

TIBET DIGEST

MARCH 2024

FOUNDATION FOR
**Non-violent
Alternatives**
To inform and shape policy on Tibet and the region



FOUNDATION FOR NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES (FNVA)

Tibetdigest is a monthly publication curated by FNVA, offering comprehensive coverage of significant developments pertaining to Tibet, Chinese politics, and Sino-Indian relations as gleaned from various open-source media outlets.

www.fnvaworld.org
143, 4th Floor, Uday Park, New Delhi, 49
office@fnvaworld.org

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Summary of the March Tibet Digest

Education policies

1. Meanwhile, Tibet is making headlines for **offering college exam opportunities to students outside the region in exchange for a hefty investment by their parents.** This move, aimed at attracting investors, has sparked debate about fairness, especially concerning local Tibetan students. The scheme's implementation reflects broader concerns about education access and economic disparities within China, particularly amid rising unemployment rates among young adults.
2. In Tibetan areas, **China's educational reforms aim to replace Tibetan language and culture with Mandarin Chinese,** sparking concerns of cultural erosion and assimilation. Boarding schools, now the primary form of education for Tibetan children, separate them from their families and suppress Tibetan language and identity. Critics argue that Beijing's policies undermine Tibetan social cohesion and cultural heritage, leading to a generation disconnected from their roots. Despite international scrutiny and advocacy efforts, China persists in promoting its educational reforms while silencing dissenting voices like Dr. Gyal Lo, a Tibetan sociologist advocating for cultural preservation.
3. **Additionally, reports highlight China's continued promotion of Mandarin and Sinicization policies in Tibet, prompting criticism from human rights organizations.** Despite

international calls for respecting Tibetan autonomy and freedoms, Chinese authorities persist in imposing restrictions on various aspects of Tibetan life, including language, religion, and expression. Such actions contribute to ongoing tensions and human rights violations in the region.

Chinese Politics

1. The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, led by General Secretary Xi Jinping, **convened to review the second round of disciplinary inspection missions of the 20th CPC Central Committee.** The meeting stressed the importance of strengthening organization and leadership, implementing oversight, and establishing an accountability system for rectifications.
2. China's Ministry of State Security **issued a fresh warning this week about overseas spy agencies disguising their efforts as consulting firms to obtain state secrets.** The Ministry of State Security has ramped up its use of social media to raise the alarm about foreign spies, releasing its latest video emphasizing the national security risks that consultancy agencies pose
3. Chinese President Xi Jinping urged young and middle-aged officials to be loyal, honest, and "keen on reform and innovation" to rally morale and encourage unity amid economic and social risks. **Xi emphasised the importance of strict adherence to the Communist Party's political discipline and rules.** He called on party members to oppose privileged thoughts and behaviors, maintain the political integrity of the party, and guard against major risks.

Tibet in Exile

1. **The \$1.2 trillion government funding bill passed by the US Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden on Mar 23 includes provisions totaling \$23 million for Tibetan programmes**, according to the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT). The allocations cover projects including language preservation, environmental protection, and Tibetan democracy in exile.
2. Tibetan musician Dechen Shak-Dagsay's remark advocating the Chinese colonial-style boarding schools in Tibet during a seminar at the University of Geneva has sparked condemnation from fellow Tibetans. **Referring to Tibet as "Xizang," she expressed her wish for the success of the Chinese colonial boarding system.** The Central Tibetan Administration's advocacy groups like V-TAG condemned her assertion and demanded clarifications, challenging her to substantiate her claims. Her remarks also faced strong opposition in the ongoing session of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.
3. The Tibet Policy Institute, associated with the Central Tibetan Administration, **hosted a panel discussion** titled "China's Dam in Dege: Assessing the Social, Cultural, and Ecological Impact on Tibetans and Beyond" in commemoration of the International Day of Action for Rivers at DIIR Lhakpa Tsering Hall, CTA, Dharamshala.
4. Tibetans are being targeted in a cyber espionage campaign, starting last September, using corrupted language translation software, according to new research by cybersecurity firm ESET. **The attackers, identified as part of**

the Chinese government hacking group Evasive Panda, targeted Tibetans in India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia, and the U.S.

5. Tibetan activist **Tenzin Tsundue recently addressed the lack of awareness about Tibet among Indian youth**, urging for education about Tibet, its culture, language, and ongoing struggles, especially in light of recent geopolitical tensions such as the Galwan Valley conflict. Speaking at the Guruswamy Centre, Tsundue blamed India's historical policy of "Hindi-Cheeni Bhai-Bhai" and subsequent silence on the Tibet issue for the dearth of information about Tibet in India.

Environment, Infrastructure and Military Development

6. **A forest fire that broke out in the eastern Tibetan County of Nyagchu (or Nyagchukha)**, Sichuan province, on Mar 15, prompted the evacuation of nearly 3,400 Tibetans from several villages, with over 1,200 firefighters deployed to combat the blaze, reported China's official media. Residents of Chengdu, 500km away, reported the sky turning orange on Mar 16, resembling an "apocalyptic disaster movie," while local residents reported the fire was not visible from the county seat and that basic services remained unaffected.
7. **China has recently completed the construction of a huge new dam on the Mapcha Tsangpo River, near the tri-junction border of Tibet, Nepal, and India, causing concern for the governments of Nepal and India.** The 3440km long border between India and China, disputed since 1962, has seen recent infrastructure construction, including mega-dams in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

8. During the ongoing "two sessions" in Beijing, Duan Xiangdong, a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference delegate and head of one of China's largest aluminum producers, **stressed the urgent need to enhance infrastructure construction in Ngari prefecture**, located in southwestern Tibet, due to its strategic importance as a "bridgehead" to South Asia.
9. President Xi Jinping **promoted the PLA's security chief, Wang Renhua, to the rank of general**, a departure from recent practice amid a purge of military leaders. Wang, 62, heads the commission that oversees the military's courts, procuratorates, and prisons.

Monastic Education

10. In China-ruled Tibet, recent reports highlight stark differences in the awarding of Geshe Lharampa degrees compared to India, with only 12 degrees awarded in Tibet compared to over 300 in India over the past four years. This discrepancy underscores concerns about religious freedom and educational opportunities in Tibet, where strict limits and restrictions are imposed on monks, including patriotism tests and arrests for perceived separatist activities. Despite being the highest degree in Tibetan Buddhism, the number of awards in Tibet remains low, raising questions about access to religious education and cultural preservation.

Detentions and forced disappearances

11. A Tibetan named **Ludup was released from prison with a disabled leg after three-and-a-half years of forced labor during his sentence**. Arrested for participating in a 2008 protest, Ludup suffered severe injuries during his imprisonment. His family received no

information about his trial or charges, and he faces surveillance and restricted access to medical care. Despite the adversity, Ludup remains a symbol of resistance, hailing from a Tibetan monastery and a family deeply rooted in Tibetan culture.

12. **The whereabouts of Gendun Lhundrub, a renowned Tibetan writer and poet, remain a mystery over three years after his arrest by Chinese authorities**. His detention follows a pattern of targeting Tibetan intellectuals critical of Chinese policies. Concerns grow for his well-being as authorities provide no information about his location, sentence, or access to his family. Lhundrub's case is emblematic of China's crackdown on Tibetan voices advocating for cultural preservation and autonomy.
13. Furthermore, **China's claims of no "mass incidents" in Tibet last year were disputed by rights groups, with evidence of protests and arrests challenging official narratives**. Tibetans continue to resist Chinese rule, advocating for their basic freedoms and cultural preservation. International scrutiny has intensified, with UN rights chief Volker Turk urging China to address human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet.
14. Following the February 2024 protests against a major hydroelectric power dam complex in Dege County, Sichuan province, **hundreds of detained monks and Tibetans have been released**, except for Tenzin Sangpo and another individual suspected of leading the protests. They have been handed over for criminal investigation. The released detainees reported severe ill-treatment and brutal beatings while in detention. Villages and monasteries on both sides of the Drichu river continue to be under

close surveillance. All the more than 50 younger monks of Wonto Monastery have been dispatched to the county government school after the protests.

Protests in Tibet

15. **Several news articles shed light on China's ongoing crackdown on Tibetans protesting the construction of the Gangtuo Dam and the lack of representation of Tibetans in China's leadership.** In Dege County, Sichuan province, over 1,000 Tibetans, including monks, were arrested for opposing the hydropower dam project on the Drichu River. The protests, which began in February, have led to arrests and strict surveillance measures, including lockdowns on monasteries and restrictions on communication and movement. Chinese authorities continue to assert the necessity of the dam project despite opposition from local Tibetans and concerns about its environmental impact.
16. **In recent events concerning Tibet, over 1,000 citizens and monks have been arrested for protesting a hydropower dam project on the Drichu river,** citing environmental concerns and opposition to forced relocation. The protests, which began on February 14, escalated with arrests following monastery inspections on February 20, where monks pleaded to halt construction. Lobsang Yangtso, an environmental researcher, reported lockdowns and assaults on monasteries, alleging police brutality. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy condemned the use of force and highlighted the ecological damage caused by dam constructions.
17. In **Chengdu's Tibetan quarter, tight surveillance marked the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising. Security measures were intensified, with armed police stationed at every intersection and numerous surveillance cameras.** The Sinicization drive was evident, as Tibetan shops displayed more Chinese signs than Tibetan ones. Despite the challenges, residents expressed a commitment to preserving their religion and culture amidst a community of at least 30,000 permanent Tibetan residents and a significant floating population.
18. Meanwhile, the **UN's human rights chief, Volker Turk, urged China to address violations in Xinjiang and Tibet, calling for the implementation of recommendations to amend laws violating fundamental rights.** China's control over Tibet since 1950 has faced criticism for oppressive rule, with Turk advocating for the release of detained individuals. Previous reports have indicated potential crimes against humanity in China's treatment of Uyghurs and Muslims.
19. **The situation underscores the ongoing tensions between Tibetans and Chinese authorities, with protests, arrests, and restrictions continuing amid calls for greater autonomy and respect for human rights.** International pressure and advocacy efforts aim to address these issues and support Tibetan communities in their struggle for freedom and representation.
20. On the broader human rights front, **China-ruled Tibet received dismal scores in Freedom House's annual survey, ranking as one of the least free places on earth. With a score of**

zero out of 100 for "Freedom," Tibet's overall situation is described as "Not Free," reflecting severe limitations on political rights and civil liberties. The report highlights concerns about unchecked power and the suppression of dissent, with Tibet's rating being the worst in at least eight years. Despite global declines in freedoms, the report emphasizes the importance of protecting dissent and building international coalitions to support democratic norms and values.

Corruption

21. In recent news, a former high-ranking Chinese official in Tibet, Ji Guogang, **has pleaded guilty to corruption charges**, including accepting bribes totaling approximately \$6.11 million and abusing power. His trial in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, revealed his misuse of authority from 2002 to 2022, involving various positions to facilitate illicit gains for entities and individuals. Ji's case underscores China's ongoing efforts to combat corruption within its ranks.
22. Recent research led by Ji Yeon (Jean) Hong, associate professor of political science at the University of Michigan, **reveals that provincial leaders, linked to strong national leaders, encourage local media to cover negative political incidents, particularly corruption investigations in other provinces.**

Two Sessions

23. **China's "Two Sessions" commenced in Beijing, uniting the political elite, business leaders, and figures from tech, media, and the arts.** The National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) will run for approximately two weeks,

during which new laws, political appointments, and government work reports will be approved.

24. Moreover, insights from China's recent political meetings, **known as the Two Sessions, shed light on the government's focus areas for Tibet, emphasizing stability, development, ecology, and border security.** However, scrutiny reveals economic challenges, with Tibet heavily reliant on central government subsidies for its financial sustenance. Despite claims of progress, Tibet's economic struggles persist, reflecting broader issues with China's development strategies in the region.
25. Additionally, **a report highlights the underrepresentation of Tibetans in China's leadership, both nationally and in Tibetan regions.** Tibetans hold token positions of power, while real authority remains in the hands of non-Tibetans. Despite China's assertions of Tibetan autonomy, Tibetans are marginalized in decision-making processes, raising concerns about their future and rights within their homeland.
26. **For the first time in three decades, the Chinese premier will not host a press conference at the end of the annual parliamentary sessions,** according to Lou Qinjian, spokesman for the NPC, China's top legislative body. Observers suggest this change reflects China's political development, with the premier's role adjusted to focus mainly on implementing the party's decisions. This move might negatively impact China's transparency and image to the outside world.

China's Tibet Policy

Former Tibet official from China awaits sentence for decades-long corruption

22 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Ji Guogang, a Chinese official who has held various senior positions in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) since 2013, including as the former vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Regional People's Congress, has pleaded guilty for corruption at a trial held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on Mar 21, and will be sentenced later, reported China's official [chinadaily.com.cn](#).

Ji, 61, has pleaded guilty to accepting bribery amounting to about 44 million yuan (\$6.11 million) and abuse of power in a trial held by the Intermediate People's Court of Chengdu, the report said.

The report cited prosecutors from the Chengdu People's Procuratorate as saying that from 2002 to 2022, Ji utilized his positions, including as deputy director of the Fixed Asset Investment Department of the National Development and Reform Commission and head of the Xizang Development and Reform Commission, to facilitate entities and individuals in obtaining project approvals and equity transfers.

In exchange, he, either directly or through his relatives, has accepted money and property totalling more than 43.98 million yuan.

Also, from 2016 to 2021, while serving as the president and legal representative of the Xizang Development Investment Group, he engaged in favouritism, abuse of power and has caused particularly significant losses to State interests, the report said.

He has been tried for the crimes of bribery and abuse of power and the verdict will be announced later.

Ji was stated to have joined the Chinese government in 1983 and become a Communist Party of China member a year later.

The report further said he previously worked at the National Development and Reform

Commission and its predecessor institute from 1983 to 2012. He became the head of the Xizang Development and Reform Commission in Jan 2013 and concurrently served as the vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Xizang Regional People's Congress from Nov 2016 until Dec 2022.

He was placed under disciplinary and supervisory investigation in Nov 2022 and expelled from the Party and removed from his public posts in May 2023, the report added.

He was approved for arrest in Jun 2023 and prosecuted three months later.

China's Tibet offers college exam takers a spot if their parents invest \$400,000

21 March 2024, [Reuters](#)

Tibet is luring investors from elsewhere in China with a promise to let their children take university entrance exams there in return for an investment of at least \$400,000, an unusual move to exploit what is considered an easier scoring system.

With a population that is 90% ethnic Tibetan, the region has one of China's lowest college entry barriers, a key edge for the millions of students who take the competitive "gaokao" entrance exams each year, hoping to secure lucrative white-collar jobs.

The plan has sparked debate on Chinese social media, however, with some posters arguing it would be unfair to students from the mountainous region, while others supported it. "What about the enrolment rate of kids born in Tibet?" asked one user on the popular Weibo platform.

Amid growing concern as the exam approaches in early June, the education ministry issued a notice on Wednesday vowing to crack down on "gaokao migrants", as students seeking to benefit from such a plan have been dubbed.

Reuters telephone calls to the Tibet government to seek comment went unanswered.

Finding jobs has become harder as the world's second-largest economy slows, with the

jobless rate hitting a record 21.3% last June among those aged 16 to 24, which includes college students.

Tibet, with a gross domestic product that is less than 2% of the richest province, Guangdong in the south, said this week the qualifying investment of 3 million yuan (\$417,000) would have to stay untouched for five years.

China's differing college admission criteria can reflect preferential policies meant for ethnic minorities.

In 2023, a student in Tibet scoring at least 300 out of 750 on the entrance exam would have qualified for an undergraduate place at more than 1,200 universities nationwide.

By comparison, those taking the exam in Beijing would have needed a score of 448.

With qualifying scores partly linked to overall exam performance, an influx of exam takers from provinces with better education resources threatens to drive up Tibet's minimum scores and hurt regional candidates.

China promoting Mandarin in parts of Tibet: Report

21 March 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

The report added that Tibetans face restrictions not only on their right to freedom of assembly, but also on expressing opinions or criticism against the “repressive and unjust government policies, both online and offline”

“Even as China ended its draconian zero-Covid policy measures in 2023, Tibetans continue to face escalating crackdowns on freedom of expression, religion and belief,” the Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy said in a report.

The annual report released on Wednesday stated that despite numerous calls from the international community to halt its forced assimilation policy, Chinese authorities imposed Chinese-medium education in Tibetan schools and amended local regulations in Tibetan areas to promote Mandarin Chinese. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is a registered non-profit

human rights organisation based in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. The annual report was prepared by TCHRD's trilingual research team, working in Tibetan, Chinese and English. The team compiled and analysed information from a wide variety of sources on the human rights situation in Tibet in 2023.

The report added that Tibetans face restrictions not only on their right to freedom of assembly, but also on expressing opinions or criticism against the “repressive and unjust government policies, both online and offline”. Under the guise of maintaining social stability, Chinese authorities exercise direct supervision and censorship over all online platforms.

“The right to freedom of religion and belief faced further restrictions as Chinese authorities introduced more repressive regulations to exercise total control over the establishment, management and activities of the religious activity sites. Despite the relaxation of zero-Covid restrictions, it made no difference to Tibetan Buddhists, who continued to face restrictions in undertaking religious pilgrimages,” the report further.

According to the report, Tibetan detainees continue to face a litany of human rights violations. Those arbitrarily, preventatively or forcefully detained underwent unjust sentencing and torture, resulting in custodial deaths. Incommunicado detention in undisclosed locations without due process also remained a regular practice, leading to lasting health issues and premature deaths among political prisoners upon release.

Tenzin Dawa, executive director of TCHRD, said, “In 2023, China was re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council, the United Nation's premier rights body responsible for protecting and promoting human rights globally. This re-election demonstrates how authoritarian states like China manipulate, obstruct and exploit the international human rights system by waging systematic campaigns to weaken and eviscerate the UN's ability to enforce global compliance with international human rights standards.”

“The injustices and human rights violations in Tibet underscore the urgent need to address the human rights abuses in Tibet perpetrated by Chinese authorities. The Chinese government must release all Tibetans detained for merely exercising their human rights and political freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other areas of public life,” she said.

2024 Two Sessions show China will continue plans to Sinicize Tibet

19 March 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The just-concluded annual Chinese political meetings known as the Two Sessions have shown that President Xi Jinping and his administration are turning China into an increasingly ideological security state and continuing their plans to “Sinicize” Tibetan Buddhism, as well as all other aspects of Tibetan life.

National leaders’ references to Tibet

This year’s annual meetings of China’s National People’s Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), held between March 4 and March 11, 2024, saw the Chinese leaders unitedly supporting the approach that puts ideology above all other aspects of people’s lives. On Tibet, there were some focus from the top leadership, both directly and indirectly, all furthering plans to change the Tibetan identity into that of a Chinese one.

The Chair of the CPPCC Wang Huning, in his report on March 4, 2024, made a direct reference to Tibet. In the fifth point of his report outlining the CPPCC work in the past year, Wang said, “Studied and implemented the Party’s strategy for governing Tibet in the new era and the Party’s strategy for governing Xinjiang in the new era, and carried out 10 research and inspections in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Tibet-related counties in Sichuan Province on promoting the sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and promoting the sinicization of

Islam in Xinjiang. Strengthened the exchanges, exchanges and integration of various ethnic groups, historical interpretation, publicity and education, and strengthen in-depth research on the awareness education of the Chinese nation community in colleges and universities.”^[1]

The reference to Tibetan Buddhism is consistent with the Chinese Communist Party’s call for the Sinicization of all religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, at the 19th Party Congress in 2017 and the subsequent 2019 five-year plan to Sinicize Buddhism launched by the state-backed Chinese Buddhist Association. Sinicization refers to the process of forcing non-Chinese groups to assimilate into Chinese culture and become loyal to the CCP. Xi Jinping made structural changes in 2018 in the party-state system by putting the notorious United Front Work Department (UFW) in charge of overseeing the implementation of religious policy. Placing a mass organ of the CCP above the state administration has been a regular occurrence recently in several policy fields, especially in discipline inspection.

In his report to the NPC on March 8, 2024, Chair Zhao Leji mentioned the “Law on Ecological Conservation of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau” that was passed in 2023 that “provides legal guarantees for ecological conservation and sustainable development of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.”^[2] Zhao added, “we pushed the parties concerned to overhaul relevant normative documents.” Zhao also mentioned that this year they will hold a symposium to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, which became effective on Oct. 1, 1984 and is the foundational legislation that purportedly provides rights to Tibetans and others considered “ethnic minorities.”



Zhao Leji interacting with Tibetan delegates to the 13th NPC in Beijing in 2018

Chinese Premier Li Qiang did not make a direct reference to Tibet in his work report to NPC on March 5, 2024.^[3] However, the report included plans that will have an impact on the Tibetan people. Li said, “We will support old revolutionary base areas and areas with large ethnic minority populations in accelerating development, strengthen development of border areas, and advance the program for boosting development and raising living standards in border areas.” In Tibet, this program for boosting development had a political agenda and included rural revitalization initiatives that primarily meant intensifying the slaughter rate of yaks and sheep. A fast-spreading viral infection had started in 2018 in China and resulted in the deaths of almost half its hogs, either from disease or compulsory culling to contain the viral spread. As China urgently needed to boost meat supply, and with obvious sources of pork imports, including the USA, off the agenda for political reasons, yak meat from Tibet became a target. The process was put within the strategy for promoting rural revitalization.

Li added, “We will, with a focus on forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, uphold and improve the system of regional ethnic autonomy, promote interaction, exchange, and integration among all ethnic groups, and speed up the modernization drive in ethnic minority regions.”

Confirming the concerns about the CCP’s intention to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, Li also said, “We will adhere to the Party’s basic policy on religious affairs, ensure that religions in China must be Chinese in orientation, and

provide guidance to religions so that they can adapt themselves to our socialist society.”

President Xi Jinping did not address the plenary sessions of both the NPC and the CPPCC, but he did address meetings of delegations, though none of them were Tibetan. During the “Two Sessions” in 2021, Xi participated in the deliberations of the Qinghai delegation and even recalled his visit to Yushu after the earthquake of 2010.^[4]

Spotlight on economic disparity in Tibet

Although not intended by the Chinese authorities, this year’s Two Sessions put the spotlight on the critical fact that Chinese policies on Tibet have failed even on non-political fields like the economy. Tibet has not become economically self-reliant even after more than six decades of Chinese claims of development.

Specifically, a statement by the Tibet Autonomous Region Governor Yan Jinhai reveals that TAR, which China claims has found the “the right path for economic growth,”^[5] only survives economically even in 2024 because of Beijing’s subsidy. During the open group meeting of the Tibetan delegation to the NPC on March 6, Yan appeared proud of “high-quality economic development” but revealed the reality when he said, “central government fiscal subsidies to Tibet have cumulatively reached over 1.7 trillion yuan (\$236 billion), which makes up 90.3% of Tibet government finances.”^[6]

Yan added, “Last year alone, the central government’s fiscal transfers to Tibet exceeded 250 billion yuan (\$34.7 billion), which per capita equals over 100,000 yuan (\$13,890). This is the highest out of all China’s 31 provinces, regions and municipalities.”

Previous Chinese official statements have confirmed this lamentable economic condition of the TAR. In 2015, they said that from 1952 to 2013, subsidies to the TAR reached 544.6 billion yuan, accounting for 95% of its finances.^[7]

It is estimated that financial aid from the central budget totaled 1.24 trillion yuan from

1980 to 2018, making up 91 percent of its finances.^[8]

In 2015, Tibet watcher Andrew M. Fischer wrote, “Analysts and scholars — including Chinese economists and social scientists — have long been critical of Beijing’s development strategy in Tibet. A heavy dependence on state subsidies to maintain high levels of economic growth cause economic inefficiencies and social inequalities.”^[9] The fact that this situation continues even in 2024, nine years later, indicates that fundamentally the Chinese authorities have failed to provide stable economic development in TAR.

Fischer also states that Qinghai, which contains most of the Tibetan area of Amdo, is the next most subsidized province under the People’s Republic of China.

Stability, development, ecology and strong borders as focus areas for 2024

While the Two Sessions were taking place, Wang Junzheng, the TAR party secretary, outlined the Chinese leadership’s plans for this year. Participating in People’s Daily Online’s “My Message to the Two Sessions” program, Wang said on March 6, “In 2024, we will adhere to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era to govern the overall work in Tibet, fully and accurately implement the Party’s strategy for governing Tibet in the new era, focus on the ‘four major issues’ of stability, development, ecology, and strong borders, and strive to promote Tibet continues to take new steps towards long-term peace and stability and high-quality development.”^[10]

Similarly, participating in the TAR delegation meeting on March 6, Wang emphasized implementation of the party’s decisions to achieve the party’s goals of “long-term stability and high-quality development”; the former a perennial goal and the later a goal since the 20th Party Congress in October 2022. Wang’s discourse, with keywords such as “grassroots governance,” “rural revitalization” and “people’s livelihood,” indicates the party’s

continued focus on Tibet’s rural areas and tweaking the governance model.^[11]

Beijing leaders at this year’s Tibet-related meetings

On March 6, the TAR delegation to the NPC held a plenary meeting, which was attended by Zhang Guoqing, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and a vice premier. Zhang is, interestingly, a delegate to the 14th NPC assigned to the TAR and had also participated in the TAR delegation meeting in the 2023 Two Sessions, too.

State media also reported that Huang Runqiu, minister of Ecology and Environment, and Sun Yeli, minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, attended the TAR delegation meeting this year. However, there is no report that Pan Yue, vice minister of the Central United Front Work Department and director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, who attended last year’s TAR delegation meeting, did so this year.

Drinking death of a Tibetan party leader raised at Qinghai delegation meeting

Chinese state media reported that on March 6, at the open group meeting of the Qinghai delegation, Chen Gang, Qinghai party secretary, had to respond to queries concerning the revelation of a senior provincial Tibetan leader’s death due to excess drinking during a Chinese Communist Party-organized event in December 2022. As the International Campaign for Tibet reported in May 2023, in the evening of Dec. 11, 2022, Dorjee, the party secretary of Tsojang prefecture and a member of the Qinghai Provincial Party Committee, died following a drinking stint with fellow cadres. The issue raised much public concern.^[12] Chen is reported to have said, “This incident, which seriously violated the spirit of the central government’s eight regulations, is a ‘sore spot’ and ‘injured spot’ for Qinghai cadres.”^[13]

Cai Qi, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, attended the Qinghai delegation meeting on March 7, state media reported.

Increased surveillance of Tibetans expected

On Feb. 27, 2024, days before this year's Two Sessions, China's National People's Congress approved the revision to the Law on Guarding State Secrets, introducing a clause that gives officials the leeway to deem any information as a state secret.^[14]

Article 64 of the amended law states, "Organs and units are to apply work secrets management measures and employ the necessary protective measures for matters generated or obtained by organs or units in the course of performing their functions that are not state secrets but would cause a definite adverse impact after leaking. Provisions on the management of work secrets are to be provided separately."

"Leaking state secrets" has been one of the spurious charges used by China to detain and control Tibetans. The amended law would only make it easier for the authorities to exploit it in their "stability management" of Tibetans. It is possible that the authorities will use this law against those Tibetans in Derge who are highlighting the negative impact of the hydropower dam project in their area, some information of which has been circulating in the international media. This law will take effect on May 1, 2024.

China still not confident in Tibet

Despite all their claims in meetings during this year's Two Sessions and all the coercive measures they've used to control the Tibetan people for the past several decades, the Chinese authorities still lack the confidence that the Tibetan people support their initiatives. Therefore, in the period before the Two Sessions, the timing of which also fell during the anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising, there was a noticeable escalation of security measures in areas of Tibetan residence.

In the Tibetan capital Lhasa, a virtual meeting was held by the Lhasa City Stability Maintenance Command on Feb. 26^[15] "to do a good job of maintaining stability and security during the two sessions." County leaders, temple management committees and various

stability maintenance units were instructed to attend the security meeting.

This meeting appears to focus on suppressing dissent and tightening control rather than addressing genuine security concerns. There was emphasis on political vigilance with focus on "enhancing political position" and aligning thoughts with party directives. The officials were asked to investigate issues like submission of petitions and to nip them in the bud.

Similarly, on Feb. 29, Chen Yongqi, deputy secretary of the TAR Party Committee and executive vice chairman of the TAR government, addressed a meeting in Chushul (Qushui) county in Lhasa City, where he emphasized that everyone "must conscientiously implement the work arrangements of the autonomous region Party committee and the work requirements of the district stability maintenance headquarters, always regard maintaining stability as the first task, implement detailed work measures, and tighten the responsibilities, highlight key areas, strengthen emergency drills, implement operating procedures, resolutely ensure social harmony and stability during the national Two Sessions, and strive to create a good social environment for economic and social development."^[16]

Interestingly, an article in the CCP theoretical journal Seeking Truth (Qiushi) on March 16, 2024, attributed to the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee, says, "Casting a firm sense of Chinese national community is the main line of China's ethnic work, and also a strategic task of Tibet's work."^[17] The article continues, "The Party Committee of the Autonomous Region has firmly established the overall concept of national security, insisting on maintaining stability as its first task, keeping the alarm bells ringing and vigilance constant, and, by means of a scientific mechanism and the concepts of normalization and the rule of law, doing the work of maintaining stability on a daily basis and at the grass-roots level, so as to constantly make the cornerstone of security and development more stable and secure."

Even though independent foreign journalists are not given permission to report from Tibet, a report by a Japanese newspaper from Sichuan's capital Chengdu reveals how Tibetans there had to undergo tightened state control in the period before the Two Sessions. In the middle of February, the Japanese journalist visited the area in Chengdu where Tibetans reside and reported, "heavily armed police officers could be seen stationed at every corner of an intersection, keeping a watchful eye on Tibetan monks and residents."^[18]

Tibetan quarter in Chengdu under tight surveillance on uprising anniversary

16 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

(TibetanReview.net, Mar16'24) — As Tibetans and supporters across the free world commemorated the 65th anniversary of their national uprising on Mar 10, there was total blackout on information from Tibet itself as China greatly tightens security ahead of the occasion each year. The security situation was the same in the Tibetan quarter of Chengdu, capital of China's Sichuan province, according to the *japannews.yomiuri.co.jp* Mar 16.

The report said: "In one area of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, a line of shops sells Tibetan Buddhist altar objects and Tibetan-language books. During a visit in mid-February, heavily armed police officers could be seen stationed at every corner of an intersection, keeping a watchful eye on Tibetan monks and residents." It added that there were many surveillance cameras.

The report found that upon entering a shop for Buddhist objects, there were noticeably more signs written in Chinese than in Tibetan, a result of China's ongoing Sinicization drive.

The report quoted a monk shopping in the store as saying in a low voice, "We have to preserve our religion and culture."

Chengdu is home to a large community of Tibetans, with at least 30,000 permanent Tibetan residents and up to 200,000 Tibetan floating population, according to a report by China's official *Xinhua* news agency back on

Mar 14, 2012 cited in a *wikipedia* page on Sichuan.

Seen as a gateway to Tibet and located about 2.5 km south west of the city centre, two other Chengdu landmarks in the area appear to have been the reason for the growth of the Tibetan Quarter, said *echinacities.com* on its page on Chengdu's Tibetan Quarter – Gateway to Tibet. These are stated to be the Kangding Hotel and the South West University of Nationalities. The university offers courses delivered in Tibetan language, and many Tibetan students take advantage of this, it said.

Tibetan prisoner released with disabled leg after forced labour.

14 March 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

A Tibetan prisoner named Ludup was released from prison last month with injuries after being made to carry out forced labour during his three-and-a-half-year prison sentence.

A source confirmed Tibet Watch: "Ludup's leg sustained serious damage from the re-education-through-forced labour transformation and his leg is crippled these days. Ludup currently stays at home but he is regularly summoned, interrogated, and given political re-education by Meruma Township police authorities."

Ludup, 54, was arrested in Ngaba County in June 2020, 12 years after he carried out a protest in front of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba on 16 March in 2008, the year that saw unprecedented spate of freedom protests erupt across Tibet.

The same source told Tibet Watch that the authorities had neither informed his family where and which court oversaw his trial, nor were they given any notice about what he was charged with.

Ludup spent the years 2008 to 2020 hiding from the police, who resorted to publishing a public notice calling the townspeople of Meruma in Ngaba to inform them about Ludup and a few other Kirti monks. The notice described them as having participated in an "illegal protest movement."

Following his arrest and trial, he served his sentence in Deyang Prison in Huang Xu Town of Deyang City, Sichuan Province.



Ludup on a wanted order issued by the Public Security Bureau of Ngaba Prefecture

Having lost his identity card during his hiding and a new one not yet reissued, he currently faces difficulties in accessing medical care at hospitals. This is in addition to him being under surveillance and restricted from meeting families and friends even during the Tibetan new year.

54-year-old Ludup (ལུདུཔ།), known by lay name Rinchen Goedoe (རིན་ཆེན་གོཏོག་འདོད།), was enrolled at Kirti Monastery at a very young age, and hails from Samsang family (བསམ་སངས་ཚང་།) in village number four of Meruma Township (མེརུམ་མངའ་སྡེ་ཆེན་བཞི་པ།) in Ngaba County.

Three years on, whereabouts of Tibetan poet is a mystery

14 March 2024, [RFA](#)

Gendun Lhundrub was arrested by Chinese police in December 2020.

More than three years after the arrest of a popular Tibetan writer and poet in northwestern China, police have not provided any details about his whereabouts, his

sentence or his well-being, despite repeated appeals by his family for information, two sources told Radio Free Asia.

Gendun Lhundrub, a former monk at Rongwo Monastery in Rebgong county of Malho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in China's Qinghai province, was detained on Dec. 2, 2020.

Authorities did not cite any reasons for his arrest, which followed a long period when police monitored his activities for signs of dissent and opposition to Chinese policies, RFA learned at the time.

Chinese authorities frequently detain Tibetan writers, artists and singers who promote Tibetan national identity and culture or who have criticized China's rule of the western region.

They scrutinize their writings for content considered as "endangering national security" or constituting an "act of separatism," thereby deeming them threats to the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

Lhundrub's relatives have made repeated requests to authorities in Rebgong county to find out where he is and whether he has been sentenced, said one source from inside Tibet. "However, they have not received any response to their queries," said the source, who declined to be identified for safety reasons.

Whenever the family wants to send items to Lundrub, officials at the Chinese government's Rebgong county office tell them to leave the items with them, and they will forward them to Lundrub, he said.

"His well-being is also unclear as no one has been allowed to meet him," the source added. Additionally, officials have shared no details or documentation as proof of Lhundrub's sentence, both sources said.

Long list

Lhundrub is among those on a long list of well-known Tibetan writers and poets arrested by authorities. In 2016, Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk was arrested and tortured. He was released in 2021 after being

held for two years in pre-trial detention and serving part of a five-year prison sentence.

Gendun Lhundru was born in 1974 in Rebgong in the traditional Amdo region of Tibet in the northeastern part of the Tibetan Plateau.

He became a monk at a young age and enrolled in the Rebgong Dargye Monastery. He later studied at the Rebgong Rongpo Monastery, Labrang Tashi Kyil and Serta Labrang.

Starting in 1994, he wrote poetry. In October 2022, he released an anthology of poems called "Khorwa," and wrote on the website Waseng-drak that writers and artists require freedom to express their thoughts and emotions without restriction, RFA learned from sources that year.

Lhundrub's collection of poems, which include "Black Rosary," "Melody of Life" and "White Book," and his literary skills are highly regarded by Tibetans around the world.

Tibet boarding schools: China accused of trying to silence language

10 March 2024, [BBC News](#)

Tibetan educational sociologist Gyal Lo can speak Mandarin Chinese fluently - but he would rather not.

He has spent the last few years telling the world about Beijing's sweeping educational reforms in Tibetan areas, and would prefer not to use the language of people he identifies as colonial oppressors.

China has expanded the use of boarding schools - for children as young as four - and replaced Tibetan as the main language of tuition with Chinese.

Beijing says these reforms give Tibetan children the best possible preparation for their adult lives, in a country where the main language of communication is Mandarin Chinese.

But Dr Gyal Lo disagrees - he believes Beijing's real aim is to undermine the Tibetan identity, by targeting the very youngest in society.

"They've designed the curriculum that produces a population that will not be able to

practise their own language and culture in the future," he said.

"China is using education as a tool to minimise Tibetans' social capacity. No one will be able to resist their rule."

Overseas human rights organisations have for decades been highlighting alleged abuses carried out by China in Tibet - but not much over recent years.

The focus has shifted to Beijing's treatment of Muslim Uyghurs, in China's north-western region of Xinjiang, and the pro-democracy protest movement in Hong Kong.

But activists say Chinese officials have been busy in Tibet too.

Over recent years, the Chinese government has closed village schools - and private ones teaching Tibetan - and expanded the use of boarding schools.

These have been in operation for many decades in a number of Chinese regions that are thinly populated - but in Tibetan areas, they appear to have become the main means of education.

Campaigners estimate that 80% of Tibetan children - perhaps one million pupils - are now taught in boarding schools, from pre-school-age onwards.

In a statement to the BBC, the Chinese embassy in London said this policy was necessary.

"Due to a highly scattered population, children have to travel long distances to get to school, which is very inconvenient," it said.

"If schools were to be built in every place the students live, it would be very difficult to ensure adequate teachers and quality of teaching. That is why local governments set up boarding schools."

But opponents say this kind of schooling creates psychological trauma for children who are forcibly separated from their families, who are pressured to send their children away.

"The most challenging aspect of my life was missing my family," said one Tibetan teenager, who attended a boarding school for several years, until she was 10.

She has since fled Tibet and now lives in India. The BBC spoke to her after making contact through a campaign group.

"There were many other children who missed their families and cried too," she said. "Some of the younger ones often woke up in the middle of the night crying, and would run to the school gate."

The BBC spoke to other Tibetan exiles who had heard similar complaints from their relatives still living back home.

Dr Gyal Lo has his own story, about two of his grandnieces, who were sent away to boarding school when they were just four and six.

After observing them at a family dinner, he realised that they felt awkward speaking their mother tongue.

"The way they were sitting there made me think they weren't comfortable sharing the same identity as their family members. They were like guests," he said.

It prompted the sociologist, who was then working at the Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou, to visit 50 Tibetan boarding schools to see if other children were the same. They were.

Dr Gyal Lo compares these boarding schools to those that were once operated in the United States, Canada and Australia.

Native children were taken away from their families in a process of assimilation that has now been discredited.

"These kids are completely cut off from their cultural roots, and the emotional connection between their parents, their families and their community," he said.

The second major change to the education system concerns the Tibetan language, a rich oral and written tradition going back more than one thousand years.

China has replaced Tibetan as the main language of tuition with Mandarin Chinese.

The Chinese embassy said ethnic minorities in China had "the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages".

But the student the BBC spoke to said only Chinese was encouraged at her school.

"All the classes were taught in Chinese, except for the Tibetan language class. Our school had a big library, but I didn't see any Tibetan books there," she said.

This policy appears to run contrary to international human rights law, according to Professor Alexandra Xanthaki, a UN special rapporteur on cultural rights.

She said parents had the right to send their children to a school that used the language of their choice.

"This means that just one or two hours where it's being taught as a foreign language is not enough," she said.

Just over a year ago, Prof Xanthaki and two other UN rapporteurs wrote a letter to China detailing a series of complaints about its educational reforms in Tibet.

The letter suggested China was trying to "homogenise" ethnic minorities, so they would become more Chinese, with Mandarin seen as the vehicle to achieve that goal.

Dr Gyal Lo remembers an argument he had with the vice-president of a university in Yunnan province, where he went to work after Lanzhou. It illustrates how Chinese is valued above other languages.

"He came to my office one day and said, 'you're producing Tibetan articles, but not Chinese articles'," recalled the sociologist.

"It made me uncomfortable and angry. I told him I don't want produce Chinese articles." The administrator turned red and stormed out.

Shortly after that incident, in 2020, Dr Gyal Lo fled China and now lives in Canada, from where he campaigns to highlight the educational changes taking place in Tibet.

Beijing is vigorously resisting the narrative put forward by activists like him. It has launched a propaganda campaign to convince the world that its reforms are beneficial.

It has also tried to discredit those who say otherwise. Prof Xanthaki was accused by China of spreading fake news. Dr Gyal Lo has been targeted too. His authority to speak on this issue has been questioned in Chinese state media.

Despite that, he remains undeterred, if pessimistic about the future for Tibetan language and culture, and the region's young people.

"Our children are becoming an alienated generation. Many will not be able to fit in either Chinese society or Tibetan society."

China's continued crackdown targets Tibetans who might have sent out Dege dam protest videos

08 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While China released a few dozen Tibetans on Feb 27 after the arrest of more than 1,000 in Dege County of Kardze prefecture in Sichuan province some days earlier, the crackdown continues with those who may have sent out video clips of the hydroelectric power dam protest being especially targeted, said the Tibetan service of rfa.org Mar 7. The report said a monastery administrator and a village official had been transferred to a large, prefecture-level detention centre located in the county.

The Tibetans had protested peacefully and submitted petitions against the project, as it was going to submerge the ancestrally inhabited homes of around 2,000 of them, as well as centuries-old monasteries with priceless artefacts, including murals which would be destroyed. China has made it clear that the project will continue.

Tenzin, the senior administrator of the 13th century Wonto Monastery in Wangbuding township and a village official named Tamdrin were transferred to the larger detention centre on Mar 3, the report said. It said the two were among those severely beaten by the Chinese police after their arrest.

The report said around 40 Tibetans were released on Feb 27 with stipulations forbidding them from communicating with outsiders. Besides strict restrictions have been imposed on the entry and exit of people at the monasteries as well as at the villages on both sides of the Drichu (Chinese: Jinsha) river over which the dam will be built.

Meanwhile the authorities are continuing to arrest more people. In particular, the crackdown targets people who posted videos of the arrests and protests that took place in February, the report said.

"The police are regularly checking people's WeChat and TikTok accounts for any evidence of them having shared the videos and for communication with the outside world," one anonymous source has said. "There's severe restrictions on movement on either side of the river and no internet connection."

Widespread, daily searches and interrogations are reportedly being carried out in attempts to find people who might have posted the widely shared videos of black-uniformed Chinese police restraining petitioning monks, who could be seen kneeling and crying out, the report said.

The police are stated to be monitoring the monks and local Tibetans very closely, with the situation in the county resembling an "open prison as they are exercising extreme control," the report cited a second source as saying "The monks and local people are very angry that they were arrested and subjected to beatings and torture for making peaceful appeals," the source has added. "They say that if the government really forces them to move, there may be violent protests."

The Gangtuo Dam is part of a plan announced in 2012 by China's National Development and Reform Commission to build a massive 13-tier hydropower complex on the Drichu. It would be located at Wontok (Gangtuo) in Dege county. The total planned capacity of the 13 hydropower stations is 13,920 megawatts.

China's claim of no 'mass incidents' in 'Tibet' last year rejected

07 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has claimed Mar 6 that there were no "mass incidents" last year in Tibet, a euphemism for protests. But it was obviously referring only to the situation in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which is roughly the western half of the occupied Himalayan

country. It has also vowed to continue the Sinicization of Tibet and its Buddhist religion.

There were no “mass incidents” last year, Reuters Mar 6 cited a senior Tibet official as saying at a briefing on the sidelines of China’s annual parliamentary session being held in Beijing.

“Last year no serious mass incidents, political incidents, or violent terrorist acts occurred,” the report quoted Yan Jinhai, the region’s second-ranked official and government chairman, as saying during a scripted press conference where questions were selected in advance.

Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has rejected Yan’s claim. “Yan’s statement is inaccurate and misleading. He’s forgetting the thousands of Tibetans who courageously attended a Tibetan Buddhist teaching in Tsoe (Hezuo City, presently under Gansu province) last September, despite a government ban. He’s also ignoring the more than 1,000 Tibetans China arrested over peaceful protests in Derge (Dege County, presently under Sichuan province) just last month,” ICT president Tencho Gyatso has said Mar 7.

She has also said: “Tibetans have resisted for over 65 years and will continue to resist to protect their religion, language and identity. China has failed to win over the Tibetan people. If China really wants no more protests in Tibet, it should respect Tibetans’ basic freedoms.”

Like other parts of Tibet, the TAR has a long history of protests against Chinese rule, including one which started in capital Lhasa in 2008 and which at once engulfed most of the Tibetan Plateau region. China’s massive armed repression led to massacres of Tibetans and imposition of prison-like controls and restrictions across the land. This in turn led to a spate of protest self-immolations across Tibet since 2009, with the exile Tibetan administration saying 157 of such reported protesters have been confirmed so far.

The tight security measures, including a highly intrusive surveillance network, tight

information control, and strict movement restrictions still remain in place.

“We have always regarded maintaining national unity and strengthening ethnic solidarity as the focal point of Tibet work,” Reuters quoted Yan, an ethnic Tibetan with Chinese name who previously served in neighbouring Qinghai province before being transferred to Lhasa in 2020, as saying.

“We will always adhere to the principle of firmly ... curbing extremism, resisting infiltration and fighting criminality,” Yan has said, adding that spoken and written Mandarin Chinese had become “comprehensively widespread” across Tibet, thanks obviously to the Sinicization drive.

He also vowed to “continue advancing the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism” and stressed Tibet’s “high-quality economic development” in recent years, which improved living standards for many of its 3.6 million residents, the report added.

Over 1,000 people, including monks, arrested for opposing Dege hydropower dam project in Tibet

07 March 2024, [Down to Earth](#)

Experts claim monasteries have been put under lockdown; dam will be environmentally detrimental



RTYC-Delhi organised protest in India's capital to oppose forced relocation of historic monasteries & households in Tibet for dam

construction. Photo: Tibetan Youth Congress / X (formerly Twitter)

Over 1,000 citizens and monks of Tibet have been arrested for protesting against a hydropower dam project on the Drichu river in eastern Tibet.

The arrests come in the backdrop of protests that began on February 14, 2024 when 300 Tibetans demonstrated at the Dege County Hall against the proposed hydropower project construction and seeking withdrawal of relocation from the vicinity.

On February 20, the authorities inspected Yena and Wonto monasteries during the preparation for their demolition. A video released by Radio Free Asia showed monks prostrating themselves before the visiting Chinese officials to plead with them to halt the construction of the dam, said a release from the International Tibet Network (ITN).

The Chinese authorities on February 22, arrested more than 100 Tibetans including monks. More arrests followed on February 23, when more than 1,000 people were held, the ITN noted.

Speaking with *Down To Earth (DTE)*, Lobsang Yangtso, a senior environmental researcher from ITN, said, "At least six monasteries are under lockdown and monks and residents were physically assaulted."

Yangtso said that internet connectivity has been restored after a brief shut down.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), a non-profit Tibetan human rights organisation based in Dharamshala, India, has alleged that the decision to announce relocation of Tibetans was strategically aligned with Tibetan New Year to divert public attention and minimise potential unrest.

The organisation, in a media release on their website, have said that use of police force was done to intimidate, suppress and arrest Tibetans. The police used water bullets and electric weapons, causing injuries leading to hospitalisation of many, the organisation noted.

"Currently, at least 13 hydropower stations exist solely in the upper reaches of the Drichu on Tibetan land. Six of these are massive dams with a power generation capacity exceeding a million kilowatts," it observed.

