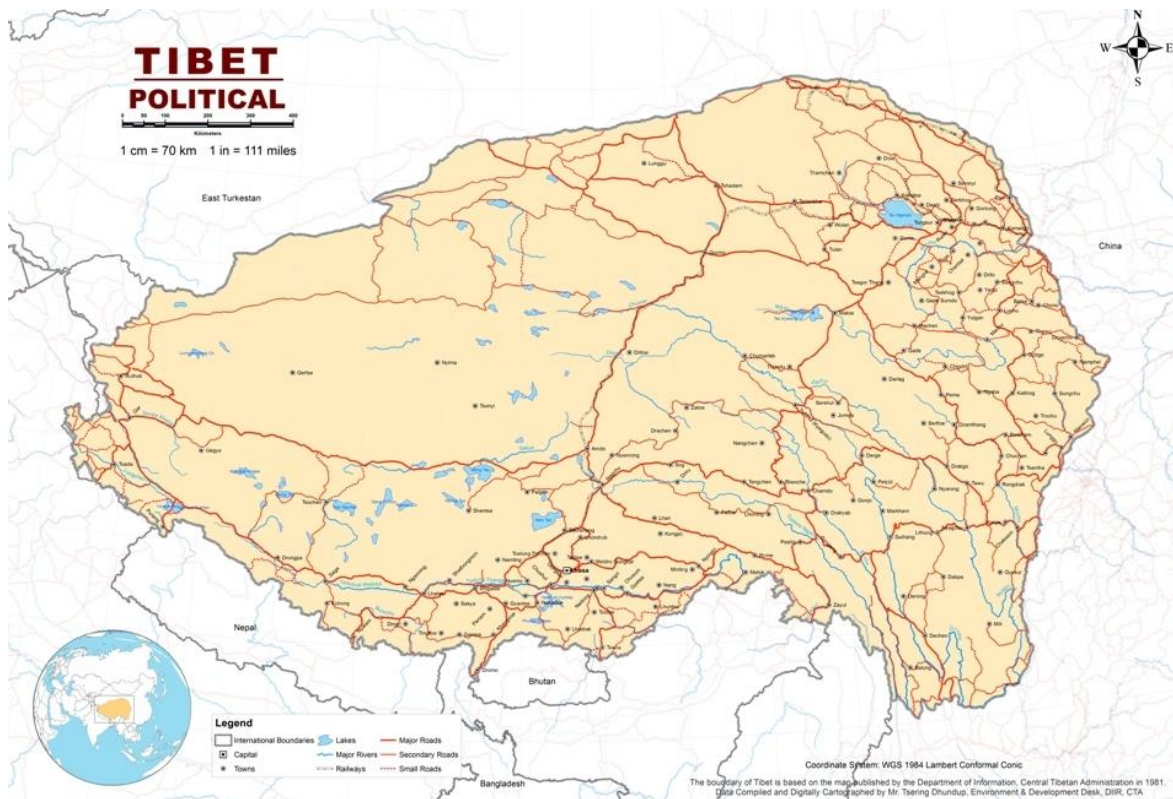


TIBET INSIGHT NEWS

December 1-15, 2014



POLITICAL NEWS

Chairman of TAR People's Government visits Chamdo

November 30, 2014

TAR People's Government Chairman and Vice-Chairman of TAR Party Committee Lobsang Gyaltsen (LosangJamcan) visited Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) from November 19-21, 2014, to inspect infrastructure, urban planning and Construction. He also met cadres including of the Temple Management Committees. Lobsang Gyaltsen was accompanied by the Vice-Chairman of TAR People's Government and Standing Committee Member of TAR Party Committee, Ding Yixian and Member of TAR Standing Committee, President of TAR People's Higher Court and Party Secretary of Communist Party of Chamdo (Ch: Qamdo) Norbu Dhondup.

Lobsang Gyaltsen stressed the need to study and implement the 18th CCP CC's plenary sessions and follow Xi Jinping as the General Secretary. He urged local officials to work towards leapfrog development and long term stability.

