

INSIDE TIBET:

ICT Report: Chinese Authorities rename and rebuild quake struck Tibetan area; Tibetans excluded from planning: Following the devastating earthquake in April 2010, Chinese authorities have announced plans to rebuild the Tibetan town of Kyegu into a new city with a Chinese name. Qinghai provincial governor Luo Huining said, “In light of the post-quake rebuilding work and Qinghai’s urbanization drive, we will build Yushu County into a city with a new temporary name of Sanjiangyuan [Three River Sources].” This news intensifies concern about the exclusion of Tibetans from the reconstruction in an area with strong Tibetan identity where Tibetans make up more than 90% of the population. <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/chinese-authorities-rename-and-rebuild-quake-struck-tibetan-area-tibetans-excluded-plannin>

ICT Report: United Nations: Nepal urged not to return Tibetans to China: The UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review mechanism scrutinized Nepal’s human rights record on January 25 in Geneva. In a statement, the U.S. delegation, urged Nepal to continue “its long-standing commitment to ensure the safe passage through Nepal of Tibetan asylum seekers and refraining from forcibly returning Tibetan Asylum seekers to China.” In response, the Nepalese Ambassador Dinesh Bhattarai said, “On the issue of Tibetan refugees, Nepal stated that it does not allow its territory to be used against neighbors or any country. Anyone found in violation of the immigration law or other laws is dealt with according to the law of the land. There are no forceful deportations.” <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/united-nations-nepal-urged-not-return-tibetans-china>

Three Tibetan Writers face hard labor: Three Tibetan writers, who were jailed for “incitement to split the nation” have been moved to a prison complex in preparation for hard labor after they refused to appeal against the conviction. The three writers, Jangtse Donkho, Buddha and Kalsang Jinpa, had 15 days to appeal after they were handed jail terms on December 30 by the Aba Intermediate People’s court. Sources told RFA that all three writers had “agreed not to appeal,” as they felt that an appeal would be useless after the unfair trial. The sources added that the judge who heard the case said orders to punish the writers, all in their early 30s, came from “higher authorities” and that their writings against the government in Shar Dhongri, a local newsletter, was the “primary reason” for the conviction. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/writers-01252011172620.html?searchterm=None>

EXILE TIBETANS:

Tibetan Election Commissioner registers 3200 new voters: On January 27, the Tibetan Election Commissioner, revealed that there were more than 3200 newly registered voters after it embarked on a fresh voter registration drive following the preliminary elections held last year. With this, the total registered voters for the 2011 Tibetan General Election has increased to 82,725 from the earlier figure of 79,449. On March 20, 2011 is the Tibetan Election Day when voters will directly elect the Prime Minister (Kalon Tripa) of the Tibetan Government in exile and members of the 15th Tibetan Parliament in exile. <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=29001&article=Tibetan+Election+Commission+registers+more+than+3200+voters+after+fresh+registration>

Challenges to Tibetan democracy in exile: At a gathering organized by ICT, panelists discussed the upcoming Tibetan elections. The incumbent Prime Minister, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche is stepping down after serving the two five-year terms allowed to him, and three candidates are short-listed for the March vote. Speaking at ICT, Nima Binara, a U.S. trained lawyer said, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s vision of a robust democratic society” is now being accomplished and debates among the candidates have been televised and web-broadcast in India, Europe and North America, adding that he expects a “very high” turn out for the final vote. Also speaking at ICT, Professor Xia Ming, a political science teacher at the College of Staten Island in New York, said that one of the main challenges is that, as exiles from their homeland, scattered around the world, Tibetan voters have no defined, unified territory to which they belong. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/democracy-01182011102742.html?searchterm=None>

Statements on the Karmapa: There is much media speculation concerning developments related to the Karmapa and his administration. To get accurate information, ICT has provided links to statements issued by the Karmapa’s office as well as by the Central Tibetan Administration. <http://savetibet.org/media-center/tibet-news/statements-karmapa>