

INDIA-TIBET Football Match in Delhi

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In the first ever historic event India will play Tibet in a friendly football match on the 4th August 2007, at the Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. India will be represented by DELHI-XI, while TEAM TIBET of Tibetan Football Association will play for Tibet.

Besides this friendly football match, there will also be a half marathon participated by people representing their countries to show the global support for Tibet. China is celebrating with much fanfare and glamour its one year countdown to 2008 Beijing Olympics starting on the 8th August, 2007. China will parade the Tibetans in colourful costumes along with the people from other occupied countries like Mongolia and the Islamic East Turkistan (Xinjiang) to show "unity" in China. They may even use Chinese dancers in Tibetan costumes as they did during Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to the US last year.

The news of INDIA-TIBET football match has reached Tibetans all over India and thousands of Tibetans are already on their way to Delhi, coming in packed buses and in trains from various Tibetan refugee camps in North and Central India and Nepal. Ten thousand Tibetan Buddhist monks are coming from various monasteries in South India. Many Indian former Olympians like cricketer L.Balaji, cricketer Madan Lal, hockey player Baskaran, sprinter Shiny Wilson have agreed to come in solidarity with the Tibetan freedom movement. Indian volunteers from different colleges are working with the organizers.

One of the organizers, Mr Choeying of Student for a Free Tibet said: "China will use the Olympics to legitimize China's colonization of Tibet". While Mr Kalsang, the long time manager of the Tibetan football club said "we have played in Greenland, Iceland, Cyprus and Switzerland. We have played few Indian clubs, but we are playing Delhi-XI for the first time, so our boys are very excited about it."

With a strong military presence China continues to maintain its occupation of Tibet since 1949. Today with "new developmental schemes" like building dams, mining and the active trends of urbanization in the pasturelands where Tibetan nomads lived, China is strengthening its colonial control of Tibet. Tibetan nomads and farmers have become dishwashers in the snazzy, new Chinese roadside restaurants and guesthouses on the highways and at railway stations.

Tibet shares closest historical and cultural relations with India and today, India bears direct political and environmental repercussions due to an increased Chinese presence in Tibet. Ecological damages in the Tibetan Plateau, due to deforestation, the train links with Beijing, the proposed road to Everest and the Three Gorges Dam are issues of global concerns.

Four Tibetan Non-governmental organizations are spearheading the 4th August initiative, which is taking place in the name of the Tibetan People's Movement:

1. National Democratic Party of Tibet, www.ndpt.net (NDPT)
2. GuChuSum ex-politicalprisonersassociation www.guchusum.org (GU CHU SUM)
3. Tibetan Women's Association, www.tibetanwomen.org (TWA)
4. SFT (SFT)