TCHRD said the Chinese government is accelerating constructions of new dams on major rivers located in Tibet such as Drichu. The move is resulting in significant damage to the fragile natural environment and displacing thousands of Tibetans in the process, the statement said.

Two major landslides in recent years have affected the flow of Drichu river, it added.

"The Chinese government's construction of large dams in areas known to be ecologically vulnerable, driven by purely economic motives, demonstrates a complete disregard for the safety of both Tibet's environment and its people," said Nyima Woesser, researcher at TCHRD, in the statement.

[UN rights chief says China committing violations in Xinjiang, Tibet](#)

05 March 2024, [Reuters](#)

U.N. human rights chief Volker Turk on Monday called on China to implement recommendations to amend laws that violate fundamental rights, including in the Xinjiang and Tibet regions.

Rights groups accuse Beijing of widespread abuses of Uyghurs, a mainly Muslim ethnic minority that numbers around 10 million in the western region of Xinjiang, including the mass use of forced labour in camps. Beijing vigorously denies any abuses.

"I also call on the government to implement the recommendations made by my Office and other human rights bodies in relation to laws, policies and practises that violate fundamental rights, including in the Xinjiang and Tibet regions," Turk told the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva.

China's diplomatic mission in Geneva did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China seized control of Tibet in 1950 in what it describes as a "peaceful liberation" from feudalistic serfdom. International human rights groups and exiles, however, have routinely condemned what they call China's oppressive rule in Tibetan areas.

Turk, who said his office was engaged in "dialogue" with Beijing, also called for the release of human rights defenders, lawyers and other people detained for "picking quarrels and making trouble".

A report released in August 2022 by Michelle Bachelet, then U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, hours before she ended her mandate, found that China's detention of Uyghurs and other Muslims may constitute crimes against humanity.

New report says Tibetans lack representation in China's leadership

04 March 2024, [ICT](#)

As the Chinese government's all-important "Two Sessions" get underway, Tibetans will be largely missing from positions of power.

In a new report released today, March 4, the International Campaign for Tibet tracks Tibetan representation in leadership at China's national level, as well as the provincial and sub-provincial levels in Tibetan areas.

The report finds that Tibetans are mainly in token positions, while real power in Tibet remains in the hands of non-Tibetans.

These findings conflict with China's claim that Tibetans have become "masters of their own destiny" since China's takeover of Tibet.

The report, "Underrepresented: Tibetans kept out of most leadership positions," arrives as Tibetans prepare to mark the 65th anniversary of their March 10, 1959 National Uprising, followed by the Dalai Lama's flight into exile seven days later.

ICT says in the report: *"The fact that the Communist Party excludes Tibetans from real leadership positions in Tibet gives reason to believe that the party leadership does not trust Tibetans to support CCP rule if they had the*

choice and, to the contrary, that Tibetans would choose to abolish CCP rule, if they could." Read ICT's report.

National leadership

The "Two Sessions" began today in Beijing with the annual meeting of China's top advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. China's legislature, the National People's Congress, was scheduled to open its meeting on March 5.

The Chinese government has used the Two Sessions to boast about the rights given to Tibetans and other so-called "ethnic minorities." However, ICT's report finds that the Political Consultative Conference has only one Tibetan at the vice-presidential level, who has held the position on and off since the 1970s. Five other Tibetans are on the conference's Standing Committee, which has a total of 299 members.

In the National People's Congress, only one Tibetan is among the 14 vice chairs. The Congress' 159-member Standing Committee also has just one Tibetan.

Tibetans are also largely missing from other leadership bodies at the national level. China's 20th Party Congress has only one Tibetan in its 205 member-strong Party Central Committee, one fewer than in the 19th Party Congress. No Tibetan has ever served in the Politburo or its real-power-wielding Standing Committee.

Leadership in Tibet

While China denies Tibetans leadership opportunities in Beijing, it also largely keeps them locked out of power in their own homeland.

No Tibetan has ever served in the highest-ranking position of Communist Party secretary in the Tibet Autonomous Region, which spans most of western and central Tibet. Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan provinces, which include the rest of the territory of Tibet, also lack Tibetan party secretaries.

There are some Tibetan party secretaries at the prefectural level in these areas, but the number has decreased since 2020.

Looking at the leadership of the security entities, including the public security

bureaus—which are at the forefront of China’s control and suppression of the Tibetan people—almost all are non-Tibetans, both at the provincial as well as the prefectural level. Almost all heads of the military leadership at all levels in Tibet are also non-Tibetans.

“Looking at the situation of Tibetans in Tibet in 2024,” ICT’s report says, “rather than having their future in their own hands, they continue to be second-class citizens in their own homeland.”

[Read ICT’s report, “Underrepresented: Tibetans kept out of most leadership positions.”](#)

Authorities urge ‘stability’ amid restrictions on Tibetans due to dam protests

04 March 2024, [RFA](#)

They tell residents and monastic heads that the building of the Gangtuo Dam will go ahead as planned.

Chinese officials have told local ethnic Tibetans and monastic leaders in Sichuan province to maintain stability following the arrest of more than 1,000 protesters over a hydropower dam, and made clear that the project would continue, two Tibetans with knowledge of the situation said.

If built, the Gangtuo Dam power station on the Dri Chu River could submerge several monasteries in Dege’s county’s Wangbuding township and force residents of at least two villages near the river to relocate, sources earlier told RFA.

“Chinese officials have held meetings in the Wonto village area where they ordered local Tibetans to comply with the government’s plans and regulations and called for the leaders of the local monasteries to mobilize the locals to toe the party line,” said one source who hails from Dege and now lives in exile.

On Feb. 25, Dege County Party Secretary Baima Zhaxi visited Wangbuding and neighboring townships to meet with Buddhist monastic leaders and village administrators, during which he called for “stability” and urged

residents to comply with regulations or else be “dealt with in accordance with the law and regulations,” according to a local news report.

“As the stability maintenance period in March and the national Two Sessions approach, we must implement detailed stability maintenance measures to promote continued harmony and stability in the jurisdiction,” Zhaxi was quoted in the report as saying.

The Two Sessions refers to China’s annual meetings of the National People’s Congress and of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, being held this week in Beijing.

“We must continue to carry out the investigation and resolution of conflicts, risks and hidden dangers, and effectively resolve conflicts and disputes at the grassroots level, and nip them in the bud,” Zhaxi said.

Zhaxi’s visit comes ahead of Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10, a politically sensitive date that commemorates the thousands of Tibetans who died in a 1959 uprising against China’s invasion and occupation of their homeland, and the flight of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, into exile in northern India.

Keep building

Zhaxi also visited the dam construction site and told the leaders of the coordination team to adhere to their work orders and make arrangements for “the next step of work,” according to a local Chinese government announcement.

Zhaxi told residents about “the great significance and necessity of the construction of hydropower stations” and indicated that the government would “protect the legitimate interests of the masses to the greatest extent.”

“Abide by the law, express your demands in a legal, civilized and rational manner, and do not exceed the bottom line,” Zhaxi told locals during the on-site visit, according to the same news report. “Otherwise, you will be dealt with in accordance with the law and regulations.”

On Feb. 23, police arrested more than 1,000 Tibetans, including monks and residents in the county in Sichuan’s Kardze Autonomous

Tibetan Prefecture, who had been protesting the construction of the dam, meant to generate electricity.

Authorities continue to heighten security restrictions in Dege county on the east bank of the Drichu River, called Jinsha in Chinese, and in Jomda county of Qamdo city in the Tibet Autonomous Region on the west bank of the river, said the sources who both live in exile and requested anonymity for safety reasons.

Strict surveillance

Residents are forbidden from contacting anyone outside the area, the sources said. Chinese officials continue to impose strict digital surveillance and tight restrictions on movement in Wangbuding after rare video footage emerged from inside Tibet on Feb. 22 of Chinese police beating Tibetan monks, before arresting more than 100 of them, most of whom were from Wonto and Yena monasteries.

Since then, authorities have carried out wide-scale rigorous interrogations of the arrested Tibetans, even as information from inside Tibet has been harder to come by amid a crackdown on the use of mobile phones and social media and messaging platforms to restrict communication with the outside world, sources said.

The protests began on Feb. 14, when at least 300 Tibetans gathered outside Dege County Town Hall to protest the building of the Gangtuo Dam, part of a massive 13-tier hydropower complex with a total planned capacity of 13,920 megawatts.

Over the past two weeks, Tibetans in exile have been holding solidarity rallies in cities in the United States, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Australia and India.

Global leaders and Tibetan advocacy groups have condemned China's actions, calling for the immediate release of those detained. Last week, Chinese authorities released about 40 of the arrested monks on Feb. 26 and 27, RFA reported.

China imposes lockdown on seven monasteries in Kham Dege

01 March 2024, [Phayul](#)

Chinese authorities have imposed lockdown on seven monasteries situated along the two banks of eastern Tibet's Drichu River in Kham Dege, reported Radio Free Asia, which cited a local Tibetan source from the region.

The seven monasteries restricted by the lockdown, include Wontod, Yena, and Khardho monasteries on the east bank of the river in Dege, and Rabten, Gonsar, Tashi, and Pharok monasteries on the west bank of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Entry and exit in these monasteries have been severely restricted, with clamp down on movement and communication channels in the county.

Over February 22-23, more than 1,000 monks and local Tibetans were reportedly arrested following petitions and protests since February 14, urging authorities to halt a proposed construction of a massive dam project. While approximately 40 monks were released on February 26 and 27, the majority remain under arrest, undergoing brutal treatment.

The released individuals were primarily from Wontod Monastery, as reported by local Tibetan sources. These individuals have reportedly been warned against communicating with exile Tibetans and giving out information on the incident. Sources suggest that international media coverage of the mass arrests played a significant role in prompting the release of some Tibetans. Monks who required hospitalisation due to severe interrogation beatings were allowed to return to their monastery.

The construction of the Chinese Gangtuo Hydropower Station, planned for the upper reaches of the Drichu River in Tibet, poses grave threat to numerous Tibetan monasteries and villages nearby. This cascade hydropower station, deemed a "leading" project, endangers at least six Tibetan monasteries and two villages inhabited by Tibetan communities. Among those at risk of complete submersion due to the project is Wontod Monastery,

established in the 14th century and known for its historical importance and remarkable Tibetan Buddhist murals and artworks.

China awards 12 top Tibetan Buddhist degrees in Tibet, compared to over 300 in India in last four years

01 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

(TibetanReview.net, Mar01'24) – China reported Feb 28 that 12 monks had been awarded the degree of Geshe Lharampa following a sutra debate that day in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), apparently to make the point that religious freedom is respected and thriving there under its occupation rule. But compare to this the fact that in January this year, the same degree was awarded to more than 300 candidates in India at a ceremony attended by Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, at Bodh Gaya, India.

Given the fact that less than 3% of Tibet's population live in exile, including around half of them in India, the difference becomes startling, even though those 300 awardees at Bodh Gaya represented the number of graduates over the past four years.

In contrast, in Chinese ruled Tibet, a total of 189 Tibetan Buddhist monks had been awarded the degree of Geshe Lharampa since 2004, according to China's official Xinhua news agency Feb 28.

Geshe Lharampa is the highest degree in the exoteric teachings of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, equivalent to a doctoral degree in modern education, the report said while reporting the award.

Hailing from TAR and Yunnan Province, the 12 monks attended the debate and award ceremony held at the Jokhang Temple in Tibet's capital Lhasa, the report said.

Yunnan, it should be noted, includes Dechen (Chinese: Diqing) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, which is part of independent Tibet's historical province of Kham.

There is a host of reasons why the number of Geshe Lharampa awards in Tibet is miniscule compared to that in India, including China's

imposition of severe limits and multitudes of restrictions on the enrolment of monks in monastic study centres; the requirement for monks to undergo patriotism tests and studies as part of their admission process, curriculum, and examination; and arrest of monks for perceived separatist activities that include calling for respect for Tibetan people's human, religious, linguistic, and cultural rights.

China-ruled Tibet is second least free country, territory in rights group's annual survey

01 April 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

(TibetanReview.net, Mar01'24) – With an abysmal -2 out of 40 for Political Rights and just 2 out of 60 for Civil Liberties, China-ruled Tibet has scored a total of zero out of 100 for "Freedom" in the international rights group Freedom House's latest annual survey of Freedom in the World released Feb 29. With a score like that, the group has ranked the occupied territory as "Not Free". In fact, it ranked just above the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh (-3) in this year's global ranking.

Nagorno-Karabakh has been in the news recently due to the violent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over territorial sovereignty.

The "zero" rating is Tibet's worst in at last eight years. It had an overall score of 1 in Freedom House's 2023 survey report, noted Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet on its savetibet.org website Feb 29.

China itself has scored -2 for political rights and 11 for civil liberties, so that its overall score is 9; it is therefore also ranked as "Not Free."

Those that ranked above Tibet but with a total score of less than 10 are: Syria (1), South Sudan (1), Turkmenistan (2), Eastern Donbas (2), Crimea (2), North Korea (3), Eritrea (3), Western Sahara (4), Equatorial Guinea (5), Tajikistan (5), Sudan (5), Central African Republic (5), Afghanistan (6), Azerbaijan (7), Somalia (8), Saudi Arabia (8), Myanmar (8), Belarus (8), Gaza Strip (8), Libya (9), and China (9).

The group's 2024 report has highlighted Hong Kong and Tibet as "among the least free places on earth" due to the "exercise of unchecked power."

Yana Gorokhovskaia, research director for strategy and design at Freedom House, has said: "In Tibet last year, the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) separated over a million children from their families and put them in state-run boarding schools, where ... Chinese language and culture was forcefully inculcated."

The rights group's 2024 survey covers the situation of freedom in 210 countries and territories.

The freest countries or territories in the Asia-Pacific region, in comparative terms, New Zealand (99), Japan (96), Australia (95) and Taiwan (94). And the worst in the region are China (9), Myanmar (8), North Korea (3) and Tibet (0).

Both Myanmar and Tibet have lost one point since last year's report.

The annual report gives each country – and many disputed territories – a score from 1 to 100 using 25 specific indicators based on the provisions of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and then declares them "free," or "partly free," or "not free."

Globally, the report said, the "breadth and depth" of the decline in freedoms last year was significant, with political rights and civil liberties having diminished in a total of 52 countries and improved in only 21.

Adrian Shahbaz, the vice president of research and analysis at Freedom House, said at the launch of the report that it was the 18th straight year of declines, noted rfa.org Feb 29. Freedom House noted that flawed elections and armed conflict contributed to the 18th year of democratic decline. However, by drawing strength from diversity, protecting dissent, and building international coalitions to support their own norms and values, democratic forces can still reverse the long decline in global freedom, it added.

Some Tibetans protesting against dam construction released after international coverage

01 March 2024, [Phayul](#)



Around 40 Tibetans have been released from among more than 1,000 people arrested by Chinese police for protesting against a dam project that threatens to submerge ancient monasteries and several villages, according to various sources.

Chinese authorities released about 20 monks each on Monday and Tuesday, said the sources who spoke on condition of anonymity for safety reasons. "One of the main reasons for the release of the Tibetans is the growing media coverage abroad of the mass arrests that have taken place," one source told RFA. International coverage including watch dog Human rights Watch has called for the release of those detained in the aftermath of the protests.

Some of the arrested Tibetans were beaten during the interrogations and later admitted to the hospital. They were also informed individually at the hospital that they would be allowed to return to the monasteries but authorities forbade them to communicate with outsiders, on Wednesday, the same source said. Chinese police have also imposed strict restrictions on the movement of monks to and from the various monasteries located on both sides of the Driчу River, the same person said. "The Chinese authorities have long been hostile to public protests, but their response is especially brutal when the protests are by Tibetans and other ethnic groups," said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights

Watch. "Other governments should press Beijing to free these protesters, who have been wrongfully detained for exercising their basic rights."

Reports say that at least 300 villagers travelled to Derge County in Sichuan province on February 14, to protest the building of the Kamtok (Tibetan: sKam thog, Chinese: Gangtuo) dam. Video footage shows villagers from the area of Wontoe protesting the dam's construction. The dam is the sixth in a proposed series of 13 on the Dri Chu River, known as Jinsha or the upper Yangtse River in Chinese.

Five major hydroelectric dams are already in operation or under construction along this stretch of the river, with an installed capacity of 8.6 gigawatts. By comparison, the world's most powerful hydro dam, the Three Gorges, lower down the Yangtse River, has a generating capacity of 22.5 gigawatts. All of this electricity is sent from Tibetan areas through the Ultra High Voltage "West to East" (xi dian dong song) transmission infrastructure, due to be completed by 2025.

Since 2017, Chinese authorities have relocated over 11,000 people from 7 townships in Gonjo and Markham counties bordering the Jinsha River for "poverty alleviation" reasons, according to official figures, for reckless state projects including the construction of dams.

The right to protection against forced eviction derives from the right to adequate housing as provided under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which China is a state party. According to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which monitors state compliance with the covenant, for evictions to be lawful they must be "solely to promote the general welfare in a democratic society," and carried out "in strict compliance with the relevant provisions of international human rights law and by general principles of reasonableness and proportionality."

These safeguards include, for example, that the government explores "all feasible alternatives" before eviction, and that it provides an

opportunity for genuine consultation with those affected. Mass evictions carried out in Tibetan areas often have not met these basic standards, Human Rights Watch said.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Now China donates 1,500 tonnes of Tibet glacial water to Maldives amidst water crisis

27 March 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

In a bid to alleviate the acute water shortage in the Maldives, the government of China has donated 1,500 tonnes of drinking water sourced from glaciers in Tibet. This donation comes as part of China's ongoing support to the Maldives, especially since President Dr Mohamed Muizzu took office in November 2023.

The announcement was made by the Maldives government, stating that the drinking water shipment has successfully reached the archipelago nation. This decision was a result of discussions during the official visit of China's Tibet Autonomous Region's Chairman, Yan Jinhai, to the Maldives, where he met with President Dr Mohamed Muizzu last November, as confirmed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The donated water is produced from frozen water sourced from glacial regions, known for its cleanliness, clarity, and mineral richness. Tibet Autonomous Region is renowned for producing high-quality premium brands of water, further enhancing the value of this donation.

This is not the first instance of China's aid to the Maldives. In March, President Muizzu announced that the Maldives would receive free "non-lethal" military equipment and training from China's military under a newly signed agreement. This agreement followed President Muizzu's meetings with Major General Zhang Baoqun, Deputy Director of the Office for International Military Cooperation of

China, and President of the Export-Import Bank of China, Ren Shengjun.

China's assistance to the Maldives has historically focused on urban and economic development. The Maldives, with its 26 atolls and 1,192 islands mostly composed of coral reefs and sandbars, faces extreme scarcity of groundwater and freshwater, exacerbated by climate change.

In December 2014, India conducted 'Operation Neer' during a severe water crisis in the Maldives following a massive fire in the Male Water and Sewerage Company complex. Indian aircraft delivered 375 tonnes of drinking water, and two Indian ships, INS Deepak and INS Shukanya, delivered around 2,000 tonnes of water, providing much-needed relief to the Maldivians.

"Two Indian Ships INS Deepak and INS Shukanya also arrived in Male and delivered around 2,000 tonnes of water alleviating the pressure faced by the Maldivians," it added. The Maldives' strategic location, just 70 nautical miles from the island of Minicoy in Lakshadweep and 300 nautical miles from the mainland's western coast, gives it significant importance in the Indian Ocean Region's commercial sea lanes. The Maldives Foreign Ministry has announced its plan to distribute the donated water as aid to various islands in the event of drinking water shortages, demonstrating China's continued support to the Maldives in times of need.

Most eastern Tibet dam protesters reported released, endured severe ill-treatment, beating
26 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Hundreds of remaining monks and other Tibetans detained by Chinese police in Feb 2024 for gathering to protest and petition against a major hydroelectric power dam complex being built in Dege County of Kardze prefecture, Sichuan province, have been released. However, they have handed over two of them, still under arrest, for prosecution, while younger monks have been transferred to

government-run schools, reported the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* Mar 25.

Tenzin Sangpo, senior administrator of the local Wonto Monastery, and a village official named Tenzin, arrested on Feb 23, are suspected of having led the protests last month against the Gangtuo Dam project, the report said.

They were among the several detained Tibetans previously reported to have been transferred to the larger, Dege County Detention Centre.

Sangpo and Tenzin have now been handed over to the government Procuratorate Office for criminal investigation and prosecution, the report cited local sources as saying, requesting anonymity for safety reasons.

However, their whereabouts, or the charges against them remain unknown.

"The local Tibetan people are worried that the government will accuse them of having instigated the February protests and being responsible for sharing information with the outside world," the report quoted one source as saying.

The report also said the released Tibetans had been subjected to severe ill-treatment and brutal beatings, which left some of them handicapped and hospitalized.

They were crammed into crowded cells and subjected to physical abuses and beatings.

The report cited a released monk as having said the detainees were fed such poor quality tsampa (roasted barley flour, a staple Tibetan diet) as to be fit only as animal feed.

"Some days, we were not given any water to drink," the monk has said. "On other days, when there was water, we were given very little."

He has said the Chinese police slapped the monks and made them run around the prison grounds as a form of punishment, and to have beaten them severely if they refused to do so.

"One monk was beaten so badly that he could not even speak," he has said. "He is now under medical treatment."

Besides, during interrogation, the Tibetans were pressured to incriminate each other,

thereby traumatizing them emotionally, the report cited other local sources as say.

Meanwhile, villages and monasteries on both sides of the Dri Chu (Chinese: Jinsha) river have continued to be under close surveillance, with no outsiders being allowed to enter the township.

All the more than 50 younger monks of Wonto Monastery have been dispatched to the county government school after the protests, the report said. Wonto and nearby Yena Monastery together had around 300 monks before the dam protest crackdowns.

The Gangtuo Dam is part of a plan announced in 2012 by China's National Development and Reform Commission to build a massive 13-tier hydropower complex on the Dri Chu. The total planned capacity of the project is 13,920 megawatts.

The project will submerge the ancestrally inhabited homes of around 2,000 Tibetans as well as centuries-old monasteries with priceless artefacts, including murals, dating back to the 13th century.

Nearly 3400 villagers evacuated as forest fire rages in eastern Tibet

17 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

(TibetanReview.net, Mar17'24) — Nearly 3,400 Tibetans from a number of villages have been evacuated and more than 1200 firefighters deployed to fight a raging forest fire which started on Mar 15 evening in the eastern Tibetan County of Nyagchu (or Nyagchukha, Chinese: Yajiang) in Kardze (Ganzi or Garze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, according to China's official media and other reports Mar 16-17. The fire soon spread to form three fire fields from south to north, reported the Chinese language *chinanews.com.cn* Mar 17. No damages to property, infrastructure, or human life have been reported so far.

The fire was reported to have broken out at around 17:00 on the 15th in Baizi Village in Nyagchu county's Golog (Xiala or Xi'eluo) Town. By about 15:00 on the 16th, the fire quickly

expanded and spread due to sudden increase in wind power at the fire site.

The report continued that at 4 o'clock on the 17th, the Sichuan Forest Fire Corps and local professional fire-fighting teams approached the fire from the southwest and northeast sides of the fire to open a breakthrough, and put out open flames.

The report said that the three fire fields currently formed were at an average altitude of 2,600 metres, with the vegetation dominated by green hills and pine trees.

The Chinese language report continued: "Among them, the No. 1 fire site is located in the southwest of Yajiang County. There is a continuous fire line on the north and west lines of the fire site, developing toward the northwest; the No. 2 fire site is located at the northernmost side, has spread to Tongda Village in the east, and continues to develop in the northeast direction, which is the key direction of fire development; Fire Site No. 3 is located on the northwest side of Yajiang County, with continuous fire lines spreading."

A Level-4 emergency response has been activated by China's Ministry of Emergency Management, over 1200 firefighters from national and local fire rescue squads deployed, and eight helicopters mobilized to fight the fire as it quickly spread over multiple mountain ridges, said the *chinanews.com.cn*, the official *Xinhua* news agency, and *scmp.com* reports Mar 16-17.

So far, no casualties have been reported. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. The Lianghekou hydropower station in Yajiang is also unaffected, according to a *Xinhua* report Mar 17.

The *scmp.com* Mar 17 cited China's official CCTV broadcaster as saying a total of 3,396 villagers from a dozen villages have been safely evacuated. A photovoltaic power station in the region had not been affected, but communication with the hydroelectric station had been interrupted. Besides, a section of a highway that passes through the region has been temporarily closed, the report said, citing *Xinhua*.

The report cited a resident of provincial capital Chengdu, located 500km (311 miles) from the site, as saying the wildfires turned the sky orange on Mar 16.

“The sky suddenly turned frighteningly orange in Chengdu. It felt like an apocalyptic disaster movie,” the city resident has said, declining to be named.

On the other hand, a *Xinhua* report March 17 cited local residents as saying the fire was not visible from the county seat and that water, electricity, and communication services had remained unaffected.

New study reveals plateau's evapotranspiration changes

17 March 2024, [China Daily](#)



Aerial photo shows the scenery at Mt Nyanpo Yutse in Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Golog of Northwest China's Qinghai province. Qinghai province, located in Northwest China, much of which lies on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, is the home to the headwaters of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers. [Photo/Xinhua]

A recently published study has pointed to the growing trend of evapotranspiration over the past four decades on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

The study, led by Ma Yaoming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, offers a profound understanding of the water balance and climate impact in this ecologically significant area.

The research, based on data collected from 1982 to 2018, which was recently published in the journal *Earth System Science Data*, has

revealed that the annual average evapotranspiration on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau over the past four decades stands at approximately 346.5 millimeters, equivalent to 930 billion metric tons of water transferred to the atmosphere annually from the plateau.

Evapotranspiration is the process in which water is transferred from the land to the atmosphere by evaporation from the soil and other surfaces, as well as by transpiration from plants.

Ma highlighted the pivotal role of evapotranspiration in the region's water balance, particularly given the prevalence of alpine meadows and the dominant arid or semiarid climate on the plateau.

Chen Xuelong, another co-corresponding author and researcher from the institute, emphasized the significance of the findings.

"The research not only confirmed an increasing trend in annual evapotranspiration, at approximately 0.96 millimeters per year, attributed to the warming and humidifying climate of the plateau, but also identified soil evaporation as the primary contributor, constituting over 84 percent of the total evapotranspiration," said Chen.

The implications of the study are far-reaching, with the data holding a pivotal value for water resource management, drought monitoring and ecological environment research and analysis, Chen said.

The research represents a monumental step forward in understanding the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau's hydro-meteorological dynamics and also underscores the critical role of evapotranspiration in shaping the region's ecological and climatic landscape.

The plateau boasts the world's highest inland lake cluster. With global warming, lakes expanded and ice periods were shortened, and the growing trend in evapotranspiration was clearly observed, according to a previous research essay by Ma.

As a result, the water cycle process has significantly accelerated, manifested by increased precipitation, with the melting of glaciers and snow and the thickening of the

active layer of permafrost, and this leads to frequent natural disasters such as ice avalanches, glacier lake outbursts, river floods and mud slides, which could affect people's life and economic activities, Ma said in the essay, calling for effective measures, including strengthening the comprehensive observation and tests on multilayered land-atmosphere interactions.

Ma said the recent study highlighted the importance of shallow soil water in the intricate water and heat exchange processes between the ground and the atmosphere.

The findings of the recent research have been made publicly available through the National Tibetan Plateau Data Center and the Science Data Bank, providing a crucial resource for further scientific inquiry and policy development.

Tibetans demand China halt Derge dam work

16 March 2024, [RTV](#)

The Tibetan community in the region has demanded that the Chinese government stop the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Drichu river in Derge town in Dege County in Sichuan in Southwest China.

The Tibetan community in the region has demanded that the Chinese government stop the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Drichu river in Derge town in Dege County in Sichuan in Southwest China.

According to Tibetan leader Jamyang Bhutia, the chairman of the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress in Mirik in Darjeeling, over 1000 Tibetans were arrested in one day in Derge as there were unprecedented protests against the construction of the dam very recently. Bhutia said that the proposed Gangtuo hydropower station would force the displacement of thousands of people living in the area.

"The proposed dam would also cause significant environmental harm and destroy six monasteries, including the Wonto monastery founded in the 14th century, which has one of the finest examples of Tibetan, Buddhist

murals, and is a great historical and cultural significance," Mr Bhutia said on the side-lines of a peace rally in Siliguri the community organised a few days ago to mark the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan people's uprising against China's occupation in Tibet in 1959.

People from the Tibetan community came in from the northeast zone, including nearby places like Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Mirik, Odlabari in the Dooars, Gangtok in Sikkim and Salugara in Siliguri, marched in the peaceful protest rally that started from Salugara and ended at Biswadeep hall on Hill Cart Road in Siliguri.

The protestors strongly condemned the "brutal crackdown" and urged the international community to call upon China to free the protesters and halt the construction of the dam.

"Tibet remains an occupied territory under tight military surveillance. Since 2008, over 160 Tibetans have self-immolated in protest against China's repressive policies. United Nations experts have raised alarms about the forced separation of one million Tibetan children from their families for assimilation into Chinese colonial boarding schools," Mr Bhutia said.

"As Tibet has consistently been ranked as one of the least free countries in the world by freedom houses with little to know information making its way out, Tibetans inside Tibet have shown extraordinary courage. Language, culture, history and identity are under threat in Tibet, but resistance is as strong as ever," he said.

How land conditions affect the Asian monsoon climate

13 March 2024, [Earth.com](#)

Researchers at Tokyo Metropolitan University have made significant strides in understanding the intricate dance between land conditions and the Asian summer monsoon climate.

Through meticulous numerical simulations, the team has shed light on the impact of land conditions on weather patterns. Specifically,

variations on the Tibetan plateau, alongside constant maritime conditions, have been shown to distinctly affect these patterns.

The findings highlight the importance of land-atmosphere interactions, which vary significantly from year to year. They also reveal a surprisingly low dependency on maritime phenomena like El Niño.

Complex dynamics of Asian monsoons

The Asian monsoon system is crucial for billions of people, affecting vast regions of Asia and its adjacent oceans. The temperature contrast between the vast Eurasian landmass and the surrounding seas primarily drives this phenomenon.

Researchers understand that both land and sea significantly impact this system, but have found dissecting the individual effects of each to be a considerable challenge.

Notably, the team highlights the shorter duration of the “memory effect” on land, which contrasts with longer-lasting oceanic influences, yet remains critical for seasonal forecasting.

Interaction between the atmosphere and land

Led by Dr. Hiroshi G. Takahashi, the researchers delved into advanced climate models to analyze weather patterns across different years.

By comparing simulations with identical maritime conditions but varied land scenarios over the Tibetan plateau, they explored how air temperature and snow cover differences affect weather variability.

The innovative approach resulted in the “L-A coupling strength index.” This index measures the interaction between land conditions and the atmosphere and its impact on the Asian monsoon.

Key findings and implications

The study revealed that the Tibetan plateau’s land conditions’ impact on the monsoon climate fluctuates significantly each year. Interestingly, the influence of sea surface temperatures often eclipses that of land-atmosphere coupling, depending on the year.

The researchers observed a correlation with a weaker Walker circulation, a key precursor to

summer monsoons. Additionally, they discovered that El Niño had a negligible impact on L-A coupling.

Moreover, winter and early spring snow cover on the plateau appeared to have little effect on monsoon severity, suggesting a land-specific memory effect lasting about a month.

Towards better monsoon forecasting

The research opens up new avenues for dramatically improving seasonal forecasts in the Asian monsoon region. By enhancing our understanding of the role of land conditions, we can potentially make more accurate predictions. This would be a boon for the billions affected by monsoons annually.

As the team continues to unravel the complexities of the monsoon climate, the promise of refined forecasts brings hope for better preparedness and resilience against the whims of nature.

The work by Tokyo Metropolitan University highlights the crucial need for sophisticated land condition modeling to improve Asian monsoon climate predictions. With ongoing research, the expectation for better forecasting grows, providing optimism for the many who depend on monsoon rains.

The study is published in the journal [*Climate Dynamics*](#).

Construction of mega dams in Tibet worries downriver nations

10 March 2024, [Geographical](#)



Mount Kailash in western Tibet. Image: Siritwatthana Chankawee/Shutterstock

Originating close to sacred Mount Kailash, high on the remote, western part of the Tibetan

plateau, the Mapcha Tsangpo River, which means the Peacock River in Tibetan, flows away from the slopes of this holiest of mountains and into Nepal, where its name changes to the Karnali. One of the most important rivers to rush through Nepal, it provides reliable freshwater for millions of people and waters huge swathes of farmland. Continuing its southward journey, the river then enters India where it's a major tributary of the all-important Ganges River, which brings life to many hundreds of millions more people.

But, new satellite imagery appears to indicate that China has recently completed the construction of a huge new dam on the Mapcha Tsangpo River, very close to the politically important tri-junction border of Tibet, Nepal and India. And that has the governments of Nepal and India worried.

India and China are the two big powers of Asia, and they have long been uneasy neighbours. The 3440km long mountainous border between the two is ill-defined and long disputed. In 1962, China and India briefly went to war against one another along this border, and since then, there have been numerous skirmishes between the two sides, including in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

In the past few years there has been a spate of infrastructure construction along the India-China border by both sides. Much of this infrastructure, which has included road and airport construction, is intended for military use. But in the case of China, it has also included the construction of mega-dams inside the Tibet Autonomous Region, which could potentially allow China to control water flow into Nepal and India.

Work is thought to have started on the dam in 2021 and, according to a recent report in Newsweek who analysed satellite images of the site, the dam is now completed and filling up with water. The concrete dam, which is situated just 28km from the Nepalese border town of Hilsa (population 51,000) and 60km from the India border.

This is not the first mega-dam that China has built within Tibet, and it is very close to India.

In 2021, China announced plans to link Tibet's river systems with the rest of the country, and that doing so would involve building a mega dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River (which also originates close to Mount Kailash) at the eastern end of the Tibetan plateau along the disputed border with the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Once the Yarlung Tsanpo bores its way through the eastern Himalaya, it becomes the Brahmaputra River, which is a critical source of freshwater for inhabitants of northeastern India and Bangladesh. In a 2022 report for the United States Institute of Peace, Mark Giordano and Anya Wahal from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service stated that 'The Brahmaputra would appear to be at the top of the list of conflict hotspots. The river is shared between four states, including the world's two most populous, China and India. Both have rapidly growing economies, and both are already among the most water-stressed in the world.' In recent years India has protested the construction of mega dams upstream of some of its key rivers by refusing to purchase electricity from sites with Chinese investment, such as the Chameliya hydropower station in Nepal, built with Beijing's financial aid.

[Online reports of fatalities due to flood damage to dam in Qinghai province denied](#)

02 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Online reports suggested that dozens of people had died and thousands had gone missing after a dam was damaged by flooding recently in the previously earthquake-hit Maduo (Tibetan: Matoes) county in Golog Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Qinghai province, according to China's official chinadaily.com.cn Mar 3. However, the report also cited local officials as saying there were no casualties due to the incident.

There have been reports online since Feb 22 that the dam-damage and resulting flood had led to the deaths of dozens of people and the missing of thousands of people. Local

authorities dismissed them as rumours, the report said.

The report also cited local authorities as saying the incident, which happened on Feb 18, had caused property damage to eight people and the deaths of 195 livestock, as well as damage to roads and water conservancy facilities. They have sought to stress that no one died from it. The dam was stated to have been repaired on Feb 21.

Maduo county was earlier hit by a major earthquake on May 22, 2021. Highway bridges, roads and walls collapsed as a result of it. At least 20 people were killed, 300 were injured, and 13 were missing, according to a Radio Free Asia report at that time.

However, Chinese officials stated at that time that there were no deaths but that 19 people sustained minor injuries.

It was the strongest earthquake to hit the People's Republic of China since 2008, preceded by another unrelated earthquake that occurred 5 hours earlier in Yunnan province.

Tibet in Exile

Latest US gov't spending bill allocates \$23 million for Tibet support projects

30 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The massive \$1.2 trillion government funding bill passed by the US Congress earlier this month and signed into law by President Joe Biden on Mar 23 to fund the rest of the federal government included provisions totalling \$23 million for Tibetan programmes, said Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT, [savetibet.org](#)) Mar 29. The Tibetan-programme allocations cover projects in areas that include language preservation, environmental protection, and Tibetan democracy in exile.

Also, included in the bill's more than 1,000 pages is a narration which bans federal spending on maps or other materials that

recognize Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China until the Chinese government agrees to a negotiated resolution of Tibet's status.

Of the allocations for Tibetan programmes, \$10 million is meant for NGOs that have experience working with Tibetan communities to support activities that preserve cultural traditions and promote sustainable development, education and environmental conservation in Tibet.

Besides, \$8 million is earmarked for promoting and preserving Tibetan culture and language in Tibetan refugee and diaspora communities, as well as development and the resilience of Tibetan communities and the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in India and Nepal. This funding will also assist in the education and development of the next generation of Tibetan leaders from those communities, said the [savetibet.org](#) report.

In addition, \$5 million is allocated for strengthening the capacity of the CTA, which provides democratic governance for Tibetans in exile. Up to \$1.5 million of this support can be made available to address economic growth and capacity-building activities, including for displaced Tibetan refugee families in India and Nepal, the report said.

The bill's documents also address China's attempts to spread disinformation about Tibet and avoid negotiating with Tibetan leaders. It forbids spending on documents, reports, maps or other materials that recognize Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China "until the Secretary of State reports to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of the PRC has reached a final negotiated agreement on Tibet with the Dalai Lama or his representatives or with democratically-elected leaders of the Tibetan people."

Franz Matzner, director of government relations at the ICT, has said: "The United States has once again demonstrated its commitment to the Tibetan people in concrete terms that provide crucial resources for their pursuit of freedom and cultural preservation in the face of the Xi Jinping regime's escalating oppression."

“For those fighting for survival in Tibet, every dollar counts—and we are grateful for each one. For those outside Tibet, Congress’ investment in maintaining the Tibetan people’s distinct language, religion and way of life provides essential aid and a firm message of hope and solidarity.”

Tibetan musician advocates colonial boarding school in Tibet, sparks backlash

23 March 2024, [Phayul](#)

A controversial remark by a Tibetan musician named Dechen Shak-Dagsay based in Switzerland advocating the colonial-style boarding schools run by China in Tibet, has sparked condemnation and censure from fellow Tibetans.

In a seminar titled, “The Protection of Human Rights for Minorities: Progress in China’s Ethnic Autonomous Region” at the University of Geneva organised by the China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS), Dechen can be seen expressing her wish for the success of the Chinese colonial boarding system in Tibet and referred to Tibet as “Xizang.”

“Last but not the least I would like to express my wish that this Tibetan students boarding project in Xizang will be very successful,” she stated.

This statement made by Dechen has drawn backlash, particularly from the Tibetan diaspora in exile. Many within the community argue that the use of the term “Xizang” represents a concession to the Chinese government terminology regarding Tibet and a direct attempt by Beijing to push their narrative. Others have said that her remarks contradict overwhelming evidence and reports documenting human rights abuses associated with China’s coerced colonial boarding school system in Tibet.

A comprehensive report published by the *Tibet Action Institute* with Tibetan educationist Dr. Gyal lo point out that these schools enforce mandatory attendance and use Chinese as the primary medium of instruction, effectively

eroding the Tibetan language and culture. Additionally, reports suggest that over a million Tibetan children have been separated from their families forcefully due to these policies, raising concerns about the impact on familial and cultural ties, against the backdrop of China’s totalitarian regime.

Furthermore, Dechen’s praise for the colonial boarding school system and her use of the term “Xizang” to refer to Tibet has been met with strong disapproval from the Central Tibetan Administration’s advocacy groups like the Voluntary Tibetan Advocacy Group (V-TAG), “V-TAG condemned her assertion and the use of the term “Xizang” to refer to Tibet, and her unabashed praise for the oppressive Colonial Boarding School System, which forcibly impose Mandarin upon millions of Tibet students, eroding their cultural identity.”

Like many Tibetans, V-TAG also demanded unequivocal clarifications from Dechen, specifically regarding her stance on these colonial boarding schools. The group challenged her to substantiate her claims by disclosing the names of the schools she visited and providing evidence of her interactions with Tibetan students. Her remarks were also met with strong opposition in the ongoing session of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

2023 Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Tibet Released

21 March 2024, [CTA](#)

By Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy. 20 March 2024.

Even as China ended its draconian zero-Covid policy measures in 2023, Tibetans continue to face escalating crackdowns on freedom of expression, religion and belief. Despite numerous calls from the international community to immediately halt its forced assimilation policy, Chinese authorities imposed Chinese medium education in Tibetan schools and amended local regulations in Tibetan areas to promote Mandarin Chinese.

Tibetans face restrictions not only on their right to freedom of assembly but also on expressing opinions or criticisms against repressive and unjust government policies, both online and offline. Under the guise of maintaining social stability, Chinese authorities exercise direct supervision and censorship over all online platforms.

The right to freedom of religion and belief faced further restrictions as Chinese authorities introduced more repressive regulations to exercise total control over the establishment, management and activities of the religious activity sites. Despite the relaxation of Zero-Covid restrictions, it made no difference to Tibetan Buddhists, who continued to face restrictions in undertaking religious pilgrimages.

Tibetan detainees inside Tibet continue to face a litany of human rights violations. Those arbitrarily, preventatively or forcefully detained underwent unjust sentencing and torture, resulting in custodial deaths. Incommunicado detention in undisclosed locations without due process also remained a regular practice, leading to lasting health issues and premature deaths among political prisoners upon release. [Click here](#) to read more.

Human Rights Violations in Tibet Raised at 55th UN Human Rights Council Session

21 March 2024, [CTA](#)

A Tibetan delegate urged the UN Human Rights Council to promptly address concerning reports of China's human rights violations.

Phuntsok Topgyal, the UN Advocacy Officer at the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, delivered an oral statement on March 20, 2024, during the 55th UN Human Rights Council Session, highlighting critical human rights issues demanding attention. He expressed alarm over China's systematic efforts to eradicate Tibetan cultural identity.

Topgyal emphasised the significance of the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising, stressing the ongoing flagrant

violations of Tibetan people's rights over the past six decades. He urged immediate action from the council to halt these abuses. Topgyal outlined the dire situation in Tibet, citing concerns such as the enrolment of nearly 1 million Tibetan students in residential schools, China's extensive surveillance measures including iris scans and DNA collection from Tibetans, and the unresolved disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, who will reach 35 years of age this year. Highlighting recent events, Topgyal noted that just four days before the 55th Human Rights Council session, Chinese authorities conducted mass arrests of Tibetans peacefully protesting the construction of a large dam in Derge. This dam project threatens to displace two villages, destroy Buddhist monasteries, and obliterate ancient murals.

Topgyal urged China to release all Tibetan protestors unconditionally and to halt the dam project, which poses a significant threat to the delicate ecosystem of the Tibetan Plateau. He called upon the UN Human Rights Council to demand that China refrain from arbitrary detention and violence against peaceful protestors, such as Gonpo Kyi, and instead uphold their right to freedom.

The video link to the oral statement is here. <http://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1a/k1a6tk9tw4>

Office of Tibet in Canberra Urges Australian Foreign Minister to Address Tibet Issue During Chinese Counterpart's Visit

19 March 2024, [CTA](#)

In an urgent plea ahead of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Australia this week, Representative Karma Singey has called upon the Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong to prioritise discussions on the critical situation in Tibet.

Highlighting the escalating repression and systemic discrimination faced by Tibetans under Chinese rule, the Representative has underscored the urgent need for international attention and action.

In a letter addressed to the Australian Foreign Minister, Representative Karma Singey states that Wang Yi's forthcoming visit serves as a crucial opportunity to raise concerns regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet.

The letter outlines various violations, including the forced separation of Tibetan children from their families and their indoctrination into Chinese Communist ideology within state-run boarding schools. Additionally, it highlights the severe restrictions imposed on religious practices, arbitrary detentions of Tibetan monks and individuals, and the recent crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Derge County.

Emphasising the importance of holding China accountable for its human rights abuses, the Representative urged the Australian government to utilise its diplomatic engagement with China to address these pressing issues.

During the anticipated meeting between the Australian Foreign Minister and Wang Yi, the Representative has urged for the following actions:

1. Raise the Tibet issue and the ongoing human rights crisis, including the ongoing repression of political and religious freedoms, environmental degradation and the eradication of Tibetan cultural and language.
2. Urge the Chinese government to immediately and unconditionally release all Tibetan protesters in Derge County who have been wrongfully detained for exercising their fundamental rights of peaceful protest and to ensure proper and timely medical treatment for injured Tibetans.
3. Encourage China to allow greater access to Tibet by international observers and greater freedom of media and movement in Tibet.
4. Encourage China to genuinely commit to resolving the Tibet issue by reopening the Sino-Tibetan dialogue.

As Australia maintains a significant trade relationship with China, the Representative stressed the importance of incorporating human rights concerns into bilateral discussions to foster a more equitable and just relationship between the two nations.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Meets with Martin Luther King III, Discusses Tibetan Freedom Movement

18 March 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressing the delegation.

Dharamshala: Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration met with Martin Luther King III, a global human rights activist and the son of Martin Luther King Jr, and a delegation from Dalai Lama Center today at the Kashag secretariat.

During the meeting, Sikyong Penpa Tsering presented an overview of the political history of Tibet, situations inside Tibet, and the Tibetan community in exile. To shed light on Tibetan freedom movement, Sikyong introduced ancient ties between Tibet and China and Tibet and India, and debunked the PRC's claim over Tibet as its integral part since time immemorial and underscored resolving the Tibet-China conflict through the Middle Way Approach while maintaining the historically proven Tibet as a separate entity.

Sikyong brought to light concerning situations inside Tibet, particularly the deteriorating environment brought about by Beijing's exploitation and misapplication of Tibet's river system, the systematic elimination of Tibet's distinct identity, the Chinese government's appropriation of Tibetan religion and

manipulation of the system of recognising high lamas reincarnations, and the expansion of sophisticated surveillance inside Tibet. Sikyong Penpa Tsering further spoke about the exiled Tibetan community and the principal responsibilities of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Martin Luther King III, who received a special audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama earlier this morning, shared his interest in collaborating with the US-based Dalai Lama Centre to promote the oneness of humanity to Sikyong during the meeting.

New resolution on Tibet introduced in the US House

18 March 2024, [RTV](#)

A new resolution has been introduced in the United States House of Representatives titled “Recognizing the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day of March 10, 1959, and condemning human rights violations related to the hydropower dam construction project in Dege”. The resolution that condemns China’s mass arrest of peaceful Tibetan protestors and reaffirms the support for Tibetan self-determination was introduced by Representatives Jim McGovern, D-Massachusetts, and Young Kim, R-California, on Monday, March 11.

The resolution acknowledges the historical events surrounding the Tibetan Uprising Day, particularly the efforts of Tibetan people who formed a human barricade around the Dalai Lama’s residence to protect him from Chinese troops in 1959. Additionally, it acknowledges the recent protests in Dege County, eastern Tibet, against a hydropower dam project that would displace residents and destroy Buddhist monasteries.

