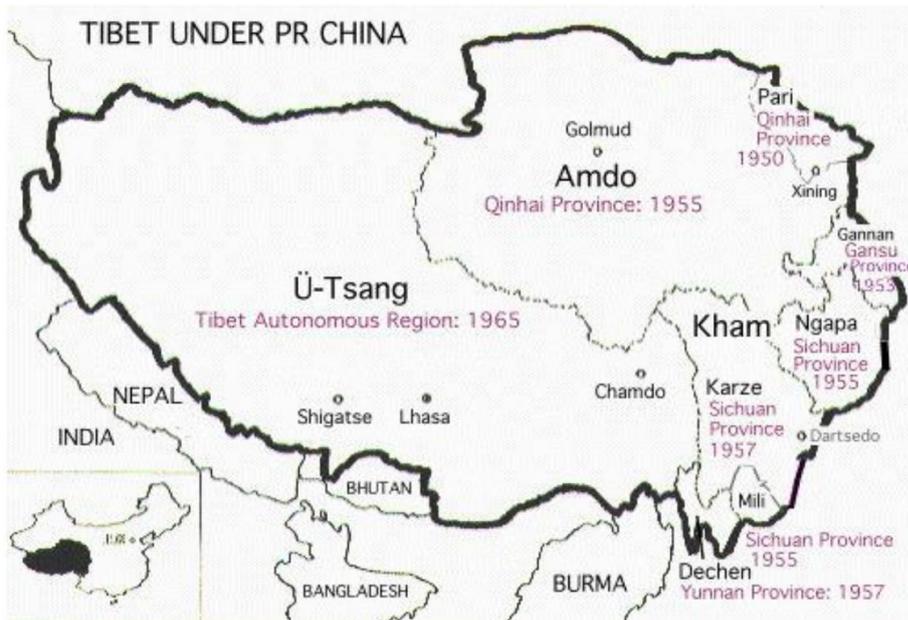
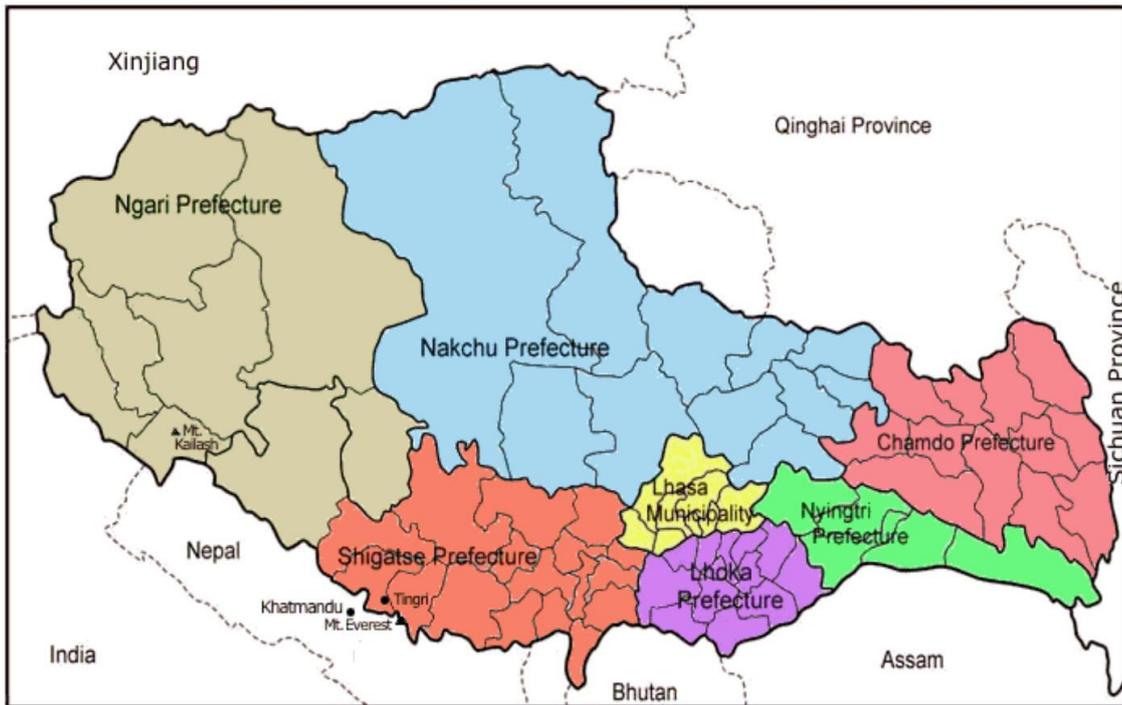


TIBET INSIGHT NEWS



Summary

- Residents of Lhasa, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces defied Chinese ban and celebrated the Dalai Lama's birthday.
- State road 318 high-grade highway phase II main project completed
- Nagchu County holds Second "Model of Harmony – 2014" award ceremony for "harmonious monasteries and nunneries, patriotic and law-abiding monks and nuns"
- China includes CPEC in scientific expedition to Tibet
- Tibet to expand six border trade markets this year
- State road 318 high-grade highway phase II main project completed
- China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducts live-fire drills in Tibet
- PLA tests new battle tank in Tibet near Indian border

