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TAR NEWS

Yumai (Lhoka) Border Police Distributes Winter Essentials and Toys to the Border Village

December 21, 2023

The Party Branch of the Yumai Border Police Station in Lhoka (Ch: Shannan) Tibet recently organized an initiative to support students at Yumai Township Primary School. The Border Police Station of Yumai raised funds via the ‘Love Donation Platform’ and distributed 30 winter gift bags to the teachers and students in the border county. The gift bags included 30 sets of stationery, 7 sets of cold-proof clothes for teachers, 37 pairs of cold-proof shoes, and 40 children's toys. The Police Officers from Yumai Border Police Station who had coordinated the distribution told the students and teachers to “cherish their current good life, hold onto their ideals, take responsibility, endure hardships, and strive for success.”

(Comment: Yumai was the first of the Xiaokang or model well-off border defence villages built by China to “consolidate” borders.)

Deputy Director of Nyingtri Education Bureau Inspects Primary School

December 26, 2023

Liu Bin, Secretary of the Party Group and Deputy Director of the Nyingtri Education Bureau conducted an inspection visit to the No. 2 Primary School in Nyingtri. Accompanied by the concerned Department officials, he examined the construction of the proposed teaching auxiliary housing and urged the school to maximize the use of functional classrooms. During discussions with school authorities and department heads, Liu Bin outlined several key points for the school's future work including strengthening management, promoting comprehensive and sustainable development, facilitating collaboration between Tibetan and non-Tibetan

Teachers, providing support for Aid-Tibet Teachers, ensuring adherence to political discipline and rules, and prioritizing teachers' ethics and work-style.

TAR People's Government Gathers Opinions from Grassroot Party Cadres and Representatives

December 27, 2023

On December 26, the TAR People's Government convened a meeting chaired by Tsering Phuntsok, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government to gather "opinions" of grassroots Party cadres and representatives. The Grassroots Party Cadres and Representatives reportedly highlighted achievements of the TAR in 2023. The meeting urged concerned departments and the report drafting groups of the TAR People's Government to study and incorporate the "opinions and suggestions" expressed by the Party cadres and representatives. Additionally, they were tasked with strengthening the implementation of the proposed work plan for 2024.

TAR Invested 71.93 Million Yuan for Border Courts

December 27, 2023

A press conference was held in Lhasa on December 26, 2023, to discuss the effectiveness and typical cases of the "four creations" and "four in the forefront" propaganda campaign of the TAR Courts. According to the press conference, the courts in the TAR had accepted 86,260 cases, a 31.75% year-on-year increase, with a 91.68% completion rate within the trial limit in 2023.

Zhao Yuyan, Deputy Secretary of the Party Group and Executive Vice President of the Higher People's Court of the TAR emphasized the court's duty to "protect the sacred land, build a happy home, and ensure the solid defence of the national security barrier." He added that since the beginning of the year, the courts in TAR have led in serving the establishment of the national demonstration zone for consolidating the border and enriching the people, innovating border-related judicial measures, completing 7,124 cases in 21 border county courts, and investing 71.93 million yuan to strengthen the infrastructure of border courts. It was reported that over past year, the courts, particularly border courts, played a significant role in serving the border, handling contradictions and disputes, cracking down on cross-border crimes, and contributing to the establishment of a national demonstration area for consolidating the border

and enriching the people. The TAR Higher People's Court conference disclosed at the press conference that 2,266 criminal cases, a 9.22% year-on-year increase, related to serving the creation of model areas for national unity and progress, were dealt with.

The press conference also highlighted the successful conclusion of 42 criminal cases of environmental resources, resulting in fines exceeding 2.1 million yuan. Furthermore, 141 civil trials involving the development and utilization of natural resources contributed to the standardized market trading behaviour of these resources. The Higher People's Court of the TAR established a leading group for the north-south mountain greening project in Lhasa, handled 190 trials and execution cases and concluded 182 cases.

