



TIBET INSIGHT, APRIL 2023

TAR NEWS

Deputy Minister of TAR UFWD Examines Publicity Materials

February 27, 2023

Zu Zhitao, the Deputy Minister of TAR United Front Work Department and Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government led a team of Officials to Yuthok road in Lhasa and examined publicity materials of the propaganda campaign titled "Study the Spirit of the 20th Party Congress." Zu Zhitao and the team examined publicity panels and materials and interacted with staff members at Yuthok road.

Zu Zhitao told the 'Research and Guidance Group' to promote and propagate the "decisive significance of the 'Two Establishments', intensively implement Xi Jinping's instructions on governing Tibet in the new era, enhance the study and understanding of 'Four Conscious', 'Four Self-Confidence', 'Two Maintenance'." Doing so would establish a new climax to the study and publicity of the spirit of the 20th Party Congress, he further added.

TAR Signs Cultural Tourism Agreements with Guangdong Province

March 01, 2023

During an investment promotion conference in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, the TAR Department of Culture and Tourism Development Bureau reportedly signed eleven cultural and tourism projects with different enterprises from Guangdong province. The projects are expected to have an investment totalling 6.84 billion yuan (around US\$ 1 billion). The TAR Department of Culture and Tourism Development Bureau shared its planning and policies during the conference, including plans to initiate Tibetan opera performances in some townships in the TAR.

Xu Zhitao, Vice Chairman of TAR People's Government, who was present at the meeting, said "with continuous developments in aviation, railways and highways, more and more people will come to Tibet for tourism. Hence, culture and tourism are the most promising industries in Tibet." As part of these agreements, TAR would support and provide leniency on tax, finance, industry, land, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to enterprises from Guangdong province.

Ngari's Purang Port Resumes Cargo Services

March 02, 2023

Purang (Ch:Burang) Port of Ngari resumed its cargo trade through Nepal on the 1st of March, according to the Commerce Department of TAR. The port was closed during the pandemic. One-way exports to Nepal resumed in December, and more than 1,600 tonnes of cement, steel bars, and other goods have been exported to Nepal since. An official with the department said, "the resumption of two-way cargo passing at the port would further deepen economic and trade exchanges between China and Nepal."

Stability Maintenance Force held joint military armed patrol activities

March 02, 2023

On March 1, the TAR Stability Maintenance Forces convened a mobilisation meeting and conducted joint military armed patrol exercises in Lhasa. Standing Member of the TAR Party Committee and Secretary of the TAR Political and Legal Committee, Liu Jiang, attended and spoke. Among others attending were Standing Members of the TAR Party Committee and the Head of TAR Organization Department, Lai Jiao, and provincial military leaders, Ren Wei, Xiao Youcai, Dawa Tsering, Li Guangquan, Tang Mingying, Sun Xianzhong, Lang Fukuan, Xu Zhitao, Jiang Jie, Yu Yungui, Wang Gang, Yang Mang, Jideng and Shi Huajie.

In his speech, Liu Jiang stressed that Stability Maintenance Forces in the TAR should take utmost responsibility to ensure social governance, stability and national security. He told them to "always tighten the string of stability maintenance, stay alert to potential risks, and always be vigilant." Liu Jiang added "the PLA in Tibet armed police officers, public security police, counter-terrorism forces, fire rescue team and other concerned forces should take all aspects of the war on stability forces seriously, should demonstrate a uniform voice and listen to the

party's command, and must dare to fight and win over challenges of national security and social stability.”

All concerned cities and districts in TAR held joint military armed patrol exercises and activities simultaneously.

(Comment: Such ‘joint military armed patrol exercises’ in TAR are not usually reported.)

The ‘Two Sessions’ and the Tibetan Delegations

I.14th NPC Session

There were 24 representatives from the Tibet Autonomous Region for the 14th NPC session. Among the 24 representatives, 20 were elected by the TAR People's Congress, while the CCP Central Committee (CC) directly nominated four, namely: Wang Hongxiang, Yang Xiaoming, Zhang Guoqing and Lin Rui. A brief profile of each of these delegates is given at the end of this report.