TAR/Lhasa

TIBETANS CELEBRATE DALAI LAMA'S BIRTHDAY

July 10, 2017

Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported on July 10, 2017, that Tibetans living in Lhasa and in western China's Qinghai and Sichuan provinces celebrated the Dalai Lama's birthday the previous week with prayer gatherings and public picnics in open defiance of a ban by Chinese authorities. In Lhasa, Tibetans conducted prayers and openly visited area monasteries, including the city's central Jokhang temple, despite the presence of plainclothes security personnel and other informers stationed nearby. In Qinghai's Rebgong (in Chinese, Tongren) county in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tibetans closed their shops and burned incense to observe the July 6 event. RFA quoted a source in Ngaba as saying that in Sichuan province, which together with Qinghai includes parts of Tibet's northeastern Amdo region, 60 monks at Ngaba (Aba) prefecture's Andu Yakgo monastery held prayers for the Dalai Lama's health and longevity. In Sichuan's Kardze (Ganzi) prefecture, residents of Tawu (Daofu) county's Nagtren village defied Chinese authorities orders to shut down an annual horse race and incense-burning festival whose date this year coincided with the Dalai Lama's birthday. Attempts to share photographs of the Dalai Lama online were blocked in Qinghai's Golog (Guoluo) prefecture, as authorities clamped down on social media and the internet.

Ministry of Water Resources holds meeting on water conservation in Lhasa

July 12, 2017

The Ministry of Water Resources of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) held a meeting in Lhasa to discuss plans to develop water conservation in Tibet. Minister Chen Lei, the Secretary of Ministry of Water

Resources, Deputy Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee (names of these two individuals?) and the TAR Regional Government Chairman Qi Zala attended the meeting. The Deputy Secretary of the TAR Party Committee presided.

Qi Zala praised the CCP's Central Committee for its "cordial care and assistance and the leadership by President Xi Jinping". The conference briefed invitees on the successful management of water resources and plans for further development of water conservation to stabilize the eco-system in Tibet and the importance of water security in Asia.

New rules prohibit gambling by Party members

July 6, 2017

The Administrative Office of the Public Security Bureau of the Administrative Committee and the TAR's Discipline Inspection Commission on July 6, 2017, jointly issued a notice prohibiting gambling by party members and staff. The notice said gambling or gambling recreational activities with members of the Communist Party and national staff are strictly prohibited. The notice listed eight rules for the TAR Party members and staff involving gambling. They prohibit any form of gambling or gambling for entertainment like playing Mahjong, playing poker and other similar activities or providing space for such activities. TAR Public Security organisations were instructed to effectively perform their functions, increase governance of gambling issues and punish those apprehended according to the gambling violations law.

Ali Prefecture Regional Committee holds conference in Lhasa on strengthening inner-Party legal system

July 10, 2017

The Regional Committee of TAR's Ali Prefecture held a conference in Lhasa on July 10, 2017, to stress the consolidation of the CCP's legal systems in Tibetan areas and the Ali Prefecture in particular. The meeting 'thoroughly carried out the important guiding spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping on the construction of the inner-party legal system'. TAR Party Secretary Wu Yingjie chaired the conference and the Deputy Secretary of the District Party Committee Wang Yongjun, the Secretary of the Commission for Discipline Inspection of the District Party Standing Committee Bazha Xi, and the Minister of Propaganda of the District Party Committee Standing Committee attended the meeting. Lin Lingmin, the Secretary of District Party Standing Committee presided.

DALAI LAMA: BOTSWANA

July 14, 2017

On July 14, 2017, Xinhua quoted Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang as saying China firmly opposes the Dalai Lama's anti-China separatist activities and opposes him meeting officials of any country.

Referring to media reports that the Dalai Lama will visit Botswana and meet its President next month, Geng Shuang told a daily news briefing that China opposes any foreign official's contact with the Dalai Lama in any form and that "The Dalai Lama is a political exile who has long engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the guise of religion". He said "We hope the country will clearly recognize the nature of the Dalai Lama, earnestly respect China's core concerns, and make the correct decision on this issue."

'2017 National Social Science Fund Project' short lists 31 projects in Tibet

July 5, 2017

The National Museum of Philosophy and Social Sciences on July 4, 2017, announced the 2017 annual National Social Science Fund projects. It listed projects for youth development and China's western (Tibet) development projects. The 3,193 projects include 1,096 Projects for the Youth and 492 western development projects among which 31 are exclusively development projects in Tibet.

Among the research projects is one entitled "Dalai Group and analysis of anti-propaganda and countermeasures" to obtain constructive solutions to counter the Dalai Group's influences. Other projects include "Research on the Current Situation of Bilingual Education in Tibetan", "Tibetan Contemporary Film and Television Drama Scripts", and "Urbanization in the context of Tibetan Monasteries and Community Relations". The projects are funded by the National Museum of Philosophy and Social Science and the award for each project is 3,50,000/- (RMB) Chinese Yuan.

The research projects stress on understanding Tibet at a much deeper level to recognise its uniqueness and at the same time to assess the situation and develop tactics to deal with foreign influences and thereby maintain internal harmony.

