good level. A good ecological environment is in itself an invaluable resource and the largest late-developing advantage enjoyed by Tibet,” Chief Procurator Zhang Peizhong said, “Strengthening judicial protection of the ecological environment is a duty-bound responsibility of the procuratorial authority, politically and legally.”

The Fifth Work Conference on Tibet made it very clear to build Tibet into a national ecological security barrier. Now Tibet has made eco-environmental protection a bottom line or red line and incorporated it into the environmental performance assessment for 74 counties (or districts) within the region to make it remain a land of clear water and azure sky.

Tibetans Fear New Mine is Planned For Polluted Gyama Valley

Radio Free Asia
August 5, 2015

Chinese road-building crews have begun cutting a new track leading to Gyama Valley near Tibet’s regional capital Lhasa, leading to local fears that a new mine may soon be built in a region already heavily polluted by Chinese extraction operations, sources say.

New mining in the area of the copper-rich Gyama township, which lies in the Tibet Autonomous Region’s Maldro Gongkar (in Chinese, Mozhugongka) county, could begin as early as this month, a Tibetan living in exile told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“Many workers have been seen busy on construction in the area,” RFA’s source said, citing local contacts.

Both government and privately owned mining companies have been active in extracting ore from Gyama Valley in recent years, leading to frequent Tibetan protests over harm caused to the environment and local livestock, a second exile source said, also citing contacts in the area.

“What we are seeing now may be plans for a new mine [in Gyama],” he said.

Tibet has become an important source of minerals needed for China’s economic growth, and Chinese mining operations in Tibet have often led to widespread environmental damage, including the pollution of water sources for both livestock and humans, experts say.

“In the past, our rivers were crisp and clean, and the mountains and valley were known for their natural beauty,” one Gyama resident told RFA in an earlier report.

“Now the rivers are polluted with poisonous waste from the mines,” he said.

Operations at one Gyama mine, scene of a catastrophic landslide that killed 83 in March 2013, have already fouled local water sources, experts say.

China to deploy space-air-ground sensors for environment protection

Xinhua
August 5, 2015

China will build a space-air-ground integrated sensing system to detect and stop pollution, according to the Ministry of Environmental Protection Tuesday.

China’s central authorities decided in July to build a comprehensive ecological environment monitoring system that will have the ability for automatic early warning using surveillance sites across the country.

The ministry said it will retake the power of environmental monitoring from local authorities, so that the country will have a unified standard for pollution detection and punishment.

A total of 2.5 billion yuan (402.8 million U.S.dollars) has already been invested to build the system, the ministry said.

So far, there has been more than 2,700 surveillance sites with 60,000 professional staff spread all over the country, covering 338 cities.

The ministry said it will also utilise satellites for remote sensing and drones to conduct regular surveillance on air and water quality.

Tibet hammers out major scheme for wetland eco-compensation

China Tibet Online
August 4, 2015

The Tibet Autonomous Region formulated a three-year pilot scheme recently for ecological benefit compensation targeting key wetlands in Tibet to boost wetland ecological conservation and restoration, China Tibet News reported.

According to the Forestry Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the pilot scheme will tentatively run

from 2015 to 2017. The wetlands under the scheme, with a total area of about 412,000 hectares, spread across three national nature reserves in three pilot counties – namely, the Serling Co Black-Necked Crane National Nature Reserve, the Qomolangma National Nature Reserve and the Black-Necked Crane National Nature Reserve in the middle reaches of Yarlung Zangbo River.

To better protect these wetlands, they are divided into lake wetlands and non-lake wetlands (marsh wetlands and river wetlands) and a proper per capita management area is used to assign keepers.

“The purpose of implementing the eco-compensation scheme is to let farmers and herdsmen benefit from wetland conservation and in turn promote wetland conservation and restoration,” an official with the Forestry Department said.

Also according to the Forestry Department, a conservation period which begins in May and ends in October is decided according to characteristics of annual migration of wild birds as well as biological habits of other rare wildlife within the wetlands. Grazing and other human activities are prohibited in the wetlands during the period. Farmers and herdsmen who observe wetland conservation will be given a compensation of 90 yuan per hectare per year.

In addition to implement the wetland-wide conservation, grazing will be limited in some key parts of the wetlands under the scheme, which represent a total area of 16,438.2 hectares. Farmers and herdsmen within the areas will be given a compensation of 22.5 yuan per hectare per year.

Grassy marshes within the project area have been degrading due to influence of natural climate conditions, with the current grass coverage rates of some areas dropping to below 20 percent. Tibet will work out a plan to enforce enclosure to wetlands whose degradation exerts major impact on production and livestock grazing of farmers and herdsmen to preserve and restore integrity and stability of the wetland ecosystem, the source from Tibet’s Forestry Department said.

Tibet is home to 6.529 million hectares of wetlands in total, accounting for 5.31 percent of China’s territory, ranking the second in the country. There are four wetland categories and 17 wetland types. The four categories of wetlands are the lake wetland, the marsh wetland, the river wetland and and man—made wetland, of which 99.92 percent are natural.

Other News

His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet denies Xi’s blame on economy

Tibet Post International
August 28, 2015

Dharamshala — The spiritual leader of Tibet His Holiness the Dalai Lama has responded to the blame from the Chinese government on “Stock Market Crash,” connecting it to the freedom struggle of Tibetan people.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has vehemently denied any involvement in the ongoing troubles of the Chinese economy. “I am exiled in India, all I do is meditate and pray. I barely read the newspaper, I find it hilarious that I am blamed for crashing the economy of a billion people” he told reporters with a large grin.

“Maybe President Xi Jinping is right after all, since everything is intimately connected in this universe, maybe I am responsible for the Chinese market crash, earthquakes in South America and all the misery in the world” said the 80-year-old Tibetan spiritual leader with humour.

President Xi Jinping announced that China will wage an unceasing fight against the “economic terrorism” led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan separatists on the Chinese economy.

After watching share prices tumble around 25 percent in a little more than a week, China’s president reassured investors that “everything will be done to take care of the Tibetan problem” Xi acknowledged on August 25.

“We will increase our fight against the Tibetan separatist activities and the Dalai Lama menace” Xi was quoted as saying yesterday. “Until they stop their economic terrorism against the Chinese people and their economy, China will fight an unswerving battle against these terrorists” he acknowledged on a nationwide television broadcast.

“The Dalai Lama, through his ongoing pursuit to destroy the Chinese economy through guerrilla tactics and propaganda, is truly the greatest enemy of the Chinese people” said the so called leading Chinese economist Liu Huy Yang.

“The Western world believes the Dalai Lama is a peace loving sect leader, but all he lives for is the destruction of Chinese pride and nationalism” Yang told journalists.

“The whole world hopes the Chinese regime is promising more openness for possible reform and change, but after all the regime lives for is the destruction of Tibetan cultural identity and violation of fundamental rights – freedom of speech and expression through terrorist tactics in the past six decades,” said Mr Nyima T.J. leading Tibetan political analyst and researcher, focusing on China’s Tibet policy.

