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China's Minority Policies

Rights group slams 'Rule of law with Chinese characteristics' in a new report

Phayul

October 31, 2015

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy on Thursday released a new report, 'Rule by Law: Special Report on the Rule of Law with Chinese Characteristics' that categorically rejects all claim of rule in not only Tibet but also China and dissects the 'status of law' and the persecution of lawyers and political prisoners.

The report collectivises a detailed insight into the 'status of law' in China and offers a comparative analysis of rule of law with Chinese characteristics with that of the global ideals. It also delves into the current situation on the ground in China and Tibet where the brunt of such extremities under official garb continue unchallenged apart from Tibetans who resist it at a grass root level.

The report is especially relevant at the time when crack down on rights lawyer and human rights defenders are steadily apparent many of whom have been detained, disbarred, harassed and intimidated in recent months. The government attacks on civil society machineries have toned the global perception of disparity in China's talk on rule of law and China's implementation on the ground.

"The increased repression in the PRC conflicts with 'rule of law' rhetoric used by Chinese leaders to bolster their claims of a reformed China. In 2014, PRC President Xi Jinping incorporated the phrase 'rule of law with Chinese characteristics' as part of the current four-year plan developed by the Central Commission of the Communist Party of China", the report states.

The report conclusively lists lack of judicial independence, corruption, low quality of legal services, complex legislative systems, and arbitrary enforcement of rule of law as some of the prime obstacles to the rule of law in China which extends to Tibet as well.

On Tibetans, the report surmises, "For Tibetans living under the PRC, rule by law (or force) is nothing new. Repressive Chinese state policies, prohibitions on expression of religion and peaceful assembly, regular beatings and arbitrary detentions, denial of legal rights,

unfair trials and disproportionate sentences which include torture, abuse and denial of adequate medical care are the reality. Prolonged denial of basic human rights has become unbearably oppressive for many Tibetans, many of whom have resorted to self-immolation protests."

The plight of Chinese human rights lawyers persecuted in PRC for defending Tibetan rights and subsequently subjected to detention and interrogation were highlighted. Teng Biao and Zheng Jianwei, defense lawyers of Dawa, a teacher at the Ngaba County Middle School for Nationalities in Sichuan Province and the Editor-in-Chief of the Tibetan magazine "Modern Self" in early 2011 and Zhang Sizhi, defense lawyer for Tenzin Delek Rinpoche were mentioned.

Apart from the censuring of China's commitment on law, the report also makes note of improvements in the Chinese legal system such as the improved quality of legal education, more lawyers and laws, rightful resistance and use of legal system by citizens and crackdown on corruption among few others.

Panchen Lama calls for stricter measures on Buddhist monks

ucanews.com

reporter, Beijing

October 26, 2015

Gyaltzen Norbu, the Panchen Lama installed by the Chinese government, has called for tighter controls over monks to ensure they follow Buddhist precepts in what is already among the most strictly managed Buddhist societies.

Roaming monks not based at any one temple are particularly prone to breaking precepts, Norbu said in rare public comments on Oct. 25 at the Fourth World Buddhist Forum in Wuxi, near Shanghai.

"It would also be difficult for any other authority or the police to seize them if they do not break the law," said Norbu.

Although his suggestions mark a stricter line on Buddhist doctrine, they also tie into Beijing's desire for greater overarching management of monks in Tibet. In trying to curb dissent against Chinese rule, Communist Party authorities have found roaming monks difficult to manage because they are often away from monasteries — the main institution used to control the monkhood.

In recent years, Beijing has insisted Tibetan monks follow Buddhist precepts. Statements by officials and experts in

state media have warned the recent spate of Tibetan self-immolations in protest of Chinese rule – at least 140 since an uprising in 2008 – go against the Buddhist doctrine.

Alongside efforts to bind monks to their own precepts, authorities have introduced new rules and policies at monasteries, all of which are now manned by police.

“Controls on religion inside Tibet have intensified especially after 2008,” said Tsering Tsomo, executive director of the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Dharamsala, north India. “Why are they doing this? There is a reason: these are efforts to secularize monks.”

Norbu’s remarks represent a return to the party line after a speech in March in which he warned that China’s quotas on Tibetan monks and nuns – a rarely acknowledged open secret – meant “a danger of Buddhism existing in name only.”

His comments were viewed by some observers as a jab at Beijing’s Tibet policies. However, other analysts noted the Communist Party would have vetted his speech in advance.

Three months later, President Xi Jinping called a meeting in which Norbu said he would “not fail to live up to the ardent expectations of the party and people.”

The Chinese government micromanages Norbu’s public appearances and comments after predecessor Choekyi Gyaltsen became critical of party policy, prompting his imprisonment.

Following Choekyi’s death in 1989, Beijing installed Norbu as the 11th Panchen Lama after detaining Gedhun Choekyi, the Dalai Lama’s choice.

Since then, Beijing has typically used the World Buddhist Forum as a stage to expose Norbu to the wider Buddhist community, with varying degrees of success. At the First World Buddhist Forum in 2006, the then 16-year-old lama was reportedly shunned by visiting Buddhists despite Beijing making him figurehead of the inaugural event.

China says Tibet officials must be ‘fortress’ against separatism

REUTERS, BEIJING

Oct 22, 2015

Officials working at the grassroots in Tibet must be a “fortress” against separatism and work to ensure the ruling Communist Party’s monopoly on information is

maintained, China’s top official in the restless region wrote on Thursday.

China this year is marking 50 years since the founding of what it calls the Tibet Autonomous Region. Beijing says it “peacefully liberated” Tibet in 1950 and that its rule has brought prosperity and equality to a once-backward region.

However, rights groups and exiles say China governs with an iron fist and represses Tibet’s Buddhist people, which leads to periodic outbreaks of violence and anti-Chinese protests.

Tibet party boss Chen Quanguo, writing in the official People’s Daily, said there was “nothing more harmful than chaos”, and China’s stability as a whole rests on the stability and security of Tibet.

A central element of this was to train and promote a core of high-calibre, loyal Tibet and Han Chinese officials who will be based in every county and village across the region, Chen said.

“Build up grassroots party organisations which serve the masses and promote development and are a staunch combat fortress to maintain stability and oppose separatism,” Chen wrote.

The “ideological security” of Tibet needs the party to control public opinion, the media and the Internet, and every house in every village must be able to watch the television or listen to the radio, he said.

“Work hard to build the same spiritual home for all ethnic groups, focus on building a strong positive force for a united, beautiful, harmonious and happy socialist Tibet,” Chen said.

China blames exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama for unrest in Tibetan parts of the country, including a wave of self-immolations. The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule.

The Dalai Lama denies Chinese charges he wants Tibetan independence or that he promotes violence, saying only that he wants genuine autonomy for Tibet.

Unusually, Chen made no direct mention of the Dalai Lama, saying only that the “struggle against separatism has been noticeably stepped up”.

Human rights: What is China accused of?

By Camila Ruz
BBC News Magazine
October 21, 2015

China's human rights record has been criticised for years. The UK government has been urged to bring up concerns during a state visit by the Chinese president. But what are the main issues?

Harassment of activists and dissidents

Human rights campaigners say that China continues to target activists and their family members with harassment, imprisonment and torture.

The government has frequently imprisoned people who have spoken about politically sensitive topics. In July, there was a crackdown on lawyers who worked on cases involving free speech and abuses of power. Amnesty International says that 245 lawyers and activists have been targeted since July. One of the best known, Li Heping, is still missing.

Amnesty says there needs to be more awareness of cases such as that of Cao Shunli, a human rights activist who died in police detention last year. Her family said that she had been denied medical attention and that they had been refused access to her body. The government has denied any mistreatment, saying that the activist's "lawful rights and interests have been protected in accordance with law".

More recently, a group of feminist activists were detained as they prepared to hand out leaflets and stickers about domestic violence. Five of the women were detained for more than a month. Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo also continues his 11-year jail term for subversion. There have repeated calls from other countries for his release. But the Chinese government has responded by saying that it is for China to decide and that "only the 1.3 billion Chinese people have a say on China's human rights".

China is often accused of heavy-handed tactics against protesters. There have been complaints over the aggressive handling of large pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong last year. Amnesty says that eight people remained in detention in September.

Persecution of people for religious beliefs

Religion is carefully controlled in China. Independent groups such as Protestant "house churches" are considered unlawful and can be raided, closed and their members detained.

Muslims in Xinjiang have also faced restrictions on their religious activities, including during Ramadan. The Falun Gong spiritual movement has been banned since 1999 and its members have been sent to labour camps and prisons, Amnesty notes.

Discrimination against ethnic minorities

Human Rights groups say that Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians continue to face discrimination and restrictions on their freedoms.

There is frequent unrest in the Xinjiang autonomous region in the far west between Chinese authorities and ethnic Uighurs, who are part of China's Muslim minority. Hundreds have died in attacks over the past three years. China said last year that the violence had forced it to launch a "year-long campaign against terrorism" and it has stepped up security in the region.

Tibet has also seen years of unrest. Human Rights Watch says that seven people set themselves on fire in Tibetan populated areas in 2014 in protest against repressive policies by the authorities. The total number of immolations since 2008 is 140.

The death penalty

Amnesty says that there are more executions in China than the rest of the world combined. There are no officially published statistics but activists believe that thousands are executed and sentenced to death there every year.

Torture

People detained for political views, human rights activities or religious beliefs are at a "high risk" of torture in custody, says Human Rights Watch. A report this year said that methods used include electrocution.

There are frequent allegations of police officers using torture to extract confessions. This is despite a ruling by the Chinese Supreme Court that forbids using "freezing, starving, extreme heat, fire branding or extreme exhaustion" on suspects.

Secrecy on Tiananmen Square

It has been 26 years since several hundred people died in a crackdown on democratic protest in China's Tiananmen Square.

Activists say that calls for a proper investigation into events on 4 June 1989 have been ignored. Human Rights Watch says that discussions about it remained censored and that the truth of what happened is withheld from people in China.

Internet and media freedom

There are tight restrictions on the press in China and several leading journalists have recently had criminal charges brought against them. Gao Yu, 71, was jailed in April on suspicion of “illegally disseminating state secrets internationally”. Amnesty International called the sentence “an affront to justice”.

For years China has also sought to limit access to foreign TV and publications. The government blocks hundreds of websites and has targeted users of apps such as WeChat. Censors also target Chinese social media. They deleted mocking comments about a World War Two military parade this year.

Labour rights

Independent trade unions are illegal in China. But there have been many disputes over low wages, poor working conditions and the treatment of migrant workers. Striking workers often face intimidation and arrests.

Family planning

China famously introduced a one-child policy in 1979. Campaigners said that it led to forced abortions, female infanticide and a gender imbalance in the country. There has been a formal easing of the policy but rights groups say that women’s reproductive rights are still under heavy control of the state.

Lack of land rights

Protests erupted in 2011 in a village in the southern Guangdong province over land taken from villagers by the local government.

Disputes like this are not unusual in China. All land is effectively owned by the government and farmers are allocated areas for set amounts of time. Villagers often accuse local officials of taking their land without giving them any compensation. And of using violent tactics to quash their protests.

Mental health and disabilities

China has been criticised for its treatment of people with disabilities. Human Rights Watch has called protections “inadequate” and says that people face serious discrimination in employment and education. Campaigners say that some efforts have been made to address this. In 2014 it was announced that China would allow Braille or electronic university entrance exams. But Human Rights Watch says that there are still problems with the practicalities.

The Mental Health Law says that hospitalisation should be voluntary except in cases where individuals pose a danger to themselves or others. But campaigners say that there are still loopholes in the law. A woman called Gu

Xianghong was detained in a Beijing psychiatric hospital for five weeks after petitioning the authorities, Amnesty said.

Chinese Authorities Destroy ‘Over 300’ Tibetan Houses and Shops Near Qinghai Lake

Radio Free Asia

October 21, 2015



Chinese work crew tears down ‘illegal’ Tibetan structures near Qinghai Lake in an undated photo. Photo courtesy of an RFA listener

Authorities in northwestern China’s Qinghai province moved against a lakeside Tibetan village this week, tearing down over 300 private homes and shops and beating and detaining area residents who resisted the demolition work, according to a local source.

The assault on Trelnak village in Chabcha (in Chinese, Gonghe) county in the Tselha (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture began on Oct. 16 and has continued for the last five days, the source told RFA’s Tibetan Service on Tuesday.

“So far about 300 houses owned by Tibetans have been destroyed, and the demolition is still going on,” RFA’s source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“In the commotion, five Tibetan nomads were detained and beaten, but were later released,” he said, naming two married couples who had tried to recover personal property from the ruins of their homes and an elderly man who was threatened at gunpoint by police and taken into custody.

“On Oct. 19, Lhachen Kyab and his wife Dobe, and Yangmo Kyab and her husband Jampel, went back to collect their

belongings, but the police would not allow them to do this," he said.

"Instead, they were severely beaten and held for two hours before being released."

Police then threatened another Tibetan—Luthar Kyab, 60 —by pointing a rifle in his face before taking him away, RFA's source said.

"He was later found in a hospital," he said.

'Pollution, crowding'

The demolition in Trelnak began on Oct. 16 and 17, "when a group of Chinese officials and police arrived and tore down 30 structures built by the Tibetans as dwellings and places of business around Qinghai Lake," the source said.

The structures had been financed by personal loans and were constructed with iron sheets, with the shops set up to cater to tourists and pilgrims visiting the lake, he said.

"The authorities accused the Tibetans of polluting and crowding the area around the lake, and therefore took action to tear down the shops and homes," he said, adding, "Now the owners are left without any source of supplemental income."

The reported number of destroyed dwellings and shops could not be independently confirmed, and calls seeking comment from local police authorities rang unanswered Wednesday.

The campaign against Trelnak followed similar incidents in May in which temporary dwellings deemed "illegal" by authorities were torn down in villages in Chabcha and Mangra (Guinan), another Tsolho county, sources said in earlier reports.

Tibetans living in China frequently complain of political, economic, and religious discrimination as well as human rights abuses.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 143 Tibetans to date setting themselves ablaze to oppose Beijing's rule and call for the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

China's Campaign to Stabilize Tibet Moved to Private Homes of Authorities

Voice of America
October 19, 2015

Inviting lamas to their homes is a part of traditional religious practice of the Tibetan Buddhists. However, the Chinese communist leaders on Wednesday began a new move to invite high lamas to their private homes in Lhasa to talk about political campaigns.

According to official state-run news in Tibetan language, the authorities discussed anti-separatism campaigns, friendship amongst the nationalities, and other religious affairs with their guests.

The hosts of this initiative on Wednesday included Chendralhs (Ch: Qizha la), Party Secretary of Tibet's capital; Dorje Tsering, Vice Chairman of Tibetan Autonomous Regional Government, and Lobsang Jigme, Vice Chairman of Tibetan Autonomous Regional Political Consultative Conference.

Critics say that it is the latest attempt of the Chinese government to gain the hearts and minds of Tibetans that is doomed to fail.

"Lamas and monks are the souls of Tibet who has great influence in the community, and China has launched a new policy to create friendship with them," said Kalsang Gyaltsen Bapa. "The reason is that they see these monasteries as the source of independence struggle."

However, the method of making friendship is not through respect, but money, which he said would not succeed as long as China continues to demonise the Dalai Lama.

According to China Tibet Net, these events continued on Thursday in different homes of other high level officials.

Thousands of Tibetans Take Vows of Good Behavior in Southwest China

Radio Free Asia
October 9, 2015



Villagers gather at Soktsang monastery in Thangkor town, Dzoegé county, to make their pledges, Oct. 8, 2015. (Photo courtesy of an RFA listener)

Nearly 5,000 Tibetan villagers in southwestern China's Sichuan province committed themselves to good behaviour at a local monastery on Friday, pledging not to engage in activities that fly in the face of their Buddhist beliefs, Tibetan sources said.

The more than 4,700 residents from seven villages in Thangkor town, Dzoegé (in Chinese, Ruó'ěrgāi) county, in the province's Ngaba (Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, gathered at Soktsang monastery to make their pledges.

"At the gathering the members vowed not to steal, gamble, kill, get involved in scuffles, carry swords or loot," said a Tibetan source from Tibet.

The villagers from Chukra, Soktsang, Ka Barma, Ponkya, Dokok, Goser and Tsangwa villages assembled at the behest of senior religious leaders as well as officials from local organisations and governments, he said.

Yongdrub, head of the Communist Party and mayor of Thangkor town, and Ape Tsering, head of the town's police station, were present, he said.

The gathering also included members of the local business community, said another Tibetan.

The villagers pledged to adhere to several rules, including a requirement that thieves pay owners the value of their property and a fine equal to 30 percent of the value to the local government, he said.

"There were several clauses in the vows that the members of the community committed to," he said.

Those who do not comply with the terms of their vows will be handed over to the police and be subject to punishment according to the law, the source said.

In addition, the family members of the perpetrators will be excluded from religious services at local monasteries for five years, he said.

Those who commit murder must pay compensation of 300,000 Chinese yuan (U.S. \$47,288) to the families of victims, he said.

Buddhist monasteries in Tibetan-populated regions of China have frequently become the focus of efforts to promote not only religion but also Tibetan national and cultural values, according to Tibetan sources.

Those who live in western China's Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces typically take such vows of good behaviour at monasteries on special occasions such as the Lunar New Year and the Tibetan New Year Losar.

Annual public assemblies at the monasteries have greatly increased in size in recent years, as thousands of Tibetans gather to assert their cultural identity in the face of Beijing's cultural and political domination.

China Restricts Reporting on Guangxi Bombings

Voice of America
October 3, 2015

Chinese officials are trying to limit reporting about the deadly bombings this week in Guangxi Province. At least seven people died in the attacks. More than 50 others were injured.

China's central propaganda department released an order on Thursday. It limits reporting on this week's bombings in Liuzhou by all Chinese media, including on social media.

Officials have barred the media from sending reporters to Liuzhou, the city where the bombs exploded. The media also are barred from publishing special reports on the attacks. Another government agency has banned the use of close-up pictures of the damage caused by the explosions.

The order said that Chinese media should "republish only authoritative sources such as Xinhua News. Violators must immediately" do what the notice directs, it said, and must remove already-published stories about the explosions.

The orders were republished on China Digital Times, an independent news agency that reports on official restrictions.

The government also moved to restrict search keywords related to the bombings or the suspect on news websites and on social media, such as Weibo.

Critics say that Chinese officials often try to limit the spread of bad news or unconfirmed reports. Their efforts increase when incidents happen at a sensitive time. The bombs exploded just before China's National Day celebrations.

The officials also fear that news about the bombings could cause political problems or make people believe that the government is not able to keep them safe.

Willy Lam is a Hong Kong-based writer and studies China's politics. He says the bombings are, in his words, "one more example of disgruntled citizens using private and very violent means to vent their frustration because they have no recourse to justice." He says judges in China are strictly controlled by the government.

Many Chinese do not believe the country's justice system is fair. Mr. Lamsays that is especially the case in rural areas, where the bombings took place. He says courts in such areas are probably under the control of China's Communist Party.

Detention and Self-immolation

Tibetan musician jailed for producing patriotic songs is released in Sichuan

Asisnews.it
October 27, 2015



Chinese authorities had sentenced Pema Rigdzin to two and a half years in prison, but released him after only 11 months. Once enrolled in a monastery, he became a producer of politically sensitive films. After his release, a crowd welcomed him home. [Many other Tibetan artists remain in jail for exercising their right to assert their Tibetan cultural identity.](#)

Chengdu (AsiaNews) – Authorities in southwestern China's Sichuan province on Friday released a Tibetan musician after he served nearly 11 months of a two-year sentence for producing banned patriotic Tibetan songs.

It was not immediately clear why producer Pema Rigdzin, 46, was released ahead of schedule from a detention centre in the Sichuan capital Chengdu, but he returned to his home to Ngaba (Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture to great fanfare, said Sonam, a Tibetan living in Europe, citing local sources.

Rigdzin was taken into custody on 6 May 2013 and subjected to interrogation for more than a year. The Chengdu People's Intermediate Court sentenced him on 26 November 2014 to two years and six months in jail and fined him 50,000 yuan (US\$ 8,130) for producing "politically sensitive" DVDs.

Rigdzin had once enrolled in the Namtso monastery in Ngaba but left the religious life in 2008 for a career in film and music production. Some of his songs, like "Remember Tibet" and "Tears", have been banned.

He was convicted on the same day that the court in Chengdu sentenced a popular singer, Kalsang Yarphel, to four years in prison for organising, among other things, a music festival in Lhasa, called Khawai Metok or Snow Flower, presenting song with “political themes”.

Based in Dharamsala, India, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) said that Chinese authorities have also banned Yarphel’s DVD recordings. However, copies have already been widely distributed in Tibetan-populated areas in China’s Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces.

Following violent protests that broke out in 2008, Chinese authorities detain on a regular basis writers, artists, singers and teachers who promote Tibet’s identity, language and culture.

Recently Freed Tibetan Detained For Carrying Leaflets Calling For Dalai Lama’s Return

Radio Free Asia
October 12, 2015



Samdrub Gyatso in an undated photo, with Drapchi prison entrance in background. Photo courtesy of an RFA listener

Authorities in China have taken into custody a Tibetan for violating the terms of his release from prison and carrying leaflets in northwest China’s Qinghai province, calling for the return of the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, sources said.

Samdrub Gyatso, believed to be in his early 30s, had finished serving a five-year sentence in May for launching a solitary protest in front of the Jokhang temple in Tibet’s regional capital Lhasa, sources said.

Gyatso was arrested in early May 2010 after wrapping himself in a Tibetan flag and calling out for the return of the Dalai Lama, the release of the Panchen Lama, and the resettlement of Tibetans expelled from the Kyegudo (in

Chinese, Yushu) area of Qinghai province following a devastating earthquake, a Tibetan in exile told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

After he served a five-year sentence in Lhasa’s Drapchi prison, authorities escorted Gyatso to his hometown Serthang in Dashi (Haiyan) county, Tsojang (Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture), in Qinghai.

“He was instructed not to travel outside the county premises,” said one of Gyatso’s relatives.

Gyatso was taken into custody again in early September when traveling from eastern to western Qinghai with the politically sensitive leaflets, a Tibetan source from Tibet told RFA.

“He was being followed and watched even after his release,” he said.

Gyatso now suffers from kidney disease and requires medication on a regular basis, the source said.

Authorities are holding Gyatso in the Dashi county jail, said one of his relatives.

“No one is allowed to see or visit him,” he said.

Gyatso had been detained briefly before in 2009 when he returned to Tibet after spending two years in India and had several books written by the Dalai Lama in his possession.

Authorities jailed him for six months in Lhasa, after which he was held for three days in Haiyan county and charged a 10,000-yuan fine (U.S. \$1,581), the Tibetan in exile said.

Upon his release, Gyatso was forced to promise not to leave the area, he said.

Chinese police frequently investigate and arrest Tibetans deemed to be supporters of the India-based Dalai Lama, whom Beijing considers a dangerous separatist bent on “splitting” Tibet from Chinese control.

Many have been trying to win redress for alleged cases of official wrongdoing, including forced evictions, beatings in custody, and corruption linked to lucrative land sales, for decades.

Petitioners in Inner Mongolia said two of their members had recently been accused of “blackmail,” in charges they say are a form of retaliation for complaints about them.

Lawyers for petitioners Liu Yanwen and Zhao Yanbo, a married couple, said they have applied to the state prosecutor’s office for the charges to be dropped.

“We happened to get a prosecutor with a conscience, who seems to be of the opinion that this couple did nothing that could be construed as blackmail,” their lawyer Shu Xiangxin told RFA.

“They are not guilty, but the local officials in this place have been interfering in the case,” Shu said.

Sichuan-based rights activist Huang Qi, founder of the Tianwang rights website, said the government routinely persecutes anyone who dares to use the country’s “letters and visits” complaints system to highlight alleged wrongdoing.

“The authorities have been using charges of blackmail against petitioners, many of whom are asking for compensation for alleged wrongs done to them by the government,” Huang said.

“The authorities are using it as a weapon to turn on petitioners,” he said.

Tibetan Writer Released From Prison

Radio Free Asia
October 9, 2015



Tibetan writer Arik Dolma Kyab in an undated photo. (Photo courtesy of an RFA listener)

A Tibetan political writer serving a 10-year prison sentence for “endangering national security” was released Thursday in western China’s Qinghai province, a Tibetan source living in Dharamsala, India, said.

Authorities detained writer Arik Dolma Kyab on March 9, 2005, and tried him in secret on Nov. 30, said Arik Gyurme, who is from the same town as Kyab.

Kyab’s “crime” was writing a book in Chinese entitled *Unstable Himalayas* as well as an article entitled “A Letter Addressed to All Tibetan Brothers,” Gyurme said.

In the article, he wrote, “There is no reason to fear. Don’t shed tears. We will certainly be victorious...”

Authorities had arrested Kyab because his publications were seen to be Tibetan nationalist in nature and a threat to Chinese rule in the region.

“Many fans and supporters showed up to welcome him when he arrived at his hometown in Droklung town in Dola [in Chinese, Qilian] county in Qinghai’s Tsojang [Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture],” Gyurme said.

Authorities had sentenced Kyab to 10 years and six months in Chushul prison outside the Tibetan regional capital Lhasa, he said.

“He was detained at the same prison until his recent release,” he said.

In 2003, Kyab went to Dharamsala to study English, but returned to Tibet the following year to work as a teacher at a middle school in Lhasa. At the time, he also started writing a book about Tibet’s topography.

Five years later, he received a Hellman-Hammett grant from New York-based Human Rights Watch, which gives the annual award to writers who have been victims of political persecution and are in financial need, Gyurme said.

After Kyab’s release from Chushul prison, two police officers from Dola county escorted him by plane to Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, where they completed the necessary paperwork at the relevant department for his release, Gyurme said.

They then took him to Droklung where he arrived at his home around 9 p.m., he said.

When Kyab arrived, his relatives expressed concern about his abdomen and liver and said they planned to take him to Xining for treatment, according to Gyurme.

China has jailed scores of Tibetan writers, artists, singers, and educators for asserting Tibetan national and cultural identity and language rights, especially since widespread protests swept Tibetan areas in 2008.

Tibet: 15-Year-Old Monk Arbitrarily Detained

UNPO

October 9, 2015



While Dolma Kyab, a Tibetan writer and professor, has just been released after having spent ten-and-a-half years in prison, Lobsang Jamyang, a young monk aged 15, has been arbitrarily detained by the Chinese security forces as he was staging a solo peaceful protest in the main street of Ngaba.

Below is an article published by Tibet Post:

Chinese authorities in Ngaba County, north-eastern Tibet have detained a 15-yr-old Tibetan monk for staging peaceful protest and shouting slogans calling for Tibetan freedom and the return to Tibet of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Fear is growing in Ngaba Count of Tibet as many Tibetans, including monks are arrested and disappeared in recent months. Source also has confirmed that names of two Tibetans who disappeared in last month following their arrest by the Chinese security forces.

“Lobsang Jamyang, 15, took to the main street of Ngaba town while shouting slogans calling for “freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” Ven Kanyag Tsering, a monk with close contacts in the Tibetan region, told the Tibet Post International (TPI).

Jamyang was arbitrarily detained by Chinese police forces around 4 pm local time, September 13, 2015 as he walked from main road in Ngaba County, now referred to as the ‘Martyr’s Street,’ while he was staging a solo peaceful protest against Chinese rule,” Ven Tsering said, citing contacts in the region.

“Jamyang was detained within minutes of his protest and taken to an unknown location. His current whereabouts and condition remain unknown,” he added, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Jamyang, a Buddhist monk from Kirti Monastery located in Ngaba County, Amdo, (Ch: Aba County, Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in the north-west of Sichuan Province) one of the three traditional provinces of Tibet.

“Jamyang, a native of village no. 2 of Meruma town, Ngaba County in Amdo, north-eastern Tibet. His father’s name is Choephel and his mother is Tsomo. He became a monk at a young age at the Monastery where he studied elementary monastic texts on Buddhist Philosophy.