After meeting local officials, the TAR Chairman visited the Bamda (Ch: Banda) Airport expansion project construction site and inspected its progress. He asked the workers to further

strengthen the organization and schedule optimal management in order to speed up construction of the project and ensure its completion as soon as possible.

Lobsang Gyaltzen visited the village cadres, homes of the villages, homes of the elderly, the Galden Jampaling Monastery, Chamdo Economic and Technological Development Zone etc.

During his inspection of the Galden Jampaling Monastery, he told cadres of the Temple Management Committee to strengthen the management of monasteries and nunneries. He urged the monastery's monks to instil patriotism among the masses, maintain discipline and national unity and promote socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Chamdo's Transition from Prefecture to City and its first Congress

December 2, 2014, December 12, 2014

The Metropolitan Preparatory Group of the CCP officially inaugurated the first Congress of Chamdo (Ch:Qamdo/Changdu) following the State Council's order of redesignating Chamdo Prefecture as a City on October 29, 2014. The Party Secretary of the Communist Party of Chamdo, Norbu Dhondup attended the opening ceremony of the First Congress. The Deputy Secretary of the Politics and Law Committee of Chamdo, She Xingyu also attended and delivered a speech. Other officials who attended were: Deputy Secretary of Chamdo Party Committee and Vice Commissioner of Chamdo Administrative Office, Abu (Ethnicity: Muslim); Deputy Secretary of Chamdo Party Committee and Deputy Secretary of Chamdo Politics and Law Committee, She Xingyu (Ethnicity: Han); Deputy Secretary of Chamdo Party Committee, Yao Hong (Ethnicity: Tujia); Chairman of Chamdo People's Congress, Kunchok Gyaltzen (Ethnicity: Tibetan); Vice-Commissioner of Chamdo Administrative Office and Standing Committee Member of Chamdo Party Committee, Zuda Xiang (Ethnicity: Han); Director of Chamdo Organization Department and Standing Committee Member of Chamdo Party Committee, Li Fuzhong (Ethnicity: Han); and the Vice-Chairman of Chamdo People's Congress and Party Secretary of Markham County, Rinchen Norbu (Ethnicity: Tibetan).

Eleven working groups were set up during the opening ceremony and were allocated their functional responsibilities.

The First Congress of Chamdo "City", attended by 341 representatives, concluded on December 10. The meeting adopted and examined the Draft Resolution of the Chamdo Discipline Inspection Committee and work report of the Chamdo "City Committee."

In his closing remarks, Party Secretary Norbu Dhondup thanked the TAR Party Committee for their guidance and strong and powerful leadership. He pledged to bring a new round of reform and development and to accelerate the completion of a comprehensive and socially stable society guided by the current ideology of CCP. He said the meeting was successful in adopting a blueprint of the various tasks and initiatives to be taken in the next five years.

Intensive seminar to Tibetan officials and cadres in TAR

December 3, 2014

Under the auspices of the TAR Propaganda Department, Tibetan officials and cadres attended an intensive three day (Nov 24-26, 2014) ‘education’ of the resolutions of the 18th CCP CC’s Fourth Plenary Session to enhance their understanding, awareness and develop unity of thinking.

On November 24, the TAR Communication Authority invited TAR Propaganda Department member and Associate Professor of Tibet University Dr. Liuyang to give a lecture entitled “Interpretation of the 18th CCP CC’s Fourth Plenary meeting Report”.

On November 25, TAR Propaganda Department member Liu Bo made a presentation entitled “In-depth study of the Fourth Plenum in order to accelerate the pace of building rule of law in Tibet”.

On November 26, TAR Vocational and Technical College students were invited to the Tibet Nationalities Institute by the Propaganda Department. Zhang Kai, An Associate Professor of the Institute and a member of the Department of Research made presentations on the rule of law, corruption etc.

Lobsang Gyaltzen’s visit abroad

December 6, 2014

Deputy Secretary and Standing member of TAR Party Committee, Chairman of TAR People’s Government Lobsang Gyaltzen (Ch: LosangJamcan) led an official 8-member delegation to Canada and US from 30th November to 6th December. The delegation visited Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa for cultural exchanges with overseas Chinese and Canadian officials. Lobsang Gyaltzen met Daniel Jean, acting Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Victor Oh, Canadian Senator and Chairman of the China-Canada Parliamentary Association in Ottawa.