“The decades-old Communist regime founded by Mao is guilty of mass genocide against the Tibetan and Chinese people,” Mr T.J. responded, adding, “maybe those countries spotlight their fears and sense of the totalitarian nature of Chinese regime, as there is a increasing sense of terror among the people and China now became an enemy of the people, including Tibetans.”

China to parade its weaponry on 70th anniversary of war’s end

Financial Times

August 25, 2015



China will next week make a public display of its weaponry in a military parade through the heart of Beijing, highlighting its most modern tanks, missiles, fighter jets and attack helicopters a fortnight before president Xi Jinping heads to Washington for talks.

On Tuesday, Beijing announced that 49 countries had agreed to send leaders or representatives to the September 3 parade, which marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the second world war.

China insists the event is a sincere attempt at healing and reconciliation, but some countries suspect it is more an exercise in drumbeating nationalism. With tanks set to roll through symbolically resonant Tiananmen Square, site of the bloody 1989 massacre, many are either staying away or sending lower-level representation.

Leaders such as South Korea’s Park Geun-hye, who will attend the ceremonies but not the parade, have placed strict limits on their participation.

This week Japan announced that prime minister Shinzo Abe would not take part, while the US embassy in Beijing said on Tuesday that it would “make available information about US participation closer to the event”.

Britain has said it will send Kenneth Clarke, former justice minister, as an envoy. Germany will be represented by its ambassador. France will send Laurent Fabius, its foreign minister.

Of UN Security Council members, only Russian president Vladimir Putin has confirmed his attendance, and a complement of Russian troops will march with Chinese troops. Mr Putin hosted Mr Xi in May for Russia’s own victory parade, which was widely boycotted among global leaders because of the war in Ukraine.

The parade will include 12,000 Chinese soldiers who were trained in precision marching by practising blindfolded in sand, with their steps measured for accuracy to the nearest millimetre, according to military experts.

However, the star of the show will be the hardware on display.

On Sunday J-15 fighter jets and Z-19 attack helicopters were visible over Beijing during a rehearsal in which 189 aircraft filled the sky with plumes of coloured smoke and flew in formation to display the number 70. Meanwhile, formations of tanks and missile launchers rolled through the heart of the capital.

China has not publicly confirmed what equipment will be included in the parade, and in rehearsals many advanced weapons have been concealed under tarpaulins. But experts expect that among them will be a truck-mounted version of the DF-41 intercontinental missile, which carries multiple warheads and was tested earlier this year.

“I expect the featured weapon of the parade will be the DF-41,” said Yue Gang, a former officer in the People’s Liberation Army. He said that while satellite images of the weapon had been published, this would be its first public display.

Shao Yongling, a colonel at the PLA’s Second Artillery Command College, told the Communist party-affiliated Global Times that Sunday’s rehearsal was the first time the DF-21D “carrier killer” missile had been displayed in public. Many US experts say the US has no defence against the missile, which flies at up to 15 times the speed of sound and is aimed at destroying surface ships.

On Tuesday China rejected charges that the parade amounted to a flexing of muscles.

"If someone says this is flexing anything, it is a flexing of the spirit of peace by the Chinese people," said Zhang Ming, deputy foreign minister.

Few are surprised Japan has elected to stay away from the commemoration, which is officially referred to by Chinese state media as "victory day in the war against Japanese aggression".

China insists Mr Abe's apology this month for Japan's wartime crimes was not repentant enough.

Mr Zhang said on Tuesday that the celebration was not directed against Tokyo.

"We have said time and again that this commemoration does not target any third party or Japan or the Japanese people", he said.

Chinese Authorities Force Tibetan Literary Website Offline

Radio Free Asia

August 25, 2015

Chinese authorities have shut down a website founded by a group of young Tibetans that served as a forum for news and literary writings in the native language of the residents of Tibetan-populated regions of western China, a source inside the autonomous region said.

Writer Kunchok Tsephel established the website in 2005 with his own money as a joint venture with young poet Kybchen Dedrol in Machu (in Chinese, Maqu) county of Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province, according to the Tibetan source and information on the website of the nonprofit, nongovernmental organisation Free Tibet.

Authorities closed down the website called Choemei (also spelled Chodme), or "Butter Lamp" in Tibetan, on August 18. It was one of the oldest Tibetan websites promoting culture and literature.

"The concerned Chinese authorities instructed the owner of the website to re-register with China's Department of Communications," the Tibetan source inside the autonomous region said, referring to the body that regulates telecommunications, postal services, broadcasting and print media.

The owner of the website apologised to all readers for the abrupt withdrawal of the articles on the website, he said.

"Many readers expressed their disappointment at being deprived of their news and access to the website," he said.

Chinese authorities had shut down the website on other occasions as well, according to Free Tibet.

In February 2009, they had searched Tsephel's home and seized his computer, mobile phone and other belongings, and took him into custody.

That November, the Intermediate People's Court in Kanlho sentenced him to 15 years in prison for "divulging state secrets" during a closed-door trial.

Authorities previously had detained and tortured Tsephel for two months in 1995 for his alleged involvement in political activities, according to the Free Tibet website.

Authorities targeted many other contributors, especially Tibetans, who wrote articles for the website and warned its owners about accepting reports that went against Chinese policy in Tibetan-populated areas, he said.

The website carried news and other reports, both written and audio, as well as video stories, music and contemporary writings.

Chinese authorities heavily censor the Internet nationwide under a wide variety of laws and administrative regulations, especially in potentially volatile areas.

They routinely suppress websites in the Tibetan language as a way to maintain control over the region which has seen sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese since widespread protests swept the region in 2008.

Reported by Lhuboom for RFA's Tibetan Service. Translated by Karma Dorjee. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

China-based APT groups hackers target India for secret information

The Wire

August 24, 2015

Several hackers from China have been suspected to hack information from Indian institutions in search of private information. These hackers were detected around the month of April before the visit of the PM to China and they are still seen to be conducting hacking activities.

The group has been seen to target phishing emails that contain Microsoft word attachments. The hackers intend to collect information on Indian security and politics and they have been sending phishing emails to the intending victims which contain virus due to which they can also hack into infected computers and steal information. Stealing information has now become the main target for the Chinese hackers.

The Chinese hackers are seen to be from the APT groups. There have been many such hacking incidents and now

India needs to take a strong hold on the security of its private information. The PM has also stressed the needs of strong security as well as protection which will restrict hackers from hacking into computers.

The hackers have been targeting at government as well as private institutions, schools and educational institutions, diplomatic as well as scientific institutions for any kind of information.

Nepal, China agree to establish three additional trading points/

Shanghaidaily.com
Aug 22, 2015

KATHMANDU, Aug. 22 (Xinhua) — Nepal and China on Saturday agreed to establish three additional trading points in view of boosting trade between the two countries.

The two countries reached an agreement in this regard during the sixth meeting of China's Tibet and Nepal Trade Facilitation Committee in Kathmandu, Nepal's Ministry of Commerce and Supplies said in a press statement on Saturday.

As per the deal, the two sides will carry out a feasibility study soon in a bid to establish three new trading points in Gorkha, Dolakha and Mugu, which are Nepal's bordering districts with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

The proposed border points between the two countries are Chhekampar and Larke areas of Gorkha District, Lamabagar area of Dolakha District and Mugu District on the Nepali side.