Tibet expanding six border trade markets this year

July 3, 2017

The official media reported on July 6, 2017, that China has invested more than 52 million Yuan for special border development programs to support the Jilong International Border Trade market and six other border trade markets in Rikaze to maintain and promote border trade. The program, called the "Tibet Autonomous Region Border Trade Poverty Alleviation Pilot Program" has already been initiated. The investments in border trade are intended to develop Tibetan towns on the borders through alleviation of poverty and establishment of effective trading markets for local residents. The Tibet Fund will accelerate reconstruction of Jilong port and also the study and early construction of the Zhangmu Cargo Port projects by the end of May 2017.

(Comment: Tibet's total import and export of goods was officially reported to total 2.96 billion Yuan, an increase of 86.5% from last year.)

News from Counties

Nagchu County holds Second “Model of Harmony – 2014” award ceremony

July 10, 2017

Nagchu (Ch: Nagqu) Prefecture held its second “Model of Harmony” or, in other words, the patriotic and law-abiding monks and nuns award ceremony.

The ceremony was organized by the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of Nagchu Prefecture and chaired by its Deputy Minister Tsering Namgyen. It was attended by more than 100 people including officials of the United Front Work Department, the Nagchu Prefecture Party Committee and representatives of the main monasteries and nunneries.

The award ceremony commended the “harmonious monasteries and nunneries, patriotic and law-abiding monks and nuns, outstanding work of the Temple Management Committee members” and awarded honorary certificates and traditional Tibetan white scarves. The ceremony recognized 10 “exemplary model-cum harmonious” monasteries and nunneries, 451 monks and nuns, 13 cadres in designated monasteries and nunneries and 6 Temple Management Committees.

One of the Deputy Secretaries of the Nagchu Prefecture Party Committee in his keynote speech, after presentation of the honorary certificates and scarves, congratulated the winners. The mainpoints of his speech were:

- i) Recognition of the individuals and collective teams for their outstanding work is a good way to maintain law and order;
- ii) Relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and monks and nuns should be harmonious and united. The two should work together to further improve and strengthen the management of monasteries and nunneries, to instill patriotism among the people and to support the work of Temple Management Committees.
- iii) The monks and nuns and officials of the Temple Management Committees present at the award ceremony should resolutely support the leadership of the CCP and follow socialism with Chinese characteristics and help adapt Tibetan Buddhism to socialist society.

(Comment: Award ceremonies being held in different parts of Tibet are one of the many propaganda initiatives of the CCP to maintain stability. A similar award ceremony was held in Zadang County of Ngari (Ch: Ali) Prefecture earlier this month.)

‘Tibet Aid’ Cadres in Chamdo meet and present Work Report

July 14, 2017

The eighth batch of Tibet Aid Cadres from Wuxi County of Chongqing Municipality arrived in Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) on July 12, 2016 and are scheduled to work in TAR for three years. There were a total of 71 individuals with the average age of 40 plus. Of them 22 cadres are government and CCP officials and 49 are professionals and technicians possessing doctorates, post graduate and graduate degrees.

The eighth batch of Tibet Aid Cadres, led by team Leader Li Yong (Ethnicity: Han), intends to implement the 'six in one' model during the course of their tenure, which includes industrial, economic, science and technology, cadres and talent collection, poverty alleviation and creation of employment for Tibetans in Chamdo.

A meeting was convened in Wuxi County of Shanxi Province, to review and 'introspect' on their first anniversary on July 13, 2017. It was attended by the Deputy Chairman of the Organization Department of Chamdo Municipal Party Committee Zhang Zhi, Deputy Director of Chamdo City Supervision Bureau Zhou Wenbin, Wuxi County Party Secretary Dawa, Wuxi County Organization Minister and Wuxi County Party Secretary Zhou Rongyou, and Wuxi County, Chongqing, Tibet Aid batch team leader Jiang Shihong. Officials of the County Education Bureau, Health Bureau, Housing and Urban Construction Bureau, Head of the Department of Transportation and all 'Aid cadres' attended the meeting. On behalf of the Wuxi County's eighth batch of Tibet Aid Task Force, Team Leader Jiang Shihong said the 'Aid cadres' had done a great job and urged them to continue with the same spirit and hard work. The meeting endorsed that the Tibet Aid cadres were especially successful in areas such as poverty alleviation, tourism promotion, investment and the implementation of projects over the past one year. A brief overview of their past work includes:

1. Paid six visits to target areas, issued 16,400 Yuan to people affected natural disasters, bought 5100 Yuan commonly used drugs;
2. Helped 26 people with physical and mental disabilities more than 60 times;
3. Organized successful exhibitions such as the 'The Tea Horse Culture and Art Festival', in Chamdo, 'Tibet Expo' in Lhasa, China's 'Western Agricultural Trade Fair' where about 180 million yuan worth of agricultural products were sold;
4. Completed planned educational, medical care and poverty alleviation projects within one-third of the allotted funds from a total investment of 220 million yuan;
5. Established 20 libraries with a total investment of 60 million yuan;
6. Signed 300 million yuan of investments for 30MWP PV Poverty Alleviation Project out of which 1.5 million yuan per year is for special poverty alleviation support. It reportedly pulled 1200 people out of poverty in one year; and
7. Trained county party and government cadres, village cadres, public security police officers, united front cadres, professional and technical personnel.