Sources said “two young lay Tibetans, Trinley and Lobsang, age unknown—also marched in the street, shouting slogans, on September 10, before being taken into custody by Chinese police.”

According to the same TPI source, Trinley and Lobsang, together had staged peaceful protest against the Chinese repression by shouting slogans calling for “freedom in Tibet” and “long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama”.

TPI earlier reported on the arrest of the two young Tibetan protesters but the TPI source was unable to confirm their details, including their names.

“Family members and friends have not been told about their arrests even as the well-being and whereabouts of the two Tibetans still remain unknown,” TPI sources said, citing contacts in the region.

Both Trinley (Tsur-ritsang family) and Lobsang (Tsitoetsang family) hailed from Soruma village of Choejema (Ch: Qiujima) Township in Ngaba County. But there is no information about the age and other details of the two at the moment.

“Local Tibetans are under heavy surveillance by the increasing number of Chinese police forces, with security checkpoints and Chinese work team officials monitoring their movements and activities,” sources said.

The situation in Ngaba County has deteriorated with a large deployment of security forces in recent months. Since September 10, all Internet lines in the Ngaba county and surrounding areas remained blocked except for government offices and institutions.

The list of Tibetans arrested and detained by the Chinese police and security forces for staging solo protests in favour of freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is consistently growing in recent months. This tendency clearly contradicts China’s recently released white paper, which claims that Tibet has reached its ‘golden age’.

Chinese Petitioner ‘Tortured’ During Detention by Beijing Police

Radio Free Asia
October 7, 2015

A petitioner detained by Beijing police at a gathering during last week’s National Day holiday in the Chinese capital has described being tortured during his detention.

Li Xinhua was detained at a gathering of petitioners, ordinary Chinese who pursue complaints against the government, at the home of Ge Zhihui on Oct. 1.

“I was having a meal at a friend’s home, when three police officers came bursting in,” Li said. “I asked them to show some ID, and then several more came over.”

“They threw me outside and broke my ribs, and my right arm has been in a lot of pain since then,” he said. “A bit later, they took me down to the police station where they tied me by the arms, legs and waist to a metal chair and put manacles on me.”

Li said he was kept in a small cell after that.

“They had realised I had broken bones, but they still forced me to wear manacles until Oct. 3, when they took them off and released me,” Li said.

He said police had refused to allow any medical treatment for his injuries.

“They tried to pass the buck, and told me I could go and get treatment myself,” Li said. “I said I didn’t have any money and they ... said ‘see a doctor if you want to.’”

Ge said she and Li had tried to complain about his treatment to various police departments in Beijing, to no avail.

“They’re not likely to admit responsibility,” Ge said. “The doctor has booked him in to hospital on Oct. 8, and they want a deposit of 40,000 yuan, and he’s on subsistence payouts from the government.”

“He doesn’t have a cent, but his shoulder is in the wrong place and several ribs are broken,” she said. “The doctor said he would be disabled if it’s not treated.”

Ge said Li was beaten up by officers from the Yuegezhuang police station in southwestern Beijing, including the head of the police station.

“They dragged him out of the apartment and beat him up, pinning his arms and kneeling on his neck and pelvis,” Ge said.

“When they were done beating him, they detained him and kept me under house arrest here in my home,” she said.

An officer who answered the phone at the Yuegezhuang police station hung up after hearing he had been contacted by RFA.

Calls to the personal cell phone of police station chief Zhang Zhanhui rang unanswered on Wednesday.

Repeatedly stonewalled

China’s army of petitioners say they are repeatedly stonewalled, detained in “black jails,” beaten, and harassed by authorities if they try to take complaints against local government actions to higher levels of government.

Five Tibetan Land Protesters Are Freed in Sichuan, With Five Others Held Back

Radio Free Asia
October 6, 2015



Tibetans petition in southwest China’s Chengdu for the return of land seized by local government, Jan. 28, 2015.

Authorities in southwestern China’s Sichuan province have released five Tibetans taken into custody last month in connection with a petition over confiscated land, holding back five others deemed key leaders of the protest, a source living in the region said.

The five who were released—Tsering Kyab, Tsering Tashi, Patra, Dobe, and Tabé—were freed on Oct. 2, a local Tibetan source told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“However, the five who had written up the original appeal have still not been released,” RFA’s source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The source identified those still held in custody as protest organizers Jigje Kyab, Tsepak, Phurko, Sonam Gyatso, and Shetruk.

Jigje Kyab, 39, was reported earlier as having gone missing at the time the others were detained, with his sister Tsokyi reportedly being beaten in detention and then released.

“Those who were freed said that they had not been tortured or punished during their detention,” the source said, adding, “However, the dispute over the land has still not been resolved.”

Long-running dispute

Those freed and those still held were part of a group of at least a dozen residents of Thangkor town in Dzoerge (in Chinese, Ruo’ergai) county in Sichuan’s Ngaba (Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture who had briefly reoccupied land taken from them five years ago for a government development project that was never completed.

In April, Jigje Kyab, also known as Jigme Kyab, went into hiding after a Thangkor official and local government employees visited his home, and said via video at the time that he had “evaded capture” and was in a safe place.

Entrusted by community members with documents supporting Tibetan claims to the confiscated property, Kyab said he had gone into hiding so that he could present the community’s case to higher provincial authorities.

Kyab had also played a role in organising a Jan. 28 protest by 20 Thangkor-area Tibetans in the Sichuan provincial capital, Chengdu, sources told RFA in earlier reports.

In that incident, authorities quickly broke up the protest and detained 11 Tibetans, later releasing all but two, after the group petitioned in front of government buildings during a meeting of the Sichuan Provincial People’s Congress for the return of their land.

The requisitioning of rural land for lucrative property deals by cash-hungry local governments triggers thousands of “mass incidents” across China every year.

Many result in violent suppression, the detention of the main organisers, and intense pressure on the local population to comply with the government’s wishes.

Tibetan Protester Freed From Prison in Gansu

Radio Free Asia
October 2, 2015



Lakyab walks out of prison in Gansu province, Sept. 30, 2015. Photo courtesy of an RFA listener

Authorities at a prison in northwestern China’s Gansu province have freed a young Tibetan man jailed in 2008 for his role in protests challenging Beijing’s rule in Tibetan areas, releasing him after he developed a medical condition as the result of torture while in detention, sources said.

Lakyab, a Tibetan from Tserima township in Gansu’s Machu (in Chinese, Maqu) county, was released on Sept. 30 after serving more than seven years in prison, a local source told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“He was released for medical reasons related to a lung condition he developed as a result of prolonged beatings and torture while in detention,” the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Lakyab, now 25, was 17 when he was detained and found guilty of attempting to burn down the Tserima township government building, as well as the local police station, amid protests challenging Beijing’s rule in Tibetan areas of China in 2008, a second source said.

“Initially, he was detained for two years in the Machu county detention center, but he was later transferred between three other prisons and subjected to extreme torture and hardship,” said the source, who also declined to provide his name.

“After his release, when he reached home, Tibetans both young and old came out to welcome him, praising his great sacrifice for Tibet’s independence, religion and culture.”

While overjoyed to be reunited with his friends and family in Tserima’s Nurma village, Lakyab continues to suffer

from his lung condition “which he has not been able to cure, despite several treatments,” the source said.

Lakyab’s father had also “passed away due to the grief he endured” knowing that his son was suffering inside a Chinese prison, he said.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008, with 143 Tibetans to date setting themselves ablaze to oppose Beijing’s rule and call for the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Important Meetings

What’s China gonna do? Fifth Plenum lays out broad blueprint for China’s next five years

shanghaiist.com
October 30, 2015



In China, everybody is talking about the “Shisanwu,” especially broadcasters who had to read part of it on evening news last night, and while the hype mostly concerns the historic change in the nation’s one child policy, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th Party Congress also broadly laid out some other meaningful changes for China in the next five years as well.

This week’s Fifth Plenum was charged with finalising details of the country’s upcoming 13th Five-Year Plan that will work as China’s economic, political and social blueprint over the next five years (2016-2020), what Xinhua refers to as China’s “home-stretch of prosperity. The whole plan will need to be officially approved when the National People’s Congress meets in early 2016, so far it’s pretty vague. Here’s the full communique in Chinese for some fun weekend reading.

While the new two-child policy is unquestionably the biggest piece of news for Chinese society, the communique also mentions another significant change in Beijing’s decision to extend social security to cover its entire elderly population. According to The Diplomat, online surveys have shown that social security runs neck-and-neck with environmental protection as the issue that people care about the most.

Economically, the communique says that China will aim for “medium-high economic growth over the next five years and looks to increase investment in innovation and

entrepreneurship, while also looking to raise domestic consumption as China's economy moves away from relying on exporting cheap goods elsewhere. Beijing also pledged to double the 2010 GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents by 2020.

Environmentally, the government continues to get more serious about cleaning up the environment. It linked environmental preservation to two of its other key goals of urbanisation and agricultural modernisation, insisting that all development be "green" and "sustainable." To achieve this aim, the communique announced heightened environmental supervision efforts that will hold government officials responsible for environmental damage done in their localities.

Here are the highlights of the communique as chosen by party mouthpiece the People's Daily which calls the whole thing "a gigantic gift package to the Chinese people."

1. Population: Two children are allowed for all couples

China will allow all couples to have two children, abandoning its decades-long one-child policy. The change of policy is intended to balance population development and address the challenge of an ageing population.

2. Economic: Medium-high economic growth is targeted in next five years

China is aiming to double its 2010 GDP and per-capita income of residents both in cities and rural areas by 2020, in order to ensure more balanced, inclusive and sustainable economic development.

3. Poverty Alleviation: China to improve life standards of rural and impoverished people

China will support the development of poverty-stricken counties and cities to alleviate the regional poverty. Also, the government will improve services to care for women, children and the elderly in rural areas.

4. Education: China will popularise high school education and exempt tuition fees in secondary vocational schools

China will promote high school education in addition to the nine-year compulsory education. Also the government will fully subsidise students with economic difficulties in secondary vocational schools.

5. Medical Care: Old-age insurance is to cover full population

China will extend old-age insurance to its full population, by using state-owned capital to augment the existing social security fund. In doing so, China is to build a more fair and sustainable social welfare system.

6. Environment: Most strict environment rules will be implemented

China will implement a more exacting environmental protection system in the next five years. All environmental protection agencies under provincial levels will conduct vertical management for air, water and soil protection.

7. Health: China will deepen reforms of the health service system

China will build a basic health service system and modern hospital management system in both urban and rural areas. A national food safety strategy is also on the agenda.

8. Employment: Entrepreneurship and social innovation are encouraged

The Chinese government will implement more positive employment policies, which includes encouraging startups, improving working conditions for technicians, and supporting mass innovation for new industries.

9. Price: Chinese government will intervene less in price formation

The Chinese government will deregulate pricing products and services in competitive sectors from 2016 to 2020. It will also cut red tape, delegate more power to local authorities, and improve government services.

10. Anti-Corruption: China will fully enforce anti-graft campaign

China will continue its efforts to fight corruption and strictly govern the Party, as the communique noted.

It's going to be quite the next five years.

China's Communist Party Plenum: What to Expect

The New York Times

October 23, 2015

On Monday, the grandees of China's Communist Party, or the more than 200 members of its Central Committee, will gather in a heavily guarded hotel in Beijing for a four-day meeting. These secretive conclaves, open to only a few members of the state news media, endorse the leadership's policy plans and make key personnel appointments.

It would be a mistake to discount these gatherings, known as plenums. The ruling Politburo and the leaders of the powerful Central Military Commission are drawn from this body and, throughout the 66-year history of Communist rule in China, plenums have been the scene of momentous decisions that changed the course of the nation's history.

In 1959, Peng Dehuai, then the defense minister and a Korean War hero, was purged at the plenum that year, a move that signaled a surge in Chairman Mao Zedong's personal power. Two decades later, a plenum in 1978 put China on the road to opening its economy to international trade and moving away from a planned economy to greater reliance on the market. An extraordinary plenum in June 1989 officially dismissed the party's general secretary, Zhao Ziyang, who had broken with the paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, and other party elders on how best to handle the student protests at Tiananmen Square.

Since what happens in China increasingly affects people across the globe, this Fifth Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party is worth watching. Here's what to look for:

What's on the agenda?

Officials have said that the plenum this year will focus on China's next five-year plan. It may sound archaic — a relic of Soviet-era planning — but China's economy is still in many ways led by the state, and five-year plans set the agenda. The next plan will run from 2016 through 2020 and will be formally approved by China's legislature, the National People's Congress, next March. But before it reaches that stage, the party's leaders must sign off on the main points.

The party has made it clear that the new plan will focus on continuing to shift China's growth model away from a dependence on exports and extensive investment in infrastructure and industry toward a more sustainable growth model focused on consumption. The next five-year plan will be built around China's "new normal" of slowing economic growth. Growth this year, forecast at 7 percent, is set to be the slowest in a quarter century. Barclay's and Nomura expect that the floor for the next five-year plan will be set at 6.5 percent.

Expect the five-year plan to bolster spending on environmental protection, increase social welfare spending and push for further financial liberalisation, including promoting the internationalisation of China's currency, the renminbi.

Ding Xueliang, a political scientist at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said he also expected the plenum to discuss shorter-term measures on how to shore up economic growth after this summer's stock market plunge, currency devaluation and the slowest quarterly growth rate since 2009.

The coming plenum will take up the new five-year plan, which is expected to continue shifting China's economy

away from a reliance on exports and investment in infrastructure and toward consumption.

What about personnel changes?

Nothing has been announced, but Alice Miller, who studies China's elite politics at Stanford University, points out that it is the plenums at the midpoint between the party congresses, which take place every five years, where almost all personnel changes happen. There are normally seven plenums between congresses, and almost all personnel changes in the years since Mao's death in 1976 have occurred in the fourth and fifth plenums. This year's meeting is the fifth plenum of the party's 18th Central Committee.

"So if the Xi leadership were to make changes at this level, the upcoming plenum would be the place to make them," Ms. Miller said.

The next party congress takes place in late 2017, and the first plenum, which will take place immediately after the congress, selects the next Politburo, the group of about 25 people who are at the apex of power in China.

Mr. Ding said one possible change could be a new party chief for Shanghai. Han Zheng, a Politburo member and the city's current party boss, may be replaced, Mr. Ding and other China watchers said. Another possibility is that Gen. Liu Yuan, the son of the former President Liu Shaoqi, may win an appointment to the Central Military Commission.

Mr. Ding is also looking for possible rule changes that would make it easier for older senior leaders to stay on past customary retirement ages. That could allow someone like Wang Qishan, 67, the party's anticorruption enforcer, to stay on for another five-year term starting in 2017.

When will we find out what happened?

Since the beginning, Communist Party politics have been cloaked in secrecy. The communiqué for the plenum isn't normally released to the public until after the close of the session, via the state news media. So expect some news on the plenum to begin coming out next Thursday evening.

But, in fact, the language of the communiqué is determined well before the meeting even starts. Plenums in the modern era have rarely been scenes of raucous intra-party debate. Instead, most policy disagreements are resolved among powerful officials ahead of the plenum.

"There may be tweaking here and there, but the real give and take will have been given and taken on the road to convening the plenum," Ms. Miller said.

Military and Infrastructure Development

Who Will Xi Jinping Put in Charge of China's Military?

Epoch Times
October 30, 2015

Xi Jinping, leader of the Chinese regime since 2012, has done a lot to make sure the People's Liberation Army—China's Communist Party-controlled military forces—answers to him only. High-ranking officers have been purged, personnel will be cut, and a groundbreaking reform of the command structure is in the works.

Now, Xi and the Party leadership are deciding who to put into the 10-member Central Military Commission that commands the PLA, according to Chinese military sources cited by the South China Morning Post. As was the case with earlier Party leaders, Xi reserves the Commission's position of chairman for himself, making him the commander-in-chief of the PLA.

The current round of decision-making is taking place as part of the Communist Party's 5th plenary session of the 18th Party Congress, the sources said. Appointments made during this time are intended to be effective in the 2017-2022 period of Xi Jinping's administration.

Among the likely candidates for vice chairman of the Central Military Commission is Gen. Zhang Youxia, known as one of Xi Jinping's most loyal. The 65-year-old, who currently heads the PLA's general armaments department, served in the Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979, making him one of the few high-ranking Chinese military officers with experience in an armed conflict.



Zhang Youxia, head of the PLA's general armaments department and ally of Xi Jinping. (Sohu Military Net)

Sources close to the PLA told South China Morning Post that there was little chance of Liu Yuan, another general loyal to Xi Jinping, being promoted to the position of vice-chairman. Gen. Liu has been involved in carrying out Xi's anti-corruption campaign in the military.

Liang Guoliang, a Hong Kong-based military expert, told the South China Morning Post that promoting Zhang Youxia to vice-chairman of the Commission would help Xi carry out his plans to reshape the PLA command. These include abandoning Soviet-inspired organisational principles and reducing the number of military zones across China from seven to four.

Zhang Youxia, like Xi Jinping, is originally from the western province of Shaanxi, and their fathers were both high-ranking officials who fought for the communists in the Chinese Civil War.

In 1947, when the PLA was fighting the forces of Nationalist China, Zhang's father Zhang Zongxun commanded the communist Northeast Army Corps while Xi Zhongxun, father of Xi Jinping, was a political commissar.

The Struggle Behind Military Reform

Soon after he came to power in late 2012, Xi Jinping's administration directed the Communist Party's disciplinary agency to crack down on corruption in the ranks. At the same time, his planned reforms, the details of which have been hinted at in recent months, look to make China's military a smaller, more quality-based force in the vein of Western-style militaries.

In September, China's state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Xi Jinping as saying that the PLA would be cut by 300,000 troops. In addition, the South China Morning Post reported that there were proposals to reduce the total

number of personnel from Chinese security forces, most notably the People's Armed Police, by 1 million.

The personnel changes coming to the PLA and Armed Police also seem to reflect Xi's tightening grip on power, demonstrated by the removal of Gu Junshan, the corrupt former lieutenant general and deputy logistics chief, and former Central Military Commission vice-chairmen Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou from their posts. Xu died of cancer while awaiting trial.

All of these men benefited from the state of politics under former Party leader Jiang Zemin, whose extensive factional network permeated the Party, military, and industry.

The People's Armed Police, for example, was controlled by Jiang Zemin's ally Zhou Yongkang, who was sacked in 2012 and sentenced to life imprisonment this June. The People's Armed Police served as a potent political tool for Zhou Yongkang, whose position as head of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission between 2007 and 2012 also gave him authority over the entire civil police apparatus and the national court system.

The Committee helped not only Zhou, but Jiang Zemin in his quest to maintain power after his official retirement in the early 2000s.

If Xi Jinping intends to downsize or replace the Armed Police, he may be simply doing what Party leaders before him have done. In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping removed over a million men from the PLA, only to create the now 1.1 million-strong Armed Police. And Jiang Zemin, who came to power in the late 1980s and 1990s, cut 200,000 troops, again from the PLA, but vastly strengthened the regime's internal security forces, in large part in order to wage a brutal, single-minded campaign against the Falun Gong spiritual practice.

Aside from posing a threat to Xi Jinping's political power, the likes of Zhou, Xu, Gu, and Guo rendered the PLA a breeding ground of corruption and inefficiency.

"In the years that the military was under the control of Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou, corruption became very serious," Xin Ziling, the former chief of the editorial desk at PLA's National Defense University, told the New York-based New Tang Dynasty Television.

"Many unqualified people took on different military posts or got promoted simply by bragging, flattery, or bribery," Xin said. "So these people need to be removed" through the troop cuts.

According to Liang Guoliang, the military observer who spoke to the South China Morning Post, Gen. Zhang Youxia's reputation of charisma would "help unify opinion to help Xi carry out his reforms."

China to Extend Military Control to Indian Ocean

Epoch Times

October 25, 2015

The Chinese regime said it's wrapping up its construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea, and all signs suggest its next big push will be into the Indian Ocean.

Conflicts are already surfacing. India was caught off guard in May, when the Chinese regime docked a submarine in the nearby port of Karachi in Pakistan. Close to two months later, on July 1, Chinese defense spokesman senior Col. Yang Yujin tried lightening the concern by saying the Chinese navy's activities in the Indian Ocean are "open and transparent."

The same day, a very different announcement was made by a senior captain from China's National Defense University. He warned India, saying they cannot view the Indian Ocean as their backyard.

It's unlikely the Chinese will back down, according to Richard Fisher, senior fellow with the International Assessment and Strategy Center.

"An effort to break out of the South China Sea, and then project into the Indian Ocean is one of the opening moves in China's quest for global military and economic dominance," Fisher said in a phone interview.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is trying to build new international trade networks under its own control. Part of this will be its new Silk Road, which will include connecting China to Pakistan with roads, rails, and oil pipelines. The other side of this is its "Maritime Silk Road," coupled with an effort to gain control or influence at all major maritime trade chokepoints.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18341>

China aims to go deeper into space

Spacedaily.com

Beijing (XNA) Oct 16, 2015

In recent years, asteroids have become a focus of international space exploration. Scientists say asteroids hold materials that could unlock the secrets of the birth of the solar system and the origin of life. Chinese experts are discussing the feasibility of sending a landing probe and retrieve samples from an asteroid.

As China's exploration of the moon progresses, its space experts have begun considering going deeper into the solar system – to Mars, asteroids and Jupiter – and a manned deep-space mission.

At a recent conference on deep-space exploration in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, an official urged scientists and technologists to have a pioneering spirit.

"When exploring the unknown, we should not just follow others. China should be more creative," said Liu Jizhong, director of the lunar exploration program and space engineering center under the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

He pointed out that China still needs to tackle key problems, such as how to go into deep space at higher speeds; generating energy and power; and developing space robots that can work in the complicated space environment.

China should also strengthen international cooperation. "Exploring space is a great undertaking for the whole of humankind, and China should shoulder its responsibilities as a big country. Through international cooperation, we can learn from each other and jointly contribute," Liu said.

Far Side Of The Moon

Some Chinese scientists have suggested landing a probe on the far side of the moon, which would be unprecedented. Although China has not officially announced the plan, experts have begun to prepare the technologies needed.

Zhang Lihua, a researcher with China Spacesat Co., Ltd., said exploring the far side of the moon is of great scientific importance. Many countries have designed their own plans for such a mission.

It would require a relay satellite, which would be used for communication and navigation on the L2- or Lagrange point where the satellite could orbit within the combined gravitational pull of the Earth-moon system, said Zhang.

Lin Yilu, a senior engineer of the Shanghai Aerospace Systems Engineering Institute, said developing a lunar relay satellite is necessary for future lunar exploration, sending astronauts to the moon, as well as setting up a lunar base.

"If China expands the range of its lunar exploration, such as exploring the south and north poles and the far side of the moon, it needs a constellation of satellites covering different areas of the moon's surface," said Lin.

Manned Or Unmanned?

China has yet to start a manned deep-space exploration program, and experts hotly debate whether it's necessary

to send humans into deep space, or just let robots do the job.

Guo Linli, a researcher with the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST), said humans will inevitably go deeper into space from near Earth orbit to the moon and then to Mars.

"Can robots replace humans to explore deep space? My view is that robots are suitable for repetitive, heavy loading, and fixed and known work. But it needs human wisdom to decide on unknown work that cannot be simulated in lab, such as surveying and choosing a site for a future lunar base," Guo said.

However, such ambitions come with a cost, and the biggest would be for the greatly increased scale of the spacecraft and rockets. It would need a heavy-lift launch vehicle with a capacity of more than 100 tonnes to send four astronauts to the moon, and environmental control and life support systems would be essential too, Guo said.

Compared with unmanned deep space exploration, manned missions would have fewer possible destinations and the cost and difficulties would be much greater. Currently, only the moon, Mars and asteroids are considered, Guo said.

Humans and robots will each have advantages, and will work together in exploring the deep space far into the future.

Asteroid "Ants"

In recent years, asteroids have become a focus of international space exploration. Scientists say asteroids hold materials that could unlock the secrets of the birth of the solar system and the origin of life.

Chinese experts are discussing the feasibility of sending a landing probe and retrieve samples from an asteroid.

But how could a probe land and move on an asteroid that might have an odd shape, almost zero gravity and complicated environment?

Zhang Wangjun, a senior CAST engineer, said wheeled robots like the U.S. Mars rover Curiosity have played an important role in space exploration. But robots with feet are more suitable for moving on hilly terrain with many obstacles.

"Robots with feet can avoid and cross obstacles more easily. We are researching two-feet, four-feet and six-feet robots. It seems that a six-feet robot has more advantages in mobility and flexibility in the complicated environment," Zhang said.

This finding echoes those in the United States, Europe and Japan, where researchers have developed robots imitating cockroaches, spiders and ants.

However, he said, current research only meets the industrial requirements. It is still a long way to go to adapting a robot to the environment of an asteroid.

Zhang has devised asteroid-probing robots like a pair of "ants" that can work independently or cooperatively.

Exclusive: Top PLA General set for rare India visit, highest from China in a decade

Indiatoday.in

October 15, 2015

First visit to India by a Vice Chairman of PLA's Central Military Commission since 2004 is seen by Beijing as a significant boost to military-to-military ties.

The top-ranking General of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) will visit India next month in what is being billed as the highest-level visit by the Chinese Army to India in more than a decade.

General Fan Changlong, the Vice Chairman of the PLA's Central Military Commission (CMC), will travel to India next month to boost military to military ties, sources told India Today.

The visit is being seen by Beijing as the most significant military visit from China to India in a decade. The CMC is the most powerful decision-making body of the Chinese military. While it is chaired by President Xi Jinping, the two Vice Chairmen are the highest-ranking PLA Generals. The other Vice Chairman is General Xu Qiliang, a former PLA Air Force Commander.

The last visit by a CMC Vice Chairman was in 2004, when General Cao Gangchuan, who was also Defence Minister, travelled to India.

Since then, visits by top PLA Generals have been rare, underlining the wariness in military to military high-level exchanges. In 2006 and 2008, the PLA's Air Force and Navy Chiefs visited, while in 2012 Defence Minister General Liang Guanglie, who was a member of the CMC but not a Vice Chairman, travelled to India.

The visit by General Fan is being seen in Beijing as a significant step in taking defence ties forward. His visit will follow a number of recent moves to expand confidence-building measures (CBMs) and ensure stability on the border.

Last week, both sides reviewed existing CBMs as a border consultation and coordination mechanism met in Beijing and reviewed steps to expand border personnel meeting

points and direct lines of communication between military commands. The idea is to prevent recurrence of stand-off incidents which have recently cast a shadow on defence ties.

In August, both sides held a first personnel meeting at Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO), the newest and fifth border personnel meeting point along the border and the second in the Western sector. Four other meeting points are in Ladakh, Sikkim and two in Arunachal in the Eastern sector.

This week, India and China are also holding the fifth round of annual defence exercises in Yunnan, in southwestern China, which will involve 10 days of counterterrorism joint operation drills. Both sides are keen to upgrade the exercises, which will conclude on October 22, for the next round to be held in India.

China and Pak just finished an air drill in Tibet; what are the lessons for India?

catchnews.com

Oct 14, 2015

This week India and China will start 'Hand In Hand', a joint counter-terrorism exercise at Kunming Military Academy, Yunnan. From India, 350 Naga Regiment personnel will join the People's Liberation Army's 14th Group Army. The 11-day exercise will focus on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.

This will be the fifth such exercise in a series started in 2007. The drills are part of confidence-building measures put in place by both countries to address mistrust sprouting from regular standoffs along the disputed Line of Actual Control between India and China.

China, however, is not playing war games with India alone. The Indian media largely missed the story about the recent Sino-Pakistani air exercise, dubbed Shaheen IV. In contrast to its confidence-building engagement with India, China held one the biggest and most complex air exercises inside the Tibet Autonomous Region

As Beijing and Islamabad strengthen their relationship, New Delhi must consider the security implications of a greater Chinese influence in south Asia.