Rep. McGovern said: “It’s been 65 years since His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was forced to flee as the People’s Republic of China forcibly took control of Tibet. Every day since, the Tibetan people have been defending their human rights and fighting for their self-

determination. The PRC must comply with its laws and its international human rights obligations, and stop oppressing Tibetans.”

Rep. Kim said: “The Tibetan people have suffered the Chinese Communist Party’s oppression and control for 70 years, and the CCP shows no signs of slowing down until it has erased Tibetan culture. The freedom-loving people of Tibet deserve our support. I’m proud to join Rep. McGovern in a bipartisan call to stand with the Tibetan people and urge the Biden administration to enforce laws in place to hold the CCP accountable.”

The resolution reaffirms the House’s support for Tibetan human rights and condemns China’s efforts to erase Tibetan cultural identity, particularly by condemning projects like the hydropower dam project in Dege. It demands the immediate release of protestors and prisoners of conscience, along with apologies and redress for rights violations.

Additionally, it calls on the Biden administration to urge China to halt the dam project and respect Tibetan input into development projects.

This resolution adds to previous Congressional actions supporting Tibet, including the passage of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 and the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020. The House also recently passed the Resolve Tibet Act, aimed at pushing China to negotiate peacefully with Tibetan leaders to resolve the conflict in Tibet.

Tibet Policy Institute Convenes Panel Discussion Titled “China’s Dam in Dege” on International Day of Action for Rivers

14 March 2024, [CTA](#)

The Tibet Policy Institute, a research centre affiliated with the Central Tibetan Administration, convened a panel discussion entitled “China’s Dam in Dege: Assessing the Social, Cultural, and Ecological Impact on Tibetans and Beyond” in commemoration of the International Day of Action for Rivers.

Held at DIIR Lhakpa Tsering Hall, CTA, Dharamshala, the event featured distinguished

panellists including Research Fellow Dechen Palmo from the Tibet Policy Institute, CTA; Researcher Ngawang Lungtok from the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy; and Senior Environmental Researcher Dr Lobsang Yangtso from the International Tibet Network, with moderation by Dr Tenzin Lhadon, Research Fellow of the Tibet Policy Institute, CTA.

Attendees representing various Tibetan NGOs and Tibetan media outlets gathered to participate in the insightful discussions.

TPI's Deputy Director, Zamlha Tempa Gyaltsen, provided a comprehensive overview of the subject matter and introduced the esteemed panellists.

The panel discussion commenced with poignant opening remarks from each panellist, delving into the recent damming project and its multifaceted implications within their respective domains of expertise. Dechen Palmo from TPI underscored the socio-economic repercussions of the Dege Dam construction, urging affected downstream nations to unify and confront the issue with China.

Ngawang Lungtok from TCHRD shed light on the human rights dimensions, while Dr Lobsang Yangtso from ITN elucidated the environmental ramifications of the dam initiative.

The moderator articulated the primary objective of the panel discussion: to raise awareness about the recent damming endeavour in Dege, Kham, and its consequential displacement of Tibetan communities and religious institutions.

Following the panellists' insights, the audience engaged with pertinent inquiries. The session, supported by USAID and NDI, concluded with a ten-point call to action, underscoring the imperative for collective advocacy and action on this pressing issue.

1. Cease Construction of Dams Without Local Consent: Considering the potential social, cultural, and ecological impacts of the ongoing dam construction in Dege, the Chinese government should halt the construction of all

large hydropower dams which are against the needs and wishes of the local communities. Additionally, any forced relocations should cease immediately, and Tibetans unjustly detained for expressing their concerns should be unconditionally released, with proper medical care provided to the injured.

2. Enhance Transparency in Eco-Environment Information: The Chinese government should prioritise transparency by disclosing more information about hydropower development plans in Tibet's major rivers, such as Drichu, Zachu, Machu, Gyalmo Ngulchu, Senge Tsangpo and Yarlung Tsangpo to ensure people's right to be informed.

3. Increase Public Involvement in Environmental Decision-making: There should be improved public participation in planning and decision-making processes, including thorough Environmental and Social Impact Assessments for all development projects in Tibet. Public involvement in evaluating plans with potential adverse environmental impacts should be allowed to safeguard environmental rights.

4. Conduct Seismic Risk Assessments: Given Tibet's high seismic activity, thorough seismic risk assessments are necessary to understand the potential risks posed by earthquakes to large dams and the millions of people living along Tibet's rivers, including people in Tibet, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

5. Advocate for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent: Governments, NGOs, and civil society groups should advocate for genuine adherence to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent principles, ensuring proper compensation, resettlement, and preservation of cultural heritage before initiating any projects requiring local consent, particularly concerning dam construction in Tibet.

6. Disengage from Businesses Affecting Tibetan Environment: The international community should cease business relations with Chinese companies involved in environmentally detrimental activities, such as mining and dam construction in Tibet until there is a

demonstrable improvement in human rights conditions for Tibetans and all social and environmental concerns are fully addressed.

7. Ratify Human Rights Treaties: China should promptly ratify crucial human rights treaties to protect local communities and indigenous inhabitants from coercion related to relocation or the destruction of culturally significant sites.

8. Recognise the Ecological Importance of Tibet: China and the global community should acknowledge the ecological significance of the Tibetan Plateau, recognising its biodiversity, influence on regional weather patterns, and its role in ensuring food and water security in Asia.

9. Address Colonial Behaviours in Tibet: Recognise and rectify the impact of Chinese colonial policies in Tibet since 1959, including resource extraction, dam construction, and forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads. Adopt a rights-based approach to protect frontline communities and respect traditional knowledge.

10. Cease Criminalisation of Environmental Defenders: The Chinese state should refrain from criminalising Tibetan environmental defenders and release all individuals, such as Anya Sengdra and Karma Samdrup, detained for peaceful activism against dam construction and forced relocation in Tibet.

House resolution supports Tibetan self-determination, protestors

12 March 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

A new bipartisan House resolution will condemn China's recent mass arrest of peaceful Tibetan protestors and reaffirm House support for Tibetan self-determination following the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising.

Reps. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and Young Kim, R-Calif., introduced the resolution "Recognizing the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day of March 10, 1959, and condemning human rights violations related to the hydropower dam construction project in Derge" on Monday, March 11.

The resolution recognizes the thousands of Tibetan people who formed a human shield around the Dalai Lama's residence on March 10, 1959 to protect their leader from the imminent threat of abduction by Chinese troops. Seven days later, the Dalai Lama was able to escape into exile to keep the Tibetan cause alive.

The resolution also recognizes the Tibetan mass protesters in Derge (Chinese: Dege) county in eastern Tibet. Last month, those protestors demonstrated against a hydropower dam project that would reportedly force residents of two villages to abandon their homes and destroy six Buddhist monasteries containing centuries-old religious murals. Chinese authorities reportedly arrested over 1,000 Tibetan people in the wake of the protests.

The resolution comes as over 200 Tibetan Americans and Tibet supporters are in Washington, DC for the annual Tibet Lobby Day, an event organized by the International Campaign for Tibet that brings advocates to the nation's capital to meet with their Congressional offices.

Quotes from Congress members, ICT

Rep. McGovern said: "It's been 65 years since His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was forced to flee as the People's Republic of China forcibly took control of Tibet. Every day since, the Tibetan people have been defending their human rights and fighting for their self-determination. The PRC must comply with its own laws and its international human rights obligations, and stop oppressing Tibetans."

Rep. Kim said: "The Tibetan people have suffered the Chinese Communist Party's oppression and control for 70 years, and the CCP shows no signs of slowing down until it has erased Tibetan culture. The freedom-loving people of Tibet deserve our support. I'm proud to join Rep. McGovern in a bipartisan call to stand with the Tibetan people and urge the Biden administration to enforce laws in place to hold the CCP accountable."

International Campaign for Tibet President Tencho Gyatso: "*This resolution is a tribute to*

the resistance and resilience of the Tibetan people over 65 years, as well as the US Congress' consistent, bipartisan support for their cause. From the Tibetan National Uprising of 1959 to the recent protests in Derge, the Tibetan people have continued to reject China's attempts to destroy their culture and way of life, and Congress has been inspirational in supporting their efforts. We thank Reps. McGovern and Kim for introducing this resolution, and we look forward to working with them and their colleagues not only to pass this legislation in the House, but to pass the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act in the Senate, too."

House resolution

The resolution confirms the House's "longstanding support for the human rights, including the right of self-determination, of the Tibetan people." It also "condemns the People's Republic of China's persistent efforts to erase the Tibetan people's distinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical identity."

According to the resolution, those efforts include the hydropower dam project in Derge. The resolution condemns China's "arbitrary detention" of the protestors and expresses "grave concern" for their well-being. It demands China immediately release the protestors and all prisoners of conscience.

The resolution also demands that China "publicly apologize" for violating the protestors' rights, "provide immediate redress for physical and emotional trauma, and expunge from the detainees' official records any mention of the arrests or charges."

The resolution calls on the Biden administration to urge Chinese authorities to halt the dam project unless China takes local Tibetans' views into account and obtains their genuine consent.

The Biden administration should also insist that China abide by its commitments to safeguard cultural heritage, and the administration should fully implement the Tibet Project Principles that require Tibetan input into development projects.

[Read the House resolution.](#)

Resolving Tibet

The new resolution is the latest in a major wave of Congressional support for Tibet, including the passage of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 and the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020.

Last month, the House passed the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by McGovern and Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas. Kim spoke in support of the legislation on the House floor.

Known as the Resolve Tibet Act, the bill will strengthen US efforts to push China to resolve the crisis in Tibet through peaceful negotiations with Tibetan leaders.

China eroding Tibetan language, religion: Sikyong on 65th uprising day

11 March 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

Penpa said that the forced assimilation of nearly one million Tibetan children in Chinese state-run colonial style boarding schools and promotion of Chinese language in kindergartens established across Tibet denies Tibetan children the right to learn and use their own language and cuts them off from their way of thinking, customs and beliefs

Sikyong (president) of Tibetan government-in-exile Penpa Tsering on Sunday alleged that China was using policies to erode Tibetan language and religion.

"The People's Republic of China is pursuing a policy of forging a strong sense of the Chinese as a single identity by erasing Tibetan identity, promotion of Chinese language by banning and minimising the teaching and use of Tibetan language and sinicisation of Tibetan Buddhism," he said while reading the statement of kashag (cabinet) on the 65th anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day.

The kashag is the highest executive office of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and is headed by Sikyong, the political leader elected by the exiled populace. On March 10 in 1959, the people of Tibet from the three traditional provinces rose in protest against the repression

by the Chinese communist forces in capital Lhasa.

Penpa said that the forced assimilation of nearly one million Tibetan children in Chinese state-run colonial style boarding schools and promotion of Chinese language in kindergartens established across Tibet denies Tibetan children the right to learn and use their own language and cuts them off from their way of thinking, customs and beliefs.

The cabinet expressed concern over alleged destruction of Tibetan Buddhism.

“The regulations by China are aimed at controlling the numbers, recognition, eligibility and curriculum of monks and nuns, and properties, revenue, expenditure and management of monasteries and nunneries. These mandate the Chinese Communist Party’s misappropriation of Tibetan people’s authority to select reincarnation of trulkus, restriction on all religious activities and movement of monks and nuns across administrative areas. These extreme measures expand on the existing Chinese government’s regulations to control Tibetan Buddhism,” the cabinet said in a statement on Sunday.

They appealed to the PRC government to allow Tibetans to learn and use Tibetan as their official language as guaranteed in the Chinese constitution and law on regional national autonomy.

Tibetan Parliament-in-exile also expressed concern over the Chinese government’s plan to build a major hydroelectric power dam in Dege area of Kham on the Driчу river.

About three thousand Tibetans, including monks and nuns, gathered in the hill town Dharamshala and held a protest march against China.

Tibetan Resistance Resurfaces: Protests Erupt Over Controversial Dam Construction

10 March 2024, [Financial Express](#)

As the world commemorates 65 years since the Tibetan rebellion on March 10th, demonstrations across global capitals, from Delhi to Dharamshala, underscore the

enduring spirit of resistance against China’s repressive regime.

A growing movement has started within the Chinese-occupied Tibet region. Triggered by China’s plans to erect a dam in Wongpo Tok city of Dige County, protestors rally against the impending demolition of the region’s historic and sacred monasteries.

Recently, approximately 1000 Tibetan citizens staged a demonstration outside the Eastern Tibet (Sichuan Province) headquarters of the Dige Administration. In response, Chinese authorities ruthlessly dispersed the protesters, leading to the arrest of nearly 100 individuals, including religious leaders from the Vonto Monastery. Alarming footage depicting Chinese officers clad in black are seen forcibly subduing demonstrators surfaced, amplifying global attention on the escalating tensions. Reports in the public domain reveal that while 40 detainees have been released under strict conditions, forbidding any involvement in future protests or dissemination of protest-related materials, a pervasive atmosphere of surveillance looms over Tibetan social media platforms and communities.

This resurgence of Tibetan dissent against the Chinese Communist government stems from mounting grievances surrounding stringent security measures and pervasive surveillance policies enforced by Xi Jinping’s administration. Unlike previous sporadic movements, notably the 2021 protests following the suspicious death of a Tibetan youth, this current wave of unrest exhibits remarkable resilience and international solidarity.

Central to the discord is China’s relentless exploitation of Tibet’s abundant natural resources, epitomized by the construction of colossal infrastructure projects like the 13-story, 13900 MW Kamtok (Kham Dige) Dam on the Driчу (Yangtse) river. Local Tibetans fear not only displacement but also the imminent threat of flooding to cherished landmarks, including the 13th-century Wonto Monastery, revered for its profound historical and religious significance.

Beyond Tibet's borders, Tibetan diaspora communities, including those in [India](#), mobilize in solidarity, amplifying the global outcry against CCP's oppressive policies. With protests coinciding with the upcoming anniversary of the Tibetan uprising, the Chinese administration intensifies efforts to suppress dissent, reflecting on their historical tactics to quell resistance.

Tibetans targeted by China-linked supply chain attacks using malicious language translators

07 March 2024, [The Record](#)

Tibetans are being targeted with corrupted language translation software in a cyber espionage campaign that began last September, according to new research.

The attackers — which cybersecurity firm ESET said are part of the Chinese government hacking group Evasive Panda — targeted Tibetans living in India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia and the U.S.

In addition to the corrupt Windows and macOS software, ESET said the campaign also involved the compromise of the website of an organizer of an annual religious gathering called the Monlam Festival, which takes place in India each year.

The hackers added malicious code to the website to create a watering-hole attack — where attackers target specific groups by compromising popular platforms.

“We believe that the attackers capitalized, at the time, on the upcoming Monlam festival in January and February of 2024 to compromise users when they visited the festival's website-turned-watering-hole,” ESET said. “In addition, the attackers compromised the supply chain of a software developer of Tibetan language translation apps.”

ESET researcher Anh Ho, who discovered the attack, said the Evasive Panda hackers used several different types of malicious tools that they have spotted in other attacks on networks across East Asia.

Most notably, the group used MgBot — Evasive Panda's flagship Windows backdoor that has existed since at least 2012 and is used to steal files and credentials and record keystrokes. In April, Evasive Panda used the malware to target a telecom company in Africa.

The majority of MgBot's plugins are designed to steal information from popular Chinese applications such as QQ, WeChat, QQBrowser and Foxmail — all developed by Tencent.

Ho said ESET also discovered another backdoor that has not been publicly documented yet, naming it “Nightdoor.” ESET noted that they discovered Nightdoor was used as far back as 2020, when it was deployed on the machine of a “high-profile target in Vietnam.”

“The Nightdoor backdoor, used in the supply-chain attack, is a recent addition to Evasive Panda's toolset,” Ho added.

ESET said it initially discovered the campaign in January after finding malicious code buried in a website run by the Kagyu International Monlam Trust, an organization based in India that promotes Tibetan Buddhism internationally.

The researchers theorized that the compromise was likely intended to take advantage of interest in the festival, which is held every January in the Indian city of Bodhgaya. In conjunction with the website attack, the researchers also found that an Indian software development company producing Tibetan language translation software was also compromised, with the attackers corrupting applications that deployed malicious downloaders on both Windows and macOS devices.

ESET found another compromise of a Tibetan news website called Tibetpost that was used to host the malicious payloads.

The use of MgBot is what led to ESET attributing the campaign to Evasive Panda — which has used the malware in attacks on a religious organization in Taiwan and elsewhere. Evasive Panda has been operating since 2012, conducting dozens of attacks aligning with China's geopolitical interests on government

entities in Myanmar, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Since 2020, ESET said it has seen Evasive Panda repeatedly hijack the update processes of legitimate software as a way to deliver its malware.

'China should leave Tibet!' Tibetans march near Parliament House to mark 65th uprising

10 March 2024, [Times of India](#)

NEW DELHI: Hundreds of Tibetans in exile took to the streets of New Delhi on Sunday to mark the 65th Tibetan National Uprising Day against China.

More than 300 protesters gathered near the Parliament House raising slogans such as "Tibet was never a part of China" and "China should leave Tibet."

The demonstrators waved Tibetan flags and carried photographs of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Seeking refuge in the town of Dharmasala since his escape from Tibet, the 88-year-old Dalai Lama advocates for substantial autonomy and the preservation of Tibet's native Buddhist culture, refusing China's claim that he is a separatist.

While India considers Tibet as part of China, it continues to host Tibetan exiles. The Tibetan government-in-exile accuses China of trampling on the basic human rights of Tibetans and systematically eradicating their identity.

The New Delhi protest march, organised by the Tibetan Youth Congress, said that in 1959, the Chinese Communist regime occupied Tibet, leading to a Tibetan uprising. "Since then, the Chinese regime has resorted to brutal tactics, resulting in the deaths of over a million Tibetans who peacefully protested against oppressive Chinese rule," the Tibetan Youth Congress said in a statement.

Statement: Kashag Urges PRC Govt to Immediately Release all Tibetans Detained in Derge Protests and Respect Rights & Aspirations of Tibetans

07 March 2024, [CTA](#)

The Central Tibetan Administration is highly concerned by the brutal crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Derge, Tibet by the authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) resulting in mass arbitrary detention and injuries to many Tibetans. Since last month, Tibetans have been appealing to halt the planned construction of hydroelectric power plant that would result in forceful relocation of hundreds of Tibetans from their ancestral village and destruction of centuries-old monasteries dating back to the 13th century that house a wealth of ancient relics and murals of Buddha.

On 14 February 2024, at least 300 Tibetans peacefully protested outside the Derge (Ch: Dege) County government in Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" in the traditional province of Kham, now incorporated into Sichuan Province, appealing to stop the hydroelectric dam construction and to withdraw the official order for Tibetans to relocate. A week later, on 20 and 21 February, County officials and security forces in large numbers arrived at the two monasteries – Wontoe and Yena – in Wonpotoe (Tibetan: དབོན་པོ་རྫོང་། Ch: Wangbuding) township to prepare for their demolition. At that time, a large number of Tibetans appealed again by kneeling and crying in desperation to the Chinese officials to stop the demolition. Chinese police deployed in the region on 22 February severely beat Tibetans using weaponries resulting in injuries that necessitated hospitalization for many participating in the peaceful protest and also led to mass arrest and detention.

The construction of Kamtok (Ch: Gangtuo) dam, the 6th of 13 dams proposed along the upper reaches of Yangtze river, or Drichu in Tibetan, will submerge two villages – Wonpotoe (or Wontoe for short as locally known) in Derge County, Karze, and Shepa Village in Jomda County in Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) – as well as six monasteries along the riverbanks namely Yena, Wontoe, Khadho, Rabten, Gonsar and Tashi Monastery. Additionally, the Wontoe and Yena

monasteries are at immediate risk of irreparable destruction of its ancient relics and murals of historical and religious significance. Tibetan protesters are primarily concerned about the Chinese authorities' failure to legitimately consult with local Tibetans whose traditional livelihoods and customary way of lives are at the risk of facing complete disruption with the planned dam construction to which they have no say. The massive power of this hydroelectric plant, capable of generating 1.1 million kilowatts of electricity, will be transferred through the Ultra High Voltage "West to East" (Ch: xi dian dong song) transmission network only to Chinese cities, while Tibet will not be benefited from the hydropower plant in any significant way.

This recent crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Derge County demonstrates the disregard for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people by the Chinese Communist Party. Currently, the Chinese authorities have completely shut down internet access and censored information relating to the protest on social media platforms as part of the widespread security clampdown in the area.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the President of the Central Tibetan Administration, said, "The crackdown of non-violent protests in Derge, as well as the disregard for Tibetans' fundamental rights by the Chinese authorities, is unacceptable on all levels. These punitive measures demonstrate China's preference for its communist ideology and economic interests over ensuring and upholding fundamental human rights of Tibetans. We urge the PRC government to immediately release all Tibetans detained in Derge protests and to respect the rights and aspirations of Tibetans. There is an urgent need for the world to hear the Tibetan voices and to confront the reality of Chinese misrule in Tibet."

As we have urged and communicated to all foreign ministries, UN bodies and relevant offices for immediate attention and action, we reiterate our appeals to the international

community, to call upon the PRC government to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release these Tibetan protesters who have been wrongfully detained for exercising their fundamental rights and to ensure proper and timely medical treatment for the injured Tibetans;
- Immediately halt the construction of mega hydropower dams in Tibet without the consent of the local population and taking into consideration its ecological implications;
- End the current crackdown, the forced and involuntary mass relocation of Tibetans from their ancestral lands and stop forced relocation without their consent in order to implement so-called economic development projects;
- Respect the religious sentiments and rights of the Tibetan people to practice and preserve Tibetan Buddhism and ancient monasteries;
- As a signatory to multiple international covenants and treaties, the PRC government must respect the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people.

Most Indians Ignorant of Indo-Tibet Historic Ties, says Tibetan Activist News

06 March 2024, [Deccan Chronicle](#)

Tibetan activist Tenzin Tsundue on Wednesday called for educating Indian youth about Tibet, its culture, language, and ongoing struggles, in light of recent geopolitical tensions such as the Galwan Valley conflict. Delivering a talk that delves into the historical and contemporary ties between the Indian subcontinent and Tibet at the Guruswamy Centre, Tsundue said the lack of awareness about Tibet among Indian youth poses a significant challenge, hindering their understanding of the complex dynamics in the region, including the occupation of Tibetan territories by China.

Tsundue, who is also a poet, writer and Tibetan refugee and activist, blamed India's historical policy of "Hindi-Cheeni Bhai-Bhai" (India-China brotherhood) and subsequent silence on the Tibet issue for the dearth of information about Tibet in India. He also pointed out the glaring omission of Tibet from Indian textbooks, despite its immense geopolitical importance and vast territorial expanse, covering two-thirds of India's land area.

Recalling the historic ties between India and Tibet for centuries, Tsundue highlighted the vibrant trade that once thrived across the Himalayas, with commodities like jaggery from India and yak wool, cotton, and precious metals from Tibet flowing freely between the two territories. He spoke about the significance of the extensive 4,000-kilometre border shared by India and Tibet, spanning diverse landscapes and cultures, encompassing various Buddhist sects, languages, and traditional practices.

The lecture provided attendees with a comprehensive overview of the intricate relationship between the Indian Himalayas and Tibet, shedding light on historical ties, cultural exchanges, and contemporary challenges.

Austria: Protest held outside Chinese Embassy demanding release of Tibetans arrested in Sichuan

01 March 2024, [Take One](#)

Vienna [Austria], March 1 (ANI): The Tibetan diaspora held a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Vienna on Wednesday, demanding the release of arrested Tibetans in Sichuan who were peacefully protesting the planned construction of a dam in Tibet, local sources stated.

The protest was held to showcase their solidarity with Tibetans in China's Sichuan province and the demonstrators called for the immediate release of hundreds of Tibetan monks and villagers.

During the protest, the Tibetan diaspora members raised slogans and held flags against this "illegal and inhumane action" by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). These Tibetan individuals also spoke about their stand against

China's "draconian laws in the occupied territory."

The protesters carried placards that read, "Chinese Communist Party should stop the forced relocation and dam construction in Kham Dege Wonpo villege in Tibet" and "China stop the demolition of homes and monasteries in Kham Dege in Tibet."

One of the protesters said, "The proposed dam would submerge historic monasteries and numerous Tibetan villages. This dam is the sixth in a proposed series of 13 dams on the River Dri Chu. The demonstration in Sichuan province started when CCP officials came to demolish the Yena and Wontoe monasteries for the construction of the dam."

"Yena monastery in Shiba village and Wontoe monastery in Wontoe village are cultural landmarks believed to date back over 700 years, and the mural paintings in the monasteries have historical importance," he added.

Previously, three youngsters from the Tibetan community in Austria staged a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Vienna on Saturday over the human rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet.

They urged the international community to unite and openly support the Tibetan government-in-exile in their ongoing struggle to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet.

Adopting a novel protest, the young Tibetans used a projector and played videos of the forceful displacement of Tibetans by the Chinese in Tibet on the walls of the Chinese Embassy in Vienna. They also projected words highlighting the human rights violations of China and the cultural genocide carried out by China to erase the Tibetan identity.

The young Tibetans, associated with the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG), Europe, also raised slogans against the large-scale environmental degradation happening in Tibet under the guise of huge projects that are unsustainable for the region.

During the protest, the young Tibetans also raised slogans in German to create awareness

among the people in Austria about what is happening to Tibetans in Tibet: the deliberate extinction of a community, an identity.

According to young Tibetans, these projects, including huge defence establishments, and large dams, would displace a large number of Tibetans from their native homeland. One of the main objectives behind such projects is to forcefully relocate Tibetans and erase their identities.

The protesters stressed that the systematic disregard for the fundamental rights of Tibetans by the Chinese government reflects a blatant violation of international human rights law.

Protesters said that China, obligated to respect and adhere to mechanisms safeguarding people's rights, has been persecuting human rights defenders, forcibly resettling Tibetans, engaging in forced labour, fostering workplace discrimination, curtailing religious freedom and language rights, assimilating Tibetan children in boarding schools, and perpetrating cultural genocide.

China Politics, Protests, Detentions and other news from the PRC

CPC leadership reviews disciplinary inspection report

31 March 2024, [ECNS](#)

The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee met on March 21/29 to review a comprehensive report on the second round of disciplinary inspection missions of the 20th CPC Central Committee. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, presided over the meeting.

It was noted at the meeting that the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has attached importance to disciplinary inspection work, and has arranged two rounds of such inspection missions since the 20th CPC National Congress, which had covered all centrally-administered enterprises. It was pointed out at the meeting that Party-building work in centrally-administered enterprises and relevant government departments had been strengthened, with new achievements in terms of the Party's full and rigorous self-governance. But there are still some problems that must be taken very seriously from a political standpoint and addressed earnestly.

Inspections and rectifications followed must be taken as the pivot for promoting high-quality development and exercising full and rigorous Party self-governance. Organization and leadership must be strengthened to see that key parties assume their primary responsibilities, and problems, tasks, and responsibilities must be put on a list, so as to ensure that every problem has a solution and feedback. Oversight over inspections and rectifications must be strengthened, key officials and events be placed under tight scrutiny to make sure that every case is addressed as required. An accountability system must be established for rectifications to ensure that those who are perfunctory or cheat in the rectifications will be strictly held to account.

It was emphasized at the meeting that state-owned enterprises (SOE) are the crucial material and political foundation for socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is imperative to uphold and consolidate Party's leadership, and thoroughly study and put into practice Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. SOEs must perform their duties and fulfill their missions in a down-to-earth manner, and must uphold General Secretary Xi Jinping's core position on the CPC Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, and uphold the Central Committee's authority and centralized, unified leadership. They must ensure both development and

security, be vigilant against potential dangers, be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios, resolutely prevent and mitigate risks and ensure high-quality development with high-level safety.

It is imperative to make advances in exercising full and rigorous Party self-governance, with rigor being maintained for the work in every aspect. Oversight of "top leaders" and leaderships must be strengthened, and crackdown on corruption must continue to be carried out with a high hand. Cases must be studied and used for promoting rectification of conduct and Party governance so that the soil and conditions that breed corruption will be eliminated.

It is imperative to conscientiously implement the Party's organizational line for the new era and strengthen the building of leaderships, ranks of officials, talent pool as well as grassroots Party organizations. What has been achieved from disciplinary inspections must be put to good use. It is also essential to conduct in-depth research on common and deep-seated problems discovered in disciplinary inspections, further improve the related systems and mechanisms, and tackle not only symptoms but also root causes.

China spy agency fingers consultancies as espionage threat

31 March 2024, [VOA News](#)

China's Ministry of State Security issued a fresh warning this week about overseas spy agencies and what it says are their efforts in recent years to obtain state secrets under the disguise of consulting agencies.

The six-minute video released Thursday on the ministry's official WeChat social media account reenacts what it says was a real case where overseas spy agencies instructed a consulting firm to steal classified information from a Chinese company seeking to invest abroad.

The release of the video comes as Chinese leader Xi Jinping met this week with American CEOs in a bid reassure them that China remains open for business, despite concerns about its

economy and worrying signals from the authoritarian government.

Over the past year, foreign investment in China has shrunk as supply chains shift to other countries while Chinese authorities have rolled out a new anti-espionage law and used exit bans to keep business executives and others from leaving the country. It has also carried out raids on consulting and due diligence firms.

During the same period, the Ministry of State Security has ramped up its use of social media to raise the alarm about foreign spies.

Its latest video — the fourth since it launched its social media account last year — has the feel of a spy thriller with dramatic music and fast-paced video elements and graphics.

It tells the story of an executive at a Chinese company who is pressed by a consulting firm representative on a string of questions, including the company's total profit, the technical parameters of its products, and how its products are used by the Air Force.

In a WeChat post released with the video, the ministry warned about the national security risks that consultancy agencies pose.

"The seemingly normal investigation conducted by consulting firms are in fact attempts to illegally acquire our commercial secrets and efforts to suppress our advantageous industries," the ministry wrote, adding that these consulting firms are accomplices to foreign spy agencies aiming to infiltrate key sectors in China.

Intimidation campaign against Chinese citizens
Some experts say the video is tailored to the Chinese audience rather than foreign investors since the video is purely in Mandarin and features the arrest of a Chinese national working for a foreign consulting firm.

The purpose of the video is "to inform and intimidate Chinese citizens by telling them that the government is watching them," said Dennis Wilder, a former U.S. national security official. He added that the campaign will likely create a chilling effect among Chinese citizens, especially those working for foreign companies.

Over the last year, Chinese authorities have raided several American companies' offices in China and detained some of their Chinese employees. Companies affected include due diligence firm Mintz Group, business consulting firm Capvision, and management consultancy Bain & Company.

Chilling effect for new foreign businesses

While the campaign focuses on Chinese citizens, Wilder said Beijing's efforts to safeguard national security will also create a chilling effect for foreign businesses trying to enter the Chinese market.

Unlike big foreign companies with an established presence in China, such as Apple or Qualcomm, he said companies that have no presence in China need to conduct due diligence. "They have to understand what their counterparts in China are all about, but if they can't conduct due diligence, they won't invest in China," he told VOA in a video interview.

A survey conducted by foreign business groups in 2023 suggests foreign companies are increasingly pulling investments and operations out of China. Survey data show that only 45% of American companies view China as their primary or among their top three investment destinations while 66% of the companies surveyed by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China said they found operating in China has become increasingly difficult.

Despite foreign companies' lack of confidence in the Chinese market, some analysts say the Chinese government thinks efforts to safeguard national security and enhance foreign investors' confidence in the Chinese market are not mutually contradictory.

"Beijing believes that while they try to attract more foreign businesses to invest in China, they also should ensure key national interests, such as core data or key infrastructure won't be easily obtained by foreign businesses," said Hung Chin-fu, a political scientist at National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan.

He said Beijing's approach will be met with deep suspicion among foreign businesses. "At a time when the Chinese government has laid

out many red lines in the name of national security, investing in China will be like walking on thin ice for foreign companies," he told VOA by phone.

As foreign businesses will likely remain hesitant to increase their investment volumes in China, Wilder thinks Chinese leaders may have different views on whether to prioritize efforts to attract more foreign investment or the need to safeguard national security.

"For Xi Jinping, I think if he has to choose between foreign investment and economic growth and what he perceives as national security, he will always come out on the national security side," he told VOA.

But for other Communist Party leaders who must consider economic growth, such as Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Wilder thinks their consideration will be different from Xi's.

U-M study reveals how China's local bureaucrats struggle for power through negative media coverage

19 March 2024, [Michigan News](#)

Recent research on China's factional competition uncovers how local bureaucrats, who are connected to influential national leaders, strategically use the media to criticize members of rival factions, harming their promotion prospects and weakening their factions.

Led by [Ji Yeon \(Jean\) Hong](#), associate professor of political science at the University of Michigan, the research analyzed millions of media reports in Chinese national and regional newspapers spanning from 2000-2014, along with information on the political networks of elite Chinese bureaucrats. It mapped out patterns of behavior among local bureaucrats in leveraging negative media coverage to attack political rivals.

Given the limited freedom of local media on criticizing local governments, provincial leaders linked to strong national leaders, such as

Politburo Standing Committee members, encouraged local media to cover negative political incidents such as corruption investigation in other provinces.

More importantly, when reporting on others, provincial leaders are more likely to target provinces connected to weaker national political leaders. The bigger the power gap between the national leaders, the more frequent the negative reporting is.

“This suggests that factional competition encourages strong factions to attack weaker factions more frequently than the reverse,” Hong said. “This often leads to power consolidation, strengthening strong factions and weakening weaker factions.”

The research further explores the consequences of such negative news coverage on the promotion prospects of provincial leaders. It finds that these negative reports indeed harm the reported-on cadres and their factions.

Specifically, news reports on corruption substantially reduce the promotion chances of the reported-on province’s party secretary, the top local political leader, who is likely to hold political responsibility and suffer a substantial disadvantage if more corrupt cadres are caught within his or her region. While leaders of provinces where the media reports on other provinces’ corruption cases enjoy a higher probability of promotion.

Even though the Chinese personnel system, including promotion, demotion and allocation of party cadres, is not transparent, one of the factors that the Communist Party formally emphasizes in cadre evaluation is public perception. Without an electoral mechanism, it is not straightforward to elicit the public’s evaluation of a cadre or its governance, but the media strongly affect public opinion in China. In such circumstances, the media role is critical. The research covers the period ranging from the end of the Jiang Zemin administration to the beginning of Xi Jinping’s regime. The Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao administrations, which constitute the bulk of the period under analysis, are not typically framed as a period in

which one faction or one top leader dominated others. Furthermore, during this period intellectuals within the party actively debated the possibility of intraparty democracy.

“This implies that the recent personalization of power in China’s central politics might not be a unique feature of the current leadership, but an outcome of latent behavioral patterns in China’s elite politics,” Hong said.

This study is published in the April 2024 issue of [Political Science Research and Methods](#).

Detailed measures stipulate place name translation from foreign language must not compromise China’s territorial claims, sovereign rights

16 March 2024, [Global Times](#)

China's Ministry of Civil Affairs on Friday published implementation measures addressing the management of geographical names, which detailed the requirements for translation of place names in ethnic minority or foreign languages into Chinese characters. Set to take effect from May 1, 2024, the implementation measures stipulated in Article 13 that "place name in foreign language that may harm China's territorial claims and sovereignty rights shall not be directly quoted or translated without authorization." Translation of place names in foreign languages or minority languages should comply with standards formulated by related organs of the State Council. The standard translations are made public through notices, the national database for geographical names and official publications on geographical names, according to the implementation measures. The measures released on Friday also clarified that names of a person, company or trademark should not be used as geographical names and specified the general rules and procedures of naming or renaming localities. The State Council issued a revised regulation on place names in April 2022, which is applicable to naming, renaming, usage, cultural protection and other management on geographical names within Chinese territories.

Analysts noted the newly released implementation measures are made in accordance with the revision. Zhi Zhenfeng, a research fellow with the Institute of Law at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times on Saturday that geographical names are not only directly related to administration and everyday life, but also carry legal and sovereign implications.

Standardization of name translation helps confirm the scope of a geographical name refers to and all administrative rights and public geographical services (mapping and navigating, weather forecast, etc) are based on that, Zhi explained.

As China still has disputes over some territories with certain neighboring countries, the use of geographical names of places in disputes directly relates to sovereign rights. Using the incorrect translation or non-standard translation could cause confusion and encroach China's territorial integrity, Zhi stressed.

Analysts mentioned the example of maritime disputes in the South China Sea with countries like the Philippines. When referring to islands and reefs concerned, the use of standard translation is a firm declaration of sovereignty and transliteration of foreign names means concession of legal rights.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs standardized the names of 11 places in Zangnan (the southern part of Southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region) in Chinese characters, Tibetan and pinyin in April 2023.

Experts told the Global Times that the move is meaningful in safeguarding national sovereignty, maintaining peace in border regions and managing border-related matters at a legal level. Using standard place names helps raise awareness of Chinese territory.

The April 2023 issuance was the third list of standardized geographical names in Zangnan published by the ministry. The first list of the standardized names of six places in Zangnan was released in 2017, while the second list of 15 places was issued in 2021.

What to expect at China's 'Two Sessions' amid sagging economy, party drama

03 March 2024, [Aljazeera](#)



The Chinese government's Two Sessions are taking place in Beijing [File: Mark R Cristino/Pool via Reuters]

China's "Two Sessions" kick off in Beijing on Monday with the meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

The event brings together China's political elite, as well as leaders in business, tech, media, and the arts.

Known as lianghui in Chinese, the concurrent meetings are an annual fixture of China's legislative agenda and run for approximately two weeks.

During the period, legislators will approve new laws, political appointments, and government work reports detailing the progress of various departments such as the Ministry of Finance and the National Development and Reform Commission.

What are the major developments to watch?

During last year's Two Sessions, delegates officially approved Xi Jinping for an unprecedented third term as president.

This year, the event is likely to be dominated by China's lagging economy, which is grappling with slowing growth, deflation, massive debt and falling exports.

One of the most important events to watch will be Premier Li Qiang's delivery of the annual work report, which will review the

government's accomplishments and set goals for 2024.

Li is expected to set an economic growth target of about 5 percent for 2024 and discuss headline issues from China's falling birth rate to the future of tech and artificial intelligence (AI) regulation.

A number of key appointments could also be made.

Over the past year, 11 members of the NPC's Standing Committee – the legislature's 175-member permanent body – have been removed, including Minister of Foreign Affairs Qin Gang and Minister of Defence Li Shangfu.

Those who were removed had ties to the military, including the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Rocket Force, which oversees China's nuclear and conventional ballistic missiles.

What is the difference between the two sessions?

The NPC and the CPPCC are both Chinese state institutions that are technically separate from the Communist Party of China (CCP), but much of their work is dictated by it.

On paper, the NPC is officially China's highest legislative body with nearly 3,000 members representing the country's provinces, autonomous regions, big cities, the PLA and the People's Armed Police. The NPC also has delegates representing self-governing Taiwan, which is claimed by the CCP even though Beijing has never exercised control over the island.

During the NPC, delegates review progress on policy goals and vote to approve new legislation and senior political appointments, although most delegates in reality have little political power.

The NPC Standing Committee is widely viewed as more powerful than the legislature in practice, despite being technically subordinate, as it meets regularly between legislative sessions.

"The NPC is not a parliament in the sense of a democratic parliament where the representatives are elected through fair elections. Its deputies are elected by a small portion of the Chinese population under the

guidance of the Communist Party," Adam Ni, co-editor of the China Neican newsletter, told Al Jazeera.

"That is to say, the deputies of the NPC are at least acceptable to the party."

The CPPCC, which meets at the same time and brings together 2,000 plus delegates from across China and the diaspora, is a political advisory body that functions as more of a public relations exercise.

Delegates are not necessarily members of the CCP, although the meeting is part of its "United Front" efforts to align different actors on common causes and spread China's influence. CPPCC delegates include leaders in tech, the arts, media, and leaders from semi-autonomous Hong Kong and Macau.

"The CPPCC performs several functions, including facilitating elite networking and directing policy advice from outside the party to the party-state. It operates as a means of trade, where the Communist Party provides access to the system and recognition through granting membership, while the elites sitting on the body gain access to policymakers and receive recognition," Ni said.

Is the NPC just a 'rubber stamp' parliament?

The NPC is often referred to as a "rubber stamp" parliament or legislature, as its main function is to formally approve premade decisions and it features little, if any, overt debate.

China watchers say that the NPC is still important to watch.

It can incorporate limited popular input on issues that are not considered too sensitive and, on rare occasions, has featured displays of dissent.

Most famously, one-third of delegates in 1992 voted against or abstained from approving the Three Gorges Dam, a controversial project to dam the Yangtze River.

"People refer to the NPC as a 'rubber stamp' because it has never voted down any bill, work report, budget, or nomination presented to it. But that unduly narrow focus on the NPC's vote outcomes alone, in my view, ignores the important role played by the thousands of NPC

delegates in representing citizen interests on a range of politically non-sensitive issues,” Changhao Wei, a fellow at Yale Law School’s Paul Tsai China Center, told Al Jazeera.

While you will not hear delegates debating on the floor, individual delegates and bodies such as the NPC Standing Committee can shape legislation as it is being drafted and provide input on issues like the national budget.

Delegates can also submit individual bills calling on the NPC to act on important issues of the day.

In 2022, delegates submitted multiple bills focusing on women’s rights and domestic violence in response to public outrage over the case of a trafficked woman with mental health issues who was found chained up by her husband.

While these bills were not debated publicly, they would not have gone unnoticed within the government either, Wei said.

Ni said although the CPP maintains an ironclad grip on power, the party is not a monolith, “but contains a multitude of interest groups and networks”.

“There are also non-party groups and personnel involved in the lawmaking process,” Ni said.

“We shouldn’t discount their agency, eg, advocates of women’s rights, environmentalists, because they can have an impact. But the influence and power of non-party individuals and groups are constrained by the political structure, where the party monopolises the instruments of state power.”

China’s premier won’t meet the press after ‘two sessions’ for first time in 3 decades

04 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

For the first time in three decades, the Chinese premier will not host a press conference at the end of the annual parliamentary sessions, which began in Beijing on Monday.

It will also be scrapped for future years of the current National People’s Congress’ term barring exceptional circumstances, said Lou

Qinjian, spokesman for the NPC, China’s top legislative body.

The press conference – first held in 1988 and established as a customary practice in 1993 – is one of the most anticipated events of the annual “two sessions”, when the top political advisory body and legislature meet.

It is one of the rare occasions when a top Chinese leader takes questions from local and international media. Those questions are often tightly scripted and chosen in advance, but it offers the outside world a chance to hear directly from a high-ranking official on policy directions.

In particular, it has been seen as a platform for China to indicate its diplomatic priorities, not only in terms of the questions selected but also which country’s media they come from.

It also makes the premier a more familiar face globally than other Chinese leaders – including the president and Communist Party secretary – who seldom talk directly to outside media.

But Lou said that after a review, the leadership had decided to scrap the press conference since it often overlapped with similar events during the two sessions.

Premier Li Qiang will deliver the government work report to the NPC on Tuesday morning, followed by two written reports from the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance outlining plans and the budget.

“It should be said that society’s major concerns have been specifically addressed in the [government] reports,” Lou said on Monday. “They will be publicised so that the media and the public can learn about their content easily.” There will be at least three press conferences during the two sessions, including one given by Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Observers said that while the change might come as a surprise, it was in line with China’s political development.

“The party’s leadership has been firmly established over the past decade. The State Council’s role is now mainly about implementing the party’s decisions,” according to veteran China watcher Wang Xiangwei, a

former editor-in-chief of the South China Morning Post.

“The role and status of the premier, who heads the State Council, is therefore adjusted accordingly.”

He said that was already reflected in arrangements for state leaders meeting the chief executives of Hong Kong and Macau on duty visits.

Previously the chief executives held separate meetings with the president and the premier. But last year they reported only to the president, with the premier sitting in on the meeting.

“It is also a reflection of Li Qiang’s pragmatism. He focuses on major policy directions, which are all clearly spelled out in his work report,” Wang said. “He doesn’t think an additional press conference is necessary as the ministers are in a better position to elaborate on detailed policies, and they will all have press conferences.”

But he said the Chinese leadership could bring back the practice in future if it was deemed necessary.

Another observer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, agreed it reflected the change in power dynamics in China.

“The premier’s job is now mainly to do with the economy and social affairs. However, the questions asked at the presser are usually about foreign affairs and China’s grand strategy,” the observer said.

“It would be strange for Li to answer those questions as foreign affairs are increasingly centralised in the hands of the party chief, President Xi Jinping.”

While the foreign minister nominally reports to the premier, Wang stepped into the role from a higher rank after Qin Gang was sacked from the job without explanation in July. Wang reports directly to Xi.

The observer said Li could also have decided not to hold the press conference as a way to show loyalty to Xi, so that more focus is on the president.

But Wang said there could be a negative impact.

“This is still the only opportunity for a top Chinese leader to have live televised interaction with foreign media. Even though it is a highly scripted event, it’s a chance for everyone who is interested in China – particularly foreign investors – to hear directly from the Chinese leadership,” he said.

“This will be an opportunity missed for China to explain itself, and it may increase the perception of China’s lack of transparency. It will have a huge impact on China’s image to the outside world when it comes to openness.”

Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said the change was likely to be part of revisions made by the cabinet to its work rules a year ago, noting that an amended version of the related law would be endorsed during the NPC session.

“[This] clearly shows the fundamental changes in China’s party-government relationships in the past few years,” he said.

The revised work rules state that the cabinet will closely follow instructions from the party leadership, and provisions related to government transparency were removed.

“It will have only taken a year from the revision of the internal work rules to the revision of the guiding law,” Wu said. “Li Qiang is certainly pushing this very hard to show his loyalty.”

Jens Eskelund, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, expressed regret that the premier’s press conference was cancelled.

“Transparency and engagement with international media are important for enabling the global audience to understand China’s priorities and its assessment of the domestic and global situation,” he said. “We hope the press conference will be reintroduced next year.”

David Lie Tai-chong, a Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference member from Hong Kong, said he believed the press briefing was dropped as part of efforts to “streamline” the two sessions.

China's top political advisory body concludes standing committee session

02 March 2024, [Xinhua](#)

The 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), or China's national political advisory body, closed the fifth session of its standing committee Saturday in Beijing.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, hosted the closing meeting and delivered a speech.

Praising the concrete progress the CPPCC National Committee has made over the past year, Wang noted that the year of 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the founding of the CPPCC.

The CPPCC should carry on its fine tradition, stay committed to its political responsibility, actively offer advice and build up consensus for advancing Chinese modernization as well as pool wisdom and strength for fulfilling the national economic and social development goals, Wang said.

He also called for efforts to ensure the upcoming second session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee be held successfully.

The meeting reviewed and adopted documents including a draft agenda and the schedule of the annual session, a work report of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, and a report on how the proposals from political advisors have been handled since the first session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee.

These documents will be submitted to the annual session for review.

Intrigue swirls about possible reshuffles as China's parliament convenes

02 March 2024, [The Guardian](#)

Thousands of delegates are due to arrive in Beijing this weekend for China's most high-

profile political gathering, a closely observed series of meetings that will lay out the government's policy blueprint for the year ahead.