Shaanxi University and the Tibet University for Nationalities Sign Agreement

December 29, 2023

On December 27, a Signing Ceremony was held between Shaanxi University and the Tibet University for Nationalities to launch new disciplines and majors at the latter. The signing ceremony took place in Xi'an. Li Mingyuan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee and Minister of the United Front Work Department of the Provincial Party Committee, and Lang Fukuan, Vice Chairman of the TAR People's Government, attended the event. The Agreement follows an exchange symposium held earlier in Shaanxi between the TAR People's Government and Shaanxi province and aims to create a platform of "assistance to Tibet" and strengthen deeper cooperation.

During the signing ceremony, the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education and the TAR Department of Education said that part of the Framework Agreement includes the launch of Disciplines and Majors at Tibetan Universities for Nationalities. Universities such as Xi'an Jiaotong University and Northwest University of Political Science and Law, among others, will conduct training for teachers as a primer to the implementation of the Agreement.

Official Inspects 'One-Stop' Conflicts and Dispute Mediation Centre

December 30, 2023

Wang Jianfei, Deputy Secretary of the Bayi (Tib: Drayibchu) District Party Committee, Nyingchi, inspected the Drayibchu/Bayi District 'One-Stop' Conflict and Dispute Mediation

Centre on December 28. He was accompanied by officials from the District Judicial Bureau. Wang Jianfei and the officials conducted on-site inspections in the registration hall, legal and consultation room, analysis and judgement room, mediation room, and psychological consultation room. Officials of the “Conflict and Dispute” Mediation Centre presented a detailed report on the staffing, work operation mechanism, workflow, and issues in the centre's operations. Wang Jianfei and the team also engaged with hired lawyers and expressed full affirmation of the effectiveness of the "one-stop" conflict mediation centre in Bayi District. The Inspection Team emphasized the need to strengthen responsibility by firmly establishing the concept of a “single chess game.” They urged the establishment of a "big mediation" pattern, the improvement of diversified cooperation mechanisms for conflict resolution, and the formation of a united force to resolve disputes.

The Inspection Team led by Wang Jianfei, additionally stressed the need to enhance self-construction by striving to build a mediation team that possesses legal knowledge, understands the business, considers the overall situation, demonstrates professionalism and a sense of responsibility, and passionately serves the people. They told the concerned party officials at the Mediation Centre to increase the publicity so that people are aware of the mediation work and encouraged them to resolve disputes through mediation and maintain social stability at the grassroots level.

(Comment: The Mediation Teams that exist in other parts of Tibet also “screen and mediate social disputes”, which involves acting to settle and contain any disputes among villagers or families, because of official concerns in China that small disputes might lead to wider unrest or “instability.” One objective is to prevent villagers from presenting petitions to higher-level officials. It also includes any potential trouble arising from dissents and protests, expression of faith to the Dalai Lama and other higher lamas, and organization of social and cultural activities, that are deemed instability prone.)

TAR To Focus on Nine Aspects of Work for 2024

December 30, 2023

The Fifth Plenary Session of the Tenth Committee of the TAR Party Committee and the Economic Work Conference was held in Lhasa from December 22 to 23. The conference focused on the implementation of the 20th Party Congress spirit and the 14th Five-Year Plan,

summarizing the past year's achievements, analyzing challenges, and planning economic and social development for 2024. In addition, the plenary session emphasized the following nine key areas of focus for 2024:

1. *Investment and Project Construction*: Prioritizing the expansion of effective investment and continuous promotion of project construction thereby focusing on development through projects
2. *Industrial Development*: Accelerating the construction of a modern industrial system. This includes the integrated development of the cultural tourism industry and the promotion of Light Industry
3. *Optimization of Business Environment*: Focusing on improving the business environment. This involves the expansion of efforts to attract investment.
4. *Financial Services Optimization*: optimization of financial services and effective coordination of financial development and security. This includes resource allocation to key areas and key links, cracking down on illegal financial activities, and ensuring financial security
5. *People's Livelihood Improvement*: Prioritizing rural revitalization, expanding employment and entrepreneurship
6. *Reform and Opening Up*: Promoting reform and opening up to enhance economic development. Integrating Tibet into the "Belt and Road Initiative," improving infrastructure, building more open platforms, and deepening reforms in key areas
7. *Ecological Civilization*: Establishing a strong national ecological security barrier. This involves strengthening ecological protection legislation, promoting ecological protection and restoration, and enhancing comprehensive environmental governance
8. *Development of Border Areas*: Accelerating the development of border areas to consolidate border security. Adhering to the principle of strengthening both troops and the people simultaneously. Highlighting the equal importance of consolidating the border and rejuvenating the border
9. *Stability Maintenance*: This involves establishing an overall national security concept, conducting an in-depth anti-secession struggle, excelling in ethnic work, improving the level of religious work, consolidating the social governance system and capacity, and resolutely maintaining political security and overall social stability.

Global Times Reporter visits “Southern Tibet's New Border City”

December 2023

A reporter from China’s official mouthpiece, the Global Times, paid an exclusive visit to “Southern Tibet's New Border City.” Established in April, the city, (formerly Tsona County), reporters from the Global Times say is strategically located between India and Bhutan, has emerged as a “crucial frontline in safeguarding national borders while simultaneously playing a pivotal role in rural revitalization”. The Reporter added that “with a population exceeding 15,000 from diverse ethnic backgrounds, residents share a collective vision to serve as the guardians of their sacred land and architects of a contented community.” The article, published after a visit to Tsona described Tsona as a historical battleground during the 1962 self-defence counterattack against India, along with Lebugou, located in the south of Tsona in Lhoka, and added it has witnessed remarkable improvements in border infrastructure and patrol conditions.

The article also delved into the transformative changes in Mama Township, where the city's government building is being relocated. The Reporter said Tsona is gaining popularity as a self-driving tour route in Tibet and that Tsona aims to be part of the national and regional tourism ring line, offering visitors a unique experience of border guarding and fostering patriotism.

According to the reporter, the completion of well-off villages in Tsona has given rise to a new border home-stay format, enriching the lives of villagers and contributing to the local economy. He added that there is support from central and local governments that has allowed villagers to upgrade their homes, attract tourists and promote sustainable development. Mama Township has approximately 86 homestays and 667 beds. In conclusion, the article highlighted the central and local government's commitment to fostering economic growth and improving living standards in Tibet's border regions.

Lhasa Gonggar Airport Terminal Building completed

On 15 December, the T2 terminal building (non-civil aviation project) of Lhasa Gonggar Airport, which was constructed by China Construction Eighth Bureau, successfully passed the completion acceptance and is expected to be put into use at the end of December 2023.

Tibet Development Plans for 2023

The TAR Transportation Department announced on December 29, that in 2023, Tibet will implement 416 rural road projects, add 4 new towns, and 214 incorporated villages will have access to hardened roads. The accessibility rates in towns and administrative villages will reach 95.55% and 82.6% respectively. It said in terms of project construction, key highway projects such as the G4218 Lhasa-Shigatse Airport Expressway are accelerating, and construction of projects such as the Lhasa Gonggar Airport external transportation reconstruction project has begun. Cuona [Tsona] City was named a national model county of "Four Good Rural Roads". The depth of maintenance and management has been further expanded. 74 counties have established and implemented a three-level road chief system of "county, township and village", completed the renovation of 94 dangerous bridges, and implemented 1,564 kilometres of refined safety facilities improvement projects. The "Interim Measures for the Management of Rural Passenger Transport Subsidy Funds and Urban Transport Development Incentive Funds in the Tibet Autonomous Region" were promulgated, and 6 new towns and 76 incorporated villages were opened to passenger buses, with the passenger bus access rates reaching 91.3% and 71.1% respectively. It added that in 2024, the TAR Transportation Department will improve the planning system for transportation power, accelerate the release of the "Tibet Autonomous Region Comprehensive Three-dimensional Transportation Network Plan (2023-2035)", and start the preparation of the "15th Five-Year Plan" Transportation Plan; accelerate the promotion of the G109 Line to Golmud and will continue to advance the construction of inter-provincial bottleneck sections and the capacity expansion and reconstruction of busy corridors, accelerate the planning and construction of high-grade highways connecting surrounding provinces and regions; fully complete the G4218 Lhasa-Shigatse Airport section project, and accelerate the construction of G318 Line quality improvement and transformation projects.