The first Shaheen exercise was held in Pakistan in March 2011 while the second in China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in September 2013. The third episode again was in Pakistan – in its Punjab province – in May last year.

This year, it is Tibet. The location has political signals, given India's asylum to the Dalai Lama and India's increasing co-operation in the Indian Ocean Region with the United States, Japan and Australia.

There is little information in the public domain about the type of air exercises that were conducted. According to Pakistani daily 'Dawn', three different types of fighter aircraft from Pakistan participated.

There also have been information indicating up to six Pakistan Air force (PAF) squadrons were involved in Shaheen IV. Pakistan reportedly didn't deploy its US-made F-16s to prevent negative reactions from the United States. The exercises also saw the use of airborne early warning and control aircraft.

The Shaheen exercises have never been on such a scale. It gave the PAF access to Russian-made aircraft similar to the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Sukhoi 30 MKI. Training against Chinese Sukhoi 27 SK and Shenyang J-11 (Chinese-made Sukhoi 27) will help the PAF draw up tactics to effectively counter the IAF's mainstay Sukhoi 30 MKI.

China's relation with Pakistan has become one of the most comprehensive one that Beijing has with any country. The strategic imperatives of developing Pakistan as a bulwark against India has been among Beijing's overriding objectives in influencing the balance of power in South Asia.

China will build 4 submarines in Karachi; is that a ploy to tie Indian Navy to Arabian Sea?

Over the years, China has helped Pakistan enhance its military and nuclear capabilities with the objective of keeping India engaged and focused on threats emanating from Pakistan.

According to recent reports, Beijing will be delivering eight Yuan-class submarine to Pakistan. Four of those will be built in Karachi. As a result, the Indian Navy's depleted submarine fleet and anti-submarine warfare assets will be further tied down in the Arabian Sea as New Delhi tries to modernise its Navy to be able to check Beijing's growing penetration of the Indian Ocean Region.

A steady and regular sighting of Chinese submarines in ports surrounding India over the last few years has created a cause for concern in New Delhi.

Chinese exercises with Pakistan aside, Beijing has held exercises with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal at regular intervals in the recent past. China was also Pakistan's biggest arms supplier between 2010 and 2014, accounting for 51% of Pakistani weapons imports.

It was also the source of 82 percent of Bangladesh's arms purchases (2009-2013), according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, making Dhaka one

of the top three buyers of Chinese weapons in the world. Sri Lanka, too, has been a substantial recipient of Chinese arms, but the conclusion of the civil war in 2009 has reduced this trend.

India's engagement with the region is pale in comparison. There has been little military-to-military engagement with Bangladesh. Engagements with Sri Lanka and Nepal, too, have been limited in scope and sometimes very infrequent.

Not a single naval exercise was held by Sri Lanka and India for six years (2005-2011) and again none since 2013 due to objections emanating from Tamil Nadu. In contrast to the Indian Navy's limited engagements with neighbouring countries, its ships have visited more than 40 countries and conducted numerous exercises in the past one year.

This week's annual Indo-US Malabar naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal has been turned into a trilateral with the inclusion of Japan. However, the reported lack of enthusiasm in increasing the number participating ships and aircraft by the Indian Navy reflects the susceptibility of the Indian establishment to cave in to the prospect of Chinese opposition.

China's core interests in its military engagement with Pakistan and other South Asian countries are to balance its relations with the United States and India. New Delhi urgently needs to proactively shape its security environment. Military engagements with far flung nations across the globe need to be limited in favour of proactive regional engagements that bear strategic and security dividends.

China's overtures in space worry India

Deccan Herald
October 12, 2015

China's rapid strides in the military use of space has triggered a fresh wave of concerns in the Indian armed forces, which have only taken some baby steps so far.

Establishment of a 50,000 strong Space Force under the Central Military Commission is a part of the China's latest military modernisation plan, sources told Deccan Herald.

The Space Force would not only have anti-satellite and anti-missile capability, but also would have military astronauts. Space and Navy are the two areas where Beijing is putting more emphasis in its military reorganisation plan as compared to other areas.

In contrast, the first Indian military satellite GSAT-7 for the Navy was launched in August 2013 for better communications among the Indian warships and submarines.

The launch of a identical second satellite, GSAT-7A to aid the communication services of the Indian Air Force and Army, however, is getting delayed. The satellite, slated for 2015, is now likely to be launched in 2016, said an Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) official.

Isro's priority is to complete the Rs 1,600 crore Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)– a constellation of seven satellites – which would aid Army for precision navigation support without relying on the US-backed Global Positioning System (GPS).

While four satellites of IRNSS is already in the orbit, the fifth one is scheduled to be launched in December and the next two by March, 2016. "Besides navigation, the service provided by the IRNSS would be used to determine target acquisition," Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha said last week.

IRNSS is intended to provide an absolute position accuracy of better than 10 metres throughout Indian landmass and better than 20 metres in the Indian Ocean as well as over a region extending approximately 1,500 km around India.

The delay in having the operational IRNSS – supposed to be up and running by 2011-12 – pushed the IAF's integrated air command, control and communications system (IACCCS) beyond the original schedule. The aim is to set up the IACCS by 2018.

But by that time, Beijing would overtake New Delhi as its BeiDou navigation system with 35 satellites is likely to be operational by 2018 providing GPS to Chinese military.

India, China begin counter-terrorism drills

The Hindu

October 12, 2015

India and China begin counter-terror drills in Kunming, as well as the Malabar-2015 naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal.

India's attempt to keep China engaged in a military-cooperation cycle while it bolters defence ties with the United States and Japan is becoming strikingly illustrated this week with the joint counter-terror drills in Kunming, as well as the Malabar-2015 naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal.

The joint Hand-in-Hand counter-terrorism exercises between India and China started on Monday, following the arrival of 175 personnel from the Naga Regiment of the Eastern Command in Kunming. An equal number of Chinese personnel from the Chengdu-based 14 Corps are participating in the manoeuvres whose aim is "to develop joint operating capability, share useful experience in counter-terrorism operations and to promote friendly exchanges between the armies of India and China."

This year's annual exercise kicked off with addresses at Kunming's Dabanqiao Training Base by Lieutenant-General Surinder Singh, Head of Observers Delegation, and Ashok K. Kantha, India's Ambassador to China, and Lieutenant-General Zhou Xiaozhou from China. While these exercises will continue till October 22, the much larger Malabar-2015 naval drills, with the U.S. and Japan will commence later this week in the Bay of Bengal.

Beijing's concerns

In view of the growing tensions with Japan, the Chinese are focusing on the format of this exercise to gauge whether the joint India-U.S. exercises are morphing into a trilateral framework with Tokyo as a permanent participant. If that happens, it will re-open the question whether Indian foreign policy is now shifting gears towards an active support for the U.S.-led "Asia- Pivot."

The Chinese perceive President Barack Obama's "Asia Pivot" or "rebalance" doctrine as a thinly veiled attempt aimed at China's containment. Japan, South Korea and Australia are firm allies in this enterprise, but New Delhi has so far carefully avoided in bracketing itself with the coalition, notwithstanding the adoption of a higher amplitude in expressing its concerns in the South China Sea.

Monitoring Malabar-2015

Analysts say that China's sharper focus on the Malabar-2015 can be attributed to the first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India, U.S., and Japan in New York last month where the exercise was discussed, according to a media note circulated by the U.S. State department. The statement also noted the "growing convergence" of the three countries in the Indo-Pacific region, referring to the sea-space on either side of the strategic Strait of Malacca, which is the lifeline of East-West trade.

'Asian century'

Regarding the Kunming exercise, a write-up in the Global Times, a state-run tabloid, pointed out that China and India "have agreed to enhance their military cooperation, and to boost people-to-people exchanges." It noted that New Delhi has also proposed joint forays in counter-terrorism, along with combating smuggling by sea and

anti-piracy operations. The article signalled India and China's shared interest in what has been described as an emerging new world



Head of the Indian Observer Delegation, Lt. Gen. Surinder Singh, his Chinese counterpart Lt. Gen. Zhou Xiaozhou and Indian Ambassador Ashok K. Kantha at the commencement of India-China joint exercise at the Kunming Military Academy in Yunnan, China.

order centred around the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping.

"A grander mission is that as representatives of emerging economies and members of the BRICS countries, both Beijing and New Delhi should boost their cooperation while improving themselves, in order to jointly create an Asian century, make breakthroughs in the current financial order, and forge a new global economic order that is more in line with emerging markets' interests," the daily observed.

Army Commanders meet today

Indian Express

October 12, 2015

At the top of the nine-point agenda is the planning and execution of infrastructure works in the 12th Plan, which has been raised by Kolkata-headquartered Eastern Command

The bi-annual Army Commanders' Conference starts on Monday in New Delhi, and it will deliberate upon infrastructure works on the China border in Eastern Command, state of border roads, and consolidation of defence land. The highest-level military conference, which will go on till Friday, will also discuss the shortage of officers. At the top of the nine-point agenda is the planning and execution of infrastructure works in the 12th Plan, which has been raised by Kolkata-headquartered Eastern Command. Sources in the Eastern Command said that almost all the planned works required for new forces

raised for China border — including roads, accommodation, ammunition sheds, railway lines, bridges and airfields — have been delayed. Besides problems with land acquisition, a major reason for the delay has been the ongoing dispute about use of local labour for construction.

The seven Army Commanders will also discuss the performance of the Border Roads Organisation or DGBR. The DGBR moved under the control of Defence Ministry from the roads ministry earlier this year. In May, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence had criticised the DGBR for the poor state of strategic Indo-China border roads.

The Works of Defence Act 1903, which imposes certain restrictions upon the use of land in the vicinity of defence constructions, is also scheduled to be reviewed during the conference. The Act and its guidelines had come to prominence in the wake of south Mumbai-based Adarsh housing society controversy, where a high-rise building had been given permission for construction in the vicinity of Army establishments. The conference will also discuss the plans for consolidation of defence land, finalise land norms and approve plans for reconciliation of pre-independence era land records.

A 2013 CAG report had found that 14,539.38 acres of defence land was under encroachment as of July 2009. The CAG report had also pointed out that as of March 2010, 2500 acres of land — valued at Rs 11,033 crore — was on lease for an annual rent of only Rs 2.13 crore. The ongoing shortage of officers in the army is another subject of deliberation before the senior commanders. Even though the army has been able to bring its officer shortage down from 26 per cent in 2010 to 18 per cent now, it is still struggling to subscribe to all the vacancies in training academies. Four hundred and thirty five of the 2,642 vacancies were unused in the current calendar year. The army is authorised 49,737 officers and was holding 40,525 officers as on 1st July this year. It hopes to reduce this shortage from 18 per cent to 12 per cent by 2021.

It plans to commission an additional 1000 officers, which will cater to 500 new accretions and make up existing shortages at the rate of 1 per cent every year. Meanwhile, the defence ministry is already working on a tri-service roadmap on reducing officer shortages in the armed forces. Even within the army, a detailed study on the intake of officers is being undertaken by DG (Recruiting). The army is also working on long-term plans to make all 10+2 entries (NDA and TES) for permanent commission while other graduate entries (UES and DE) will be for granting short-service commission. But these plans will only be put in place if short-service commission, at 10 years and extendable by another four years, becomes an

attractive proposition. The army commanders' conference will also discuss issues pertaining to married accommodation in high-pressure stations and construction of pre-engineered building by the Military Engineering Service. A study of the revised recruitment system, a review of educational scholarships and concessions and integrated development of sports in the army is also on the agenda of the conference.

China launches student-made satellites

Times of India

IANS

October 10, 2015

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have launched a satellite made by a group of college students which has already began sending back data, the media reported on Saturday.

Students in Nanjing University of Technology and Engineering independently developed the satellite, using commercial components, the People's Daily reported.

They named their self-made satellite "Nanligong-1" – an abbreviation of the name of their college in Chinese.

Small but perfectly formed, the satellite contains all the necessary satellite systems, such as power structure and thermal, altitude and communications controls.

The satellite – carried by a Long March-11 rocket – was successfully launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre.

It is being used for Global Maritime Automatic Identification and for demonstrating information exchanges between satellites in-orbit.

Chinese flying ops in Tibet have increased, but no need to worry: Air chief Arup Raha

Indian Express

October 4, 2015

Arup Raha expressed hope that the Rafale contract between India and France would be signed before December.

In what may raise serious concerns for India along the Chinese frontier, Air chief Marshal Arup Raha on Saturday said the Chinese flying operations in Tibetan Autonomous

Region (TAR) has increased "exponentially". He, however, cited that India too has its assets deployed along the border and that India does not have a reason to worry. Speaking on a number of issues during the Indian Air Force's (IAF) annual press conference, he also hinted at the requirement of additional numbers of Rafale-like jets and indicated that the IAF is set to carry out training without the much-delayed Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT). "In TAR, flying operation (of Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force) has increased exponentially and the capability (has been) increasing throughout the year... We also have our assets, our infrastructure and are deploying our force (along border). Therefore, there is no need to worry," Raha said, adding that India had no reason to be anxious about a two-front war involving Pakistan and China. He also added that though India had the capability to carry out strikes in PoK, the intent was not his.

He also downplayed the proposed sale of Russian Mi-35 attack choppers to Pakistan, saying that the (Indian) government is in touch with Russian government and that taking the development seriously would be like making "mountain out of molehill". Meanwhile, almost six months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an announcement on buying 36 Rafale fighter jets from France, Raha said more number of Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) – the category to which Rafales belong – are desired. He added that against the ongoing negotiations of two squadrons, the IAF would want to raise six squadrons of similar aircraft and hoped that the Rafale contract is signed before December. "The demand, wish is there... I want MMRCA. I am sure government will look at it," Raha said without referring to any specific aircraft that could fit the bill. He also added that the IAF will accept 120 Tejas jets in their specified configurations, but cited that Hindustan Aeronautics Limited will have to ramp up the production rate of the indigenous fighter. Raha said that the IAF will aim towards reaching the stipulated strength of 42 squadrons by 2027. Indicating that the IAF has given up on the much-delayed IJT, Raha said the IAF is now carrying out three stage, two aircraft training which is an accepted practice in many nations. He added that the Pilatus PC-7 aircraft which is in service of the IAF will take care of the first two stages of training— alternating for the IJT in stage two— while Hawk will ensure stage three training. In a bid to ensure integration towards nation's net-centric warfare capabilities, Raha said the government was in the process of setting up defence cyber and space agencies.

Environment

China's bottled water industry to exploit Asia's water tower

ecobusiness.com

October 30, 2015

The Tibet government wants massive expansion of the bottled water industry by tapping the Himalayan glaciers, but the environmental stakes are high.

Tibet wants to bottle up much more of the region's water resources, despite shrinking glaciers and the impact that exploitation of precious resources would have on neighbouring countries.

This week the Tibet Autonomous Region's government released a 10-year plan to encourage the massive expansion of the bottled water industry in the ecologically fragile region.

The target is to build 5 million cubic metres of bottled water production capacity by 2020. Since Tibet produced 153,000 cubic metres of water in 2014, according to Xinhua – this is indeed a huge jump.

Water in Tibet is abundant and so much cheaper than in other parts of China. Water bottled upstream among snow-capped peaks is also perceived as pure, commanding a premium. This has led to a huge influx of companies hoping to cash in on the region's water resources. Though it only makes up a very small proportion of China's annual bottled water production, such premium water is seen as the new point of growth for the country's booming bottled water industry.

But tapping glaciers will come at a huge cost to Tibet's fragile environment, warned China Water Risk's recent report "Bottled Water in China – Boom or Bust?". The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau – known as Asia's water tower – is the source of the continent's major rivers that provide a lifeline for China and other parts of Asia.

In the last two decades, China has become the world's largest bottled water consumer and a major producer. However, with per capita consumption 19 per cent lower than global average, the market is expected to continue to boom. Even if China reaches the consumption level of Hong Kong, the market scale would be four times larger than today's. In 2012, China produced 55.6 million cubic metres of packaged water.

In the light of President Xi Jinping's desire to build an "Ecological Civilization", China has also strengthened policies to conserve forests and natural protection zones. China's strong commitment to dealing with climate change also includes actions to protect its glaciers.

But how does the growth of the bottled water industry in the region fit into such policies? What does it mean for China and downstream countries if bottling production capacity soars? The glaciers in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau have already shrunk 15 per cent over the last three decades. With the stakes so high, the government and investors should rethink their strategy.

Asia's water tower – bottled water hotspot

While concerns over water pollution has driven the demand for bottled water, it's no surprise that companies have flooded upstream to regions like the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in search of cleaner sources of water. The region is home to China's largest national parks and the source of major transboundary rivers. It is also known as "the third pole" because it holds the largest stores of fresh water outside the north and south poles.

The Qinghai-Tibet plateau is already a hotspot for the bottled water industry. By 2014, the government had approved licenses for 28 companies to produce bottled water in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Bottled water activities are also growing rapidly in neighbouring Xinjiang, Qinghai and Yunnan provinces, with companies even bottling water straight from glacier tongues.

Gelaixue Glacier Water is one such company. According to its official website, all its water comes from the glacier tongue of the "No.1 Glacier" – which sits 4,480 metres high in the Tianshan mountains, Xinjiang province.

The company and its partner, the Tianshan Glaciological Station of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, have not disclosed any details about the exploitation process or the environmental impact of its activities. What is clear is that the glacier is melting rapidly – at a rate of 4 to 8 metres every year.

Companies are also tapping glaciers in the Everest (Qomolangma) mountain range. "Qomolangma Glacier Water" bottles water from the Qomolangma National Nature Reserve, 80 kilometres from Everest Base Camp. "Pamirs Ancient Glacier Water" bottles spring water from the foot of the Ata peaks of the Pamir range near Tajikistan.

Preferential treatment

This is just the start of the rush to exploit the region's water resources. Cash-rich companies, including pharmaceutical, confectionery, petroleum and biotechnology, all want a finger in the pie. In November

2014 as part of a government advocacy event called “Good water in Tibet should be shared with the world”, the TAR government signed 16 agreements with various investors, totalling 2.6 billion yuan (US \$409 million).

Among them were state-owned oil producer Sinopec, Bright Food Group, China National Gold Group and the Three Gorges Group, which owns in the world’s largest hydroelectric power station in Hubei province.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18470>

Earthquake risks be river dammed: Big brother to Three Gorges Dam may be built this year in Sichuan and Yunnan as seismic warnings swept aside

South China Morning Post
October 28, 2015

Two controversial hydroelectric power stations over the Jinsha River are to be approved and start construction this year, People’s Daily reported yesterday.

When completed, the 10.2GW Wudongde and 16GW Baihetan hydropower projects in Yunnan and Sichuan, together with the Xiangjiaba and Xiluodu hydroelectric power stations which began generating last year, will produce twice as much power as the Three Gorges Dam.

Xinhua said Sichuan and Yunnan had approved residents’ resettlement plans for the Wudongde and Baihetan plants, while the Ministry of Environmental Protection had approved the evaluation reports.

China Three Gorges Corporation is behind all four stations, and has been pushing for the approval of Wudongde and Baihetan since the others came online.

When finished, Baihetan will be the second largest – and Wudongde the fourth largest – power station in China.

A recent evaluation of the plan for the Wudongde station concluded it was fit for submission to the National Development and Reform Commission, and to the State Council for final approval.

It is on the council’s agenda to approve the station as one of the year’s biggest clean energy projects.

Feasibility studies on the Wudongde station launched in 2005, but research into the project stretches back to the 1960s.

“The permission means the Ministry of Environmental Protection, NDRC, local governments ... and of course the State Council have reached a consensus,” said a source familiar with the approval process.

State media has touted the dams as a way to cut poverty in mountainous regions and address the country’s acute shortage of electrical power, but experts have voiced concerns.



A landslide near the construction site of the Baihetan Dam in 2012 buried more than 40 people. Experts say the area is geophysically unstable. File Photo

Geologist Yang Yong said building a dam in earthquake-prone Wudongde was risky. “The area has a history of geological disasters and the hazards have been active in recent years,” Yang said.

Xu Zongxue, a professor with Beijing Normal University’s College of Water Sciences, said the dams would affect the ecology of the lower reaches of the Yangtze, of which the Jinsha is a tributary.

China Plans to Enter Era of ‘Ecological Civilisation’

Sputniknews.com
October 27, 2015

Creating a new “ecological civilization” rather than focusing on GDP growth will become a new priority of the Chinese government toward 2020, a former adviser to China’s Ministry of Environmental Protection told Sputnik Tuesday.

MOSCOW (Sputnik) — On October 26-29, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is holding its 5th plenum, to set directions for the country’s 13th 5-year plan for 2016-2020.

“The CCP under Xi Jinping’s leadership will herald an era of ‘ecological civilization’ calling for a new type of growth that is more holistic and balanced than the almost blind focus on high growth industrial development of the past

decade,” Laurence J. Brahm, the founder of the Himalayan Consensus NGO protecting ethnic diversity, said.

He added that “paramount on the agenda will be improvement of the environment not only for aesthetic reasons but rather for food and water security as a national priority.”

“This will involve sweeping reforms calling for regenerative policies of renewable and efficient energy and smart cities reversing a decade of blind growth drive by high carbon output. Officials under Xi’s administration will be promoted on the basis of what they do for their community and environment rather than on the GDP statistics they deliver as has been the case for the past decade,” he observed.

The CCP will introduce new values rewarding conservation as opposed to consumption, holding party members to a higher environmental and ecological standard, Brahm pointed out.

According to Brahm, “it will be in many ways a reversal of some policies of excess and a rebalancing of the China growth model.”

It comes after Chinese National Bureau of Statistics announced last week that the country’s economic growth stood at 6.9 percent in the third quarter of 2015, reaching its slowest pace since March 2009.

China Invests 31.5 Bln Yuan to Improve Rural Eco-environment

CRIENGLISH.com

October 26, 2015

China has invested some 31.5 billion yuan, around 5 billion US dollars, since 2008 to improve the environment in 59,000 villages covering some 110 million local residents.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Finance issued a joint statement on Sunday in Nanjing confirming the investment.

The two ministries said that they had made collective efforts to improve road infrastructure, waste disposal, sewage treatment and drinkable water systems in rural areas across China.

Minister of Environmental Protection Chen Jining said that environmental protection is a weak point in rural areas.

“In the next stage, the financial support from the central authorities will focus on the villages and regions nearby important water sources and national water diversion projects such as the Danjiangkou Reservoir, the central

and eastern routes of the South-to-North Water Diversion Project and the Three Gorges Reservoir. Meanwhile, we will continue to push forward the management of the environmental issues in rural areas. Such problems will be solved once they are found.”

Deputy Finance Minister Liu Kun said that the central authorities will continue to increase their investment in improving the environment in the 130,000 villages newly added to the campaign’s must-do list over the next five years.

Tibet hit by aftershock of Afghanistan earthquake

GBTIMES BEIJING

October 27, 2015

Chaya county in Tibet was struck by a magnitude 4.2 aftershock at around 2:00 local time on Tuesday following the devastating earthquake which shook Afghanistan, northern Pakistan and parts of India on Monday, according to China News Service.

With an epicentre eight kilometres deep, tremors from the quake were felt all over the county, a magistrate said, adding that relief materials including tents had been dispatched to the affected area.

The aftershocks caused minimal damage with reports suggesting that just minor damage to walls had occurred.

Al Jazeera reports that 335 people have been confirmed dead in Afghanistan and Pakistan from the original 7.5 magnitude earthquake, with damaged communication lines making damage assessment difficult.

The epicentre is said to be a few hundred miles away from the site of the deadly 2005 earthquake that struck the country, killing over 80,000 people.

China Launches \$2.8 Billion Worth Major Water Diversion Project

ndtv.com

Press Trust of India

October 23, 2015

BEIJING: China has started yet another large water diversion project with \$2.8 billion investment in central China’s Hubei Province which will benefit nearly five million people after completion.

The 270-km long pipeline will divert 1.4 billion cubic meters of water each year from Danjiangkou Reservoir to the cities of Xiangyang, Suizhou and Xiaogan in north Hubei.

Last year, China successfully completed its \$80 billion world's biggest water diversion project which had brought the water to Danjiangkou Reservoir from the country's second largest Yellow River.

The new diversion project to Tianjin is being built with an investment of nearly 18 billion yuan (\$ 2.8 billion). It is the largest water distribution project in Hubei and will take three years and nine months to complete. After completion, it will benefit 4.82 million people and irrigate 310,000 hectares of land as well as industries along the route, said Wang Zhongfa, head of the Hubei Provincial Water Resources Department.

A reliable water supply will guarantee urban water supply, ensure grain production, improve the regional environment and with poverty relief efforts, said Minister of Water Resources Chen Lei, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Gone with the wind? Gustier future in China may ease smog in big cities says Tibetan Plateau study

South China Morning Post
October 22, 2015

Team says wind patterns have become more aggressive in mountainous western region, which suggests a reversal of weakening gusts nationwide may be on the cards.

China's notoriously bad air quality may improve naturally over time because smog can be dispersed by just a gentle breeze, and such gusts are expected to grow in frequency in Beijing and other landlocked Chinese cities in the future, according to a new study by local scientists.

While the rate of efficacy remains up for debate, a team led by Professor Yang Kun found in their latest study that gusts moving at speeds of 3.5 metres per second (12.6 kph) can have a significant effect in cleaning the air.

Such winds classify as a gentle breeze on the Beaufort scale, with only enough strength to move flags, leaves or twigs.

The researchers based their findings on the relationship between wind speed and the dimming effect of air pollutants on sunlight over the last half a century.

They also drew on their previous research in Tibet after picking up an important signal at a remote monitoring station in the western Chinese province two years ago, which they reported in an earlier paper.

They found that surface wind speeds at high altitudes across the mountainous region had increased steadily for more than a decade.

And while wind speeds are known to have declined across China from the 1960s to the early 2000s, they said this suggested another reversal may be in the pipeline with more gusts expected across the mainland in the coming years.

The team published their latest findings last week in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

"With potential wind speed reversals and strict controls on aerosol emissions, the current solar dimming may be alleviated and polluted regions may experience brightening in the future," they wrote.

This could "be a useful reference for [government bodies] managing industrial activities and vehicle emissions in large cities, such as Beijing," they added.

Yang worked on the paper with other colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research in Beijing.

Air pollution remains one of the biggest headaches for the Chinese government, with a number of Chinese cities in the top 10 index of the world's unhealthiest metropolises.

A 2013 study of northern China, where coal burning creates massive amounts of smog in winter, by an international team found that people living in this broad swathe of land could expect to have their life expectancy shortened by five years on average due to illnesses related to air pollution. The research was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* journal in July of that year.

Moreover, as China embraces a healthier outlook in line with the government's latest five-year plan, more wealthy Chinese are moving their money and families overseas to minimise the risk of contracting heart disease, lung cancer or some other ailment linked to pollution.

To tackle the issue of chronic smog, the government has launched its most stringent environmental laws and policies to date in recent years.

Measures include shuttering factories that don't meet the required guidelines, or relocating them away from urban city centres, and regularly banning automobiles from the roads depending on their registration plate.

While these measures have been welcomed by the majority of Chinese society, negative side effects include

inconveniencing commuters, impeding economic output and ramping up pollution levels in less developed areas.

“The mainstream view [about pollution in China] is still quite grim,” said one environmental science researcher who was asked to comment on the new study. He declined to give his name.

“Global warming will lead to weaker winds across China, and that is the estimate of many research teams over the last few decades,” he said, adding that he was surprised at Yang’s claims.

“To overthrow other people’s forecasts, they need to come up with stronger evidence [than this].”

However, more scientists in China have come up with findings to challenge the generally accepted status quo in recent years.

Another research team with the Chinese Academy of Sciences reported recently that global warming will actually benefit China by increasing rainfall in its dry northern regions, while reducing flooding in the southern areas.