"Six trading points — Olangchugola, Kimathanka, Tatopani, Rasuwagadhi, Mustang and Yari — were opened between the two countries in the past. Now we have decided to establish three new trading points," Joint Secretary at the Nepal's Ministry of Commerce Jibaraj Koirala who led the Nepali delegation in the meeting told Xinhua.

The two-day meeting also decided to accelerate renovation of Nepal-China customs points — Khasa and Rashuwagadhi — which were devastated by April 25 earthquake and ensuing aftershocks.

At the meeting, the Chinese side expressed readiness to complete the construction of Larcha Dry port at the earliest as per the agreement reached between the two countries.

Reiterating China's commitment in Nepal's rebuilding process, head of the 10-member Chinese delegation assured the Nepali officials that China would continue to provide assistance to Nepal.

Koirala expressed gratitude to the Chinese side for helping the country reopen the Araniko highway, which links the two nations but was blocked due to the landslides triggered deadly earthquakes.

The next meeting of the Nepal-Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee will be held in Tibet in 2016, officials said.

Chinese hackers targeting Sino-India border dispute: Report

The Tribune
August 21, 2015

Beijing, August 21 Chinese hackers are believed to be snooping on information related to the Sino-India border dispute and Tibetan exile groups in India since 2012, a US-based cyber-security firm has claimed.

The hackers were detected in April ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China in May and they are still conducting attacks, cyber-security firm FireEye said.

One advanced team has been zeroing in on organisations there to steal information related to border disputes and Tibetan exile groups, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted a FireEye statement as saying.

"Over the past four years, this threat group has (targeted) over 100 victims, approximately 70 per cent of which were in India," it said.

In April, FireEye had reported that a separate Chinese hacking team, APT30, had been spying on governments and businesses in Southeast Asia and India uninterrupted for a decade, echoing claims made by researchers at US firm McAfee in 2011.

China had refuted it strongly such allegations in April.

"I want to stress that the Chinese government firmly bans and crackdown on all forms of hacker attacks," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hong Lei had said in response to the allegations by FireEye.

The new report said the APT hacker group "also targeted Tibetan activists and others in Southeast Asia, with a focus on governmental, diplomatic, scientific and educational organisations."

China has viewed Tibetan groups in India with suspicion ever since the Dalai Lama fled China in 1959 to establish the Central Tibetan Administration, more commonly known as the Tibetan government-in-exile, in Dharamsala.

Unrest in China's Tibetan autonomous region in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics led to a crackdown by Chinese authorities and protests by Tibetan groups in India, Europe and North America.

A spate of self-immolations in the Himalayan province in 2012 spurred another security crackdown.

Over 130 Tibetans committed self immolations in recent years, according to overseas Tibetan groups.

China has long been accused of spying on Tibetan groups in India, including the Tibet government-in-exile and the Dalai Lama, the Post report said.

In 2009, researchers at the Information Warfare Monitor, a Canadian NGO, accused Chinese hacking groups of breaking into computers at Tibetan government-in-exile organisations in London, New York and Dharamsala.

“Malware attacks against ethnic minority groups in China including Tibetans and Uygurs, and religious groups such as Falun Gong, go back to at least 2002, and possibly earlier,” according to the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab, which monitors cybersecurity issues.

While pinpointing the culprits for any given hack attack can be very difficult, FireEye experts told the Post that, at least in terms of the latest campaign, all signs pointed to China.

They said the attackers were “well-resourced, with long-term objectives”, and conducted operations around the clock, indicating high levels of discipline and funding.

The malware used also pointed to China.

“Collecting intelligence on India remains a key strategic goal for China-based APT groups,” Bryce Boland, FireEye chief technology officer for Asia-Pacific said.

“These attacks on India and its neighbouring countries reflect growing interest in (India’s) foreign affairs,” he was quoted by the Post as saying. — PTI

Chinese hackers spying on Tibetan groups in India for years, experts say

South China Morning Post
August 21, 2015

Cybersecurity firm says hackers on the mainland have targeted Tibetan exile groups for at least four years, claim long denied by Beijing.

Chinese hackers are believed to have targeted Tibetan exile groups in India that Beijing views as a threat for at least four years, despite China denying any official involvement in hacking.

One advanced team has been zeroing in on organisations there to steal information related to border disputes and Tibetan exile groups, according to cybersecurity firm FireEye.

Hacks were detected in the run-up to the first state visit to China by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April, and the group is likely still conducting attacks, FireEye said.

“Over the past four years, this threat group has [targeted] over 100 victims, approximately 70 per cent of which were in India,” it said in a statement.

It “also targeted Tibetan activists and others in Southeast Asia, with a focus on governmental, diplomatic, scientific and educational organisations.”

Beijing has viewed Tibetan groups in India with suspicion ever since the Dalai Lama fled China in 1959 to establish the Central Tibetan Administration, more commonly known as the Tibetan government-in-exile, in Dharamsala.

Unrest in China’s Tibetan autonomous region in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics led to a crackdown by Chinese authorities and protests by Tibetan groups in India, Europe and North America. A spate of self-immolations in the Himalayan province in 2012 spurred another security crackdown.

China has previously been accused of spying on Tibetan organisations overseas in an apparent attempt to stave off future unrest at home.

In April, FireEye reported that a separate Chinese hacking team, APT30, had been spying on governments and businesses in Southeast Asia and India uninterrupted for a decade, echoing claims made by researchers at US firm McAfee in 2011.



Chinese military personnel guard a street in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in 2012 as China stepped up security in the province after a series of self-immolations by protesters. Photo: AP

China has always denied involvement in such operations.

“The Chinese government firmly opposes hacking attacks; this position is consistent and clear,” foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei said after the April report.

China has long been accused of spying on Tibetan groups in India, including the Tibet government-in-exile and the Dalai Lama.

In 2009, researchers at the Information Warfare Monitor, a Canadian NGO, accused Chinese hacking groups of

breaking into computers at Tibetan government-in-exile organisations in London, New York and Dharamsala.

“Malware attacks against ethnic minority groups in China including Tibetans and Uygurs, and religious groups such as Falun Gong, go back to at least 2002, and possibly earlier,” according to the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab, which monitors cybersecurity issues.



Flames shoot from a jeep after it crashed into the barrier of a bridge at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 2013, killing three people inside the vehicle and two tourists. China billed it a terrorist attack by ethnic Uygurs. Photo: SCMP Pictures

Uygurs are a Turkic-speaking ethnic group in the far western Chinese province of Xinjiang. Some complain of discrimination in favour of Han Chinese. Others have been accused of “terrorist” activity by Beijing, including one incident in 2013 when a jeep loaded with knives and sticks crashed in Tiananmen Square, killing five people.

While pinpointing the culprits for any given hack attack can be very difficult, FireEye experts told the Post that, at least in terms of the latest campaign, all signs pointed to China.

They said the attackers were “well-resourced, with long-term objectives”, and conducted operations around the clock, indicating high levels of discipline and funding. The malware used also pointed to China.