During his meeting with the Canadian Officials, Lobsang Gyaltzen explained the CCP’s Tibet Policy and the tremendous social and economic progress that Tibet has made under the CCP’s leadership. He spoke highly of the exchanges and cooperation between the legislative bodies of China and Canada.

Lobsang Gyaltzen reaffirmed that “Tibet is an inalienable part of China since time immemorial”, and that the “CCP liberated Tibet peacefully” more than 60 years ago. He said that Tibet, under the leadership of the CCP, would always strive towards leapfrog development.

Lobsang Gyaltzen stressed that the TAR authorities under the leadership of the CCP’s CC fully adhere to the policy of religious freedom, promotion of religious harmony and strengthen the management of religious affairs according to law. He said that the current situation of Tibet is the best period in its history and there is social harmony and stability,

rapid economic development and national unity. He appealed to Canadian officials to make a comprehensive, objective, impartial view of Tibet and recognize the importance and sensitivity of the Tibet issue. He requested them not to provide any scope for anti-China activities in order to cement a healthy and friendly relation between the two nations.

The Canadian officials warmly welcomed the Chinese delegation to Canada and stated that Tibet is an inalienable part of Chinese territory and Canada does not support the "independence" of Tibet and is not willing to see the Tibet issue interfere in the development of relations between the two countries. They said they hope to intensify communications with the Chinese side to push forward Canada-China relations along the correct road.

After a four day visit to Canada, the delegation visited New York and Washington in the U.S from December 2. He had meetings with Think-tanks, spoke at the Brookings Institute, met journalists, overseas Chinese and overseas Tibetans.

Shigatse People's Congress concludes

December 10, 2014

The Communist Party of Shigatse (Ch:Xigaze) concluded its first People's Congress meeting on December 10. Deputy Chairman of Shigatse People's Congress and Party Secretary of Shigatse Party Committee, Tenzin Namgyal presided over the closing ceremony and delivered a speech. The meeting reviewed the work reports of the past four years and determined the guiding ideology, goals, tasks and major initiatives for the next five years. The meeting pledged to accelerate comprehensive reforms and development, maintain social stability, and support CCP CC's leadership and to strive towards long time stability.

RELIGION/MONASTIC RELATED NEWS

Party Secretary of Lhasa's inspection to important monasteries in Lhasa

November 28, 2014

Party Secretary of Lhasa Choedak (Chedak) inspected the managements of the Ramoche and Sera monasteries of Lhasa on November 26 along with Lhasa Municipal Committee member and head of United Front Work Department Dawa, Party Secretary and the Vice-Chairman of Chengguan District (Ch:Trinkuchu) and member of the Public Complaints Bureau, Li Huixing.

The team inspected the rooms, canteen, halls, and libraries of both the monasteries. Chedak asked the Temple Management Committees of both monasteries to strengthen innovative ways to conduct the affairs of their respective monasteries and implement the CCP's ethnic and religious policies.

Officials of other relevant Departments of Lhasa Municipal Office, Municipal Propaganda Department, the Municipal Finance Bureau and the Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau were present during the inspection.

Pope Francis declines to meet Dalai Lama

December 11, 2014

Pope Francis chose not to meet the Dalai Lama in Rome over the week-end of December 13-14, 2014, when the exiled Tibetan leader was in Rome to attend a summit of Nobel Peace Prize winners. The decision was prompted by the Vatican's desire not to offend China at a time when it is attempting to improve relations with Beijing and for fear of provoking trouble for the country's Catholic community.

Commenting on the Pope's decision, the Dalai Lama said "The Vatican administration says it's not possible because it could cause inconveniences." He added that "This time I won't meet Pope Francis," though he would have been "very happy" to do so.