There are 12 representatives of Tibetan ethnicity in the 14th NPC, the same as in the 13th NPC. Overall, the number of Tibetans from TAR and other Tibetan areas in the 14th NPC has reduced from 33 in the 13th NPC to 29 in the 14th NPC, i.e. TAR: 12, Sichuan:7, Hubei:1, Henan:1 Gansu:2, Qinghai:4 and Yunnan:2. The number of Han representatives has increased from 6 in the 13th NPC to 8 in the 14th NPC.

March 7: The Tibetan delegation, led by TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng, had a plenary meeting to review the draft of the amendment to the legislative law. The Delegation also met to review work reports, including budgetary and plans. Ma Xingrui, the Deputy to the NPC and the Party Secretary of Xinjiang Autonomous Region, also convened a plenary meeting to review work reports.

March 9: The Xinjiang Delegation held a group meeting to review the work report of the Supreme People's Court and the work report of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

March 10: The Tibetan delegation held a plenary meeting; Wang Junzheng, Head of the Tibetan delegation, Party Secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region;

Lobsang Gyaltzen, Chairman of TAR People’s Congress, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People’s Congress and Deputy Head of the Tibetan delegation, and Yan Jinhai, Deputy Head of the Tibetan delegation and chairman of TAR People’s Congress attended and spoke. At the meeting, all the representatives reportedly discussed the candidates for the Premier of the State Council, the Vice Chairman and Members of the PRC Central Military Commission.

March 11: The Tibetan delegation held a plenary meeting. At the meeting, all the representatives discussed the candidates for the Vice Premier of the State Council, the State Councilor, Ministers of various ministries, Directors of various committees, the Governor of the People’s Bank of China, the Auditor General, and the Secretary-General. Candidates for the Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, and members of special committees such as the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Overseas Chinese Committee, the Environment and Resource Protection Committee, the Agriculture and Rural Committee, and the Social Construction Committee.

March 12: The Tibetan Delegation held a plenary meeting to review draft resolutions on the government work report, annual plan, annual budget, work report of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, work report of the Supreme People’s Court, and the work report of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate. The TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng, in his speech, said all representatives have deeply understood the significance of the ‘Two Establishments’, reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen ‘Four Consciousness’, ‘Four Self-Confidences’, ‘Two Maintenances’ and that they will always maintain a high degree of consistency with the CCP Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core in terms of ideology, politics, action, and to consciously integrate the leadership of the party. He urged the representatives to set an example in carrying out the study and publicity of the spirit of the 20th Party Congress, Xi Jinping’s “important instructions” on Tibet work, and the Party’s strategy of governing Tibet in the new era.

II. CPPCC Session

In its first session of the 14th CPPCC held on the morning of the 7th March at the Great Hall of the People, Wang Huning, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee hosted the presidium meeting of the first session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee. Among others attending were Shi Taifeng, Member of the Political

Bureau of the CCP Central Committee and Secretary of the Central Secretariat, Liu He, Vice Premier of the State Council, and concerned Party Officials from different departments of the CCP Central Committee and the State. Hu Chunhua, Executive Chairman of the first session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee, chaired the first session of the CPPCC. All Executive Chairmen of the first session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee, Shen Yueyue, Wang Yong, Zhou Qiang, Phakpa Lha Gelek Namgyal (Tibetan) Ho Hau Wah, Leung Chun-Ying, Su Hui, Shao Hong, Gao Yunlong, also attended the meeting.

The meeting first heard the explanation of the amendment (draft) of the Constitution of the CPPCC. Later, 13 CPPCC representatives spoke. Among the speakers was Dilinal Abra, a CPPCC member from Xinjiang, who stated that since the cultural enrichment work started, Xinjiang has strengthened the inheritance and utilisation of archaeological and historical cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritages such as “Twelve Muqam” have been effectively protected. He further said “We must stick to the right direction, conduct in-depth research on the internal relationship between Xinjiang history and Chinese culture, discover the symbols and images of Chinese culture shared by all ethnic groups, strengthen the construction of the typical spiritual home of the Chinese nation, and let the consciousness of the Chinese nation community be rooted in the hearts of the people of all ethnic groups.”