“Collecting intelligence on India remains a key strategic goal for China-based APT groups,” said Bryce Boland, FireEye chief technology officer for Asia-Pacific.

“These attacks on India and its neighbouring countries reflect growing interest in [India’s] foreign affairs.”

Indian pilgrims finish journey to Tibet

ShanghaiDaily.com

Aug 20, 2015

LHASA, Aug. 20 (Xinhua) — The last batch of 51 Indian pilgrims left Tibet using the recently opened Nathu La Pass on Thursday morning, marking the end of this year’s pilgrimage.

The newly opened mountain pass links India’s Sikkim State to the sacred Mount Kangriboqe and Mapam Yumco Lake in Ngari Prefecture, Tibet.

China has allowed Indian pilgrims to use the Nathu La Pass since June 22. The first group of 43 pilgrims returned to India on July 3 after their journey.

A total of 240 Indian pilgrims entered Tibet through Nathu La Pass this year, said Li Wenbin, who works for the frontier inspection station.

Ravinder Kumar Sharma, from New Delhi, who was among the last batch, said, “ [I] finally saw the sacred mountain and lake and I’ve fulfilled my dream. I thank China’s warm welcome and reception.”

Chinese authorities have built shelters at four resting points, which provided welcome breaking points for the pilgrims as they adapted to the high altitude. The Nathu La Pass sits 4,545 meters above sea level.

The government also set up a reception center by Mapam Yumco Lake where a kitchen, bathroom, blankets and souvenirs are provided. A four-star hotel has been opened at the foot of Mount Kangrinboqe.

The opening of the pass will promote people-to-people exchanges and improve ties between China and India, said Le Yucheng, Chinese ambassador to India, who completed the journey with the first group of pilgrims.

The new route shortens the pilgrimage from more than 20 days to about eight to 12 days.

Pilgrims to Ngari Prefecture traditionally climb over the Qang La Pass, which sits 5,200 meters above sea level on the China-India-Nepal border. The road is steep and usually covered by snow.

According to Indian media, around 250 Indians, in five groups of 50, will travel to Tibet along the new route this year. Another 18 groups of 60 will undertake the pilgrimage along the old route.

Completely closed for more than 40 years, it was reopened in 2006, but for trade only.

The Chinese government first allowed Indians to make pilgrimages to Tibet in 1981. China has welcomed almost 80,000 Indian pilgrims in the past decade alone.

China and India have been strengthening their relationship lately. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China in May, following Chinese President Xi Jinping's trip to New Delhi last year.

Independence Day celebrated by Indian, Chinese troops in Arunachal



Niti Central
August 18, 2015

Indian and Chinese troops jointly celebrated the country's 69th Independence Day at Bumla in Arunachal Pradesh on August 15.

Bumla, located at a height of about 15,000 ft in Arunachal Pradesh, has been a witness to many border personnel meetings in the past, a defence communiqué said here today.

A warm welcome was extended by the Indian delegation leader Brigadier D S Kushwah to the Chinese delegation.

The event commenced with the hoisting of national flags and rendition of national anthems of both the countries, followed by welcome addresses by both the delegation leaders.

A cultural programme was held for the visiting Chinese delegation followed by social interaction. The event witnessed participation of women and children from both sides.

A dance was performed by the Monpa tribe and students from Tawang. Indian troops performed Bhangra and Gatka which was lauded by the Chinese.

Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen friendship and maintain peace and tranquillity along the border.

Both delegation leaders appreciated the growing trust and harmony between the two countries and were sanguine that Indo-China relationship would continue to grow in the future, the communiqué said.

Ethnic games conclude in Inner Mongolia

Xinhua
August 18, 2015



A performance at the closing ceremony of the ethnic games in Ordos, Inner Mongolia. (Photo/CNS)

China's ethnic games concluded on Monday, wrapping up the nine-day competition and folk-style sports demonstration in Ordos, Inner Mongolia.

Some 6,240 athletes from all 56 recognised ethnic groups in China competed or performed in nearly 200 traditional sporting events with 188 first prizes, 472 second prizes and 496 third prizes being awarded instead of medals, which put cultural exchanges and mutual understanding ahead of the results of the events.

The 34 delegations allowed an exclusive experience to spectators with their unique ethnic-style traditional sports. The tournament is much like a fashion show and traditional culture exhibition than sports competition.

Ma Yanlin of the Miao ethnic group in Guizhou province dressed in a Miao traditional costume to attend a culture exchange program in the middle of the games. She wore a one-meter-high hat and magnificent traditional dress which was decorated with many silver accessories and other ornaments.

"Not quite like the other sports events, the ethnic games are much more a culture feat and traditional festival to me," said the 22-year-old, whose silver accessories combined for a weight of more than seven kilograms, swinging and jingling like a music instrument.

With its 62-year history, the quadrennial games served as a get-together party for the country's 56 ethnic groups and has played a key role in keeping multiple traditional sports alive.

In November 1953, nearly 400 athletes from China's (then recognised) 13 ethnic groups participated in the inaugural ethnic games in Tianjin, taking part in competitions such

as weightlifting, boxing, wrestling and a couple of traditional sports.

The first ethnic games lasted five days and attracted a total of 120,000 spectators. It was also the first ever multiple-sport event in the world's most populous country.

Some 29 years passed however before the event took place again, this time in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia, in 1982, where 55 ethnic groups participated, excluding the ethnic Han Chinese majority.

Since 1991, the ethnic games have become a quadrennial event, featuring ethnic sports and characteristics of the country's ethnic minorities, who account for almost 9% of the country's total population of 1.3 billion people.

The ethnic games offers an opportunity for people from China's rural and border areas to present their specialties as well. In 2007, Tibetan athlete Dahi traveled on a train for the first time in his life after being selected by the Gansu delegation to attend the eighth ethnic games in Guangzhou, one of the largest and most prosperous provinces in China.

The Tibetan herdsman, born on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, barely slept during his 36-hour trip because he didn't want to miss any of the scenery along the way.

Traditional sports can be expressions of both skill and joy. Thanks to the games, many ethnic traditions can be preserved even if they no longer play a major role in day-to-day life.

Single bamboo drifting, which originated in Guizhou province and once served as a local transportation method, was introduced to the games as a title event four years ago. Athletes need to stand on a seven-meter-long bamboo pole and use a much thinner bamboo in hands as an oar to glide on water.

There are 17 title events in the games, including a dragon-boat race, stilt race, board shoe race, equestrian, swing, shuttlecock kick, Huapao (which bears similarities to rugby), ethnic martial arts, yajia (ethnic-style one-on-one tug of war), and bowl (which bears similarities to hockey).

Athletes from the majority Han ethnic group are allowed to participate in team events are allowed to make up up to one third of the squad.

The ethnic games prioritises cultural exchanges, ethnic interaction and mutual understanding more than competition, recognising and upholding culture differences and ethnic features.

The next ethnic games will be held in Zhengzhou, the capital of central China's Henan province, in 2019.