The event, known as the "two sessions", begins on Monday as China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC) convenes alongside a separate but parallel meeting of the country's top political advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

The nearly 3,000 NPC delegates can amend the constitution, enact new legislation, approve the government budget and fill vacancies in state offices. But in reality the NPC is a rubber-stamp parliament. It has never voted down any item on the agenda, and the Communist party (CCP) holds the ultimate power over the state. Nevertheless, it is a keenly watched political event. The premier, Li Qiang, will present the government work report, which lays out its plans for the year ahead, including the GDP growth target. And while no changes are expected to the position of Xi Jinping, who was granted a norm-busting third term as president at last year's NPC, personnel changes may be announced, after months of uncertainty about who is responsible for some of China's most important government departments.

The most significant changes are at the offices of the foreign minister and the defence minister. Speculation around the fates of Qin Gang, the former foreign minister, and Li Shangfu, the former defence minister, has swirled since the two men were removed without explanation from their positions last year, in a season of turbulence for China's government.

Qin has not been seen since in public since June, leading to rumours about his fate. This week Qin was removed as a NPC delegate, concluding his eradication from the levers of China's government.

Unlike other delegates who were "dismissed" from parliament, the official notice said Qin had resigned. James Palmer, a deputy editor of Foreign Policy, said in his China Brief newsletter that this indicated Qin's "fall from grace has been relatively cushioned".

Qin was replaced as foreign minister by his predecessor, Wang Yi, who is also the director of the more powerful CCP foreign affairs commission. Many experts believe that Wang's reappointment was intended to be temporary, with a replacement expected to be announced at this year's NPC. A likely candidate is Liu Jianchao, a senior party cadre who has travelled extensively in recent months to participate in diplomatic meetings.

Li, the former defence minister, was recently removed from the website of the CCP's central military commission.

The demotions of Qin and Li have left vacancies on the state council, China's cabinet. Li's vacancy may be filled by his replacement as defence minister, Dong Jun. But it is far from certain that Dong or any new foreign minister will be appointed to the state council.

Neil Thomas and Jing Qian, researchers at the Asia Society Policy Institute, said in a recent analysis that if the spots remained vacant, it "could suggest a higher degree of mistrust and paralysis at the centre of Xi's leadership and a poorer outlook for China's attempts to both manage tensions with the west and lead the global south".

Observers will be paying close attention to the government work report, which Li will deliver on Tuesday. He is expected to announce a relatively modest GDP growth target likely to hew closely to 2023's target of 5%.

There may be some modest fiscal support, although not the deep structural reform or more aggressive stimulus that many economists say is necessary to recharge China's struggling economy. That is because Xi's third term as China's leader has been characterised by a focus on national security, even at the expense of economic growth or business confidence.

Underlining this, on 27 February the NPC standing committee, which meets when the NPC is not in session, revised the law on state secrets, expanding the scope of sensitive information to "work secrets". The update requires government agencies to protect information that may not be a state secret but

"would cause a definite adverse impact after leaking".

Although the law only applies to state institutions, Thomas and Qian said the widened scope of sensitive information "could affect firms that deal with China", meaning more uncertainty for businesses in China.

China's Xi Jinping calls for 'loyalty and honesty' from younger officials as morale runs low

02 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday urged young and middle-aged officials to be loyal, honest and "keen on reform and innovation" in an effort to rally morale and encourage unity in the face of economic and social risks.

"[Young and middle-aged officials] must actively practice loyalty and honesty towards the party, and must make their political stance clear," Xi said, according to state news agency Xinhua.

He called on young cadres to strictly uphold the Communist Party's political discipline and rules, show honesty and maintain a high degree of unity with the party at all times.

The message was conveyed at the opening ceremony of a training programme for young and middle-aged officials on Friday at the Central Party School in Beijing, where Xi urged party organisations to nurture reliable and qualified successors.

"[Party members] should be strong promoters of good and clean political ecology ... resolutely oppose privileged thoughts and privileged behaviours, and maintain the political integrity of the party," Xi added.

He also called on them to guard against major risks and solve prominent problems.

Xi emphasised that young party members should be "selfless" and dedicate themselves to improving people's well-being. They should also be "keen on reform and innovation and dare to confront difficulties", he said.

Xi has previously highlighted the importance of innovation in China's modernisation path, saying it should be given a prominent position

in overall development, according to an excerpt published last year in Qishi, the party's theoretical journal.

"Chinese-style modernisation is an exploratory undertaking with many unknown areas that the country is required to boldly explore through reform and innovation, and we should never rigidly cling to an idea or approach without considering the reality of the situation," Xi said, according to the journal.

Morale is running low among China's public servants as Xi's sweeping anti-corruption campaign has increased the pressure on rank-and-file cadres, while the risk of social unrest is growing because of the country's economic slowdown.

Chen Daoyin, a political analyst and former professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, noted that it was "party tradition" to train young and middle-aged officials at the Central Party School, where cadres learn to fill key party and state positions. "The points emphasised in Xi's speech this year suggest prevalent problems among young and middle-aged officials, including the lack of a sense of responsibility and capability and low awareness of their roles," Chen said.

In January, Xi warned that the party should continue to fight corruption and other problems with "tenacity, perseverance and precision".

Later that month, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, China's top anti-corruption body, revealed that around 110,000 party officials faced disciplinary action last year. China's former foreign minister Qin Gang and former defence minister Li Shangfu were also stripped of their titles and state councillor positions last year. The reasons for their dismissals have not been revealed publicly.

China economy gaining momentum despite calls for hardline US stance: senior diplomat

02 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

China's economy is gaining momentum towards recovery and high-quality

development as it becomes a "modern socialist country in all respects", a senior Chinese diplomat said on Friday, even as he denigrated American critics calling for hardline policies against the Asian giant.

The comments by Qian Jin, China's deputy consul general in New York, come as the administrations of Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping seek to stabilise relations and build on good will following their November summit in California amid escalating US rhetoric ahead of the nation's presidential election in November. "Some people have been hyping up [the] so-called 'China threat', advocating cutting China off from chips, slapping new sanctions," said Qian in prepared remarks.

"The stabilising momentum in China-US relations should not be disrupted by domestic politics."

Friday's statement, one of several over the past year by Beijing officials aimed at boosting investor and consumer confidence in China's struggling economy, was released amid a slew of headwinds.

Qian knocked detractors who voice "concerns and doubts" about China's economic development and who use such phrases as "struggling for momentum", "lack of drive" and "dragging down the world".

"This is further from the truth," he said. "The ship of China's economy is breaking turbulent waves of the global economy and moving steadily forward."

Qian argued critics should note that Beijing achieved its 5.2 per cent growth target in 2023. In addition, China's economy remained a strong engine of global growth, he said, and planners had avoided "massive stimulus" for short-term gain given "sound and solid fundamentals".

Beijing has sought to project confidence as it tries to right its economic ship. Its swooning property market is a grave concern, accounting for some 25 per cent of the country's economy and about 70 per cent of household wealth.

On other fronts, local debt levels are mounting, and youth unemployment stood at 15 per cent

in December. Last summer, the total surpassed 20 per cent, after which China's National Bureau of Statistics temporarily stopped releasing figures, citing a need to change how the index was calculated.

Furthermore, deflationary fears have intensified, and consumers during the closely watched Lunar New Year period stayed cautious.

While the number of domestic tourists was up 34 per cent during the major annual holiday over last year – and 19 per cent above 2019 pre-coronavirus pandemic levels – average spending per person was nine per cent below 2019.

"In short, Chinese households are readily partaking in the service economy but remain frugal in their spending," said Michael Hirson of 22V Research, a New York-based investment research firm.

"Cautious household spending and investing has been a key factor behind weak domestic demand since the post-Covid reopening and we see few catalysts to reverse it any time soon," added Hirson, who served as the US Treasury Department's attaché in China from 2013 to 2016.

Qian countered that the economy was stable, saying 2023 grain output fell only slightly below 2022 levels, R&D spending held strong and a shift was under way to new sources of growth. China continued to welcome foreign investors, he added, while electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and new energy developments remained promising. Some economists noted overcapacity concerns, however.

The country's domestic EV sales could grow 25 per cent to 9.44 million units this year, according to a forecast by Citic Futures. That is down from annual growth rates of 31 per cent last year and 89 per cent in 2022.

Beijing has sought to tackle the mounting economic uncertainties, vowing to embark on a host of pro-growth policies. "Proactive fiscal policy must be moderately strengthened and improved in quality and efficiency," according to a statement from the Politburo on Thursday.

In a meeting with US business executives in Beijing on Wednesday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang touted the "huge demand potential" in advanced manufacturing, urbanisation, consumption upgrading and green energy transformation. He did so even as he criticised any move to decouple the two economies.

On trade, prospects for China look mixed, analysts said, as 2023 exports fell, the US has maintained its insistence on restricting exports of high-end semiconductors and other key technologies and Europe grows warier of Beijing's ambitious EV plans, which the continent has viewed as a threat to its own efforts.

But Qian said better Sino-American trade relations were mutually beneficial.

"Decoupling between us will not work and will produce no winner," the diplomat said. "For Chinese companies in the US, unreasonable tariffs, sanctions and suppression are most unwanted."

Beijing's bid to bolster confidence with foreign investors comes amid steep stock market declines – partially reversed after recent government intervention – and plunging sentiment.

According to an American Chamber of Commerce in South China survey released on Tuesday, 63 per cent of US firms in China were looking to reinvest in China, down 5 percentage points.

The same survey found that only 11 per cent of non-American foreign firms planned to reinvest in China, down sharply from last year's 71 per cent.

Trade tensions are also weighing on the economy. More than 60 per cent of American firms and over half of Chinese firms in the South China AmCham survey said they had been negatively affected by tariffs both from Beijing and Washington, with 85 per cent expecting bilateral trade tensions to worsen.

The low level of trust and ongoing mudslinging between the world's two largest economies was evident in this week's annual US

assessment of China's membership in the World Trade Organization.

Washington accused Beijing of a "state-directed, non-market approach" and an array of non-market practices targeting industries for global market domination, according to the 80-page report.

The US added that China's socialist market economy "has turned decidedly predatory".

Beijing quickly denied the charges, countering Washington relied on "discriminatory" industrial policies that disrupt global supply chains and used "smear tactics and blame-shifting methods to cover up its violations and sabotage".

Qian on Friday contended doubters would be proved wrong. "The Chinese economy can handle ups and downs," he said. "The overall trend of long-term growth will not change."

Further fall from grace for disappeared former foreign, defence ministers in opaque world of China

01 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

(TibetanReview.net, Mar01'24) – China said Feb 27 that the resignation from the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) by the months-long disappeared former foreign minister Qin Gang had been accepted, without any information on his whereabouts or current status. China also said Feb 27 that it's also months-long disappeared defence minister Li Shangfu had been removed from the Party Central Military Commission (CMC).

"Tianjin Municipal People's Congress Standing Committee has decided to accept Qin Gang's resignation as a delegate to the 14th NPC," reported China's official Xinhua news agency Feb 27. The decision came ahead of the opening of the NPC's 2024 session on Mar 5.

Qin, China's former envoy to the United States, took the office of foreign minister in Jan 2023. He disappeared from public view in Jun 2023 and was formally banished from his position as a state councillor in October.

Qin rose to power due to his personal relationship with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, and

his downfall has left many questions unanswered. Some experts have even described him as Xi's most loyal servant, noted [newsweek.com](#) Feb 27.

Beijing has yet to officially explain Qin's dismissal as foreign minister, after he was removed from the post only six months into the role. The mystery around Qin's disappearance since June continues as various theories about his fate have been put forward, the report noted.

Meanwhile, it is also not clear when exactly Li Shangfu was removed from China's key military command body, said the [scmp.com](#) Feb 27.

Li, who had not been seen in public since late Aug 2023, was removed as defence minister and state councillor without explanation at a meeting of the NPC Standing Committee in Oct 2023. He had only been in the post for months. The CMC is a parallel system for the party and the state, with the same membership. Li had already been removed from the state CMC in October, the report noted.

It added that Li is still a member of the party's Central Committee and retains his seat in the legislature.

Last year also saw a number of senior generals being removed from their commands, prompting speculation that President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption drive was deepening in the military. They included the leadership of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force who are responsible for the country's nuclear arsenal.

Nine of those commanders were also stripped of their seats in the legislature in Dec 2023, with the NPC saying this month that they were suspected of "violations of discipline and the law", usually a euphemism for corruption, the report noted.

Also, the fate of Li's predecessor Wei Fenghe remains uncertain after he did not appear on a list of senior officials who received Lunar New Year greetings from the leadership – a common courtesy. Wei has not been seen in public since then.

Besides, the new Defence Minister, Dong Jun, a former head of the navy, has not yet been given

the rank of state councillor or a seat on the CMC, something all previous defence ministers have received, the report noted.

Military and Infrastructure Development

Chinese military's security chief Wang Renhua elevated to top rank of general

29 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

- Promotion could give Wang and the CMC Political and Legal Affairs Commission, which he heads, more power, observer says
- President Xi Jinping presented him with a certificate of order at a ceremony in Beijing on Thursday, according to state television



General Wang Renhua heads the commission that oversees the military's courts, procuratorates and prisons. Photo: CCTV
President Xi Jinping has promoted the PLA's security chief to the rank of general, a

departure from recent practice that comes amid a purge of military leaders.

Wang Renhua, head of the Central Military Commission's Political and Legal Affairs Commission, was elevated to the highest rank for officers in active service on Thursday.

Wang, 62, is the third security chief of the People's Liberation Army since a major overhaul of the military in 2015. He took up the job in late 2019 and was promoted to lieutenant general.



Xi Jinping (front row, centre) poses for a photo with top military brass and two newly promoted generals, Wang Renhua (back row, left) and Xiao Tianliang (back row, right), in Beijing on Thursday. Photo: Xinhua

He becomes the first general to serve in this position since the overhaul – his predecessor Song Dan was a lieutenant general when he was security chief, as was Li Xiaofeng before him.

It comes as the ruling Communist Party is ramping up a campaign targeting corruption in the military. In December, nine PLA generals – including a number of senior members of the PLA Rocket Force responsible for China's nuclear arsenal – were dismissed from the top legislature.

Meanwhile, Li Shangfu – who has not been seen in public since August – was sacked as defence minister and state councillor in October, without explanation. Li was also removed from the CMC last month.

Others include aerospace company chairman Feng Jiehong, who resigned from the legislature in February. Li Zhizhong, a lieutenant general who was deputy

commander of the PLA's Central Theatre Command, was also dismissed from the legislature

Wang heads the commission that oversees the military's courts, procuratorates and prisons. It is responsible for formulating laws and regulations related to the military, including those protecting the rights of personnel.

Lu Li-shih, a former instructor at the Taiwanese naval academy in Kaohsiung, said Wang's promotion could give both him and the commission more power.

"[This] means the elevation of his commission and military courts and military prosecutors' office – not just a promotion for [Wang]," he said.

Lu added that the promotion would also give the commission more authority in the trials of senior generals.

Xi – who is also chairman of the CMC – presented Wang with a certificate of order to elevate him to the top rank at a ceremony in Beijing on Thursday, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Xiao Tianliang, president of the PLA's National Defence University, was also promoted to general, in line with past practice.

Wang, who is originally from Sichuan province, has previously served as director of the political unit at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi Desert, and as deputy head of the PLA Ground Force political work department. In 2017, he became chief of the graft-buster of the PLA Navy's East Sea Fleet.

As PLA security chief, Wang is also a member of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, a party body that oversees all security-related matters.

Prior to the 2015 military overhaul, PLA security chiefs were generals who were also in charge of the CMC's Commission for Discipline Inspection – the graft-buster responsible for investigating alleged wrongdoings by military officers.

Chinese Ministry of State Security: 'Military Fans' at High Risk of Becoming Espionage Targets

20 March 2024, [RFA](#)

China's Ministry of State Security has issued another stern warning about the potential national security threats posed by military enthusiasts, or "military fans." The ministry says this group is a high-risk target for espionage, theft of secrets, and leaks involving military matters.

In an article titled "Another Reminder for 'Military Fans'" published earlier this month, the ministry outlined several specific risks pertaining to this community's activities. The article states that military fans could inadvertently "guide" foreign intelligence operations by revealing sensitive military information, their online military forums and groups could become channels for overseas theft of secrets, and individual military fans could become targets for "screening and enticement" by foreign personnel acting as "insiders."

On March 7th, the ministry's official WeChat account delved deeper into the risks involved. The WeChat post noted that Chinese military fans obsessively track developments of advanced weapons and equipment, closely following details such as equipment quantities and models, troop locations, and aircraft serial numbers. They establish databases compiling this sensitive information and share it on websites, constantly expanding and refining the available data. "As time goes by, this information will become increasingly rich and professional, to the point of endangering military security," the Ministry of State Security warned.

This is not the first time that Beijing has raised alarms about the activity of military fans. On December 23rd of 2023, the Ministry cautioned fans against leaking information on construction progress, technical specifications, or deployment details of new military equipment. The Ministry's communication at that time stated that violations could result in

prison sentences of 3 to 7 years. China's security establishment clearly views information gathering and sharing by these military enthusiasts as a critical risk to be proactively addressed.

China's South Asia 'bridgehead' needs urgent infrastructure boost to aid security, mineral exploration

08 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

China should address an urgent need for infrastructure construction in a strategically important part of its southwestern Tibet autonomous region – seen as a “bridgehead” to South Asia – to enhance national security and mineral exploration, according to the head of one of its largest aluminium producers.

“As a base for China's mineral resources reserve, [Ngari prefecture] is an important transport and logistics hub in the western part of the country,” said Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference delegate Duan Xiangdong during the ongoing “two sessions” in Beijing.

“There is an urgent need [for the region] to enhance its infrastructure, such as electricity and transport.”

Located in the remote and high-altitude western region near India, Ngari prefecture grapples with a challenging terrain and harsh climate, which has hindered logistics and infrastructure development, further constraining its economic progress.

While the region had made progress in mineral exploration that has contributed to China's reserves of strategic mineral resources over the past few years, progress has been crippled by inadequate infrastructure, Duan added.

“Currently, the electrical grid capacity in the region is insufficient to meet the demands of its economic and social development, particularly given the absence of railway lines,” he said, according to the Aluminum Corporation of China official website on Tuesday.

He added that the region's administrative centre is over 1,200km (746 miles) from the nearby railway stations.

“Relying solely on road transport results in long distances, high costs and low efficiency, thereby compromising the region's ability to support the security and development of the country's border area,” Duan added.

He called for “concurrently advancing” infrastructure construction and mineral resource exploration to “turn its resource advantages into economic strengths”.

Beijing has put energy self-reliance and security high on its agenda, ramping up domestic exploration and mining for critical minerals amid growing geopolitical tensions that risk its status in the global supply chain.

Duan suggested speeding up power grid construction in northwest Tibet, increasing electricity purchase from other regions and enhancing the transmission capacity of power interconnections with the neighbouring provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai.

To address the logistics challenges, Duan proposed accelerating the construction of the northern line of the Xinjiang-Tibet railway.

Tibet plans to complete building 4,000km of railway lines by 2025, according to its 14th five-year plan, with the section between the city of Xigaze – also known as Shigatse – and Lake Pelku expected to begin operation next year.

The government and relevant enterprises should also work together to improve the green, efficient and sustainable exploration and utilisation of strategic mineral resources in the prefecture, added Duan.

Beijing has increased investment in Tibet, initiating a project to establish the world's highest computing data centre in its capital city of Lhasa, which will span over 645,000 square metres (6.9 million sq ft).

The 11.8 billion yuan (US\$1.6 billion) project, which completed its first phase of construction in 2020, is expected to produce an annual revenue of 10 billion yuan, according to the state-backed Xinhua News Agency.

China in the Region

China-Nepal

Nepal Deputy Prime Minister Shrestha visits Tibet; calls for opening 14 traditional border points with China

31 March 2024, [PTI](#)

A press release said that Mr. Shrestha, during the meeting, reiterated the need for reopening of traditional border points.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha also underscored the importance of exporting products from Nepal during a meeting with Wang Junzheng, secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee of China.

Mr. Shrestha, who is on his first visit to China after taking over office earlier in the month, was in Lhasa on Friday as part of his trip from March 25 to April 1 when he also urged the Chinese side for its cooperation to address issues facing the residents along the Nepal-China borders. A press release from the Consulate General of Nepal in Lhasa said that Mr. Shrestha, during the meeting, reiterated the need for reopening of traditional border points for the promotion of trade and commerce as well as facilitating the movement of people.

He sought cooperation to make arrangements for the use of pastureland along the bordering areas, to provide entry passes for Nepali containers and electrification in Nepal's highlands, according to the MyRepublica news portal. He recalled an agreement to resume 14 Nepal-China traditional transits during his meeting with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi in Beijing two days ago and expected the facilitating role on behalf of Tibet's administration to implement the understanding.

Mr. Shrestha also called on the Chinese side to make provisions for resuming the Kathmandu-Lhasa bus service, the report said. He also underscored the importance of exporting products, including Haylage, cooked buffalo meat, and medicinal herbs among others to further strengthen economic cooperation. Haylage is a type of nutritious animal feed.

"The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs further expressed the need to cooperate in the areas of infrastructure and connectivity including the transmission lines to further strengthen the bilateral ties," The Kathmandu Post newspaper reported, quoting the statement. The two leaders also discussed matters relating to expanding socio-economic cooperation, enhancing understanding and goodwill through high-level exchanges, consolidating the ongoing cooperation and exploring new areas of cooperation.

"Both the leaders discussed matters of mutual interest," reiterated a post on X along with a photo by Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs late on Friday night after the meeting.

Earlier on March 26, the strategic partnership between the two countries was discussed during Shrestha's meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang where China has also urged the new dispensation in Nepal to finalise the implementation plan for its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects that have struggled to make any headway due to continuous political changes in the Himalayan nation. Posting about the meeting on social media platform X, Ambassador Chen Song, the Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, said: "The two sides agreed to reopen 14 traditional border trade points immediately, strengthen practical cooperation between two counties in such fields as trade, investment, tourism, and advance the bilateral relations to a new height." Shrestha is also expected to visit the holy pilgrimage site of Kailash Mansarovar in Tibet during his visit, it was announced earlier last week.

China's anti-India, Tibet-pilgrimage restrictions
ruining friendly Nepal's tourism industry

22 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Beijing denied access to Mt Kailash in Tibet to nearly 50,000 Indian pilgrims seeking to travel there through Nepal last year and the situation does not seem likely to change, given the state of Sino-India relations, reported the *kathmandupost.com* Mar 22.

It was hoped that after Beijing opened the Hilsa border point, the gateway to Kailash Manasarovar, last April, the worst was over. However, this was dashed when the Chinese authorities in Tibet restricted Indian pilgrims' movement through the border. As a result, many entrepreneurs in Nepal's tourism industry were forced to close, leaving many people unemployed, the report said.

Even after Beijing reopened some border points to Nepal allowing people and trade movement, it has imposed restrictions, especially for Indian pilgrims, which many say is the fallout of the growing India-China geopolitical rivalry, the report said.

The restrictions were stated to have ruined the million-dollar business of scores of hotels, tour operators, porters, helicopter and airline companies.

Around 15,000 tourists used to visit Kailash Manasarovar through the Hilsa border before the Covid pandemic. The border was closed for four years due to the pandemic and reopened in April last year.

Kailash Manasarovar Yatra is one of the most lucrative tour packages for Nepali tour operators and Hilsa is the major point of entry for it, the report said.

"We are expecting our business to be zero this year too. There is no sign of opening the border even as the season is to start after a week," Bijay Lama, a hotel entrepreneur, has said.

Before the Covid pandemic, there used to be a huge movement of Indian tourists on the Hilsa border, Karma Lama, another tourism entrepreneur, has said. "As a result, from porters to hotel operators and from airlines to

local groceries used to be busy from early morning."

"We incurred heavy losses when the border was closed. But despite the reopening last year, the tourist movement has been almost zero," he has said.

The report cited tour operators as saying that last year Chinese authorities in Tibet denied access to nearly 50,000 Indian pilgrims who had booked for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra that included journeying through different border points, including the Kathmandu-Lhasa flight.

In 2023, Nepal welcomed an all-time high number of Indian visitors, crossing the 300,000 mark for the first time. The major draw was the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra. But they were forced to reschedule their tour package and visit, instead, Nepal's holy places like Muktinath and Lumbini.

"Until China allows Indian pilgrims, there is little likelihood of tourists returning and business bouncing back," Yakyung Lama, a guard at Manasarovar Hotel in Hilsa, has said, adding he has been deployed to look after the hotel alone as there were no visitors.

Willing to work with new Nepali government, says
Beijing

07 March 2024, [ANN](#)

As a friendly neighbour and cooperative partner, China attaches great importance to Nepal-China relations and is willing to work with the new Nepali government to adhere to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, according to Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson.

China has said it is willing to work with the new Nepali government, a day after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ditched the Nepali Congress-led alliance and formed a new government with the support of CPN-UML, Rastriya Swatantra Party and Janata Samajbadi Party.

Speaking during a regular press briefing in Beijing on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "China has

noticed that Nepal has recently formed a new ruling coalition and reorganised its cabinet. We sincerely hope that all parties in Nepal will unite and cooperate to smoothly advance the work related to the formation of a new government and achieve political stability, economic development, and improvement of people's livelihood."

As a friendly neighbour and cooperative partner, China attaches great importance to Nepal-China relations and is willing to work with the new Nepali government to adhere to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, enhance traditional friendship, deepen pragmatic cooperation, and promote Nepal-China strategic cooperation for ever-lasting friendship oriented toward development and prosperity, she said.

The partnership will further develop and create more benefits for the people of the two countries, Mao added.

Nepal's other neighbour, India is yet to speak about the recent political development in Kathmandu.

Nepali ambassador to China interests in two sessions

04 March 2024, [ChinaDaily](#)

This is the second time I will be attending the opening meeting of the annual session of the National People's Congress. The two sessions are China's important annual parliamentary meetings where the Chinese premier presents the annual report of the government of China. The uniqueness of the two sessions is the presence of more than 2,000 deputies across the country showcasing the democratic parliamentary system of Chinese characteristics. I am also interested to learn about the target of China for 2024 in various areas including trade, investment, tourism, digital technology, science and innovation, green energy.

Furthering the Belt and Road Initiative, Global Development Initiative and other initiatives would be another aspect of interest. I also look forward to the priority of the Chinese

government toward its neighboring countries like Nepal in its approach to high-quality development and higher level of opening-up. For the envoys attending it, the two sessions will be an opportunity to witness the solidarity and commitment of the Chinese government for development, progress and prosperity.

As a close and friendly neighbor, Nepal also looks forward to see how China prioritizes neighborhood policies and implements the South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in areas such as economic cooperation, people-to-people relations, green and low-carbon development, artificial intelligence, digital economy, climate change and BRI implementation.

Enhancing trade, tourism, investment, people-to-people relations, connectivity and other areas of cooperation would be our prime interest. Therefore, the plan, program and targets in that direction will be our focus.

Digital economy is another particular area. Nepal is also leaping towards digital development. Cooperation on digital infrastructure, digital technology transfer, capacity building, e-governance infrastructure development, e-commerce and raising awareness about innovative digital technology will be more advantageous in Nepal. Such cooperation will be useful in the areas of aviation, tourism, service sectors and so on. Assistance to building smart city, robotic growth, IT based development in the areas of trade and data management would be more effective as well.

Nepal and China to renew talks on cross-border transmission lines

03 March 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#)

Building a pair of Nepal-China cross-border transmission lines will again be on the agenda of a bilateral Joint Working Group meeting scheduled for later this month, two officials of the Nepal Electricity Authority said.

The meeting of the Joint Working Group comprising representatives of the NEA and the State Grid Corporation of China is

scheduled to be held in the northern neighbour in the last week of March.

When Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal visited China in September last year, the two sides had signed an agreement on building the Nepal section of the proposed 220kV Jilong/Kerung-Rasuwadhi-Chilime cross-border transmission line with Chinese grant.

“The two sides will launch the construction of the Jilong/Kerung-Rasuwadhi-Chilime 220kV cross-border power transmission line at an early date,” said the joint statement issued during the visit.

The two sides agreed to build the first transmission line connecting the two neighbours. Without grid connectivity with the other neighbour, Nepal fully relies on India to import electricity in the dry season and export its excess power in the wet season.

In the meantime, around a dozen cross-border transmission lines including one of 400kV capacity with India are in operation while four 400kV cross-border grids extending southward are in the pipeline.

The Nepal section is 16 km from the China border to the Chilime hub, while the Chinese will have to build around 80km from the border on their side as well, according to the NEA officials.

“During the meeting, we will also request them to build the project on the Nepal side as agreed earlier,” said Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha, chief of the transmission directorate at the NEA. “We expect them to build the power line on their sides at the earliest as well.”

Even though the Chinese side agreed to fund the Nepal section of the project, there has not been a further study on the proposed Ratamate-Rasuwadhi-Kerung Cross-Border Transmission Line since its capacity was brought down to 220kV from 400kV.

“As the alignment will be the same on the Nepal side, a little update on the existing detailed feasibility study of the Ratamate-Rasuwadhi-Kerung line will be enough to build the Nepal section,” said Shrestha. “We plan to request the Chinese side to conclude

the detailed feasibility study on their side within six months.”

While designing the project under 400kV capacity, the cross-border transmission line was supposed to carry 5,000MW power, according to the NEA.

“There will be a discussion on how to synchronise the two power systems to enable cross-border transmission of power,” said Komal Nath Atreya, chief of the Ratamate-Rasuwadhi-Kerung Transmission Line Project, who has also been entrusted with coordinating with the Chinese side for building the proposed 220kV cross-border line.

Nepal also plans to propose another cross-border power line connecting the bordering village of Kimathanka in Sankhuwasabha district to the Chinese side. “We will convey to them that it is also our priority agenda,” said Shrestha.

Kimathanka is located in Bhotkhola Rural Municipality of Sankhuwasabha in Koshi Province. “As several power projects are under construction on the Arun corridor, new cross-border transmission lines in eastern Nepal would help with the export of power from the projects in the region to China,” said Atreya.

According to NEA officials, the two sides will also discuss powering up some of Nepal’s bordering villages with the Chinese grid.

As per the joint statement issued after the prime minister’s visit, the Chinese side agreed to positively consider Nepal’s request for supplying grid power to electrify northern remote villages of Nepal from the Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region of China, and take overall consideration of providing equipment or technology on commercial terms.

Nepal had sought the neighbour’s help to light up several bordering villages in around half a dozen districts.

Kimathanka in Sankhuwasabha, Lapchi in Dolakha, Chumubri in Gorkha, and Hilsa in Humla were some villages proposed for electrification with Chinese assistance, according to the NEA officials.

According to the power utility, over 5,000 households in several bordering villages are

without electricity. Nepal had proposed using Chinese electricity as connecting the mountain villages to the domestic grid will be expensive because of the difficult terrain.

“The Chinese side has expressed its readiness to provide electricity to two bordering villages as a pilot initiative,” said Atrerya.

Nepal is ready to welcome back Chinese travelers

01 March 2024, [Beijing Review](#)

On February 27, an event promoting exchanges between China and Nepal’s tourism sectors was held at the Embassy of Nepal in Beijing. Some 100 industry insiders from the World Tourism Alliance, China Association of Travel Services and travel agencies in both countries were in attendance.

“The government of Nepal and the government of China have decided to jointly celebrate tourism,” Bishu Pukar Shrestha, Nepal’s ambassador to China, said in his welcome address. Highlighting the natural wonders, cultural heritage sites and unparalleled hospitality of Nepal, he stressed that now is the perfect time to promote tourism between the two countries. “It is imperative that we add up the comprehensive and collaborative efforts to unlock the potential of tourism in Nepal,” he said.

With high peaks, deep canyons and rolling hills, Nepal, a landlocked country lying along the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountain ranges, has always been a popular destination for trekkers, adventurers and yoga enthusiasts worldwide.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, China was Nepal’s second-largest tourist source market, the first being India. The pandemic, however, took a heavy toll on the inbound flow of Chinese tourists. In 2019, Nepal received a record 169,534 Chinese tourists. In 2022, that number fell to 9,599.

Things took a favorable turn in 2023, the year in which China fully reopened its borders. Last March, Nepal was added to China’s list of approved outbound tourist destinations for Chinese citizens. Last November, a new land

port serving as a gateway between southwest China’s Xizang Autonomous Region went into operation. Several Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Chongqing and Lhasa, have also resumed direct flights with Nepal.



Representatives from the World Tourism Alliance, China Association of Travel Services and Chinese and Nepali travel agencies attend a tourism promotional event at the Embassy of Nepal in Beijing on February 27 (COURTESY PHOTO)

“In 2024, we will increase the capacity of our flights to accommodate 80,000 passengers traveling between China and Nepal,” An Yongshen, general manager of Himalaya Airlines, said during the event. Himalaya Airlines, a joint venture between Nepal and China, was the first airline to resume direct flights between Beijing and Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, in January 2023. The airline is also planning to invite a group of Chinese travel and outdoor sports influencers to visit Nepal this March as a way of promoting local tourism on Chinese social media.

With the gradual resumption of flights and tourism activities, hopes are high that arrivals from China will foster cultural as well as business connections between the two countries. This is especially significant under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a strategy to boost global connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road, first proposed by China in 2013.

“By jointly pursuing the BRI, China and Nepal have continued to foster ties, especially

through tourism," Liu Shijun, vice-chair and secretary-general of the World Tourism Alliance, said. "I hope that we can all participate in strengthening the initiative and facilitating genuine connection between China and Nepal at a human level."

China-Pakistan

Six killed in suicide attack on Chinese engineers in Pakistan

27 March 2024, Reuters

A suicide bomber rammed a vehicle into a convoy of Chinese engineers working on a dam project in northwest Pakistan on Tuesday, killing six people, police said, the third major attack on Chinese interests in the South Asian country in a week.

The first two attacks targeted a Pakistan naval air base and a strategic port used by China in the southwest province of Balochistan where Beijing is investing billions in infrastructure projects.

The engineers were en route from Islamabad to their camp at the dam construction site in Dasu in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, regional police chief Mohammad Ali Gandapur said.

"Five Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver were killed in the attack," Gandapur told Reuters.

Dasu is the site of a major dam and the area has been attacked in the past. A blast on a bus killed 13 people, including nine Chinese nationals, in 2021.

Chinese engineers have been working on a number of projects in Pakistan with Beijing investing over \$65 billion in infrastructure works as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under Beijing's wider Belt and Road initiative.

No one claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attack; there also had been no claim for the 2021 attack. Pakistan is home to twin insurgencies - one by Islamists and the other by ethnic militants seeking secession.

While Chinese interests are primarily targeted by the ethnic militants seeking to push Beijing out of mineral-rich Balochistan, they generally operate in the country's south and southwest - far from the site of Tuesday's attack.

Islamists mostly operate in Pakistan's northwest, the area where the convoy was attacked.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have reached the spot and started relief operations.

A separate police source told Reuters the convoy was carrying staff of the construction firm China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) working on the Dasu hydropower project - the same company targeted in 2021.

Construction work ceased for months after that attack.

China's embassy in Pakistan demanded investigations into the attack.

"The Chinese embassy and consulates in Pakistan have immediately launched emergency work, demanding that the Pakistani side conduct a thorough investigation into the attack, severely punish the perpetrators, and take practical and effective measures to protect the safety of Chinese citizens," the embassy said in statement.

The embassy on Wednesday also warned Chinese citizens to stay abreast of the situation and strengthen security measures. It said China will work more resolutely with Pakistan to do its utmost to maintain the security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan. 'FOREIGN ELEMENTS'

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to visit Beijing next week, according to a source in the Prime Minister's Office, his first since taking office following February elections.

On Tuesday afternoon after the attack, Sharif went to the Chinese embassy to offer condolences to victims' families and the Chinese government, the embassy said on Wednesday.

A Pakistani military statement said the three attacks in the last week were aimed at destabilising the internal security situation, accusing "foreign elements" of aiding and abetting such incidents in Pakistan.

It said strategic projects and sensitive sites vital to Pakistan's economic progress were being targeted in an effort to sabotage it and sow discord between Pakistan and its allies, most notably China.

Pakistan's Indian Ocean port of Gwadar, on the route to key Gulf shipping lanes, is managed by China, while nearby naval air base Siddique is used to support security and development work, spearheaded by Beijing, in Balochistan.

Both were attacked in recent days by Baloch separatists.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar condemned Tuesday's attack and said Pakistan would continue to fight back against militants.

Pakistan's foreign office said the life and safety of Chinese nationals in Pakistan was of paramount importance.

"Pakistan will continue to work with our Chinese brothers in ensuring the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in Pakistan," it said in a statement.

Pakistan assures IMF not to allocate additional budget for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

17 March 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The Pakistan government has assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that it will not allocate an additional budget to settle the Pakistcurrency (PKR) 493 billion dues of Chinese power plants, The Express Tribune reported on Sunday.

This comes as the IMF questioned the efficacy of the power sector's anti-theft campaign in Pakistan.

The IMF inquired about the government's decision on the allocation of funds for the Chinese power plants over and above the budgeted amount of PKR 48 billion for this fiscal year, said officials of the Ministry of Energy.

They added that the IMF was informed there was no plan to approve additional funds for retiring the outstanding debt of the Chinese power plants.

The outstanding dues of power projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) alarmingly increased to a record PKR 493 billion or USD 1.8 billion as of the end of January 2024. The amount was PKR 214 billion or 77 per cent higher than June last year. The Pakistan-based news daily reported that the government also faced criticism about a record PKR 7 per unit increase in [electricity prices](#) in March due to the [energy ministry's](#) faulty policy of using expensive imported fuels, The Express Tribune reported quoting sources. The loan lending organisation is in doubt about the government's claim of restricting losses due to the non-recovery of bills to PKR 263 billion in this fiscal year, as the amount has already almost reached PKR 200 billion in just seven months. This has serious implications for restricting the overall [circular debt](#) to PKR 2.31 trillion by June this year.

The build-up of Chinese debt violates the 2015 Energy Framework Agreement, which binds Pakistan to allocate sufficient money in a special fund to keep Chinese investors immune from the circular debt. However, the government is allocating only PKR 48 billion annually with a condition to withdraw a maximum of PKR 4 billion per month. Sources said the IMF appeared sceptical about the long-term success of the government's anti-theft campaign and the military's involvement in monitoring the performance of power distribution companies. Energy ministry officials said the IMF believes the anti-theft campaign can work only in the short term and the government needs to focus on digital monitoring of the power distribution network.

The government claimed it has recovered PKR 82 billion in this fiscal year because of its anti-theft campaign, although there is no publicly available breakup about recoveries from private and public sector consumers. Sources said the IMF's view was that such measures can only be beneficial in the short term. The IMF also did not appear satisfied with the involvement of third parties in monitoring the anti-theft campaign, said the

sources.

For the global lender, as such interventions could diminish the role of power distribution company management and their boards. The low recovery of bills and high line losses contribute annually to PKR 589 billion in the circular debt build-up - a sum that the government recovers either through further price increases or budget subsidies. For this fiscal year, the government estimates PKR 263 billion in losses due to lower bill recovery by power distribution companies. Despite the anti-theft campaign, in seven months, there has already been an increase of PKR 200 billion under this head. Energy ministry officials claimed before the IMF that recoveries have increased to 92 per cent of the billed amount, marginally better than last year. They further said recoveries would improve once billing increased during the summer period.

The energy ministry officials said the finance ministry would release over PKR 250 billion in subsidies this month to keep the circular debt flow at the agreed level for this fiscal year. The IMF was informed that circular debt increased by PKR 378 billion during the first half, jumping to PKR 545 billion by end March. However, the government has agreed to keep the overall debt stock at PKR 2.310 trillion by settling the addition through the budget by June this year.

The Express Tribune reported that the government also faced IMF questions over a sharp monthly increase of PKR 7 per unit due to monthly fuel cost adjustment in electricity bills. The sharp increase highlighted mismanagement by the energy ministry, which failed to implement planned use of various fuels to keep prices low.

Sources said the IMF argued there was no justification for the PKR 7 per unit increase when the exchange rate was stable and global commodity prices did not change. The energy ministry explained the government had to seek the price increase due to using expensive fuels during winter for electricity generation. High-speed diesel, furnace oil, and

imported gas were used due to a faulty policy of allocating cheaper local gas to other sources. Sources said the IMF has also sought a fresh timeline for ending agriculture tube-well subsidies in Balochistan. (ANI)

Two Sessions fosters stronger Pak-China ties

05 March 2024, [The Tribune](#)

Pakistani experts have lauded the significance of the "Two Sessions" in fostering global economic stability in the context of jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiatives.

They believe that the foreign policies and incentives for foreigners in China during these sessions are pivotal in enhancing economic cooperation and promoting sustainable development in the region.

Muhammad Asghar, a correspondent for the Associated Press of Pakistan in China, said that the strategic discussions held during the Two Sessions serve as a platform for fostering stronger ties between Pakistan and China.

"I'm attending different meetings and briefings during the six-day Two Sessions. I will focus on jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative President Xi Jinping launched a decade ago to build a community with a shared future," he stated.

"I am also looking forward to attending Foreign Minister Wang Yi media interaction and also the opening and closing ceremonies of Two Sessions in the People's Great Hall," he added. Shahid Afraz Khan, a foreign expert in Beijing, said that the strategic discussions and initiatives undertaken during these sessions serve as a testament to the strong partnership between China and the world and their commitment to sustainable economic development.

"Jointly building the BRI has become the biggest mega development project of the 21st century which is successfully negating the spillover repercussions of geopolitics,

protectionism, unilateralism, war-theatre mentality, isolation, marginalisation and gearing the developing countries and Global South towards greater socio-economic integration," Pakistani expert Dr Mehmoodul Hassan Khan told CEN.

[Ship from China to Pakistan stopped at Mumbai port; Indian agencies suspect nuclear link](#)

02 March 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

Indian security agencies stopped a Karachi-bound ship from China at Mumbai's Nhava Sheva port suspecting a dual-use consignment that could aid Pakistan's nuclear and ballistic missile programme, officials said on Saturday, reported *PTI*.

Customs officials, acting on intelligence input, intercepted the Malta-flagged merchant ship, CMA CGM Attila, en route to Karachi on January 23. The consignment, featuring a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine manufactured by an Italian company, was thoroughly inspected during the operation.

What are CNC machines?

Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine is a manufacturing device where computer software guides the movement of factory tools and machinery. This technology controls various complex machinery like grinders, lathes, mills, and CNC routers.

CNC machines ensure a level of efficiency, consistency, and accuracy that is unattainable through manual operation.

Concerns about CNC machines in nuclear programmes

Since 1996, CNC machines have been covered by the Wassenaar Arrangement, an international arms control regime aiming to prevent the spread of equipment with both civilian and military applications.

India, one of the 42 member countries, participates in the exchange of information regarding transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies.

The CNC machine was employed by North Korea in its nuclear programme.

A team from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) examined the consignment and verified its potential use in the neighbouring country's nuclear programme.

Officials said that the seizure aligns with efforts to prevent potential proliferation by Pakistan and China.

The consignment was coming from China

The consignment, originating from China, detailed the consigner as "Shanghai JXE Global Logistics Co Ltd" and the consignee as "Pakistan Wings Pvt Ltd" in Sialkot, according to documents such as bills of lading. However, a more in-depth probe by security agencies revealed that the 22,180-kilogram consignment was shipped by Taiyuan Mining Import and Export Co Ltd, intended for Cosmos Engineering in Pakistan.

Cosmos Engineering is already on watchlist

Cosmos Engineering, a Pakistani defence supplier, has been under scrutiny since March 12, 2022, when Indian authorities intercepted a shipment of Italian-made thermoelectric instruments at the Nhava Sheva port.

Officials expressed concerns about Pakistan potentially using China as a conduit to obtain restricted items from Europe and the US, disguising identities to avoid detection. Worries have heightened over Chinese support for Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes, highlighted by a 2020 case involving the concealment of an industrial autoclave, crucial for missile production, as industrial equipment on a Chinese vessel bound for Pakistan.

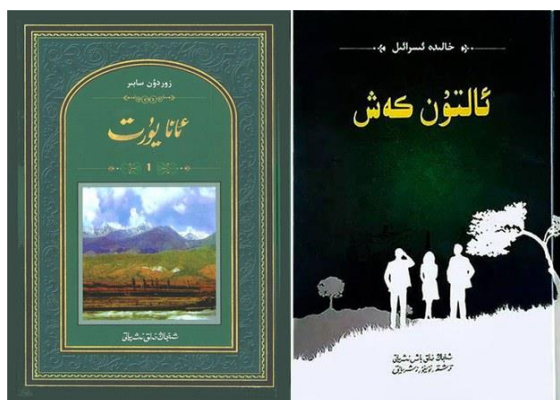
The ongoing investigation seeks to determine if the suspected Pakistani entities receiving these dual-use items are supplying them to the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DESTO), responsible for much of Pakistan's defence research and development.

China-Xinjiang

[Uyghur publisher jailed for books on Uyghur independence, identity](#)

23 March 2024, [RFA](#)

Erkin Emet was arrested in July 2018 during a crackdown on writers and publishers.



Erkin Emet was arrested and jailed for publishing 'Altun Kesh,' or 'Golden Shoes,' (R) by Halide Israel and marketing Zordun Sabir's 'Ana Yurt,' or 'Motherland.'

A prominent Uyghur who published books about Uyghur cultural identity and China's persecution of the Uyghurs has been sentenced to prison, according to a Norway-based foundation and officials in Xinjiang.

Erkin Emet, 65, on a list of detained intellectuals in Xinjiang compiled by Uyghur Hjelp Foundation based in Norway, was taken into custody in July 2018, according to the organization's founder, Abduweli Ayup.

Emet's family said authorities accused him of inciting ethnic separatism and that he is serving a prison term, according to a source in Kashgar, asking not to be identified for security reasons. However, his whereabouts and the length of his sentence are unknown, the source said.

Through confidential channels, Ayup discovered that Emet was most likely arrested for his involvement in the publication or dissemination of two books in particular.

The first was the novel "Altun Kesh," or "Golden Shoes," by Halide Israel, about the persecution of Uyghurs during China's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution and the importance of holding onto Uyghur identity.

Emet also sold copies of Zordun Sabir's "Ana Yurt," or "Motherland," which chronicles the Uyghur victory over Chinese nationalist forces in the early 1940s and the establishment of the

second East Turkestan Republic, in existence from 1944 to 1949.

Crackdown on intellectuals

Emet was arrested during a crackdown known as "Hui Tou Kan," or "Looking Back," a police officer who works near the Xinjiang's Health Publishing House in Urumqi, where Emet used to work, told Radio Free Asia.

At that time, Chinese authorities were detaining Uyghur intellectuals, including writers and publishers, in internment camps or prisons for producing works viewed as harboring separatist tendencies.

Material written or published by prominent Uyghurs was scrutinized, even though it had previously received government approval.

"During *Hui Tou Kan*, they investigated all previously published books," said an official at Xinjiang's Political Law Office in Urumqi, the region's capital.

The most problematic book related to his arrest was "Altun Kesh," he said.

Another source said that his involvement in the sale of "Ana Yurt" was also behind his arrest.