Profiles of the Tibetan Representatives:

1. Wang Junzheng, Party Secretary and Head of the TAR Delegation
2. Lobsang Gyaltzen, Chairman of TAR People’s Congress
3. Yan Jinhai, Chairman of TAR People’s Government
4. Kelsang Dolma, Deputy Secretary of the TAR Youth League
5. Luo Qingwu Deputy Secretary of the Chamdo Municipal Party Committee and Mayor of Chamdo Municipal People’s Government
6. Shede, Secretary of the Party Branch of Porongtang village, Jiangmian Township, Nagchu
7. Laqiong, Professor, Professor in the Department of Life Sciences, College of Science, Tibet University, Lhasa
8. Lhachung, Director of the Tibetan Yuanqing Barley Technology Co., Ltd.

9. Tsering Tsomo, Director of Production Workshop of Tibet Ganlu Tibetan Medicine Co., Ltd
10. Nyidon, Director of the Plant Tissue Culture Research Office of the Plateau Biology Institute of the TAR
11. Nima, Vice President of Lhasa People's Hospital, TAR
12. Pema Tso, Associate Researcher, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Tibet Academy of Social Science
13. Bata, Deputy Secretary and Mayor of Nyingtri Municipal Party Committee
14. Tashi Nyima, Deputy Squad Leader of State Grid Tibet Electric Lhasa Power Supply Company
15. Phurbu Yangzom, Deputy Director of the Villager Committee of Medog Village, Medog Town, Medog County, Tibet
16. Tashi Gyaltzen, Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of Layu Township, Shannan City, Tibet Autonomous Region, was later transferred to the Party Committee of Layu Township, Phungyal County, and the Minister of the People's Armed Forces Department. In 2017, Tashi Gyaltzen was stationed in the village.

Sichuan: Total (144)

Tibetan Representatives: 7

1. Yu Dechun, Director of the Village Committee of Shuizi Village, Shuizi Township, Danba County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan
2. Luo Zhenhua, Deputy Secretary of the (Tib: Ngaba) Aba State Party Committee of Sichuan Province, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the State Government, Governor, Principal of the State Minority Cadre School (concurrently)
3. Kelsang Wangmo: Dean of Maerkang Home for the Elderly, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province
4. Xinjia Tenzin, Vice Chairman of the Political Consultative Conference of Jinchuan County, Aba Prefecture, Sichuan Province, third-level researcher
5. Jaden Lhurong Jampa, President of Sichuan Tibetan Buddhist Institute
6. Feng Fagui, Deputy Secretary and Governor of Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan Province

7. Jiangyoshi Village, Representative of the 14th National People's Congress, President of Ganzi Prefecture Tibetan Hospital, Sichuan Province

Yunnan: Total 91

Tibetan Representatives: 2

1. Zhang Weidong Deputy Secretary of the Diqing Prefecture Committee of Yunnan Province, Governor and Secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the State People's Government
2. Yang Yaqin, Deputy Director of the Public Policy Research Center of Yunnan University of Finance and Economics

Gansu: Total (53)

Tibetan Representatives: 2

1. Yang Zhenlin: Member of the Standing Committee of the Gannan Prefecture Committee of Gansu Province
2. Sixth Jamyang Lobsang Jigme Thutten Chokyi Nyima, Member of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress, member of the Ethnic Committee, Vice President of the Chinese Buddhist Association, Deputy Director of the Standing Committee of the 14th Gansu Provincial People's Congress.

Qinghai: Total (24)

Tibetan Representatives: 4

1. Rinchen Tashi-
2. Sonam Tenzing, Deputy Secretary of Yushu State Party Committee and Governor of Yushu State Government, Qinghai Province
3. Shawa Dolma, Employee of Tongren City Water Supply Company, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province
4. Guo Jinping, Teacher of the Second Boarding Junior High School in Menyuan County, Haibei Prefecture, Qinghai Province

Hubei: 1 Tibetan

Keke: He is currently the Deputy Secretary of the Suizhou Municipal Committee of Hubei Province, the mayor of the Municipal People's Government, and the secretary of the Party Leadership Group.

TAR and China Railway Construction Corporation Signs Strategic Cooperation

March 14, 2023

On March 14, TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng and the China Railway Construction Corporation Board of Directors Chairman Wang Jianping signed a 'Strategic Cooperation Agreement' in Beijing.