DEVELOPMENT/INFRASTRUCTURE

Sichuan Airlines beginning Kathmandu flights from January

December 2, 2014

Sichuan Airlines of China is starting daily flights on Chengdu-Lhasa-Kathmandu sector from January 2015. The airline operates a fleet of 93 aircraft including Airbus A319, A320, A321 and A330.

Chinese travellers to Nepal crossed the 100,000 mark last year reaching an all-time high of 113,173, and the number is expected to reach 250,000 within a couple of years. Nepal has witnessed a constant growth in Chinese arrivals since June 2009 after being granted the Approved Destination Status (ADS) by China National Tourism Administration in 2002.

Rabi Chandra Singh, Chairman of Society Travels, said "We are excited that Sichuan Airlines has chosen Kathmandu as its latest destination as Chinese travellers are our fastest growing source market and we expect that Sichuan Airlines will further stimulate the growth"

Construction begins on Chengdu-Ya'an section of Sichuan-Tibet railway

December 09, 2014

Work began on the rail line from Chengdu, capital of southwest Sichuan Province to Ya'an, a city in the province on Saturday.

Chinese team to study West Seti Hydro

December 09, 2014

An eight-member team from CWE Investment Company arrived in Nepal on 2nd December to conduct a field study of the long-planned West Seti Hydropower Project located in Dadeldhura and Doti districts. The technicians left for the project site on 3rd December.

They will study the proposed sites for the dam and the powerhouse. CWE is a subsidiary of China Three Gorges Corporation. The West Seti project, which is designed to produce 750 MW of electricity, has remained on the drawing board for the past two decades.

IBN Chief Executive Officer Radhesh Panta said the major objective of the field visit was to verify the facts and figures of previous reports and study the current scenario.

“The outcome of the study will be used for the Chinese company’s internal assessment,” said Gaurav Basnyat, project manager at IBN. “They will make a study of the technical, social and economic aspects.”

The changes made in the management structure of CWE is another reason behind the study, said IBN. Previously, CWE could make any decision independently, however, with the new management; it has to get the go-ahead from Three Gorges first.

“The project consultant too has been changed for this purpose, and the new consultant wants to recheck the details,” said Basnyat, adding that the study had been initiated to satisfy the internal process.

IBN officials will also be joining the study tour. Apart from assisting the officials from China, the team will create a framework to take the project ahead. According to Basnyat, IBN has asked the Chinese developer not to “dillydally” over minor issues and invited it to begin negotiations for a project development agreement (PDA).

IBN and CWE signed a memorandum of understanding on developing the project around two and a half years ago.

A number of issues like lack of clarity regarding the power purchase agreement (PPA) and the construction of the transmission line, which is to be done by the Nepal Electricity Authority and the Ministry of Energy, have slowed down the Chinese developer. In addition, the subject of energy consumption is one of the most crucial issues that has delayed the project’s construction. While the power produced by two other mega projects, Upper Karnali and Arun III each with a capacity of 900 MW, is primarily meant for export, the energy from West Seti is intended for domestic consumption.

CWE is also said to be sceptical about whether the domestic market can absorb 750 MW of energy or not. Last month, a CWE team had visited Nepal to study the country's power consumption scenario. It is likely to submit its report to CWE and IBN within two months.

The first study on West Seti, which will be the biggest reservoir-based project, was conducted in 1987. Two decades ago, an Australian company Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation (SMEC) had shown interest in building the project. The government and SMEC had even signed an agreement on its construction. However, SMEC did not start work on time and its licence was cancelled.

SWC to blacklist Chinese NGO APECF

December 12, 2014

Nepal's Social Welfare Council stated on December 12 that it had started necessary process to blacklist the Asia Pacific Exchange and Cooperation Foundation (APECF), a Chinese non-governmental organisation, for its lack of transparency and accountability.

SWC Director Madan Prasad Rimal said the SWC would soon blacklist APECF for its non-cooperative attitude and lack of transparency in its functioning. "SWC has found faults with APECF, which has violated existing acts and regulations," he said.