Bookstore manager

Emet, who has two children and several grandchildren, first served as deputy director of the Kashgar branch of Xinhua Bookstore in the 1990s, according to Ayup, whose group is also known as Uyghuryar.

Emet was the first bookstore manager to order 5,000 copies of "Ana Yurt," which sold out quickly, he said.

"He opened multiple large bookstores in different counties of Kashgar, expanded the Kashgar Xinhua Bookstore, and diversified its offers with different categories, which proved to be successful," Ayup told RFA.

Emet was appointed director of the Kashgar Uyghur Publishing House at the end of 2010.

There he published notable works, including Hojamuhemmed Muhammad's eight volumes of poetry collections and was instrumental in getting Halide Israel's "Kechmish," or "Tales of the Past," and "Altun Kesh" published, Ayup said.

In May 2018, Emet moved to Urumqi to become director of Xinjiang's Health Publishing

House, where he worked with Qurban Mamut, a renowned retired Uyghur editor at the *Uyghur Civilization Journal*, according to Ayup.

Two months later, Emet was arrested.

Mamut, father of RFA journalist Bahram Sintash, was arrested later and sentenced to 15 years in prison, Ayup said.

Human rights activist exposes Chinese oppression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang at UNHRC

22 March 2024, [ANI](#)

Social and human rights activist Shunichi Fujiki in his intervention during the 38th meeting of the 55th General Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, shed light on the barbarity faced by the Uyghur community in Xinjiang due to Mainland China's actions.

During his intervention, Fujiki expressed grave concern about the ongoing systematic human rights abuses against Uyghurs in Xinjiang. He highlighted China's refusal to grant access to the region, hindering independent verification of reports on systemic discrimination, mass arbitrary detention, and forced labour.

Despite these challenges, a growing body of evidence, including extensive research by NGOs, journalists, and academics, reveals a disturbing pattern of systematic human rights violations.

In his intervention Fujiki outlined China's efforts to erase the unique Uyghur identity and culture, citing mass detentions in "vocational training centers" that serve as de facto internment camps.

These facilities subject individuals to political indoctrination forced labor, and attempts at cultural assimilation.

He referenced a 2023 report by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which raised concerns about mass surveillance, restrictions on religious practices, and forced sterilizations. Shunichi also Fujiki urged the UNHRC to take

immediate action. He called for free access to Xinjiang for observers, including UN human rights experts, the release of arbitrarily detained individuals, and a comprehensive investigation into allegations of torture, forced labour, and cultural assimilation. Additionally, Fujiki appealed to member states to enact legislation banning the import of goods produced with forced labor in Xinjiang. He emphasized the urgent need for decisive actions, as the Uyghur community continues to suffer under oppressive conditions. (ANI)

So-called 'forced labor' in Xinjiang is one of the most notorious laws of the 21st century, aiming to destabilize Xinjiang: FM

15 March 2024, [Global Times](#)



This photo taken on Oct 12, 2023 shows farmers harvesting cotton in Korla, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Photo: Xinhua

The US' so-called Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) is one of the most notorious laws of the 21st century. It is essentially a tool used by US politicians to destabilize Xinjiang and curb China's development, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Friday, responding to US suspension of garment imports from the Philippines on suspicion that cotton used is involved in "forced labor" in Xinjiang. So-called "forced labor" in Xinjiang is the lie of the century concocted by anti-China forces to create forced unemployment and poverty in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Wang Wenbin, spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said on Friday during a routine press conference.

"Such a lie is a tool used by US politicians to destabilize Xinjiang and curb China's development," said Wang. Wang shared several examples during the press conference, which clearly showed that what the US has done on Xinjiang violated human rights under the banner of "human rights protection."

One example was a private clothing company in Xinjiang, which employed more than 2,200 people as of the end of 2018, with ethnic minority employees accounting for more than 95 percent. However, due to the impact of the US and Western sanctions, the main partners of the company have cancelled all orders in 2019, resulting in direct losses of over 10 million yuan (\$1.4 million) and a reduction in employees to less than 500 people. At present, most of the factory and equipment owned by the enterprise remains idle, and it is barely able to maintain its operation through domestic orders.

Another example is a Xinjiang hair ornament production enterprise which saw its order volume decrease by 40 percent in 2023 compared to the previous year, after being sanctioned by the US. The company's production and operations have continued to deteriorate.

While it used to produce 50 million hair ornament products annually, with an annual export volume reaching \$30 million in 2022, it also made a great contribution to solving local employment.

Wang also cited a villager living in Xinjiang's Kashi, who found a job in a wholly foreign-funded enterprise doing trade in Central China's Hunan in September 2019, with a monthly salary of 5,000 yuan. In 2020, due to the impact of the US sanctions, the enterprise canceled the labor contract with the villager, which forced the villager to return to his/her hometown to make a living, and the monthly income was greatly reduced. In addition, for the sake of so-called compliance, some US companies have unilaterally terminated the supply of medical products purchased from Xinjiang, seriously

affecting the right to life and health of the Xinjiang people, Wang noted. "Facts have proved that the so-called UFLPA is in essence a tool used by US politicians to destabilize Xinjiang and curb China's development. It not only seriously infringes on the human rights of the people in Xinjiang, but also seriously disrupts the stability of the global industrial and supply chain, and seriously undermines international economic and trade rules. It is one of the most notorious evil laws of the 21st century," the spokesperson said.

Wang also called on the international community to firmly resist the wrongful actions of the US, which smears other countries, interferes in their internal affairs, oppresses their enterprises and stifles their development under the pretext of "human rights." China will continue to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises.

China pushes 'Sinicization of Islam' in Xinjiang as Ramadan arrives

12 March 2024, [RFA](#)

Xinjiang's Communist Party secretary says it is an 'inevitable trend.'

While global leaders from U.S. President Joe Biden to U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan issued well wishes to the more than 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide at the start of Ramadan this week, China's president remained silent.

Xi Jinping failed to acknowledge Ramadan, one of the most sacred times for Muslims, despite the 11 million-strong mostly Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples who live in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, as well as the roughly 7 million other Muslims in China. Chinese authorities have cracked down on Uyghurs in Xinjiang for decades, claiming they are prone to religious extremism and separatism. The Chinese government says it wants to make Islam "compatible" with

Chinese culture by ensuring it aligns with traditional Chinese values defined by Beijing. Ramadan began less than a week after Ma Xingrui, China's Communist Party secretary in Xinjiang, discussed the "inevitability" of the Sinicization of Islam, with Uyghur rights organizations expressing concern about possible crackdowns on Muslims during Ramadan, which runs from the evening of March 10 to April 9.

"Everyone knows the need for Sinicization of Islam in Xinjiang," he said at the National People's Congress in Beijing on March 7, according to a VOA report. "This is an inevitable trend."

Since 2017, China has restricted or banned religious rituals among the Uyghurs in an effort to eliminate "religious extremism" amid a larger crackdown on Muslims that resulted in the mass detention of nearly 2 million of them. Authorities have also demolished mosques and committed severe rights violations in Xinjiang, amounting to genocide and crimes against humanity, according to the U.S. government and others.

In 2023, authorities banned Uyghurs in many parts of the region from praying in mosques and their homes during Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of Ramadan. Only senior citizens were allowed to pray in mosques under heavy police surveillance.

The previous Ramadan, authorities in Kashgar paid Muslim Uyghur men to dance outside Xinjiang's most famous mosque to celebrate the end of the holy month. The performance was filmed and released by state media ahead of an anticipated visit by the U.N. human rights chief.

"To the Uyghurs enduring the ongoing genocide, Ramadan is synonymous with extreme suffering, pervasive surveillance and unyielding oppression," Rushan Abbas, executive director of Campaign for Uyghurs, told Radio Free Asia.

"This year, the situation is further inflamed by Ma Xingrui's audacious remarks about the inevitability of the Sinicization of Islam in East

Turkistan," she said, using the Uyghurs' preferred name for Xinjiang.

Religions must adapt

The concept of the Sinicization of Islam was first introduced by Xi Jinping during the National Religious Work Conference in April 2016, when he emphasized the need for religions to adapt to a socialist society and advocated for the integration of religious beliefs with Chinese culture, Xinhua News agency reported.

In 2017, the Chinese government began detaining Uyghurs and other Muslim en masse in large "re-education" camps and prisons, in part to eradicate "religious extremism."

During the National Religious Work Conference in 2021, Xi made "adhering to the Sinicization of religions" a main objective. He emphasized the need for training more personnel with Marxist views on religion and collecting believers around the Chinese Communist Party, according to Xinhua News Agency.

American political analyst Anders Corr said Ma Xingrui's comments indicate little change in Beijing's goal of bringing Islam and other religions under the control of the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP.

During an August 2023 visit to Xinjiang, Xi Jinping urged government officials to enhance the Sinicization of Islam in Xinjiang and to suppress illegal religious activities. He also emphasized the importance of maintaining stability through efforts directed against terrorism and separatism, according to media reports.

Turghunjan Alawidin, a member of the East Turkistan Scholars Union, said the Sinicization of Islam will completely transform the religion in China.

"The statement that the Sinicization of Islam is an unavoidable trend essentially implies the eradication of Islam," he told RFA.

"China has a history of hostility towards Islam and has targeted the religious beliefs of Uyghurs," he said. "Chinese authorities seem to acknowledge that erasing Uyghur religious beliefs is necessary to gain compliance; thus, they are actively suppressing Islam."

Hu Ping, a U.S.-based China analyst and former chief editor of the pro-democracy journal “Beijing Spring,” said that the Sinicization of Islam implies the CCP's systematic alteration and control of the religion.

Historical precedent

Ma Ju, an ethnic Hui scholar based in the U.S., said China's efforts to Sinicize Islam has historical precedent, noting a failed attempt during the transition from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Now, Xi Jinping is treating the issue as one of Chinese nationalism, he said.

“The primary objective of Sinicizing Islam is the complete eradication of the Muslims in China,” he said. “Ma Xingrui's recent visit to Beijing and his public declaration that the Sinicization of Islam is inevitable sends signals to the world that China intends to persist in ethnic and cultural genocide in the Uyghur region.”

Ma Xingrui's concern about the “three forces” — a political phrase referring to ethnic separatism, religious extremism and violent terrorism in Xinjiang — is “self-defeating and undermines the effectiveness of past anti-terrorism efforts,” Ma Ju said.

But Anders Corr said that the Chinese government uses the phrase as justification for its oppression of the Uyghurs.

“Beijing is still using the excuse of terrorism to bring Islam under its control and commit genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims,” he said. “There is little to no recent evidence of extremism in Xinjiang.”

EU reaches deal on forced labour ban, with China's Xinjiang in its sights

05 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

The European Union reached a provisional agreement on Tuesday to ban goods made using forced labour, advancing legislation that was broadly written with China in mind.

The ban, which still needs to be approved by the European Parliament and the Council — made up of EU member states — will target specific economic sectors in places where state-imposed forced labour exists, based on a

database drawn up by the European Commission.

China is not named in the documentation, given the need to comply with World Trade Organization rules. But the initial proposal was driven by widespread allegations of state-sponsored forced labour in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, which Beijing denies.

Nonetheless, unlike a US ban which specifically targets goods made in Xinjiang, it will apply to products from all over the world, including the EU.

Negotiators clashed over who would administer the ban, with its global remit expected to be a drain on resources. Commission sources on Tuesday said member states would need to afford them more staff to enforce the ban, “otherwise this is just headlines”.

As part of an early-morning deal reached by lawmakers from the parliament and council diplomats, the commission will investigate companies' supply chains if suspicions are flagged outside the EU. Individual member states will investigate instances within the union.

“It is appalling that in the 21st century slavery and forced labour still exist in the world,” said Pierre-Yves Dermagne, the deputy prime minister of Belgium, which holds the rotating EU presidency, prioritised the ban.

“This hideous crime must be eradicated and the first step to achieve this consists in breaking the business model of companies that exploit workers.”

If an investigation finds that forced labour is present in a supply chain, authorities can demand the goods be withdrawn from sale and confiscated at the borders. Goods considered critically important will not be destroyed, but detained until the forced labour is traced to be eradicated.

As well as drawing up a list of suspected regions, the commission will identify products in which forced labour is considered a higher risk. In these instances, importers and exporters will have to submit extra details to

EU customs, for example related to the manufacturer and supplier.

Samira Rafaela, a lawmaker who led negotiations on the deal, said it was “groundbreaking in the field of human rights”. “It will prevent forced labour products from entering our market. And it has several references to remediation. It is a step forward in achieving fair trade and cleaning up supply chains, while prioritising human rights.”

However recent history suggests its passage is not guaranteed: last week, EU member states, including Germany and Italy, torpedoed a piece of legislation that would have required companies to provide forensic audits of the human rights records of their suppliers, including in China.

The dramatic collapse of the corporate sustainability due diligence directive came at the same stage of the legislative flow, after EU members had preliminarily approved it. The Belgian government is now scrambling to salvage the law before the EU elections in June. Since a UN Human Rights Office report on Xinjiang in 2022 found the Chinese government may have committed crimes against humanity in the region, the EU has been under pressure to enact legislation on forced labour.

Campaigners demanded that like the US, the EU place the burden of proof on importers who would be responsible for ensuring there is no forced labour in their supply chains – something the proposed risk-based legislation does not do.

Adrian Zenz, a German researcher at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, whose work on Xinjiang has been widely-cited by Western legislators, said it would be better to have “no legislation” than what the EU has proposed.

“In the Xinjiang case, it would be better to have no legislation, because then there would be no illusion that the EU has done something. It’d be better to not have anything ... if you can’t do something that’s properly effective, it’s better to not have it at all,” he said.

The issue of human rights in China hit headlines in Europe recently when the German chemicals giant BASF announced it would prematurely divest from joint ventures in Xinjiang following reports that its business partners were involved in abuses.

Pressure is mounting on German car company Volkswagen to follow suit, after a German newspaper last month reported what it said was evidence of the carmaker’s involvement in forced labour in the region.

China’s foreign ministry brings in new press official from Xinjiang

15 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

China’s foreign ministry has appointed a new senior press official whose previous role was in Xinjiang – a flashpoint in ties with the West – as Beijing steps up efforts to push its own narrative to the world.

Career diplomat Lin Jian has been named as deputy director general of the ministry’s press unit, which releases information on diplomatic events and foreign policy.

The announcement was made on the ministry’s website on Friday, with Lin now holding the same administrative title as foreign ministry spokespeople Wang Wenbin and Mao Ning.

Lin has just finished a stint in the far western region of Xinjiang, where for several years he was Communist Party chief at the foreign office of state-run paramilitary organisation the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

During his time at XPCC, some of its top leaders were sanctioned by the United States and other Western nations in 2020 and 2021 over alleged human rights abuses against Uygurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in the region.

Lin was not among those sanctioned, but the list included XPCC party secretary Wang Junzheng, who is now the party chief of Tibet.

The European Union also imposed sanctions on XPCC’s public security bureau, accusing it of running detention centres and violating the

human rights of Muslim ethnic minority groups.

Lin, who is from Wuhan in Hubei, started his career in Europe. After graduating with a major in English from Beijing Foreign Studies University, he was sent by the foreign ministry to study in Denmark, according to Chinese media reports. He went on to work at the Chinese embassy in Copenhagen.

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He took up the post in Xinjiang after that, in late 2020. During his time at XPCC, Lin took part in talks seeking to boost exchanges in trade and tourism between Xinjiang and Hong Kong, according to a 2022 report on the website of the Hong Kong government's Beijing office.

Beijing's treatment of ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang has drawn mounting criticism from the West, with allegations it detained a million Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minorities in re-education camps and forced them into labour.

Those claims have been strongly denied by Beijing, which says its security measures in the region are intended to counter terrorism and extremism.

China-Hong Kong

Article 23: China hits back at criticism of Hong Kong's hardline new security law

21 March 2024, [The Guardian](#)

China has accused western governments and the United Nations of slander after they criticised Hong Kong's new national security law, which was rushed through the city's pro-Beijing parliament this week.

The law, known as Article 23, covers newly defined acts of treason, espionage, theft of state secrets, sedition and foreign interference. Critics said it was ushering in a "new era of

authoritarianism", would further erode the rights and freedoms of residents, and would scare off international business and investment.

US state department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel said on Tuesday the US believes the law has the potential to accelerate the closing of a once open society. Patel said the crimes outlined in the legislation are poorly defined and that Washington was analysing the potential risks to US citizens and American interests.

The UK, Australia, Japan, Canada and the UN also lodged concerns, while the EU said in a statement the new law had the potential to "significantly" affect the work of its office in the city, as well other organisations and companies.

But the criticisms were dismissed by Beijing's diplomats. Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in the US, said the new law was "legitimate, lawful and beyond reproach". Liu said it was aimed only at "a tiny minority of individuals that are involved in offences seriously jeopardising national security".

"Foreign institutions, enterprises and personnel's normal activities will be fully protected," he said, saying the US criticism was unfair because it too has many domestic national security laws.

At a regular ministry of foreign affairs press briefing on Wednesday, spokesperson Lin Jian said China's leadership "strongly deplore and firmly oppose individual countries and organisations' slandering and smears against the safeguarding national security bill of Hong Kong".

Lin said the law "upholds the fundamental principle of respecting and protecting human rights and protects in accordance with the law the rights and freedoms which the residents of Hong Kong enjoy".

The law was passed unanimously in Hong Kong's opposition-free parliament on Tuesday, after an unusually short 12-day legislative process and a limited public consultation period of just one month. Hong Kong's chief

executive, John Lee, had called for the law to be processed "at full speed".

Authorities said the vast majority of responses from the public were positive, and dismissed many of the negative submissions as coming from "overseas anti-China organisations" or fugitives.

Emily Lau, a veteran pro-democracy politician and former legislator, told the Guardian on Thursday she felt the low number of negative responses were likely due to "self-censorship" in the city, after a years-long crackdown on opposition. "My feeling is there are people who have other views but dare not speak out," she said.

Jeffrey Wasserstrom, a professor of Chinese history at the University of California, said the new law seemed to be the government adding "more levers" to their crackdown.

China Tightens Grip On Hong Kong, Issues New National Security Law Bill

09 March 2024, [Business World](#)

Hong Kong on Friday published its draft of a new national security law, a document some lawyers said broadened what could be considered sedition and state secrets, with tougher penalties for anyone convicted of those crimes and several others.

The draft, which includes new laws encompassing treason, espionage and external interference, is being closely watched by foreign diplomats and businesses who fear it could further dent freedoms in the financial hub, which has already been subjected to a China-led crackdown on dissent that has sent many pro-democracy politicians and activists into jail or exile.

The Legislative Council started debating the bill on Friday amid tight security and several members of the largely pro-Beijing body said they expected it to be passed into law before mid-April.

Hong Kong leader John Lee had earlier urged lawmakers to pass the bill "at full speed".

"The geopolitics have become increasingly complex, and national security risks remain imminent," a government statement said.

Some lawyers analysing the draft said that at first glance, elements of the revised sentences for some listed offences are similar to Western ones but some provisions, such as those for sedition and state secrets, are broader and potentially tougher.

The bill includes sentences of up to life imprisonment for treason, insurrection and sabotage, 20 years for espionage and 10 years for crimes linked to state secrets and sedition.

The European Union, in a statement to Reuters, said it had made clear in a diplomatic note its "grave concerns" over the far-reaching provisions in the bill on "external interference" and the law's extra-territorial reach.

A spokesperson for the US State Department said the United States is closely monitoring the development of the so-called Article 23 legislation, "and its implications for US citizens and companies operating in Hong Kong."

"We have serious concerns that if authorities rush forward with enacting proposed Article 23 legislation without adequate public consultation or incorporating checks and balances, the law will be used to continue suppressing dissent and erode the human rights and fundamental freedoms for people in Hong Kong," the official said.

The draft bill noted some rights provisions.

"Human rights are to be respected and protected, the rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, of the press and publication, the freedoms of association ... are to be protected," the bill read.

Some investors said the desire to fast-track the bill was concerning.

"The fact they are rushing through Article 23 shows concern about public opposition. The business community is going to be unhappy unless there are guardrails protecting individual rights," Andrew Collier, managing director at Hong Kong-based Orient Capital Research, told Reuters.

Simon Young, a law professor at the University of Hong Kong, also said the broad definitions of

crimes, especially those linked to foreign interference and collusion, could prove challenging to firms.

"It may well be that businesses or groups that have some connection with foreign governments might fall under the radar as an 'external force'", Young said.

China removes Hong Kong affairs veteran Zhang Xiaoming from senior role at top advisory body

02 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

Zhang Xiaoming, Beijing's former top official on Hong Kong and Macau affairs, has been removed as deputy secretary general of China's top political advisory body.

The decision was endorsed on Saturday at the close of a two-day meeting of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), state broadcaster CCTV reported.

The CCTV report was brief and did not give the reason for the removal but did refer to him as "comrade", a title reserved for Communist Party members.

He remains a member of the CPPCC and the party, a source told the South China Morning Post.

China's 'two sessions' 2024: Hong Kong delegates to raise ways to keep city unique, help mainland companies go global

02 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

Hundreds of Hong Kong politicians and tycoons are heading to Beijing on Sunday for China's biggest annual political gatherings and will meet top officials and policymakers face to face with few Covid-19 curbs in place for the first time in four years.

This year's meetings of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and National People's Congress (NPC) will see the country's elites moving around freely without masks after four years of strict Covid-19 pandemic arrangements, although everyone must still do a pre-event nasal swab test.

Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu will leave for Beijing on Monday to attend the opening meeting of the NPC, the national legislature, the following day and will also call on central ministries to enhance cooperation and exchange, according to the government.

Lee will also witness the signing of cooperation documents between the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the National Health Commission and the Health Bureau, respectively, on strengthening the training of healthcare talent and commencing projects on prevention and response against local communicable diseases. He would be joined on the trip by financial services chief Christopher Hui Ching-yu and health minister Lo Chung-mau, a government spokesman said on Saturday.

Known as the "two sessions" meetings, or *lianghui*, the gatherings come at a time when mainland China and Hong Kong are grappling with sluggish economies and need fresh moves to reinvigorate growth in the face of domestic and external challenges.

The Hong Kong delegates have prepared hundreds of proposals to raise at the meetings, many centred on ideas to attract more mainland tourists, strengthen cross-border integration, and how the city can help mainland companies go global.

Proposals on Hong Kong competitiveness

"The keyword is unique," said CPPCC Standing Committee member Henry Tang Ying-yen, who is chairman of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and a former chief secretary. "If Hong Kong became another Shanghai, Hong Kong would no longer be unique and would become a burden to the central government. We must not be a burden to the central government," he told the Post.

Tang came up with seven proposals to boost the city's competitiveness, building on its strong financial and legal systems and market, and complementing the country's pursuit of high-quality development.

To attract more visitors, he will propose raising the duty-free shopping limit for mainlanders from the current 5,000 yuan to 30,000 yuan.

He said the idea had the support of two-thirds of the 200 Hong Kong CPPCC members.

The city's largest pro-Beijing party, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, has 30 proposals for the central government, including one to "streamline the vetting process" of the stock exchange to encourage more quality mainland companies to list in the city.

The Liberal Party's Nick Chan Hiu-fung, a delegate to the NPC, said Chinese firms had been affected by historically high inflation rates in Europe due partly to soaring energy prices and some "irresponsible self-serving yet inflation-exporting monetary policies" in the West.

He wants Beijing to promote Hong Kong's professional services, especially in dispute resolution and the insurance and marine sectors, among mainland businesses.

He said mainland firms might not be aware that they did not need to rely only on "the Western club" for services related to foreign trade and going global.

"Why not think about Hong Kong's better and cheaper services?" he asked.

Delegates from the Business and Professionals Alliance will be seeking Beijing's support to promote Hong Kong as a "one-stop professional service platform" for the Belt and Road Initiative, a national development blueprint aiming to link China with the rest of Asia, Europe and Africa.

What to watch for in meetings

Political analysts said there were some things to look out for when the meetings started. The CPPCC, China's top political advisory body, has its opening session on Monday.

China is still facing multiple headwinds particularly after property investment fell by 9.6 per cent last year. This was despite last year's economic growth of 5.2 per cent meeting the target of "around 5 per cent".

The country's growth targets and government work reports to be unveiled next week will be seen as the first report card for Premier Li Qiang and other state leaders who took up their new roles a year ago.

These announcements, together with the state leaders' closed-door exchanges with Hong Kong delegates, will also provide clues to Beijing's strategies and priorities for the city in the coming year.

Lau Siu-kai, a consultant from the semi-official Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies think tank, said some key issues expected to surface during the two sessions meetings were linked to Hong Kong: the mainland's downturn in the real estate market, stagnant domestic consumption and the lack of foreign investment.

"These are not purely economic problems," he said. "They were aggravated by suppression and smears by US-led foreign powers. Beijing has to ensure Hong Kong, as an externally oriented economy, will not be susceptible to undesirable influence by foreign forces."

He said he expected that national security would continue to be a priority in the central government's consideration of Hong Kong-related policies, even though the city had been calm since Beijing imposed the national security law in 2020.

National security and Hong Kong's role

The year ahead is expected to be pivotal for the US-China relationship, and observers of the two sessions will be looking for signals from Beijing on this front.

Last year saw a series of high-level bilateral meetings, yet long-standing tensions continue to pose risks.

Washington's export controls on high-end semiconductors and chipmaking tools to China have no sign of easing.

The latest crossfire occurred on Friday, over Hong Kong's draft national security legislation, a requirement under Article 23 of the Basic Law, the city's mini-constitution.

After a US State Department spokesman declared that the proposed legislation would weaken the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong people, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning shot back that Washington's view was "completely naked political manipulation". But veteran China watcher Johnny Lau Yui-siu said he did not expect the Article 23 legislation

to be raised at any group discussions attended by Hong Kong delegates, possibly reflecting Beijing's preference that mainlanders not pay attention to the draft law.

He said he felt it was more urgent for top leaders to discuss how to make use of Hong Kong to boost foreign direct investment into the country, after reports suggested that last year's total was 82 per cent lower than in 2022 and the lowest since 1993.

"Maintaining Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre is becoming more important than ever to attract overseas investors amid the ongoing geopolitical challenges," he said.

"But this could be tougher than ever, especially if Beijing continues to emphasise national security in the city."

China urges U.S. to stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs

01 March 2024, [Xinhua](#)

China urges the United States to respect China's sovereignty and immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Friday.

In a press statement, the spokesperson of U.S. Department of State said that the United States is closely monitoring the implications of Hong Kong's national security legislation under Article 23 of the Basic Law for U.S. citizens, investments, and companies operating in Hong Kong and is concerned by the definitions of "state secrets" and "external interference" and the extraterritorial reach of Article 23, alleging that Article 23 would undermine the "one country, two systems" framework.

In response, spokesperson Mao Ning told a daily news briefing that China strongly deplores and firmly opposes the U.S. statement.

Mao noted that completing the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and plugging loopholes to safeguard national security is the constitutional responsibility of the government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and what must be done for the lasting

stability and security in HKSAR and the sound implementation of One Country, Two Systems in the long run.

The just concluded public consultation has shown that the Hong Kong society has reached strong consensus to complete the legislation, Mao added.

The legislation on Article 23 targets a handful of criminals gravely endangering the national security and protects in accordance with law the rights and freedoms which the residents of Hong Kong enjoy under the Basic Law and the provisions of relevant international covenants as applied to Hong Kong, according to the spokesperson.

"Foreign citizens, investments, and companies operating in Hong Kong will also be protected in accordance with law," Mao said.

The extraterritorial effect of Article 23 is in strict compliance with international law and the common practices of all countries and regions, Mao said, adding that "state secrets" and "external interference" are defined with full consideration given to HKSAR's realities and the common practices of all countries. "The legislation is legitimate, lawful and beyond reproach."

The past three years since the Law of the PRC on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR was formulated and came into force are a period when Hong Kong has restored order and is set to thrive again, and when the international community cast a vote of confidence in Hong Kong's prospects, Mao said, adding that after the Article 23 legislation is completed, Hong Kong's high-quality development and high-standard opening up will be better guaranteed and Hong Kong residents and international investors will benefit from it.

"The United States has issued troves of laws safeguarding its own national security but thrown dirt on and labeled the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law. This is out-and-out political manipulation and hypocritical double standards," Mao said.

Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong and Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs,

which no country is in any position to point fingers at or interfere in, she stressed.

"We urge the United States to respect China's sovereignty, observe the principles guiding international law and the basic norms governing international relations, and immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs which are China's internal affairs," Mao said.

China- Bhutan

Chinese academic warns Bhutan's India-bonhomie is inimical to Tibet-border talks

30 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The heightened level of bonhomie seen in India-Bhutan relations in recent times has prompted a Chinese academic to warn that it could have "obvious and direct" impacts on China's efforts to resolve its long-running occupied-Tibet border dispute with the Himalayan kingdom. During his visit to Bhutan last week, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi reaffirmed a partnership that "is not limited to land and water". He doubled India's Five-Year Plan assistance to Bhutan to more than \$1 billion; was hosted a private dinner by King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck at his Lingkana Palace; and became the first foreigner to be honoured with the Order of the Druk Gyalpo, or Dragon King, Bhutan's most prestigious civilian award.

Modi's Mar 22-23 trip came just a week after Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, newly elected in Jan 2024, held talks in Delhi with top Indian leaders.

Tshering Tobgay's predecessor Lotay Tshering was seen as being overly anxious to settle the Tibet-border dispute with China, which likely involves land swaps that would gravely compromise India's security concerns, although he sought to allay any such concern. Anyhow, Lotay Tshering made it clear that the border dispute could be settled soon – in the next two or so rounds of talks between the two sides – which was seen as having given rise to misgivings in New Delhi. But in light of recent

developments, Lin Minwang, deputy director of the Centre for South Asian Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, has said the impact on Chinese-Bhutan border talks could be "obvious and direct". "We have seen some momentum since 2020 and the negotiations have achieved significant progress," the *scmp.com* Mar 29 quoted Lin as saying. "The two sides are (a)waiting for an opportunity of breakthrough but now I think there could be some changes." But it has never been clear how far the border negotiations had advanced since neither Beijing nor Thimphu disclosed details. Nevertheless, the report noted that in an interview with *The Hindu* last year, then-Bhutanese prime minister Lotay Tshering – considered a China-friendly figure – had said that the two countries were "inching towards the completion" of a three-step road map on boundary delineation. A land swap involving the Bhutan-controlled Doklam area was stated to be among the proposals, although Bhutan made it clear that any such talks should necessarily involve India as an interested party. China first proposed a "package deal" in 1996 to trade Jakarlung and Pasamlung for a smaller tract of disputed area around Doklam, Sinchulumpa and Gieu, but Bhutan backed off. In 1998, the two sides instead signed an agreement to pause negotiations, pending further talks, the report noted.

Reflecting Beijing's thinking and hope, Lin has said the territorial disputes between China and Bhutan were "not that big in principle".

"The core issue is if Bhutan has made up its mind to resolve the disputes – and if it is willing to defy India."

Despite Bhutan's assurances, India is seen as being deeply wary of any land swap, which would give China a strategic advantage in the Doklam plateau. The plateau is close to the Siliguri Corridor a strip of land that is around 20km (14 miles) wide at its narrowest point that connects India's eight northeastern states as well as a part of West Bengal to the rest of the country. Such a swap could expand India's vulnerabilities to the Chinese in occupied Tibet, with the two Asian powers already at

loggerheads over their disputed Himalayan borders stretching over more than three thousand kilometres.

After comments by Lotay Tshering (prime minister from 2013 to 2018 on a possible land swap with Beijing, there were discussions in India about whether Thimphu was struggling to reach a deal without Delhi's backing; and the former prime minister had to clarify that there was no change in position by Bhutan, the report said.

In broader terms, while India's relation with China has remained soured since the 2020 violent border clashes along the Ladakh border, the latter has steadily pushed for closer ties with other South Asian nations, including Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, hosting their leaders in Beijing and financing a number of infrastructure projects in the region.

China-Taiwan

Taiwan Calls for Return of Military Officer Rescued by China

23 March 2024, [VOA](#)

Taiwan called Saturday for the swift return of one of its military officers who was rescued by Chinese authorities after losing contact during a fishing vacation.

Two men from Taiwan's outlying Kinmen island were found on March 18 by the coast guard of China's Fujian province after the engine of their boat failed.

Chinese authorities said one of the anglers, surnamed Hu, was an active member of Taiwan's military, accusing him of intentionally concealing his identity.

Taiwan's defense ministry confirmed Saturday that Hu was part of the Kinmen Garrison Brigade.

"(He) went fishing during his vacation and lost contact due to heavy fog. He contacted his family and service unit that he was rescued by the Chinese coast guard and is safe," said Kinmen's Defense Command in a statement.

It added that they were cooperating with other agencies and hoped "for the safe return of its personnel to Kinmen as soon as possible on humanitarian grounds."

Kinmen Defense Command also said it will tell soldiers "to refrain from participating in various risky activities during their vacation."

The other man in the fishing boat, surnamed Wu, was repatriated to Kinmen by Taiwan's coast guard Saturday.

According to video footage shared by Kinmen lawmaker Chen Yu-jen — who was at the dock — Wu was greeted by his tearful mother with a hug when he stepped off the boat.

Hu's mother told reporters that she hoped China would allow family members to go visit him.

"Our hearts are filled with anxiety when we can't see him in person, although my son has sent a message saying he is safe," she said.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office — a mainland body tasked with handling cross-strait relations — had told Chinese state news agency Xinhua that Hu needed to be held "to further verify and understand the situation."

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory and has said it will not rule out force to bring the island under Beijing's control.

This incident comes after an ongoing row between Taipei and Beijing over a fatal boat incident last month.

A Chinese speedboat carrying four people capsized on February 14 near Kinmen while Taiwan's coast guard was pursuing it, leaving two dead.

The coast guard had defended its actions, saying the boat was within "prohibited waters" and was zigzagging before it capsized, but Beijing has accused Taipei of "hiding the truth" about the incident.

Since then, China said it would step up patrols around Kinmen — a territory administered by Taipei but located just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the mainland city of Xiamen.

Taiwan Faces Sovereignty Dilemma in South China Sea Amid Chinese Pressure

22 March 2024, [VOA](#)

Taiwan has been grappling with debates over the last week about a potential visit to an island in the disputed South China Sea by its outgoing president.

Some lawmakers from the main opposition party Kuomintang, which advocates friendlier ties with China, have urged Tsai Ing-wen, who will leave office in May, to visit Itu Aba, in the contested Spratly Islands, and assert Taiwan's sovereignty over the island.

Taiwan took control of the 46-hectare (114-acre) islet, which Taiwan and China call Taiping Island, in 1956. China, Vietnam and the Philippines all claim sovereignty.

It hosts 200 members of Taiwan's coast guard and contains a hospital, a farm and a runway to facilitate military resupply missions. In January, Taiwan completed a dredging project that would allow larger vessels to dock at the wharf. In 2016, a Hague tribunal ruled that Itu Aba is not an "island," under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, and thus not subject to claims of sovereignty.

"Since the South China Sea arbitration downgraded Taiping Island to a reef in 2016, the Tsai administration hasn't protested against the ruling," Ma Wen-chu, a Kuomintang legislator, wrote on her official Facebook page. "Instead, her administration urged Kuomintang not to claim sovereignty over the South China Sea. President Tsai should really go to Taiping Island and declare Taiwan's sovereignty over the island," she said, adding that lawmakers from the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee are planning a trip to the island in early May.

However, Taiwan's foreign minister and top security official have advised the president not to take the trip at the moment, saying she should consider current regional tensions and international perception of the potential trip. "Many countries' aircraft and ships are interfered with by relevant countries when passing through, [so] it is necessary [for the

government] to assess whether the president's aircraft's flight safety can be maintained during the 1,600-kilometer flight," Tsai Ming-yen, director-general of Taiwan's National Security Bureau, told journalists Thursday.

Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said Wednesday that while the Taiwanese government remains committed to upholding Taipei's sovereignty over Itu Aba, it needs to consider how other countries might interpret a potential visit to the island by Tsai.

Pointing to the standoff between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, Wu said Taiwan "must consider how to use peaceful means to resolve the South China Sea issue, and not let others think we are creating difficulties."

While both of Tsai's predecessors visited Itu Aba, Tsai hasn't made similar trips in office. Taiwan has built a runway on Itu Aba to facilitate military resupply missions, but the island is lightly defended compared with nearby islands controlled by China.

The debate comes as Taiwan prepares for the inauguration of President-elect Lai Ching-te on May 20, whom Beijing views as a "separatist." It also follows the increased activities by Chinese coast guard vessels around disputed waters near Taiwan's outlying Kinmen Island in recent weeks.

Some analysts said a potential visit to Itu Aba could "inflare tensions" between Taiwan and other countries with territorial claims in the South China Sea. A trip to the island by Tsai "could be used by China to further strain [cross-strait] relations," Timothy Rich, an expert on Taiwan politics at Western Kentucky University, told VOA in a written response.

Since Itu Aba lies about 230 miles from the Philippines and is more than 900 miles from Taiwan, Rich said Taiwan's attempt to assert sovereignty over the island through a potential trip by Tsai "could strain relations" with Manila, whose administration "seems particularly open to strengthening relations with" Taipei.

In addition to allowing China to increase pressure on Taiwan, other experts told VOA that a potential trip to Itu Aba by Tsai could also

damage the diplomatic progress that Taiwan has achieved since 2016.

“A trip to Taiping Island would be counterproductive to Tsai’s New Southbound Policy and the diplomatic progress that Taipei has made with regional partners over the past 8 years,” said Ivan Kanapathy, who served on former U.S. President Donald Trump’s National Security Council as director for China, Taiwan and Mongolia, in a written response.

As China maintains an aggressive posture in the South China Sea, some Taiwanese analysts think it is in Taiwan’s interest to defend its territorial interest in the disputed water through a peaceful approach.

“Since tensions remain high between China and the Philippines and Vietnam in the South China Sea, it’ll be favorable for Taiwan if the government uses more peaceful ways to safeguard its territorial integrity,” Su Tzu-yun, a military analyst at the Taipei-based Institute for National Defense and Security Research, told VOA by phone.

Growing Chinese military activities

Amid ongoing debates about the Taiwanese president’s potential trip to Itu Aba, China has increased military activities around Taiwan over the last few days. A total of 68 Chinese military aircraft and 11 Chinese naval vessels were detected in areas near Taiwan between Wednesday and Friday, according to statistics released by Taiwan’s Defense Ministry.

Su in Taiwan said the uptick in Chinese military activities around Taiwan is a way for Beijing to express its displeasure toward U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s trip to the Philippines, during which he reiterated Washington’s “ironclad” commitment to defend Manila, and Taiwanese Vice President-elect Hsiao Bi-Khim’s recent trip to the Czech Republic.

“China is showcasing its displeasure toward Washington’s and Taipei’s recent diplomatic activities by increasing the scale of its military activities around Taiwan,” he told VOA.

With less than two months until Taiwan’s President-elect Lai takes office, Rich at Western Kentucky University said China may try to keep up the pressure on his administration by

increasing the frequency of its military activities around Taiwan.

“I assume China’s increased naval and air exercises around Taiwan still serve as means to persuade the Lai administration into what they see as a more pro-China policy, [but] the strategy is unlikely to bear fruit,” he told VOA. Amid increased Chinese military activities near Taiwan, the top U.S. military commander in the Indo-Pacific warned that China remains ready to potentially invade Taiwan by 2027.

“All indications point to the PLA [China’s People’s Liberation Army] meeting President Xi Jinping’s directive to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027,” Indo-Pacific Command chief Admiral John Aquilino told the U.S. House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday.

Kanapathy, now the senior vice president of Washington-based consultant Beacon Global Strategies, said that since China’s Xi has told his military to be ready for a potential Taiwan invasion in 2027, the world “should take him at his word.”

“Beijing is investing heavily to buy down its perceived risks for an invasion operation, including by expanding lift capacity and nuclear capabilities,” he told VOA.

Taiwan warns of 'enormous' Chinese bases near its S.China Sea holding

20 March 2024, [Reuters](#)

TAIPEI, March 20 (Reuters) - Taiwan's foreign minister said on Wednesday that China has built "enormous" military bases on three islands surrounding Taiwan's main holding in the South China Sea, but Taipei is not looking to further escalate tensions in the strategic waterway.

Both Taiwan and China claim most of the South China Sea as their own territory, but Taiwan only controls one islet in the contested Spratly Islands deep in the southern part of the sea called Itu Aba, which Taiwan refers to as Taiping.

Some lawmakers from both the ruling and main opposition parties have called on

President Tsai Ing-wen to visit Itu Aba before she steps down in May to assert Taiwan's sovereignty and view a newly renovated harbour that can take larger ships.

Both her predecessors visited the island but she has yet to do so while in office.

Asked by reporters about calls for Tsai to go to Itu Aba, Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said there was no doubt the island belonged to Taiwan and the government would defend their sovereignty over it.

China and the Philippines have been involved in a dangerous stand-off in the South China Sea of late, but the situation around Itu Aba is also tense, Wu said.

"China has already created very enormous South China Sea military bases on the three islands surrounding Taiping - Subi Reef, Fiery Cross Reef and Mischief Reef - and these are all quite close to our Taiping," Wu said.

"As the dispute continues to intensify, we in Taiwan must consider how to use peaceful means to resolve the South China Sea issue, and not let others think we are creating difficulties."

If there is an opportunity, Taiwan will use the "best way" to demonstrate its sovereignty over Itu Aba, he added without elaborating.

Itu Aba has a runway long enough to take military re-supply flights from Taiwan, but is lightly defended compared to the nearby Chinese-controlled islands. Chinese forces generally leave Itu Aba alone.

China has carried out extensive land reclamation on its South China Sea islands, building major air force and other military facilities, causing major concern in Washington and around the region.

China says it has every right to build on and defend what it considers its territory.

Taiwan also controls the Pratas Islands in the northern part of the South China Sea, and both China's air force and navy regularly operate nearby to assert Beijing's territorial claims over Taiwan, which the government in Taipei rejects.

Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei claim other parts of the South China Sea in dispute with both China and Taiwan.

Unification of Taiwan not priority for many Chinese, one-third disapprove of war: Report

17 March 2024, [The Print](#)

Beijing [China], March 17 (ANI): The 'unification' of Taiwan with mainland China is not the main priority for many Chinese people, and around one-third consider launching a full-scale war on the self-ruled island "unacceptable," Al Jazeera reported.

But, even though the people's focus remains underpinned on the economy and other crucial fronts, the Taiwan issue will remain the 'cornerstone' of the Chinese Communist Party's narrative.

The communists won the Chinese Civil War in 1949, and the nationalists of the Kuomintang (KMT) fled Beijing for the island of Taiwan. It was on Kinmen, the main island of the archipelago of the same name, less than 10 km (6.2 miles) from the coast of China, that the nationalists repulsed repeated communist invasion attempts, but not before the fighting had wreaked havoc on both Xiamen and Kinmen, Al Jazeera reported.

Kinmen and its outlying islets – some of which lie even closer to the Chinese coast – have been a part of Taiwan's territory ever since.

Chinese citizens were once able to get tourist visas to visit the islands, but that ended with the pandemic.

"It is difficult to imagine that this used to be a warzone," 23-year-old Shao Hongtian said. "Kinmen, China and Taiwan are all part of the same nation, so it should be possible to visit, and I hope I can visit one day."

Like Shao, Chinese President Xi Jinping and the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) too claim that Taiwan and its territory are part of China.

Xi said in his New Year's address that China's unification with democratic Taiwan was an "historical inevitability," and China has not ruled out the use of force to achieve

unification. Last year Xi called on China's armed forces to strengthen their combat readiness.

In recent years, the Chinese military has increased its pressure on Taiwan with almost daily airborne and maritime incursions close to Taiwan's air and seaspace. This further intensified after the visit of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taipei.

At times, the Chinese manoeuvres have been accompanied by sabre-rattling rhetoric and large-scale military drills.

Lately, tensions have also been rising near Kinmen.

Last month, two Chinese fishermen were killed when their speedboat capsized as they attempted to flee the Taiwanese coastguard when they were discovered fishing "within prohibited waters" about one nautical mile (1.8km) from the Kinmen archipelago, Al Jazeera reported.

Since then, the Chinese coastguard has stepped up its activities around Kinmen.

Zhu Fenglian, a spokesperson for the Chinese government's Taiwan Affairs Office, called the February incident "vicious" and stressed the waters were "traditional" fishing grounds for fishermen in China and Taiwan. There were no off-limits waters around Kinmen, she added.

A second capsizing was reported on Thursday, and on this occasion, China asked for help from the Taiwan coastguard.

But, despite the recent tensions, Chinese citizen Shao says hostilities are not the way to bring China and Taiwan together.

"I want unification to happen peacefully," he said. He said that if that is not possible, it would be better to keep things as they are.

He knows that many of his friends feel the same way. According to Shao, if they go to Kinmen and Taiwan, it should be as visitors, not as fighters.

"The Taiwanese haven't done anything bad to us, so why should we go there to fight them?" he said, convinced that any war between China and Taiwan would result in significant casualties on both sides. "Unification with Taiwan is not worth a war."

According to Al Jazeera, a study published by the University of California San Diego's 21st Century China Center last year suggests that Shao and his friends are not alone in opposing a war over Taiwan.

The study explored Chinese public support for different policy steps regarding unification with Taiwan and it was found that one-third of Chinese respondents termed launching a full-scale war to achieve unification as "unacceptable."

Only one per cent rejected all other options but war, challenging the Chinese government's assertion that the Chinese people were willing to "go to any length and pay any price" to achieve unification, Al Jazeera reported.

Mia Wei, a 26-year-old marketing specialist from Shanghai is not surprised by such results. "Ordinary Chinese people are not pushing the government to get unification," she said. "It is the government that pushes people to believe that there must be unification."

At the same time, support for a unification war turned out to be close to the same level found in similar studies from earlier years, indicating that despite the growing tension in the Taiwan Strait and renewed talk about taking control of Taiwan, there has not been a corresponding increase in support for more forceful measures.

Wei believes that Chinese like herself are more concerned with developments inside their country, amid issues like property crisis and economic concerns.

"First there was Covid, then the economy got bad and then the housing market got even worse," she said. "I think Chinese people have their minds on more important things than unification with Taiwan."

However, regardless of what Chinese people might think, Eric Chan, a senior fellow at the Global Taiwan Institute in Washington, DC believed that unifying Taiwan with the mainland will remain a 'cornerstone' of the CCP's narrative.

"Unification is not a topic that is up for any sort of debate with the general public," he said.

Although the Chinese leadership often claims that China is a democratic country where the party is guided by the will of the Chinese people, there are no regular national elections or free media, and online discourse is restricted and regularly censored. Speaking out against the CCP can also result in criminal convictions. Since Xi became president in 2012, crackdowns on civil liberties have intensified, and Xi has centralised power around himself to a degree unprecedented since the rule of Mao Zedong – the man who led the communists to victory against the nationalists and became communist China’s first leader, Al Jazeera reported.

During Mao’s rule, reforms and purges of Chinese society led to the deaths of millions of Chinese people, while over 4,00,000 Chinese soldiers died as a result of his decision to enter the 1950-1953 Korean War on North Korea’s side.

But according to Chan, the days when a Chinese leader could expend tens of thousands of lives in such a manner are over. Recent government actions that exacted a heavy toll on citizens led to public pushback, and Xi did not appear immune.

