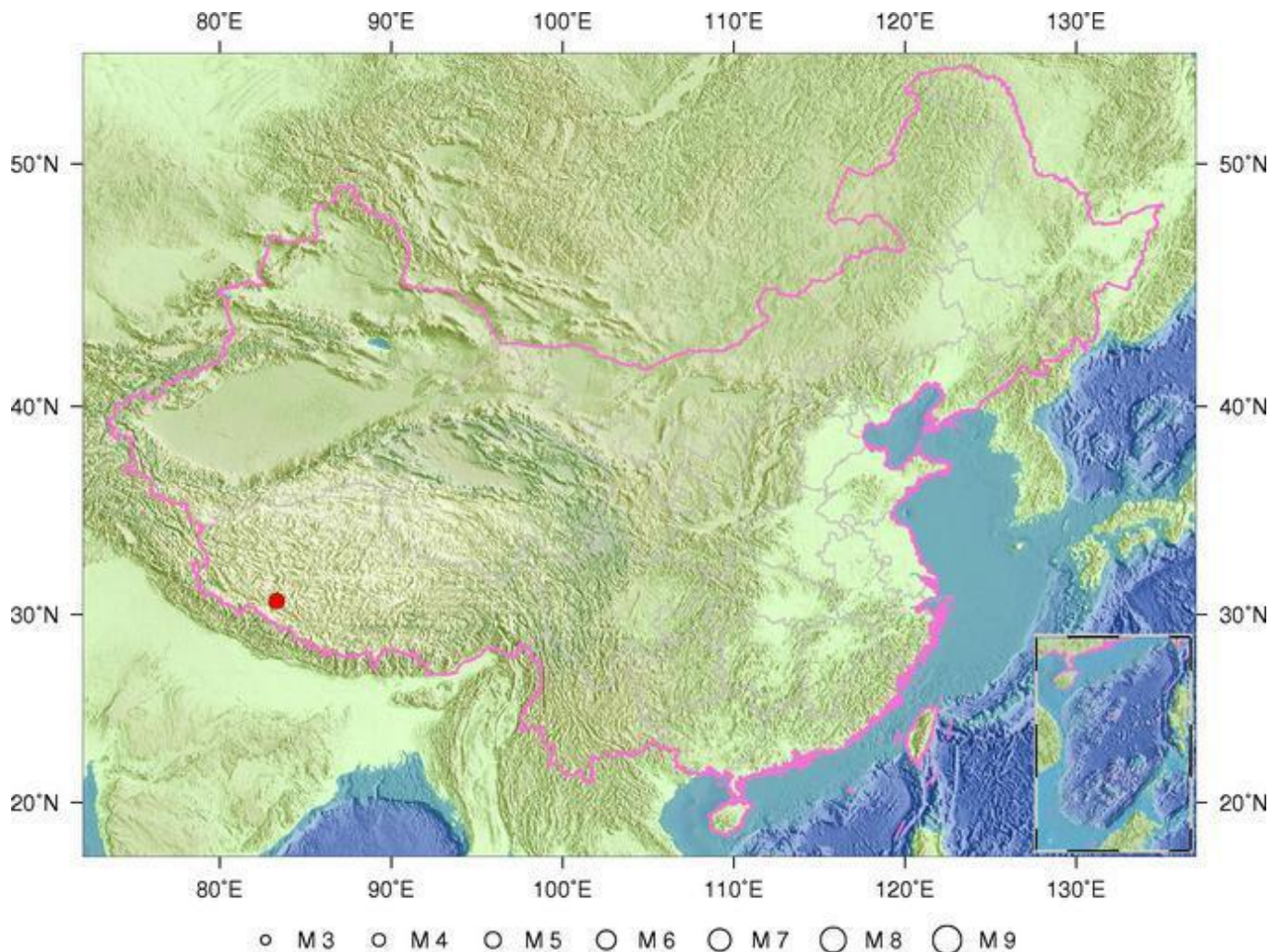


5-magnitude quake hits Tibet; no casualties reported



A 5.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Zhongba County in Tibet on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. [Photo: China Earthquake Administration]

A 5.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Zhongba County in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region at 6:07 p.m. Wednesday (Beijing Time). No casualties were reported.

The epicenter was monitored at 30.67 degrees north latitude and 83.34 degrees east longitude. The quake struck at a depth of 8 km, according to the China Earthquake Networks Center.

The epicenter, 124 kilometers from the county seat and 757 kilometers from Lhasa, is in an uninhabited zone and therefore the moderate quake caused no injuries and death of people and livestock, Wei Xince, deputy county governor, told Xinhua by phone.

