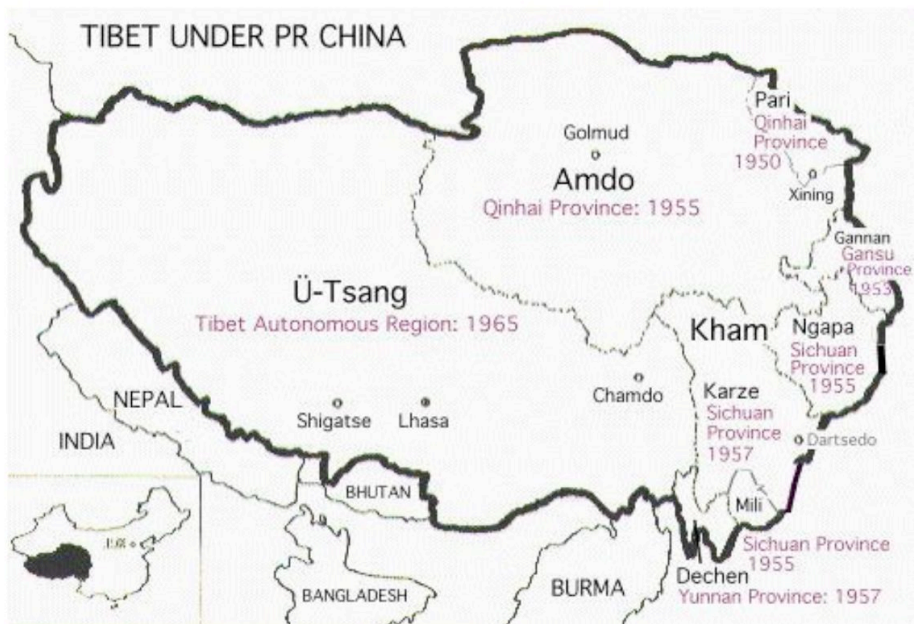




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TIBET INSIGHT, 1-15 SEPTEMBER 2019



TAR NEWS

Security Operations in TAR tightened for 70th founding Anniversary of PRC

September 12, 2019

An All-TAR video conference on management of security operations was convened on September 11. The meeting assessed current security related matters in the region and delegated specific tasks.

Norbu Dhondup, standing committee member of the TAR Party Committee, Executive Vice-Chairman of TAR People's Government and Director of the newly formed TAR Security Committee attended and spoke at the meeting. Norbu Dhondup emphasised the need to respond to 'risks and challenges' immediately without 'delayed thoughts and action' and emphasised that all must adhere to 'four consciousness,' and everyone should work with full responsibility. He urged that, "all departments and cadres should first of all improve their political positions, unify their thoughts in line with the party, and enhance sense of responsibility particularly concerning security matters." The meeting concluded with the message that "all security precautions and control measures must be ensured for a conducive and peaceful social environment for the 70th anniversary of the founding of New China."

"Special Press Conference" by TAR Delegation in Beijing

September 12, 2019

Top TAR leaders including TAR Party Secretary Wu Yingjie and Chairman of TAR People's Government Qi Zha la (Ch: Chedak) convened a press conference in Beijing on September 12, to celebrate and share 'social and economic achievements' of Tibet in the last 70 years. Representatives of 40 media outlets and 76 journalists (domestic and international) participated in the press conference. Hu Kaihong, Director of the Information Bureau of the State Council Information Office, presided over the press conference.

Wu Yingjie asserted that, “Tibet is a special frontier ethnic region and is known as the ‘Roof of the World’. It is an important national security [border with India] and ecological security barrier, an important strategic resource reserve [water and minerals], a plateau living on agricultural products and an important cultural reserve of Chinese national characteristics.” Wu Yingjie added that, “Tibet is a world tourist destination and an important channel for opening to South Asia including Belt and Road Initiative.” An exhibition was organized at the venue where Tibetan “cultural and creative products and specialties” were displayed.

(Comment: There is speculation that the TAR delegation was in Beijing primarily to prepare for Chinese President Xi Jinping’s ‘likely visit’ to Tibet.)

TAR held competition on knowledge about ‘unity and development’

September 18, 2019

On September 16, the TAR Civil Affairs Commission organized a general knowledge competition in Lhasa via WeChat with the theme ‘Like Pomegranate seeds for Unity’. The contest was publicized in media platforms such as Tibet Daily, Tibet Business Daily etc to “further create awareness about the Chinese cadres and masses to all ethnic groups in the region, to stimulate enthusiasm, instill confidence and strengthen national unity.”