Wang Junzheng said in his briefing to Wang Jianping that since the 18th Party Congress, the CCP CC, with Xi Jinping at the core, had attached great "importance to Tibet work, had personally laid out the blueprint, visited Tibet and made essential instructions as the Party's Strategic of Governing Tibet in the new era." He added, "As laid out by General Secretary Xi Jinping, the 10th TAR Party Congress had put forth the 'Four Major Focuses'- of stability, development, ecology and consolidating border', by considering the actual situation in Tibet." In addition, the 10th TAR Party Congress had put forward specific goals of 'creating a national model for ethnic unity. Wang Junzheng further stated that the China Railway Construction Corporation "has always taken projects in Tibet as a political responsibility and implemented the decisions and deployment of the CCP Central Committee actively." He hoped that the China Railway Construction Corporation would continue to take the social and political responsibilities in the capacity of a state-owned enterprise and contribute to economic and social development in Tibet.

Wang Jianping thanked Wang Junzheng, and the TAR People's Government for their "long-term support and cooperation with all the railway/expressway projects", including the Qinghai (Golmud) to Lhasa, Lhari Railway, Lalin Expressway.

Yan Jinhai, the Chairman of TAR People's Government and Zhuang Shangbiao, the President of the China Railway Construction, signed the 'Strategic Cooperation Agreement on behalf of

the two sides. According to the Agreement, the two sides “will take full advantage of the resources and policies in Tibet through investment, financing and construction.”

Report On Ngari Power Transmission Project

March 15, 2023

According to a report published by People’s Daily on March 15, several “gigantic power transmission towers” in the suburbs of Gar county of Ngari prefecture ensure stable power supply for families residing above 5000 meters. These power transmissions, known as the Ngari-Central Tibet Power Grid Interconnection Project, spanned over ten counties and districts of Ngari and were put into operation by the end of 2020. The report added that it is a 500 kV power transmission and transformation project with the world's highest altitude and longest distance and reliable electricity for 380,000 farmers and herdsmen in 16 counties along its route.

The person in charge of the Ngari branch of State Grid Corporation of China said "Since the project was implemented, the maximum electrical load in Ngari has expanded by 12.63 per cent, with a supply reliability rate of 99.68 per cent. The project has transmitted 218 million kWh of electricity in the past two years, or 76.49 per cent of the total power supply in Ngari prefecture. Besides, the project has lowered electricity prices by over 55 per cent. It has also improved investment and business environment, injecting new impetus into Ngari's economic and social development." Though the project is a massive benefit for Ngari, the maintenance of the project in such a sparsely populated prefecture is a challenge. The arduous inspection tours along cliffs are extremely difficult. However, workers of the maintenance group of the project have long been used to the undertaking. Jamyang Kelsang, Head of the maintenance group, disclosed that once a sudden failure took place along the main line and particular spare parts were needed to fix it completely. However, the parts couldn't be found locally and he and other maintenance staff had to stay where the failure was for around a week to maintain emergency operation until the spare parts were delivered. "Stable power supply is not only about the construction of the project, but also the maintenance of it," Jamyang Kelsang said, adding that the project means greater convenience for residents and merchants, but to maintenance staff members, it means greater responsibility.

State Council's Ministry of Education holds a meeting for 'Education Reform in Tibet'

March 17, 2023

On March 15, under the State Council of the CCP and TAR People's Government, the Ministry of Education met in Beijing to "discuss and plan education reforms in Tibet." The meeting was attended by the Secretary of the Party Group of the Ministry of Education and Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng, Vice Minister of Education, Sun Yao, Wang Junzheng, Party Secretary of the TAR, and Yan Jinhai, Chairman of TAR People's Government.

Huai Jinpeng stated that Xi Jinping attaches great importance to Tibet work and has put forward the 'Ten-Musts' strategy for governing Tibet. He added, "at the core of the Tibet work and to change the face of the Tibetans and Tibetan areas, deepening education is fundamental." He stressed that education work in Tibet is an essential intersection of the "three grants and one benefit" and, therefore, must shoulder greater responsibility. He added that the Ministry of Education is willing to strengthen consultation and cooperation with Tibet to develop an education system and build a good foundation in Tibet.