Li Yong, team leader of the Eight batch of the Tibet Aid Group concluded the meeting by applauding the cadres for their courage and determination to work tirelessly in the 'snow-covered plateau.'

Patriotic and Law-abiding Award Function in Ngari

July 7, 2017

Zadang County of Ngari (Ch: Ali) Prefecture held the second 'Harmonious Model-cum Patriotic and Law-abiding Award Ceremony' in early July 2017. The award ceremony applauded 10 'model', or harmonious, monasteries, 32 monks and nuns, 3 cadres working in monasteries and a policeman who looks after parking places of these monasteries in the county.

The Zadang County People's Congress requested all the monks, nuns, Temple Committee Members and others present at the award ceremony to continue to focus on continuous innovations in the management of the monasteries, to work hard on extensive publicity and propaganda activities, to give education on patriotism, to enhance the patriotic enthusiasm of the monks and nuns and to deepen and polish the work-style of cadres in the monasteries and nunneries.

Fujian Province of China holds Education Symposium in Chamdo

July 11, 2017

The Fujian Provincial Education Work Committee, under the leadership of its Director Huang Hongwu, led an Education Working Group to Chamdo and held a symposium on July 10, 2017. Deputy Secretary of Chamdo Party Committee and Director of Chamdo Education Work Committee Phurbu Tsering summed up his Committee's work report at the symposium and outlined future plans and projects in Chamdo in the field of education.

Director Huang Hongwu greeted the teachers present at the Symposium and thanked Chamdo Municipality's Department of Education for their years of cooperation with the Fujian Education Committee. Issues raised included the need for teacher's training, educational exchange between Fujian and Chamdo primary and secondary teachers and promotion of vocational training,

Huang Hongwu gave a positive response and pointed out that Fujian Province has attached great importance to 'aid Tibet' work since 1995 onwards and envisions economic, social and long term stability in Tibet. Huang Hongwu stressed that it is important at the same time to strictly monitor the personnel management and conduct of the Tibet Aid Cadres, actively obtain more initiatives from the people and provide financial and material support to other aspects of education to improve conditions and the quality of education in Chamdo.

Phurbu Tsering, on behalf of the Chamdo Municipal Committee and Department of Education, thanked Tibet Aid Cadres for their work in Chamdo, their inspection tours to local schools, guidance to teachers and their donations. He pointed out that the Department under the aegis of the Chamdo Municipal Committee acknowledged the importance of the Tibet Aid projects and their ultimate objective of improving the people's livelihood, strengthening national unity and promoting economic and social development in Tibet.

He also emphasised the importance of improving the quality of bilingual education. He asserted that Chamdo will further strengthen communication and coordination with Fujian's Education Department by reporting on the progress of projects, about the Tibet cadres' behaviour at work and publicising the projects.

Assimilation through Cultural Exchange Programs

July 11, 2017

The Chamdo Municipal People's Government is promoting and paving the way for the prosperity of 'socialist culture' in the city. To pursue this, the Municipal Bureau of Culture and Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics have vigorously strengthened and pooled cultural and artistic professionals and trained and held exchange programs.

According to statistics, between April 2013 - April 2017, the Municipal Bureau of Culture (City Cultural Relics Bureau) trained 212 professionals from Tibet in Tianjin, Chongqing, Fujian and other places. Training on public culture, dance, choreography, museum operation and management and cultural relics protection, ideological importance of cultural aspects etc were provided.

At the same time, from 2013 onwards the Municipal Vocational School, commissioned by the Municipal Bureau of Culture (City Cultural Relics Bureau) and the City Board of Education, held a 3-year diploma course to train 100 Tibetan students in folk art. The Municipal Bureau of Culture, Chamdo has signed a co-operation agreement with the Tianjin Crafts and Arts Vocational College (TCAVC) with 12 million Yuan in assistance from Tianjin as a part of Tibet Aid work projects. 60 art students were recruited by TCAVC for two years training from 2012-2015. The Chamdo Culture Bureau intends to impart large-scale personnel training on 6 more occasions. Till now, more than 400 Tibetan students from Chamdo have been trained by TCAVC.

Banbar County meeting to promote Poverty alleviation programs

July 4, 2017

A meeting was held in Banbar County of Chamdo on July 02, to discuss poverty alleviation programs in the County. Deputy Secretary of the County Party Committee and also a vice-chairman of 'Chamdo Housing and Development Bureau', Xia Bing and the Deputy Secretary of Party Committee and Executive Magistrate Yang Zhelin were among the County leaders who attended. The meeting focussed on the delegation of work in poverty stricken areas in the region and brainstormed strategies for alleviating poverty. It was decided that 15 Special Teams would be deputed in 11 poverty stricken areas/townships. The meeting urged departments of all levels in the County to work conscientiously and in accordance with the guidelines. Xia Bing urged officials to increase publicity efforts about the poverty alleviation policy and increase awareness among the masses about the programme.