Introduction to the nature, evolution and achievement of the middle-way-policy

The Department of Information and International Relations, (DIIR) Central Tibetan Administration

To read the full report click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17275>

US government to China: "We see tremendous problems in Tibet"

Tibet Post International
14 August 2015

Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Tom Malinowski briefs reporters following the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., on August 13, 2015. Photo: State Department

Dharamshala — "We see tremendous problems in Tibet," US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Tom Malinowski said during a special briefing on Wednesday, in Washington DC.

"We also urged greater access to Tibetan areas by diplomats and journalists on the basis of reciprocity," he said, while briefing on the 19th round of the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue.

The US has pressed hard on human rights issues including religious freedom and deteriorating situation in Tibet, while recognising the issue of Tibet as a priority of US government policy.

During a day-long US-China dialogue on human rights, the US pressed China on a number of human rights issues including the recent crackdown on lawyers and increasing tension in the Tibetan areas, Malinowski said.

He said these issues will feature very prominently in Xi's meeting with President Barack Obama in September. "Today's meetings also help set the stage – and this is very, very important – for the upcoming state visit in September of Chinese President Xi Jinping, where human rights will be very prominently addressed."

"We suggested that China could reduce tensions in Tibetan areas by renewing dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives and by respecting the religious practices of Tibetan Buddhists, like their ability to select reincarnate lamas or to handle the deceased with proper rituals, Malinowski said.

"It's [Tibet] absolutely a priority, and I mentioned it in my opening statement," when asked whether or not the issue of Tibet is a top priority for US when it comes to China.

"We see tremendous problems in Tibet," Malinowski said during the special press briefing, when asked his "assessment of human rights situation in Tibet."

"But I think in this [Tibet] case, probably the best advice I would have to you is to look at our recently released Human Rights Report, which gives the full assessment of the wide range of problems."

"The dialogue gave us a chance to convey in advance of that visit the growing sense of alarm in the US about human rights developments in China and to stress the importance of making specific improvements in keeping with China's own laws and international commitments," Malinowski said.

"The recent deterioration of the human rights situation and the Chinese Government's increasing emphasis in its rhetoric and its laws on fighting what it calls, "cultural infiltration and Western influence" raises serious questions whether China remains on a long-term path towards greater openness and integration with the world or has begun to turn inward," he said.

This trend harms the interests of the Chinese people most of all given China's importance and influence is of great concern to the international community as a whole, he said.

Malinowski acknowledged that the Chinese delegation raised the issue of recent police attacks on certain sections of the society in the US.

"They did raise a couple of issues, although I have to say that the vast majority of the conversation concerned events in China. They raised, for example, the recent incidents of police violence.

"The Ferguson case was raised briefly and I actually thought this was quite interesting because they said 'We all saw that on TV' and my response, without in any way diminishing the seriousness of the problem that we are facing in the US, was, 'Exactly, you saw it on TV because the Chinese state media was able to be in Ferguson and to cover those events nonstop from start to finish,'" Malinowski said.

"The international media does not have that kind of access in China when there is violence, in Tibet or Xinjiang or in other parts of the country. Nor, I would add, did the US Government arrest the lawyers of Michael Brown or people who took video footage of the police violence," he said.

"We discussed the Chinese Government's crackdown on lawyers, which has resulted in over 250 attorneys,

activists, and their family members being detained, questioned, interrogated, or held incommunicado," he said, adding: "many are still in custody, many reportedly have been denied access to defense counsel.

"Some have been forced to make televised confessions, actions as we explained today that run contrary to China's own criminal procedure law."

"We called for the immediate release of lawyers still being held and charged with crimes including Wang Yu, Zhou Shifeng, Li Heping, and Liu Xiaoyuan, among others," he stressed.

"We also discussed other prominent cases of attorneys and legal activists who have been detained or imprisoned for peaceful activities," he said.

He further added: The Chinese leadership's recent fourth plenum emphasised ruling the country according to law, but it is hard to have rule of law when lawyers are arrested for defending their clients or when the government equates arguing a case in court with, quote, "creating a disturbance" or "picking a quarrel" – two of the vague offenses under which lawyers and others have been prosecuted.

"Rule of law means that when there is a conflict between the primacy of the law and the preferences of the state, law takes precedence," he added, saying "In China, the opposite appears increasingly to be the case."

"In China, as in any other country, when legal avenues to resolve grievances are closed, those grievances don't go away; they build up and the likelihood of social unrest and instability increases," Malinowski said.

US Senators to Obama: Raise Tibet human rights issues with Xi

The Echo of India

12 Aug 2015

Ten powerful Senators have asked US President Barack Obama to raise concern with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping over human rights conditions in China, particularly on the issues of Tibetan lamas, when the two leaders meet here in September.

"We understand that there are many important issues in the US-China bilateral relationship we expect that China's recent actions in the East and South China Seas, economic and trade issues, climate change, as well as the recent cyberattacks, will figure prominently in your discussions," the Senators wrote in a letter to Obama on Tuesday.

“While these issues deserve a full and robust exchange of views, so too do human rights...Mr President, we recognise that managing the US-China relationship is an enormous and complex task. We firmly believe that a full and frank discussion of our concerns regarding human rights and civil society in China would serve to strengthen our relationship,” the Senators wrote in the letter released to the press.

Xi will visit the White House next month where Obama will host him over a State Dinner.

The letter was signed by Senators Ben Cardin, John McCain, Pat Leahy, Kelly Ayotte, Sherrod Brown, Tom Cotton, Tammy Baldwin, Susan Collins, Robert Menendez and John Cornyn.

In the letter, the Senators hoped that the President’s administration would continue to urge China to end the “harassment, detention, and other mistreatment of individuals” who seek to peacefully practice their religion, and express their views or seek legal redress.

“In particular, we hope that you will emphasise to President Xi that China should respect the basic and universally recognised right of religious freedom, to include refraining from persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and from interference in the centuries-old system of recognising reincarnate Tibetan Buddhist lamas,” he said. (PTI)

Looking Back: 4 Broken Promises of the Beijing 2008 Olympics

Epoch Times

August 5, 2015

In the 2001 bid to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, the Chinese regime made grand promises to quell outcries about its human rights violations and environmental abuses. But in the years that followed, the Chinese Communist Party broke them all.

1. Press Freedom

“We will give the media complete freedom to report when they come to China” said Wang Wei, Secretary General of the Beijing Olympic Bid Committee.

But to prevent negative coverage, many foreign journalists were refused entry into China. The ones that were allowed in found that sites like those involving Tibet, the Tiananmen Square massacre, or the persecuted spiritual group of Falun Gong, remained blocked. Reporters who attempted to publicise these sensitive issues were detained and their reports suppressed.

2. Human Rights

The Olympics Games will “benefit the further development of our human rights cause,” said Liu Qi, Mayor of Beijing.

But contrary to these claims, torture, arbitrary detention, and reeducation through labor increased. In the months before the Olympics, the Chinese Communist Party imprisoned hundreds of dissidents. When Tibetan riots and demonstrations erupted in March of 2008, the Chinese regime cracked down on the protesters, detaining thousands and killing hundreds, while preventing journalists from entering affected regions, according to Tsering Woeser, a Tibetan activist.