He listed the following steps for implementation in Tibet:

- Providing moral education is fundamental
- Foster a communal sense of the Chinese nation, Chinese nation national unity, promote the popularisation of the 'national common language.'
- Create more platforms to disseminate "national wisdom education."
- To apply innovative and scientific technologies to integrate and assimilate
- To continuously build capacity and improve counterpart-aid and assistance programmes. To consolidate counterpart aid mechanisms and support training programmes

TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng, spoke at the meeting and said: "Education system in Tibet has made progress in all aspects under the guidance of the CCP Central Committee, Ministry of Education, and concerned ministries." He added that since the 18th Party Congress, the Ministry of Education has thoroughly implemented the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's instructions on education in Tibet, provided multi-level and wide-field counterpart support patterns, and implemented policies that produced good results." Wang Junzheng

stressed that at present, “the whole of Tibet is seriously studying and implementing the spirit of the 20th Party Congress and the spirit of the ‘Two Sessions’, implementing the essential instructions of General Secretary Xi Jinping on the work of Tibet and Party's strategy for governing Tibet in the new era, focusing on the four major issues of "stability, development, ecology and strengthening the border" and striving to create a national model area of national unity and progress, a pioneer area of high-quality development of the plateau economy, and a national model area of national unity and progress and a demonstration area of national action to strengthen the border and prosper border residents.”

Chairman of the TAR People’s Government holds Meetings with Heads of Enterprises

March 17, 2023

The Chairman of the TAR People’s Government, Yan Jinhai, had a series of meetings with the Secretary of the Party Committee and Director of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council Zhang Yuzhuo, the National Bureau of Statistics Party Secretary, and Director Kang Yi, the National Energy Bureau Party Secretary, Director Zhang Jianhua, the Ministry of Water Resources Party Secretary, Minister Li Guoying, and China Power Construction Group Limited Chairman Ding Yanzhang.

Yan Jinhai thanked the relevant state ministries and central enterprises for their long-standing concern and support for Tibet. Yan Jinhai pointed out that since the 18th Party Congress, Xi Jinping has personally steered the work of Tibet and planned the layout of the country, tailoring a series of particular policies and projects for TAR, attaching greater importance and support than ever before, leading Tibet to make all-round progress and historic achievements in various undertakings. He added that TAR had carried forward the ‘four focuses’ of “stability, development, ecology and strong border” as specified by Xi Jinping.

Deputy Minister of TAR UFWD inspects Jokhang and Potala Palace

March 20, 2023

Xu Zhitao, the Deputy Minister of TAR United Front Work Department (UFWD) led a team of officials to inspect monasteries in and around Lhasa. Among other monasteries, Xu Zhitao and his team went to the Jokhang temple and Potala palace and investigated cultural relics, fire safety measures and Monastic Management Committees.

Xu Zhitao emphasised the need to enhance security measures to detect “hidden dangers”, conduct deep excavation, research and interpretation of the historical value of cultural relics, and to conduct religious affairs as per the law. He added that the Monastic Management Committees should continue to “improve their level of monitoring and management, strengthen the ‘Three Consciousness’ education campaign and proactively promote the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism.”

TAR Party Secretary Conducts Inspection at Political Research Office

March 22, 2023

On March 20, the TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng inspected the Political Research Office and met with the officials. Wang Junzheng spoke on the need to adhere to Xi Jinping’s guidance on Socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, understand the ‘Two Establishments’, and improve political comprehension, judgement and execution based on the ‘reality of Tibet.’ He urged the officials to build their capacity for research and investigation rigorously.

In addition, the TAR Party Secretary inspected the Agricultural and Rural Research Office, the Party Construction Research Office, the Secretariat and the ‘New Tibet Magazine’ Department. Wang Junzheng stated that since the tenth TAR Party Congress, the Political Research Office has always done political research with a clear-cut political stance, defended the ‘Two Establishments’ and upheld the ‘Two Maintenances.’ He praised the Political Research Office for “always coming up with countermeasures, providing the Party with literature, investigations and research, policy advice and contributing to the Party’s Propaganda Journal.”

Wang Junzheng described the Political Research Office as the ‘Think Tank’ of the TAR Party Committee. He added that it undertakes tasks such as providing economic and social development strategies and researching significant issues. The Party Secretary was accompanied by Dawa Tsering, Member and Secretary-General of the TAR Party Committee.