Cyber Security Network Skills Competition held in Lhasa

September 20, 2019

The TAR Cyber Security Network held a competition on Cyber Security skills on September 18, 2019. Wang Haizhuo, Vice-Chairman of TAR People’s Government attended and presented awards to the winners. In the wake of the National Cyber Security Publicity Week, the competition was to “thoroughly implement Xi Jinping’s socialism with Chinese Characteristic in the New Era.” A total of 28 teams and 86 individuals participated in the competition.

TAR Discipline Inspection Commission punishes three for ‘violation of rules’

September 13, 2019

The TAR Discipline Inspection Commission recently arrested three officials for “violating three rules of the CCP CC’s eight provisions.” The three officials are Ou Zhu, member of the Standing Committee of Nagchu’s Nima County, Secretary of the Nagchu Political and Legal Committee, and also Political Commissar of the Public Security Bureau of Nagchu. He has been accused of illegally using a bus during vacation and misusing the fuel cost of the bus. The second official arrested was Tenzin, Director of the Office of the Ethnic and Religious of the Lhoka (Ch:Shannan) Municipal’s Political Consultative Conference. He was accused of organizing a banquet costing 6,300 yuan for his son in the school. Bhu Tsering, the third official, was accused of violating provisions of the CCP CC and embezzling funds totaling almost a million Yuan. A circular was also issued that stressed “party organizations at all levels in TAR especially top leaders must maintain political strength, conscientiously carry out party principles and implement the ‘eight regulations’ directed by the Central Committee.”

Ngari and Tibet-China Power Grid Project mobilization meeting held

September 18, 2019

The ‘mobilization’ meeting for an ‘interconnection’ construction project between Ngari (Ch: Ali) and Lhasa was held in Lhasa on September 17. The Tibet-China Power Grid Corporation will be in charge of the Project. Liu Zehong, Executive Vice- President of the State Grid Corporation of China attended the meeting along with top TAR leaders.

The ‘interconnection’ project between Ngari and Lhasa is a ‘key’ project of the 13th Five Year Plan. It is considered part of a major national defense strategy for improving the livelihood of people living in the border areas and their power supply. Once completed, it is estimated the project will provide power to up to 380,000 people living in Ngari as well as the western region of Shigatse. The Ngari and Tibet-China power grid interconnection project started from the 220-kilovolt substation in Samdrubtse District of

Shigatse and terminated at the 220-kilovolt substation in the Gar County of Ngari, with a total investment of 7.4 billion yuan. It is expected to be completed in 2021.

Lhoka held a symposium for management of monasteries

September 5, 2019

Lhoka (Shannan) held a symposium on the ‘management of the monasteries work’ in the city with the objective of aligning monastery work with the political ideology and construction. The objective of the symposium was to strengthen the party’s overall leadership over the temple management committee, strengthen party building by the temple management committee, strengthen personnel training and cadre allocation of the temple management committee. The meeting stressed the need for in-depth study of ‘Xi Jinping’s new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics’ and the ‘spirit of the 19th party congress’ and ‘Xi’s critical exposition on religious work and the stability of the border’. The meeting emphasized that the party’s policy on religion is clear from the series of speeches and instructions by the General Secretary, i.e. to manage the religion according to law. It is not only important to manage the religion according to law and regulations but, it is also necessary to establish the concept of ‘supremacy of the country’s law over religion’. The monastic management committees were told to assess the problems related to religious affairs according to law and uproot the real hardships and establish a good temple management system. Religion in Tibet today should go hand in hand with development and progress of contemporary China and conform to the interpretation of traditional Chinese culture. All the ‘believers’ should abandon superstition and pursue a healthy and civilized lifestyle. The religious community must earnestly contribute to the social stability and practice “four standards”.

Construction of 4th station of Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway begins

September 5, 2019

The Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway section of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway once completed would become the second railway to Tibet from the Mainland. It comprises four sections

– Lhasa to Nyingchi, Chengdu to Ya'an, Ya'an to Kangding, and Kangding to Nyingchi. About 75 percent of the railway on the high plateau is bridges and tunnels, and it is expected to be completed in 2020.