During the Covid pandemic, Xi ardently defended the country’s zero-COVID policy even though its mass testing and strict lockdowns had dire socioeconomic consequences. The government eventually abandoned the policy as the economy sank, and people took to the streets across China’s major cities demanding an end to the lockdowns, even calling for Xi to step down, Al Jazeera reported.

As for war, the circumstances are also different. A battle for Taiwan would be existential for the communist party and Xi, according to Chan.

According to Chan, the public outrage over a long unification war that might even end in a Chinese defeat could ‘endanger’ the party’s rule. So, he expects the CCP instead continuing to engage in low-cost grey zone operations against Taiwan while developing a Chinese military that would be able to score a swift victory.

For citizens like Shao, however, any attempt to settle the issue through conflict would be a disaster.

“I don’t think it will end well for anyone – not for those that have to fight it and not for the government that starts it,” he said. (ANI)

CCP is increasing cross-strait ‘gray area’: report

10 March 2024, [Taipei Times](#)

The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) unpredictability is increasing and the “gray area” in its cross-strait policy is being reduced as its National People’s Congress (NPC) and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference’s (CPPCC) National Committee meetings consolidate Chinese President Xi Jinping’s (習近平) authority and the party’s control over the state, a report by Taiwan’s National Security Bureau (NSB) said.

The report, which has been sent to the Legislative Yuan ahead of NSB Director-General Tsai Ming-yen’s (蔡明彥) presentation to the legislature’s Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee tomorrow, said that Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s (李強) report at the opening of China’s NPC earlier this week showed that the State Council, which coordinates China’s government ministries, is to play the role of enforcing party orders and upholding Xi’s authority.

The Organic Law of the State Council was also amended to grant the party a further legal basis for it “to lead the state,” the NSB report said, adding that China had also scrapped the premier’s press conference this year that is usually held at the end of each NPC.

The report cited critics as saying that these moves would inevitably strengthen Xi’s hold over the party and make Chinese politics even more closed off.

Despite facing inflation and the bursting of a housing bubble, China is determined to pump more money into its military spending and is working ever more closely with Russia to increase geopolitical risk in the Indo-Pacific region, the report said.

With the US elections set for November, China is stepping up efforts to reinforce its “one China” principle and change the “status quo” by stepping up military, diplomatic, economic and legal pressure against Taiwan, it added.

China is also trying to invite various Taiwanese groups to visit China with a aim to influence them with “united front” rhetoric, the report said.

On the US presidential election, Tsai said in the report that incumbent Joe Biden and his front-running opponent, Donald Trump, see China as a challenger to the US.

Regardless of who wins the election, the US strategy to continue to support Taiwan and contain China would not significantly change, the report added.

“Neither India nor Taiwan is part of the PRC and we’re not its puppets” Taiwanese FM

07 March 2024, [Phayul](#)

The Chinese embassy in India has issued a statement condemning an Indian media channel’s interview with Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. The embassy alleges that the interview provided a platform to advocate “Taiwan independence,” on March 2.

The statement from the Chinese embassy read: “On 29th February 2024, certain Indian TV broadcasted an interview with the head of Taiwan’s foreign affairs office Joseph Wu, which provided a platform for him to advocate ‘Taiwan independence’ and disseminate false information. It seriously violated the one-China principle, and is totally unacceptable.”

In response to the Chinese embassy’s statement, Taiwan’s foreign ministry posted on X, “Neither India nor Taiwan is part of the PRC [People’s Republic of China] and we’re not its puppets. We’re both democracies with free and vibrant presses that can’t be dictated to.” Taipei asked Beijing to worry about its “economic slump, not bully its neighbours”.

India was among the first nations in the world to accept the “one China policy” in 1949 and used it in joint statements, but New Delhi stopped doing so around 2010 in response to

Beijing’s insistence on issuing stapled visas to residents of Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh.

Over the years, India has also deepened its engagement with Taiwan through trade, including negotiations for a free trade agreement, and culture without having diplomatic relations. India has a trade and cultural office in Taipei with a reciprocal set-up in New Delhi, which also provides consular services.

China drops 'peaceful reunification' reference to Taiwan

05 March 2024, [Reuters](#)

China will boost its defence spending by 7.2% this year, fuelling a military budget that has more than doubled under President Xi Jinping's 11 years in office as Beijing hardens its stance on Taiwan, according to official reports on Tuesday.

The increase mirrors the rate presented in last year's budget and again comes in well above the government's economic growth forecast for this year.

China also officially adopted tougher language against Taiwan as it released the budget figures, dropping the mention of "peaceful reunification" in a government report delivered by Premier Li Qiang at the opening of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's rubber-stamp parliament, on Tuesday.

Tensions have risen sharply in recent years over Taiwan, the democratically ruled island that China claims as its own, and elsewhere across East Asia as regional military deployments rise. Li Mingjiang, a defence scholar at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, said that despite China's struggling economy, Taiwan is a major consideration in Beijing's defence spending.

"China is showing that in the coming decade it wants to grow its military to the point where it is prepared to win a war if it has no choice but to fight one," Li said.

Since Xi became president and commander-in-chief more than a decade ago, the defence budget has ballooned to 1.67 trillion yuan (\$230 billion) this year from 720 billion yuan in 2013.

The percentage rise in military spending has consistently outpaced the annual domestic economic growth target during his time in office. This year the growth target for 2024 is about 5%, similar to last year's goal, according to the government report.

The defence budget is closely watched by China's neighbours and the United States, who are wary of Beijing's strategic intentions and the development of its armed forces.

Based on data from the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), this year's budget marks the 30th consecutive year of Chinese defence spending increases.

Japanese government spokesperson Yoshimasa Hayashi on Tuesday urged greater openness from Beijing, warning of serious international concerns.

China's continuous military spending increases without sufficient transparency were "the greatest strategic challenge ever to ensure the peace and stability of Japan and the international community and strengthen international order", Hayashi said in Tokyo.

South Korea's defence ministry declined to comment. Australia's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

James Char, a security scholar at the RSIS, said that despite the defence budget's outpacing GDP growth, it had remained at about 1.3% of overall gross domestic product in the last decade and had put no stress on the national coffers.

"Of course, the country's longer-term economic fortunes will determine whether this can be sustained going forward," Char said.

The purchase of new equipment is likely to take up the largest single chunk of the budget as the military works to meet Xi's goal of full modernisation by 2035, the IISS said in research published last month.

That push continues across several fronts, with China producing weapons ranging from warships and submarines to drones and advanced missiles that can be equipped with both nuclear and conventional warheads.

Char said tighter management would also be a priority for military leadership after high-profile personnel purges related to weapons procurement.

The Central Military Commission, China's top military body, last July ordered a "clean up" of the procurement process and invited the public to report irregularities.

The commission has not announced the results of its investigation, but at least nine generals, including four directly in charge of procurement, have been stripped of their title as parliamentarians, a necessary procedure before they can be charged in court.

Two former defence ministers, Li Shangfu and Wei Fenghe, have also gone missing without explanation, which in China often means they are under investigation.

Li had been in charge of military procurement from 2017 to 2022. When asked whether Li would attend the parliament sessions, parliament spokesman Lou Qinjian told Singapore paper Lianhe Zaobao on Monday that Li "cannot attend because he is no longer a delegate".

In the government work report, China reiterated a call for "reunification" with Taiwan, but added emphasis that it wants to "be firm" in doing so and dropped the descriptor "peaceful", which had been used in previous reports.

Although it is not the first time that China had omitted the word "peaceful", the change in language is closely watched as a possible sign of more assertive stance towards Taiwan.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council on Tuesday urged China to accept the fact that the two sides are not subordinate to each other, and urged China to create health cross-strait exchanges.

The island's defence minister had said on Tuesday Taiwan's armed forces would increase the number of missile drills they hold this year.

Wen-Ti Sung, a political scientist and fellow at the Atlantic Council, said that the language on Taiwan has "moderately hardened".

"Beijing appears to be balancing between projecting increased toughness on Taiwan with stabilising relations with Taiwan's international friends," he said.

After the Democratic Progressive Party's Lai Ching-te won the presidential election in Taiwan, the Chinese Communist Party's fourth-ranked leader, Wang Huning, said at a high-level Taiwan policy meeting last month that China would "resolutely combat" any efforts towards Taiwan independence this year.

Previous statements from the annual meeting only vowed to "resolutely oppose" Taiwan independence.

(\$1 = 7.1987 Chinese yuan renminbi)

Taiwan faces steady 'drip' of pressure as China tightens pre-inauguration squeeze

01 March 2024, [Reuters](#)

TAIPEI, March 1 (Reuters) - Taiwan is facing a steady "drip, drip" of Chinese pressure ahead of the inauguration of its next president in May, with officials in Taipei fearing Beijing could further squeeze the island's room to manoeuvre without resorting to direct conflict. Since current Vice President Lai Ching-te won the presidency in January - China views Lai as a separatist - Beijing has snatched away a diplomatic ally, altered an air route in the narrow Taiwan Strait, and begun regular coast guard patrols around the Taiwan-controlled Kinmen islands, which hug the Chinese coast. China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, over the island's strong rejections.

Visiting Taipei last week, U.S. Representative Mike Gallagher, chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives select committee on China, said Beijing's patrols around Kinmen, which is a short ferry ride from the Chinese cities of Xiamen and Quanzhou, were part of a pattern of steady pressure on Taiwan.

It is a salami-slicing effort; they are slowly turning up the rheostat," he said, referring to a resistor used to control an electric current.

One foreign official tracking security matters in the region described what was happening as a "drip, drip" of pressure, keeping up the message that Beijing does not like Lai, but without holding war games - as it has twice around the island in the past year and a half - or forcing direct military confrontation.

"It's part of the pattern of gradually altering the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, seeing what they can get away with and shifting to a new normal, restricting Taiwan's space to move," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

China says the coast guard patrols are to ensure the safety of its fishermen. Two Chinese fishermen died last month trying to flee Taiwan's coast guard after approaching too close to one of Kinmen's heavily fortified islets. Asked on Wednesday whether the Kinmen tensions were part of China's pre-inauguration pressure on Lai, a spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not answer directly, reiterating China's right to the coast guard patrols.

"Both sides of the Taiwan Strait are part of one China, and Taiwan is a part of China," Zhu Fenglian said.

China says it alone has sovereignty over the Taiwan Strait, and that it also recognises no "off limits" waters for its fisherman around Kinmen. Taiwan strongly rejects China's territorial claims.

Li Zhenguang, a Taiwan expert at Beijing Union University, told China's official Xinhua news agency this week that it was up to China to "firmly grasp the initiative" when it came to dealing with Taiwan, and that asserting jurisdiction around Kinmen was a necessary step on the road to "reunification".

'GREY ZONE'

Taiwan has complained for four years of stepped-up Chinese military action, such as fighters regularly flying over the strait as part of a "grey zone" strategy to wear down Taiwan

with activities that stop short of a full-blown conflict.

A senior Taiwan official familiar with the island's security planning said that Beijing is exerting pressure "day in and day out" ahead of Lai's inauguration speech on May 20, and that the Kinmen situation was another "grey zone" tactic.

"We will not go along with their political plots and escalate tensions," said the official, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Taiwan's Ocean Affairs Council Minister Kuan Bi-ling, whose department runs the coast guard, this week drew a parallel to what was happening around Kinmen and China's regular sovereignty-asserting patrols around islets in the East China Sea that Beijing, Tokyo and Taipei all claim as theirs.

"It is China trying to take the Diaoyutai method and apply it to the Kinmen-Xiamen waters, which we really, really cannot accept," she said, using Taiwan's name for the islets China calls the Diaoyu and Japan the Senkaku.

Tensions around Kinmen, however, appear unlikely to ease anytime soon, as government representatives from both Taiwan and China this week continued negotiations on how to settle the incident. Families of the dead have asked for compensation and an apology from Taiwan authorities.

A senior Taiwan official dealing with the incident in Kinmen said Taiwan will not apologise, as doing so would make future Taiwan law enforcement there difficult.

Taiwan's armed forces have left the handling of the dispute so far to the coast guard, whose Kinmen fleet of 16 boats patrols there rather than the navy, signalling they don't want an escalation.

Asked on Tuesday what the response would be if China's coast guard "overdid it", Taiwan Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng said they don't want conflict.

"Avoiding war is not to shirk it. We have rules for combat preparation, but we don't want it to happen," he said.

China-US Relations

EXCLUSIVENow Chinese migrants are sneaking onto Guam: Top Republican warns Communist Party wants to 'exploit' every part of the U.S. map and warns critical American base is vulnerable

30 March 2024, [Daily Mail](#)

There are rising concerns that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is infiltrating the United States' sensitive military site in Guam where over 20,000 troops are stationed.

A growing number of Chinese nationals have been sneaking in from the Northern Mariana Islands into Guam, which makes the U.S. territory susceptible to CCP influence.

Guam is the location of the Navy's only submarine base in the western Pacific. It also hosts a 'strategically important' air base with bombers and fighter jets.

The island's homeland security agency has reported 118 'unlawful or attempted unlawful entries by Chinese citizens' since 2022.

The number peaked at 85 in 2022 followed by 27 in 2023 and six so far in 2024, according to Stars and Stripes.

'Count on the Chinese Communist Party to exploit every potential vulnerability on the map. What the CCP is doing in Guam is almost certainly no exception,' House Homeland Security Chairman Mark Green, R-Tenn., told DailyMail.com.

'The United States maintains a significant military presence on the island, a vital outpost for helping America defend our strategic interests in the region.'

He added that the 'surging numbers of Chinese nationals coming into Guam' should be a 'major cause for concern, in part because we simply do not know for what purpose these individuals are coming.'

Green blames the Biden administration for allowing the CPP to 'sense weakness' and then 'take advantage' of the situation.

'It's not just rising numbers of Chinese nationals illegally crossing our Southwest

border that demands attention—what's happening in Guam does, as well.'

Chinese migrants using the border to gain entry are the fastest growing group being smuggled in from Mexico.

Last year, Green told DailyMail.com that there had been over 17,800 Chinese nationals released into the U.S. from January through September after they came across the southern border.

In addition to the illegal migrants streaming onto the island, DailyMail.com previously reported on the 'loophole' that allows Chinese nationals to spy on U.S. military installations in Guam.

In 2019, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enacted a policy to allow Chinese nationals to visit the Northern Mariana Islands for 14 days without a visa.

From there, many have been reported to charter boats to Guam in order to get information on sensitive U.S. military sites.

Guam Customs and Quarantine spokeswoman Alana Chargualaf-Afaisen told Newsweek that the agency stops 'unlawful arrivals' to the territory.

The migrants often 'prevent harm in a variety of areas, including military intelligence and reconnaissance, terrorism, communicable diseases, human trafficking for slave labor, prostitution and illegal gambling, cheap, undocumented labor, the movement of illicit drugs, and other illegal activities that pose a threat to the quality of life in Guam, are of equal concern to our island,' said the statement to Newsweek.

The ongoing visa loophole is of major concern to top leaders in the Senate as well.

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, previously told DailyMail.com that the visa loophole allows spies to take a 'hard look' at what that U.S. is doing militarily in Guam and then 'use that against us.'

'We're trying to close those loopholes. I just think it's very, very important that we do this,' said Ernst, who sits on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Ernst and Rep. Rep. Neal Dunn, R-Fla., wrote a letter to Department of Homeland Security Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas slamming the policy, which the administration has said provides a significant economic boost for the small island.

China slams the U.S. for interfering in Arunachal Pradesh border dispute with India

21 March 2024, [CNBC](#)

China slammed the United States for interfering in its border dispute with India, after Washington said it recognized the disputed Arunachal Pradesh as a part of Indian territory.

"China strongly deplores and firmly opposes this," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said Thursday at a press conference in Beijing. "The China-India boundary question is a matter between the two countries and has nothing to do with the US side."

The response comes after the U.S. on Wednesday rejected China's "unilateral attempts" to advance its territorial claims, weighing in on a spat between New Delhi and Beijing after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a tunnel in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

It is the latest in an escalating dispute between neighboring India and China, which share a 3,500 kilometer border.

China, which refers to the territory as Zangnan, claims Arunachal Pradesh is part of southern Tibet. India rejects those claims, stating Arunachal Pradesh has always been a part of India.

On Wednesday, the U.S. State Department weighed in on the matter.

"The United States recognizes Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory and we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments, military or civilian, across the Line of Actual Control," spokesperson Vedant Patel said.

The LAC is a demarcation that separates India-controlled territory from that controlled by China.

China on Thursday reiterated its claims over Arunachal Pradesh, saying: "Zangnan has always been China's territory, a basic fact that is undeniable."

"It is known to all that the US has consistently spared no efforts to provoke and take advantage of other countries' conflicts to serve its selfish geopolitical interests," Lin added.

U.S. support for India in the border dispute is a "reflection of consistent U.S. efforts to fully align itself with India in its competition with China," Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center told CNBC.

Kugelman pointed out that the U.S. typically refrains from commenting on some Indian border disputes, such as the one with Pakistan over Kashmir.

But in this case, he said, Washington is signaling its solidarity with New Delhi — "in the same way that it has made efforts, including through intelligence-sharing, to help India deter Chinese aggressions on its northern border."

India-China border tensions heat up

Earlier this month, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the "Sela Tunnel" — the world's longest bi-lane tunnel built at an altitude above 13,000 feet, which is located in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, triggering sharp responses from Chinese officials.

Border tensions between India and China have risen in recent years. In a major escalation in 2020, a clash between the two sides killed 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops. Last year, China renamed 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh, a move strongly opposed by India.

Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang, deputy director general of the Information Office of China's Ministry of National Defense said in a statement days after the road tunnel inauguration that "China never recognizes and firmly opposes India's illegal establishment of the so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh.'"

Last week, China's defense ministry reiterated its claim over the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.

India's foreign ministry this week responded to Zhang's comments, saying Arunachal Pradesh "was, is and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India."

Randhir Jaiswal, India's foreign ministry spokesperson said in an official statement that the Chinese Defense Ministry made "absurd claims" over the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh and "repeating baseless arguments in this regard does not lend such claims any validity."

On the U.S. standing up for India, Harsh V. Pant, vice president for studies and foreign policy at Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi-based think tank, said: "It shows how far India-U.S. relations have come."

"Even when it comes to the matter, which has been very sensitive, such as the India China border dispute, the U.S. today is openly standing with India," he told CNBC.

'Renewed US-India ties amid China rise', says President Joe Biden in his final State of the Union Address

09 March 2024, [Times of India](#)

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden delivered a defiant argument for a second term in his State of the Union speech Thursday night, lacing into GOP front-runner Donald Trump for espousing "resentment, revenge and retribution" and for jeopardising freedom at home and abroad. Revelling in the political moment, Biden fired multiple broadsides at "my predecessor" without ever mentioning Trump by name - 13 times in all - raising his voice repeatedly as he worked to quell voter concerns about his age and job performance while sharpening the contrast with his all-but-certain Nov rival.

The scrappy tone from Biden was a sharp break from his often humdrum daily appearances and was intended to banish doubts about whether the 81-year-old president, the country's oldest ever, is still up to the job. For 68 minutes in the House chamber, Biden

goaded Republicans over their policies on immigration, taxes and more, invited call-and-response banter with fellow Democrats and seemed to relish the fight. "I know I may not look like it, but I've been around a while," Biden deadpanned. "And when you get to my age certain things become clearer than ever before."

Noting he was born during WWII and came of political age during the upheaval of the 1960s, Biden declared: "My lifetime has taught me to embrace freedom and democracy. A future based on the core values that have defined America: honesty, decency, dignity, equality. To respect everyone. To give everyone a fair shot. To give hate no safe harbour. Now some other people my age see a different story: an American story of resentment, revenge, and retribution. That's not me."

The president linked Trump's praise for those who overran the Capitol in an attempt to subvert the 2020 election with antidemocratic threats abroad. "Freedom and democracy are under attack both at home and overseas at the very same time," Biden said as he appealed for Congress to support Ukraine's efforts to defend itself against Russia. "History is watching." Biden directly referenced the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol, calling out those who have played it down. "My predecessor - and some of you here - seek to bury the truth about Jan 6 - I will not do that," Biden said. "This is a moment to speak the truth and to bury the lies. Here's a simple truth. You can't love your country only when you win."

Taking a victory lap in selling his legislative accomplishments, including funding to bolster manufacturing of computer chips nationwide, Biden veered from his prepared script to take a dig at Republicans who voted against such policies but nonetheless take credit for them back home. "If any of you don't want that money in your districts," Biden said, "just let me know."

Biden also engaged in a loud call and response with lawmakers as he rhetorically questioned whether the tax code was fair and whether

billionaires and corporations need "another \$2 trillion in tax breaks," as he charged Republicans want. Biden also highlighted his efforts to fight "shrinkflation" and so-called "junk fees" on services. Neither is a prime driver of inflation, but the White House hoped to show consumers that Biden is fighting for them.

US has a wrong perception of China, says foreign minister

07 March 2024, [Reuters](#)

The U.S. is clinging to wrong perceptions of China and has yet to fulfill its "promises" despite some progress since presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping met last November, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Thursday.

Speaking at a news conference on the sidelines of an annual parliament meeting in Beijing, Wang said exchanges between both countries can only continue if both sides respect and recognize their differences.

"It has to be pointed out that the U.S. side's erroneous perception of China continues, and the promises it has made have not really been fulfilled," Wang said at the National People's Congress.

"The methods of suppressing China are constantly being renewed, and the list of unilateral sanctions is constantly being extended," he said.

The "crimes" the U.S. wanted to add to the list China had supposedly committed "have reached an unbelievable level," Wang said.

Still, Biden had made it clear the U.S. would not seek a new Cold War nor seek to change the Chinese system or back Taiwan's independence, Wang said.

In an annual and wide-ranging discussion, Wang struck a relatively measured tone as he also covered relations with Russia and the Ukraine conflict, Europe, China's stuttering economy and artificial intelligence.

Wang said China would submit a draft resolution on AI to the United Nations General

Assembly, reflecting the need for both development and security.

"AI should always be under the control of human beings," he said.

Tensions between the two superpowers have slightly eased since Biden and Xi staged their landmark summit in San Francisco last November, but they remain in an uneasy detente ahead of the U.S. election this year which could see Republican China hawk Donald Trump return to the White House.

Washington has repeatedly stated its desire to put a floor under the relationship after it spiralled to its worst in decades last year over issues including Taiwan, tech competition, trade and an alleged Chinese spy balloon shot down by the U.S. off its east coast.

China alleges the U.S. is trying to contain and suppress its high-tech development and industrial policy, while both militaries eye each other closely amid increased deployments across East Asia.

"So we urge the U.S. to understand the historical development trend, objectively and rationally look at China's development (and) actively and pragmatically carry out interactions with China."

Beijing also faces ongoing geopolitical confrontations on multiple fronts, including with Europe on trade and the Ukraine war, Japan across a variety of issues, as well as the Philippines over the South China Sea, a regional hotbed of competing territorial claims.

Wang said China is willing to work with Russia to foster new drivers of cooperation and consolidate friendship.

China and Russia had declared a "no limits" partnership in February 2022 when Putin visited Beijing just days before he sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine, triggering the deadliest land war in Europe since World War Two.

Wang also announced an expansion of its visa-free travel scheme, saying that China will offer visa-free travel to nationals from Switzerland, Ireland, Hungary, Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg from March 14.

China currently has a mutual visa waiver agreement with 22 countries, including most recently Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

China has also unilaterally allowed visa-free entry for citizens from nations such as Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy for 15 days. Those five European nations have yet to reciprocate with a similar arrangement for Chinese citizens.

China Hopes For Better Relations Regardless Of US Election Outcome

04 March 2024, [NDTV World](#)

"No matter who becomes the president, we hope that the United States can work in the same direction with China" Lou said.

China said Monday it hopes relations with the United States can improve whoever wins the presidential election in November.

Beijing and Washington have clashed in recent years on flashpoint issues from technology and trade to human rights, as well as over Taiwan and competing claims in the South China Sea. Americans go to the polls this November in an election that will likely pit former leader Donald Trump against the sitting President Joe Biden for the keys to the White House.

"You mentioned the US presidential election, it is an internal affair of the United States," parliament spokesman Lou Qinjian told a press conference in response to a question about the vote.

"No matter who becomes the president, we hope that the United States can work in the same direction with China and work for a stable, healthy and sustainable China-US relationship," Lou said.

"To stabilise and improve China-US relations is something that everyone follows closely and expects to see, he said, adding: "China's position has been consistent.

Sino-Indian Relations

China gives its own name to 30 more places in Arunachal Pradesh in cartographic extension of its Tibet rule

31 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In yet another provocative move, asserting cartographic sovereignty over the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh on the basis of its occupation rule over Tibet, China has on Mar 30 declared its own names for 30 more places in the territory it calls Zangnan (or southern part of Tibet).

The Ministry of Civil Affairs released the fourth list of standardized geographical names in Zangnan, reported China's official *globaltimes.cn* Mar 30, citing the ministry's official website. It said the announcement was for "30 additional publicly used place names in the Zangnan region".

The report did not list those names. However, according to the *scmp.com* Mar 31, the latest renaming covered 11 residential areas, 12 mountains, four rivers, one lake, one mountain pass and a piece of land, all given in Chinese characters, Tibetan and pinyin, the Roman alphabet version of Mandarin Chinese.

It noted that the ministry had last standardized the names of 11 places in Zangnan, using Chinese characters, Tibetan and pinyin, in Apr 2023. That was the third list since 2017 when six placenames were announced, which was followed by the second list with 15 placenames in 2021.

The latest list followed the ministry's publication on Mar 15 of implementation measures on Mar 15 for the management of geographical names, which detailed the requirements for the translation of place names in ethnic minority or foreign languages into Chinese characters.

The measures, which will take effect from May 1, 2024, stipulate in Article 13 that "place names in foreign languages that may harm China's territorial claims and sovereignty rights

shall not be directly quoted or translated without authorization."

And it was made clear that translation of placenames in foreign languages or minority languages should comply with standards formulated by related organs of the State Council, China's cabinet or council of ministers. Standard translations are made public through notices, the national database for geographical names and official publications on geographical names, according to the implementation measures.

This meant that "Tibet" should be referred to as "Xizang", "Arunachal Pradesh" as Zangnan", "Mt Everest" as "Qomolangma", and so forth.

The report also noted that the State Council had issued a revised regulation on placenames in Apr 2022, applicable to naming, renaming, usage, cultural protection and other management on geographical names within Chinese territories.

China continues to harp on its claim over Arunachal Pradesh

26 March 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

China on Monday continued to claim that Arunachal Pradesh has "always been" its territory, notwithstanding India dismissing Beijing's claim as "absurd" and "ludicrous". On Monday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian reiterated China's claim reacting to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's assertions on Saturday, dismissing China's repeated claims on Arunachal Pradesh as "ludicrous" and that the frontier state was a "natural part of India".

"This is not a new issue. I mean China has laid claim, it has expanded its claim. The claims are ludicrous to begin with and remain ludicrous today," Jaishankar said in response to a question on the Arunachal issue after delivering a lecture at the prestigious Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

"So, I think we've been very clear, very consistent on this. And I think you know that is

something which will be part of the boundary discussions which are taking place," he said. Lin, replying to a question from the official media seeking his reactions to Jaishankar's comments, said the border between India and China has never been settled.

"The China-India boundary has never been delimited and is divided into the eastern sector, the middle sector, the western sector, and the Sikkim section", he said. "Zangnan (the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh) in the eastern sector has always been China's territory," he said. China had all along exercised effective administrative jurisdiction over the area "until India's illegal occupation", which he claimed is a "basic fact that cannot be denied".

"In 1987, India formed the so-called "Arunachal Pradesh" on China's territory under India's illegal occupation. China issued a statement right then to firmly oppose it and stress that India's move was illegal and null and void. China's position remains unchanged," Lin said.

This is the fourth time this month China spoke about its claim over Arunachal Pradesh. Beijing said it has lodged a diplomatic protest with India over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh on March 9 reiterating its claim over the area. China, which claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, routinely objects to the Indian leaders' visits to the state to highlight its claims. Beijing has also named the area as Zangnan. China's defence minister has also claimed that Arunachal Pradesh was part of Chinese territory, a claim dismissed by the Ministry of External Affairs last week.

China's State Media Reacts After India Predicts Prolonged Border Tensions

20 March 2024, [News Week](#)

Chinese state media sharply reacted to comments by India's Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, who has called China a challenge for the "foreseeable future."

"India has an excessive suspicion and paranoia toward China's rise. Seeing China as the 'most formidable' challenge makes no sense and has no chance of success for India. India does not need to 'fear' the so-called 'China challenge' China and India can and should be partners, avoiding becoming opponents, and certainly not enemies," Chinese state media outlet Global Times said on X, formerly Twitter, on Tuesday.

China and India now consider each other geopolitical rivals, as Washington has backed New Delhi as a bulwark against Beijing in the Indo-Pacific region. China and India have been locked in a four-year-long military standoff, which began in June 2020. The beginning of the stand-off in 2020 saw the first clash between the armies of China and India in over four decades.

"The unsettled borders with China and the rise of China will remain the most formidable challenge that India and Indian armed forces will face in the foreseeable future," Chauhan said at an event organized by a university in India's Pune on Monday, Indian news channel NDTV reported on Tuesday.

Newsweek contacted India's Ministry of Defense for comment.

"The occupation of Tibet by China, made them a new neighbor, and a partition of India created a new nation that thrived on hostility and hatred towards us," Chauhan added.

At least 50,000 soldiers on the Chinese and Indian sides are immediately facing each other in the Eastern Ladakh region since the stand-off began in 2020. At the same time, there is known to be a far more extensive deployment of troops in the rare areas of the Line of Actual Control.

Based on reports from the Indian media, the Indian Army now has between 150,000 and 200,000 soldiers facing China. The People's Liberation Army is said to have an equally large deployment of soldiers, up to 200,000 troops from the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Regions, *Newsweek* had reported earlier.

Bloomberg recently reported that India had deployed an additional 10,000 troops to the

border with China after freeing the soldiers from the Western border with Pakistan.

Meanwhile, China's defense ministry recently responded to India's additional troop deployment and the inauguration of the Sela Tunnel in the Arunachal Pradesh region along the border with China.

"Zangnan is China's inherent territory, and China never recognizes and firmly opposes India's illegal establishment of the so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh,'" Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang, spokesperson of the Ministry of National Defense, said on March 15.

"We require the Indian side to cease any action that may complicate the boundary question, and earnestly maintain peace and stability in the border areas," Zhang added.

Arunachal Pradesh 'inherent part of China's territory', claims Chinese military

17 March 2024, The Economic Times

The Chinese military has reiterated its claim over Arunachal Pradesh, calling the area an "inherent part of China's territory", days after India rejected Beijing's objection to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the state. The Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang said that the southern part of Xizang (the Chinese name for Tibet) is an inherent part of China's territory, and Beijing "never acknowledges and firmly opposes" the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India", official media here reported.

Zhang made the remarks in response to India's enhancement of its military readiness through the Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh, according to a report posted on the Chinese Defence Ministry's website on Friday.

China, which claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, routinely objects to Indian leaders' visits to the state to highlight its claims. Beijing has also named the area as Zangnan.

India has repeatedly rejected China's territorial claims over Arunachal Pradesh, asserting that the state is an integral part of the country. New Delhi has also dismissed Beijing's move to assign "invented" names to the area, saying it did not alter the reality.

On March 9, Prime Minister Modi dedicated to the nation the Sela Tunnel built at an altitude of 13,000 feet in Arunachal Pradesh that will provide all-weather connectivity to strategically located Tawang and is expected to ensure better movement of troops along the frontier region.

The Rs 825 crore tunnel, constructed on the road connecting Assam's Tezpur to West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, is being billed as the longest bi-lane road tunnel in the world at such an altitude.

The Sela Tunnel will provide for better movement of troops and weaponry to various forward locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, according to Indian military officials.

"The Indian side's actions contradict the efforts made by both sides to ease border situations and are not conducive to maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas," Zhang said, referring to Modi's visit.

He said that the current border situation is generally stable, with effective diplomatic and military communication between the two sides on border issues of common concern. Zhang urged India to "stop actions that complicate the border issue and to earnestly maintain peace and stability in the border area."

He "stressed" that the Chinese military remains highly alert in defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity, according to the report.

Zhang's reaction follows China's foreign ministry spokesperson's remark on Monday about lodging a diplomatic protest with India over Modi's recent visit to Arunachal Pradesh. India "strongly rejected" China's objection and asserted that the state "was, is, and will" always be an integral and inalienable part of India.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi that the Chinese side was made aware of this "consistent position" on several occasions.

Jaiswal said China's objection to such visits will not change the reality that Arunachal Pradesh "was, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India."

"Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, as they visit other States of India. Objecting to such visits or India's developmental projects does not stand to reason," he said.

"Further, it will not change the reality that the State of Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India," Jaiswal said.

US Intelligence Report Warns of Potential Armed Conflict Between India and China

15 March 2024, [The Wire](#)

The report underscored the strained relationship between India and China citing sporadic encounters between their militaries as a risk for miscalculation and escalation.

US intelligence agencies have raised concerns over a potential armed conflict between India and China amid escalating tensions and large troop deployments along the disputed border in a report released on Monday (March 11).

The report, released by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), underscored the strained relationship between India and China, citing sporadic encounters between their militaries as a risk for miscalculation and escalation.

"The shared disputed border between India and China will remain a strain on their bilateral relationship. While the two sides have not engaged in significant cross-border clashes since 2020, they are maintaining large troop deployments, and sporadic encounters between opposing forces risk miscalculation and escalation into armed conflict," the report said.

It also pointed out China's ambitions to establish overseas military bases, particularly

in Sri Lanka and Pakistan. This move is seen as part of China's broader strategy to project power and safeguard its interests beyond its borders, the *Hindustan Times* reported.

India, Pakistan and a fragile global order

While a calm persists following a cease-fire with Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in early 2021, the report warns that any provocations from Islamabad could lead to armed conflict between the two neighbours.

The report also highlights the fragile global order, pointing to China's military expansion plans, aggressive cyber operations, and potential interference in the upcoming 2024 US presidential elections. Alongside these concerns, the assessment mentions ongoing conflicts such as the Israel-Hamas war and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

India-China standoff

Both India and China have amped up efforts on infrastructure projects near the border since a military standoff with China in Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) began in May 2020.

Close to 50,000 troops from each side have been stationed in the area and India has made it clear that bilateral relations cannot be normalised till there is peace and tranquility in the border areas, the *Hindustan Times* report said.

In continuation of these efforts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Sela tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh, enhancing all-weather connectivity to the strategically important region of Tawang.

India reportedly lost about 1,000 square kilometres of area in Ladakh to Chinese control in 2020, as per intelligence inputs provided to the Union government. Since then, twenty-eight rounds of negotiations between the two countries have failed to resolve the deadlock.

While China has publicly staked their claim on parts of Arunachal Pradesh, renaming some towns, details about physical confrontation with Indian soldiers were never made public. Former chief of Army Staff, General M.M. Naravane's memoirs were also withheld for

revealing how the Modi government left the Army to its own devices when hostilities at Galwan broke out.

Trustworthiness-challenged China criticizes India's Tibet-border redeployment move

12 March 2024, [RTV](#)

In light of its latest assessment of threats posed by an expansionist China from across occupied Tibet, India has freed nearly 10,000 soldiers from its western border to redeploy them under a new command to its 532-km border in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh states, according to media reports Mar 8.

China responded by saying the move was “not conducive to easing tensions” between the two sides, reported Reuters Mar 8. Meanwhile, India has faulted China's breach of long-standing written agreements for the current border turmoil.

In addition, an existing contingent of 9,000 soldiers, already designated to the Chinese occupied Tibet border, will be brought under the newly created fighting command, reported Bloomberg Mar 7.

The two countries are still at loggerheads along at least two remaining unresolved sectors along the Tibet-border region in nearby Ladakh region following a violent night clash in mid-June 2020 that, however, did not involve the use of firearms. Twenty Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese troops were killed in that clash.

Both militaries have fortified positions and deployed troops and equipment there in the last few years.

However, the two countries have also agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels, and on Feb 19 held a constructive 19th army commander-level meeting for restoring normalcy in this western section of their border dispute.

“China is committed to working with India to safeguard the peace and stability of the border areas,” Mao Ning, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, has said “We believe that India's practice is not conducive to safeguarding peace and is not conducive to

easing tensions,” she has added, referring to the news of India's redeployment of its border troops.

“India's increase in military deployments in border areas does not help to calm the situation in the border areas or to safeguard peace and safety in these areas.”

The Indian Army and defence ministry have declined to comment on the redeployment news. However, speaking at an event hosted by a TV channel, Defence minister Rajnath Singh has said: “We are working continuously towards keeping the morale of the soldiers high... They are equipped, capable and ready to give a befitting reply to anyone who casts an evil eye on India.”

Meanwhile, in Japan, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said Mar 7 that China had not observed longstanding written agreements with India. “For example, ... between 1975 and 2020, which is really 45 years, there was no bloodshed on the border, and in 2020, [that] changed,” timesofindia.com Mar 8 quoted Jaishankar as saying. “We can disagree on many things, but when a country actually sort of does not observe written agreements with a neighbour, I think, you have caused ... because ... then raises a question mark about the stability of the relationship and frankly, about intentions,” Jaishankar has said in response to a question.

India and China share a 3,800-km frontier, a legacy of the latter's annexation of Tibet and the former's acceptance of the occupied territory as an autonomous region of China in a 1954 trade agreement.

China protests against India tunnel opening, warns it will only complicate border issue

12 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

Beijing has lodged a diplomatic protest with New Delhi after Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially opened a tunnel built in territories along the two countries' disputed Himalayan border, weeks ahead of general elections in the South Asian state.

Modi paid a visit on Saturday to the contested region – known as Arunachal Pradesh to India and South Tibet, or Zangnan to China – where he inaugurated the Sela tunnel connecting Tezpur in Assam and Tawang in Arunachal.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said on Monday that India had “no right to arbitrarily develop the area of Zangnan in China”. The move “will only complicate” the boundary question and “disrupt the situation” in the border areas.

“The area of Zangnan is Chinese territory. The Chinese government has never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh, illegally set up by India and firmly opposes it.” Wang said “solemn representations” had been made.

“China strongly deplores and firmly opposes the Indian leader’s visit to the east section of the China-India boundary,” he said, adding that the border question has “yet to be solved”.

The tunnel, built at an altitude of 13,000 feet (3,960 metres), is expected to facilitate India’s movement of troops and weaponry to forward locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) – the disputed 3,440km (2,100 miles) de facto border.

Modi’s announcement came weeks after the 21st round of corps commander-level talks between the two sides in late February – described by China as “positive, in-depth and constructive” and by India as “held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere”.

Both sides said at the time that they had agreed to keep communicating through the relevant military and diplomatic mechanisms, and were committed to maintaining peace on the ground in the border areas.

China and India have been locked in a military stand-off since their fatal border clash in June 2020 but the dispute dates back to 1962, when the two sides fought a war over the contested boundary.

Modi, who has overseen a decisive tilt towards Washington, is widely expected to secure his third term in the April-May polls, with more than 945 million people set to vote.

During his prime ministership, Modi has elevated military ties and accelerated

partnerships with the US, Japan and Australia through the Quad – a strategic security dialogue that Beijing has slammed as an “Indo-Pacific Nato”.

In July, Modi refused to support Beijing’s landmark Belt and Road Initiative at the virtual Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit.

A few weeks later, he and Chinese President Xi Jinping met briefly on the sidelines of the Brics summit in August for their first direct conversation in a year. In September, Xi skipped the Group of 20 summit in India.

China has been without an ambassador to India for 16 months. The post has been vacant since the most recent incumbent Sun Weidong was promoted to a foreign vice-ministership in November 2022.

China warns that increasing Indian troops at border won't ease tensions

08 March 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

Senior Indian officials, requesting anonymity due to the confidentiality of the discussions, revealed that a unit of 10,000 soldiers previously deployed to the western border is now assigned to safeguard a segment of the frontier with China, a Bloomberg report said. An existing group of 9,000 soldiers, initially designated for the disputed Chinese border, will now fall under the newly established fighting command. This unified force will protect a 532 km (330.57 miles) border section dividing China's Tibet region from India's northern states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

Souring Ties

Beginning on May 5, 2020, Chinese and Indian troops were involved in aggressive confrontations, face-offs, and skirmishes at various locations along the Sino-Indian border. These incidents occurred near the disputed Pangong Lake in Ladakh, the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the border between Sikkim and the Tibet Autonomous Region. Additional clashes took place in eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

In late May, tensions escalated when Chinese forces raised objections to Indian road construction in the Galwan River valley. On September 7, 2020, shots were fired along the LAC for the first time in 45 years, with both parties attributing blame to the other. Indian media also reported that Indian troops had fired warning shots at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on August 30, 2020. Ties between India and China deteriorated following confrontation, and there has been limited improvement since. Despite engaging in as many as 21 rounds of military-diplomatic talks, progress has been incremental. In response to the strained relations, India has enacted laws aimed at discouraging Chinese investments and business enterprises within the country.

In 2021, India deployed an extra 50,000 soldiers to monitor its border with China, responding to heightened tensions following a deadly clash the previous year that resulted in the unfortunate loss of at least 20 Indian soldiers, significantly straining diplomatic relations.

Subsequently, both China and India have taken steps to enhance military-related infrastructure, relocating missiles and aircraft to their respective border regions, alongside the additional deployment of troops.

India-China relations: Foreign Minister S Jaishankar highlights decades of peace shattered by 2020 conflict

07 March 2024, [The Telegraph](#)

Longstanding agreements are not being necessarily observed, raising question marks about the stability of the environment in which we all operate: Jaishankar

Taking a dig at China, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said Beijing has not observed longstanding written agreements with India and blamed it for the bloodshed at the borders in 2020, the first in more than four decades.

Speaking here at the inaugural Raisina Roundtable in Tokyo, an event by the think

tank, Jaishankar also spoke about how he expected a change in Russia's direction towards the rest of the world and it may likely want multiple options in Asia.

On a two-day trip to Japan, Jaishankar elaborated on the changing world order, saying, "There is a reality of a very big power shift in the Indo-Pacific. When there are very big shifts in capabilities and influence and presumably ambitions, then there are all the accompanying ambitions and strategic consequences." "Now, it's not an issue whether you like it or you don't like it. There's a reality out there, you have to deal with that reality," he said and added, "Ideally, we would assume that everybody would say, okay, things are changing, but let's keep it as stable as we can." "Unfortunately, that's not what we have seen in the last decade of our own experience in the case of China, for example, is between 1975 to 2020, which is really 45 years, there was no bloodshed on the border, and in 2020, changed," he said.

"We can disagree on many things, but when a country actually sort of does not observe written agreements with a neighbour, I think, you have caused ... because ... then raises a question mark about the stability of the relationship and frankly, about intentions," Jaishankar said in response to a question.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Lake area.

The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

"We see it in conflict in Europe, in disregard for international law in Asia, and in the ongoing developments in the Middle East and often in the weaponisation of the normal," he said earlier in his prepared address.

"Longstanding agreements are not being necessarily observed, raising question marks

about the stability of the environment in which we all operate," he said, referring to the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement (BPTA) and the 1996 agreement on "Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas".

Answering a question after his speech, he said, "That is why for India, in a changing world, our own equilibrium, our own balances with other countries are changing as well. They don't have to be acrimonious, but the balance is changing." The External Affairs Minister had on March 2 in Delhi raised a similar point while speaking at an interactive session of a think tank. "China must adhere to border management pacts and there has to be peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) for improvement in Sino-India ties," Jaishankar asserted amid the lingering military face-off in eastern Ladakh.

In his remarks, in an apparent reference to India's increasing economic strength, he said, "We cannot become, in GDP, from number 11 to number five and (expect) everything remains the same. It will not remain the same." "But how to create new equilibriums ... in a less frictional manner ... I think that today, the management of the global order, some of us are trying to help. Some of us have other approaches to countries in various sectors and also that broadens the spectrum," the Minister added.

The Minister also made an interesting comment about Russia and its changing approach. Pointing out how, during the last two years, Russia's relationship with the West has broken down because of the Ukraine conflict, he said, "Economically, it means that a lot of access Russia had to the Western world is no longer there and historically, Russia has always put a premium that is the main axis for them." "So you actually have today the prospect that Russia is turning more and more towards Asia. It can also turn to other continents but I would say Asia is the most dynamic possibility for them," he observed.

The flow of Russian trade of investments of resources, and available collaborations towards Asian destinations will not be a short-term trend and continue for some years, he added.

"So I expect, actually, almost like a change in Russia's direction towards the world and I think it has very interesting implications for us in Asia, because like any big power Russia will also want multiple options," Jaishankar added.

China-India ties remain adrift as wait for Chinese envoy to New Delhi drags on

04 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

China has been without an ambassador to India for 16 months – despite the importance Beijing attaches to its relationship with New Delhi, where foreign policy is mainly focused on its periphery and the interactions of major powers, observers said.

The post has been vacant since the most recent incumbent Sun Weidong was promoted to a foreign vice-ministership in November 2022.

The gap – the longest since 1976 – has coincided with a sharp deterioration in relations, with the two countries locked in a military stand-off since the fatal clash at their disputed Himalayan border in June 2020.

Observers said the long period without a Chinese ambassador to India was highly unusual, adding that the appointment of a new envoy would be viewed positively on both sides as a crucial step towards building trust.

Wang Dehua, an expert on India at the Shanghai Municipal Centre for International Studies, said the long absence of a top Chinese envoy had laid bare the damage caused by the border tensions to ties between the world's two most populous nations.

"That's something very rare in the history of Sino-Indian relations, which for many is an ominous sign and makes it difficult for both sides to manage their differences, especially when ties are at a low point," Wang said.

"While it is true that New Delhi is unlikely to ever become Beijing's friend, China still needs

to try its best to have good relations with India ... or at least woo it away from the US on strategic issues, such as trade and Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy. After all, the US and Japan remain our top opponents." According to Wang, it was "imperative" for Beijing to fill the vacancy, a move that would help China stabilise ties with its nuclear-armed Himalayan neighbour in the midst of its intensifying geopolitical and ideological feud with the US-led West.

Top candidate for the post is tipped as Xu Feihong, who until December served as assistant foreign minister for administrative and financial affairs. He was removed after an almost three-year stint, without explanation or an announcement of his next position.

Hong Kong newspaper Sing Tao Daily reported rumours that the move was intended to pave the way for 59-year-old Xu, a former ambassador to Afghanistan and Romania, to take up the New Delhi posting.

And in January, Indian news site The Wire reported that Xu's appointment as China's envoy was being finalised, citing unnamed sources who claimed the news "has been conveyed about the candidate" to New Delhi.

Neither Beijing nor New Delhi has confirmed the appointment.

Liu Zongyi, a senior fellow with the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies' South Asia and China Centre, said an early appointment would be much-needed good news to help arrest further decline in the already strained ties.

Despite his lack of direct involvement in managing Indian affairs, compared to Sun and his predecessor Luo Zhaohui, Xu would be a good candidate for the role, according to Liu.