Although this contradicts previous studies, the argument was supported by evidence based on climate patterns repeated in plants dating back as far as 20,000 years.

China presses pollution-free buses in Tibet

Business Standard
Press Trust of India | Beijing
October 20, 2015

China has deployed nearly 150 energy-efficient buses in climate-sensitive Tibet to “protect” the environment of the ‘roof of the world’.

The buses — 27 electric and 120 hybrid — have been put into service in the provincial capital Lhasa, the second most populous city on the Tibetan Plateau after Xining.

The new buses are said to generate 30 per cent less emissions than traditional buses.

Lhasa’s buses and cabs are scheduled to switch entirely to new energy by 2018, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Famed for its blue-sky, an explosive growth in the number of vehicles has aroused environmental concerns in Lhasa.

The Tibetan Plateau is increasingly experiencing the effects of climate change. According to experts, the region has witnessed an increase in temperature of approximately 0.3 degrees Celsius every 10 years.

In the past 50 years, the temperature has increased by 1.3 degrees Celsius, three times the global average, they say.

Today, Lhasa has more than 150,000 vehicles — one for six people — and about half of Tibet’s total, the report said.

China has more than 46,000 glaciers, mainly on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, about 14.5 per cent of the world’s total.

And the alarming rate of their retreat will inevitably lead to ecological and environmental change, several experts have warned.

Climate change: Tibet sees receding glaciers, shrinking permafrost

The Economic Times
October 20, 2015

DHARAMSALA: The Tibetan plateau, home to the third largest store of ice that feeds Asia’s six great rivers, is highly vulnerable to climate change, researchers say, warning that over two-thirds of the glaciers could disappear by 2050.

Tibet is increasingly experiencing the effects of climate change. The Tibetan plateau has seen an increase in temperature of approximately 0.3 degrees Celsius every 10 years, say climate researchers of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

In the past 50 years, the temperature has increased by 1.3 degrees Celsius, three times the global average, they said.

This resulted in 82 percent retreating of ice cover and 10 percent degrading of permafrost.

Degrading grasslands and increasing desertification owing to large-scale mining, excessive damming and reducing forest cover also threaten the fragile ecosystem of Tibet, the highest and largest plateau which influences the onset of the Asian monsoon.

Sounding an alarm ahead of the UN climate talks – COP21 – in Paris next month, CTA head Lobsang Sangay said the world leaders should put Tibet, also called the Third Pole as it stores the most ice and water after the Arctic and Antarctic, at the centre of negotiations.

“An environmental catastrophe can be avoided by recognising the significance of the Tibetan plateau to the environmental health of the planet,” Sangay told IANS.

Quoting its independent studies and international scientific assessments, CTA researchers say excessive damming leads to heavy loss of water through evaporation and causes a significant fall in the river water volume in downstream countries.

This contributes to the release of greenhouse gases and climate change, they say, adding China has dammed major rivers and their tributaries in Tibet and more such action is expected.

Sangay said China has dammed every major river and its tributaries in Tibet. And more dams are expected as China has given priority to hydropower projects.

As an example, he said, by China's own estimates, 80 percent of Tibet's forests – which once covered 25.2 million hectares – have been destroyed. Similarly, China has announced more than 3,000 new mining sites that have deposits of 132 minerals.

Tibetan spiritual leader and Nobel laureate the Dalai Lama has been saying “the blue planet” of his homeland Tibet is currently vulnerable to climate change and needs to be protected not just for the people of Tibet but also for the world's environmental health and sustainability.

According to the researchers, 82 percent of the ice in Tibet has retreated in the past 50 years.

“There has been no net accumulation of ice since 1950's. The melting season comes earlier and lasts longer. And at the current rate, two-thirds of the glaciers will be gone by 2050,” the CTA said

It said climate change has a visible impact on the Alpine permafrost in Tibet, which stores about 12,300 million tonnes of carbon.

Permafrost is an ecologically important element of high-latitude and high-altitude ecosystems. In Tibet more than 50 percent of the total area is covered by grasslands.

“Ten percent of the permafrost has degraded in the past decade. The Tibetan permafrost stores one-third of the world's soil carbon. Its degradation and the resulting vegetation loss would lead to a huge amount of carbon entering the atmosphere, exacerbating global warming,” said a CTA researcher.

The Roof of the World, as Tibet is also known, is also facing desertification.

Quoting UNDP reports, Sangay said Tibet's grasslands are turning into deserts at a staggering 2,300 sq km per year. Likewise, the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing has stated that Tibet's wetlands have shrunk more than 10 percent in the past 40 years.

Climate researchers at the University of East Anglia and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in an online paper in US

academic journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, said the wettest individual year reconstructed in 3,500 years in northeastern Tibet is 2010.

“Solutions to the climate change crisis in Tibet exist. We want to recognise the global significance of the Tibetan plateau to the overall environmental health of the universe,” Dicki Chhoyang, CTA's head of the department of information and international relations, said.

She said the international community should urge the Chinese government to rigorously enforce its Environmental Protection Law that came into force on January 1 this year.

The Dalai Lama has lived in India since fleeing his homeland in 1959. The Tibetan exile administration is based in this northern Indian hill town.

India's longest rail-cum-road bridge on Brahmaputra to be ready by June 2017

Myinform.com

October 19, 2015

India's longest rail-cum-road bridge, the Bogibeel bridge on the Brahmaputra river in upper Assam, will be commissioned in June 2017, an official of the Northeast Frontier Railway said here on Wednesday.

India's longest rail-cum-road bridge, the Bogibeel bridge on the Brahmaputra river in upper Assam, will be commissioned in June 2017, an official of the Northeast Frontier Railway said here on Wednesday.

Announcing the successful launch of the twelfth girder of the bridge, the NF Railway official said construction of the 4.950 km bridge was going on as per schedule. “Altogether 2100 persons including engineers, welders and other workmen are at work to complete the bridge within the stipulated period,” he said.

The bridge that will connect Dibrugarh on the south with Dhemaji on the north, will have 39 girders of 125 meter and 2 girders of 33 meter span, and will be the fourth across the Brahmaputra. “It will also be India's longest road-cum-rail bridge,” the official said. While all the girders are likely to be completed by March 2017, it would take a few months more for final commissioning of the bridge, the official informed.

The earlier three bridges are located in Guwahati, between Kaliabor and Tezpur and between Goalpara and Jogighopa.

Swelling lake in China threatens endangered wildlife

zeenews.india.com
October 19, 2015

Beijing: A salt lake on China's Qinghai-Tibet plateau has tripled in size over years due to climate change, posing a threat to animals living nearby and local infrastructure.

The surface of Hoh Xil lake has grown from 45.89 square km in 2011 to the current 150.41 square km, Xinhua news agency quoted Qinghai Institute of Meteorological Science as saying.

It is located in Hoh Xil National Nature Reserve, home to several endangered species, including Tibetan antelopes and wild yaks.

"The lake's expansion will erode lakeside grassland and probably damage some nearby communication and transportation facilities," said Wang Hailin of the reserve's management bureau.

Though there has been no indication yet of damage to the habitats of antelopes and birds, the risks are mounting, he said.

The Qinghai-Tibet railway, the world's highest, is also threatened, as the distance between the lake and the track has been shortened from 12 to nine km.

Experts say the expansion of the lake is a result of the thawing of glaciers and increased rainfall under the influence of global warming.

Local authorities have been closely monitoring the expansion of the lake, and are planning to counter it by building dams and diverting water.

Hydropower station on Brahmaputra: India to monitor situation

The Indian Express
PTI
October 15, 2015

"We have ongoing consultations mechanism with China on water resources sector... China has repeatedly assured us that they have no intention of diverting water of the river and the Chinese projects that are coming up including this one are run-of-the-mill projects," the Spokesperson in the External Affairs Ministry said.

Amid reports that Chinese Zam Hydropower Station on the Brahmaputra river may disrupt water supplies in the country, India today said it will monitor the situation and will convey its concerns to Beijing, if required. "We have ongoing consultations mechanism with China on water resources sector... China has repeatedly assured us that they have no intention of diverting water of the river and the Chinese projects that are coming up including this one are run-of-the-mill projects. "Therefore, we will continue to monitor the situation and if we feel that it need our concerns to be conveyed to the Chinese side we will certainly do it," the Spokesperson in the External Affairs Ministry said. Two days ago, China operationalised its USD 1.5 billion Zam Hydropower Station, the largest in Tibet, built on the Brahmaputra, which has raised concerns that there may be disruption in the water supplies to India. Operationalising the dam, China said it will take into consideration India's concerns and will remain in contact with New Delhi on this. To a separate query on reports that Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif may hand over dossiers carrying evidence of India fomenting instability in Balochistan to the US President during his visit to Washington, the spokesperson said, "They are free to raise it with whoever they want. Nothing can stop them but facts speak for themselves." He also took a dig at Pakistan giving these dossiers to the UN, saying the global body receives around 800 representations every day but how many of them are taken not of. "It will be seen whether the UN Secretary General will appreciate the fiction." Asked about the recent flip-flop of former Pakistan Defence Minister Ahmed Mukhtar's on al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden's presence there, the Spokesperson said, "It is irrelevant whether it was a failure of the Pakistani state or complicity of the Pakistani. "Fact of the matter is that world's most wanted terrorist was found living a few hundred metres from Pakistan's military academy. This fact speaks enough about the state of Pakistan."

Report: China Completes Tibet's Biggest Hydropower Plant

Reuters

October 13, 2015



FILE – Picture shows the Zangmu Hydropower Station in Gyaca county in Lhoka, or Shannan prefecture, southwest China's Tibet region, Nov. 23, 2014.

China has completed the construction of the Zangmu hydropower facility in Tibet, the largest so far to be built in the region, the company in charge of building the project said on Tuesday.

The project on the Yarlung Zangbo river, the upstream section of the transboundary Brahmaputra, is located around 140 kilometres from the regional capital of Lhasa and cost 9.6 billion yuan (\$1.52 billion) to build, said Gezhouba Group, one of China's biggest state dam builders, on its website.

All six units have now been completed and connected to the grid. With a combined capacity of 510 megawatts, the Zangmu facility will supply 2.5 billion kilowatt-hours of power to the grid annually, or enough to meet the needs of more than 600,000 residents based on Chinese per capita power use in 2014.

The 2,900-km Brahmaputra flows southeast from Tibet through the Himalayas into northeast India's Arunachal Pradesh before entering Bangladesh and merging with the lower section of the Ganges, when it empties into the Bay of Bengal.

India has expressed concern that upstream dams could disrupt downstream water supplies.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on Tuesday that the two sides continue to communicate on the issue.

"China pays great attention to the issue of source water protection for downstream regions. Experts from both sides have also been in close contact," she said. "We are also willing to fully consider India's relevant concerns and continue to stay in close contact with India about this."

The Brahmaputra in Tibet was identified in China's 2011-2015 energy "five-year plan" as one of the key sites for hydropower development, along with two other transboundary rivers in southwest Yunnan province, the Salween and the Mekong.

Sewage plant in China shamed for fabricating pollution data

Economic Times

PTI

October 11, 2015

BEIJING: China's environment authority has named and shamed a sewage treatment plant in the southern part of the country for fabricating pollution data and dumping excessive polluted water.

The plant in Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, has fabricated the pollution volume it treated, inflating the number to gain more subsidies from the government, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said in a statement yesterday, adding that the violation was "very serious."

The plant has also illegally pumped water to its sewers to dilute the waste water and make it "look clean," it added.

Maintenance on its pollution treatment facilities was also under par, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The ministry asked the Guangdong environment authority to further investigate the case and transfer those suspected of crimes to judicial organs.

China targets corruption in environment impact assessment

English.news.cn

October 10, 2015

BEIJING, Oct. 15 (Xinhua) — China has revised regulations on environmental impact assessors to combat corruption, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) said on Thursday.

The regulation prohibits any enterprises funded by environmental authorities or their affiliates from being accredited as assessment agencies.

The regulation also tightens supervision over the environment impact assessments, including raising fines, holding both agencies and practitioners accountable for wrongdoing, and making the process more transparent.

Cheng Lifeng, director of the MEP Environmental Impact Assessment Department, said the regulation was a response to criticism of discipline inspectors following an MEP inspection in February.

The regulation will take effect on Nov. 1.

China's green revolution

The Week

October 10, 2015

The world's worst polluter is worried about climate change, and is now the biggest global investor in green technology. Here's everything you need to know.

How much does China pollute?

China has overtaken the U.S. as the world's largest economy, and over the past two decades its blitz of industrialisation has pulled millions of people out of poverty — and pumped millions of tons of carbon into the atmosphere. From 2008 to 2013 alone, annual energy consumption in China rose more than 50 percent. Some 70 percent of that electricity was generated from the worst possible source: coal. China burns as much coal as the rest of the world combined, and it now emits twice as much total carbon as the U.S. (although Americans still lead the world in per capita emissions). You can see the results in the thick haze that blankets Beijing and just about every other city. In fact, just a handful of China's 500 largest cities meet World Health Organisation standards for air quality.

How bad is the smog?

Air pollution kills more than half a million Chinese people every year. Runners in the Beijing International Marathon last year had to wear face masks against the smothering yellow haze, and smog alerts routinely force cities to ban driving and temporarily shut down factories. The filth has begun to cause what Chinese authorities fear most: political unrest. China now has more than 50,000 environmental protests a year, mostly local demonstrations against planned factories and waste incineration plants. Communist Party officials and business leaders aren't happy about the pollution, either. "Watching people wearing anti-toxin masks in the capital is pretty embarrassing," said Yun Gongmin, head of China Huadian, one of the largest state-owned energy companies. "Nobody wants to live in a polluting city for fear of getting diseases."

What is China doing about it?

China's authorities are making a major push to curb emissions, both to ease the smog and alleviate the consequences of climate change. In Washington last month, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that a national cap-and-trade program, the world's biggest, would begin in 2017. Chinese companies that emit more greenhouse gases than the allowed cap will be fined, while those that emit less can sell their credits. China is also pouring money into renewable energy, investing \$90 billion last year alone, more than any other country. It has ramped up its solar power at a staggering rate, building sprawling solar farms in the Gobi Desert and increasing capacity this year by 18 gigawatts, an amount equal to the entire solar capacity of the U.S. China is already the world's largest producer of wind power, with thousands of turbines installed in the windy west and plans to more than double the number of turbines over the next five years. It's also the world's largest hydropower producer, home to half the world's 80,000 dams and building many more every year.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18041>

Green China: Why Beijing Fears a Nascent Environmental Protest Movement

takepart.com

October 9, 2015

Worried about the health effects of China's out-of-control pollution, citizens are starting to take action.

Sometimes in the middle of the night, a pungent odour permeates the suburb of Asuwei, outside Beijing. A chemical tang mixed with the rotten smell of garbage, it can be so strong that it awakens Hu Jun from her slumber. She says that when the wind blows in a certain direction, she knows the smell is coming and closes the windows before going to bed. But it still gets in. "I can smell it when I'm asleep. It comes through the cracks. It can permeate the room and wakes me up," says Hu, a university professor in her late 50s. (Her name has been changed, as speaking negatively about the government in China can result in harassment, persecution, or imprisonment.)

Asuwei is past the end of Beijing's sprawling subway line, where the city meets the countryside, close to a river and a hot spring resort. The stench comes from an overflowing nearby landfill; opened in 1996, it has grown with the Chinese capital's population and wealth to exceed

capacity. Hu knew about the landfill when she left the city center a decade ago but believed the upmarket development of neat houses with tidy lawns where she was making her new home would be a quiet, idyllic place to live. But soon residents were complaining about the garbage smell, and five years ago, the local government installed giant chemical-spraying guns, a kind of enormous version of a Febreze air freshener. But instead of solving the problem, the putative deodorisers created another. Hu says that now she can almost taste the chemicals in the air. "It is not merely a bad smell; it is a smell that is a mix of the chemicals and the garbage."

Beijing now produces almost 15 billion pounds of municipal household waste each year; the landfill at Asuwei receives 7.2 million pounds. In an effort to deal with the growing amount of trash generated by China's expanding middle class and increasingly consumerist society, Beijing and other cities are building huge incinerators—including one close to the landfill in Asuwei. Hu is worried; once fully operational, the new incinerator will reportedly burn 6 million pounds of garbage a day. Environmental authorities have said the project passed the required assessments, but Hu and other residents are mistrustful, fearing the emissions that will come from the plant. "The environment cannot tolerate it, and our health would be at risk," she says. She maintains that everyone in the area is against the incinerator, though only a few—including Hu—are taking action, organising and participating in public protests. She spends a lot of time reading and analysing reports and environmental assessments, trying to find a way to stop the incinerator from opening.

China's leaders appear fearful that the many, small localised bands of discontented citizens like Hu will coalesce into a larger movement; it now spends more money on internal security, which includes managing and suppressing these protests, than it does on its military. The unification of what are now disconnected grassroots actions against specific pollution sources into a national environmental movement is perceived as a threat to the rule of the Communist Party. The Internet, used by activists and protesters as a tool for sharing information, is often quickly scrubbed of evidence of any protest actions or criticism of the government. Earlier this year, a documentary film on China's environmental ills received hundreds of millions of hits in just one week before being taken down by government censors, presumably out of fear that it could become China's Silent Spring moment, sparking a nationwide outcry. At the same time, citizens are fearful too—of the rash of toxins that threaten their lives, and of the government that has shown it is willing to punish those who dare complain about the threat.

Nevertheless, complaining they are, in increasing numbers and with increasing boldness—and impact.

Over a traditional lunch of shared dishes, Hu explains her motivation. "Our main disagreement is that the government believes the pollution can be under control, but we don't," she says, getting animated and waving her chopsticks. "The government said they could control the pollution in the landfill, but the stinky air is constantly there. I'm told the landfills in the U.S. don't have any smell at all. Golf courses, parks, and cafés are right around them. But our government doesn't have good management ability. It's actually a public trust issue."

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18035>

China raises solar installation target for 2015

Reuters

October 7, 2015

China has raised its solar power installation target for 2015 by 30 percent from its previous goal, state media reported, potentially adding to overcapacity as insufficient grid capacity remains a hurdle for the new plants to deliver power.

Solar plants can in theory delivery returns of 10-15 percent under long-term power purchase contracts with state utilities but in practice face problems of subsidy collection and panel quality, making investors wary of the sector.

China will add another 5.3 GW installed capacity of solar power stations this year, on top of an earlier national target of 17.8 GW, Xinhua reported, citing a notice from the National Energy Administration last week.

The new stations will be added mostly in Inner Mongolia and Hebei in the north and Xinjiang in the west, the report said.

The NEA required the project hosts to complete construction by end of this year and get connected to the grid by end of June next year, the report said.

China's insufficient grid capacity and overcapacity has curtailed the sector's growth. Nearly a tenth of the solar power generated during the first half of this year was unable to be delivered, according to the NEA.

China, the world's largest solar market, installed 7.73 GW capacity in the first six months of 2015, the NEA has said, which would be only a third of the new target, meaning

companies would need to speed up construction significantly in the second half of the year.

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, has vowed to cap CO2 emissions by largely increasing the use of non-fossil fuel such as wind and solar, hoping for a peak in carbon emissions by 2030.

The country aims to raise the share of non-fossil fuels to 15 percent of its total energy mix by 2020 from around 11 percent at end-2014 as part of efforts to ease its dependence on coal and meet its climate pledges to the United Nations.

Tibet gets its first natural science museum

GBTIMES

October 2, 2015

The first natural science museum in Lhasa, capital city of the Tibet Autonomous Region, went into trial operation on Thursday, reports People's Daily.

The museum, which covers a space of 30,000 square metres, has two exhibition halls, one for natural science exhibits and the other for modern technology.

With interactive devices installed, the museum offers people the experience of visiting the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and also plays host to China's highest calibre astronomical telescope.

The facility will cultivate innovation from local youths and develop interests in science and technology in the wider community, according to Gang Qing, head of the regional department of science and technology.

The museum, backed by an investment of 400 million yuan (\$63 million), is Tibet's largest, reports Xinhua News Agency. It can hold up to 3,000 visitors and will be open to the public after the end of the trial on October 10.

Border Issue

8,000 more ITBP troops to guard the Chinese border in Arunachal

thenortheasttoday.com

October 30, 2015

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police is all set to give a boost to its strength along the Chinese border by 12,000 personnel. Two-thirds of that will go to Arunachal and the remainder to Ladakh.

The procedure for the ITBP to take over the guarding of the Myanmar border from the Assam Rifles has also started.

The Defence Ministry has sanctioned eight new battalions, around 8,000 personnel, for Arunachal. This takes the total figure of ITBP forces in the state to 19 battalions guarding the 1126-km long international border.

Last September, Indian security forces had found surveillance equipment belonging to Chinese forces set up in Ladakh. After they dismantled the equipment, there had been a standoff with the Chinese troops.

There have been other similar instances in Ladakh that had forced the government to consider raising the current strength of protection along the border.

The Defence Ministry had, earlier this year, given its nod to withdraw Assam Rifles from the Myanmar border because according to international conventions, borders cannot be guarded by armies.

The Assam Rifles, though technically a paramilitary force under the home ministry, is actually a part of the army.

Arunachal Pradesh, which shares a border with both China and Myanmar, will get a frontier headquarter for the ITBP and two sector headquarters.

Posts for woman in the rank of assistant commandants have also been sanctioned.

The forces will get at least 4,000 night-vision devices for better surveillance of the Chinese border.

India to invest big in Arunachal Pradesh

straitstimes.com
Bloomberg
October 27, 2015

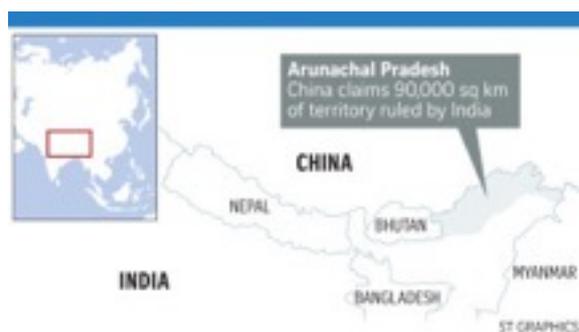
India plans to invest billions of dollars to populate a remote north-eastern state it has neglected since fighting a war with neighbouring China more than five decades ago.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is finalising blueprints for a US\$6 billion (S\$8.4 billion) highway in Arunachal Pradesh, which is also claimed by China. Construction on the 2,000km road will start as early as 2018, Mr Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Home Affairs, said in an interview.

"If China is developing on their side of the territory, we should develop on our side," Mr Rijiju, a native of Arunachal Pradesh, said at his New Delhi residence last Saturday. "India has failed the people living along that border. We are now taking very concrete steps in that direction."

Prime Minister Modi has taken a more assertive stance towards China as he seeks to constrain its territorial ambitions, while still attracting investment to strengthen India's economy.

In addition to developing the north-east, he has sided with the United States in calling for stability in the South China Sea and bolstered ties with Sri Lanka after it voted out a pro-China government.



Arunachal Pradesh, which means "Land of the Dawn-Lit Mountains", is an area in the Himalayas the size of Austria tucked between China, Myanmar and Bhutan.

It has 1.4 million people, less than 1 per cent of India's 1.2 billion population, and a third of them live in poverty as hydropower, coal and mineral resources sit undeveloped.

In 1962, India and China fought a four-week war over their Himalayan border. Chinese troops operating at high

altitudes advanced into Arunachal Pradesh and another disputed area to the west.

The war ended when China declared a ceasefire and withdrew to the McMahon Line formed by Britain and Tibet in 1914, which serves as the de facto border today.

Since then, China has developed nearby areas. The Tibet autonomous region today boasts over 7,000km of highways, all-weather road and rail links to China's heartland, five airfields and a fibre optic network that connects nearly all towns, said Delhi Policy Group.

Arunachal Pradesh, by contrast, has been forgotten. It was connected to the national railway network only last year, the nearest commercial airport is in another state and large swathes do not have power or telecommunications.

While the state has more hydropower potential than what is currently installed in all of India, less than 1 per cent has been developed. Only 29 per cent of the region has paved roads, compared with a national average of 62 per cent, according to the Central Electricity Authority and a report by PwC.

"We have reversed that policy because it is a huge geographical tract and very strategic," Mr Rijiju said of the failure to develop Arunachal Pradesh. He said Mr Modi has allocated more resources to build schools, clinics and bridges there, and is planning to boost telecommunication and transport networks.

Mr Rijiju stressed that India's moves should not be seen as a challenge to China.

"I don't want to link it to China," he said. "We are not doing anything to disturb relations. It is not in terms of challenging or competing with China, but in terms of securing our own territory."

The highway project should strengthen economic ties between India and China instead of dividing the nations, Mr Rijiju said.

China may not see it that way. "The Chinese government has never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh unilaterally established by India," Vice-Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said in a February statement.

China calls the area South Tibet and has repeatedly asked India to "refrain from actions that complicate the boundary issue".

ITBP to create 50 new posts along China; says no warmongering

Business Standard
Press Trust of India
October 27, 2015

Aiming to bolster its presence along the Sino-India border, the ITBP will create over 50 new posts and deploy about 8,000 fresh troops along this sensitive frontier even as it disapproved today of becoming “warmongers” in the wake of several incursions taking place at this border.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police Director General Krishna Chaudhary, during the annual press conference on the eve of the forces’ 54th Raising Day, said while he does not deny that incidents of transgression have taken place due to difference of perception of the border between ITBP-Army and the Chinese PLA, his agenda for the deployment of his force at this border was to guard it and not to wage war.

“We must not become warmongers. The objective is peace. The objective is not to fight a war but to guard (this border). All our neighbours are our friends and we want to enhance friendship with them. The perception that we are going to war (due to recent standoffs between the two sides) is not correct. There is no call for a major concern,” the ITBP chief told reporters here.

He said making “provocative statements” is not something that they want to do and India wants to have friendly relations with all its neighbours.

While refusing to share the number of border transgressions that took place in the last year, Chaudhary revealed that the force was building up its strengths by creating more border posts and inducting smart weather-proof facilities in these areas prone to snow blizzards and blinding storms.

“We have established six new border posts in Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh this year. In eight posts in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh we have augmented facilities and troops strength during the same period,” he said.

Chaudhary said the force has also got a defence approval for setting up of a total of 52 new border posts in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim and ITBP was “on the verge” of getting the final government sanction for the creation of these fortified locations.

The force will deploy eight battalions (about 8,000 personnel) to man these new posts.

“We have also requested the government to sanction us 10 new battalions so that we can have more units for rest

and recuperation as most of our border guarding troops serve in extremely hard areas and icy conditions,” the DG said.

ITBP to deploy women personnel to guard India’s border with China for the first time

firstpost.com
PTI
October 27, 2015

In a first, border guarding force ITBP has decided to deploy women personnel in combat duties at its high-altitude posts along the Indo-China border.

The force is training a special contingent of 500 ‘mahila’ constables for the task and these personnel are expected to take position at the border by early next year.

“This is for the first time that we are deploying women personnel in full combat role right at the border. The aim is that women work shoulder-to-shoulder with men in this force. We are preparing infrastructure for them at these locations and they will take charge soon,” ITBP Director General Krishna Chaudhary told reporters in New Delhi on the eve of the forces’ 54th Raising Day.

In an another proverbial breaking of the glass ceiling, the about 60,000 personnel strong force will also induct women officers for the first time.

Chaudhary said the force has already sent a request to induct women officers in the entry-rank of Assistant Commandants (ACs) to the UPSC.

“We are looking forward to have more and more women to come into the force. We want them in officer ranks so that they can lead our battalions. The women personnel who are in the force are doing good work and this is a positive indicator,” he said.

ITBP is the only force till now which did not have women coming into the force in class ‘A’ officer rank like CRPF, BSF, CISF and SSB.

The DG said they have envisaged a “modest” role for these women personnel to be posted on the border and it has been decided that about one-third of the strength of a border post, where men and women troops are posted, will be kept female.