According to the regulatory body, the APECF has not submitted its audit reports to the council after the Hong Kong-based NGO signed the general agreement and a project agreement with the council. He said the "APECF has not reported to SWC about its activities after it signed general agreement on Lumbini Recovery Plan in March, 2012, and a project agreement on 'Raise Rural Income in Mountainous Regions of Nepal' in January, 2013, with SWC". "Suspensions increased after APECF issued a notice in February seeking the cancellation of a half-million dollar project". The SWC said that neither APECF Executive Vice Chairman Xiao Wunnan, country representative Liu Jianli nor the local partner NGOs responded to SWC despite several attempts by the SWC. "The council has no information on what the Chinese NGO had done in Lumbini region or other project districts, including Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Rasuwa and Nuwakot." He disclosed that the APECF had selected 17 VDCs in these four districts to run a year-long education and three-year long agriculture projects from 2013-2017.

Officials at the Ministry of Home Affairs and SWC said that besides the APECF they were closely watching the activities of other NGOs in bordering areas. "Intelligence inputs being received from across the border have led us to monitor activities of more than 20 NGOs working in the bordering villages in central and western Nepal," said high-level officials, who refused to share details on such organisations.

(Comment: The APECF, which has Nepal's former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal as one of its vice-chairmen, had announced a US\$ 3 billion plan to redevelop Lumbini and build an international airport, first class hotels, shopping malls, temples and cultural centres, a Buddhist university and a museum in Lumbini region. It had received the SWC's affiliation on March 25, 2012. In its letter to SWC, the APECF had listed Malaysia's Rimbunan Hijau Group, London-based Sanbar Development Corporation and The Rockefeller Foundation in the US as shareholders.)

Lobsang Gyaltzen's Inspection to the New Tibet Railway Project Headquarter

November 21, 2014

TAR People's Government Chairman Lobsang Gyaltzen went to Larin, the headquarters of the Lhasa to Nyingtri (Ch: Nyingchi) railway construction network.

He examined the technical standards, design and overall progress of the new Tibet railway project. He told the railway preparatory team that the State Council and CCP attach immense importance to the project and told them to henceforth report the progress of the project. He further stated that the construction of the new Railway is meant to improve the people's livelihood, break bottlenecks and constraints of development and promote long-term stability.

He told the Railway Preparatory Team to unify their thinking and work together to promote and complete the project as soon as possible.

Larin is an important part of the Sichuan-Tibet railway, the Yunnan-Tibet railway, the western development of key construction projects and also reportedly one of the "Twelfth Five-Year Plan"'s landmark projects.

The Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway line will be 433-km long, including 402 km to be newly built. It will have 34 stations, including nine major ones, and trains are designed to travel at an average speed of 160 km per hour. Although described in different Chinese media reports as Lhasa-Nyingchi (Tibetan: Nyingtri) or Xigaze (Shigatse)-Nyingchi line, it will actually be the Xierong-Nyingchi line, with Xierong being a stop on the Lhasa-Xigaze line located 32 km from Lhasa.

The report said that once completed, it will take less than one hour to travel from Lhasa to Lhoka Prefecture, and two hours to reach Nyingchi Prefecture.

The report said that the Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway will connect not only the tourist resources along the line, but also famous scenic locations such as Jiuzhaigou Valley, Yellow Dragon Scenic Area, and Qinghai Lake, as well as tourist cities such as Chengdu, Dali, and Lijiang, through a railway network encompassing the Chengdu-Nyingchi Railway, Yunnan-Tibet Railway, Qinghai-Tibet Railway, and Lhasa-Shigatse Railway.

Tibet-Sichuan grid now operational

November 20, 2014

Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (CC), announced the opening of a power grid connecting Tibet and Sichuan on 18th November.

The 1.08 billion U.S. dollar project links Chamdo in Tibet and Garze of Tibet in Sichuan Province, allegedly aiming to put an end to the electricity shortages of the 500,000 residents of the Chamdo region and ease power strain in Tibet as a whole.

The complex interconnection circuits stretch 1,521 kilometres across the plateau at an average altitude of 3,850 meters and its construction involved more than 20,000 staff over eight months, according to the State Grid Corporation of China.

Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (CC), inspected the power dispatching centre under the State Grid before the announcement.