Both Sun, currently foreign vice-minister in charge of Asian affairs, and Luo have extensive regional experience, including stints as China's top envoy to Pakistan, and are considered experts in South Asian affairs.

But Liu pointed out that Xu – who served as China's ambassador to Afghanistan from 2010-13 – would not be the first top envoy to New

Delhi to lack direct experience with the South Asian nation.

Luo's predecessor Le Yucheng – a Russian expert who was posted to India in 2014, shortly ahead of President Xi Jinping's first official visit to New Delhi – did not have any Indian experience either, he said.

On return to Beijing after their stints in India, Luo and Sun were both promoted to foreign vice-minister positions, while Le served as deputy to China's then top ranking diplomat Yang Jiechi, also a vice-ministerial role.

Liu said that all three former Chinese ambassadors had been serving as assistant foreign ministers when they got the New Delhi job, putting Xu's appointment – if confirmed – in line with past arrangements.

But he cautioned against expectations of a quick turnaround in Sino-Indian ties, which were at a "critical juncture", amid signs of further geopolitical division between them on top of their border impasse and in the midst of intensifying US-China rivalry.

"I don't think the border dispute is too complicated to be resolved, and the key is whether both sides are able to demonstrate their willingness to work together towards a mutually acceptable solution, especially on the part of New Delhi," Liu said.

"But even if the border issues can be resolved, I am not optimistic that bilateral ties could be improved any time soon."

According to Liu, Beijing is also concerned about India's hyping of China as a threat and its increasingly restrictive policies against Chinese investment, as New Delhi seeks to decouple economically from its neighbour and replace it in the global supply chain as the world's factory.

Xu's previous experience in financial affairs might prove useful if the veteran diplomat were posted to New Delhi, Liu said.

A Bloomberg report this week said a study by London-based Fathom Financial Consulting found that India has made headway in its efforts to increase its market share of electronics exports – through tax cuts and

other incentives – previously dominated by China.

The two countries wrapped up another round of commander-level border talks last week, seeking a mutually acceptable solution “at the earliest possible time” in a bid to “turn the page” on the tensions, the Chinese defence ministry said.

Beijing expressed similar hopes in December, at the start of this latest round of diplomatic talks with New Delhi on the border issues.

However, after 21 rounds of military-level talks and 28 rounds of diplomatic dialogue, there is little sign of any quick solution, let alone “a complete disengagement” of Chinese and Indian troops along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh.

Neither side appears ready to back down on the highly charged border issues, with Beijing and New Delhi each accusing the other of stalling the situation.

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has overseen a decisive tilt towards Washington, elevating military ties and accelerating partnerships with the US, Japan and Australia through the Quad – slammed by Beijing as an “Indo-Pacific Nato”.

While Xi and Modi briefly discussed the border situation in August on the sidelines of the Brics summit – their first direct conversation in a year – bilateral ties have largely remained deadlocked.

In a move widely seen as a snub to New Delhi, Xi skipped the Group of 20 summit in India in September, after Modi refused to support Xi’s signature Belt and Road Initiative at the virtual Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in July.

[China urges Indian media to uphold One China policy, berating a Taiwan foreign Minister interview](#)

04 March 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China wants the media in India to follow its so-called One China policy after the television channel NewsX aired on Feb 29 an interview with Taiwan’s foreign minister Joseph Wu. The

Communist Party of China (CPC)-state has never ruled Taiwan but considers the latter a renegade province and vowed to “reunify” it, including by armed invasion if necessary.

In a statement issued Mar 1, the Chinese embassy in India claimed the interview provided “a platform for advocating Taiwan independence and disseminating false information,” which it deemed a serious violation of the One-China principle.

China’s One-China principle asserts that there is only one China in this world and Taiwan is part of it, and the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is its sole legal representative. It requires all countries having diplomatic relations with it to abide by this principle.

However, India has for years refrained from including the One-China nomenclature in joint statements after meetings with leaders of China due to the latter’s claim on Arunachal Pradesh and pro-Pakistan position it has adopted on the Kashmir issue. China has also repeatedly angered India by preventing the UN from sanctioning terrorists who had attacked it and were being protected by Pakistan.

The Chinese embassy statement stressed that the One-China principle is widely accepted and forms the political foundation for diplomatic ties between China and countries worldwide.

It urged the “Indian media to uphold China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

Responding strongly to the Chinese statement, the Taiwan Foreign Office has said, “Neither India nor Taiwan is part of the PRC and we’re not its puppets.

“We’re both democracies with free and vibrant presses that can’t be dictated to. Beijing should worry about its own economic slump, not bullying its neighbours,” the statement has added.

India-Taiwan relations, while unofficial, have gradually strengthened in recent years, driven by economic, strategic, and cultural factors. Despite not having formal diplomatic ties, the two sides have sought to enhance bilateral trade and investment through various mechanisms. Taiwan’s technological expertise

in areas like chipmaking aligns with India's goals of promoting innovation and digitalisation, noted news18.com Mar 3.

The report said that less than a month ago, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre in India – Taiwan's de facto embassy in India – and the India Taipei Association (ITA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on labour cooperation.

India to open 'strategically important' navy base near China-friendly Maldives

03 March 2024, [South China Morning Post](#)

India's navy has said it is bolstering forces on "strategically important" islands close to the Maldives, with a new base set to open just days before Male starts sending home Indian forces.

Relations between India and the Maldives have soured since pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu won elections last year after promising to expel Indian forces.

India is suspicious of China's growing presence in the archipelago nation, which straddles key east-west international shipping routes, and the new base will extend New Delhi's "operational surveillance" of the area, the navy said in a statement late Saturday.

Muizzu has asked India to withdraw 89 security personnel based in the Maldives to operate reconnaissance aircraft, with the first batch due to leave by March 10 and all to depart within two months.

The new base, opening March 6 on India's Lakshadweep islands, will turn an existing small detachment into an "independent naval unit", according to the navy's statement.

India's Lakshadweep islands lie about 130 kilometres (80 miles) north of the Maldives, with the new naval base on the island of Minicoy situated at their closest point.

India's navy already has a base on the Lakshadweep island of Kavaratti, but the new base will be about 258 kilometres (160 miles) closer to the Maldives.

"Minicoy is the southernmost island of Lakshadweep, which straddles the vital sea lines of communications," the navy said.

It said the base will boost anti-piracy and anti-narcotic operations, and was part of a policy to "incrementally augment security infrastructure at the strategically important" islands.

India, China in 'constructive communication' to settle Ladakh standoff: Chinese military

01 March 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

China and India have maintained "constructive communication" to find a mutually acceptable solution to resolve the standoff in eastern Ladakh, the Chinese military has said, underlining that Beijing attaches "great importance" to ties with New Delhi to jointly maintain peace at the borders. The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. "The two sides had positive, in-depth and constructive communication on resolving the border issues of each other's concern and agreed to reach a mutually acceptable solution at an early date," Ministry of National Defence spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang told the Chinese media at a press briefing here on Thursday, referring to the commander-level talks held on February 19 between India and China.

"China attaches great importance to the China-India military-to-military relations and hopes that India and China will work towards the same goal, enhance mutual trust, properly settle differences and jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas," he was quoted as saying by China Military Online, the official news portal of the Chinese Defence Ministry.

The talks held on February 19 were the 21st round of talks between the two militaries to resolve the eastern Ladakh logjam, which will enter its fourth year in May this year. The Chinese military action in May 2020

resulted in the Galwan Valley clash that marked the most serious military conflict between India and China in decades. According to the Chinese military, the two sides have so far agreed to disengage at four points - the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra) -- contributing to the de-escalation of tensions along the border.

But the talks were deadlocked over reaching a similar agreement at Depsang and Demchok, where the Indian side strongly pressed for resolution of two lingering issues. Both sides issued separate press releases on the 21st round of talks.

A press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on the latest talks said the two sides agreed to maintain communication on the way ahead through the relevant military and diplomatic mechanisms. "The discussions built on the previous rounds, seeking complete disengagement in the remaining areas along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in eastern Ladakh as an essential basis for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas," it said in a statement.

The MEA said the two sides shared their perspectives on this in the talks held in a "friendly and cordial" atmosphere. "The two sides have agreed to maintain communication on the way ahead through the relevant military and diplomatic mechanisms. They also committed to maintain peace and tranquillity on the ground in the border areas in the interim," it said.

In Beijing, China's Ministry of National Defence said the two militaries conducted positive, in-depth, and constructive communication on resolving border issues of mutual concern. Both sides agreed to continue communication through military and diplomatic channels, guided by the important consensus of the leaders of the two countries, to reach an acceptable solution as soon as possible and "turn the page" in the border situation, the Chinese readout on the 21st round of talks said.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Lake area. The Eastern Ladakh standoff has resulted in a virtual freeze of bilateral ties on all fronts except trade. India is pressing the People's Liberation Army to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok, maintaining that there cannot be restoration of normalcy in its relations with China as long as the state of the borders remains abnormal.

Commentaries

The United States should seek engagement without provocation of China

31 March 2024, [East Asia Forum](#)

No foreign policy challenge is more important, or difficult, than finding a way to simultaneously deter and engage China without provoking unwanted behaviours. Achieving this requires understanding the perceptions and priorities shaping Beijing's actions.

Despite China's worsening economic problems and waning international trust, the March 2024 session of the National People's Congress has reaffirmed Beijing's determination to stick with policies fuelling domestic discontent and alienating foreign partners. The reasons are structural, not simply strong-man egoism. Policies in China are tightly interconnected, reflect hard-to-change perceptions, reinforced by bureaucratic and personal interests. Changing one facet requires changing the entire policy package. For now, that package prioritises domestic stability and security over economic growth.

Beijing has fallen into an old mindset that sacrifices growth to reduce vulnerability to external and internal threats that leaders believe endanger the regime and China's future. This is not good for China, the United States or the world. Washington cannot achieve immediate or fundamental changes in China's behaviour but ill-considered actions can make things worse. The best we currently

can achieve is wary coexistence, careful management to reduce dangers, and keeping the way open for a better day.

The current bilateral framework of big power politics and competition is harmful to both countries and to efforts to address global challenges. It is vital to acknowledge that US policy is one of the drivers of Chinese behaviour. The United States should strive for a minimally provocative deterrent posture. The United States should adopt policies that make clear that it hopes for the material progress of China in a cooperative framework and that it will support any resolution of cross-Strait relations peacefully agreed to by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Eventually, the United States and China will adjust their policies toward mutual accommodation, but this could be well into the future and impose high costs on both nations in the interim.

Whenever that new day arrives, it will involve three parallel developments. First, Chinese acceptance that the United States is in Asia to stay. Second, US acceptance that the internal governance of China is a domestic choice of Chinese citizens, not a US change objective. Third, both countries deciding that cooperation to address global challenges is more important than each using the other to justify costly, contested or expedient policies.

Currently, prospects for such a meeting of the minds are poor. Leaders in both countries are firming up their internal support by depicting the other as an existential threat. China has blundered by aligning with the world's worst actors — from Russia to North Korea and Iran — while the United States has erred by driving Beijing further in the wrong direction.

Since at least the 19th century, China has pursued national security and economic modernisation through selective engagement with the West, seeking to acquire technologies that would strengthen China without endangering the domestic system which its elites were determined to preserve. China's twin goals of economic modernisation and internal stability are inextricably linked and

always pursued in tandem, but circumstances and leadership calculations episodically change the weight given to each objective.

Over the centuries, China's policy options have coalesced into one of two comprehensive policy bundles. The historically dominant policy bundle prioritises national and regime security over economic growth and is deeply suspicious of outside interference. In such phases China imposes more restrictions on foreign trade, investment, civil society and religion. There is increased emphasis on strong-man rule and ideological indoctrination. This is the China we face today.

Conversely, in periods in which internal stability seems more assured and the West is seen as a positive force in economic modernisation, China prioritises the gains to be made through interdependence and openness. Former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping embodied this second policy bundle and President Xi Jinping embraces the first.

Until a better day arrives, US strategy needs to hold open the door to the second Chinese policy package, while limiting the damage that the current first policy package does to core US interests. The biggest move the United States could make to influence Chinese behaviour in constructive ways is to get its own governance and economic house in order. Speaking loudly, while carrying a small stick, is provocative.

The United States must avoid setting its strategic goals in a way that implies it is trying to keep China eternally weak, divided and isolated, or that regime change is the US goal written in invisible ink. Statements from officials such as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, Ely Ratner, suggesting that even peaceful cross-Strait reunification is strategically unacceptable to Washington, undermines the basis for normalisation achieved in 1979.

Washington should restate the long-held US position that the use of force in the Taiwan Strait is unacceptable, that the United States is not opposed to peaceful reunification and that ties between the United States and Taiwan are unofficial. One Taiwan, One China is not US

policy. Washington needs to stop nibbling around the edges of the One China Policy.

The Xi regime is acting as much out of insecurity as it is strength. It also is acting from the belief that the United States is overstretched internationally and divided internally. Washington's route forward, particularly in the 2024 presidential election year, is to make it clear that US foreign policy goals are not antithetical to the legitimate aspirations of the Chinese people. For its part, Beijing must realise it has blundered in choosing team Russia, Iran and North Korea over countries that fuelled its rise during the four-plus decades of engagement. Beijing needs to get back to a policy of reassurance rather than muscle flexing.

Tibetan culture, livelihoods are being damned in Xi Jinping's China

31 March 2024, [First Post](#)

In eastern Tibet, local Tibetans have resisted non-violently in the face of an imminent displacement from their ancestral land as China continues with its insatiable exploitation of Tibetan rivers with dams and diversions

Browsing through the pages of 'China's Tibet'—Beijing's primary propaganda magazine on Tibet—one is likely to get an artist's impression of a utopian Tibet—free and galloping like a wild stallion on the path of development.

However, in reality, through these colourful pictures and self-praising language, a chauvinist colonial Beijing masquerades itself as the only agent of liberation and modernisation for the very people it has occupied and colonised.

From time to time, Tibetans break this glassy shroud for the same Beijing to see the disgracefulness of its behaviour under the intoxication of its naked power.

This time, it is in Dege, in eastern Tibet, where local Tibetans have resisted non-violently in the face of an imminent displacement from their ancestral land as China continues with its

insatiable exploitation of Tibetan rivers with dams and diversions.

China has planned to build a series of 13 dams on the Driчу River (Ch:Jinsha) on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in eastern Tibet. These dams will, directly or indirectly, affect Tibetans living in Jomda in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, Yulshul in Qinghai, Dege, Markham, Bathang, Sershu, and Derong in Sichuan, and Dechen in Yunnan. All these sites selected for dam construction are areas where local Tibetans have lived for thousands of years as the Driчу River mothered their civilisation and sustained their lives.

Among them, the under-construction Kamtok (Gangtuo) hydropower station (229 metres) in Dege is the main reservoir for the South-to-North Water Diversion project to divert water from the Yangtze to the Yellow River. This dam is about to demolish at least two villages and six Buddhist monasteries, including the famous Wontoe monastery, whose murals date back to the 14th century.

In addition to their cultural values, these Buddhist monasteries and murals are even more precious in the context of the fact that more than 6,000 Tibetan monasteries and temples suffered destruction during the Chinese invasion in the 1950s and later the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

Those monasteries that survived the ravages of both Chinese military and cultural violence hold special meaning for the Tibetans as cultural heritages that maintain historical and civilizational continuity for a people that continues to face cultural suppression.

The recent public gathering in front of the Dege county government on February 14 took place after the local Tibetans tried almost all the available legal means to prevent an illegal and unjust displacement looming over their villages and monasteries. We can see, in the videos from the scene, Tibetans, including monks and women, literally begging the officials with their thumbs raised to halt the dam construction.

In Tibetan culture, to request someone with one's thumb(s) represents extreme humility to the point of self-humiliation. By using the most

humble body language, the local people appealed to the human conscience of Chinese authorities to recognise the magnitude of the devastation that they were about to wreck on the local Tibetans. Many held the Chinese flag in their hands to show their desperation rather than defiance.

However, the manner in which Chinese authorities cracked down on the peaceful Tibetan petitioners, with mass arrests, beatings, and phone confiscations, reflects their colonial mindset. Many had to be hospitalised. A large armed police force is deployed for further suppression, as if there were an armed revolt.

The geographical area threatened by the dam is not some desolate region but a thriving fertile river valley that supports both nomadic and farming activities for the local people. Given the limited arable areas available on the high and dry Tibetan plateau, such fertile river valleys are too priceless to be wasted for a dam whose advantages are questionable and disadvantages are real and long-lasting—both for the people in the affected area and those downstream in China.

The narrative of hydropower stations as clean sources of energy whitewashes the reality of their negative impacts on the whole ecosystem. Often, their construction begins with the mutilation of mountains, the strangulation of rivers, the drowning of vegetation to death, and the mass displacement of vulnerable communities.

Speaking of displacement, who gets displaced for a dam is not merely a question of engineering necessity but power relations, like who is more displaceable in the eyes of dam builders by weighing the political and economic resources of a given community to defend their fundamental interests.

In today's occupied Tibet, the existing political system makes Tibetans the most displaceable, if not disposable, people in the eyes of Beijing. For effective control and surveillance, China has transferred thousands of Tibetans, particularly nomads and farmers, from their ancestral lands to government relocation sites

in the name of environmental protection or poverty alleviation.

Relocation, no matter how thoughtful, will never restore what the local people are about to lose—their land and way of life. But for China, it's made clear that the livelihood or cultural heritage of Tibetans is cheaper than a 229-metre-high dam.

In a fundamental sense, terms like relocation or resettlement not only fail to appreciate but also underestimate the whole experience of violence, trauma, and humiliation that the people facing displacement have to suffer—to say nothing of their material loss and physical difficulties.

The displacement of the Tibetans from their lands is a form of colonial dispossession to disempower them, thereby making their ability to earn a living conditional on their political and ideological subservience to colonial Beijing. It is to control their thoughts and behaviour with a rice bowl.

After being kicked out of their villages and monasteries, the Tibetans in Dege, besides being colonial subjects, will become refugees in their own homeland like thousands of other Tibetans displaced from their ancestral lands under different pretexts.

Once built, these dams will stand as monuments to China's colonial subjugation of Tibetan people and their land rather than representing modernisation or development.

Communist China had a good run — but the Party is over

30 March 2024, [New York Post](#)



Outside the Chinese Parliament in Beijing, the

centerpoint of China's decades of communist rule and economic expansion -- the former now beginning to strangle the latter.

China had a good run, but it is now over. You know it's over when 65 million homes — one-fifth of the nation's total — lie vacant and real-estate prices have collapsed to 2018 levels.

Tens of millions of Chinese plunked down their life savings for an apartment in a high-rise that they will never live in because the builder went bankrupt, leaving the building an uninhabitable empty shell.

You know it's over when China's "official" youth unemployment rate reaches double digits, while its Ministry of Finance reports a 16% drop in personal income tax collected year over year.

Given how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) toys with statistics, the real numbers must be much, much worse.

Finally, you know China's boom days are over when both capital and people are heading for the exits.

Five hundred billion dollars may have fled the country in 2023 alone and the hemorrhaging continues.

And as far as the human exodus is concerned, look no further than our own southern border. The Chinese are now the fastest growing demographic attempting to enter the US, with 37,000 apprehended during the last year alone, not counting an unknown number of "gotaways."

While spies and saboteurs are surely among them — the CCP would be foolish not to take advantage of our open border in this way — the vast majority are simply seeking a refuge where their lives and property will no longer be at risk.

How has mighty China, which was supposed to dominate the 21st century, come to this?

The Trump tariffs—imposed in 2018 and still in place today — set China back on its heels. And the COVID debacle deepened China's economic malaise.

But most of the wounds have been self-inflicted.

The Chinese economy is suffering from a kind of death by a thousand cuts perpetrated by the policies of Xi Jinping, a man who models himself on one of the most monomaniacal — and deadly — communist leaders in human history.

There is, one might say, a specter haunting China. It is the specter of Mao Zedong — channeled by his latter-day clone, Xi Jinping.

It wasn't that long ago that former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, viewing the serial disasters that Chairman Mao's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution had created, decided that a little private property might not be a bad thing.

He dissolved the communes, encouraged people to go into business for themselves and opened up China to the West.

The result of removing the dead hand of the state was explosive growth.

The Chinese people pulled themselves up by their bootstraps and fueled decades of double-digit economic expansion, along with a new generation of wealth creators.

But then along came Xi Jinping, Soon after assuming office in 2012, he gave a secret speech to senior leaders in which — sounding like every other communist from Karl Marx on — he predicted "the eventual demise of capitalism and the ultimate victory of socialism."

Many observers, both in China and abroad, dismissed this as mere rhetoric.

Why would anyone in their right mind recklessly tinker with, much less abandon, a successful economic policy that has produced over three decades of mostly double-digit economic growth for China?

Yet, in communism's latest triumph of ideology over experience, Xi is once again driving the Chinese people down the socialist road to ruin.

Xi had to move slowly at first.

He assured China's wealth creators that he had no problem with people getting rich — as long

as they used their wealth to serve the Party's interests.

Then, to make sure they did, he sent political commissars to watch over them.

Every major non-state-owned company in China was ordered to add a CCP representative to its board.

The effect was to place a target on the backs of the wealthy. It wasn't long before the more ambitious among those CCP overseers decided that the best way to ensure that the rich used their wealth to serve the Party's interest was to steal it from them.

Taking their cues from Xi's increasing hostility toward private enterprise, government officials at all levels began arresting, imprisoning, executing, and even "suiciding" hundreds of Chinese billionaires and CEOs. China's wealthiest woman, Whitney Duan, was snatched from her Beijing apartment by the security forces in 2017 and has yet to reappear.

In the minds of rapacious Communist officials, the best way to eliminate capitalism has always been to simply eliminate the capitalists themselves.

Not surprisingly, the Chinese economy has been on the skids ever since.

In one sense, Xi is merely doing what all good communists do when they get in a position of power: they choke the life out of the economy—and out of any person who gets in the way.

We know how this tale ends.

Whenever a Chairman Mao or a President Xi decides that producing tyranny is more important than producing the goods — as they all do sooner or later — economic collapse follows.

When that day arrives, the Chinese people should not expect sympathy from Xi.

After all, they got none from his mentor either, when Mao's own foray into collectivist folly ended in famine.

As tens of millions of his countrymen were starving to death in the early sixties, Mao simply shrugged: "Deaths have benefits, they fertilize the ground."

Opinion: A Gullible Singer And a Few Questions

25 March 2024, Bhuchung D. Sonam, [Phayul](#)



Switzerland based Tibetan musician Dechen Shak Dagsay (Photo/Instagram)

About a week ago, a minor-league Swiss-based Tibetan singer named Dechen Shak-Dagsay attended an event organised in Geneva by the China Society for Human Rights – one of many propaganda fronts of the Chinese Communist Party – during which she said that “the Tibetan language is spoken all over the place [Lhasa]” and thanked China “for giving our young generation in Tibet such a unique opportunity to excel in their studies, and each one becomes a precious gem, shining from the roof of the world.”

In a subsequent video clarification after harsh reactions from the exile Tibetans, Shak-Dagsay said that “we have shouted for sixty years, which only widened the gap between Tibetans inside and those of us in exile” and that “Tibetan language, culture and everything is so well maintained there [in Tibet].” Commenting on China's colonial boarding schools, she said that “China spends huge money on this ... [and that] exile Tibetans should never oppose it.”

An in-depth [report](#) on China's colonial boarding school by the Tibetan Action Institute found out that about a million Tibetan students in occupied Tibet are coerced into state-run schools, which “function as sites for re-molding children into Chinese nationals loyal to the CCP,” and are “removed from their families and communities, students must study primarily in Chinese, are barred from practicing their religion, and are subjected to political indoctrination.”

Dr Gya Lo, educational sociologist and a leading expert on China's assimilation and education policies in Tibet, writes in an op-ed in The New

York Times that within a few months of being admitted into one such school in northeastern Tibet, his young grandnieces started to distance themselves from their Tibetan identity and spoke “only Mandarin to each other and remained silent during our family dinner. They had become strangers in their own home.” Dr Gyal has testified on this issue at the UN Human Rights’ Summit, the *Canadian House of Commons* and other global forums.

China’s ongoing colonial boarding schools are widely covered in the international media, including the BBC, Foreign Affairs and others which led the European Parliament to pass a resolution condemning these schools stating that “80 % of Tibetan children, totalling around one million, have been separated from their families by this system, which aims to forcibly assimilate them culturally, religiously and linguistically into the Han majority.” The US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, said that his country “is taking steps to impose visa restrictions on PRC officials for the forcible assimilations of Tibetan children in government-run boarding schools.”

In this year’s 10th March Tibetan National Uprising Day speech, President Penpa Tsering of the exile government said that “the ongoing forced assimilation of nearly one million Tibetan children in Chinese state-run colonial style boarding schools and promotion of Chinese language in a large number of kindergartens established across Tibet not only deny Tibetan children the right to learn and use their own language, they are also cut off from their way of thinking, custom and belief, which is giving rise to a generation affected by forced assimilation.”

Many Tibetans have harshly responded on social media to Shak-Dagsay’s groundless and unjustifiable comments by calling her “a Chinese stooge”, “a running dog” and “a Chinese spy”, which is widely off the mark. Shak-Dagsay does not have qualities to be an agent. She is simply a gullible woman who fell for shrewd Chinese propaganda. She was bamboozled into motor-mouthing ready-made

half-truths about Tibet and puffery to China because she was given an opportunity to sing in Lhasa and was taken for an officially-vetted tour to spruced up places and schools.

Shak-Dagsay has since issued a reluctant two-sentence apology of a sort to the Tibetans. But the damage is done. China for the moment achieved its mission and got what it wanted:

1) An endorsement from an exile Tibetan to legitimizes its occupation of Tibet and its genocidal policies leading to the destruction of Tibet’s natural environment, self-immolation of 157 Tibetans, jailing of artists and intellectuals, including Go Sherab Gyatso and Gegjom, and corralling of over a million Tibetan children into colonial boarding schools.

2) To cause distrust and disharmony among the Tibetans, which have been clear from angry tirades and invectives thrown at the elderly singer, and a distrust that one of us could do such a thing. These are things that we do not want at all.

What is clear from Shak-Dagsay’s incident is that decades of relentless Chinese disinformation campaigning is working. The timing of this occurrence also seems calculated since the exile parliament is in session to discuss on the long-due charter amendments, and Shak-Dagsay’s instance could steal the focus. Judging by the amount of financial and human resources that China pour into its propaganda apparatus, Shak-Dagsay won’t be the last exile Tibetan to be conned into its web of lies.

This urgently calls us to rethink, recalibrate, reenergise and restrategy our moves. We also need to ask ourselves how did an exile Tibetan who lives in one of the most democratic countries in the world fall prey to Communist propaganda? Are we not telling our stories good enough? Are we not informing our citizens well enough about democracy and rule of law? What does it say about our communication channels?

Pointing our fingers at Shak-Dagsay – and badmouthing her – may give us a temporary ventilation to our anger, but it won’t solve the

fundamental problem. We need to do so much more.

As China prepares to invade Taiwan, US forces are about to combat-test a vital weapon

24 March 2024, [Telegraph](#)

Building giant steel Lego as Chinese missiles rain down

The main mission of the US Army flotilla now sailing toward Gaza is to build a floating pier that will help ships offload desperately-needed humanitarian aid. But the task force also serves a secondary purpose: it's practice for a critical combat operation – one that could help US forces to roll back Chinese advances in the event of a war over Taiwan.

The Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore pier system, or JLOTS, is a Lego-like suite of floating metal piers and ramps that can connect virtually any ship to virtually any beach. While the Pentagon is sending five 273-foot US Army landing craft to begin building the pier, the final components will sail aboard the 951-foot transport ship *Roy A Benavidez*, which belongs to the US Navy-administered Ready Reserve Force.

It could take weeks to ship the pier components and days to assemble them. But once the pier is ready, it should be able to move – from sea to shore – 2,000,000 meals per day, according to the Pentagon.

The Pentagon has deployed JLOTS before, perhaps most notably to Haiti following the devastating earthquake in that country in 2010. But it has never deployed it in a major war.

That could change – and soon – if China makes good on decades of threats and launches an invasion of Taiwan. If the People's Liberation Army succeeds in occupying Taiwan's island strongholds in the Taiwan Strait as a prelude to landing on Taiwan itself, counterattacking US forces could face a serious dilemma: how to land their own people and equipment in what amounts to a counter-invasion of mainland Taiwan and its island outposts.

Historically, US forces would force their way ashore aboard US Navy amphibious ships. But

the US fleet has lost faith in its traditional amphibious capability as enemy beach-defenses stiffen with increasingly deadly anti-ship missiles. Lately, the US Navy has been decommissioning amphibious ships faster than it commissions them.

But JLOTS endures. And it gives the Pentagon options.

"JLOTS is a critical joint capability that enables US forces to enter a land area from sea despite insufficient port infrastructure," Joseph Tereniak, a US Army officer, wrote recently.

It's not that Taiwan doesn't have great ports: it does. But if Chinese forces control those ports as US and allied forces counterattack, the Americans and their allies will need some other way of moving heavy equipment over the beaches. "Potential adversaries will attempt to deny access to fixed ports," US Army officer Tom Clady wrote in 2013. "Seabasing provides a viable alternative to project forces."

The problem with JLOTS, of course, is that it's a big floating target that takes days to set up and, even when it's working perfectly, is a delicate piece of maritime clockwork. The speed at which soldiers and sailors can build the pier – and *rebuild* the pier in the event of an enemy attack – could make the difference between victory and defeat.

Back in 1996, a naval official named Harold Workman warned of a "lack of training, and therefore diminished proficiency levels," that could doom JLOTS ops in wartime. It's not clear that, nearly 30 years later, the US Army and US Navy have solved the training problem. JLOTS just doesn't get used very often in a truly stressful environment.

Gaza is nothing if not a stressful environment, with Israeli forces relentlessly bombarding cities and towns and even hospitals and Iran-backed militants – including the Houthis in Yemen – lobbing drones and missiles at commercial and naval vessels in the region.

US president Joe Biden announced the Gaza pier operation during his annual state-of-the-union address to the US Congress on March 7. "I'm directing the US military to lead an emergency mission to establish a temporary

pier in the Mediterranean on the Gaza coast that can receive large ships carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelters,” Biden said.

“No US boots will be on the ground,” Biden added. They’ll only be on the pier.

Increasingly impatient with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Biden is counting on the US Army’s logistics fleet not only to save Gazan lives, but also to signal his – and America’s – opposition to continuing Israeli aggression. As a bonus, the fleet will be practicing a unique military skill: the construction of a temporary port.

“This temporary pier would enable a massive increase in the amount of humanitarian assistance getting into Gaza every day,” Biden said.

It would be crass to think of the coming humanitarian JLOTS deployment primarily as practice for war. But it would also be naive to pretend American soldiers and sailors won’t benefit from building a pier from scratch in a war zone. Even if that war doesn’t directly involve US troops.

Those Americans just might be ordered to build the pier again in the waters around Taiwan, while Chinese missiles rain down.

Xi’s China deserves a diplomatic surgical strike by India on Tibet

24 March 2024, Vijay Kranti, [Organiser](#)

Having seen PM Modi’s aggressive and decisive response to Pakistan’s Uri and Pulwama acts, the Indian people are disappointed at a docile, timid and verbose response to China’s insult on issues related to India’s Arunachal Pradesh. India now needs to hit at the fountain head of China’s aggression its illegal occupation of Tibet

Beijing’s aggressive reaction against Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to India’s north-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh for the inauguration of a strategically important road tunnel at Sela Pass on March 9 was no less intense and bullying than China’s earlier

reactions on similar occasions in the past. Hence, it was not very surprising, though shocking, for the common Indians. But what is surprising is the defensive response of the Modi government that had otherwise earned a different image and expectations after India’s aggressive and decisive response to Pakistan in Balakot and across the LOC in Jammu & Kashmir.

New Delhi’s verbose and oft-repeated reaction to China’s aggressive and humiliating assertion has disappointed those who are watching India’s foreign policy achieve new heights under the Modi government. They see it as just a replay of what is generally termed a docile, timid and self-evasive ‘Nehruvian’ response, which BJP and its leaders have always scoffed at. Trying to dismiss China’s claims over Arunachal Pradesh, the MEA statement from New Delhi on March 12 looks like a copy-past exercise. This time, it reads that China’s claims “will not change the reality that the State of Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India”. In his media briefing, the Indian spokesman once again tried to assure the nation by saying, “The Chinese side has been made aware of this consistent position on several occasions.”

This MEA’s statement is in no way different from what it had said when Beijing challenged all similar visits by other Indian leaders like Home Minister Amit Shah in April 2023, PM Dr. Manmohan Singh in October 2009, USA’s New Delhi-based Ambassador’s visit in November 2023; Dalai Lama’s visit in April 2017 or China’s other humiliating acts like assigning Chinese names to more than 11 Indian cities and towns of Arunachal in 2017 and 2023. In July last year, China again issued stapled visas to Indian athletes from Arunachal and Jammu & Kashmir for participation in the Asian Games, saying that it does not recognize J&K as a part of India and that the Arunachal visitors don’t need a Chinese visa as they are ‘Chinese’ citizens.

An ordinary Indian today has come to realize that Xi Jinping’s ever-increasing assertion on claiming Arunachal as a ‘part of China’ and his open challenge to the authority and right of the

Indian PM even against entering a State of his own country amounts to a far more aggressive act than Pakistan's open support to separatism and terrorist acts at Pathankot, Uri and Pulwama.

Looking back into the history of India-China relations, one will be amused to notice that neither the tendency of Chinese aggression and advances on Indian soil has changed over the past seven decades, nor there is a change in India's defensive and half-hearted, rather apologetic tone against the Chinese manoeuvres. For example, soon after occupying Tibet in 1950-51, China quietly grabbed about 38,000 sq km of Indian land of Aksai Chin in upper Ladakh. When the Indian Foreign Secretary brought this to the notice of PM Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, he was furious. He instructed the FS to send a strong letter of protest to Peking (i.e. today's 'Beijing'). However, only a few hours later, Nehru called him back and asked him to hold it, saying he would talk to Chinese PM Zou Enlai.

But it never happened. It was only in September 1957, when China inaugurated the 1200 km long stretch of G-219 highway through Aksai Chin and invited the Indian Ambassador in Peking to attend the ceremony, that the Nehru Government got furious. Even then, the official reaction from New Delhi was limited to the question: how did Chinese labour enter this Indian region without an Indian visa?

In the next five years, China developed Tibet into a military foothold and used the Tibetan land as its launch pad to attack an unprepared and unsuspecting India in October 1962. However, despite suffering a humiliating defeat in this attack from China, India has perpetually failed to realize that it is only illegally occupying Tibet, which is the real fountainhead of all aggression and territorial troubles for India from Beijing rulers. Indian security agencies have confirmed once and again that China has been using the occupied Tibetan land for training, sheltering and supplying arms, money and drugs to a host of anti-India terrorist and

separatist groups like the Naxalites, Nagas, Mizos etc.

The latest Chinese danger, looming large from across the Indo-Tibetan borders, is President Xi Jinping's campaign to occupy the religious institution of reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhism. His real aim is to install the next, i.e., the 15th Dalai Lama, as a Chinese puppet after the demise of the current ageing 14th Dalai Lama. This exiled religious ruler of Tibet has been living in India since 1959, when China violently crushed the Tibetan people's uprising against its colonial rule, and the 25-year-old Dalai Lama had to escape to India to save his life. Understanding the fallout of this move of Xi Jinping, the US Congress, despite a serious clash of opinion and policies among the warring Democrats and Republicans, has passed a near-unanimous bi-partisan constitutional amendment which makes it obligatory for all future Presidents and governments of the USA to take effective action against Chinese government to stop it from usurping the institution of Dalai Lama.

Unfortunately, total silence and indifference on the part of New Delhi make one believe that the Indian Government is oblivious to the severe consequences of Xi's designs for India's national integrity and sovereignty. The fact remains that the supreme religious root-temples and root-Gurus of almost all Buddhist traditions of Indian Himalayas, Nepal and Bhutan today lie inside Chinese occupied Tibet. A situation in which a puppet Dalai Lama and other incarnate root Gurus would act on Beijing's diktats holds seeds of imminent havoc falling upon the entire 4000-long Himalayan belt for all these three countries. This single development can convert today's Ladakh, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal from India's 'first line of defence' to porous floodgates of sabotage and rebellion against India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

This surely calls for a qualitative change in the Indian Government's approach towards the Dalai Lama and the overall issue of Tibet. Sadly, right from the day the Chinese PLA marched into Tibet in 1950 to walk over to India's

borders and subsequent signing away of Tibet by New Delhi as 'China's Autonomous Region' through its much-hyped 'Panchsheel' Agreement of 1954, all Indian governments have been handling Dalai Lama and the issue of occupied Tibet as a liability rather than an asset in their dealings with Beijing. With consistent use of Tibet as an anti-India launch pad and Xi's claims on Arunachal as 'Southern Tibet', New Delhi must have by now realized that the natural source of trouble from China for India is the former's colonial control and presence in Tibet. Unless India starts contesting and challenging China's illegal occupation of Tibet, New Delhi cannot hope for any end to the Chinese aggression.

It may not be easy for India to take any military action against today's mighty and rogue China. But the policymakers in New Delhi can surely use some fine surgical tools of diplomacy and international politics by taking some decisive baby steps like standing by the Dalai Lama on the issue of his reincarnation, honouring him with India's highest civilian award, 'Bharat Ratna' (as in the cases of other foreigners like Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan); and bestowing a more respectful status to Dalai Lama's Dharamshala 'Central Tibetan Administration' as compared to its present 'NGO' like status in India. Taken one after another in a staggered manner, such steps are bound to force Xi and his communist establishment to shift from their aggressive gear to a defensive one. But that can happen only if the Modi government decides to show the courage of undertaking a diplomatic surgical strike in the same way as it did on the war front with Pakistan in Balakot and Uri.

Why is China provoking India over Arunachal Pradesh?

21 March 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

China, under Xi Jinping, has gone downhill economically as well as politically with its BRI brand losing sheen by the day.

New Delhi: Chinese reiteration of its unfounded cartographical claims over Arunachal Pradesh in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the border state this month is part of Beijing's plan to keep scent marking its territorial claims as also deliberately provoking India.

While the Modi government has verbally retaliated to Chinese uncalled-for statements on Arunachal Pradesh, the fundamental objective is to draw Bharat into a verbal match and keep the comatose issue alive. The fact is China under Xi Jinping has gone downhill economically as well as politically with its BRI brand losing sheen by the day as countries like Italy have walked out of the Communist debt trap. By contrast, India has grown under PM Modi economically and politically with Bharat on the way to acquiring the global heft needed to tackle coercive powers like China.

However, India has learnt to play the Chinese on their own game. The Modi government also repeats the standardized text in response to Chinese ad-nauseam claims over Arunachal Pradesh and parts of East Ladakh. Gone are the days when India would get hassled by oft-repeated Chinese statements and the Modi government is assiduously engaging allies in South East Asia with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in the Philippines on March 25 and profile of Taiwan increasing in India. US leadership may be in confusion over 'One China' policy but India has not uttered the magic words for Chinese for the past decade even as it continues to engage the Tibetan leadership in exile as well as openly supporting freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. The Chinese provocation also is designed to provide fodder to the Indian opposition who themselves are trying to egg on the Modi government to take on the PLA for political rather than any nationalistic reasons. The Indian military border infrastructure all along the 3488 km LAC has taken a jump for the best

under the Modi regime and classified efforts are also being made to ensure that the Indian troops never run out of ammunition and artillery in the worst-case scenario.

The real reason is that the Chinese economic bubble has burst because of the stock market decline. There are credible reports that the Communist state has intervened in the stock market in excess of RMB 400 billion, which is the second highest after their intervention in 2015 stock market collapse. In 2015, they had intervened to the extent of RMB 900 billion to revive its spiraling stock market. The current BRI debt is close to a trillion US dollars with countries like client state Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Venezuela, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Angola, Laos in no position to repay Beijing and being forced to part with state equity to repay the very high interest loans. The only other option is for Communist to take a haircut on these bad debts or give a loan waiver. But the latter is not possible as China projected growth this year is five percent with US political leadership slowly waking up to Beijing's coercion even as Europe is still playing the fence sitter.

The best way for India to deal with Chinese stuck record on Arunachal Pradesh is to have its own repudiation of Beijing's claim on an audio loop.

India shows the world how to deal with hegemonistic China

20 March 2024, [First Post](#)

India has reiterated that it remains unconcerned about China's objections, protests and criticism. It will not normalise ties till the situation reverts to pre-April 2020

At the Express Adda last week, External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, answering a question posed by Zhou Yongsheng, political counsellor at the Chinese embassy in New Delhi, mentioned, "I think it's in our common interest that we should not have that many forces on the LAC, it's in our common interest that we should observe agreements that we have. And

today, it's not just in common interest, I believe it's in China's interest as well."

He added, "I'm still very much committed to finding a fair, reasonable outcome (to the standoff at the LAC). But one which is respectful of agreements, which recognises the LAC, and doesn't seek to change the status quo." Jaishankar stuck firmly to the Indian stance that unless the border is resolved, relations cannot be normal, while mentioning that the situation was 'very tense and dangerous.'

The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, responded to Beijing's standard approach, by stating, "China has stressed multiple times that the boundary question does not represent the entirety of China-India relations, and should be placed appropriately in bilateral relations and managed properly." The standoff in Ladakh continues since the Chinese intrusion in the summer of 2020.

A day prior, the Chinese had lodged a diplomatic protest over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh to inaugurate the Sela Tunnel. In the protest it reiterated its claims to the region and mentioned that 'such moves will only complicate the unresolved boundary question'. India rejected the claim by responding that Arunachal Pradesh 'was, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India'.

The same day Rs6,621 crore were sanctioned for the construction of the planned frontier highway in Arunachal Pradesh. This is expected to enhance connectivity to border areas as well as foster socio-economic growth. In 2014, once this project was announced, China objected by stating, "Before the border problem is solved, we hope the Indian side will not take any action that could further complicate the relevant issue, so as to preserve the current situation of peace and stability in the border area."

When India conducted its Agni-5 MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle) test in the Bay of Bengal last week, China moved its research vessel, Xian Yang Hong 01, to monitor it. The vessel was

deployed in international waters off the Vizag coast, under surveillance of the Indian navy.

The Chinese government mouthpiece, *The Global Times*, commented that the test indicates that 'India's main hypothetical enemy is China, with its goal of having missile coverage over China to enhance deterrence capabilities.' Its assessment was true. It also linked the test to Prime Minister Modi's visit to Arunachal.

Around the same time, *The Global Times*, in an opinion piece, hit out against India's policies towards Chinese mobile manufacturers. The government had demanded that Chinese mobile companies be transparent and accountable to Indian laws. To ensure this they must have 'Indian management, Indian distributors and local contract manufacturers.' The Chinese media termed the Indian action as 'trade protectionism.'

However, *The Global Times* ignored the fact that Indian directives were intended to curb illegal practices of Chinese companies. In December 2021, income tax authorities raided the offices of Xiaomi and OPPO, both Chinese companies, for violating rules and evading taxes. Earlier, Chinese firms running mobile loan applications and transport businesses were raided. The Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrashekar, had stated in the Rajya Sabha, in July last year, that Chinese smartphone makers including OPPO, Xiaomi and Vivo have been 'found evading taxes worth Rs 9000 Crores.'

In October 2023, the Enforcement Directorate arrested four executives of Chinese smartphone maker Vivo, including one Chinese national, in relation to a pending case of money laundering. Chinese companies had assumed that they could act against Indian laws because of diplomatic protection from their government. Government scrutiny of Chinese firms increased post Galwan. Chinese mobile companies currently control almost 70 per cent of the market in India.

The Chinese protesting high-level visits to Arunachal Pradesh are nothing new nor unexpected. It had resorted to criticising the prime minister's visit in February 2019 also. It

had also objected when the US Ambassador, Richard Verma, visited the state in October 2016. Beijing had then warned Washington, mentioning, 'We urge the United States to stop getting involved in the China-India territorial dispute and do more to benefit this region's peace and tranquillity.'

In 2019, when the then US Ambassador, Kenneth Juster, visited Arunachal Pradesh, the US state department commented, "The Tawang visit highlights resolute US support for Indian sovereignty and commitment to local partnerships." This irked the Chinese. Beijing repeated its objections even when the current US ambassador, Eric Garcetti, visited the state in November last year.

It had opposed the visit of the Dalai Lama in both 2009 and 2017. In 2017, the Chinese spokesperson stated, "India, in disregard to China's concerns, obstinately arranged the Dalai Lama's visit to the disputed part of the eastern part of the China-India border, causing serious damage to China's interests and China-India relations." In every case, India countered the Chinese claiming Arunachal Pradesh belongs to India. Chinese objections are ignored and counters issued as a matter of routine.

The competition for regional dominance continues between the two nations. When the Chinese satellite tracking vessel, Yuan Wang 5, docked in Sri Lanka, despite Indian protests, in August 2022, it was received by pro-China Sri Lankan lawmakers as also the Chinese ambassador to Colombo. The Chinese ambassador even published an article on the docking in a local daily. The intent was to display diplomatic victory.

This year, when India pushed Sri Lanka to not permit the Chinese research vessel from docking, New Delhi considered it a diplomatic win. When it was granted permission to dock in Male, *The Global Times* stated, "The diplomatic actions India previously took to pressure Sri Lanka against the Chinese research vessel seem unlikely to work with the Muizzu government."

India's engagements with Taiwan are on the rise, which is bound to irk China. Apart from inking an agreement to move Indian workers to Taiwan and honouring their Foxconn Group's CEO and Chairman, Young Liu, with a Padma Bhushan, the government is establishing semiconductor plants in collaboration with Taiwan. Laying the foundation stone, the prime minister stated, "Leaders from Taiwan have also joined us in today's programme virtually." Unofficially, India is dumping the one-China policy.

India has reiterated that it remains unconcerned about China's objections, protests and criticism. It will not normalise ties till the situation reverts to pre-April 2020. China has understood Indian intent, and also noted its confidence in countering them. India will not bend, will China?

There will be no 'short, sharp' war. A fight between the US and China would likely go on for years.

19 March 2024, [Atlantic Council](#)

Everyone loves a short, sharp war. They end on time, are won decisively, and provide tight narrative completion for the stories we want to tell.

Among military commanders, planners, and theorists, this often manifests itself in the quest for the decisive battle—one that will inflict such a stunning defeat on the enemy that its will to fight is broken, forcing enemy leadership to sue for peace or otherwise accept terms of surrender. In naval warfare, Alfred Thayer Mahan embodied this ideal in his prescription to mass one's superior fleet against an adversary's inferior fleet, seek and win decisive battles, and thereby win command of the sea.

This bias is borne out in modern US war games, in which players command opposing armed forces in simulated warfare. Usually sponsored by military commands or think tanks, such games generally open with a compressed "road to war," or a backstory and the conditions under which the notional war begins. The

players—usually a mix of military officers, officials, policymakers, and think tankers—"fight" a highly kinetic scenario at the opening stage of a conflict. While a war game might theoretically play out over a longer period, time constraints in the real world typically compel game sponsors and facilitators to end these games in a short period, often in a few days or a little over a week. Conclusions are then made based off of the snapshot provided by this brief gameplay. The results inform commanders and policymakers as they approve war plans and military investments.