Tibet Aid from Wuxi County's education campaign in Chamdo

July 14, 2017

The Education Bureau of the Tibet Aid Group from Wuxi County of Chongqing stationed in Chamdo has undertaken 'propaganda and educational activities' to lay the foundation for a strong ideological community based on themes such as unity, love, stability and harmony. Teachers from Wuxi County hold propaganda sessions for the local 'masses' in Chamdo. Around 200 people have been 'educated' so far. The curriculum includes the history of 'old and new' Tibet, 'social changes that the CCP has brought in' and 'the abolition of feudalism in Tibet' etc. There is a special focus on the 'Three Guarantees Policy', which is a preferential policy primarily aimed at getting farmers and herdsmen to send their children to school, oversee the effective implementation of the policy, and to mobilize the enthusiasm of this segment of Tibetans who don't send their children to schools. Wuxi County cadres urged Chamdo Municipal Committee Officials to be more proactive in community services.

Shigatse (Xigaze) holds Skill Training Program

29 June, 2017

The official Tibet media reported on June 28, 2017, that 218 workers participated in an employment training organized by the Skill Center of the Xigaze Human Resources and Social Security Bureau. Most participants, it said, were 'highly enthusiastic' and potential future entrepreneurs who wanted to make the best use of this program.

The training allows participants to master entrepreneurial knowledge and methods and make them further aware of government's support and policies to identify and help them achieve their entrepreneurial goals. It allows them to adapt to market demand, avoid unnecessary entrepreneurial risk and findsuitable start-up projects.

18th meeting of Standing Committee of Xigaze People's Congress The first session of the Nineteenth July 7, 2017

Standing Committee of the Xigaze city started on July 6, 2017, in Xigaze City. The Municipal People's Congress Standing Committee Director Zhaxi Zen presided. The Vice Mayor of the Municipal Standing Committee Nima Chang and Zhao Xiaozhou, Yu Deping and 35 other members attended the meeting.

The first session was for the Municipal People's Government to draft the budget plan of Xigaze City for 2017. The session will also confirm the resignation of Jiang Zhao as Deputy Director of the Standing Committee of the First People's Congress of Xigaze and of Zen Tzexi from the post of member of the Standing Committee of the First People's Congress of Xigaze City. The meeting was also to vote on personnel appointments and removals and the swearing-in ceremony.

Xigaze Government to rebuild houses for first batch of Earthquake-affected Residents

July 6, 2017

The Xigaze government will rebuild houses for more than 3000 earthquake affected residents under the 'guidance of higher authority'. The residents were transferred and resettled in new housing as a precaution.

The project was started in 2016 after an earthquake of magnitude 7.8 Ms hit mainly the Nepal and Tibet border including Xigaze on April 25, 2015. The new houses will use 185,555 bricks and concrete. The buildings will combine modern architecture with classic Tibetan structure. The residents will shift to new houses as soon as possible where there will also be a school.

A meeting held for the celebration of the 96th founding anniversary of the General Assembly in Qiongjie County

June 28, 2017

The Qiongjie County regional Party (one of the 12 counties of Shannan Prefecture) held a celebration to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the General Assembly of the Chinese Communist Party. An Xingguo, Party Secretary of Qiongjie county, attended the meeting and Lang Lang Duoji, the Deputy Secretary of Qiongjie County, presided over the meeting. The meeting stressed that the commemoration would be marked by new projects that the Ninth Session of the Party Committee would put forward to build a 'unique historical and cultural charm of the Tibetan culture core area' to highlight the quality of agricultural and livestock products in Shannan (Qiongjie).

Developmental/Infrastructure News

State road 318 high- grade highway phase II main project completed

July 3, 2017

The main project Phase II of the State Road 318 linking Linzhi to Lhasa and a high-grade highway was completed except for the Mira Hill tunnel. Official media reported that with the completion of this highway the total mileage of district high-grade highways is now nearly 500 kms. This highway shortens travel time from Lhasa to Nyingchi by 3 hours.

Apart from the Mon La mountain tunnel, the project is completed. The project of Lhasa-Nyingchi highway starts from west Gongbogyambda county and ends in west Maizhokunggar county. The highway connected with phase I section and the whole length is about 398 kilometres and designed for speeds of around 80 km/hr. The total length of phase II main projects was 236 kilometres. It helps to reduce the journey time from 7 hours to 4 hours. Once the main project connecting phase I with this highway is completed it will be the longest high grade highway in Tibet.

The Lhasa-Nyingchi highway is important as it is the main passageway connecting central and eastern Tibet economic zones as well as the southwest. The highway will facilitate movement of PLA personnel and equipment and help promote tourism and accelerate Tibet's emergence into the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle.

The State Road 318 high-grade highway project began on January 25, 2016 and the main project was completed on June 30, 2017. Representatives from the Transport organization of Lhasa, Linzhi City People's Government, the Autonomous Region Development and Reform Section, Public Security office, Environmental Protection departments, Forestry and other departments joined in the highway's trial to make it a multi-sectoral joint trial.