Drilling of the 2515 meters long Dana Tunnel of the Lalin section was completed on September 5. It covers both; Nyingchi (Linzhi), and Lhoka (Shannan) and a total of 47 tunnels have been built along the route. The tunnel is located on the axis of the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), and 87.8 percent of the tunnel is soft rock. Construction of the fourth of 34 stations of the Lhasa-Nyingchi railway line has commenced. So far only 90.3 kilometers of the 435 kms railway line has been completed.

Nyingchi holds meeting for stricter discipline inspection

September 11, 2019

The Nyingchi Municipal Government Information Office held a meeting for building a party style clean government and anti-corruption work. Yang Yonggian, the Minister of Propaganda of the Nyingchi Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection told the media the priority is to construct a correct political direction, carry out in-depth supervision and discipline inspection in the work of poverty alleviation, reformation of supervision system, inspection of the role of stationed party organisations and maintain high pressure on anti-corruption work, and black and illegal forces. He reported that this year, the Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision carried out 114 unannounced visits, investigated and dealt with five violations of the Central Eight Provisions and they received a total of 124 complaints from the people with some of them including the higher level as well. They carried out strict investigations in 103 cases of violations of responsibilities of the State government and party, and handled 19 cases successfully. The report mentioned that the Discipline Inspection Committee collected 566, 000 Yuans in penalty fees from individuals and party organizations. Most complaints were regarding poverty alleviation (98 complaints) and 28 were on 'black and evil' and corruption related. The District Commission for Discipline Inspection is handling these cases and 26 of them were completed.

(Comment: There appears to be an increase in targeting party cadres and leaders in the name of ‘black and corruption’ work who differed from the Party line.)

Nepal deported six Tibetan asylum seekers

September 11, 2019

Radio Free Asia (RFA)’s Tibetan service (September 9) said brushing aside pleas from local bystanders and warning them against speaking about it, police in Nepal’s northwestern corner district of Humla on September 5 forcibly handed over six Tibetan asylum seekers to Chinese border forces. The RFA report, quoting an unidentified source, said “When those six Tibetan escapees arrived on Nepal soil [on foot], at a place called Legme, the Nepalese border police arrested them. From there, the Nepali police led the handcuffed Tibetan refugees to Simikto police station. The handcuffed Tibetan refugees were wailing in great distress at their fate, and were pleading the police with folded hands not to take them back to the Chinese.”

(Comment: The arrest and deportation of the Tibetans, who crossed into Nepal from Purang (Chinese: Burang) County of Tibet’s Ngari (Ali) Prefecture, was reported to have taken place the same day.).

Xi Jinping likely to visit Nepal

September 13, 2019

The Chinese delegation led by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Kathmandu to prepare the ground for President Xi Jinping’s much-discussed Nepal visit was reported by the Annapurna newspaper to not be pleased. Wang Yi held detailed discussions with Prime Minister KP Oli and President Bidya Devi Bhandari about Xi Jinping’s visit. It was neither able to get the Nepali side to finalize the BRI projects that Nepal wanted China to help with, nor was it assured about the ‘security preparations’ for Xi Jinping’s trip. The delegation was concerned with the inability of the Nepal authorities to prevent a protest outside the Chinese Embassy by a group of women. They were apprehensive that

there could be protests in Nepal by pro-Tibet activists or by the local Muslim community over China's treatment of its Uighurs. However, during the Chinese Foreign Minister's visit, the two countries signed three letters of exchanges: on a hospital recovery project in the district of Manang; on providing 5,000 emergency shelter tents; and on a volunteer Chinese teachers' program. The Annapurna newspaper said if the Chinese were assured of security, then Chinese President Xi Jinping could even stay overnight, otherwise his visit might last 8-9 hours. Former DIG of Nepal Police Hemanta Malla Thakuri was quoted as saying he does not believe there is any physical threat to foreign dignitaries in Nepal. But due to the recent unrest among the Uighur Muslim community in China, Thakuri said the Chinese may have felt some threat from this section in Nepal. Tanka Karki, a former Nepali ambassador to China, said, "In 2016, powerful forces were successful in blocking Xi's visit. But this time, he is almost sure to come." A senior intelligence officer with the National Investigation Department said the Chinese would finalize President Xi Jinping's visit only after being completely assured. High-level security teams from China have been regularly visiting Nepal in the past few weeks. The NID official said "Just to be doubly sure, Nepal Army will be deployed at the front row of the security arrangement".

(Comment: Xi Jinping's visit will be the first by a Chinese President to Nepal in 23 years since Jiang Zemin's trip in 1996.)