Officials said the first deployment of this maiden women squad will be made in the Ladakh sector of Jammu and Kashmir where ITBP troops man posts at a height of over 8,000 feet and more.

“We have not set any scale of work for these women. They are as good as men and I think they are trained to render any task,” he said.

The force has a total of 1,661 women personnel in its various ranks and branches of work with the maximum number of 1,033 being in the constabulary ranks.

The women constables of ITBP were till now deployed for rendering law and order duties in troubled areas and in few instances they have been posted at the Nathu La trade pass for facilitating traders and frisking women members.

In a landmark move, the government recently had approved induction of women fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force (IAF), the first time when women would be in combat role in the country’s armed forces.

China plays down Indian border standoff video

zeenewsindia.com

October 26, 2015

China on Monday said ties with India and between the armies have improved as a result of bilateral mechanisms put in place by both sides to bring down tensions over the disputed border after a video emerged showing Indian and Chinese soldiers involved in a standoff in 2013.

“I have seen the report. The video showed something that happened several years ago. We released information and clarified our position at that time,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing.

He was replying to question about a video shown by an Indian television channel in which soldiers from both sides animatedly argued that the particular area in Ladakh region where they stood belong to their respective countries.

The video was shown by China’s Phoenix television creating a buzz on Chinese social media.

The standoffs began ahead of the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to India as his first overseas destination soon after he took over the post in 2013 as goodwill gesture.

The standoff in which Chinese troops pitched tents at Depsang area in Ladakh continued for several days before they withdrew.

After the incident the two sides activated the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) which included senior diplomats and military officials to

resolve a number of other standoffs including the one which took place during the visit of President Xi Jinping to India in 2014.

“As we have known, in recent years China and India have set up and improved cooperation mechanisms including the WMCC and border defence mechanism. These mechanism enhanced mutual trust and helped us to resolve these issues in timely fashion,” Hua said.

“This showed that as long as the two sides have the political will they are capable and have the wisdom to resolve the issue and maintain peace and stability of the border areas. We all know that stable and sound development of bilateral ties are important to regional peace and stability.

“We hope the two sides can enhance mutual trust through this mechanisms and move forward cooperation properly deal with relevant issue and ensure peace and stability of the border area and maintain sound development of bilateral relations,” she said.

India Is Spending Billions to Populate a Remote Area Claimed by China

Bloomberg.com

October 26, 2015



Soldier guards military installation in Tawang. This Indian town with its historic monastery is in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which has long been disputed territory and that China claims as ‘South Tibet.’ Photographer: Annie Gowen/The Washington Post via Getty Images

India plans to invest billions of dollars to populate a remote northeastern state it has neglected since fighting a war with neighbouring China more than five decades ago.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government is finalising blueprints for a \$6 billion highway in Arunachal Pradesh, which is also claimed by China. Construction on the 2,000-kilo meter (1,243-mile) road will start as early as 2018,

Kiren Rijju, minister of state for home affairs, said in an interview.

“If China is developing on their side of the territory, we should develop on our side,” Rijju, a native of Arunachal Pradesh, said at his New Delhi residence on Saturday. “India has failed the people living along that border. We’re now taking very concrete steps in that direction.”

Modi has taken a more assertive stance toward China as he seeks to constrain its territorial ambitions while still attracting investment to strengthen India’s economy. In addition to developing the northeast, Modi has sided with the U.S. in calling for stability in the South China Sea and bolstered ties with Sri Lanka after it voted out a pro-China government.

Arunachal Pradesh — which means “Land of the Dawn-Lit Mountains” — is an area in the Himalayas the size of Austria tucked between China, Myanmar and Bhutan. It has 1.4 million people, less than 1 percent of India’s 1.2 billion population, and a third of them live below the poverty line as hydropower, coal and mineral resources sit undeveloped.



Proposed highway in Arunachal Pradesh Source: Bloomberg

In 1962, India and China fought a four-week war over their Himalayan border. Chinese troops operating in extremely cold weather at high altitudes advanced into Arunachal Pradesh and another disputed area to the west. It ended when China declared a cease-fire and withdrew to a boundary known as the McMahon Line formed by Britain and Tibet in 1914, which serves as the de facto border today.

Since then, China has developed nearby areas. The Tibet autonomous region today boasts more than 7,000 kilo meters of highways, all-weather road and rail links to China’s heartland, five airfields and a fiber optic network that connects nearly all towns, according to Delhi Policy Group.

Forgotten State

Arunachal Pradesh, by contrast, has been forgotten. The state was only connected to the national railway network last year, the nearest commercial airport is in another

state and large swathes of the territory don’t have power or telecommunications.

While the state has more hydropower potential than what is currently installed in all of India, less than 1 percent has been developed. Only 29 percent of the region has paved roads compared with a national average of 62 percent, according to figures from the Central Electricity Authority and a report by PwC.

“We have reversed that policy because it’s a huge geographical tract and very strategic,” Rijju said of the failure to develop Arunachal Pradesh.

Modi has allocated more resources to build schools, clinics and small bridges in the state, and is planning to boost telecommunication and transport networks, Rijju said.

“The people along the border have migrated down where amenities are available,” he said. People native to the region “should not have to move out for want of basic amenities.”

Rijju stressed that India’s moves shouldn’t be interpreted as a challenge to China. “I don’t want to link it to China,” he said. “We’re not doing anything to disturb relations. It’s not in terms of challenging or competing with China, but in terms of securing our own territory.”

No Recognition

China may not see it that way.

“The Chinese government has never recognised the so-called ‘Arunachal Pradesh’ unilaterally established by India,” Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said in a Feb. 21 statement after Modi gave a speech in the state capital. China calls the area South Tibet and has repeatedly asked India to “refrain from actions that complicate the boundary issue.”

Modi has sought to settle the boundary dispute, which continues to flare up from time to time. A two-week standoff ensued in September 2014 when Chinese troops advanced several kilo meters into northern Ladakh, an area of strategic importance nestled between Tibet and Pakistan.

During a visit to Beijing in May, Modi called for China to “reconsider its approach” and settle the border issues once and for all. It may yet happen: President Xi Jinping said last year that the Chinese side is determined to resolve the boundary question at an early date.

The highway project should strengthen economic ties between India and China instead of dividing the nations, Rijju said. China was India’s largest trading partner last year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

“It should not be seen as a confrontation but as complementary,” he said. “These ancient linkages are a reality.”

‘Not Your Bloody Area’: How Indian and Chinese Soldiers Faced Off in Ladakh

NDTV.com

October 25, 2015

“This is not your bloody area. This is our area. And you are doing recce [reconnaissance], and patrolling this area with so many people? 10 people can do patrolling. Why so many?” Angry words from an Indian Army Officer to a Chinese officer as soldiers of both sides came face to face in Ladakh in Northeast Kashmir.

“The line is very clear,” says the Chinese officer in halting English. The Indian officer replies, “This is Indian territory. You are in Indian territory.”

This is all part of a video of a tense standoff that the Army says took place more than two years ago. And though the Army says there haven’t been recent flare-ups like this, the fact remains, young men from either side tasked with holding the line are often involved in situations where frayed tempers, miscommunication and contradictory claims to territory pose a very serious threat to the overall peace between that exists between the two countries.

As the face off becomes more volatile, the Chinese officer repeats, “The line is very clear.”

The Indian Army officer counters this and wagging his finger tells his Chinese counterpart, “The line is very clear to me. It is not clear to you.”

With both sides refusing to budge an inch, Chinese soldiers form a protective cordon behind their officer preventing the Indian Army from moving forward. Indian soldiers do the same to prevent the Chinese moving closer to Indian positions.

This tense high altitude standoff is a complete contrast to the friendly side of the India-China military equation. Just two days ago, far from the barren high altitude desert of Eastern Ladakh, Indian officers were garlanding their Chinese soldiers with medals in operations called Hand in Hand, joint operations that have now ended in Kunming in China. So while there are standoffs on the line of actual control in Ladakh and in Arunachal Pradesh, there is also the pomp and pageantry of military parades at the closing ceremony of joint exercises such as Hand in Hand,

exercises held for 12 days, where both sides worked together in joint anti-terrorism operations.

And then further south, in a third altogether different scenario, the Navies of India, Japan and the United States trained in very high level Naval manoeuvres in the Bay of Bengal last week in what is being seen as the first step towards the formation of a Naval alliance against an increasingly expansionist Chinese Navy.

India insists that its China policy is pragmatic and that the Naval exercises target no one. Delhi also says the joint exercises with China are a gesture at being friends. But out there in the cold sub-zero temperatures of Ladakh, its often business as usual for Indian and Chinese soldiers defending a frontier that remains undefined for decades.

Uttarakhand: After border visit, Rijiju sounds alert on use of Nepal SIM cards

The Indian Express

October 21, 2015

Rijiju has written to the DoT and the Ministry of Defence that the local villagers, and even the soldiers posted there, use Nepal SIM cards, as Indian telecom services are not available in the region.



Gunji village in Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand.

After his two-day visit to areas of Uttarakhand on the Indo-Nepal and Sino-Indian borders, Minister of State (MoS) for Home Kiren Rijiju has raised a peculiar security concern. Rijiju has written to the Department of Telecom and the Ministry of Defence that the local villagers, and even the soldiers posted there, use Nepal SIM cards, as Indian telecom services are not available in the region. This means all communication in the area can easily be tapped by Nepal or even China, the MoS has pointed out.

Rijiju visited Gunji, Kalapani and Nabhidang posts near the Indo-Nepal and Sino-Indian borders in Uttarakhand on

Sunday and Monday. The first minister from the Centre to visit these areas, Rijiju said he was surprised to find scores of villages near the border deprived of even basic amenities.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Rijiju said, "It's a shame that in 68 years of independence, we have not been able to provide over 20,000 villagers in this region with roads, electricity and telecommunication. People, including our jawans, use SIM cards bought from Nepal as Indian telecom signals do not reach here.

There is no tower in the entire region." Confirming that he had written to Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, the MoD, and sent a note to Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi, he said, "We talk of securing the border, but can't provide basic amenities.

[Our soldiers using Nepal SIM cards is a security risk.](#)

According to the minister, after Pungla, a small village near Dharchula in Uttarakhand, there are no motorable roads up north till the Sino-Indian border.

Rijiju himself had to trek for eight hours from Kalapani to Nabhidang to meet soldiers guarding the borders. "Villagers in this region walk for five days to reach a road. After Dharchula, only Nepal SIM cards work," Rijiju told The Indian Express.

Notably, the route the minister took to reach Nabhidang is the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra trail. Fifteen kilometres after Dharchula, travellers begin climbing on foot to reach their destination.

the delegation leaders. Thereafter a function showcasing vibrant cultures took place, the statement said.

The proceedings reflected a mutual desire of maintaining and improving relations at the border.

Both delegations interacted with each other in a congenial and cordial environment.

The delegations parted amidst feelings of bonhomie and commitment towards enhancing the existing cordial relations and maintaining peace along the LAC.

Both sides also sought to build on the mutual feeling for upholding the treaties and agreements signed between the governments of the two sides to maintain peace and tranquility along the LAC, the communique added.

A similar exchange of pleasantries between the two countries was held Thursday at the Chinese Border Personnel Meeting huts at Chushul and Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) in eastern Ladakh to mark the 67 Anniversary of Chinese National Day.

The BPM, on the occasion of Chinese National Day on 1 October, is conducted every year by Chinese troops with great enthusiasm, the communique said.

Indian, Chinese troops hold meeting near Arunachal border after face-off along LAC

First Post India

October 2, 2015

A ceremonial Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) between India and China was held near Bumla in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh on the occasion of Chinese National Day, weeks after a face-off between the two along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

The Indian delegation was led by Brigadier DS Kushwah, Commander of Tawang Brigade while Colonel Tang Fu Cheng, Commander of Tsona Dzong Garrison represented the Chinese delegation, a defence communique informed in Itanagar on Friday.

The meeting was marked by unfurling the national flags of India and China, followed by ceremonial address by both

Other News

XI JINPING VISIT: SHAO JIANG URGED DAVID CAMERON TO CRITICISE CHINA'S HUMAN

or-politics.com
October 27, 2015



Senior Chinese pro-democracy campaigners protesting Britain's treatment of an activist detained during Chinese President Xi Jinping's pageant-filled visit to Britain.

Officers were filmed arresting Shao Jiang outside Mansion House in central London, on Wednesday before President Xi's arrival. After his arrest this week, his home was searched by British police, his wife told *The Independent*, and his computer was confiscated. The activists, named as Sonam Choden, 30, and Jamphel Lhamo, 33, both from London, reportedly attempted to wave Tibetan flags at President Xi's passing vehicle, before being dragged away by police. "Otherwise [the United Kingdom government] will damage their human rights standards and undermine democracy", he warned. Now they are a regular fixture on the London Chinese dissident scene, where they had thought that they would be guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to peaceful protest. Tibetan exile groups have also reacted with anger following the arrest of two women shortly after Shao for waving a Tibetan flag near Xi's auto, and had their homes searched while they were under arrest. Johanna Zhang, who earlier protested with her husband outside Downing Street, said: "When I was told by the police he had been arrested, it was like I was back in China again". "It feels like it was when I was in China," he said. He added: "Shao Jiang has witnessed a lot in his life". She said: "In addition to the need to facilitate peaceful protest, there was a need to ensure a tight security operation for not only the Chinese President and First Lady but also our Royal Family and Prime Minister".

The Met said Mr Jiang and the two women were initially arrested to "prevent a breach of the peace". The arrests come amid accusations the British government and Scotland Yard have kowtowed to Chinese demands for firm action over protesters. All three have been released on police bail. After trying to take pictures she says she was "singled out by three official looking Chinese men, who effectively herded me away from the event, lowered my arm holding the camera". Commander Lucy D'Orsi said: "The assertion that political manipulation of the command team or, indeed, the broader Metropolitan Police took place is wrong and doesn't reflect the facts". The officer responsible for policing the visit said she was "disappointed" at claims her force tried to suppress legitimate protest. Other protesters have expressed "shock" at how peaceful demonstrators are being treated by police. Perhaps it is time that we should focus a few of our concentration on our own civil liberties at the same time as we criticize others for their stance on human rights," he added. London police said Jiang, a 47-year-old academic and a blogger for human rights group Amnesty worldwide, was arrested on suspicion of "conspiracy to commit threatening behavior". Campaigners accused the Metropolitan Police of acting disproportionately and suggested Britain was kowtowing to China to secure lucrative trade deals. 'Like back in China': Met police arrest, raid home of Tiananmen Square survivor

Spiritual and political leaders of Tibet congratulate Canada's new PM

Tibet Post International

23 October 2015

Welcoming the incoming Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,, The spiritual and political leaders of Tibet congratulated Mr Justin Trudeau on his party's victory in the Canadian national elections.

In a letter, the spiritual leader of Tibet His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated that "during his visits to Canada over many years he has been touched by the affection and friendship shown to him by Canadians from all walks of life."

The Nobel Peace laureate said "Canada extended a warm welcome to Tibetan refugees for resettlement on humanitarian grounds from the early 1970s onwards, a generous gesture for which we remain grateful."

His Holiness also said he is “pleased to see that by and large they are contributing to the enrichment of Canadian life.”

He further added that “he was sure it would be a source of pride to his late father that, following in his footsteps, he too has now been elected Prime Minister of Canada. His Holiness wished Mr Trudeau every success.”

“On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people, I would like to congratulate you and your party’s decisive victory in the Canadian general election and wish you all the best for your new responsibility as the prime minister,” Sikyong or the democratically elected political leader of the Tibetan people wrote in his congratulatory letter.

“I also wish to thank your party for endorsing the Tibet cause during the election campaign and encouraging the Chinese government to engage with the Tibetan political leadership in a spirit of constructive dialogue. As you have rightly pointed out, dialogue, not confrontation, is the key to resolving the critical situation in Tibet,” Sikyong said.

“I am grateful for the people and Government of Canada for their support to the Tibetan people by facilitating the immigration of up to 1000 Tibetans living in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in India. I look forward to your continued support on the issue of Tibet so as to resolve the critical situation prevailing inside Tibet,” he added.

“On behalf of all the Tibetan people, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile wishes to congratulate you and your party for the victory in the recent election. It’s great to see you in the footstep of your late father on the same position and we hope you will take your country to a higher level,” said Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

“We have been very appreciative of your party’s support for the cause of Tibet and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” the Speaker added.

“We also express our sincere gratitude for the government and the people of Canada for their support towards Tibetan people by rendering immigration facilities for the Tibetans living in Arunachal Pradesh, India.”

“We wish you all the success in your endeavours and hope you will continue to play a pro-active role in reducing the current grave situation inside Tibet and in finding a lasting solution to the issue of Tibet based on the mutually beneficial Middle Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Administration-in-Exile,” he wrote.

Mr Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party, is the son of former Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau. The new prime minister-elect has met His Holiness the Dalai Lama

during his public talk in Toronto in 2004. He has also introduced His Holiness before the public talk.

Awkward! Chinese President forces a smile as he is challenged on live TV over ‘deeply, deeply troubling attitude’ to human rights

Dailymail.co.uk
October 21, 2015

Chinese President Xi Jinping was today challenged on his country’s ‘deeply, deeply troubling attitude’ to human rights on live television as he was confronted by the reality of Britain’s free press.

A Downing Street press conference was electrified by a question from the BBC’s political editor Laura Kuennsberg which left British officials squirming.

The start of President Xi’s state visit had passed off without incident with protesters kept away from key events or drowned out by pro-Beijing groups.

But appearing in Number 10 alongside David Cameron, he was forced to smile as Miss Kuennsberg took him to task before claiming he must ‘combine human rights with China’s reality’.

In came as the Prime Minister trumpeted a deal which will see China take a 33 per cent stake in a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset.

The lavish welcome given to the Chinese President has been attacked as a ‘national humiliation’ by a former close adviser to the Prime Minister, who is under pressure to raise concerns about human rights and ‘dumped’ cheap steel blamed for the loss of thousands of British jobs.

“A country that isn’t democratic, isn’t transparent and has a deeply, deeply troubling attitude towards human rights”

BBC’s Laura Kuennsberg

Ex-Number 10 policy guru Steve Hilton said the UK should be imposing sanctions, not rolling out the red carpet.

Mr Cameron has also been forced to deny that the new ‘golden era’ of relations with China will not damage Britain’s special relationship with the US.

Amnesty International says China executes more people than any other nation – potentially thousands a year –

while freedom of expression is limited and activists face harassment and arbitrary detention.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn raised concerns about human rights at a face-to-face meeting with President Xi last night, but behind closed doors.

David Cameron hoped to use the press conference to champion a series of multi-billion pound trade deals with China

Protesters During Xi Jinping's UK Visit Tell Their Stories

Epoch Times
October 21, 2015

As the first day of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's state visit came to a close, we found out more about the people protesting



Heading down toward Buckingham Palace through Green Park, the sound of chanting grew louder.

Although the day's protests were coming to an end they had lost none of their energy. A group of Tibetans was shouting "No more CCP" and "China, China, China, out, out out!" while a line of policemen encircled the remaining pro-CCP supporters. Newscasters stood to the side, delivering pieces to cameras while the protests still had life left in them.

It was mainly Tibetans with their colourful banners, but one lone blue flag was being waved by a smartly dressed woman. She was a Uyghur, the heavily oppressed Muslim group from the Xinjiang region in northern China.

Toward Horse Guards Parade, where Xi Jinping, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, had been chaperoned down the mall from in the Queen's carriage, around 15 Falun Gong protesters silently held banners. They were calling for previous Party leader Jiang Zemin to be held accountable for initiating the persecution of the spiritual practice in 1999.

Taking stock of the day, three interviewees offered their thoughts.

Paul Golding, Tibet Society

The day's gone well. We know that the Chinese Embassy bused in seemingly thousands of students. It looked like a propaganda event in Beijing with all the banners and the Chinese waving their flags. We felt a bit swamped.

Subsequent to that it really picked up at Parliament Square where it was a bit more balanced. We had about 150 protesters and there was a similar number of pro-China supporters.

There were two messages. One is to Xi Jinping himself, which is calling for freedom and human rights for Tibet but of course across China as well. And the second message is to Prime Minister David Cameron. We want Cameron to raise the issues with Xi Jinping and to come out with a really strong, robust public statement.

Whether it will actually happen is questionable. It seems the way the British government is going at the moment in terms of kowtowing to China and all the trade deals that it's very unlikely to come out with any statement.

It says that they talk about things behind closed doors but what we want to see is some transparency—what is it that they talk about behind closed doors? But more importantly, come out with it publicly, because the people in Tibet and China, those who are fighting for human rights, they want to know that there is support for them internationally. And unless these governments come out and publicly support that, they don't know it and feel like they've been forgotten.

I've seen a lot people who've come down for their first ever protest because they were appalled at what's happening in terms of China, and the U.K. rolling out the red carpet for them. So it is slowly getting out there and the longer this goes on, the more people are going to realize how much we're selling the U.K.'s soul.

The government needs some morals, it needs to go back to what's important to the British people. I believe that's the basics of human rights, freedom, and democracy.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18185>

Uighur leader says blood on Britain's red carpet welcome for China's Xi

Reuters.com
October 19, 2015

The red carpet Britain is laying out this week to welcome Chinese President Xi Jinping is stained with the blood of Uighurs, Tibetans and dissidents, a top exiled Uighur leader said on Monday, calling the lavish reception "unfortunate".

Britain has been criticised by activists for putting human rights on the back burner when it comes to forging ties with China, though British officials say they do bring up the subject but in private as it is a better way to effect change.

Last month, British finance minister George Osborne visited Xinjiang, home to the Uighur people, where he touted Britain's commercial relations with China but largely avoided addressing the unrest there.

China says Islamist militants and separatists operate in energy-rich Xinjiang, on the borders of central Asia, where hundreds have died in violence in recent years.

But exiles and rights groups say China has never presented convincing evidence of the existence of a cohesive militant group, and that much of the unrest can be traced back to frustration at controls over the culture and religion of the Uighur people. Beijing strongly denies such charges.

"It is very unfortunate that they are welcoming President Xi by the red carpet," Rebiya Kadeer, president of the World Uyghur Congress, told reporters while on a visit to Tokyo, when asked about Xi's trip to Britain.

"They should know that in that red carpet is the blood of the Uighur people, Tibet and other Chinese dissidents," she added, speaking in Uighur through a translator.

Britain is pulling out all the stops to welcome Xi, and he and his wife will stay with the Queen in Buckingham Palace.

Kadeer said China's policies had turned Xinjiang "almost into a war zone".

"There are military vehicles, Chinese soldiers patrolling every street of the Uighur neighbourhoods, police everywhere," she added. "This situation created a terrible tension between the government and the Uighur people."

China dismisses Kadeer as an "anti-Chinese splittist". She is a former Chinese political prisoner accused of leaking state secrets in 1999. She was later allowed to leave on medical grounds and now lives in the United States.

Kadeer said the World Uyghur Congress condemned all forms of violence and called on China to change its ways.

"Don't push the Uighurs to the edge and create a situation to radicalise the Uighurs, to push the Uighurs to a degree that then there will be violence," she said.

China says some Uighurs have traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight with Islamic State and other groups.

China's Tibetan Language Media Censored and Distorted Obama's Remark with Xi

Voice of America
October 19, 2015

Two days after President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping held a joint press conference on September 25, Chinese state-run Tibet Radio announced a fabricated quotation of Obama's remarks from the joint press conference held at the Rose Garden.

"Obama said, the United States will not support the so-called Taiwan independence, Tibet independence, Xinjiang independence and the US will not interfere Hong Kong affairs." Obama may have indicated some aspects of these messages, but they were not words from Obama's remarks that he made during the joint press conference. What the Chinese media did not mention was that Obama urged Xi Jinping to preserve the Tibetan religion and culture and engage with the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

Scholars familiar to Chinese media coverages in sensitive regions like Tibet didn't expect that Chinese media would mention the US president raising human rights and Tibet issues, including freedom of press and religion that Mr. Obama said he "affirmed" in meeting with Xi.

"When Chinese official media reports this, of course they only emphasise that the United States, along with most of the countries on earth, recognise China's territorial claims to the territories that it actually occupies," says Michael Davis, a professor at the University of Hong Kong, talking to VOA Tibetan service. "And, not to look at critics of Chinese policies regards to those territories."

Wu'ar Kaixi, political commentator in Taiwan and former Tiananmen student protest leader who was born in Xinjiang, watched the Chinese media coverages in Xinjiang region. He told VOA Tibetan Service that the Chinese media used Obama remarks as an indicator that the United States is with China in the fight against Xinjiang separatists. "In the Uyghur language, the Chinese press is

repeating the same message, like United States and the Chinese government are in the same united front line in attacking terrorism and that the U.S. does not support separatism in Xinjiang area,”

Kaixi, who is currently seeking a chair in Taiwan parliament, said that the main messages about Xi Jinping’s trip to U.S. in Chinese media were all about how successful it was.

Tibet Radio also made an announcement that Obama had promised to leave aside the issues that the two counties disagree upon and move forward to work together constructively.

Obama had clearly said that he had raised concerns about cyber-threats, South China Sea territorial disputes issues, and had a “frank” discussion on human rights issues with Xi.

Experts now question how successful the trip actually was for Xi Jinping. Less than two weeks after his meeting with President Obama, the U.S. Navy is now reportedly preparing to send ships inside the territorial limit China claims in South China Sea.

ANCIENT TEETH IN CHINA: SHOCKING DISCOVERY MAY REWRITE HUMAN HISTORY

inquisitr.com
Oct 17, 2015



Ancient human teeth were recently discovered in China and the shocking find could rewrite human history. The 47 teeth were found in a limestone cave in Daoxian in Hunan Province, which is located in southern China. Researchers who have examined the teeth believe they are between 80,000 and 120,000-years-old.

Speaking with media outlets, Michael Petraglia, an archaeologist at the University of Oxford, gave the following statement to Nature.

“This is stunning, it’s major league,” Petraglia, who was not involved in the study, said. “It’s one of the most important finds coming out of Asia in the last decade.”

The discovery of the ancient teeth in China suggests that homo sapiens came to Asia tens of thousands of years before scientists thought. As explained in a report from CNN, the widely accepted theory of modern human migration, known as “Out of Africa,” is based on available scientific evidence that indicates modern humans originated in Africa and made their first successful migration to the rest of the world in a single wave between 50,000 and 70,000 years ago.

“This demonstrates it was not a failed dispersal,” Petraglia explained. “This is a rock-solid case for having early humans — definitely homo sapiens — at an early date in eastern Asia.”

María Martín-Torres, a palaeoanthropologist at University College London, said that researchers did not expect to find human remains dating that far back in China.

Martín-Torres, who co-led the study with Wu Liu and Xie-jie Wu at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology in Beijing, said the team knew almost immediately that the teeth belonged to homo sapiens. The results of the study were published in Nature this week.

This is the first time anyone has proven the existence of modern humans in China earlier than previously thought. In 2011, Simon J. Armitage and his colleagues found evidence that suggested homo sapiens had reached Arabia about 125,000 years ago.

According to Science Daily, Armitage, a researcher from Royal Holloway, University of London, discovered an ancient human toolkit at the Jebel Faya archaeological site in the United Arab Emirates. He was able to calculate the age of the stone tools using a technique known as luminescence dating and determined that the artifacts were about 100,000 to 125,000-years-old.

“These ‘anatomically modern’ humans — like you and me — had evolved in Africa about 200,000 years ago and subsequently populated the rest of the world,” Armitage explained. “Our findings should stimulate a re-evaluation of the means by which we modern humans became a global species.”

Until now, the oldest traces of modern humans in China have been dated back only to 40,000 years -50,000 years ago.

The ancient teeth were described as being very small and simple, and had flat crowns and narrow roots. It is virtually

impossible to distinguish them from the teeth of modern man, researchers noted.

The teeth were discovered inside a cave and they were well preserved in a layer of sand, along with bones from more than 30 different animals. Scientist plan to extract DNA from the teeth samples to shed more light on the origins of the Daoxian people. Since the teeth were so old, carbon dating couldn't be used to determine the age, so researchers had to analyze nearby limestone and other human remains to find out how old they were.

