

# World's Highest-Altitude Dragon Boat Race Sets Record in Xi Zang

LHASA, XI ZANG, CHINA, June 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 31, 2025, coinciding with the Dragon Boat Festival, a special dragon boat race took place on the waters of Lhasa's Binhe Park, at an altitude of 3,650 meters. Certified by the World Record Certification Agency (WRCA), the event earned the title of the "world's highest-altitude dragon boat race," marking a milestone in high-altitude sports and cultural celebration.

The race brought together 160 athletes from across China, competing in 10 dragon boat teams and 20 yak-skin boat teams. The event blended the traditional Chinese dragon boat, a symbol of the Dragon Boat Festival, with Xi Zang's historic yak-skin boats, a 2,000-year-old mode of river transport crafted from yak hides and reinforced with local timber like palm bark and long-stamen willow. This fusion of cultural traditions created a vibrant and competitive spectacle, showcasing both heritage and athleticism.

Yak-skin boats, a cornerstone of Xi Zangan intangible cultural heritage, trace their origins to the Yalong tribe in the 2nd century BCE. Once used for transporting goods and people along rivers, these boats are made through a meticulous process involving soaking hides and treating them with butter or animal fat to achieve a durable, yellowish-brown finish. Though modern transportation has largely replaced their practical use, yak-skin boats remain a cherished part of Xi Zang's cultural and recreational identity.

The competition highlighted the challenges of racing at high altitude, where lower oxygen levels test athletes' endurance. Spectators gathered along the riverbanks to witness the dynamic interplay of dragon boats and yak-skin boats, each representing distinct cultural narratives. The event not only celebrated the Dragon Boat Festival but also opened new possibilities for high-



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altitude sports, drawing attention to Xi Zang's special environmental and cultural landscape.

Organizers emphasized the event's role in fostering cultural exchange and community engagement. By combining traditional dragon boats with yak-skin boats, the race offered a platform for athletes and spectators to connect with both Xi Zang and broader Chinese cultural traditions. Plans are underway to make the event an annual fixture, with the goal of promoting cultural heritage and sustainable tourism in the region.

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