The Chinese regime also intensified the suppression of Falun Gong, authorising hundreds of illegal arrests across China, according to Minghui.org, a website carrying firsthand reports of the persecution. And practitioners in Beijing labor camps were relocated elsewhere to avoid media scrutiny.

The U.S. Congress’s Human Rights Caucus issued a statement in early July 2008 that “strongly condemned” the Chinese regime’s crackdown on the Uyghurs, China’s Muslim minority. Congressman Frank Wolf said, “The Chinese government should not be permitted to use the ‘war on terror’ or Olympic security as a front to persecute the Uighurs.”

3. Displacements and Evictions

In 2002, the Chinese regime pledged in a Beijing Olympics Action Plan to pay “special attention” to conserving buildings in old Beijing, a historic neighbourhood of famous “hutong” alleyways. But authorities disregarded their pledge, demolishing homes and evicting residents to make way for new infrastructure. According to the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, over a million Beijing residents were displaced and denied proper compensation or access to legal recourse

4. Air Pollution

The Chinese regime pledged that by 2008, air pollution levels would meet the standards of the World Health Organisation.

But Steven Andrews, an environmental consultant in Beijing, told the Washington Post that air quality was actually worse in 2007 than in 2001. Chinese authorities only succeeded in reducing air pollution during the Olympics through short-term measures like closing factories, halting construction, and keeping half the city’s cars off the road.

Chinese cyber espionage group hacked base

CNN

August 5, 2015

Washington (CNN): A highly trained group of Chinese hackers is targeting defense, commercial and political organisations worldwide, pulling off sophisticated heists of sensitive information, according to new research out Wednesday.

Though Chinese cyber espionage has been well-documented, researchers from Dell SecureWorks Counter Threat Unit — a division of Dell tech company — say this group, nicknamed Emissary Panda by another research firm, has pulled off cyberattacks at a level of sophistication and specialisation rarely seen before among Chinese hackers.

“In the instances we were able to observe them, they had very specific organisations and projects in mind that they were pursuing, and the broad spectrum of industry verticals they targeted indicated they were more of a surgical tool used to take specific things from specific organisations, rather than the smash and grab, take everything type,” said Aaron Hackworth, Dell SecureWorks senior distinguished engineer.

The research contradicts the conventional notion of Chinese cyber thieves, who are typically described as taking everything they can get their hands on.

“I liken them a bit to a drunk burglar,” FBI Director James Comey said of China’s hacking groups in a “60 Minutes” interview. “They’re kicking in the front door, knocking over the vase, while they’re walking out with your television set. They’re just prolific. Their strategy seems to be: We’ll just be everywhere all the time. And there’s no way they can stop us.”

The group has been spotted before in 2013, turning the website of the Russian embassy in Washington and a Spanish defense firm into what’s called a watering hole attack — where the hackers turn the website against visitors to it to spread their malicious software.

Since then, Dell researchers have observed the hackers attacking a wide range of targets, including major U.S. defense contractors, aerospace firms, automakers, the energy sector, law firms handling sensitive business deals and political targets — including ethnic minorities in China.

That last target, combined with the hours the group operates, the particular malicious software it uses and the use of search engine Baidu all give researchers a high degree of confidence the culprits are Chinese, Dell said.

They didn’t connect the group to the Chinese government, but most Chinese cyber groups are considered by industry experts to be working for Beijing.

Not only were they able to break into the companies, but were able to steal sensitive data, as well.

Hackworth couldn’t reveal any names of the victims, but said researchers personally observed more than 100 watering hole traps on websites worldwide and identified 50 targets in the U.S. and U.K. He estimated what Dell could monitor was only a sliver of what the group was accomplishing.

“I would go as far as to say that the amount and type of data that was stolen is of concern both to our industrial base and our defense programs,” Hackworth said.

Once the groups managed to make an initial foray into an organisation’s networks, within hours they were able to access credentials that gave them “full run of the place,” Hackworth said. They would then spend days or weeks making detailed lists of everything on the network that might have value, returning finally to take only a select few items.

It was that precision, combined with a sophisticated organisational structure, that makes researchers believe they are dealing with a group that is the best of the best.

“It almost feels like they were tasked for specific things,” Hackworth said, adding that even after the hackers were discovered and kicked out of networks, they found a way back in. “The tenacity of these groups is something often overlooked in these reports; they don’t stop. If you’re a target of interest, that interest doesn’t stop when you wipe the malware off the computers. ... They’re going to continue to pursue it regardless of what the defenders do.”

Ling Jihua's brother could become China's Snowden: Duowei

Want China Times

August 5, 2015



Ling Wancheng, who also goes by the name of Wang Cheng and Jason Ling. (Internet photo)

The fate of disgraced former presidential aide Ling Jihua may still be up in the air due to a major bargaining chip held by his brother Ling Wancheng, who remains in hiding in the United States and is rumoured to be seeking political asylum, reports Duowei News, a US-based Chinese political news outlet.

The 58-year-old Ling Jihua, best known as the political “fixer” of former president Hu Jintao, was placed under investigation for “suspected serious disciplinary violation” last December and expelled from the Communist Party on July 20 after being found to have violated political rules, abusing his power, accepting huge bribes and obtaining a significant amount of party and state “core secrets.” In addition, he was found to have committed adultery with a number of women and traded his power for sex.

While Ling Jihua has yet to be convicted by a court of law, an official announcement of this kind from anti-graft authorities in China typically signifies that his fate has already been sealed. Duowei believes, however, that there could still be developments in the case because his youngest brother Ling Wancheng is said to be in possession of so-called “core secrets” he surreptitiously accumulated over the 15 years he spent in the Communist Party’s General Office.

According to Duowei, Ling Wancheng remains in hiding in the US and is using the classified documents to threaten the Chinese government into releasing his brother. There are suggestions that the information in Ling Wancheng’s possession is far more sensitive and important than that handed over by disgraced former Chongqing police chief Wang Lijun — currently serving a 15-year prison sentence — during his attempted defection at the US consulate in

Chengdu back in 2012, and potentially even more explosive than the documents on US government surveillance released by former CIA contractor Edward Snowden in 2013.

In fact, if the claims of seeking political asylum are true, Ling Wancheng could become China’s own version of Snowden, Duowei added.

Duowei’s assertions have been backed up by the New York Times, which published a report earlier this week claiming that China is demanding that the US government return Ling Wancheng.

Citing several US officials familiar with the case, the report said that Ling Wancheng may be in possession of “embarrassing information” about current and former officials loyal to Chinese president Xi Jinping, and that he could become “one of the most damaging defectors” in the history of the People’s Republic of China should political asylum be granted.

It is not doubted by US officials that Ling Wancheng is currently in the US, where he and his wife bought a luxurious property in the small Californian town of Loomis from NBA player Beno Udrih for US\$2.5 million in September 2013.

Christopher Johnson, a former CIA analyst focusing on China, told the New York Times that Chinese leaders might want Ling Wancheng’s assistance in prosecuting his older brother, but more importantly, to prevent the “treasure trove” of knowledge he has about Chinese politics from being divulged to US officials. “The leadership would want this guy badly. There’s no question that he would have access to a lot of interesting things,” Johnson said.