New Road between Shigatse (Xigaze) Peace Airport and Xigatse City completed

July 3, 2017

The TAR Department of Transportation announced on July 3, 2017, that the main project for new road construction connecting Xigaze Peace airport and Xigaze City was completed on June 30, saving 30 minutes of travel time.

(Comment: Shigatse (Xigaze) Peace airport is a dual purpose airport serving as a Military and public airport and was first opened to the public on October 30, 2010. It is in Jiandang Township which is 43 kms from Xigaze city.)

SICHUAN-TIBET RAILWAY

July 5, 2017

On July 5, 2017, China's official news agency Xinhua publicised that construction of the Sichuan-Tibet railway had begun at the two ends of the railway. The Sichuan-Tibet Railway will be the second railway into southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region after the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. The line will go through the southeast of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, one of the world's most geologically active areas. You Yong, Chief Engineer of the Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), who is leading a scientific and technological support team to avoid disasters in the mountains, was quoted as saying "The construction and operation of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway must overcome the biggest risks in the world."

The China Railway Eryuan Engineering Group Co. Ltd., which is designing the line, said it will run from Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, through Ya'an and Kangding, and enter Tibet via Chamdo. It will then go through Nyingchi and Shannan prefectures before arriving at Lhasa, capital of Tibet. The total constructed length will be about 1,700 kilometers and it will cost 250 billion yuan (about US\$ 36.88 billion)

Xinhua added that the section between Chengdu and Ya'an is expected to open in June 2018. The feasibility study on the section between Ya'an and Kangding has been completed. The section between Lhasa and Nyingchi is under construction.

However, the section from Kangding to Nyingchi -- the most difficult and the longest section -- is still being designed. Its construction is expected to begin in 2019 and according to the China Railway Eryuan Engineering Group Co. Ltd. could take about seven years.

The Sichuan-Tibet Railway will be a major line in the western China rail network, connecting Tibet and the more developed central and eastern regions. The design speed is from 160 kilometers per hour to 200 kilometers per hour. On completion, the travel time by train from Chengdu to Lhasa will be reduced from 48 hours to about 13 hours.

You Yong, who has spent almost 30 years studying mountain hazards, said the line will traverse the eastern Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, which has sharp changes in terrain. The active geological structure of the region causes strong earthquakes. The railway will go through earthquake zones such as the Longmen Mountain and Yarlung Zangbo River seismic belts. He also said the Sichuan-Tibet Railway has four major environmental characteristics: significant terrain elevation differences, strong plate activities, frequent mountain disasters, and a sensitive ecological environment. Mountain hazards were a major challenge. You Yong added "The regions along the Sichuan-Tibet Railway have the most developed, most active, most diverse and most serious mountain hazards in China. Constructing a railway in such a complicated geological environment will face a lot of scientific and technological difficulties. And the prevention and control of mountain hazards will be key to its success."

The CAS began in 2014 to analyze the mountain hazard distribution patterns and risks, and experiment on disaster prevention along the route. To date, scientists have identified the basic distribution and activities of mountain hazards, and set up a data bank for the hazards along the route. Based on analysis of the risks, researchers offered their advice on the route selection and technologies to prevent and control the landslides and debris flows.

Lhasa Transport Bureau's Development Report

July 13, 2017

Tibet Daily reports that a number of major infrastructural projects were completed in Lhasa to alleviate poverty, boost tourism and for overall economic development. To improve transport service capacity and prevent bottleneck traffic constraints, 40.07 billion Yuan is invested in the tenth five-year plan. Eight key highway projects and 276 roads have been completed till now. The Lhasa-Nyingtri highway, Lhasa Ring Road and some other key projects are in the pipeline and being accelerated.

TAR Transportation Department Director Yongji told reporters that more transportation projects have been completed than the previous year. He added that highway infrastructure in the region has steadily increased.

A meeting was held on June 16, 2017, by the Lhasa Municipality Committee where officials of the Department of Transportation, Development and Reform Commission, Department of Homeland, Department of Environment Protection and other concerned Departments were present. The meeting focused on joint efforts to complete the construction of key road and transportation projects.

(Comment: An amount of 52.2 billion yuan is allocated for transportation infrastructures and fixed asset investment in Lhasa, of which 8.746 billion yuan are allocated for transportation while 18.832 billion are for fixed assets in the first half of the year. Key highway project construction investment has a budget of 10.611 billion yuan while rural road construction projects have an investment of 6.667 billion yuan).

China includes CPEC in scientific expedition to Tibet

June 18, 2017

China has included the controversial China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in its second scientific expedition to the 4,000-metre-high Qinghai-Tibet plateau to study changes in climate, biodiversity and environment over the past decades in the region.

The official Xinhua news agency said the expedition will take scientists to "a pass linking to South Asia". The expedition will last 5 to 10 years and the first stop will be at Serling Tso, a 2,391-square-km lake that was confirmed to have replaced the Buddhist holy lake Namtso as Tibet's largest in 2014.