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE OF TAR

Gansu-Qinghai earthquake death toll rises to 131, including 18 in Qinghai

December 20, 2023

A powerful 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck Gansu province and affected Qinghai province on December 18, resulting in a death toll of 131, with 18 deaths reported in Qinghai. As of December 20, the disaster has left 198 people injured in Qinghai, with 16 individuals still missing. The epicentre was in Liugou Township, near the county seat of Bonan-Dongxiang-Salar Autonomous County of Jishishan in Gansu Province. The earthquake caused significant casualties due to the densely populated areas near the epicentre and the high seismic intensity. Over 700 people were injured in both provinces, with the most damage reported in Gansu's Jishishan county and the city of Haidong in Qinghai. The earthquake is the deadliest in China since the 2014 earthquake in Yunnan province.

China claims progress in Yebatan Hydropower Station Construction on the Drichu River in Tibet

December 12, 2023

China announced (December 11) that it has reached a significant milestone in the construction of the Yebatan hydropower station on the Jinsha River (Tib: Drichu) in Tibet. The dam's height exceeded 100 meters, marking the completion of nearly half of its planned height. The Yebatan hydropower station is the 7th level of the 13 cascade hydropower stations in the upper reaches of the Jinsha River. The total installed capacity is designed to reach 2,240 megawatts upon completion, with a maximum dam height of 217 meters. The first unit is expected to generate electricity by the end of 2025, and the entire project is slated for completion in 2026. The investment in the project is over 33 billion yuan (\$4.6 billion) over 105 months, contributing to poverty alleviation, rural revitalization, and China's energy structure adjustment.

EXILE TIBETAN NEWS

Vietnamese Buddhist group in Europe condemns China's meddling in Dalai Lama's reincarnation

December 22, 2023

The Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe, a Vietnamese Buddhist group with over 50 pagodas across the continent, has strongly condemned the Chinese government's interference in Tibetan Buddhist affairs, specifically addressing the recognition of the reincarnation of high lamas, including the 14th Dalai Lama. The group emphasized that such interference is contradictory for a government that claims to be atheist and stated that the recognition of reincarnated spiritual beings is a unique practice within Tibetan Buddhism, reserved for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The group called on China to cease interference in Tibetan Buddhist affairs and respect the Tibetans' rights to freedom of religion or belief, urging the international community not to recognize any reincarnation appointed by China.

US company says it stopped selling DNA collection kits to Chinese-ruled Tibet

Thermo Fisher Scientific, a US-based biotechnology company, has announced the cessation of sales of its DNA collection kits in Chinese-occupied Tibet following criticism from rights groups and pressure from Congress. Accusations suggest that China is creating a DNA database for ethnic profiling of Tibetans, leading to concerns about potential abuses. The Thermo Fisher spokesperson stated that the decision was made in mid-2023, emphasizing the importance of its human identification technology in forensic applications while aligning with routine forensic investigation practices in the region. The move comes after reports in 2022 revealed Chinese police engaging in mass DNA collection in Tibet using equipment purchased from Thermo Fisher. The company faced pressure to halt sales from rights groups and Congress, culminating in its decision to cease sales in the Tibet Autonomous Region.
