



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 11

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ICT's Tibet Roundup is a twice-monthly compilation of curated news from various sources, including Chinese state media, official Chinese documents, briefings, information reported by Tibetans in Tibet and international commentary on Tibet. The roundup is organized in categories, including law, politics, culture, economics, climate and commentary. The focus is on presenting news and reports with limited analysis and editorializing.

POLITICS

1. Number of CCP members in Tibet Autonomous Region

State media outlet [Tibet Daily](#) reported on July 1 that the total number of Chinese Communist Party members in the officially designated Tibet Autonomous Region is 446,100 as of Dec. 31, 2022. Compared to the 7th census conducted in 2020, the total number of TAR CCP members accounts for 12.25% of the total population of 3.65 million.

Citing the Organization Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the state media states there are 23,000 grassroots party organizations in the region, out of which 1,600 are grassroots party committees, 1,000 are general branches and 20,400 are branches.

2. State Security Minister affirms CCP's regime security as core purpose of China's national security work

China's State Security Minister Chen Yixin, in a [lengthy article](#) published on July 12, affirms that China's national security work is to uphold the CCP's regime security. In his article published in Democracy and Legal System magazine, which is operated by the China Law Society, a government-controlled organization promoting the ideology and legal concepts of the Communist Party, Chen writes that "putting political security first is the lifeline of national security work in the new era." He further explains that

The core of political security is regime security and system security, the most fundamental of which is to maintain the leadership and ruling status of the Communist Party of China and maintain the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. As a special force for consolidating and defending the party's ruling status, for safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development interests, and for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, the hidden front must put maintaining political security first.

China amended its anti-espionage law, originally enacted in 2014, through a legislative vote in April. The [new counter-espionage law](#), in effect since July 1, broadens the definition of espionage and grants expanded investigative powers to national security law enforcement agencies. Chen Yixin's call for proactively defending against espionage reflects the Chinese government's commitment to reinforcing national security and maintaining the Communist Party's leadership. By embracing cutting-edge emerging technologies like big data, blockchain and AI, China aims to enhance its capabilities in countering espionage activities and safeguarding the CCP's regime security.

DEVELOPMENT

3. Chinese scientist worried about impacts of climate change on Tibetan Plateau

Chinese geologist Yang Yong, who has been studying the Tibetan Plateau for over 30 years, has expressed in his [expedition note](#) deep concern about the alarming changes caused by global warming. In a report posted on chinadialogue.net, Yang emphasizes that the plateau is at a critical turning point, facing a range of long-term threats due to climate change. He has observed higher temperatures, retreating snowlines, shrinking glaciers, hydrological changes, grassland degradation and worsening desertification as the main impacts on the Tibetan Plateau. These changes have significant implications for both the population and the fragile ecosystems of the region.

During his annual visits to the Tibetan Plateau, which is often referred to as "The Third Pole" or "Asia's Water Tower," Yang has witnessed the direct impacts of climate change. He highlights the likelihood of future challenges posed by the El Niño climate pattern, potentially leading to temperature spikes. Yang's studies on glaciers reveal substantial retreats, such as the crucial glacier source for the Yarlung Tsangpo (elsewhere known as the Brahmaputra) River, receding by 400 meters in just 12 years.

The geologist was struck by the unseasonable heat and scarcity of rainfall during his expeditions, resulting in parched ground despite it being the rainy season. He further notes the low river levels, exposed riverbeds and depleted reservoirs during what should have been flood season months. While the number and size of lakes on the plateau have increased over the last 50 years, this development presents challenges as it alters river systems and contributes to the occurrence of natural disasters. Melting glaciers and

shrinking permafrost, which is projected to decrease significantly by the end of the century, are major factors behind these changes.

The implications of these environmental transformations are significant, with the scenic “Zhuonai” Lake rising and breaking its banks in 2012, creating a new river that impacted the Dri Chu (Chinese: Yangtze) River system. Similarly, a Chinese Academy of Sciences study in 2019 identified the “Qinghai-Tibet Plateau,” aka Tibetan Plateau, as one of the regions most affected by global warming, leading to glacial melting, increased lake sizes and ice collapses. These findings highlight the urgent need to protect the well-being of the affected populations and preserve the unique ecosystems of the Tibetan Plateau.

EDUCATION

4. Middle school students intercepted attempting to flee to India

According to [Tibet Watch](#), four out of eight students at Second Middle School in Chuchen (Chinese: Jinchuan) County, Ngaba who attempted to leave Tibet in March 2023 faced a troubling situation. They were arrested and later experienced interrogation and assault while in detention, with each of them being fined 20,000 yuan.

The students' plan to flee to India was disrupted when the police apprehended them, while the fate of the other four students remains unknown.

The parents of the missing students received distressing news as the police contacted them, stating that their children had crossed the border and were now in the hands of “criminal or blacklisted organizations.”