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE TAR

Gannan (Kanlho) revokes mining rights in protected areas at all levels, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu

September 3, 2019

After the Qilian Mountain environmental crisis, the Gannan State government of the State Council revised and inspected various sites and now it is required of all counties, municipalities and state departments to maintain the baseline of ecological protection, safety, quality and upper limit of the natural resource utilization. With the issuance of

Gansu Province's "Implementation Plan for the Reconstruction of Ecological Environment Problems in the Qilian Mountain Reserve, the Gannan State Government of the State Council came up with the "Implementation Plan for Strengthening the Specialized Remediation Work of Ecological Resources and Management in the Field of Mineral Resources" uniform to whole prefecture. Under this plan, the county and state government are required to actively promote the clean-up and withdrawal of mining rights involving various nature reserves including cancellation, deduction and compensation exit schemes of the mining rights. It covers 202 existing mining rights in the state, of which 33 mining rights in national-level nature reserves, 26 mining rights of various protected outside nature reserve and forest land. They are completely cancelling 21 mining rights, deducting 8 and providing compensation for four mining rights from national-level nature reserves.

Gannan has 16 types of protection sites at various levels such as water sources, forestland, wetland etc. Any kind of new mining is prohibited at defined important areas like nature reserves, scenic spot, national parks, protected water sources, cultural relics protection area, geological parks, forest parks and wetland etc. The exit method of mining rights has reached to 59 mining rights at various protected sites and cleared 53 cases so far with an exit rate of 89.83%. All the cities and counties are required to sign the 'Mineral Environment Protection Responsibility Contract' to restore the mine condition, systematic management of the deposit, and follow the opinions shared by Gansu Provincial Bureau of Geology and Minerals.

Up to eight years of imprisonment for illegal online content, Qinghai

September 8, 2019

Beginning from September, the Qinghai authority has been circulating a 5-minute voice recording (in Tibetan and Chinese) on various social media particularly WeChat of the "ten rules" that all the Internet users are required to follow diligently. The podcast targets online groups with more than ten members each and instructed them to publicize the contents of the notice, exercise self-restraint and not circulate any rumours. The notice

bans posting and sharing of “illegal” information that “harms the nation and the Chinese Communist Party” failing which the consequences would result in fixed-term imprisonment of one to eight years. The notice said that ‘the chat groups and individuals if found posting and sharing illegal contents will be charged as part of the ongoing nationwide crackdown on ‘black and evil forces’. The admin or the group moderators of the online chat groups are told to shoulder extra responsibilities in controlling the behaviour of their group members and the content they share. The relevant government department and internet authorities are to close monitor all chat groups including their status updates or moments and the offenders will face strict punishment according to law.

The 10 rules that every netizens have to observe are:

1. Do not share sensitive political information
2. Do not believe in rumours and do not post/share them
3. Do not send internal information to outsiders
4. Do not send threatening information related to [the above point]
5. Do not share information related to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan before the government releases it
6. Do not share information related to the military
7. Do not share documents related to state secrets
8. Do not collect any kinds donations unless verified
9. Do not send photos and videos of various [government officials]
10. All must abide by the constitutional law

Kanlho (Gannan) carries out extensive training of China’s new campaign of ‘Not forgetting the initial heart and remembering the new mission’

September 9, 2019

From September 9 the State Education Committee of Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture began extensive training of China’s new campaign of ‘Not forgetting the initial heart and remembering the new mission’. Professors of the State Party School were invited to give lectures on ‘struggle and achievement of the

communist party since the founding of the party. The State Council's leading group for this theme education has sent 15 tour groups to all the counties and cities in Gannan, and more than 89 state direct departments participated in carrying out this theme education. The groups were instructed to ensure that the political direction is correct, understand the party's significance, effectiveness of the grassroots party organization and their supervision, and learn the arrangement and requirement of the provincial party committee. They were told to play the complete role of linking, guiding, checking, and coordinating while adhering to the highest standards of the party's position. While carrying out the mission at Machu (Maqu) on September 11, Liu Yongge, a member of the State Standing Committee and Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee demanded that local cadres and party members deepen the ideological position, enhance the sense of political responsibility, and understand the urgency of this theme education. He said party officials at all levels should immediately hold meetings, and the county committees should further understand the significance, objectives, tasks, and methods of carrying out this theme education. The theme education should align with general work of curbing the risk and overall plan of security and stability work in the founding anniversary of 70th year of the PRC.