"They really look modern, but they are very old," Martín-Torres said. "And they are very old also particularly when we take into account that they were found in China."

Martín-Torres is enthusiastic about the work the renowned research team has done in China. The finding tells us that modern practices were being used by humans in southern China 100,000 years ago.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," says Martín-Torres.

Kerung route reopened after nearly six months

Himalayan Times

October 16, 2015

The movement of trucks and containers on the Rasuwagadhi-Kerung route resumed today after the route was reopened nearly six months after the devastating earthquake of April 25. Both the trade routes with China via land — Rasuwagadhi-Kerung and Tatopani-Lhasa — were damaged by the massive quake in April and the powerful aftershock on May 12.

"After the maintenance of the customs offices and damaged road sections on both sides, trade with China via land route has officially resumed from today," said Shiva Prasad Tripathi, undersecretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies.

Though a larger chunk of the trade with China is being carried out through sea route, the reopening of Kerung route is expected to accelerate the movement of vehicles laden with essentials and industrial raw

materials. This might provide some relief to the public as the continuous obstruction in the movement of

vehicles from India to Nepal has created short supply of essentials and industrial raw materials.

Many trucks and containers laden with essential goods were stuck at the Chinese border of Kerung and Lhasa

after the earthquake. The Ministry of Commerce and Supplies has said that Tatopani-Lhasa trade route will also reopen very soon. Nepal has already opened the track of the damaged section of Tatopani-Lhasa trading route and maintenance of the road has been accelerated on both Nepal and China side.

Sikyong receives US medal for non-violent resolution for Tibet

Tibet Post International

October 15, 2015



Dr. Janet Dudley-Eshbach, President of the University, presenting the Presidential Medal to Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, 13 October 2015.

Maryland, US — The political leader of Tibetans, Dr Lobsang Sangay has been bestowed with the Presidential Medal by Salisbury University in Maryland, US, "in recognition of his esteemed political leadership and his work to seek a peaceful, non-violent resolution for Tibet."

According the Salisbury University in Maryland, the prestigious Presidential Medal, the highest honour awarded by the University to an individual for leadership and forward thinking.

Quoting Janet Dudley-Eshbach, the president of Salisbury University, it said "the medal was dedicated to the sufferings of the Tibetan people, and the non-violent Tibetan movement to restore freedom and dignity across Tibet."

"It sends a powerful message to Tibetans inside Tibet that there are friends outside Tibet who are with justice, who stands for human rights and the freedom of the Tibetan people," Sangay said at the awards' ceremony at the university on Tuesday.

"At the same time, it sends a message to the Chinese government that they should embrace the peaceful and re-conciliatory spirit of the Tibetan people and solve the issue of Tibet." Sikyong said, adding "it is also a message

to a world beset with violent conflicts that peace and harmony can only be brought about through non-violence.”

Sikyong also recalled the dual Buddhist notions of impermanence and attachment. “As a human being, we all are born to die. However, while you live, you can make a difference. That’s what makes life worth living,” he said.

The Tibetan political leader also made a pun on the Buddhist philosophy of attachment with cyber security, jokingly explaining that if Buddha were to receive an email today, he would say, no attachments, please.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a long-time friend of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, also congratulated Sangay. Tutu said that Sangay got the honour at a time when there is so much turmoil and suffering caused by violence and unrest.

“I am delighted to write this short note to congratulate you on receiving the President’s Medal for promoting peace and understanding, especially at this time when we see so much turmoil and suffering caused by violence and unrest,” he said in a letter to Dr Sangay.

“The world has been stunned by the number of refugees seeking to flee violence and unrest. Our world needs more champions of peace and goodwill of which you are one,” he wrote.

Speaking on the theme of the lecture series “one person can make a difference” Sikyong spoke about his personal journey from a small obscure hamlet near Darjeeling to the base of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Speaking on the topic of his presentation ‘Democracy and the Third Way’, he talked about His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s vision and gift of democracy to the Tibetan people and spoke about the evolution and maturation of Tibetan democracy in exile.

He also spoke about Tibet as the third pole, expounding on the importance of protecting the fragile environment of the Tibetan plateau and asserted that preservation of the Tibetan plateau is vital to climate change and the other ills of rapid environmental degradation not just in Asia but also in the world.

Speaking about the Middle Way Approach which seeks a genuine autonomy for Tibet within China, Sikyong said “the Middle Way Approach is the third alternative of conflict resolution.” He explained that “the present repressive policies in Tibet is unacceptable while at the same time, Tibetans do not seek independence from China if Tibetans are granted genuine autonomy.”

He also highlighted that Tibetans follow Ahimsa, the Gandhian notion of non-violence to resolve the issue of Tibet. “Under Chinese occupation, Tibetans are facing

political repression, environmental destruction, cultural assimilation, social discrimination and economic marginalisation. In spite of all these repression, Tibetans are still following non-violence to fulfill their aspirations of freedom and justice,” Sikyong said.

“Despite the Central Tibetan Administration’s repeated appeals not to resort to drastic actions, at least 142 Tibetans have burned themselves in protest. Their unanimous demands have been the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans,” Sikyong said expressing his grave concern at the wave of Tibetan self-immolation protests.

“Life is precious. Even if someone slaps you, you don’t like it. Therefore, when Tibetans from all walks of life are willingly burning themselves to death, it reflects the seriousness of the situation, the difficulty of life inside Tibet,” he added.

Sikyong said that the peaceful Tibetan movement of non-violence resonates with the trends of democracy and harmonious co-existence with each other. “And when the Tibetan movement succeeds, which I know it will, it will be one of the best stories of the 21st century.”

LCCI to form ‘Council on Kalabagh Dam’

Business Recorder
October 09, 2015

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry has decided to form a “council on Kalabagh Dam” of experts, technocrats, business leaders and chamber representatives and other trade bodies in a bid to pave the way for an early completion of the Kalabagh Dam through developing consensus. The decision was taken by Lahore Chamber President, Sheikh Muhammad Arshad who said the sole objective would be to make environment conducive for the dam construction.

He said during his election campaign he had promised to form the council to pave way for this important national project and that letters to seek consent of experts had already been dispatched. He also said the dam was hardly an issue of the Punjab alone but a matter of the country’s survival that was “at stake because of fast depleting water resources”.

He urged the civil society to play its role to save Pakistan. He said the dam construction was recommended by a highest-level World Bank team in 1960s so there was no question of the Punjab being the sole beneficiary of this dam. He said he had talked on the issue since long but

neither any politician nor any government gave due attention towards this problem.

He said all those who were opposing the dam were doing disfavoured to the whole nation. So much so, he said, they are playing with future generations of this country. He said that it was unfortunate that our decision makers were not the victims of wrong decisions they make as it would only adversely impact the common man. "The dam is absolutely essential to irrigate 800000 acres of cultivable land that is located 100-150 feet above the Indus River level in NWFP. He said this land could only be brought under cultivation if the river level is raised that is only possible if Kalabagh Dam is built. He said the other alternative is to pump the water which is very costly.

Studies have indicated that pumping water for potential cultivable land would cost farmers Rs 5000 per acre per year while canal water after construction of Kalabagh Dam would cost only Rs 400 per acre per year. He said historical data indicates that during past 75 years average 146 million acres of water is available per year in river Indus. He said we throw on average 30 MAF of water per year in the sea, most of it during two months of monsoon. He said this water must be stored for irrigation and power generation.

Chamber senior Vice President Almas Haider and Vice President Nasir Saeed said a seminar on hydro politics in South Asia concluded that China, India and Pakistan "are poor in fresh water that has the potential to flare in to conflicts". They said India has got double standards when it comes to water rights. They said it claims right on the basis of upper riparian over use of this water against Pakistan while in case of China and Nepal from where some of its rivers originate it claims water on historic use. However, they added before confronting India we must put our house in order.

"If we cannot defend and prudently utilise our own resources we would not be able to fight for the similar resources being usurped by others." They said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry would continue its struggle for creating a consensus for the early construction of water reservoirs in the country.

At U.N., China uses intimidation tactics to silence its critics

Reuters
Oct. 6, 2015

Beijing is blunting scrutiny of its rights record at the venue created to protect victims of state repression – the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. Its success is evidence of China's growing ability to stifle opposition abroad.

GENEVA – In a café lounge at the United Nations complex in Geneva, a Tibetan fugitive was waiting his turn earlier this year to tell diplomats his story of being imprisoned and tortured back home in China.

The 43-year-old Buddhist monk, Golog Jigme, had broken out of a Chinese detention centre in 2012, eventually fleeing to Switzerland. But his Chinese government pursuers hadn't given up.

As Golog Jigme prepared to testify in March before the U.N. Human Rights Council, a senior Chinese diplomat, Zhang Yaojun, was in the crowded café. Zhang stood just a few meters from the table where the bald monk was seated in his saffron robes.

"He just took a photo of me," Golog Jigme said, gesturing at Zhang, who was standing with his smartphone in his hand. Zhang's action violated a ban on photography in the halls of the United Nations, except by accredited photographers.

"When I was hiding in the mountains, the Chinese government announced a cash reward of 200,000 yuan (about \$31,000) for whoever finds me," said the monk. "Maybe he wants the cash reward."

Zhang said later he was simply photographing the scenery and was unaware of the ban.

Golog Jigme's caustic joke speaks to the disturbing nature of his encounter with Zhang. The surveillance of the monk, Western diplomats and activists say, is part of a campaign of intimidation, obstruction and harassment by China that is aimed at silencing criticism of its human rights record at the United Nations.

Geneva, site of the U.N.'s headquarters for handling rights violations, is a hub of that effort. The primary function of the council, whose rotating members are elected by the U.N. General Assembly, is to review countries' human rights records.

More broadly, Beijing's conduct here is an example of China's growing capacity to stifle opposition in the international arena. The Communist government's global reach is growing at a time when it is cracking down on domestic dissent and preparing a new, restrictive law on

foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in China. In July, Chinese authorities targeted human rights lawyers and activists, detaining or questioning 245 of them, according to Amnesty International.

Photographing and filming critics like Golog Jigme is one tactic. Others include pressuring the United Nations to deny accreditation to high-profile activists and filling up meeting halls with Chinese officials and sympathisers to drown out accusations of rights abuses.

“We are well aware of these problems, which unfortunately happen repeatedly – and are not confined just to China,” said U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein. He said he was “extremely concerned by the increasing number of cases of harassment or reprisals against those cooperating with the Human Rights Council.”

Beijing is also barring mainland activists from leaving China and travelling to Geneva, where the rights council last week concluded its third three-week session of the year. Activists who speak out against their country’s rights record in Geneva have to contend with another signature Chinese tactic: coordinated interference by diplomats and delegates from Beijing-backed non-governmental organisations. These astroturf groups are known as GONGOs, or government-organised non-governmental organisations, a play on the acronym NGO.

China has an army of GONGO officials at its disposal in Geneva, especially when its record is under review. According to a U.N. database, it has 47 NGOs from the mainland, Hong Kong and Macau that are allowed to participate in meetings at the Human Rights Council. At least 34 of these are GONGOs, a Reuters calculation shows. These groups are either overseen by government ministries or Communist Party bodies, or have a current or retired party or government official as their head.

“We are well aware of, and disturbed by, the presence of NGOs that are not truly independent – again, from quite a few countries,” said U.N. High Commissioner Zeid. “But the Human Rights Council cannot do anything to prevent them from attending sessions when they enjoy official status.”

EVADING SCRUTINY

China’s campaign is working, diplomats and activists say. The ruling Communist Party has succeeded in evading censure of its rights record at the U.N. in recent years. NGOs and alleged victims of human rights abuses on the mainland are struggling to make their voices heard.



SNAPSHOT: Chinese diplomat Zhang Yaojun, shown here in March, was accused of taking an unauthorized photo of Tibetan dissident Golog Jigme at the U.N. Human Rights Council building in Geneva. Zhang said he was taking a panoramic shot of the space. REUTERS/Denis Balibouse

“As long as they feel the political costs of intimidating someone are lower than the benefit of hearing the criticism, the practice will continue,” said Michael Ineichen, a director at the International Service for Human Rights. The NGO supports human rights defenders. The U.N. and member states, he said, must “increase the political costs so it’s no longer beneficial for China to silence people at the U.N.”

Ren Yisheng, minister counselor in charge of human rights at China’s mission in Geneva, denied his country was engaged in intimidating activists and silencing critics. China is currently one of the 47 rotating members of the council.

Ren said China was the victim of a double standard in Geneva. “I seldom hear the (European Union) criticise the U.S. for ... police brutality, Guantanamo, surveillance, the discrimination against minorities,” he said in an August interview at the Chinese mission. “I seldom hear the U.S. criticise the EU or other developed countries. Whenever they take the floor, they always focus on developing countries, including my country.” [to read the full article please click here: http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17970](http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17970)

Former Chinese Operative Tells of Decade in Political Subversion Force

Epoch Times
October 11, 2015

Cheng Ganyuan, a former operative for a Chinese undercover agency that specialises in infiltration and subterfuge, has seen plenty of ups and downs throughout his 80 years.

This August, he published a memoir describing his decade-long career at the United Front Work Department, which Mao Zedong once called a “holy grail” of the Chinese communist political program. It targets non-communists, including foreign people and institutions.

The United Front is an organisation that has no equivalent in Western countries. But it has served its creators effectively by “utilising weaknesses in human nature” for the nearly seven decades of its existence.

According to Cheng, missions undertaken by the United Front “target people, not information.”

Its operatives “collect intelligence about you and your circumstances, him and his circumstances, and devise ways to bring you over to their side,” Cheng said. His remarks were published by the Chinese Democratic Education Foundation, a San Francisco-based NGO that promotes democracy in China, and which held the event publicising his book.

Cheng’s memoir, called “Unmasking the Communist Party’s United Front Work Department,” focuses on the United Front’s role as a communist weapon of “political subterfuge” furthering its “stratagems of deception.” He goes into depth to describe how the agency infiltrates foreign democratic parties and institutions, and how it co-opts religions as well as ethnic minorities to organise and direct them for the Party’s own ends.

The United Front Work Department was officially established in 1942, when the Nationalist government of China was embroiled in a total war with Imperial Japan. By appealing to intellectuals and members of the opposing Nationalist Party, agents were able to undermine the rivals of communism from within their own ranks.

One of Cheng’s female coworkers, owing to her charming appearance, was a highly successful agent who infiltrated the Nationalist military administration in southwestern China, the base of organised resistance against Japan in World War II.

Following the Japanese surrender, three years of civil war between the opposing Chinese political factions ended in communist victory in 1949. The Nationalist government retreated to the island of Taiwan, which it still administers.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18047>

Denmark to probe removal of pro-Tibet demonstrators in 2012

Yahoo News

October 2, 2015

“The case raises doubts over whether the authorities adequately protected fundamental democratic freedoms,” Justice Minister Soren Pind said in a statement.

Denmark’s government was led by the Social Democrats at the time of the visit in June 2012. The country is now ruled by the conservative Venstre party.

A court last week ruled that the removal of a demonstrator during the three-day visit had been unlawful, and said that police had tried three times to prevent people from displaying the Tibetan flag.

Amateur footage aired by national public broadcaster DR showed police officers grabbing a Tibetan flag from the hands of a female demonstrator, reportedly outside the parliament, and trying to take another down from a pole on an activist’s bicycle.

According to a Copenhagen police document made public Friday, police were ordered to make sure no one in the Chinese president’s convoy could see the demonstrators.

Denmark’s PET intelligence agency believed it was “crucial” for the Chinese delegation not to “lose face” during a potential confrontation with pro-Tibet activists, the document added.

The document surfaced after Copenhagen police previously told the justice ministry and parliament’s legal affairs committee that they did not order the removal of demonstrators.

Denmark’s Independent Police Complaints Authority has also launched its own inquiry.

China froze relations with Denmark in 2009 after two successive prime ministers welcomed Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama at the official government residence.

Relations were repaired in late 2010 when the Danish parliament made it clear that Copenhagen had a one-China policy and did not back independence for the Himalayan territory.

'Chinese Lawyers Live in Constant Fear': Former Chinese Judge

Radio Free Asia
October 2, 2015

Zhong Jinhua, a former judge at the Wenzhou Intermediate People's Court in the eastern Chinese province of Zhejiang who became a lawyer to escape political interference, arrived last month in the United States along with his family.

His arrival on Sept. 4 coincided with a nationwide police operation targeting human rights lawyers across China that has seen hundreds detained and many held in secret locations since the detention of top Beijing rights attorney Wang Yu and her colleagues at the Fengrui law firm on the night of July 9.

Zhong told RFA that the crackdown hasn't only affected lawyers who take politically sensitive cases, however, but the entire legal profession.

"The majority of lawyers are now living in fear of forced 'chats' with authorities, since they have detained between 200 and 300 lawyers," he said. "Such a thing is unprecedented."

"Under such circumstances, many voices right across Chinese society have been silenced, as well as human rights defenders," said Zhong, who originally planned to board a flight to the U.S. on Aug. 11 with his wife and two young children, before being turned back by border guards at Shanghai's Pudong International Airport and forced to undergo a strip and body search.

According to the Hong Kong-based Chinese Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, at least 288 lawyers, law firm staff, human right activists and family members have been detained, questioned by police, forbidden to leave the country, held under residential surveillance, or are simply missing.

While 255 have since been released, the rest remain under some form of surveillance or criminal detention, the group said in a statement on its website on Friday.

According to Zhong, many lawyers are continuing to fight for their rights, and for those of their clients, however.

"It's really not an easy thing to do, as they could be detained, beaten up, or sent to prison at any time," he said.

Zhong said he left China because he doesn't see any let-up in the crackdown.

"This isn't going to stop in one year or two," he said.

Government interference

Zhong, who in 2012 threatened publicly to resign from the ruling Chinese Communist Party if it didn't implement political reforms, said he witnessed continual political and personal interference in cases he presided over during his time as a judge.

"So-called sensitive cases would have to ... be passed by a sentencing committee and then again by the party's politics and legal affairs committee," Zhong said.

"This was interference by the executive arm of government, and also by vested interests," he said.

He said that in recent years, the judiciary in China has been used as mostly as a tool to maintain the party's grip on power.

"This means that there is little oversight, as the police, prosecution and the courts all play along," Zhong said.

Zhong said he never envisioned leaving China, and is now in the U.S. as a tourist, unsure what to do next.

But friends are warning him not to return, for fear of immediate arrest.

Zhong said the lack of judicial independence had prompted him to leave the bench and become a lawyer, before becoming embroiled in the latest crackdown.

"In China, you can't really take a stance on anything, because you have to think about your family," he told RFA.

"There's always that fear there, particularly since this huge operation against lawyers starting on July 9, when even people who had just tweeted a couple of things were getting hauled in for compulsory chats with the state security police," he said.

"The state security police came knocking on my door on July 14.

Opinion: Here's what Chinese hackers really want

Marketwatch.com
October 1, 2015

Their ultimate aim is patriotic — to rebuild the power and glory of the People's Republic

Chinese hackers may be a military unit within the People's Liberation Army or part of a non-military patriotic hacker network.

In a speech last week on U.S.-China relations, President Xi Jinping said: "We have agreed that neither the U.S. nor the Chinese government will conduct or knowingly

support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information for commercial advantage.”

Does this include government secrets? Considering President Xi’s statement, it could be deduced that the Chinese government is actively hacking U.S. governmental and government-relevant information systems. The intelligence community, in fact, knows this to be true. Earlier this year, former Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell said “the Chinese have penetrated each major corporation of any consequence within the U.S.”

When you hear that there are Chinese hackers, they may be a military unit within the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) or part of a non-military patriotic Chinese hacker network. In fact, in China, there are many nationalistic hacker groups that hack Western systems for monetary and political reasons. Unlike their Western counterparts, who are mostly individualistic or protesters, Chinese hackers are more involved with politics and the establishment of China as the world leader.

It’s important for cyber technologists in the U.S. to understand the mind of Chinese hackers. To do this, it’s important to know a little history. China was once considered to be the world superpower. However, it has since lost that status. Chinese nationalism is not just about surpassing the West in terms of military might and economic status; it is about returning China to its previous glory and cleansing itself of weakness and humiliation. That is a substantial part of the Chinese global-political hacking agenda.

Most Chinese hackers involved with hacking American systems are young (many are in their 20s), passionate about their homeland and intensely patriotic. These politically motivated youths use hacking as a way to protest against foreign policy that they believe is counter to China’s global dominance. For the most part, they organize into politically focused hacker networks, which build independent web sites that educate their members on computer attacks and intrusion techniques. And as there are many out there that will pay for stolen American data, monetary motivations are becoming almost as important as patriotism.

From this, it can be deduced, and the U.S. government knows, that many Chinese nationalistic hacker groups focus on stealing commercial secrets and selling them to the highest bidder. Which in some cases is undoubtedly the Chinese government.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17892>

Commentaries

The CIA’s Secret Himalayan Hotel for Tibetan Guerrillas

dailysignal.com

Nolan Peterson

October 30, 2015



POKHARA, Nepal—It’s been 43 years since the CIA cut off support to the Tibetan guerillas that the agency trained and armed to fight a covert war against China. Yet, a monument to the CIA’s secret war in Tibet is still standing in Pokhara, Nepal.

The former Hotel Mount Annapurna building sits on a quiet side street off the Pokhara airport. Established in 1972 with CIA funds, the hotel was meant to give former Tibetan resistance fighters based in Nepal’s nearby Mustang region a livelihood and a future as they laid down their arms and transitioned to life as refugees.

Tibetan guerillas and their families ran the hotel until it closed in 2010. Today, the Hotel Mount Annapurna building is a nursing school. The aging concrete structure with 1960s lines looks tired and nondescript. Paint is peeling off the exterior walls. The once lush and well manicured landscaping is overgrown and wilted. This relic of the CIA’s secret Cold War guerilla campaign in Tibet is now locked behind a rusting metal gate and easily overlooked. It is in a part of town into which tourists rarely venture.

The area around the Pokhara airport was prime real estate in the 1970s. But business slowly dried up as Pokhara’s tourism center of gravity shifted to the Phewa Lake shoreline to accommodate waves of hippies and trekkers. The Lodrik Welfare Fund—an NGO that former Tibetan resistance fighters created in 1983 to provide welfare for veterans and their families—currently owns the property and rents it out to the Gandaki Medical College.

“This used to be the best spot, but we shut down because there was no business,” said Tsultrim Gyatso, chairman of the Lodrik Welfare Fund and former manager of the Hotel

Mount Annapurna. His father was a Mustang resistance fighter.

Gyatso was born in Pokhara in 1972. He worked at the Hotel Mount Annapurna from 1989 to 2010 and was the hotel's manager at the time it shut down.

Gyatso currently works next door to the former hotel property out of the same offices that were a command center for the Mustang resistance in the 1960s and 1970s—the office he works in was opened in 1962 for the resistance movement. “My father worked in this very office when he was an intelligence officer for the resistance,” Gyatso said.

Overlooked Legacy

Today there are few visible clues to the former hotel's guerilla heritage. In the lobby there is a framed poster of Mt. Kailas (the most holy mountain in Tibet), which is hanging next to a painting of the hotel in its glory days. There is also a painted mural on the wall of the main stairwell, the imagery of which pays homage to the fighting spirit of Tibet's resistance fighters.

The security guard at the gate offered a confused look when asked about the building's Cold War history. Younger shop owners on the adjacent street shrugged their shoulders politely and said they knew nothing about Tibetan resistance fighters. A few older shop owners, however, acknowledged the hotel used to be run by “Khampas”—a reference to Tibet's Kham region, which is known for its warriors and bandits and was the birthplace of Tibet's guerilla campaign after the 1950 Chinese invasion.

Those who knew about the hotel's past, however, were reluctant to talk about it. Questions about the CIA and Tibetan resistance movement spurred worried looks and anxious body language. One older shop owner, a Sherpa from the Solukhumbu region near Mt. Everest, offered an explanatory hint when he claimed pressure from Maoist rebels during Nepal's civil war (1996-2006) forced the hotel to shut down. As proof, he pointed to Maoist graffiti on a wall across from the hotel's entrance.

“They're bullies,” the old Sherpa said, speaking about Maoist rebels. “And they didn't get along with the Khampas.”

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18464>

China's ethnic problem, the ticking bomb that could destroy it

Asianews.it
James Leibold

October 27, 2015

China's ethnic minorities number 120 million. In Tibet and Xinjiang, the central government appears to have lost control. The underlying cause is a power struggle between those, like President Xi Jinping, who want to abandon ethnic policies in favour of forced integration, and those, like the president's late father Xi Zhongxun, who favour the maintenance of ethnic differences. Against this backdrop, former President Hu Jintao and the United Front Work Department, which plays an active role in managing ethnic and religious minorities, still cast their long shadow. Courtesy of the Jamestown Foundation.

Washington (AsiaNews) – Since assuming power in November 2012, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Secretary General Xi Jinping has sought to put his imprimatur on the contentious realm of ethnic policy. As with other agenda items, Xi has sought to concentrate power around his own person, believing this to be the only way to push forward reform against vested interest groups, including in the realm of inter-ethnic relations. Yet the minzu or “ethnic” lobby is a powerful and deeply entrenched part of the political machine in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

State-run media frequently lauds Xi for his intimate knowledge and personal interest in the nearly 120 million Chinese citizens who belong to an ethnic minority, and especially the troubled regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. His inspection tours of minority regions are front-page news, as are his important speeches on ethnic work. Most recently, his image and words featured prominently at the official celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region and the 60th anniversary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinhua, September 8; Xinhua, October 1).

Yet, Xi Jinping's intervention has failed to end the long-running and deeply acrimonious debate over the future direction of ethnic policies in the PRC. Xi lacks both the authority and the political capital to push ethnic policy in the more assimilationist direction he desires. Rather, he is hamstrung by the liberal legacy of his father Xi Zhongxun and the continued influence of former Secretary General Hu Jintao, two powerful sources of support for the ethnic lobby and its defense of ethnic pluralism. The end result is policy paralysis, leaving local officials to interpret the contradictory messages emanating from Beijing while

increasing the importance of stability maintenance work as the only agreed method for dealing with a complex set of ethnic contradictions.

The Ethnic Policy Debate

Since the establishment of the PRC in 1949, ethnic policy has been in a state of constant flux, swinging (often dramatically) between the accommodation and protection of ethnic differences and centralising, integrationist tendencies. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 provided yet another jolt. Nationalists warned the liberal policies ushered in by former party secretary Hu Yaobang during the 1980s placed China in a precarious position not that dissimilar to the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev.

Peking University Professor Ma Rong has long argued that China shares the same preconditions for national fracturing as the Soviet Union, while the influential policy scholar and Tsinghua University Professor Hu Angang has called for a “second generation of ethnic policies” on the eve of Xi Jinping’s elevation as party secretary (see China Brief, July 6, 2012). Current policies, these would-be reformers argue, place too much emphasis on ethnic identities while creating institutional barriers (administrative autonomy, ethnic classification, ethnic-based preferences) that hinder the natural fusion of different groups and the forging of a strong, shared national identity. In short, Ma, Hu and other reformers advocate a minzu-blind politic, one that would naturalise and eventually eliminate policymaking based on ethnic differences.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18384>

Of water wars & dam busters

The Asian Age

Shankar Roychowdhury

Oct 27, 2015

“Operational requirements remain unaltered and India has to consider the employment of its Agni series of missiles, as well as drones and unmanned aerial vehicles against strategic ‘water war’ targets like the Zangmu dam on the Brahmaputra”

Recent reports of a Chinese hydro-electric power project at Zangmu, feeding off the Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet (which in its lower reaches is the Brahmaputra in India) has come as an unpleasant surprise to India. The situation is somewhat reminiscent of the one in 1960, when similar reports of a Chinese road to Xinjiang cutting across Indian

territory in Ladakh were received initially. The reverberations at that time resulted in the China-India border war of 1962. The reverberations of the Zangmu hydroelectric project in 2015 are still in the realm of speculation, but nevertheless beg the question — Ato kim? What now?