TAR Sets Up Research Centre to Propagate Chinese Nationalism

March 22, 2023

According to a report in Tibet Daily on March 22, the authorities in the TAR have intensified efforts to promote and propagate Chinese nationalism. Apart from the existing propaganda campaign of creating the TAR as a model for ethnic unity and progress, the TAR has set up a 'Research Centre', the sole purpose of which is to forge and foster Chinese nationalism or, to build consciousness of a communal sense of the Chinese nation. The Centre was launched on March 21.

Tsering Phuntsok, the Director of the newly launched 'Research Centre', said, "Tibet has been an inseparable part of the motherland since ancient times. More than 40 ethnic groups live here, including Han, Tibetan, and Hui. Establishing the 'Research Centre for Consolidating the Consciousness of the Chinese Nation' is important and far-reaching. It will be a model for accelerating the advancement of national unity and progress." He added "No matter in what era, ethnic unity is the mainstream of ethnic relations in Tibet, and the fate of the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet is always the same as the future of the great motherland. The two are closely connected, and the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have always had a glorious tradition of safeguarding the motherland's unity and strengthening national unity. Over the long history, they have contributed to safeguarding the motherland's unity, resisting foreign aggression, strengthening national unity, and opposing ethnic division."

Tsering Phuntsok also spoke about the importance of building and strengthening the communal consciousness of the Chinese nation as one of the main strategic tasks of the Party to govern Tibet. He said he is committed to making the 'Research Centre an authoritative institution and academic platform with high reputation and influence."

Chamdo to Complete Projects worth 20 billion Yuan in 2023

March 22, 2023

According to the Development and Reform Commission of Chamdo (Ch:Changdu), Chamdo plans to implement 397 construction projects in 2023 with investments of 20.089 billion yuan. Among the 397 projects, 167 are already in progress with an investment of 12.072 billion yuan, and 230 new projects will be implemented with 8.017 billion yuan. One of the projects is a

housing construction plan for Yesui village in Chamdo over an area of 51,000 square meters is expected to be completed by August 2024.

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE OF TAR

Recent Developments in Tibet that Impact India

China recently made public its “medium to long term railway plan” for Tibet, which announced expanding the TAR rail network to 4000 km by 2025 from the current 1400 km. This includes the Xinjiang-Tibet network, which follows the route of the G219 highway passing through the disputed Aksai-Chin region. Another important aspect, which is intrinsically linked with the peace and security on the India-China border is the announcement of the construction of the Bomi-Ranwu (波密-然乌) sections of the Yunnan-Tibet railway. This railway line will pass through Shangri-La, Dechen, and meet the Sichuan-Tibet railway at Bomi. The line will be extended up to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province. On completion, it will connect Kunming, Chuxiong, Dali, Lijiang, Shangri-La, Deqin, Markam, Bomi, Nyingchi, Tsetang, Gonggar and Lhasa. Nyingchi is the closest point on the route to the Indian border. This line is further integrated with the upcoming wider Tibetan railway network, which runs parallel to the Indian border across Tibet and reaches Hotan in Xinjiang, passing through the disputed Aksai-Chin region.

Completing this rail line will reduce the distance from Dali, Kunming, Kaiyuan, and Lancang to Tibet. These cities in Yunnan host the PLA 75th GA’s significant installations. Dali has a PLA mechanised infantry brigade, Kaiyuan hosts an infantry brigade, Lancang has an infantry brigade, and Kunming has infantry, artillery, air defence and armoured brigades (China Brief, July 22, 2016).

These units were previously part of the 14th Corps, later reorganised as the 14 Group Army (GA) before being incorporated into the 75th GA under the STC. The 75th GA is currently garrisoned in the Yunnan province. The construction of the Tibet-Yunnan railway network will be completed by 2030. Once completed, travel time between the two regions will be reduced by half, allowing for quicker mobilisation of forces.

Compared to mobilising forces from the Central Theatre Command (CTC), which acts as a reserve force for every Theatre Command (TC), including the Western Theatre Command (WTC), mobilisation of the 75th GA to Tibet would be relatively faster. Also, given the relatively high altitude at which troops in the 75th GA are stationed in the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau region, their acclimatisation to Tibet's climatic conditions would be relatively easy compared to the Beijing-based CTC.

In a recent notice dated January 30/31, the PLA released an enquiry purchase order of a "combined mace" belonging to the cold weapons category. According to the public information on the military procurement network, the PLA issued two announcements on procurement enquiries on the military procurement network. One is a mace, and the other is a combined mace.