Karze Gesar Airport is officially opened, Sichuan

September 16, 2019

The Karze Gesar airport officially opened for navigation on September 16, when the first A319 flight from Chengdu landed at Gesar Airport with local Tibetans dressed in traditional attire and khataks welcomed it. There is a huge statue of King Gesar riding a horse at the front of the airport. Gesar Airport is located at the junction of Ganzi County and Dege County in Ganzi Prefecture, at a height of 4,068 meters. Ganzi Prefecture is the second largest Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture outside TAR, covering Dege, Sershu, Palyu, Seda, Nyarong, and Tawu Counties. It is the third high-altitude civil feeder airport and is one of the major projects of Ganzi Prefecture's "traffic first" strategy. With the completion of Gesar Airport the northern Tibetan area of Ganzi is no longer isolated. Chengdu is now only one hour distant from Ganzi County, and nearly 10 hours shorter

than the road trip.

The airport was built over two years and two months and construction was started in June 2017. The airport is designed to receive 220,000 passengers in 2025 and cargo of 660 tons per year. Construction of the airport was given to the China Wuye Group Co. Ltd.. According to Yang Qinghua, Deputy Secretary of Ganze State Government and Director of the State Poverty Alleviation and Development Bureau, the airport intends to promote high-end agricultural and livestock products and increases the income to alleviate the masses from poverty.

DIASPORA TIBETAN NEWS

U.S. Congress intends to adopt a new Tibet Policy Act

September 10, 2019

On September 9, the President of Tibetan Government in Exile, Sikyong Lobsang Sangay reached Washington to discuss a new Tibet Policy Act and highlight the importance of religious freedom for the reincarnation process. He attended a reception hosted at Rayburn House by the House Democratic Partnership. It was attended by HDP Chair and Congressman David Price, Congresswoman Judy Chu, Congresswoman Terri Sewell, Congressman Ted Yoho, Congressman Gerry Connolly, and Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the President of the National Democratic Institute, the Vice President of the International Republican Institute, and the Vice President of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Presidents of the Tibetan Associations of New York, Philadelphia, and Capitol area, the Vice President of the International Campaign for Tibet, all the staffers of the Office of Tibet – DC, also attended the event. Most of the congressmen were part of the recent bi-partisan delegation visit to Dharmasala. The house speaker also met with Sikyong Lobsang Sangay and said she would help make the new Tibet Policy a priority in Congress.

President Sangay also met Congressman Jim McGovern, the chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and Jon Stivers, the staff director of the CECC. They discussed the new Tibet Policy Act, which they said would be announced formally within a few weeks. Senator Feinstein and Congressman Vern Buchanan have promised to co-sponsor the new Tibet Policy Act. The emphasis of the new policy would be on the religious freedom, issues of funding and strengthening the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and Tibet's environment. Ambassador Brown, the ambassador at-large for Religious Freedom reaffirmed that this is a good moment in time to push for the new Tibet Policy Act and compared the plight of Tibetans and Uyghurs to the Soviet Union's treatment of Jewish people stating that he 'believes that Tibetans and Uyghurs are the keys for confronting China'. The Sikyong invited them to Dharamsala, India. Ngodup Tsering, head of Office of Tibet in Washington, DC, accompanied Sikyong.

New Tibet bill in US Congress targets Chinese leaders who interfere in Dalai Lama reincarnation process

September 17, 2019

A bill has been introduced in the US Congress, which, if passed, will require Chinese officials who attempt to interfere in the reincarnation process of Tibetan Buddhists to be subjected to targeted sanctions. The bill was introduced in the House of Representatives on September 13 and a similar bill was expected to be introduced in the Senate a week later.

The bipartisan Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2019 seeks to make it official US policy that the succession or reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders are exclusively religious issues that the Tibetan Buddhist community should decide on. The bill, which seeks to modify and reauthorize the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Committee on the Judiciary in the next stage in the adoption process. The bill also says no new Chinese consulates should be allowed in the US until a US consulate is established in Lhasa, Tibet's historical capital. Under the new bill, any Chinese official deemed complicit in

identifying or installing a future Dalai Lama will face sanctions that could include having their assets frozen and their entry to the US denied. The bill also calls on the Special Coordinator for Tibet in the State Department to build international diplomatic coalitions to oppose any effort by China to interfere in the Dalai Lama's succession.

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