The report said Beijing has been raising pressure on Washington in recent months to return Ling Wancheng, whose absence from a list released by Chinese authorities containing the names of 40 fugitives believed to be hiding in the US indicates just how delicate the situation is for the Communist Party.

The case is said to be further straining relations between the two countries ahead of Xi’s planned state visit to the US in September, especially after it was revealed last month that US officials believe Chinese government hackers had stolen personnel files of millions of US government workers and contractors.

As of now, the charges against Ling Jihua are sufficient to earn him the death penalty, Duowei said. While it is unlikely that Ling Jihua will be able to escape prison from here, the severity of his punishment could very well depend on whether Beijing is able to get its hands on his brother, Duowei added, noting that if political asylum is granted

the situation will turn from a simple corruption case into one involving national security.

Chinese police repair damaged highway inside Nepal

*Press Trust of India | Beijing
August 5, 2015*

The 100 Chinese police officers, who entered the Nepalese territory via Tibet after the China-Nepal Highway was blocked by a landslide, have cleared the 30-kilometre stretch of the vital himalayan route.

The officers entered Nepal from Tibet on Saturday to help repair the rain-ravaged highway at the request of the Nepal government.

The part of the highway on the Nepalese side is 114-kilometre long and was ravaged by days of heavy rainfall.

The Nepalese Army had said that a joint team from the two countries would clear the blocked Tatopani-Khadichaur stretch of the highway within 20 days, state-run Xinhua news agency reported today.

China has dispatched 100 Chinese People's Armed Police Force officers for repair of the highway, a vital route for trade for the local people.

The 943-km China-Nepal Highway connects Lhasa, capital of Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China, with the Nepalese capital Kathmandu. It was put into use in July 1965.

Heavy rainfall have led to mudslides and blocked traffic at several areas in recent days in Nepal.

Chinese armed transport police entered Nepal for the first time in early May to carry out relief work after a massive earthquake struck the himalayan country on April 25. About 9,000 people were killed in the quake.

Chinese, Nepalese PMs Exchange Congratulations on Anniversary of Ties

*Xinhua
August 1, 2015*

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Saturday exchanged congratulatory messages with his Nepalese counterpart, Sushil Koirala, to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between their two countries.

In his message, Li said China and Nepal have been developing their ties on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

China-Nepal relations have become a model for equal treatment and friendly coexistence between big and small countries, he added.

The Chinese side always supports Nepal's efforts in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and highly appreciates its adherence to the one-China policy, he said.

The premier said China is willing to work with Nepal to keep promoting their comprehensive cooperative partnership for generations to higher levels.

For his part, Koirala described China as a trustworthy friendly neighbour, close friend and reliable development partner to Nepal, saying his country firmly sticks to the one-China policy.

He also thanked China for its support and help for Nepal's social and economic development.

The prime minister voiced his belief that the two countries' friendly cooperation will be further strengthened during Nepal's reconstruction after the devastating earthquakes in April.

Commentaries

How the once-thriving commerce on the India-China border dried up

*Quartz India
Kai Friese
August 31, 2015*

In early August, the Indian prime minister addressed anxious questions in parliament regarding the impact of the recent downturn in the Chinese market.

Indian exports, he confirmed, had declined precipitously to a third of last year's figures, and imports too were down by more than 30%. As the New York Times reported, the prime minister agreed that "Indian traders were being put to considerable harassment by Chinese authorities and that Peiping was violating the terms of the accord."

That's right, 'Peiping': this was in August 1959, after all.

The commerce Jawaharlal Nehru was referring to was the overland trade with Tibet, worth some \$525,000 in 1958. It comprised mostly of Tibetan wool and a wide range of Indian manufactured goods from cloth and cigarettes to dismantled trucks and jeeps for the Chinese army, hauled over the Himalayan passes between Lhasa and the Indian town of Kalimpong, popularly known as the “Harbour of Tibet.”

Come August 2015, Beijing’s economic policies are headline news in New Delhi again in the wake of the devaluation of the yuan and the precipitous fall in Chinese stocks, which triggered an alarming 6% crash in India’s own BSE Sensex and a two-year low in the value of the rupee.

To be sure, the effects of China’s “Black Monday” have been felt not just in India—but across the globe. And other than the fact that the events of both August 1959 and August 2015 diminished many Indian fortunes, they express such different realities that they might as well have occurred on different planets.

Perhaps they have. The world is indeed a very different place today. China is now India’s largest trading partner, the value of bilateral trade is estimated at over \$70 billion and India’s trade deficit is around \$48 billion. Indian imports are now dominated by consumer goods, notably mobile phones, while exports to China are led by iron ore and more recently cotton.

And yet, despite the significant scale of this trade and the glaring fact that that the two countries’ fortunes and misfortunes are inextricably intertwined in a global economy, it was not long before an element of schadenfreude emerged in Indian comment and analysis of “the Great Fall of China.” One senior member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Subramanian Swamy, welcomed the crisis as an “opportunity for India,” noting that he had predicted the collapse of the Chinese economy by 2020. “I’m glad that it is happening five years earlier,” he said. Similarly, a web chat with readers hosted by an editor of a leading Indian financial paper was peppered with queries along the lines of “will India surge ahead of China?”

To read the full article click here <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17100> or the title of this article

Here’s the tactic that makes China’s espionage activities are so effective

Business Insider India
Jeremy Bender
August 18, 2015

As the US still attempts to formulate a response to China’s massive hack of the US government’s Office of Personnel Management – a breach that affected some 22 million people, including federal employees with security clearances – the massive size and scope of Beijing’s intelligence gathering operations continues to come into focus.

Unlike other nations, China uses a broad array of both professional and citizen spies to gather data, Peter Mattis explains for War On The Rocks.

As Mattis describes it, the first level of Chinese intelligence-gathering resembles that of just about any other government. A Ministry of State Security carries out surveillance of targets within China and monitors potential threats, while the Ministry of Public Security has control over China’s national databases and surveillance networks.

China also has various levels of military intelligence organisations within the People’s Liberation Army. Most of the operatives for these organisations are also based in China, although Mattis notes that “defense attaches and clandestine collectors do operate abroad.”

This also isn’t all that different from how countries normally operate. The US has some 17 intelligence agencies, several of which are organised under branches of the military. They weren’t under the oversight of a single Director of National Intelligence until 2005.

Where China begins to differ from other nations is its use of operatives who aren’t intelligence professionals and who may technically be outside Beijing’s already sprawling security sector. According to Mattis, Chinese media agencies and their foreign-based journalists have likely collected non-classified data on such sensitive topics as foreign governments’ stances towards Tibet or the South China Sea. These journalists then file reports directly to the Central Committee in Beijing.

“Although most Chinese journalists are not intelligence officers and do not recruit clandestine sources, good journalists can provide information that is not publicly available, but also not classified,” Mattis writes.

To read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16998> or the title of this article

China – A Peaceful Country always Ready for War

August 17, 2015

Niti Central
Claude Arpi

China is a peaceful country: it is at least what Beijing likes to say.