Distribution of river waters is an arcane geo-science and has hitherto not been a noticeably significant issue in China-India relations. This might very well change in light of the Zangmu project. As media reports indicate, the project is a run-of-the-river scheme comprising a series of dams and powerhouses at Yarlang, Dagu, Xiacha, Xiexu and other locations along the Yarlung Tsangpo inside Tibet. The diverted water is fed back into the river after generating electricity. China’s actions open up disturbing prospects of unilateral action by upper riparian states for diverting water from lower riparian countries backed by military muscle — recently demonstrated at China’s massive “Victory Day” parade at Beijing in September 2015, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of victory over Japan in the Second World War.

China has reportedly conveyed informally that the diversion of water from the Tsangpo will not in any manner affect the quantum of water presently received by any of its lower riparian neighbours. However, it is also obvious that India does not have much leverage in the situation, beyond post-facto discussions with China, either bilaterally or at the United Nations, where China is a permanent member of the Security Council.

Given the past history of conflict between the two countries and the hostile public mindset that has developed in India, the geo-political environment appears none too conducive towards a mutually satisfactory resolution.

The Zangmu hydro-electric project is yet another instance of pre-emptive unilateralism by China, in conformity with its traditional Confucian mindset of “All Under Heaven” being the prerogative of the emperor.

However, India cannot allow its own national interests to be held ransom and must take necessary steps with requisite urgency to build up a credible capability to defend its sovereignty and national interests — in this case its own rights as a lower riparian country along the Brahmaputra, as well as other rivers which rise in the Tibetan plateau and flow from Chinese territory into India like the Indus, Sutlej and other rivers in the western sector.

The main approach in this context has to be diplomatic — either directly at the bilateral level or multilateral via the UN. The Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan or the Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty with Bangladesh are examples of

successful “water diplomacy”. Perhaps it’s time to take similar diplomatic initiatives with Beijing as well. But all that notwithstanding, alternative military options, however unthinkable at the present juncture, even as a last resort option, should never be swept off the table completely. This can be designated as the “dam buster” option.

The Dam Busters was the unofficial title accorded to 617 Squadron, the Royal Air Force, a unit specially raised in 1940 during the Second World War, for the specific task of carrying out precision airstrikes on the Möhne and Eder dams inside Germany to inundate the Ruhr valley and cripple German defence production. The unit was equipped with the four-engined Lancaster heavy bombers and trained to drop the spherical “dam-buster bombs” designed by Dr Wallis Barnes for the specific purpose of breaching dams. World War II is long over and its weapons long gone. But operational requirements remain unaltered and India has to consider the employment of its Agni series of missiles, as well as drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) against strategic “water war” targets like the Zangmu complex on the Tsangpo.

The geopolitical and military uncertainties of such pre-emptive actions and their implications in terms of conflict escalation are enormous, especially in a regime of precision missiles, nuclear warheads, drones and UAVs. Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten that India has invested enormous resources in developing a stable of strategic missiles, as also in the acquisition of drones and UAVs. They have a very important and definitive role to play in the context of national security and cannot just remain parade ground tokens to roll down Rajpath on Republic Day. They are to be used whenever required in the national interest, though their use will be a serious step up the escalatory ladder. India’s stated policy of “second strike” cannot be restricted to the context of hostile nuclear missile or airstrikes only. “Water wars” have come to stay and will undoubtedly be a feature of future strategic dilemmas. India must get its strategic planning into gear to factor in this new threat.

The strategic scenario of a “two-front war” remains unchanged with some variations — Pakistan is a “downstream” opponent, over which India holds a firm upper hand, but China is an “upstream” opponent against whom India has very limited leverage in a “water war” contingency.

In a drought-ridden world hit by variable patterns of climate change, availability of water resources and their equitable utilisation, either by mutual agreements between individual countries or through international arbitration, will increasingly become a major factor in

maintaining global peace in a future that is advancing at a frightening pace. There should be no doubts about the chances of the next major regional or even world conflict being a “water war” focused around access to water resources. That is well within the realm of statistical possibility and we must prepare for it.

The Sorry State Of India’s Borders

Swarajyamag.com

Claude Arpi

October 27, 2015

Conditions are so bad that some of India’s villages and settlements along its north-eastern border are not even covered by Indian telecom companies. The residents have to use Nepali SIMs.

Sometimes, though it is rare, one reads some good news in the national press. One of these refreshing items, for me at least, was the visit of the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) posts in Gunji and Kalapani of Pithoragarh District of Uttarakhand.

According to Sushil Kumar, the District Magistrate, Rijiju went “to take stock of the defence infrastructure in these border areas.”

The young dynamic minister from Arunachal spent a night at Nabhidhang rest house, on the way to Lipulekh-la, not very far from the trijunction between India, Tibet and Nepal.

He is said to have walked the last eight kilometres from Kalapani to Nabhidhang to reach the last ITBP border post.



The MoS for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju being briefed by the SSB officers.

And guess what the minister discovered?

A ‘peculiar security concern’, said the local press.

Indian telecom services are not available in these remote areas; as a result, local villagers have to use Nepali SIM cards.

Isn't it shocking?

Rijju said: "Villagers in this region walk for five days to reach a road. After Dharchula, only Nepal SIM cards work."

He told The Indian Express: "It's a shame that in 68 years of independence, we have not been able to provide over 20,000 villagers in this region with roads, electricity and telecommunication. People, including our jawans, use SIM cards bought from Nepal as Indian telecom signals do not reach here. There is no tower in the entire region."

On his return to the capital, the minister wrote to his colleagues in the Department of Telecom and the Ministry of Defence asking them to immediately remedy this vital lacuna.

This raises several issues.

First, it is not a new phenomenon. Several years ago, I was told by a politician from Arunachal, who had earlier served as a minister, that when he went abroad and he received calls from Tawang, to his surprise, the identification number showed the Chinese ISD code: it meant that calls originating from Tawang were transiting via China. That was long ago, but the situation on the borders does not seem to have improved much.

Then, Rijju was the first Union minister to visit these areas. Why? It is simply too far from Delhi's comfort.

Further, Nabhidhang is not an ordinary border post: it is on the track followed by the MEA Yatra to Kasilash-Mansarovar and one of the 3 official landports (with Nathu-la and Shilpi-la) between India and China.

I would be curious to know how many times the Pithoragargh DM has visited this area. Usually, once in a tenure is enough; local officials prefer to dream of a posting in Dehradun.

A larger, but closely linked issue is the migration of populations from India's frontiers.

A few weeks ago, The Times of India (TOI) reported from Dehradun: "As villages along the international border in Uttarakhand face out-migration on an unprecedented scale, uninhabited areas lie open to territorial claims by the Chinese."

The journalist studied the case of Niti, the last Indian village, located 26 km south from the Niti pass, which demarcates the border between Tibet and India. For centuries, the village, situated at an altitude of 3,600 metres, saw traders, pilgrims and officials freely moving between the two countries and the area flourished. Unfortunately, all this stopped in 1962; today only 35

families remain in the village; a few decades ago, there were 250.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18404>

Letter From Lhasa: Amid immigrant influx, an empty throne

efinancialnews.com

26 October 2015

The Lhasa municipal workforce appears in no hurry to dismantle the thousands of red flags and assorted banners proclaiming the population's joy at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Tibet's official inauguration as the Xizang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. Life is only slowly returning to what passes for normal here.

At the major intersections, the bright red LED message boards proclaim this week's catchy slogans, in Chinese, Tibetan and English (foreigners are now allowed in again, having been banned during the parades and "spontaneous" rallies). One officiously verbose message reads: "Strengthening the frontier region is a key to governing a country and maintaining stability is a prerequisite of strengthening a frontier region."

Another is somewhat snappier: "To enhance the ethnic solidarity is the key to building a beautiful Tibet." The term "ethnic solidarity" is official code for China's policy of absorbing Tibet into the Chinese state through a combination of tight security, massive economic investment and population shift on a grand scale.

In 1965 Tibet was still largely cut off from the world, its population homogenous, fervently Buddhist and culturally distinct from its Chinese neighbour. Fifty years later, a significant proportion of the population is Han Chinese (though China officially denies the Dalai Lama's claim that Tibetans risk becoming a minority in their own land).

Beijing has historically encouraged migration to Tibet's three main cities – Lhasa, Gyantse and Shigatse. Han Chinese already control most of the small businesses in the urban areas. Across the river from the well preserved historic capital, a forest of cranes relentlessly sways above rows of high-rise apartment blocks under construction to house the continued influx.

Quite apart from the creeping loss of identity, Tibetans feel another loss – their traditional ruler. The 14th Dalai Lama, who is 80, fled into exile in 1959 during an uprising

against the Chinese that resulted in many thousands of civilian deaths (the exact numbers are disputed). His former residence, the spectacular Potala Palace, dominates the centre of Lhasa. All day, every day, hundreds of ordinary, devout Tibetans are to be seen processing slowly clockwise around the perimeter, chanting softly and whirling their prayer wheels.

Those who enter the palace and climb the 400 steps to the Dalai Lama's official reception rooms lay gifts of holy scarves or small banknotes before an empty throne. Elsewhere, in a discreet corner of one of the monasteries that continue to flourish, hangs the unmistakable photograph of the present Dalai Lama – a beaming image that is officially forbidden, together with the old Tibetan 'snow lion' national flag.

On the positive side, China's massive investment in Tibet's social and economic infrastructure is there for all to see. Pylons straddle the inhospitable mountains of this country, which did not have electricity before the 1950s. Giant electronic advertising displays flash above the entrances to brash shopping malls selling all the usual international luxury brands, bringing Western as well as Chinese culture to Tibet.

There is a shiny airport with a connecting motorway and, since 2006, the highest railway in the world, built on permafrost, linking Lhasa to Xian in a 33-hour trip across the roof of the world. The frenetic drive for development has its costs.

The stunning turquoise Lake Yamdrok Tso, which lies between Lhasa and the Himalayas, is regarded as sacred by Tibetans. In 1985 a hydroelectric scheme was initiated, which gave rise to (rapidly suppressed) protests from ecologists and Buddhists predicting depletion and desecration. Thirty years on the lake appears to have lost 20% of its area.

But the electricity to power the boom has to come from somewhere, and the last thing this thin, crystal-clear atmosphere needs is the coal-fired power stations that have contributed to the permanent smoggy haze that covers much of this part of the world.

The author recently visited Tibet

AN 'UNDERSTANDING' THAT CAN PROVE FATAL

The Pioneer
MS Menon
October 23, 2015

New Delhi has reasons to be worried by the fast pace with which China is building dams along rivers that impact India

Faced with an acute shortage of water and energy resources to meet the needs of a burgeoning population, China has turned to exploit the Tibetan rivers and is now in a damming spree in the Brahmaputra river (Yarlung Tsangpo) to fulfil its increasing needs. Hence after constructing the two inter-linking canals, the eastern and the central routes, to transfer water from the water endowed south to the arid northern areas in 2014, it has operationalised recently the Zangmu project, the largest hydropower facility located in the middle reaches of the river, raising concerns for India.

This project is to be followed by five more dams upstream for power generation. The Shuomatan project, the Great Bend project near Indian border, is also being planned by the Chinese to divert the Brahmaputra waters to its north areas through the third link canal, the western route.

Though our neighbour has been insisting time and again that their projects being run-of-the river schemes would not affect downstream flows, the deep reservoirs built with sufficiently large storage capacities at such projects and the highly snow melt yield at the sites could be diverted by the Chinese through tunnel intakes to create artificial water scarcity downstream. Further, simultaneous opening of the project gates could result in man-made floods downstream. However, China has assured that it would be providing more river flow data as per the 'Understanding' signed in 2013 and that India need not be unduly perturbed over Chinese projects in Yarlung Tsangpo.

A perusal of the existing 'Understanding' would reveal that it deals only with regard to exchange of flow data between the countries, and hence, it is not a guarantee to allay our fears of floods and water scarcity in Brahmaputra, arising particularly during conflicts.

For taking care of such situations, we have to have a high dam with a storage capacity adequate to absorb the floods from upstream and also to contain high water level fluctuations in the river due to indiscriminate operation of upstream Chinese reservoirs, as presently there are no such structures downstream in the river. Therefore, such a project is strategically important for India.

Looking at the experience of the Mekong river basin countries with China, we should not remain complacent with the 'Understanding' and the assurances offered by our neighbour. We need to put the country's strategies in place well in time, so that our national interests are insured against future developments. This is all the more necessary since projects like the High Dam take years to be implemented to address the concerns arising out of the Chinese projects.

However, our relevant ministry is yet to start work. Leave alone construction, even preliminary works for taking up this strategically important project are still to be initiated by the authorities. In fact, succumbing to the diktats of environmental activists and groups, authorities have put a complete ban on the design and approval of new water resource development projects, till the committee set up by the Government some time back submits its report on environmental flows (e-flows) required for all the rivers in the country. Hence, all such projects, including the Brahmaputra High Dam, the river-linking project, the India-Nepal Pancheshwar project etc, irrespective of whether they are strategically important or not, will have to wait till the committee's report on e-flow is finalised!

Unfortunately, even after conceiving this project more than a decade ago in the aftermath of floods resulting from the failure of a Chinese dam in 2000, our authorities continue to be lackadaisical in their approach regarding the construction of the project. This is sure to cost heavily to the country since, for want of a storage dam we would have to depend on China for the release of waters during the dry season and for protection from floods during the wet season.

Added to this situation is the likely security threats arising from the Tibetan liquid bombs during periods of conflicts with our neighbour. We cannot ignore history.

China Willing To Expand Military Ties With India

Huffingtonpost.in
HufPost Staff
October 22, 2015

Beijing is willing to expand militaries ties with New Delhi to enhance mutual trust between the two forces, a Chinese general told the Hindustan Times Thursday.

Concluding an Indo-China counter-terrorism exercise, Major General Zhang Bing, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Chengdu military region, said an important achievement

of the drill was discussions on jointly conducting disaster relief. "China is willing to expand the scope of exchange and cooperation between our two armies. In that way, we can enhance our mutual trust and friendship," Zhang said at the PLA Infantry Battalion of the 14 Group Army's training academy where the drill was held.

India and China have fought a war in 1962, which India lost. In the decades since, there have been frequent altercations regarding allegations of border infiltrations into Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Tibet and Sikkim. China is India's largest trading partner with, however, an overwhelming portion of the trade balance in China's favour.

Officials told NDTV that a significant feature of this Indo-China military exercise was that both sides designed special drills, pooling up their anti-terrorism experiences.

While India has been confronting infiltration by terrorists in Kashmir, China is battling the terror menace from East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in Xinjiang for the past few years.

As clearances turn into hurdles, Brahmaputra edge lost to China

The Indian Express
Anil Sasi
October 21, 2015

With China commissioning Zangmu Hydropower station on upper Brahmaputra earlier this month, India seems to have lost its shot.



The Zangmu Hydropower station is on the Yarlung Zangbo River — the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra

Early into the summer of 2009, China kicked off construction work on a controversial project, the Zangmu Hydropower station on the Yarlung Zangbo River — the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra. In six years flat, the

Chinese managed to commission a gravity dam on the bend of the Yarlung Zangbo in the Tibet Autonomous Region, just before the river enters India via Arunachal Pradesh.

Around the same time that the Chinese started work on this project, India commenced the process of awarding a shelf of 14 hydro power projects in Arunachal Pradesh, most of which were lower down on the Brahmaputra. For India, the implications of the Chinese project go way beyond this being the first dam on the Brahmaputra. That the clock was ticking fast for India was evident from the fact that it needed to establish its 'lower riparian right' by setting up a hydel project downstream on the Brahmaputra, thereby creating a strong bargaining position to detract China from building hydel projects on the river's upper reaches. Under the doctrine of prior appropriation, a priority right falls on the first user of river waters. China now has that right. Ironically, all 14 Indian hydro projects in Arunachal Pradesh are still languishing, with construction yet to begin on even a single project. With the exception of one project, all the others are stuck with want of green clearance. The sole project that cleared the environmental hurdle, is stuck for want of funds.

The Zangbo flows through 1,625 km in Tibet, and then enters Arunachal Pradesh, where it is known as the Siang. Further down, the Siang — after its confluence with the Dibang and Lohit — is known as the Brahmaputra. The Chinese construction activity on the dam — part of the run-of-the river Zangmu Hydropower Project that supports a 510-MW hydro station on the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra — was not exactly a secret. Even though the Chinese officially denied having any information on the project for well over a year, in April 2010, Yang Jiechi, the then Chinese Foreign Minister, officially revealed that China was actually constructing the Zangmu Dam on the river but extended the assurance that the dam was "a small project" that "will not have any impact on the river's downstream flow" into North-East India. The assurance may have been flimsy, but the response of the Indian administration in terms of fast-tracking the Arunachal hydro projects was considerably more sluggish. For instance, between 2008 and 2010, 25 projects were put on bidding block and then allotted to various private players. When they came to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for concurrence, the apex planning body of the Ministry of Power gave clearance to 14 of these projects. Subsequently, the Central Water Commission gave clearance to the dam for most of these projects and the seismic flood safety, while the Geological Survey of India cleared the safety of terrain and modelling studies. But despite the strategic hue to these projects from an

Indian standpoint, all of these clearances were not enough.

Environmental clearances held up pretty much all of the projects, with just one reaching financial closure, only to run out of money. In fact, well before the shelf of these projects, two Central sector projects — NHPC Ltd's Lower Subansiri and NEEPCO's Kameng — started in 2004-05 in the Eleventh Plan and were to be wrapped up by the early years of the Twelfth Plan. For these two projects, an 800kv, 6000 MW HVDC transmission line costing Rs 12,000 crore has nearly been completed by Power Grid Corporation but there is simply no electricity to evacuate from Arunachal Pradesh. Local agitation has put paid to these plans, resulting in these two projects hanging fire too. Officials in the CEA said that Kameng has a history of inept management and contractual disputes while Lower Subansiri has been held up due to protest by Assam. For instance, in March this year, the forest panel of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests had shelved the 3,097 MW Etalin Hydro Electric Project in Arunachal Pradesh, pending the completion of an environment impact assessment study of the state's Dibang river basin.

The Rs 25,000 crore Etalin project was to be a run-of-the-river project where little water storage was required. The sorry state of progress on the hydel projects in his state had forced Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Nabam Tuki to erupt in anger at a meeting of the hydro task force in September 2013, where he underlined his frustration on how the foundation stone for the 3000 MW Dibang hydro project — touted as the nation's largest — was laid by no less than then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh way back in February 2008 but had failed to move an inch because of red flags raised by the environment ministry.

Ironically, from a policy point of view, the Centre had been pushing the Arunachal Pradesh government to expedite the development of storage hydroelectric projects on the Brahmaputra. Efforts have been on to get the state to allot at least one storage hydroelectric project in each of the sub-basins of Siang, Lohit and Subansiri rivers. Even if all clearances were to come through, however, the ability of the state to execute these projects fast has been under cloud, considering that road and rail links, a prerequisite for transporting equipment to project sites, are lacking desperately in Arunachal Pradesh.

Talk to China on Brahmaputra

ROW

Deccan Herald
October 19, 2015

India and China must begin dialogue immediately to finalise an agreement on river water sharing. A conflict is looming over the waters of the River Brahmaputra, known as the Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet where it originates. China is building dams on the upper and middle reaches of this river, which could impact the flow of water into India's North East and Bangladesh.

Last week, China announced that the Zangmu Hydropower Station on the Yarlung Zangbo River is fully operational now.

Tibet's largest hydro-power station which is slated to produce 2.5 billion kilowatt hours of electricity a year, the Zangmu project is the first of a string of dams that China plans to build on the Yarlung Zangbo.

There are reports too of Chinese plans to divert the waters of this river to the arid and heavily populated north east of the country. While the possibility of the latter plan being implemented is rather remote given the enormous technological and financial challenges it involves, hydropower projects on the Yarlung Zangbo are a reality and pose a clear and present danger to Sino-Indian relations.

India and Bangladesh, the two lower riparian countries, are understandably worried over the Zangmu project's impact on the lives and livelihoods of people living downstream.

Security analysts warn that China could step up pressure on India during times of tension and conflict by withholding water. Its impact on the North East would be serious.

Indian and Bangladeshi apprehension over the Chinese dams can be alleviated if China becomes more transparent about its plans for the Yarlung Zangbo.

A couple of years ago, China agreed to allow Indian hydrological experts to conduct study tours to monitor the river's flow in Tibet. It also promised hydrological data during the flood season. This was a welcome gesture.

Beijing needs to take this further by clarifying its dam and diversion plans to Delhi and Dhaka. India is right in asking China to be more consultative and transparent in its plans for the Yarlung Zangbo. However, this hasn't been an approach that India adopts vis-à-vis Dhaka on dam building across transboundary rivers running into Bangladesh. India plans to build hundreds of small hydel

projects on the Brahmaputra in the North East, which are triggering anxiety in Bangladesh. India can set an example by consulting Bangladesh and keeping Dhaka in the loop on its plans for dams. Having won Bangladesh's confidence, India could initiate tripartite talks involving China as well on the sharing of the waters of the Brahmaputra. A treaty on sharing the Brahmaputra's waters is urgently needed.

A modern tragedy

Asian Age
Claude Arpi
Oct 19, 2015

While Beijing has taken leaps forward to built its border infrastructure, Delhi has worked at snail's speed, struggling to create a semblance of infrastructure; migration is the outcome of this slow pace

The migration of populations from the frontiers, particularly the borders with China in Ladakh, Uttarakhand or Arunachal Pradesh is a modern tragedy.

It is rarely mentioned in the Indian press, though a few weeks ago, an English daily reported from Dehra Dun:

"As villages along the international border in Uttarakhand face out migration on an unprecedented scale, uninhabited areas lie open to territorial claims by the Chinese."

The journalist studied the case of Niti, the last Indian village, located 26 km south from the Niti Pass, which demarcates the border between Tibet and India. For centuries, the village, situated at an altitude of 3,600 metre, saw traders, pilgrims and officials freely moving between the two countries and the area was flourishing. Unfortunately, all this stopped in 1962; today only 35 families remain in the village; a few decades ago, there were 250.

Trade with Tibet (today China) is dead and the area is virtually closed to outsiders; an Inner Line Permit (ILP) is not easy to obtain from the local authorities.

Located 88 km from Joshimath, though the village could have been developed into an eco-tourism centre, it was not done probably due to the "sensitivities" of the Chinese authorities on the other side of the pass.

Even amongst the remaining 35 families, most of the young people have moved to the plains in search of a better life.

The Chinese have no qualms to develop their side of the Himalayan range and while Beijing has taken great leaps

forward to built its border infrastructure, Delhi has worked at snail's speed, struggling to create a semblance of infrastructure; migration is the direct outcome of this slow pace.

Soon after he took over as the Union minister of state for home affairs, this writer had interviewed Kiren Rijiju, a native of Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh; he had then said, "My immediate concern is to concentrate on the India-China border." The young and dynamic minister added, "It means development of infrastructure, roads, communication, other basic amenities; facilities for local people living in the border area. They should be provided with electricity, water and food."

But it is not a glamorous process; indeed perseverance and an unshakeable will are required to change the tide. Migration is today one of the major issues facing the populations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh or the McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh.

Why should a farmer or a pastoralist, living near the LAC in Ladakh, remain in his native village with the risk of being harassed by the Chinese People's Liberation Army when he can earn a decent living as a taxi driver or by running a small hotel in Leh?

Defence analyst, Nitin Gokhale, who visited most of these borders areas, wrote about the sad situation in Ladakh: "Chushul, an important village very close to the border did not have a single landline telephone and the lone mobile tower in the vicinity was more a showpiece than a functional facility. The anger among the villagers at the lack of what is now a basic necessity was palpable."

It is not an easy challenge. In one of his monthly radio programs, Mann ki Baat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that he was "deputing Central government officials to find solutions to problems being faced by the region". The ministry of development of the north-eastern region was to send officials to hold week-long camps. The outcome has never been made public.

Remember Verrier Elwin's A Philosophy for NEFA, so dear to Nehru! Based on French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory:

"Nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state, when (he is) placed by nature at equal distances from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man,"

the romantic view of the tribal folks ultimately amounted to the segregation of a large chunk of the Indian population and a total lack of development of these strategically important regions... and today, irreversible migration.

One of the decisions taken by Modi sarkar has been to modify the guidelines of the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) drafted some 10 years ago. According to the new notification,

"The main objective of the BADP is to meet the special developmental needs and well being of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border."

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18117>

China Poses a Water Problem

The New Indian Express
October 16, 2015

The day may not be far when the criminal neglect of successive governments in increasing our water storage capacity may spell more trouble and, as strategic affairs experts warn, China might be able to switch off water taps in the North-East at will. We are not being unnecessarily alarmist. But, the news that Beijing has operationalised its \$1.5 billion Zam hydropower station on the Brahmaputra in Tibet, must surely set the alarm bells ringing in New Delhi. The dam, considered the world's highest-altitude hydropower station, will produce 2.5 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. That, is not our concern. We should be worried since China, the most dammed country in the world, is reportedly planning a few more, which may disrupt water flows into India. Consider this: As per the UN, 718 billion cubic meters of surface water flows out of Chinese territory every year, of which 48.33 per cent comes into India; China has never inked any water agreement with any of its riparian neighbours and, has water disputes with most of them.

It's common sense and under international law too, it becomes difficult to effectively counter a country's right over natural resources it shares with other nations, if it takes the initiative first. China has already done that. It, of course, maintains that its dams are run-of-the-river projects (they won't hold water) and has assured that it "will take into consideration the concerns of the Indian side." The problem for India arises on two counts. One, China reportedly has plans to divert the Brahmaputra waters to its northwest; and two, it considers Arunachal Pradesh 'Southern Tibet'. If it diverts the Brahmaputra, the consequences will be devastating.

Under the circumstances, the Modi government's focus on ramping up infrastructure in the North-East must be supported. Efforts should be made to resolve issues to

ensure completion of projects such as the 2,000-MW Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Power Project in Arunachal. We can ill-afford to let self-proclaimed activists stop projects. To tackle China, the government must blend caution with aggression at the diplomatic level. The damage has already been done. India can only limit its extent.

China's new Zam dam could be disastrous for India. Here's why

CATHNEWS.COM

NIHAR GOKHALE

OCTOBER 15, 2015

China's ambition

- Zam is the highest-altitude hydel station in the world
- Set on Siang, that feeds Brahmaputra – the lifeline of Assam, Arunachal

India's problem

- Such 'run of the river' projects drain out silt from the water
- They also cause major harm to the river's aquatic life

More in the story

- Does India have any way to ward off a potential disaster?
- India needs to act; but where should it start?

On 13 October, China switched on the Zam Hydropower Station, set at the highest altitude among all hydel power plants in the world. And that should worry India.

The river that the Zam plant is built on is known as Yarlung Zangbo in China; in India it is called Siang and is among the main tributaries of the mighty Brahmaputra – yes, the lifeline of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

So, how would the 510-megawatt project affect India?

China says there wouldn't be much of an impact as Zam is a 'run-of-the-river' project. Beyond that, it has only assured that any adverse impact on India would be sorted out diplomatically.

But how comforting is China's assurance?

Siang is only a tributary of Brahmaputra. It flows through Arunachal to Assam where it combines with Lohit and Dibang.

As the jargon suggests, 'run-of-the-river' projects do not need to store water to generate electricity. The tiniest form of such a project is a simple turbine placed in a river, spinning with its normal flow. They are known to be less

harmful than standard dams that block the flow of water, depriving regions downstream of the river.

Problem is, the Chinese dam is much bigger.

In such projects, all the silt is removed before the river water hits turbines. Thus, the flow emerging from the is almost silt-free. That's harmful. Such water is more powerful and has a greater capacity to erode. Silt deposits also make the river banks fertile.

