



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 13

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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. Tibetology symposium in Beijing echoes CCP rhetoric

The [7th Beijing International Symposium on Tibetology](#), themed "Prosperity and Development of Tibetology and an Open Tibet," began on Aug. 14, revealing China's manipulation of academic platforms for political agendas. With a history of controlled narratives, this event serves to legitimize the Chinese Communist Party's approach in Tibet, as the symposium's discourse echoes CCP rhetoric.

While presented as a scholarly exchange co-hosted by entities like the China Association for the Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture, the symposium underscores China's control over academic dialogue and genuine mutual learning.

The 7th Beijing International Symposium on Tibetology masks the reality on the ground under the guise of academic discourse to push forward a state-centric narrative on Tibet. Activities and awards for "Research on the Relationship between Tibet and the Central Government since the Yuan Dynasty (Volume 1 and 2)" is a clear example of pushing forward historical propaganda under the guise of academic discourse.

This event falls short of addressing Tibet's ongoing struggle for cultural preservation and human dignity.

2. Seven official documents required for travel

In Qinghai, Sichuan and Gansu, high-tech state surveillance, micromanagement and daily activity restrictions within Tibetan Buddhist monasteries have escalated significantly, according to a report by India-based [Tibet Times](#). These actions are carried out under the broader policy of Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism, aimed at aligning the religion with Xi Jinping's thought.

Notably, the scope of surveillance has extended beyond the monastery premises. Monks are now monitored even within their village homes, where human intelligence agents posing as donors or patrons have been stationed.

Recent developments underscore the stringent controls imposed on monks traveling to other locations, particularly Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. A complex web of seven official documents is required to obtain permission for such travel in eastern and northeastern Tibet:

- Permission letter from local authorities
- Permission letter from monastery authority
- Letter from the township people's government office
- Letter from the township police station
- Letter from National Defense & Security office
- Letter from local religious affairs administration office
- Letter from the prefecture religious affairs administration office

Travelers lacking any of these letters are denied passage during their journey. The content of these letters centers on the associated monasteries and the individual's record of legal activities. Notably, those involved in "political activities", particularly the spring 2008 pan-Tibetan protests, face challenges in obtaining these documents.

The intensified surveillance and stringent travel restrictions underscore the deepening control exerted by the state, raising concerns about the curtailment of religious freedom and individual rights within Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

3. Red tourism

China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the National Women's Association and the China Customs Commission, has jointly unveiled a comprehensive "Action Plan for Cultivating New Talented Generation in the Era through Red Tourism 2023-2025." This [plan](#) aims to harness the power of red cultural resources and soulful experiences within

the realm of red tourism to enrich the education and development of the younger generation.

Red tourism is an initiative of the CCP that encourages the populace to visit locations with historical significance to the CCP. The party aims to remind the populace of the early revolutionary ideals of the CCP in a changing China, with the intention of mitigating any disenchantment the populace may have with communist ideals and values.

The core objectives of the action plan are underscored by a determined effort to create 100 high-quality red tourism research courses tailored for youth over a three-year period. Simultaneously, the plan intends to establish thousands of red tourism research routes, as well as organize 10,000 red tourism promotion activities, all designed to engage millions of primary and secondary students across China. school teachers and students across

The action plan sets forth a clear vision for its culmination by 2025: an augmented mechanism for promoting and nurturing the soul through red tourism, a more prominent educational role for red tourism, and an integration of red culture into the ideological and political education of the younger generation.

The central theme of the Action Plan centers on "Making good use of red resources to cultivate new communist generations." The strategy hinges on effectively utilizing the potential of red tourism in red education, while adhering to scientific educational principles. Central to this approach is the establishment and refinement of a normalized working mechanism that intertwines red tourism and education. The goal is to foster a conscious practice of socialist core values among the youth, instilling unwavering faith and confidence in following the Communist Party and contributing to China's rejuvenation.

The action plan outlines ten principal tasks:

- **Constructing Red Culture Courses:** Developing red research courses and seamlessly integrating red culture into everyday teaching.
- **Promotional Activities:** Inviting professional lecturers to share red stories, empowering youth participants to narrate red stories, and involving senior party cadres, members, and representatives in storytelling.
- **Red Tourism Brand Activities:** Organizing events like the National Red Story Interpreter competition and the National College Student Red Tourism Creative Planning Competition.
- **Enhancing Red Education Activities:** Improving the availability and quality of red tourism products, elevating the standard of red tourism services, and refining the mechanism for red research and practical teaching.

The unveiling of the "Action Plan for Cultivating New Talented Generation in the Era through Red Tourism 2023-2025" reflects a concerted effort to infuse red cultural heritage and the spirit of red tourism into the educational landscape, with the ultimate goal of indoctrinating a new generation well-versed in communist ideals and values.

RELIGION

4. Matoe County Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism

Matoe (Chinese: Maduo) County in Golok (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture hosted the county's first [forum](#) on "Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism by firmly establishing the sense of community of the Chinese nation" on July 30. The gathering aimed to bolster the Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism with socialism, promote adherence to regulations and set exemplary standards for religious affairs personnel, leading the charge in fostering ethnic unity.