In June, Beijing reiterated its 'peaceful' doctrine in a White Paper (WP) on 'China's military strategy', which affirmed that the country generally enjoys a favourable environment for development, though external challenges are increasing.

Of course, in Beijing's eyes, the main villain is Washington; Beijing does not appreciate the US' 'rebalancing' strategy' and its enhanced military presence in the region. Then, there is Japan. Mao would have probably called Tokyo a US lackey; the WP affirms that Japan is "sparing no effort to dodge the post-war mechanism, overhauling its military and security policies."

Although China is a peaceful nation, Beijing is getting ready for any eventuality.

On August 10, the Chinese media, led by Xinhua announced: "China ramps up joint military exercises"; further reporting: "A joint military drill that started in late July, entered a live fire stage in a plateau area in southwest China's Sichuan Province."

'Plateau area' is another word for Tibet, i.e. India's northern borders.

The drill, coded 'Joint Action-2015D', is organised by the Chengdu Military Area Command (MAC) of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It is the first of five such drills, to be held during the current year in separate MACs.

Xinhua further pointed out:

"It will involve a total of more than 140,000 soldiers from over 140 PLA regiments of various types."

That is not a joke, nearly one and half lakh of soldiers for a 'joint operation' which includes the ground forces (PLA) as well as the PLA Air Force (PLAAF), the PLA Navy (PLAN), the Second Artillery Forces (missiles), the People's Armed Police (PAPF), but also intelligence, reconnaissance and electronic warfare units. This is what He Qimao, head of the joint drill bureau of the PLA General Staff's training department, announced.

To read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17016> or the title of this article.

Visitors are flocking to Tibet, one of the world's remotest holiday destinations, as a result of massive investment in the region's transportation infrastructure, report Luo Wangshu in Xigaze and Xin Dingding in Beijing.

ECNS.CN

August 16, 2015

Driving in Tibet was once considered a dangerous line of work. So much so, that the locals still tie brightly coloured flags signalling "good luck" to cables and rocks on the peak of every mountain and hill.

"The flags are there to wish passers-by a safe journey," explained Yarphel, who has 22 years experience as a local government driver in Ngari prefecture in the Tibet autonomous region – often referred to as "the roof of the world".

During his long working life, Yarphel has developed a special routine and follows a number of rituals. Whenever he drives past the peak of a mountain, he honks his horn. "It's a greeting to the gods, asking them to bless us," he said. More prosaically, it's also a good way to let other motorists know he's there. "On unpaved roads, visibility is often zero because your vision is obscured by the clouds of dust that rise from the road surface," he said.

Yarphel has encountered this situation many times on his travels between Xigaze prefecture and Burang, a county in Ngari, the home of Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar, which are both regarded as holy features by the local Buddhists. "I constantly have to step on the brakes and slow down," he said.

The 1,100-kilo meter journey from Xigaze to Burang used to take at least two days, because "driving 12 hours a day on such a bumpy road was hard and I was exhausted pretty quickly", he added.

Things changed when the road was asphalted, cutting the journey time by half. "Driving on the new road means the journey is no longer such a tiring experience," he said.

The upgraded transportation infrastructure has also benefited Gelek Gyatso, a senior monk at Lingbu Monastery in Gyangze county.

To read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16883> or click the title of this article

Are Uighur Turks oppressed in China?

Daily News

August 10, 2015

During every Ramadan, news erupts in the Turkish press claiming China is oppressing Uighur Turks in the country and banning their practice of Islam. As usual, this was again the case last month. Similar news was broadly covered in the media upon which anti-China demonstrations and attacks took place throughout Turkey.

Yet are these claims valid? Are Uighurs tyrannised in China?

I had the chance to have first-hand observations and meetings in China last week when I took part in President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's official visit to Beijing.

First of all, Uighurs are a Turkic ethnic group; their language is related to Turkish and most of them are Muslim.

Yet they are not the only minority in China. China's population is 1.4 billion and 92 percent of it is ethnically Han. The rest, 8 percent, is composed of 55 different ethnic groups. Muslims constitute 19 million, which is about only 1 percent of the whole population. According to official numbers, there are 9.5 million Uighurs, yet Uighurs themselves claim they are 15 million.

Han Chinese is considered the first class ethnicity in the country. They are said to be given the best jobs and the majority do well economically, something that has fuelled resentment among Uighurs.

But the most conflicting issue between Beijing and Uighurs is the name of the Xinjiang region. Uighurs call it "East Turkestan," which originated from the "East Turkestan Islamic Republic," which briefly survived as an independent state between 1933-34. The second time Uighurs were independent in history was under the "East Turkestan Republic" between 1944-49, which had been built with the support of the Soviet Union. Yet later in 1949, Xinjiang officially became part of communist China.

Beijing opposes this name and insists on "Xinjiang Autonomous Region." When they hear "East Turkestan," Chinese people feel just like a Turk would feel if Turkey's southeast region were called "Kurdistan."

Xinjiang is given this much importance by Beijing and the wider international community mainly because most of the oil and gas resources in the country are found in this region. Moreover it is the most strategic transit point of the Silk Road.

This is still a highly strategic asset, since the Silk Road is getting revitalised by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Jinping announced this economic development framework which will integrate trade and investment in Eurasia in 2013. It included 65 countries situated on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

To read the full article please click here:<http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16684> or click the title of this article

TIBETS ROAD AHEAD

Tibetans lose a haven in Nepal under Chinese pressure

LOS ANGELES TIMES

BARBARA DEMICK

AUGUST 6, 2015

Tsomo escaped Tibet last year on a zipline that carried her into Nepal over a chasm of jagged rocks and a river gushing white as frothing milk.

The 23-year-old student remembers she was numb with terror as the smugglers fastened a thick rope through her legs and across her chest in a harness. It was the dead of night, but still she could hear the river roaring below her.

"It was like something out of a bad dream. I was so scared I peed in my pants," said Tsomo, who is now a student majoring in English at a Tibetan school in India.

She was among the lucky few.

For decades, Nepal was the main station on an underground railroad for Tibetans fleeing China, which claims sovereignty over Tibet. After a long trek over the Himalayas, evading Chinese security, refugees would seek asylum in Nepal or move onward to India, where the Dalai Lama, their spiritual leader, lives in exile.

Now the doors are slamming shut, as Nepal falls under the sway of China's power and money.

Nepal is a case study in how a rising China has come to exert itself over its neighbours. Landlocked and impoverished, with a chaotic political system and recovering from natural disaster, Nepal has capitulated easily to Beijing's will — and nowhere has that been more strongly expressed than in the fate of would-be immigrants from Tibet.

From 1991 to 2008, an average of 2,200 Tibetans came across annually, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Only 171 made it in 2013, and fewer last year.

One reason is that a booming Chinese economy has persuaded many Tibetans to remain at home. Some are even returning to Tibet after years of exile. But the

dwindling number of Tibetan immigrants to Nepal also suggests strongly that the once-welcoming Nepalese government has been pressured by China to shut the door.

To read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=16611> or the title of this article