In an unsettling development, the parents were informed that they could retrieve their children by paying 80,000 RMB (about US \$11,150) per person. Local suspicions have arisen that the missing students might be in police custody, with the high ransom possibly serving as a financial gain for the authorities.

Despite the relentless efforts of parents, relatives, and friends, the search for the missing students has yielded no results, leading to deep distress and uncertainty about their well-being.

This situation raises significant human rights concerns, particularly regarding the students' right to freedom of movement and safety. Reports of mistreatment and extortion by the authorities have sparked outrage and underscored the need for a thorough and transparent investigation into the students' disappearances. Ensuring the welfare and rights of the missing students is a priority, and decisive action should be taken to facilitate their safe return, while holding those responsible for any mistreatment accountable.

RELIGION

5. Dhingri County “Three Consciousness” transition meeting

Dhingri (Tingri) county at the western edge of the officially designated Tibet Autonomous Region held a transition meeting for the “Three Consciousness” education work in religious circles on June 26, according to the [United Front Work Department of Dhingri County Party Committee](#), Shigatse City.

The County Religious Circle’s “Three Consciousness” Education Leading Group representative, Dawa Tashi, referred to unspecified outstanding problems and shortcomings, which most likely are gaps in adherence to Xi Jinping's socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics and implementing decisions and deployments of higher party committees.

During the meeting, Dawa Tashi stressed the significance of understanding and aligning with the direction of Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism. He called for the implementation of the "four standards" and "five haves" as the foundation for religious work, ensuring integration of religious practices within the broader framework of Chinese culture and society.

A key focus was on ensuring clear direction and correct orientation in the ideological and political education of monks and nuns. Dawa Tashi underlined the target requirements of "Three Consciousness" education, with a particular emphasis on embracing Xi Jinping's new era socialism as the guiding principle.

To achieve these objectives, Dawa gave instructions for a problem-oriented and classified approach to strengthen the ideological and political leadership within religious circles. This approach aims to stimulate the political consciousness, ideological consciousness and action consciousness of religious practitioners, supporting the overarching goals of the "four creations" and "four fronts."

In line with the broader goals of enhancing "Three Consciousness" education, Dawa emphasized the need to broaden the scope of “education” and ensure it meets the diverse needs of the local population. He also called for expanding the reach and impact of individual awareness education within the religious circles of Dhingri County.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to fostering a deeper understanding and adherence to the core principles of Xi Jinping's socialist ideology.

6. “High-quality development of Tibetan Buddhist education in the era” aims to produce modern monks aligned with party

Karma Tseten, Member of the Standing Committee of the District Party Committee and Director of the United Front Work Department of the Tibet

Autonomous Region, conducted an investigative visit to Tibet Buddhist College on June 30 to assess the progress of thematic education and inspection work, according to state media outlet [Tibet Daily](#).

Highlighting the significance of General Secretary Xi Jinping's crucial speeches and directives on thematic education, Karma Tseten urged the Party Committee of the Buddhist Academy to wholeheartedly embrace Xi Jinping's new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, reported Tibet Daily. He emphasized the importance of remaining steadfast in supporting the "two establishments" and achieving the "two safeguards," thereby promoting profound and solid thematic education to enhance the party's influence. Following Secretary Wang Junzheng's instructions during the investigation by the United Front Work Department of the District Party Committee, Karma Tseten underscored the college's commitment to serve the region's "four creations" and "four fronts," while further fostering a strong sense of mission and responsibility. He urged the college to cultivate a robust team of Buddhist college cadres, enhance the quality of teaching and level of school management, and actively nurture modern monks who align with the party, appreciate its guidance, follow its principles and meet the "four standards." Such efforts, he emphasized, would promote the high-quality development of Tibetan Buddhist education in the new era.

7. Constructing academic discourse system of Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism

A seminar on constructing the academic discourse system of the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and the launch of the new book titled "Monasteries and Communities: The Vision of the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism" took place in Lhasa, reported state media outlet [Tibet Daily](#) on July 5. Experts from institutions such as China Tibetology Publishing House, East China University of Political Science and Law, Tibet University, Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee Party School and Tibet Autonomous Region Academy of Social Sciences participated in the event.

Liao Yunlu, a scholar from the Academy of Social Sciences of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the author of "Monasteries and Communities: A Vision of the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism," presented the book's focus on the interrelation between Tibetan Buddhism and society, describing it as the connection between "monasteries and communities." For three years, Liao Yunlu and the team conducted extensive research aiming to explore an effective path to actively guide Tibetan Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society.

The seminar and the launch of the book demonstrate the commitment to advancing the discourse on Sinicization and its impact on Tibetan Buddhism to blend religious traditions and the socialist society in China.

We welcome your feedback! Send any thoughts about ICT's Tibet Roundup and ideas for future changes to research@savetibet.org.



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