In the coming months, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) will take more than 100 scientists to the lake area and the origin of the Yangtze, China's longest river. They will be divided into four groups and make a comprehensive survey of the plateau's glaciers, climate change, biodiversity and ecological changes, Yao Tandong, Director of the CAS Institute of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Research, was quoted as saying "Great changes have taken place in the plateau's resources and environment since the first scientific expedition. We need further research to find out ways to cope with these changes."

China's first comprehensive scientific expedition to the Tibet plateau began in the 1970s and covered more than 50 disciplines including geologic structure, prehistoric life, geophysics, climate, zoology and botany.

Yao Tandong added that "The scientists reported major discoveries and filled many gaps in plateau research," and the new round of research will focus on changes.

Zhu Liping, another CAS researcher leading the lake observation team, said the surface of Serling Tso Lake, had expanded 40 per cent between 1976 and 2009. Since 1990, water in the plateau's 1,000 lakes has increased by 100 billion cubic meters. "The volume is equal to three times the water in Three Gorges Dam," Zhu Liping said. The study will measure the impact on the ecology and its potential link to flooding and drought in the low-lying eastern monsoon region. Zhu Liping said data will be collected by scientists using automatic boats for the first time and a topographic map will be drawn.

"The plateau climate is becoming warmer and more humid," said Xu Baiqing, who is leading another team to the glaciers.

The team will drill ice cores at three major plateau glacier groups. Buried in the cold interiors of glaciers, ice cores contain well-preserved and detailed records of climate change in a century.

The impact of climatic changes would be assessed and proposals for conservation and rational development of resources formulated. Deng Tao, Deputy Director of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, under CAS said that on the archaeological front, scientists will look for evidence that can prove an earlier archaeological discovery of a Paleolithic ruins in the Serling Tso suggesting that humans might have been lived on this part of the world since some 30,000 years ago.

Archaeologists will try to answer why humans came to this plateau, where they came from, and how they adapted to high altitude living. A fourth team will research the biological diversity on the plateau and draw up a habitat map for preservation and tourism purposes. A national park might be set up in Serling Tso, the report said.

Tibet to reconstruct and expand 6 border trade markets this year

July 3, 2017

The Tibet official media reported on July 3, 2017, that a Special fund of over 52 million Yuan is to be allocated to Tibet for the reconstruction and expansion of 6 border trade markets and the construction of 4 border trade points in Dinggye county. The aim is primarily to boost the economy and trade of the inhabitants and help them increase incomes. A TAR Government report stated there had been a year on year increase of 86.5% valued at 2.96 billion Yuan of export and import trade by May this year. This had helped the business and economy of the residents of border areas. The report said that this year, Tibet will continue to speed up post-disaster reconstruction of Gyirong port and promote the reopening of Zham Port. These ports were trade centers between Tibet and Nepal, but the "tragic earth quake in Nepal on April 25," made life difficult for the residents and trade impossible.

Life expectancy of Tibetans to reach 70 in next five years

July 11, 2017

Tibet's official media reported on July 11, 2017, that the 13th Five-Year Plan from 2017 has been announced and according to the plan, the average life expectancy of Tibetans at the end of the last five year plan is 68.2. It said average life expectancy in TAR will reach 70 by the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan. Tibet's per capita basic public health services have increased considerably and urban and rural residents have free access to 12 categories of 45 basic public health services. Tibet Autonomous Region Development and Reform

Commission implemented a total of 2190 Aid projects in provinces and cities and invested 15.17 billion Yuan in the TAR from 2012 to 2016 and 2017. The reports said that since the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the central focus is on public health and poverty alleviation and, therefore, more public health assistance and funds have been provided to the TAR.

Nyingchi City promotes Herdsmen and Farmers Enrichment Project

July 7, 2017

The Linzhi City People's Government has announced a series of projects to improve the living standards of herdsmen and farmers of Nyingchi City. These will include opening of cultural relics, including those of Bayi Sanjie and Longxian Chongkang, and antique stores in the city to attract the more than 28 million domestic and international tourists. It will help more than 620 farmers and herdsmen whose income is expected to increase more than 1400 Yuan. Secondly, development of cultural enterprises will be promoted. Nyingchi City has a total of 372 cultural markets operated by 3,450 herdsmen and farmers with a registered capital of 492 million Yuan making their total income around 4,580 million Yuan.

Third is to build a cultural festival platform. In this section, different cultural festivals will be organized by masses of herdsmen and farmers. Festivals involve different games and exhibitions. More than 720 farmers and herdsmen participate in activities and exhibition to boost income to around 2600 million yuan.

Poverty Alleviation Housing Development in Linzhi City

July 7, 2017

A new 18,0893.3 square meter poverty alleviation housing project started in Linzhi city and is expected to be completed this October. The project aims to provide employment opportunities and houses to poverty stricken people in the city. It will be funded by the Municipal Financial Credit Poverty Alleviation Fund.

This project expects to increase the number of employees in the city to 1359. Total investment in the project is 57.778 million Yuan. Total investment till now is 52,007,400 Yuan accounting for 90% of the total investment.

Live stream network system project in Tibet to be completed

July 7, 2017

A 'live' system of the Tibet Network project is complete and is currently in its debugging phase. It will be another 8-10 days to get 'live' coverage of the Tibetan Network project. This live stream network will provide synchronized interaction to users including financial media in addition to CCTV broadcasts, CCTV news media and microblogging. It will be synchronized live 2 hours a day. In the process, there will be a live interaction between reporters and civilian concerned.