Local authorities were checking damages to roads and makeshift livestock pens in the summer pasture.

Zhongba, which is in the western-most of Xigaze prefecture and borders Nepal,

covers an area of 45,900 square kilometers and has a population of 24,800. It has an average altitude of over 5,000 meters.

[China sees rising traffic as holiday nears end](#)

China's transport system saw rising traffic Wednesday as millions of people started to return to work after the week-long Lunar New Year Holiday.



Passengers wait for trains at the Nanchang West Railway Station in Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province, Feb. 1, 2017. (Xinhua/Peng Zhaozhi)

Some 9.7 million passenger trips were estimated on Chinese railways on Wednesday, year-on-year growth of 9 percent, as the week-long holiday draws to a close Thursday, according to China Railway Corporation.

Traffic on expressways around major cities also increased, leading to rising congestion.

During the New Year holiday, hundreds of millions of people go back to their hometowns to meet relatives and old friends, and as Chinese people become more affluent and keen to travel, pressure on the transport system is huge.

Data from the China National Tourism Administration showed some 27.4 million visitor trips were made in China Wednesday, up 14.1 percent year on year.

Tourism revenue reached 34 billion yuan (about 4.96 billion U.S. dollars) on the day.

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[East China unique bean curd popular overseas](#)

Despite the Spring Festival holiday, workers in a flavoring company in eastern China's Zhejiang Province continue to package their fermented bean curd products.

The preserved bean curd, or "furu" in Chinese, is a traditional flavoring for food. Red or white in color, the unique fermented bean curd in Shaoxing city started being exported more than a century ago.

Last year, Shaoxing exported 1,233 tonnes of fermented bean curd products with a total value of 2.86 million U.S. dollars, up 11.6 percent and 11.3 percent respectively. Hong Kong is the major importer, while Europe and North

America are emerging markets.

With soybeans the main material, the traditional craft of Shaoxing fermented bean curd has a set of complicated procedures and strict requirements on temperature and humidity in production. Large bean curd pieces for export need to be sealed in pots for one to two years for post-fermentation.

“A local yellow rice wine is used in the process, contributing to the special flavor,” said Xie Xiaoben, deputy general manager of Xianheng Foodstuff in Shaoxing.

“No nitrite is produced during the processing,” Xie added, dispelling concerns.

The basic processing craft for fermented bean curd has not changed much in a century.

“More and more westerners like the bean curd,” said Ren Mingxing, an entry-exit inspection and quarantine official in Shaoxing.

There has never been any food safety problem with the exported bean curd, which has won overseas trust for Chinese products, according to Ren.

Tuition fees are a harsh lesson for parents

As pupils face ever-growing pressure to improve grades, courses offered by private agencies seem like an easy solution but the cost in both time and money is high.



Students practice calligraphy in Wuzhi county, Henan province. The course is part of a free-tuition program run by the local government. [Photo/Xinhua]

Wang Haifeng is pondering whether to register her son, a fifth-grade Beijing primary school pupil, on a math tutorial course. If she does, it would be the fifth course the Beijing resident has signed her 10-year-old child up for.

The other four are English, Chinese classics, basketball and the game of Go. Her son has to attend each class once or twice every week.

“The number is not that large compared with many of my son’s classmates at school, who have seven, eight or even more tutorial courses of different subjects to take outside school.”

The popularity of these seemingly “hot services” is accentuated by the scarcity of places offered by some tutorial agencies.

In November 2016, a report by Metro Express, a newspaper in Zhejiang province about parents waiting outside classrooms of a well-known tutorial agency to obtain a place for their children went viral on WeChat Friend Circle. It triggered heated discussions and retrospection among parents and educators on whether the pursuit of such services is rational or not.

The report said many parents signed their children up for tutorial courses not only to improve the children’s test results over a short period of time, but also with a longer-term view: to get the children prepared for the fierce competition of entrance exams for highly selective junior middle or high schools.

According to educational laws and regulations, pupils in China do not have to take any tests when they finish their primary school studies and rise to

junior middle school.

But the principle only applies to students who choose to enter ordinary junior middle schools that are adjacent to the addresses on their hukou, or permanent residence permit.

For those who want to attend prestigious junior middle schools with better facilities and teachers, they have to pass independent recruiting exams, which are organized by the schools and consisting of tests of subjects taught in primary school, including math and English.

Under such circumstances, turning to tutorial agencies that help students improve test scores is almost a must to possibly increase the odds of being admitted.