Mace and combined mace are weapons used for fist fighting on the India-China Border. The purchase order is for February 4-5, 2023. Also, these maces are to be made of insulating materials. There are two requirements for this purchase order.

1) This mace has to be longer than the standard/ordinary mace. This means the length has to be longer. There is no explanation, but the Chinese social media voices discuss that this is to hit the opponent from a distance and still be able to protect oneself from the opponent's weapon.

2) It has to be a combined mace. The tender is for the combined mace that can be carried separately, meaning spikes can be separated from the rod if required. The Chinese social media claims that the bid was made public to enable an extensive design plan to equip the soldiers with as perfect mace as possible.

The purchase order details that the PLA has placed an order of 2600 such maces. The length of the mace is around 180 cm. It consists of three parts: the hammerhead, the rod body, and the rod drill. Among them, the hammer head is about 50 cm, equipped with fine steel spikes and sharp corners at both ends, machined, welded and quenched to ensure strength and the rod body is made of zinc steel pipe. The order was placed in the first week of March 2023.

(Comment: India should expect these maces to be deployed with the forces along the LAC and be prepared for them to be routinely used. This will be an escalatory move.)

PLA SSF New Base on the India Border near Arunachal Pradesh:

A new electronic warfare base has been detected near Nyingchi, 30 km from Arunachal Pradesh. The People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force (PLA SSF) reportedly operates the base. Some dates indicate that this was established in December 2021.

Satellite Photographs of the base show some objects in the compound:

- 1) Military trucks.
- 2) Three circular objects in the upper right corner look like radars (VORs: VHF Omnidirectional Radio range), which makes it a likely PLA SSF site.
- 3) blue shelters looking like aprons, where smaller helicopters could be parked.
- 4) There are two approach roads to enter this base, one from the left, which goes around the base and comes from the north, and the other on the right, which leads to the south, most likely towards the border.

Elsewhere, Taiwan's Defence Ministry's INDSR's latest publication of the military technology in the Xinjiang Military regions details that this military command still retains four mobile field combat divisions.

The Xinjiang Military Region along with the Tibet Military Region (District), hosts Type 15 tanks (fastest and lightest Chinese tanks) and 99 A heavy-duty tanks with the 99A guidance system that acts as the brain of the battlefield. Besides these two tank types, this region also hosts the Type 96 B, Type 88, and Type 59 D old tanks, which are still in service and probably only in service with this military command.

The PLA's Growing Airpower Projection Capabilities in the Western Theatre Command

PLA Logistics and Sustainment: PLA Conference 2022 has a chapter on the PLA's growing capabilities in the WTC. In this chapter, Brian Hart, Bonny Lin, and Matthew Funaiolo highlight that there are more than 50 airports and helipads in Tibet and Xinjiang, of which 36 have been constructed or upgraded since 2017. The authors highlight that the new facilities are closer to the Indian border. The placement of new heliports highlights that the PRC might be pursuing a new strategy of locating heliports in remote areas without supporting ground

infrastructure. The authors also highlight that earlier, Tibet only had five airports. There was an immense gap, for instance, 950 km between Ngari Gunsa Airport in western Tibet and Shigatse Airport in central Tibet. With the construction of Ngari Burang and Shigatse Tingri airports, the gap has been reduced to 500 km. The authors also highlight that earlier, the distance between Chinese airports and Indian strategic facilities was more than 500 km. It has changed: for instance, the Bareilly Air Force Station is 400 km from Ngari Gunsa and 200 km from Ngari Burang (under construction).

EXILE TIBETAN NEWS

Former Nepalese PM Oli attacks Kathmandu for allowing Buddhist college in Buddhist Mustang

Former Prime Minister and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli said that establishing a Buddhist college in the country's Buddhist area of Mustang is anti-China and therefore anti-Nepal even if it is done at the request of the local people and administration through the government of Nepal so long as India funds it. He has criticised Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, a fellow-communist leader from another party, and India, while coming to China's defence over the issue, reported *kathmandupost.com* on March 5. Oli said "To turn the country into a playground for foreigners, the government is allowing India to open a Buddhist college in Mustang". "This plan is an attack on the country's sovereignty."