Qinghai-Tibet railway prepares for summer travel peak

July 4, 2017

Anticipating a Summer season rush of travellers to the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, the railway authorities are taking measures to introduce additional train services between Xining and Lhasa. 8 trains will now operate daily on this route, which is at an elevation of over 3,000 metres. Train staff will speak in Chinese, Tibetan and English. The summer travel season covers July and August with passenger numbers expected to peak in late July and early August.

Demonstration of Highland Barley passes National Evaluation

July 6, 2017

A recent report of the Quality and Technology Supervision Bureau of Xigaze city was quoted by the official Tibet media on July 6, 2017, as claiming that the standardized planting of highland barley of Xigaze city has made certain achievements and had passed the expert evaluation of China's Standardized Administration (SAC).

Output of Xigaze's highland barley planting demonstration area has been increased from 360 kilograms to 380 kilograms per mu via demonstration planting. Similarly production of Gyanze highland barley planting demonstration area has increased from 325 kg to 360 kg per mu. The planting scale of Shigatse highland barley planting demonstration also expanded from 10,000 mu to 5.8 mu. There was an increase from 10,000 to 40,000 mu in Gyangze.

Currently 3578 households are planting highland barley in areas totaling 58,000 mu. with barley output of 22.04 million kg and the output value of 110 million Yuan. Farmers' per capita income in the demonstration area increased to 600 Yuan. In case of Gyangze, 528 households planted barley highland in demonstration areas that total 40,000 mu. Total highland barley output is 14.4 million kilogram with a value estimated around 28.8 million yuan. The per capita income of these demonstration areas increased to 566 Yuan. The use of pesticides, fertilizers and chemical agents has been reduced and limited in order to reduce the detrimental effects of these chemicals to the environment.

The highest post office "The Mount Everest in Tibet" is put into use

The world's highest post office "heaven in Tibet - Everest post office" commenced operations recently at Everest base camp, Shigatse. Located in Dingxian County, the Everest base camp Post Office, covers 24 square meters and is 5200 meters above sea level. It is at a distance of about 19 kms from the Everest. It will function from April 15 to October 15 and offer courier services, sell various climbing equipments and postcards, stamps, souvenirs, free drinking water and accommodation for rest.

Diaspora Tibetan News

China cancels Indian journalists trip to Tibet

July 3, 2017

In the backdrop of the stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops in the Doklum area in the Sikkim sector, China cancelled a trip (July 8 – 15, 2017) of Indian journalists to Tibet. This was conveyed to the journalists by the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi.

(Comment: As part of its propaganda effort, China organises sponsored visits for select Indian journalists to Tibet each year.)

Tibetan student self-immolates in India

July 16, 2017

Tenzin Choeying, a Tibetan student attempted self-immolation at the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh after shouting "freedom", police said on (date?)injuring himself critically. Indian police said they are investigating the 20-year-old's recent failure in an examination as a possible cause for his action. The International Campaign for Tibet identified the student as Tenzin Choeying. Tenzin Choeying wrote in English, "Please don't cry. Tell everyone that my body is for Tibet".

PLA Activities in Tibet

Military Chinese army conducts live-fire drills in Tibet

July 17, 2017

The state-owned China Central Television (CCTV) reported on July 14, 2017, that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted live-fire exercises in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in the midst of the ongoing stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops at the Doklum area in Bhutan. China Central Television (CCTV) did not mention the exact timing of the drills. Global Times said on July 17, that the brigade that conducted the drills was from the PLA's Tibet Military Command and is one of China's two plateau mountain brigades. The PLA Tibet Military Command guards the Line of Actual Control (LAC) of the India-China border along several sections connecting the mountainous Tibetan region.

According to the CCTV report, the brigade has long been stationed around the middle and lower reaches of the Brahmaputra (Yarlung Tsangpo, in Chinese) River, which flows into India and Bangladesh, and is responsible for frontline combat missions. The live-fire drills included the quick delivery of troops and different military units working together on joint attacks. A 2-minute video clip posted online showed soldiers using anti-tank grenades and missiles against bunkers and howitzers for artillery coverage. The video also showed radar units identifying enemy aircraft and soldiers using anti-aircraft artillery to destroy targets. The drill lasted 11 hours.

Chinese military tests battle tank in Tibet near Indian border

June 29, 2017

Earlier on June 29, 2017, the PLA disclosed that it had conducted trials of a light weight battle tank in Tibet near the Indian border. PLA spokesman Col Wu Qian said at a media briefing that the the 35-tonne tank had carried out trials in the plains of Tibet. Asked whether it was targeted against India, the PLA spokesman said, "The purpose is to test the parameters of the equipment and is not targeted against any country."

PLA Communications Drill in Lhasa

July 10, 2017

Separately, Tibet's mobile communication agency conducted a drill on July 10 in Lhasa, capital of Tibet, where members of the agency practiced setting up a temporary mobile network to secure communications in an emergency.
