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## **Tibetan abbot jailed for "*inciting masses*"**

04 February 2008

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) reports that Khenpo Jinpa, 37, the abbot of Chogtsang Talung monastery in Sichuan province (Kham), has been jailed for three years on charges of "*endangering national security by inciting the masses*". According to TCHRD, the sentence was pronounced in July 2007. Police reportedly detained Khenpo Jinpa in August 2006 on suspicion of distributing leaflets calling for Tibet's independence and the Dalai Lama's long life at a festival the previous year. Khenpo Jinpa had joined the Serthar Buddhist Institute in 1992. The institute was founded by the late Khenpo Jigme Phuntsog with support of the Panchen Lama. In 2001, it was partly destroyed by paramilitary police and the authorities imposed a ceiling on the number of monks.

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## **RWB condemn Beijing for failing Olympic promises**

06 February 2008

(RWB) Reporters Without Borders (RWB) has condemned the Chinese government for failing to live up to its promises in the run up to the Beijing Olympics. According to a statement released by RWB, the Chinese authorities gave very specific promises in 2001 in order to win the games for Beijing. They said the holding of the games would "*help improve human rights*" and that there would be "*total press freedom*" before and during the games. RWB claim "*none of this has happened*". They also say that about 80 journalists and Internet users are currently imprisoned in China, and a total of 180 foreign reporters were arrested, attacked or threatened in China in 2007. The group says that three Tibetans were also given long prison sentences last year because of reports about repressions they had sent abroad.

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## **12 tons of red sandalwood smuggled to Tibet with 'police protection'**

06 February 2008

(NepalNews) Twelve tons of red sandalwood has illegally been smuggled from Nepal into the TAR via Khasa Bazaar, the Tibetan town just across the border with Nepal. According to the state-owned Radio Nepal, the smuggling took place "*with police protection*". Quoting local residents of Sindhupalchowk district, Radio Nepal said the police helped a container loaded with 12 tonnes of red sandalwood to cross the border at the Tatopani checkpoint. There were no other details about the case. Police authorities are yet to react to the news report.

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## **Informal protest at Indian PM's Arunachal visit**

08 February 2008

According to the Express News Service, China has informally conveyed a verbal complaint about Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent visit to Arunachal Pradesh. The objection is said to have been raised at a junior diplomatic level in Beijing during an informal meeting. Since effectively giving up their claim in 2003 that India illegally occupies Sikkim, the Chinese authorities have been increasingly depicting the border state of Arunachal Pradesh as a part of Chinese territory. The claim, which raises considerable emotion in India, is regularly rejected by the Indian authorities. Indian government sources denied that any formal protest has been lodged so far. It was also confirmed that no written communication on the matter has been received through diplomatic channels in either Beijing or New Delhi.

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## **Tibet Railway transports 5.95 million**

08 February 2008

(Xinhua) More than 5.95 million people had travelled on the Golmud-Lhasa railway by the end of 2007, 18 months after it opened. The passenger flow accounted for 43 percent of all tourists visiting the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) during the period, according to the regional tourism bureau.

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## **CTA mourns death of Minling Trichen Rinpoche**

09 February 2008

(Phayul) Senior officials of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamsala mourned the death of Kyabje Minling Trichen Rinpoche, the ceremonial head of the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, by offering prayers. Kyabje Minling Trichen Rinpoche, the 11th Mindrolling Trichen passed away at the Mindrolling Monastery in Dehra Dun, India. He was 78. As a mark of respect, the departments and offices of the Administration remained closed, following an hour-long prayer session. Senior officials of the CTA, including the Chief Justice Commissioner, the Kalon Tripa and

members of the Kashag, and monks from the Nechung Monastery attended the ceremony in the Gangchen Kyishong to offer prayers of condolence.

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### **Chinese Geological Survey announces five major gold mines discovered**

11 February 2008

(Xinhua) The Chinese Geological Survey Bureau (CGS) announced that five major gold mines were discovered in 2007 in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The CGS also said that a number of gold deposits have been discovered near lead and zinc mines. The five mines were identified as the copper-gold mine in the Gandise (Transhimalaya) area in the TAR, the Dachang gold mine in Qinghai province, the Yangshan gold mine in Gansu province, the Sizhuang gold mine in Shandong province and the Baolun gold mine in Hainan province. Xinhua estimated that the five mines have a combined gold resource of 600 tonnes.

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### **Indian opposition politicians visit Taiwan**

11 February 2008

The Telegraph, Calcutta, reports that three high-profile members of the Indian opposition party BJP, including Khiren Rijju, the MP from Arunachal Pradesh, met with Prime Minister Frank Hsieh during a visit to Taiwan. The visit had the expressed goal of protesting against the perceived lack of firmness on the Arunachal Pradesh issue on the side of the Indian government. The PRC has repeatedly portrayed the border state Arunachal Pradesh as a part of its territory.

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### **Thousands pay tribute to late Panchen Lama**

11 February 2008

(Reuters) Thousands of monks and villagers lit yak butter candles and chanted mantras as they packed monasteries in the TAR and other Tibetan areas of the PRC to commemorate the 70th birthday of the second highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism. Hundreds of monks prayed while villagers spun prayer wheels and prostrated at Kumbum monastery in Qinghai province, while thousands of villagers and monks lined the roads from the 10th Panchen Lama's birthplace to the local temple in Wendu village to catch a glimpse of his daughter, Yabshi Pan Rinzin Wangmo. *"These prayers demonstrate that my father still lives in the people's hearts"*, she told Reuters. *"Time has not dimmed his legacy"*. Residents greeted Yabshi Pan Rinzin Wangmo, and more than 500 motorcycles escorted her to her father's home village.

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### **Spielberg pulls out of Olympics; British athletes' gag reconsidered**

15 February 2008

(Reuters; Guardian; BR) The Beijing Olympics have suffered a PR blow in the run up to this summer's games after film director Steven Spielberg withdrew from his role as an artistic adviser in protest over China's policy on the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region. Spielberg's announcement has attracted widespread press coverage, drawing attention to China and the Darfur crisis. His decision could lead others involved in the Games to pull out or reconsider their roles. Human rights campaigners have accused China of being partly responsible for Darfur's chaos because of its unstinting diplomatic backing for the Sudanese government. Prior to this, British Olympic officials insisted that there is no intention to gag athletes from making political comment in China during the Games. The statement came after reports claimed UK athletes were being asked to sign contracts that would have prohibited them from taking part in *"political demonstrations or propaganda"*. But the British Olympic Association (BOA) has said it will now look again at the wording of the draft agreement.

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**Website:** [www.tibetinfonet.net](http://www.tibetinfonet.net)  
**Phone:** +44 (0) 20 300 206 33  
**Fax:** +49 (0) 2238 9494466  
**Email:** [tin@tibetinfonet.net](mailto:tin@tibetinfonet.net)