



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 21

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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. Sisters detained for sending WeChat messages encouraging virtuous actions

Two Tibetan women, known for aiding the needy in their village, were detained on Oct. 23 for sending encouraging messages about virtuous actions on WeChat, according to [Tibet Watch](#) on Dec 5. Tsono and Nyidon, devout Buddhists and sisters hailing from Karchen Township in Sershul County, volunteered to help the poorest in their community before their arrest. They're currently held in a detention center without updates on their condition. According to a source speaking to Tibet Watch, there's a clampdown on religious activities in Tibet, with villagers in Karchen Township questioned about promoting Buddhist values. The Chinese Communist Party introduced strict regulations, forbidding unlicensed religious activities online under Article 17 of the Measures on the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services, implemented in December 2021.

2. Expanded session of Tibet party committee to implement decisions of Central Economic Work Conference

In a significant gathering led by Wang Junzheng, secretary of the Party Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, an expanded session of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee convened on Dec. 14 to implement the decisions of the Central Economic Work Conference. The session, presided over by Wang, emphasized the paramount importance of General Secretary Xi Jinping's guidance, according to Chinese [state media](#). Stressing the need for all regional departments to integrate this guidance into

their agendas, Wang positioned the study and implementation of Xi's directives as vital political obligations.

With 2024 as a significant milestone marking the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China and a pivotal year for the "14th Five-Year Plan," Wang underscored the immense significance of the upcoming year in steering economic policies. His vision emphasized the imperative adherence to the spirit of the Central Economic Work Conference, particularly Xi Jinping's directives, as the driving force behind Tibet's pursuit of "high-quality development" and its role in advancing China's broader national rejuvenation goals.

3. Data released on Dram border crossings since reopening

Chinese [state media](#) recently reported a significant movement of approximately 100,000 individuals across the Dram border, connecting Nepal to Tibet. This surge occurred in three months between Sept. 1 and Dec. 4, following the reopening of the land border with Nepal. Despite the release of border movement data by state media, specifics regarding the direction of this traffic remain undisclosed. Presumably, the movement involves Nepali traders and potentially some foreigners traveling into Tibet, rather than traffic from Tibet. Once a crucial safe passage for Tibetans seeking refuge from Chinese rule, the Dram border now sees a marked decline in the number of Tibetan refugees crossing into Nepal, subsequently making their way to Dharamsala in India, since 2008.

4. Tibetan refugees in Nepal languish in limbo

The India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and Korean nonprofit Asian Dignity Initiative jointly prepared a report about Tibetan refugees in Nepal. Published on International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, the report "[Languishing in Limbo 2023 REPORT](#)" concludes that the situation of Tibetan refugees in Nepal has worsened over the years due to Nepal's stringent application of the "One China" policy that curtails the human rights of Tibetan refugees in the country.

For over three decades, Nepal sheltered Tibetan refugees fleeing Chinese oppression, providing them asylum and essential documentation. However, this sanctuary has gradually eroded since the mid-1990s under mounting pressure from China, according to the report. Nepal's shift in policies, influenced by geopolitical dynamics and economic alliances, significantly affected Tibetan refugees. The country's adherence to the "One China" policy deepened, resulting in the denial of refugee status, curtailing of basic rights, and facilitation of agreements like the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAT) and the Boundary Management System, which jeopardize the safety and rights of Tibetans. This shift left Tibetan refugees in

a state of limbo, devoid of official documentation, rights and protection, making them vulnerable to exploitation and suppression.

TCHRD and ADI call for urgent action from both China and Nepal. China must respect Nepal's sovereignty and cease pressuring the country regarding Tibetan refugees. Simultaneously, Nepal needs to fortify its legal framework to safeguard the rights of Tibetan refugees. This involves ratifying international conventions on refugees, amending its constitution to protect the fundamental rights of all individuals within its borders and issuing comprehensive refugee documentation to Tibetans, granting them the freedom to live, work, study and travel beyond Nepal's confines. Addressing these critical issues is imperative to ensure the safety, dignity, and rights of Tibetan refugees in Nepal.

5. China's discriminatory access policy against Indian pilgrims

China denied Indian pilgrims access to Mount Kailash and Manasarovar—sites of religious importance to both Hindus and Tibetan Buddhists—in Tibet. [The Kathmandu Post](#) in its report on Dec. 6 on the surge in tourism from India attributed the rise to China's restrictions denying 50,000 Indian Hindu pilgrims access to Mount Kailash and Manasarovar in Tibet. The denial of access to Indian pilgrims has sparked allegations of discrimination, particularly as other foreign nationalities have reportedly been granted tourist access to these significant religious locations.

The restrictions on the Kailash pilgrimage come amid ongoing geopolitical tensions between India and China. The disputed border region and recent clashes have strained relations between the two nations. Seen in light of China's historical practices of weaponizing access for political leverage, the move to limit Indian pilgrims' access appears to be a calculated political tool aimed at exerting pressure on India.

RELIGION

6. County meeting emphasizes fortification of ideology

Amdo (Chinese: Anduo) County in Nagqu (Naqu) Prefectural-level City organized a meeting aimed at implementing comprehensive "three consciousnesses" (national consciousness, citizen consciousness, and rule of law consciousness) education within religious circles, according to [United Front Work Department of Amdo County Committee](#), Nagqu City, on Dec. 12. Led by the deputy secretary of the County Party Committee and minister of the United Front Work Department, the meeting outlined a multifaceted strategy to elevate ideological understanding, cultural adaptation and rectification within the religious community in the county. Emphasizing the integration of "three consciousnesses" education, the meeting stressed the

need to fortify ideological principles, party spirit, and practical application among monks and nuns. The objective was to reinforce core principles, self-assurance, and the defense of established ideologies of the Chinese Communist Party while guiding Tibetan Buddhism toward alignment with socialist values.

Furthermore, the meeting prioritized the identification and promotion of exemplary models within religious practices and tailoring policies for indoctrination of monks and nuns. It called for meticulous organization of exchange activities and seminars, focusing on comprehensive discussion materials to address existing issues and facilitate effective communication within the religious community. Moreover, a strong emphasis was placed on the meticulous execution of "three consciousnesses" education, aligning actions with higher-level party directives and fostering heightened political awareness and practical responsibility in implementing these initiatives within the religious sector.

DEVELOPMENT

7. Exporting Chinese development model to Nepal

In what seems to reflect China's proactive approach in exporting its development model to neighboring countries, the Academy of Social Sciences of the Tibet Autonomous Region made a presentation in Nepal on the theme of "Chinese-style Modernization and Tibet's Historic Achievements."

Deputy Director Sun Xiangjun from the Propaganda Department of Tibet's Party Committee in his presentation emphasized the essence of Chinese-style modernization, drawing contrasts with Western models, according to Chinese [state media](#) on Dec. 14. Xiangjun attributed the development model in Tibet to the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and the influence of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

In attendance, Leela Mani Poudyal, Nepal's former ambassador to China, voiced enthusiastic support for the replication of China's development model within Nepal, expressing profound admiration for the Chinese developmental approach in Tibet. Nepal China Research Center hosted the event with participation from the Academy of Social Sciences of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Institute of South Asia, the Institute of Marxist Theory, the Institute of Contemporary Tibet and the Institute of Religion of the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences.

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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