At the request of the local Barha Gaun Mukti Chettra Rural Municipality, the government of India is spending over Rs700 million to set up the Buddhist college in the restricted territory of Upper Mustang, the report said. Government officials have said the proposal was forwarded to the government of India at the request of the local Barha Gaun Mukti Chettra Rural Municipality, and a final decision has yet to be taken. The report said the Mustang Sakya Buddha Sangh had taken the initiative to open the college, arranged land for it and then requested the Indian side via the government of Nepal. Sakya is one of the four primary schools of the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism.

Oli's criticism came after Dahal ditched his alliance with the UML and decided to support the Nepali Congress candidate—Ram Chandra Paudel—in the presidential election scheduled for March 9. The post-poll alliance of the two major communist parties of Nepal ended on Feb 25

when Dahal formally severed his ties with the UML and joined hands with the Nepali Congress and six other parties in support of Congress's Paudel's presidential bid. Oli has already pulled his party out of Dahal's Cabinet and withdrawn support to the government.

The report said he is now busy attacking Dahal and India while trying to defend China. Oli has called establishing a Buddhist college in the restricted areas of Mustang district a "betrayal" against China. He sees it as a reminder of the Tibetan guerrilla organisation based in the district after China fully annexed Tibet in 1959. The Nepal government had in 1974 peacefully 'disarmed' the Tibetan guerrilla organisation and settled its members in various parts of the country.

Oli has maintains "Gey Wangdi was the Khampa leader at that time [of the Khampa uprising]. The Khampas were stationed near Marfa village. Now efforts are to set up a Buddhist college in Lo Manthang, part of Upper Mustang where no one lives,". "Only a handful of people with vested interests live there. This is a dangerous plan that we should oppose and confront."

China Denounces US Hosting of the Exile Tibetan Leader

March 30, 2023

China has accused the US Congress of interfering in its internal affairs by its virtual hosting of the executive head, or Sikyong, of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), based in India, at a hearing on March 28. Sikyong Penpa Tsering told the hearing, held by the bipartisan US Congressional-Executive Commission on China, that "If PRC (the People's Republic of China) is not made to reverse or change its current policies, Tibet and Tibetans will die a slow death." Reuters Mar 29 quoted the spokesperson for China's embassy in Washington, Liu Pengyu, as saying "The so-called 'Tibetan government-in-exile' is an out-and-out separatist political group and an illegal organisation in total violation of China's Constitution and laws."

Liu Pengyu said the organisation had long been attempting to split Tibet from China, assuming the legality of its annexation of Tibet in 1951. He told Reuters "The invitation for the 'Sikyong' to speak at the Congress was an interference in China's internal affairs. China is firmly opposed to this". "The US should take concrete actions to honor its commitment of acknowledging Tibet as part of China and stop meddling in China's internal affairs."

A bill is currently being discussed in the US Congress for a law which, if passed, will reject China's claim of sovereignty over Tibet, recognise the Tibetan people's right to self-determination, and call for a negotiated solution on the Himalayan territory's legal status.

Exile Tibetan foreign minister meets with her Taiwanese counterpart

March 30, 2023

As China remains busy threatening repercussions for a possible meeting on US soil between Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the foreign minister of India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has embarked on a week-long visit to the self-ruled island, which included a meeting with her counterpart Jaushieh Joseph Wu on March 28.

Kalon (minister) Norzin Dolma apprised Joseph Wu about the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s ongoing policy of eradicating Tibetan religion, culture, language and identity. She called Taiwan and Tibet victims of CPC's aggression, which the two should face unitedly, said the CTA on its Tibet.net website on March 29. Ms Norzin Dolma has also raised visa-related problems faced by monks of Tibetan Buddhist Centres and Tibetans studying in Taiwan and sought his help to solve them. She has also requested visas for Tibetans pursuing certificate programmes and courses in Taiwan. Taiwan's Foreign Minister has assured help and conveyed his country's solidarity with the Tibetan people. He has expressed his admiration for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and suggested strengthening ties between the Europe-based Taiwan consulates and the Offices of Tibet.

On March 29, she, accompanied by her departmental secretary Mr Karma Choeying, met with You Si-Kun, President of the Legislative Yuan and former Prime Minister of Taiwan; Freddy Lim, Chair of the Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet; and legislators Sun Han-Hung and Wang Ting-yu, President of National Human Rights Commission of Taiwan.