The significance of patriotic education was stressed, coupled with the primacy of state laws over canon laws. The development of the Buddhist forum seeks adherence to socialist core values underscoring the promotion of Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism in the county. The County Buddhist Association was designated as a conduit to fully enact the policy of religious belief.

A call was made to support the modernization, Sinification and localization of Tibetan Buddhism in line with the times, facilitating "national unity" on the Tibetan Plateau and alignment to the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

The Matoe County forum exemplified efforts toward Sinification and national unity within Tibetan Buddhism. It aimed to harmonize religious beliefs with socialist values, ensuring adherence to state regulations. The event highlighted the ongoing push for cultural convergence and "unity."

DEVELOPMENT

5. "Regional Conditions Research Base" for Nepal-TAR trade

During the first half of 2023, trade volume between the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Nepal experienced a 4.7% year-on-year increase, resulting in a total trade value of 814 million yuan (equivalent to approximately US \$114 million) from January to June, according to China's [state media](#). Gao Baojun, the deputy secretary general of TAR, made this announcement at the 11th Meeting of China's Tibet-Nepal Trade Facilitation Committee.

This rise in trade is paralleled by the resumption of two-way trade activities through the ports of Kyidong (Jilong), Zham, and Purang (Burang) earlier this year.

The TAR's economic engagement with Nepal is exemplified by its involvement in 20 projects within Nepal, which collectively surpasses an investment of US \$87.33 million. Additionally, the TAR hosts more than 60 foreign-invested companies from Nepal, collectively generating over US \$13 million in investment, as indicated by a state report.

With the intention of refining port operations and functions, the TAR government has unveiled plans to allocate 600 million yuan for 20 port infrastructure projects spanning from 2021 to 2025.

This concerted effort is aligned with the region's overarching goal of fortifying trade mechanisms and enhancing overall efficiency in port activities.

On Aug. 8, according to [state media](#), the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the China Frontier Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Academy of Social Sciences of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Management Committee of the Kyidong Border Economic Cooperation Zone inaugurated a "Regional Conditions Research Base" in the Kyidong Border Economic Cooperation Zone.

While China's much-touted Belt and Road Initiative has fared poorly globally, China continues to focus on Nepal as its opening to South Asia with the establishment of a think tank to make deeper inroads in Nepal.

SECURITY

6. Working Meeting on National Security and People's Defense Line in Tibet Autonomous Region

A Working Meeting of the Party Leading Group for the construction of the National Security and People's Defense Line was convened in Lhasa within the Tibet Autonomous Region, according to [state media](#). Presided over by Liu Jiang, a member of the Party Standing Committee and Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee of TAR, the meeting centered on essential strategies for enhancing national security and safeguarding social and political stability in the northwest region of the country.

Liu Jiang's address underlined the imperative for Tibet to embrace the ideals set forth in the 20th Party Congress and the broader national security framework. He emphasized the need to reinforce the establishment of robust national security and people's defense lines, metaphorically described as a "copper wall and iron wall." These measures, he asserted, are pivotal for upholding national security and ensuring the stability of social and political dynamics in the region.

In elaborating further, Liu Jiang elucidated that the construction of the National Security and People's Defense Line plays a vital role in the enhancement of a modernized national security apparatus and capabilities. It forms a foundational cornerstone in the establishment of a contemporary security framework. He underscored the necessity for Tibet to consciously embrace its responsibility in consolidating the national security bulwark while concurrently fostering a socialist modernized new Tibet.

The meeting concluded with a resolute commitment from the assembled leaders to fortify the construction of the National Security and People's Defense Line, thereby contributing to the overall preservation of China's national security.

TIBETAN WOMEN

7. Eleventh Women's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region in Lhasa

On Aug. 11, the [Eleventh Women's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region](#) commenced in Lhasa. Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region, underscored the imperative to diligently implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's significant directives regarding the work concerning women, children and the Women's Federation. The objective is to proactively engage, innovate, exert efforts and contribute to the comprehensive construction of a new socialist modernized Tibet.

Unlike international women's forums that aim to empower women in terms of rights, freedom and equality, the Women's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region appears to serve as a political platform to mobilize women in support of the CCP and its core, Xi Jinping.

In his opening statement, Wang Junzheng emphasized the pivotal role of Tibetan women in fortifying their ideals, aligning with political direction and comprehending essential concepts such as the "two establishments." He called for heightened awareness and self-assurance, while upholding revolutionary ideals and integrating them into the national mission. The values of self-improvement and unwavering commitment were underscored, along with a call for active engagement in tasks such as maintaining stability and grassroots governance. Wang stressed the significance of women in fostering unity, upholding national values and championing cultural virtues. He also highlighted the need for women's federations to prioritize party leadership, reform, grassroots service and serving as a dependable pillar of support for women.

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



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@save-tibet.eu