Large run-of-the-river projects do not store water, but they also don't generate power only from a river's natural flow. Instead, water is diverted through long channels and the force of its flow is manipulated. This harms aquatic life.

Thus, such projects impact the biodiversity of the river downstream. Fewer varieties of and quantities of fish in the river in Siang is likely to affect livelihoods of riverside communities downstream.

Who regulates

The flow of water coming from such dams needs to be regulated. This has been a sore thumb with most such projects worldwide.

Take the example of Canada's British Columbia province, which has many such projects. There were more than 700 instances in just 2010 when dam authorities flouted rules and changed water flow too suddenly, killing thousands of fish, found the Globe and Mail newspaper.

As changing water flow at the Chinese dam will affect India, regulations should involve both. Any mechanism will have to be a diplomatic measure.

But India and China do not have any river-use agreement, which will make enforcement of such a mechanism nearly impossible. Despite concerns raised by India for several years about the impact of China's projects on Brahmaputra, no joint mechanism has come up.

China's Zam dam will kill thousands of fish, reduce soil fertility in India. What can India do?

And the impact would not only be on fish: if China suddenly releases a lot of water, or if the dam ever bursts, it would be disastrous for India, especially along Siang and to an extent, Brahmaputra.

The project would also affect India's own ambitions in generating hydel power from Siang. Over 40 projects have been planned along it, though none of them have taken off as they have not received environmental clearances. If they do become operational, they will also be at risk of such sudden increase in water flow.

So what can India do?

There are almost no studies in India to try and understand the impact of these projects put together, according to Himanshu Thakkar of the South Asian Network for Dams, Rivers and People.

India first needs to get all information on such projects from China. It also needs to conduct a separate study to analyse the cumulative impact of all dams taken together. Combining the impact of individual projects may not be enough.

“Even if India were to take this issue to the United Nations or to the International Court of Justice, it needs to have these assessments in place to build a case,” Thakkar said.

A CIA-Trained Tibetan Freedom Fighter’s Undying Hope for Freedom

dailysignal.com

Nolan Peterson

October 13, 2015

PANGONG LAKE, India—At dawn, the old man stood outside his home on the Indian side of Pangong Lake, thumbing his prayer beads and chanting, “Om mani padme hum.”

The sun was rising from behind a wall of Himalayan peaks on the opposite shore, which was Tibet.

The old man’s face, which had been darkly tanned by a lifetime in the high-altitude sun, was as carved and as wrinkled as the Himalayas. His mouth moved almost imperceptibly as he chanted his mantra and stared across the burning blue water toward his homeland, from which he has been exiled for more than half a century.

The old man, whose name is Tsering Tunduk, fled Tibet in 1959 with his little sister, Khunda, after Chinese soldiers executed their parents. It was the same year the Dalai Lama escaped Chinese artillery in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa to seek exile in India.

Orphaned and alone, Tunduk and his sister joined a group of refugees for a treacherous two-month-long journey across the Himalayas into India. Along the way they faced hypothermia and frostbite, a lack of food, and persistent attacks by Chinese troops. Once they arrived in India, the two children began the hard life of refugees.

Ten years later, after he had completed his studies in Mussoorie in 1969, Tunduk volunteered for a secretive all-Tibetan unit in the Indian army called Establishment 22, which the U.S. CIA helped stand up and train when China

attacked India in the 1962 Sino-Indian War. Tunduk went through six months of basic training, which included jump training taught by CIA instructors, whom Tunduk remembered as “blond and tall.”

As a new recruit Tunduk made only 80 rupees a month (when he retired in 1996 he made 1,300 rupees a month, about \$20), but life in the military offered Tunduk an opportunity more valuable to him than money.

“China killed my parents, and I wanted revenge,” Tunduk, who is now 70 years old, said during an interview from his home on Pangong Lake. He spoke in halting, accented English as he peeled potatoes in preparation for dinner. A CD playing the Buddhist, “Om mani padme hum,” mantra set to music was on an endless loop in the background. A shrine to the Dalai Lama, draped in a Khata scarf and with offerings of fruit laid out before it, was on a shelf over the table.

“I would have fought them with a knife at that time,” Tunduk added, not looking up. “I wanted to kill them all.”

Even now, at 70, Tunduk says that when he closes his eyes to sleep at night, he is haunted by images of his dead parents. As he describes their murder, Tunduk’s face muscles relax. His usual smile is replaced by something cold and expressionless. His mind is back in a time and place that no words, not even from one’s native tongue, have the power to faithfully recreate.

to read the full story please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18395>

Xinjiang the Thorn in China’s Might

NitiCentral

Claude Arpi

October 12, 2015



[LIUCHENG: Chinese police officers walk past the scene of an explosion in Liucheng county in southern China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015. An explosion damaged a six-story building Thursday in southern China, less than a day after more than a dozen blasts triggered by explosive devices delivered in mail packages killed several people and

injured dozens more in the same county in southern China, officials and state media said. AP/PTI(AP10_1_2015_000152B)]

The dust had hardly settled down on the Potala Square in Lhasa where the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) were held, that the Chinese leadership moved to Xinjiang to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

According to the Chinese media, everybody rejoiced in Tibet, but it was not the case in the restive far-western region of China.

In Tibet, the Communist leadership openly said that Tibet had entered the Golden Age, it is not the case in Xinjiang.

On September 10, an article in China Daily had proclaimed: "The now-50-year-old Tibet autonomous region has every reason to rejoice: The national regional autonomy mechanism is working well and benefiting ordinary Tibetans," adding that even though: "the 14th Dalai Lama and those in Dharamsala of India will not be sharing the festive mood."

In Xinjiang, the situation is more difficult, in fact extremely thorny for the Communist Party. Though like in Lhasa, a large delegation of Party cadres landed in Urumqi for the 'festivities', nobody spoke of the Golden Age.

Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and member of the Politburo's Standing Committee led the delegates, without fanfare.

Vice-Minister Liu Yandong was also there like in Lhasa, but the other lady member of the Politburo Sun Chunlan was 'missing in action', though she is the powerful Director of The United Front Work Department which overlooks Xinjiang affairs. Why she was missing is not clear.

Surprisingly, Zhang Qingli, a former infamous Party boss in Tibet, who had called the Dalai Lama 'a wolf in monk's garbs' had come as a CPPCC's Vice-Chairman. Zhang Chunxian, current party chief of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was the host of the party, though nobody was in a festive mood.

A few days earlier, Reuters had reported a fatal attack which occurred in a coal mine, in which 50 Chinese Hans lost their lives. As he arrived, Yu Zhengsheng warned that everything was not under control in the region. He stated: "We must fully recognise that Xinjiang faces a very serious situation in maintaining long-term social stability, and we must make a serious crackdown on violent terror activities the focal point of our struggle," and he invited the local cadres 'not to rest on their laurels', while Beijing faces a grave 'threat from militants and separatists'.

In recent years, the energy-rich Muslim province has witnessed hundreds of deaths in 'separatist' violence.

Mid-September, Radio Free Asia (RFA) had reported that "at least 50 people died in an attack on a Chinese coal mine in the far-western region of Xinjiang". The incident occurred at the Sogan colliery in Aksu; all the casualties belonged to the Han Chinese majority.

to read the full article please click here; <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18051>

What China's One Belt and One Road Strategy Means for India, Asia and the World

The Wire
BY SHYAM SARAN
09/10/2015

Since India lacks the resources today to set up competing networks, it may be worthwhile to participate in those components of the OBOR which might improve Indian connectivity to major markets and resource supplies



Chinese map marking out the important routes and cities involved in the Belt-Road Initiative.

The well-known geopolitical theorist Halford Mackinder postulated in 1904 that the inner area of Eurasia – characterised by interior or polar drainage and impenetrable by sea-power – was destined to be the "Pivot Area" of world politics. It was his view that the rule over the heart of the world's greatest landmass would become the basis for world domination, owing to the superiority of rail over ships in terms of time and reach. Russia and China, if they came together, he predicted, could outflank the maritime world.

The course of the First World War led him in later years to modify his initial perspective. In looking at the shape of the post-World War II order, he foresaw a world geopolitically balanced between a combination of the North Atlantic, or what he termed as Midland Ocean, and

the Asian heartland powers. In effect, he conceded that geopolitical dominance required both a continental as well as a maritime dimension. Another important geopolitical theorist, Alfred Mahan, also had a Eurasian centred global perspective, but his emphasis was on maritime power mediating between a two-fold global framework – a Western and an Oriental system.

Against this backdrop, what we may currently be witnessing is a carving out by China of a continental-maritime geo-strategic realm constituted by its initiative labeled 'One Belt and One Road', also known as the Belt-Road Initiative and the abbreviation OBOR.

The belt manifests the continental dimension of this geo-strategic realm. It consists of a network of rail routes, overland highways, oil and gas pipelines and other infrastructural projects, stretching from Xian in Central China, through Central Asia and Russia, with one artery crossing Kazakhstan and the other through Mongolia but both linking up with the trans-Siberian railway and going on to Moscow, Rotterdam and Venice.

The road is the maritime dimension and consists of a network of ports and other coastal infrastructure from China's eastern seaboard stretching across South East Asia, South Asia, the Gulf, East Africa and the Mediterranean, forming a loop terminating at Piraeus (Greece), Venice (Italy) and Rotterdam (Netherlands) in Europe and Mombasa (Kenya) in Africa.

Both the Road and the Belt include regional loops and branches which extend the reach of the emerging transportation networks but also serve to tie the Road to the Belt at critical points. Thus the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is significant precisely because the port of Gwadar is one of the points where the Road and the Belt intersect. Of interest to India is the branch constituted by the BCIM corridor, which proposes to connect Yunnan in southern China with Myanmar, Bangladesh and eastern India.

More than just routes

The OBOR is not only about putting in place physical infrastructure, although this is an indispensable component of the initiative. The 'Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road' document – announced by the China National Resource and Development Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March this year – sets out the overall rationale behind the initiative.

According to Zhang Gaoli, Vice Premier and head of the high level group charged with piloting the project , its objectives are:

- Enhancing policy coordination across the Asian continent;
- Trade liberalisation;
- financial integration; and
- Connectivity including people to people links.

The document describes OBOR as “a systematic project which should be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all and effort should be made to integrate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and the Road”.

Thus the initiative is seen as an instrument to create a contiguous land and maritime zone where countries pursue convergent economic policies, underpinned by both physical infrastructure and supported by trade and financial flows. The inclusion of people to people links is a recognition that soft power will play an important role in creating a congenial political environment for the sustained roll-out of the ambitious initiative.

The document further states,

“The initiative to jointly build the Belt and the Road enhancing the trend towards a multi-polar world, economic globalisation, cultural diversity and greater IT application, is designed to uphold the global free trade regime and the open world economy in the spirit of open regionalism”.

To read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=18024>

Marco Rubio: Xi Jinping 'devastating' for human rights in China

CNN

James Griffiths,
October 8, 2015

(CNN)U.S. Senator and Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio has blasted the human rights record of Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Rubio, who co-chairs the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), said that “human rights and the rule of law have suffered a devastating blow” since Xi assumed the presidency.

“By nearly every possible measure, China today is more repressive and more brutal,” he said.

“Millions of Chinese people yearn for the same basic rights that we as Americans enjoy, but their aspirations

have been met with intimidation, imprisonment, torture and even death.”

The CECC, created in 2000, monitors and reports on human rights and the development of the rule of law in China.

In the latest report, the bipartisan commission called for a top-down reformulation of U.S. human rights diplomacy with Beijing.

Obama criticised for not pushing Beijing on human rights

Human rights have taken something of a back foot in recent years when it comes to Sino-U.S. relations.

President Barack Obama has been criticised by Republicans for not doing enough to pressure Beijing on the issue.

During Xi’s recent state visit to Washington, Obama pointedly raised the issue during a joint news conference.

“We recognise that there are real differences there, and President Xi shared his views in terms of how he can move forward in a step-by-step way that preserves Chinese unity,” he said.

Obama also mentioned the name of Tibet’s spiritual leader — who is regarded by China as a separatist.

“Even as we recognise Tibet is part of the People’s Republic of China, we continue to encourage Chinese authorities to preserve the religious and cultural identity of the Tibetan people, and to engage the Dalai Lama or his representatives,” he said.

Xi said he was willing to have a human rights dialogue with the United States, but as is customary with Chinese leaders, he pointed out that the concept of human rights was seen differently in Beijing.

“We must recognise that countries have different historical processes and realities, that we need to respect people of all countries in the rights to choose their own development independently,” he said.

Dalai Lama: China more concerned about future Dalai Lamas than I am

CNN

Mick Krever

October 7, 2015

London (CNN)The Chinese government cares more about the institution of the Dalai Lama than the man who carries that name, the 14th Dalai Lama told CNN’s Christiane Amanpour.

“I have no concern,” he told Amanpour in London, adding that it is “possible” he would be the last Dalai Lama.

The Chinese government still considers him a political leader, the Dalai Lama said, as the previous men carrying that title were for centuries. But since 2011, he told Amanpour, he is only a spiritual leader. “I totally retired from political responsibility — not only myself retired, but also (a) four-century-old tradition.”

Buddhism in Tibet far precedes the Dalai Lama, and “in the future, Tibetan Buddhism will carry (on) without the Dalai Lama.”

Decades ago, he told Amanpour, “I publicly, formally, officially — I announced the very institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not — (it is) up to Tibetan people.”

Amanpour spoke with the Dalai Lama shortly before he was hospitalized and forced to cancel several appearances in the United States. Now back in India, he has assured his followers he is in “excellent condition.”

The Chinese government is continually at odds with the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists. Chinese officials label him an “anti-China splittist,” alleging that he wants Tibet — now a region of China — to become an independent country.

“We are not seeking independence. Historically, we are (an) independent country. That’s what all historians know — except for the Chinese official historian; they do not accept that.”

Labeling him a “splittist,” the Dalai Lama said, fits with China’s “hardliner policy.”

“Past is past. We are looking (to the) future.”

Tibet, he said, is “materially backward,” and benefits from being part of China.

“It’s in our own interest, for further material development — provided we have our own language, very rich spirituality.”

Asked if he had a message for Chinese President Xi Jinping, who at the time was on the eve of a state visit to Washington, the Dalai Lama at first demurred.

With a laugh, he told Amanpour he’d have to think about it.

“I may say to him, Xi Jinping, leader of most populated nation, should think more realistically.”

“I want to say (to him), last year, he publicly mentioned in Paris as well as New Delhi, (that) Buddhism is a very important part of Chinese culture. He mentioned that. So I also say — I may sort of say some nice word about his — that comment.”

Nowhere else, the Dalai Lama said, is the “pure authentic” tradition of the religion kept so intact as in Tibet.

“No other Buddhist countries. So in China, preservation of Tibetan Buddhist tradition and Buddhist culture is (of) immense benefit to millions of those Chinese Buddhists.”

In one of those Buddhist countries, Myanmar, the often peaceful image of practitioners has been tarred in recent years with the persecution of — and often outright violence against — Muslim minorities, the Rohingya.

Whenever a Buddhist feels “uncomfortable” with a Muslim, or person of any other religion, the Dalai Lama said, he or she should think of “Buddha’s face.”

“If Buddha (were) there — certainly protect, or help to these victims. There’s no question. So as a follower of Buddha, you should follow Buddha sincerely. So national interest is secondary.”

“Consider as a human brothers, sisters. No matter what is his religious faith.”

“To some people, Muslim, Islam, (is) more effective. So let them follow that. We must accept that.”

Is China Really Collapsing?

Forbes Asia

Jonathan Woetzel

October 5, 2015

A widely held Western view of China is that its stunning economic success contains the seeds of imminent collapse. This is a kind of anchoring bias, which colours academic and think-tank views of the country, as well as stories in the media. In this analysis, China appears to have an economy unlike others—the normal rules of development haven’t been followed, and behaviour is irrational at best, criminal at worst.

There’s no question, of course, that China’s slowdown is both real and important for the global economy. But news events like this year’s stock-market plunge and the yuan’s devaluation versus the dollar reinforce the refrain, among a chorus of China watchers, that the country’s long flirtation with disaster has finally ended, as predicted, in tears. Meanwhile, Chinese officials, worried about political blowback, are said to ignore advice from outside experts on heading off further turmoil and to be paranoid about criticism.

My experience working and living in China for the past three decades suggests that this one-dimensional view is far from reality. Doubts about China’s future regularly ebb

and flow. In what follows, I challenge five common assumptions.

1. China has been faking it.

A key tenet of the China-meltdown thesis is that the country has simply not established the basis for a sustainable economy. It is said to lack a competitive, dynamic private-enterprise structure and to have captured most of the value possible from cheap labor and heavy foreign investment already.

Clearly, China lacks some elements of a modern market economy—for example, the legal system falls short of the support for property rights in advanced countries. Nonetheless, as China-economy scholar Nicholas Lardy recently pointed out, the private sector is vibrant and tracing an upward trend line. The share of state-owned enterprises in industrial output continues to drop steadily, from 78% in 1978 to 26% in 2011. Private industry far outstrips the value added in the state sector, and lending to private players is growing rapidly.

In fact, much of China’s development model mirrors that of other industrialising and urbanising economies in Asia and elsewhere. The high savings rate, initial investments in heavy industries and manufacturing, and efforts to guide and stabilise a rapidly industrialising and urbanising economy, for example, resemble the policies that Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan followed at a similar stage of their development. This investment-led model can lead to its own problems, as Japan’s experience over the past 20 years indicates. Still, a willingness to intervene pragmatically in the market doesn’t imply backwardness or economic management that’s heedless of its impact on neighbouring economies and global partners.

Furthermore, China’s reform initiatives since 2013 are direct responses to the structural changes in the economy. The new policies aim to spur higher-value exports, to target vibrant emerging markets, to open many sectors for private investors, and to promote consumption-led growth rooted in rising middle-class incomes. Today, consumption continues to go up faster than GDP, and investors have recently piled into sectors from water treatment to e-commerce. These reforms are continuing at the same time China is stepping up its anticorruption drive, and the government hasn’t resorted to massive investment spending (as it did in 2008). That shows just how important the reforms are.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17947>

Why India should be worried about the Dalai Lama's health

catchnews.com

Bharat Bhushan

October 3, 2015

The Tibetans have reason to be worried about the health of their religious and temporal leader, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Although the Dalai Lama keeps a punishing schedule, he reluctantly decided to cut short his sojourn to the US on medical advice and returned home to India.

On the face of it, the Dalai Lama seems in fairly robust health for an 80-year-old. He apparently has slightly enhanced sugar levels, some issues with his knees and a prostate problem which may eventually require surgery. The doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where he had gone for what his office called a "routine annual check-up", have ruled out prostate surgery and advised him to rest.

At one level, these are merely age-related issues. While wishing him a long and healthy life, the point is that the Dalai Lama is not immune from them.

An ageing and possibly ailing Dalai Lama is not only a matter of concern for the Tibetans. It should also have India deeply worried. His health will determine both the future of Tibet and have a direct bearing on Sino-Indian relations.

With intimations of mortality how will he deal with China? And what will happen to the institution of the Dalai Lama after him?

It is quite possible that with age and health no longer on his side, the Dalai Lama may want to settle with China as the still undisputed leader of Tibetans. He may conclude that the conditions today are more propitious than before for a settlement.

There are several signals that suggest that the Dalai Lama views the current regime in China differently from previous ones.

Last October, he had expressed his keenness to make a pilgrimage to the Wutai Shan mountain in Shanxi Province in northern China, considered sacred by Tibetans. Although the Chinese had earlier ruled out such a visit, Wu Yingjie, a senior official from the Tibet Autonomous Region, confirmed that discussions were on for the possibility of the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. He said that the Dalai Lama and his officials could return to Tibet subject to their giving up "splittist" policies and accepting that Tibet and Taiwan were part of China.

To read the full article click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17939>

The Return of China's Environmental Avenger

The Diplomat

Elizabeth Economy

October 2, 2015

Pan Yue, China's most outspoken, innovative, and articulate environmental official, is back in action.

As China rolls out plans to tackle one environmental challenge after another — most recently Beijing pledged to initiate a nationwide cap-and-trade system for CO2 emissions in 2017 — it is easy to swing wildly between exultation and despair: Exultation at the ambition and despair at the current capacity. With every initiative, one must ask: Does China have the people, the institutions, and the structural incentives to implement its policies and programs? Most often, the answer is not reassuring.

The past few months, however, have brought reason for hope. Pan Yue, China's most outspoken, innovative, and articulate environmental official, is back in action. Pan has served as a senior official within the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) and its predecessor, the State Environmental Protection Administration, since 2003, but was sidelined in 2009 for unknown reasons (speculation ranges from political problems to illness). Chinese media recently announced that Pan is now in charge of environmental impact assessments and has been promoted to deputy secretary for the Communist Party within the MEP. These responsibilities would reinforce his position as the second highest-ranking official in the ministry, squarely behind another well-regarded environmental official, the new head of the MEP, Chen Jining.

With Pan, what is old seems certain to become new again. For example, he is best known for his advocacy of the Green GDP program, which he introduced in the mid-2000s. It was eventually quashed by recalcitrant provincial officials, who did not want to reveal the degree to which they had failed to protect the environment, and the National Bureau of Statistics, which argued that it did not have the ability to undertake the statistical analysis necessary to calculate a Green GDP. Now, however, MEP is making a renewed push on this front.

Other "new" environmental policies that Beijing has announced over the past year or so have also been in Pan's playbook for quite a while. In his 2007 book

Thoughts on Environmental Issues, Pan introduces ideas such as the incorporation of environmental protection indicators into the performance evaluation of government officials and an environmental information disclosure system (see p. 242), both of which are currently being rolled out. He is also prescient in calling for China to take action on global climate change, claiming, "At the moment we are glad that the United States is still number one in carbon emissions, which leaves us a strong standing point... however, it is highly likely that China will be the number one carbon emission country in that time [in 2015]; everyone will be watching us then" (p. 295).

Pan may also find strong support for his views from on high. Well before Chinese president Xi Jinping's current efforts to bring Confucianism back into Chinese political culture, Pan discussed the importance of integrating Marxism with traditional Chinese culture and philosophy as a means of ensuring a spiritual Chinese civilisation and common prosperity (pp. 234-236).

Pan's strongest fan base, however, has always been China's environmental non-governmental organisations and on-the-ground activists, who look to him for both leadership and protection. He is a vigorous supporter of the "public's right to know the truth" and the "right to supervise on planning related to national welfare and people's livelihood" (p. 170). He has called broadly for the Chinese people — not simply a limited set of NGOs and government departments — to be able to "launch lawsuits in their own names" (p. 122). And when he asks, "What is a nation ruled by law?" and answers, "It is the equality enjoyed by everybody in front of the law," (p. 123) it is almost certain that Chinese environmental activists everywhere are cheering.

With debate over the highly restrictive draft NGO law currently underway in Beijing, now more than ever, Pan needs to step forward to make sure his voice is heard. As he stated in an interview with Der Spiegel in 2005, "We need a law that enables and guarantees public participation, especially when it comes to environmental projects. If it's safe politically to get involved and help the environment, then all sides will benefit. We must try to convince the central leadership of that." Let's hope that a decade later, Beijing will finally listen.

Population resettlement in China a lose-lose scenario

East Asia Forum François N. Dubé
2 October 2015

According to the central Chinese government, more than 10 million citizens will have to be resettled by 2050 to solve rural poverty and environmental degradation problems in China. This number does not include the 7 million people that have already been resettled over the last 30 years or so. The massive scale of these population resettlement programs was confirmed by President Xi Jinping during his recent visits to some of the provinces most concerned, where he called upon regional Party and state authorities to 'implement with full force' the environmental resettlement projects in order to 'uphold both ecological and development standards'.

In China, environmental resettlement means resettling entire communities living in areas deemed unable to support sustainable livelihoods due to harsh environmental conditions. Ostensibly, resettlement serves the dual purpose of protecting the environment — by forbidding grazing and logging, reducing population pressure and land use — and helping local communities to break away from the cycle of rural poverty. Over the past few decades, these resettlement projects have been highly publicised and are said to be an integral part of China's 'sustainable development strategy'.

Less well known are the negative consequences associated with these resettlement projects, which expose vulnerable migrants to severe risks of social isolation, economic exclusion and material impoverishment.

A review of environmental resettlement programs over the last the 30 years in China shows that priorities of the state apparatus have consistently trumped those of the communities to be resettled. In other countries the promised beneficial results of resettlement programs simply do not materialise and authorities are generally very reluctant to fully involve local communities in the process of their own resettlement. This seems particularly true in China, where resettlement projects seem to put migrants in a situation of chronic impoverishment and higher vulnerability.

Data collected among environmental migrants from the province of Ningxia show that most suffered a sharp reduction in terms of housing size and a substantial increase in living expenses. Furthermore, access to basic social services, like healthcare and education, are not consistently enforced.

Resettlement results also in severe consequences that are not easily quantified but are still deeply disturbing for migrants. Even many years after resettlement, ethnic Mongolian migrants in Inner Mongolia say their new community remains nothing but an 'empty frame', leaving them with a deep feeling of confusion, loss of control and longing for their traditional lifestyle. Migrants often end up just as, if not more, vulnerable in their place of resettlement than in their original habitat.

As for the environment, these large-scale resettlement policies have in the past resulted in a lose-lose scenario, where the root environmental problems were far from being resolved by the resettlement of local communities. Although originally intended to protect and restore areas plagued by serious degradation, they have not always led to any sustainable improvements. Some resettlement projects have even resulted in the introduction of industrial livestock production in areas previously untouched by intensive animal farming. These have had even more dire consequences on the environment than the traditional activities of resettled herders and farmers.

In view of these negative consequences, using alibis of environmental conservation and human development to justify population resettlement policies appears inappropriate, if not outright dishonest. The question of how traditional livelihoods of rural communities and environmental degradation interact is complex, and so far the answers provided by policymakers in the form of population resettlement have failed to solve any of China's environmental or poverty problems.

While the current Chinese leadership seems determined to pursue and even accelerate these policies, it is not being held adequately accountable for past failed experiences. Sadly, public discourse on these policies in China is severely restricted. Scholars in China can tolerate criticism of these policies poorly despite numerous field surveys suggesting the detrimental results of the resettlement projects.

to read the full article please click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17917>

SHOUTING INTO THE WIND

In China's "other Tibet," Xi Jinping is using human rights rhetoric to oppress an entire people

QZ.com

Haroon Moghul

October 1, 2015



A local woman on a crutch shouts at Chinese paramilitary police in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region. (Reuters/David Gray)

Twenty years ago, Beijing hosted a landmark international summit on women's rights. This weekend, China's president Xi Jinping reiterated his country's "commitment to gender equality and women's development."

These are bold words, but they ring hollow. Because for 60 years, China has used the language of women's rights, along with human rights, secularism, and even anti-terrorism, to justify the occupation of a people, the dilution of their population, and the erasure of their national identity.

If you're thinking Tibet, you're right—sort of. Because while China has in fact spent decades subjugating the Tibetan people, there is another Tibet, one that far fewer people know about.

Sixty years ago, on Oct. 1, 1955, the Chinese government formed the autonomous region of Xinjiang. (known to locals as Uighurstan, or East Turkestan). While the Xinjiang region has experienced remarkable technological advance in industrialisation under Communist rule, such advances have come at great cost to the indigenous Uighur people's culture, heritage and individual and national rights.

While China has in fact spent decades subjugating the Tibetan people, there is another Tibet, one that far fewer people know about.

The native majority, mostly Muslim and Turkic peoples who have come to be known collectively as the Uighurs, were the overwhelming majority in 1955. Today, they have become a mere plurality in their own land. For all Xi Jinping's talk of women's rights, Uighur women are told

how to dress (and punished for disobeying); meanwhile, Uighur men are forbidden from growing beards, and Muslims are prevented from fasting in Ramadan.

To read the full article click here: <http://fnvaworld.org/?p=17887>