

Uprising blamed for Tibet's GDP decline

by UPI

BEIJING -- China blamed the March uprising for the decline in Tibet's first-quarter gross domestic product growth, which was still a robust 10.4 percent. Qiangba Puncog, chairman of Tibet's regional government, said Tibet's GDP in the first quarter of 2008 totaled about \$1.1 billion, up 10.4 percent from last year's first quarter, Xinhua reported. Tibet reported growth of 17 percent in its GDP in the first quarter of 2007. That figure was the highest in a decade, the report said. "Although the overall economy maintained steady growth this year, we should take measures to cushion the impact of the Lhasa violence on the economy and strive to meet this year's growth target of 12 percent," the Tibetan official was quoted as saying, adding those steps should include promoting investment and expanding consumption. The report accused the Dalai Lama of masterminding the March Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule of the region, charges the Tibetan leader has consistently denied. The report said the uprising caused damage totaling \$35 million. China has sentenced 30 of those accused of taking part in the uprising including Buddhist monks to prison terms ranging from three years to life.

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