In the United States, war-game results might, for example, inform prioritization of weapons procurement by the Office of the Secretary of Defense or the enthusiasm for Congress to invest in security infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific. Recently, an unclassified Center for Strategic and International Studies war game played out a scenario in which the United States fought China and won—albeit at great cost. While informative, this game focused largely on a short, decisive fight in and around Taiwan and the first island chain.

The same trend is borne out in the literary genre of "useful fiction." Recent novels such as *Ghost Fleet* and *White Sun War* depict wars fought primarily between the United States and China. Almost always in such works, the war is brought to a satisfying conclusion over a relatively short time frame. In part, this is a function of the commercial format, which almost certainly inclines authors toward tidy endings to satisfy publishers and readers alike. But the novels' popularity among military readers and their placement on official military service reading lists also reveal a predilection in the US military to think in terms of quick wars with decisive outcomes.

But wars between great powers are rarely short and sharp. They are more often long, grueling slogs of attrition that tend to expand horizontally, ensnaring other regions in their wake. Of course, it is possible that a US-China conflict over Taiwan could be an exception, that it could be brief and limited instead of protracted and wide-spread, but it's

irresponsible to assume such an outcome given history.

For the French and the British, the American Revolutionary War was but a single theater of war in what was then the latest episode of an enduring conflict that spanned the globe. At the outset of World War I, popular opinion in Britain, among other belligerents, held that the war would be “over by Christmas,” only for that nation and the world to endure four long years of slaughter. Imperial Japan launched its surprise attack on Pearl Harbor based on the assessment that it would convince the United States to cede to Japan its interests in the Pacific. Instead, Japan found itself fighting for years on the strategic defensive, until the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki forced Japan’s unconditional surrender.

Examples abound, but the historical record repeats this simple but critical theme: Great powers rarely settle military conflicts with other great powers in a neat, tidy fashion. Yet despite career requirements to attend professional schools where military history is at the heart of the curriculum, military planners continue to chase the unicorns of decisive battles and short wars. Cathal Nolan documents this phenomenon, and reveals its hollowness, in his masterful *The Allure of Battle*.

But if one were to write the novel that more precisely illustrates the long, global grind that a war between the United States and China would entail, it might appear something like this:

The opening pages showcase the trends of modern war games and novels, where naval combatants, fifth-generation aircraft, missile forces, and non-kinetic effects wreak havoc in the war’s opening days, crippling the air and naval power of the belligerents. Thousands upon thousands are killed in this first stage of the conflict. But the war expands horizontally, with China, Russia, and North Korea aligned against the United States, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, South Korea, and others. Fighting occurs in multiple theaters within United States Indo-Pacific Command and

beyond, including a massive conflagration on the Korean peninsula. Soon, the ability to hurl precision munitions back and forth culminates as expenditure rapidly outpaces production capacity and as US fuel stocks in the Pacific dwindle. With pressure increasing and options decreasing, tactical nuclear weapons are employed on the battlefield . . . and yet the war drives on.

Thus would end the first chapter. The reader turns the page, which says: “Three years later.” And with some skillfully placed exposition, the author reveals the massive changes that have occurred across society as belligerents commit to a long, bloody war. Nations have fully mobilized their economies to support what is now an existential war. Drafts and conscription are made mandatory to fill and maintain the ranks of multiple field armies, amphibious corps, fleets, and air forces. The war is not limited to the first island chain, but has multiple theaters that span the globe and escalates horizontally, with simultaneous conflicts drawing in additional belligerents. Emergency powers are universally invoked by executive branches, curtailing liberties in even the historically freest societies. The threat of nuclear holocaust is ever-present, and continuous fighting through tactical nuclear exchanges shatters previous conceptions of escalation management.

While these are logical conclusions should a US-China war occur, they usually take a backseat in policy analysis, strategic thinking, and operational planning, eclipsed again and again by a hyperfocus on a limited conflict in and around Taiwan. Committing the preponderance of security studies to the first phases of a global war of attrition is short-sighted, like a chess player who studies openings but fails to study the mid-game or its closing. None of this is easy, of course. Large-scale war disrupts societies and technology in profound and often unexpected ways. But because of this feature and not in spite of it, US policymakers and military leaders must rigorously study and plan for a broad range of implications of a years-long war with China.

With new national security legislation, China shows it will never loosen its grip on Hong Kong

19 March 2024, [VOX](#)

21 years ago, half a million Hong Kongers took to the streets to stop Article 23. This month, Beijing finally won.

On Tuesday, the government of Hong Kong passed the latest of a series of increasingly draconian national security laws. This one will target espionage, treason, and foreign political interference — all of which are fuzzily defined at best — and those found guilty of violating some of its tenets could be sentenced to life imprisonment.

This might sound niche or even well-intentioned; doesn't the US have its own fears about foreign political interference in its elections? But this isn't really about national security. It is, as Human Rights Watch put it, "Beijing's latest effort to transform Hong Kong from a free society to an oppressed one where people live in fear."

That effort has been underway at varying speeds since Hong Kong was returned to Beijing's control in 1997. Despite complaints from foreign governments, from what remains of Hong Kong civil society, and even from the city's increasingly beleaguered international business community, that effort is now all but complete. For Hong Kong's 7.4 million citizens, the multiyear fight to maintain some semblance of self-government and political rights is basically over. There is no news here.

But the name of this new legislation — Article 23 — will jog the memory of anyone who has lived in or observed Hong Kong over the past quarter-century. It's a name that was once a symbol of Hong Kongers' refusal to submit to Beijing's will and their willingness to take to the streets to fight for their liberty.

The backstory of Hong Kong's Article 23

Article 23 is found in Hong Kong's Basic Law, a city constitution of sorts worked out between Beijing and the British government in the years

leading up to Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule. It states, among other things, that Hong Kong's government will "enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government" in Beijing.

It wasn't until nearly six years after the 1997 handover that Hong Kong's government, with more than a little nudging from Beijing, made a serious effort to pass a law that would fulfill Article 23. Legislation was drafted in February 2003 that, among other provisions, would have allowed the Hong Kong government to ban any organization if it had links to organizations banned in China for national security reasons. That alarmed pro-democracy groups in Hong Kong, where hundreds of thousands of people from China had found refuge following the Chinese Communist Party's takeover of the mainland in 1949, as well as the city's vibrant Christian churches, which feared being forced out of existence.

But there were fears that went beyond the text of the legislation.

The relationship between Hong Kong and China after the former's return was defined by the phrase "one country, two systems." Formulated by former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who had a knack for pithy political expressions, this meant in practice that Hong Kong would be largely left to run under its own system of laws — including general civil liberties like freedom of speech and press — while acknowledging that ultimately, Hong Kong was part of the Chinese state.

So Hong Kongers were always on the lookout for signs that "two systems" were becoming one. The introduction of Article 23 legislation in 2003 was that sign.

Still, what could they do about it? The British — who, let's not forget, had never allowed Hong Kong anything like full democracy — were long gone. They might be a Special Administrative Region and have their own passports, but they were part of the People's Republic of China. And in any case, Hong Kong was a city built on trade, not politics. Its business was business.

Then came July 1, 2003.

The march — and what came after

On what was a brutally hot day even for a Hong Kong summer, as many as 500,000 Hong Kongers took to the streets to oppose the Article 23 legislation. It was the largest such protest in the city since hundreds of thousands had marched against the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.

I was there, walking among the marchers as a young reporter for Time magazine. It was a cross-section of the Hong Kong I knew — young families, elderly men and women who had once come from the mainland themselves, teenagers at their first protest. They were angry about the Article 23 legislation, about the way their government had mismanaged the SARS outbreak earlier that year, and about the dwindling opportunities for good jobs and decent housing.

But what I remember was the pride present in the crowd. They were proud of their identity as Hong Kongers, as a people with a distinct language, a distinct culture, and, yes, distinct rights. They took to the streets because they would not allow that identity and those rights to be taken from them without a fight.

And they won, at least temporarily. The Article 23 legislation was eventually shelved.

But not forever. By the 2010s, with the less pragmatic and more autocratic Xi Jinping leading China, Beijing began to squeeze. Legislation was introduced to bring “moral and national education” to Hong Kong’s curriculum, code for Beijing’s view of history, and what limited representation existed in the city’s legislature was further constrained.

At every turn, Hong Kongers returned to the streets in protest, most famously in the “Umbrella Revolution” of 2014. They won some battles and became a symbol of the global fight for democracy. But it was a war they couldn’t win.

Xi Jinping had no interest in two systems — only his. And with every year, the room for free expression was further curtailed until there was no room at all. The new Article 23 legislation merely confirms that fact.

For one day, though, in July 2003 — and on many days that would follow — Hong Kongers showed what it was to act on freedom.

In the busy waters between China and Taiwan, the de facto border is being tested

19 March 2024, [The Guardian](#)

Around Kinmen, “Beijing has been careful to avoid looking excessively provocative even while using the incident to try to undermine Taiwan’s authority,” says Amanda Hsiao, a Taiwan-based senior China analyst at the International Crisis Group.

“The use of law enforcement patrols as a means of signalling displeasure is likely to continue, but Beijing may also choose to dial the frequency and intensity of those patrols up or down in response to events”.

Last week the director-general of Taiwan’s National Security Bureau, Tsai Ming-ye, told parliament that China was running “joint combat readiness patrols” on average every seven to 10 days in an effort to normalise the activity.

The end of the ‘silent agreement’

On Kinmen, residents are relaxed, and dismiss the recent furore as bad faith parties “internationalising” a tragic accident. Attitudes towards cross-strait relations and national identity are different to those on Taiwan’s main island. “The geographical economy and culture mean these two areas are always close,” says independent local councillor Tung Sen-po.

Kinmen is home to more than 140,000 people. It is a quiet, semi-rural community, with visible signs of thousands of years of culture and hundreds of being a military staging base or frontline to multiple conflicts. The economy once relied on the thousands of soldiers stationed there during and after the Chinese civil war, but has since pivoted to tourism and production of a local liquor, kaoliang. In 2020 it was Taiwan’s fifth-richest county in terms of median income.

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The primary worries among Kinmen people are about the tourism economy, and the ongoing restrictions on bilateral travel and trade privileges between their island and Xiamen, which were suspended during the pandemic and only partially restored.

Still, there are some concerns that tensions after the capsizing will deter tourists. A taxi driver and hotelier both thought fewer domestic visitors have come since the capsizing incident. A couple from Taiwan's main island, surnamed Qiu and Li, say they were worried while planning their visit, but felt reassured once they arrived.

Some residents are concerned about maritime enforcement. At a fish market in Jincheng township, vendors say some fishing crew and tour boats are nervous to head offshore since Chinese patrols ramped up.

"They are worried about safety, and we are also afraid of conflict," says Zhang, a seafood seller.

"We don't think there is any hostility because [fishing crews] sometimes trade at sea, [but] the problem of smuggling is very serious, and sometimes the marine patrols will take care of it, but there are few of us and a lot of them."

In the past, China and Taiwan have cooperated on illegal activity in the strait but the future is now complicated.

Raymond Kuo, a political scientist at the Rand Corporation, says the standoff increases the risk of misunderstandings and accidents.

"Not just between Chinese and Taiwanese enforcement agencies, but also between those agencies and civilians in the area," he says.

"Whose rules and orders should they follow? What if they receive contradictory instructions? This disagreement in enforcement jurisdictions also creates opportunities for illegal activity."

Chinese negotiators left Kinmen weeks ago without an agreement on compensation. Taiwan's Ocean Affairs Council minister, Kuan Bi-ling, has apologised for poor evidence-collecting by Taiwan's coast guard, and expressed regret and condolences over the deaths. But Taiwan's investigation is ongoing, and further information would not be released until it was completed, she said.

On Wednesday last week, Chen Binhua, spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, accused Taipei of stalling, and threatened further countermeasures.

Less than 24 hours later, at least two Chinese fishers were killed in another capsizing, this time a registered fishing vessel near Dongding, Kinmen's southernmost island. It was inside the prohibited waters, but the cause wasn't clear. Chinese and Taiwanese authorities conducted the search and rescue, suggesting

that at least for now, some cooperation is continuing.

But so are the increased patrols. Over the weekend, four Chinese coastguard vessels entered Kinmen's waters on consecutive days, causing confusion among Taiwanese officials who had just sent help to the capsized. Tung says the "silent agreement" on the border is gone now, but hopes the two sides can formalise it during negotiations.

Lu too is hopeful that the two sides can move on, and Kinmen's unique position between the two can return to friendlier times.

"The incident could have been minimised in the first place, but now it has become an international issue," he says.

Developments that rattled China in a fortnight

18 March 2024, [The New Indian Express](#)

Interesting developments in the domain of Sino-Indian relations took place almost simultaneously last fortnight. The relationship has not been in the best of states since May 2020, when the East Ladakh standoff commenced between the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Indian Army and resulted in some serious clashes at Galwan on June 15, 2020. The relationship seemed to dive only further south.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Sela Tunnel, which has been bored at a cost of ₹825 crore and is 1.5 km long at a height of 3,000 metres, well below the height of 4,200 metres at which the Sela Pass exists. The Chinese seemed to have their age-old objection about the visit of any dignitary to Arunachal Pradesh, which they claim as their territory called Southern Tibet (or Zangnam). For the Indian PM, it was perhaps a carefully thought-out measure to assert sovereignty and project a sense of strategic confidence in the face of repeated psychological warfare. The completion of the tunnel in an area it calls its own is itself objected to by the PLA. Little does China and its official media, The Global Times, say about the entire corridor it has constructed

through Gilgit-Baltistan, an area legitimately belonging to India.

Militarily, the Sela tunnel acts as a force multiplier in the speedy deployment of troops to hot war locations in the Kameng division of Arunachal Pradesh, one of the regions where the PLA and the Indian Army clashed during the Sino-Indian border war in 1962. With all-weather rapid induction of troops, the tunnel provides a psychological boost for India's military commanders who have always had to fret over the optimum size of deployment for winter and the quantum of winter stocking of supplies and ammunition.

For the layman, it needs to be understood that on the PLA side beyond the Bumla pass north of Tawang, the Tibetan plateau opens out into rolling plains, making logistics and reinforcements the least of its problems. Almost on the same lines, Eastern Ladakh also bears for the Indian Army the challenge of the Ladakh range from Leh to the battle areas. Srinagar and Pathankot have a problem of winter connectivity to Leh through the Himalayan and the Zaskar ranges. For the PLA, Indian infrastructure development should be worrisome, but India is only doing what the PLA did 20-30 years ago and continues to do. It should also be aware that permanent locations with habitat and storage have come up in important places all along the LAC, converting it almost akin to the LoC, which is manned very densely by the Indian Army to prevent any loss of territory.

The other development is in the field of future weaponry. India tested the Made-in-India Agni-5 missile with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) technology. MIRVs consist of several reentry vehicles, each equipped to carry multiple warheads (2-10) that can be designated for various targets, spaced hundreds of kilometres apart. Alternatively, multiple warheads can target a single location.

This is different from other missile technologies, where a single missile carries only one warhead and targets only a single location. Under Project Divyastra, this is a

classic Indian achievement. Only the five big powers possess this capability, which is complex enough to let the warheads be decoys for the adversary's anti-ballistic missiles, or cause far greater destruction through delivery of nuclear munitions to multiple targets several kilometres apart.

While the US MIRV capability exists at 12,000-15,000 km, it is not just the long range but the achievement of complex technologies of reentry and multiple targeting that gives greater nuclear deterrence capability to India in a calibrated way. Although Pakistan is reported to be developing a similar capability, India's progress is not aimed at any one adversary but a broad future range of contingencies where the possession of such capability provides inherent deterrence.

Some interesting outcomes appear evident from the successful India MIRV launch. Firstly, with the MIRV range at 5,000 km (with perhaps more to come) China's Global Times quotes Qian Feng, a director of one of its research departments, as saying, "It particularly shows that India's main hypothetical enemy is China, with its goal of having missile coverage over China to enhance deterrence capabilities." What China, its leadership and military hierarchy have to realise is that India, too, is developing at a fast rate and gaining greater confidence as its economy, research and development, technology and human parameters all improve. This is natural for any nation to aspire for.

India is fully perceptive that China does not wish to see India grow and become an alternative pole in Asia. Understanding the inevitability of India's growth, China wishes to scuttle whatever it can to delay the achievement of India's aspiration. The actions China commenced in April-May 2020 in Ladakh have been followed by a tirade of hostility to force India to commit itself far more to its strategic security. It continues to include a mix of various measures to keep India on the defensive; the most recent being the placement of spy vessels of the PLA Navy in the vicinity of India's maritime zone to obtain data

from Indian technology tests such as the MIRV. Tering 10,000 Indian troops in Eastern Ladakh, under various stages of re-orbating, as increments on the LAC, when these troops have remained deployed here since April-May 2020, is also unfortunate.

What China needs to realise is that keeping Sino-Indian relations in the grey zone of 'friend, adversary, partner or collaborator' is not helpful to either nation. In a competitive world, with a young population and dynamic human capital, India has all the potential to grow beyond the threshold of a middle power; events such as landmark technological achievements will continuously contribute to China's unfortunate perceptions, and the scope for that will increase manifold with more progress. It probably fears this happening before it has achieved its own threshold objectives, such as the re-integration of all its perceived former territories. Being a potential superpower too, it's not easy to let go of perceptions. Can India do anything more to ease misperception and intent? It will give us more leeway for rapid growth and perhaps even collaboration. Time to think.

Upholding one-China principle an unstoppable historical trend

18 March 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

The separatist activities for "Taiwan independence" are the most destructive elements to the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi when answering questions from Chinese and foreign media about China's foreign policy and external relations recently. To truly safeguard cross-Strait peace, the world must unequivocally oppose "Taiwan independence." The stronger the commitment to the one-China principle is, the greater the guarantee for the peace across the Strait will be, said Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

This solemn stance on the Taiwan-related issues made by the Chinese government has given a serious warning to the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces and external forces behind them, once again sending a powerful message that the historical trend of upholding the one-China principle is unstoppable.

Taiwan is China's Taiwan. The elections in Taiwan held this January are just local elections in one part of China. The result does not change, even in the slightest terms, the basic fact that Taiwan is part of China. Nor does it change the historical trend of Taiwan's return to the motherland.

Since the elections ended, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokespersons promptly shared the reaction of the international community to the elections. In just a few days, more than 100 countries and international organizations have reaffirmed their commitment to the one-China principle and their support for China in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia said in a statement that Serbia, in accordance with its consistent policy and advocacy for adherence to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, supports the one-China principle, that it does not recognize the statehood of Taiwan.

The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade reaffirmed Hungary's commitment to the one-China principle in the country's foreign policy.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, Prime Minister of Nepal, said Nepal opposes "Taiwan independence," never allows others to use Nepal's territory to engage in any activities that harm China's interests, and opposes any interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova said that the Russian side opposes any form of Taiwan's independence, and called on all outside forces to refrain from provocative actions

undermining regional stability and international security.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry said that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China, and any election or action carried out in Taiwan should not affect this fact.

Leaders of the Maldives, Sierra Leone and other countries issued joint press communiques or joint statements with the Chinese side during their visits to China, reaffirming their commitment to the one-China principle, opposition to external interference in China's internal affairs, and support of all efforts made by China to achieve national reunification.

These voices of justice and peace reflect the broad consensus of the international community in firmly upholding the UN Charter and the basic norms governing international relations, and embody the trend of the times and of history.

The one-China principle is what underpins peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. Whatever changes take place in Taiwan, the basic fact that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is part of China will not change; the Chinese government's position of upholding the one-China principle and opposing "Taiwan independence" separatism, "two Chinas" and "one China, one Taiwan" will not change; and the international community's prevailing consensus on upholding the one-China principle and long-standing and overwhelming adherence to this principle will not change.

A few countries, out of geopolitical considerations and ideological confrontation, have chosen to stand in opposition to the vast majority of countries in the international community, obscuring and hollowing out the one-China principle. While paying lip service to not supporting "Taiwan independence," they announce arms sales to Taiwan and collude with the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces.

The Democratic Progressive Party authority has obstinately adhered to the separatist position of "Taiwan independence" and refused to

recognize the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus. It made provocations in pursuit of "independence" in collusion with external forces. Such acts of undermining the one-China principle are despicable and deplorable. These are the root causes of the tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

The Chinese government and people have a clear stance on such plots and tricks. Whoever engages in "Taiwan independence" on the island will be held accountable by history. Whoever in the world connives at and supports "Taiwan independence" will get burned for playing with fire and taste the bitter fruit of their own doing.

Standing up for the one-China principle is the right thing to do. It has the overwhelming support of the international community and represents the prevailing trend of the world. A total of 183 countries have established diplomatic relations with China based on the one-China principle. Taiwan's number of so-called "diplomatic allies" has been reduced to 12, and these countries only account for less than 0.3 percent of the world's population. It's obvious to see which one represents the mainstream and the general trend.

On Jan. 15 this year, the day after the elections in Taiwan concluded, the Nauru government announced its recognition of the one-China principle and severed the so-called "diplomatic relations" with the Taiwan authorities. The country said it is willing to resume diplomatic relations with China.

On Jan. 24, China and Nauru signed a joint communique on the resumption of diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level. Nauru's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Lionel Aingimea said during his visit to China that the one-China principle is an irresistible trend in the world.

It is believed that more members of the international community will see the historical trend and choose to establish or resume diplomatic relations with China. The international community's prevailing consensus on upholding the one-China principle will become more solid. The Chinese

people's just cause of opposing "Taiwan independence" separatism and external interference and striving for national reunification will win more understanding and support.

Some day, there will be a family photo of the whole international community in which all members uphold the one-China principle. It is only a matter of time.

The 2nd session of the 14th NPC: The Government Work Report and Key Takeaways for Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang

18 March 2024, Rinzin Namgyal, [FNVA](#)

The commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the National People's Congress (NPC) stands as a pivotal juncture in the evolution of China's political framework. Despite enduring perceptions characterizing the NPC as a mere rubber stamp institution, its historical trajectory reveals a substantive legacy of consequential deliberations. Premier Li Qiang's delivery of the government work report during the second session of the 14th NPC underscores this significance, as it serves to delineate key policy initiatives and priorities of the state.

Furthermore, scholarly attention is merited towards the NPC's policy directives concerning ethnic minority regions, indicative of China's persistent endeavors towards societal cohesion through assimilative measures. Such analyses contribute to a nuanced understanding of the NPC's multifaceted role within China's political landscape and its implications for governance dynamics.

Government Work Report:

Premier Li Qiang's presentation of the government work report on March 5th served as a focal point for highlighting a spectrum of policy measures. Significantly, the event was preceded by a pre-report seminar wherein insights from eight experts were solicited and incorporated.

Key highlights include:

1. The establishment of a GDP growth target for 2024 at approximately 5 percent, signaling a strategic trajectory for economic expansion.
2. Facilitation of over 12 million employment opportunities within urban sectors, aligning with objectives to bolster labor market vitality and sustain socioeconomic stability.
3. Implementation of targeted fiscal measures, including the issuance of special-purpose bonds for local government projects and ultra-long special treasury bonds, to optimize financing mechanisms and support infrastructural development endeavors.
4. Introduction of the AI Plus initiative alongside a concerted drive to foster innovation in disruptive technologies, underscoring commitments to technological advancement and competitive positioning in global markets.
5. Adoption of comprehensive measures to invigorate consumer spending and catalyze domestic demand, pivotal for fortifying economic resilience and ensuring sustained growth momentum.
6. Affirmation of national treatment principles for foreign-funded enterprises and active participation in international trade agreements, indicative of a steadfast commitment to fostering a conducive business environment and deepening global economic integration.
7. Implementation of targeted risk mitigation strategies to address challenges pertaining to property markets, local government debt dynamics, and the resilience of financial institutions, aiming to safeguard financial stability and mitigate systemic vulnerabilities.
8. Prioritization of the energy revolution agenda alongside resolute opposition to external interference, reflecting a strategic imperative to enhance energy security and safeguard national sovereignty in economic decision-making.

Ethnic Minority Regions:
Ethnic minority regions are divided into cultivated (Shufan) and uncultivated (Shengfan) areas, with historical perceptions of hierarchies.

The plenary sessions for Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet shed light on regional policies:

1. In Inner Mongolia, the strategic objective is the integration of ethnic minority communities within the broader societal framework, concurrently prioritizing stability initiatives and countering separatist tendencies.
2. Xinjiang maintains a trajectory of assimilationist policies, with a particular emphasis on the Sinicization of Islam, coupled with efforts aimed at sustaining social cohesion and stability.
3. Tibet's policy emphasis lies on fostering peace, stability, and development, notwithstanding environmental preservation challenges and the imperative of safeguarding cultural heritage amidst modernization efforts.

Observations and Analysis:

The proceedings of the National People's Congress (NPC) and plenary sessions elucidate a sustained pursuit of assimilationist policies within ethnic minority regions. Guided by the leadership and ideological framework espoused by Xi Jinping, these initiatives prompt inquiries into their alignment with constitutional precepts and laws pertaining to ethnic autonomy. Notably, deliberations underscore the government's concerted attention towards rural revitalization, modernization, and the pursuit of high-quality development as central tenets of governance priorities.

Conclusion:
The convening of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) second session underscores China's steadfast dedication to fostering economic growth and ensuring stability. Nevertheless, the deliberations on policies concerning ethnic minority regions illuminate persistent complexities in reconciling assimilation endeavors with imperatives of cultural preservation and legal autonomy. A nuanced comprehension of these intricate dynamics offers valuable insights into the prospective trajectory of China's ethnic policies and their implications for the nation's socio-political landscape.

Economic diplomacy: Charting the course for
China-U.S. relationship

18 March 2024, [CGTN](#)

In the ever-evolving landscape of global commerce, few relationships carry as much weight as that between China and the United States. Despite apparent economic tensions between the two countries, stemming primarily from Washington's polarized politics and its policy of treating China as a rival, recent diplomatic efforts signify an ongoing commitment to keeping channels of communication open.

"The Americans have woken up and realized that China is a great power, which was inevitable - if China was successful economically, it would become a great power. And they find this very, very difficult to handle," remarked Martin Wolf, Chief Economics Commentator at the Financial Times, at a roundtable organized by the Beijing-based Center for China and Globalization (CCG) in the Chinese capital last month.

"The bottom line is we should take politics out of commerce... If there's a national security issue, let's deal with that. If there's no national security issue, let's leave it at that," emphasized Eric Zheng, President of AmCham Shanghai, speaking exclusively with CGTN. "If it's a commercial issue then let the market decide," he added.

The recent visit of an American business delegation to China, led by Suzanne Clark, President and CEO of the influential U.S. Chamber of Commerce, underscored the importance of maintaining dialogue and pursuing economic diplomacy. Clark's meetings with top Chinese officials, including Premier Li Qiang, emphasized the "extremely important" nature of China-U.S. relations.

"I think all of us want an outcome where the world's two largest economies can coexist in a way that isn't defined by zero-sum metrics," Clark had earlier said. "We want to create a framework...where we can compete on a level playing field, confront challenges in the

relationship, and cooperate on big global priorities."

Clark's visit was welcomed by the American business community in China. "It's good to have somebody like Ms. Clark visiting China so that she could demonstrate to the audience back home in the U.S. that engagement (and) commercial relationship with China is important," Zheng stressed.

Despite the apparent China-U.S. tensions, a large number of American companies remain upbeat on China as a business and investment destination, as revealed in the latest report by the American Chamber of Commerce in China (AmCham China) released last month. Another report by AmCham South China found that 90 percent of American companies have achieved profitability in China, reflecting a high return on investment (ROI).

"We represent U.S. companies in China, so we certainly see the commercial benefits from that angle," Zheng noted. "When you talk about manufacturing, and certainly China has become a major manufacturing base exporting affordable products to the U.S. So, from a manufacturing standpoint, global supply chain standpoint, these two countries have benefited from this relationship. And from a consumption standpoint, certainly China is a huge market, not only for China itself but also for foreign companies," he elaborated.

However, despite striking a positive chord in Beijing and recognizing the significance of China-U.S. economic relations, Clark's own views continue to defend American protectionism, as gauged from her remarks at the 13th annual China Business Conference in Washington D.C. last year.

"The U.S. Chamber supports targeted and responsible steps to restrict Chinese access to sensitive technologies that could be used to undermine America's national security, including export controls, technology restrictions, and scrutiny of outbound investment," Clark said at the conference, however clarifying that "not every economic interaction with China poses a national security risk" and that "there is still a vast area of

commercial opportunity where the two countries can and should engage productively." This sentiment is mirrored in the Biden administration's strategy of "decoupling" or adopting a "small yard, high fence" approach that seeks to restrict economic engagement with China, particularly in high-tech sectors like artificial intelligence (AI) and semiconductor development. Premier Li Qiang pointed out the detrimental effects of this approach to the visiting American business delegation led by Clark.

Wolf offers a slightly different perspective. "When [U.S. National Security Advisor] Jake Sullivan says, 'We are trying to build a high fence but with a small yard,' I think he means it... They don't want open-ended conflict with China. They want a deal which narrows things... they want trade to continue and they want to be able to do deals with China on very important joint interests like climate which this administration believes in and other things." The American business community in China recognizes the importance of maintaining robust economic relations between the two countries. "Decoupling is not a feasible option given the extensive commercial and cultural integration between the U.S. and China over the past four decades. Finding ways to work together remains in the best interests of both countries," concluded Zheng.

Despite the complexities and challenges, the economic relationship between China and the U.S. remains indispensable on the global stage. As we navigate through this intricate landscape, it's evident that constructive dialogue and cooperation are vital for both nations. While tensions may persist, the mutual benefits of collaboration far outweigh the alternatives, reinforcing the necessity of economic diplomacy in charting the course for China-U.S. relations.

Rahul Sankrityayan's Tibet connect debunks false Chinese narrative

17 March 2024, [Firstpost](#)

During the annual 'Two Meetings' in Beijing, it was announced that China's defence budget for 2024 would be \$231.36 billion, an increase of 7.2 per cent from the previous year (about thrice the size of the Indian defence budget); it is a large increase, especially when one knows that official figures are only a fraction of the actual spending by the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Li Jie, a Beijing-based naval expert, told the Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece *The Global Times*: "By 2027, the Chinese military will have the ability to effectively deal with threats brought by hegemonism and power politics in the western Pacific region, including issues relating to the Taiwan question and the South China Sea, as well as border tensions between China and India."

It is clear that the increase in the Chinese budget is targeting not only Taiwan, the 'rebel island', but also India.

In these circumstances, it is necessary for Delhi to think 'out of the box'.

One of the many alternatives is to supplement military preparedness with 'Historical Warfare'; this would not cost much to the exchequer and would help refocus and motivate the defence forces on the border.

It would also put the boundary question in its proper historical perspective; for millennia, Northern India has been contiguous to Tibet, an independent nation till the end of the 1950s, not to China; the same is true for Eastern Turkestan (now called Xinjiang).

In this context, I recently became acquainted with the fascinating life of Mahapandita Rahul Sankrityayan, one of the greatest Indian scholars who wrote some 130 books.

He was a great wandering scholar, spending 45 years of his life away from home on Asian and Western roads.

Rahul Ji, as he was known by his followers, was born Kedarnath Pandey to an Orthodox Hindu Brahmin family in Pandha village of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh on April 9, 1893. He was the eldest child of six siblings. Though he only received a formal education up to grade eight (in Urdu language in his village),

Sankrityayan later mastered some 34 languages.

His maternal grandfather, Ram Sharan Pathak, an ex-soldier, with his innumerable tales of valour and adventure, planted the seed of love for travelling in him; already at the age of 9, he ran away from home 'to see the world' and only after having visited Calcutta and Varanasi did he return to complete his middle school.

One of his biographers wrote: "Sankrityayan's life, work, and ideas were steeped in and spread through many cultures, disciplines, and geographies. Born in a Sanatani Brahmin family, he lived variously the life of a Vaishnava sadhu, an Arya Samaji polemicist, a Buddhist monk, an antiquarian and scholar of Buddhism, a political activist jailed for anti-colonial speeches (1920 and 1923–1925) and beaten up by the henchmen of landlords in a peasant movement in Bihar (1939), a self-professed communist, a progressive writer, a novelist, a historian, a biographer, a language activist, a linguist, lexicographer, and so forth."

Sankrityayan indeed lived multiple lives in one, always ready to change his worldview while remaining profoundly human.

From 1914 till 1930, he lived as a Vaishnava sannyasi; in 1939, Rahul Ji converted to Buddhism; this did not stop him from participating in the freedom movement, and between the years 1936 and 1944, he was actively involved in the peasant movement. During this period, he spent 29 months in jail (1940–42) for being a member of the Communist Party of India.

When free, he extensively travelled to Sri Lanka, the Soviet Union, the Far East, Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Western Europe.

Sankrityayan's four visits to Tibet are fascinating as they are a vibrant proof of the century-old linkages between India and Tibet (a fact denied by Communist China today) and a proof that Tibet is truly a child of Indian civilisation (as the Dalai Lama likes to put it).

It is important in the present tense context of Sino-Indian relations to not forget this.

During his trips to Tibet, this polymath managed to bring back to their land of origin

some 1,619 valuable manuscripts and *thankha* paintings; he employed 16 mules to bring the precious loads to Bihar, where they are today kept in a special section of the Patna Museum.

In Tibet, Rahul Ji met his Tibetan 'counterpart', probably the greatest Tibetan scholar of the first part of the 20th century, Gendun Choepel. Rahul Ji called him 'Geshe' ('Kalyanamitra' in Sanskrit) or 'Brother in the Dharma'. In Tibet, Geshe denoted a high degree of knowledge and was equivalent to a PhD in Buddhist studies.

The Mahapandita recounted: "My first meeting with Geshe took place in Lhasa. He was a disciple of Geshe Sherab, the most learned pandit of Drepung, the largest monastery in Tibet. Geshe Sherab was an authority on philosophy; thus, his disciple would also be a student of the same subject."

However, Gedun was not only a student of philosophy; he was also a poet and had mastered traditional and modern Tibetan painting: "As a talented artist, he could live a comfortable life in Lhasa. However, Geshe never aspired to a comfortable life."

Like Rahul Ji, Gedun was a wanderer, an adventurer, with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, always wanting to acquire more knowledge.

Sankrityayan recalled: "[In 1934] I realised that his depth of classical learning combined with his artistic background would be invaluable to me in the search for ancient MSS [manuscripts]... On his part, he wanted to accompany me to India and see and learn more. We became friends from that time onwards."

Thus started the search for the lost manuscripts of Nalanda and the other great viharas of Northern India; the two pandits wanted to rediscover the centuries-old linkage between India and Tibet.

They first visited the ancient monasteries north of Lhasa, then they went to Reting monastery, established in the 11th century: "Tibet has a scanty rainfall, and at the time of our arrival, richly painted thangkhas had been hung out for

an airing. Geshe's heart leapt at the sight. They were of Indian workmanship, and it is also possible that they had been brought from India." They copied them.

In his memoirs, Rahul Ji noted: "My Tibetan journeys were a combination of bitter-sweet experiences—the bitterness as extreme as the sweet. Sometimes, animals to carry us and our goods were as readily provided as a householder's hospitality. Sometimes, though we ourselves were willing to walk, we could not hire porters, and it was difficult to get a yard of space to rest ourselves."

His following visit to Tibet was a great success: "I saw many dozens of ancient Sanskrit MMS. I was able to photograph many of them and copy down many by hand."

The day of May 25, 1936, was memorable: "We were informed by Dolma Phodrang [one of the temples in Sakya monastery] that they had received the key to Chakpe Lhakhang... I had very little expectation that I would find a Sanskrit manuscript there. After arriving, I turned to the left and found the first stockroom. The door and doorframe seemed centuries old. Who knows how many years of dust must have been collected? On one occasion, dust spread so profusely that the whole stockroom was blanketed as if in smoke."

The Mahapandita continued his exploration: "We waited a little and then moved in. There was also enough dust on the floor to make footprints. We found hundreds of scriptures there, some wrapped in cloth, while others had been left uncovered. Among them, we found scriptures as old as seven and eight hundred years. These were the texts that had been written and read by great ancient Tibetan masters and scholars. They were precious jewels of Tibetan literature and history." They had found the lost manuscripts.

Rahul Ji continued to explore the room: "I was searching for palm leaf manuscripts in Sanskrit. After browsing here and there, I found one which was not wrapped in cloth. One, two, three, four... I found twenty manuscripts in all.

I opened one and began to look at it. I was overjoyed."

This discovery symbolises the age-old relationship between Tibet and India.

Today, it is important to remember these ancient linkages (there are many others), which bear testimony to the deep connections between the people of India and Tibet.

If these connections could be revived in any way, it could completely change the perspective of the conflict with China and Beijing's erroneous narrative for the border 'dispute'. In the meantime, Beijing should be reminded that Tibet has been (and is still geographically) India's northern neighbour.

And real heroes like Mahapandita or Geshe should not be forgotten; on the contrary, they should be honoured, and a young generation of historians should be encouraged to boldly follow in the footsteps of the wandering scholars.

Tibetans in Exile – Raising Voices for a Distant Homeland

13 March 2024, [Vision Times](#)

Tibetans in Calgary spoke out against human rights violations in China on the 65th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising.

CALGARY, Alberta — Tenzin Tsepel's dearest dream is to see the Potala Palace with her own eyes. She enjoys watching YouTube videos of tourists visiting the massive fortress in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital.

She grew up in southern India, like thousands of Tibetans who fled their homeland after it was occupied by Communist China in 1950. Her grandparents followed the Dalai Lama on foot across the Himalayas, escaping persecution after the Tibetan uprising of March 10, 1959.

"To me, [Tibet] feels like home. But at the same time, I feel like it's a home that was stolen from me, and I was raised mountains away from my homeland," Tsepel said.

On March 10, 2024, in an annual event followed by Tibetans worldwide, Tsepel marched with other members of the

community in Calgary to commemorate the 65th Tibetan National Uprising Day.

As customary, they held a two-hour static protest in front of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Consulate to denounce the CCP's human rights abuses.

On the same day, Tibetans in Toronto joined with supporters for a protest rally that saw 1,900 participants, including members of the Chinese democracy movement, gather before the city's PRC consulate.

Sheng Xue, vice chairperson of the Federation for a Democratic China, gave a speech at the Toronto event praising the Tibetans' continued resistance to the CCP and urged others to help end communist tyranny in China.

"China has constructed dams along [Tibet's major] rivers, not only harming aquatic life, but also destroying and flooding local villages and displacing Tibetans," Tsepel said.

She added that the regime "has also made efforts to forcibly separate Tibetan children, over one million – that is three quarters of the Tibetan children population in Tibet – to place [them] in colonial boarding schools."

Tsepel compared the CCP's boarding schools in Tibet with the Indian residential schools in Canada's history.

"These children are now not only indoctrinated, but they are forbidden from speaking our own language, from practicing our culture and religion," she said. "You can imagine the profound intergenerational trauma."

During the 20th century, Tibet exercised independent rule despite being a sovereign part of the Chinese republic. In 1949, the legal Chinese government was toppled by communist armies, who established a repressive totalitarian regime.

According to the U.S. Department of State, human rights abuses in Tibet under communist rule include unlawful or arbitrary killings and arrests, disappearances, torture, and cases of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, such as transformation through re-education and rape of Buddhist girls and nuns.

The CCP claims that its occupation has brought Tibet prosperity and emancipation, calling the region's Buddhist culture a "feudal serfdom" that was transformed into a progressive and civilized "socialist system," as mentioned in an article by state-run paper the Global Times.

In an emailed response to a Vision Times reporter, the PRC Consulate in Calgary did not directly comment on the protest, but stressed that "Xizang has been an integral part of Chinese territory since ancient times," using the Mandarin Chinese name for Tibet. It also appended the PRC's white papers on the subject in its response.

According to Tibetan estimates, 1.2 million Tibetans have died as a result of the Communist Party's tyranny, including at least 85,000 who perished during and following the 1959 uprising that led to the Dalai Lama's flight. A report by the UN Refugee Agency found that Chinese regime authorities burned sacred Tibetan texts and destroyed more than 6,000 monasteries in Tibet during the Cultural Revolution.

The consulate's response ignored the human rights abuses ongoing in Tibet, and repeated the Party's claims of having led the region down a "bright road of unity, progress and development."

Apart from Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhism, the CCP has endeavored to destroy or subvert all religious faith in China. Independent Christians, Muslims, and practitioners of the Falun Gong spiritual practice have been subject to decades of harsh persecution ranging from fines to being harvested alive for their organs.

"In recent years, the Tibetan issue has almost been cast aside," said Dorjee Parsur, co-president of Students for a Free Tibet at the University of Calgary. "Since we march every year, we want to make sure that people remember that major events are still occurring in Tibet."

Dorjee, born in Calgary, says he's proud of his culture and identity, and stressed the importance of Buddhism for Tibetan culture.

"I think that it [Buddhism] makes me a better person in general," he said. "We believe that

the merits of our good actions will result in good favor, and I believe that good will eventually triumph over evil.”

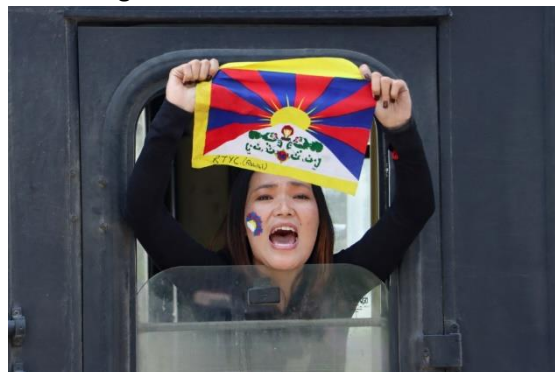
As for Tenzin, she dreams of visiting the town where her grandparents were born and raised. “I do want to be able to go to my country, see the landscape, see the mountains and [feel] the air,” she said. “I feel like it’ll bring me to tears, really.”

[Exposing China’s Human Rights Charade Under Xi Jinping: Insights From China’s Fourth U.N. Universal Periodic Review and Beyond](#)

13 March 2024, Tenzing Dhamdul, [Domino Theory](#)

I first heard of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review in detail during the International Tibet Youth Forum held at Dharamshala, where it was introduced to us by a member of the Tibet Justice Center. This, along with my eventual participation in the Asia Regional Meeting in Tokyo organized by the International Tibet Network, equipped me to participate in the India Advocacy Week in December 2023. The week was a coalition of organizations working for Tibet, namely the International Tibet Network, Students for a Free Tibet, the Tibetan Youth Congress, the National Democratic Party of Tibet, the Foundation for Non-Violent Alternatives, and the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group. During this event, we met and engaged with Indian parliamentarians, highlighting that China’s fourth review was about to take place. The Universal Periodic Review is a three-hour examination of a U.N. member’s human rights record conducted by all other U.N. member states. This review mechanism was established in March 2006 by U.N. General Assembly resolution 60/251 with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights in every country. Since the first periodic review in 2008, all 193 member states have each been reviewed three times. The review process is currently in its fourth cycle, which began in November 2022. The People’s Republic of China underwent its fourth review on January 23, 2024 at the

U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. More than 21 U.N. member states raised questions and brought recommendations, shedding light on, among other abuses, the gross violations of human rights in Tibet.



A Tibetan activist stages a protest at the Chinese embassy in New Delhi on March 11, a day after the 65th Tibetan National Uprising Day against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. (Photo: AFP)

When it comes to Tibet, there was a twofold increase in the number of member nations calling out China on its human rights record compared to China’s third review in 2018. Member states that raised concerns about Tibet, shedding light on, among other abuses, the gross violations of human rights in Tibet, included the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, France, Lithuania, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Ireland, Montenegro, New Zealand, Canada, Denmark, Belgium and Estonia.

Even Pakistan, a close strategic ally of China, called for China to “further intensify international cultural and religious exchanges, especially through more visits to Xinjiang and Tibet.”

Thinley Chukki, the official representative of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration at the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, stated that, “The colonial boarding school system, which targets the very culture and identity of Tibetans in occupied Tibet, was exposed and brought to light by many of these states, and hearing them speak on it was

profound.” However, she was dismayed to hear blatant lies uttered by the Chinese representatives when addressing their human rights report to the U.N. floor. The Chinese representatives said these boarding schools were established because Tibetans lived far from their schools, when the truth is that the Chinese systematically shut down schools near Tibetans and intentionally established these boarding schools — where the main language of instruction is Mandarin — to separate young Tibetans from their families and culture, thereby cutting them off from their traditional roots.

The Chinese representatives were well prepared, as they are aware of the gross violations of human rights their country commits. Some of the tactics they utilized in the lead-up and post Universal Periodic Review included:

1. Hosting their own side events both before and after review sessions, both of which praised China’s human rights track record, with some participants and speakers calling out the West for the double standards it sets. On January 22, a side event titled “Putting Development at the Center of the Agenda: Safeguarding Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” took place in Geneva. On January 24, another side event titled “Human Rights and Chinese Modernization” was organized by Beijing’s China Society of Human Rights Studies. Writing in *Bitter Winter* regarding the latter event, Tenzin Youten, in his article “China’s Own Propaganda Side Event at the U.N. Human Rights Council,” states that “all the representatives belong to China-based institutes, established and funded by the Chinese government,” with none of these experts reporting on the Tibetan uprisings of 2008 and the Uyghurs uprisings of 2009.
2. Utilizing available diplomatic might, especially when it comes to nations of the Global South. This tactic was

uncovered by Reuters, which saw diplomatic notes sent by Chinese missions to countries reading, “I would kindly request your delegation to render valuable support to China and make constructive recommendations in the interactive dialogue... taking into account the friendly relations and cooperation between our two countries.”

3. The tried and tested intimidation tactic of bringing a large delegation to occupy seats at the review session, which numbered more than 40 diplomats, complimented by a considerable number of Chinese NGOs known as GONGOs, or government-organized NGOs. This tactic was previously reported on by Kunchok Dolma Yaklha, Special Appointee for Human Rights at the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, who mentioned that in 2018, during China’s third review, her colleague Kalden Tsomo from the Tibet Bureau was screamed at by a Chinese woman to hand over seats Kalden had saved for her Tibetan colleagues. Kalden told the woman she was familiar with these intimidation tactics.
4. Publishing their own narratives in Chinese-owned media. This can be seen from an article titled “U.N. Human Rights Council UPR Working Group adopts Recommendations made to China,” published by Xinhua News Agency on January 27, which did not mention any of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group’s for China questions and recommendations but instead painted a rosy picture of the session. Similarly, a video taken from Xinhua was uploaded to YouTube on January 28, 2024 titled “China delivers good performance in UN Periodic Review of Human Rights,” by the channel China Human Rights. In the video, Chen Xu (陳旭), China’s ambassador to the U.N.

Office in Geneva, speaking with the news anchor, said China's Achievements in human rights won international acclaim.

Even with such gaslighting tactics, China lost face in front of an international audience when it came to its gross violations of human rights. There is a clear trend one can notice here, and that is even with China's growing power and influence in the world, nations are gradually coming together and questioning the Chinese Communist Party more strongly than ever. This has become increasingly obvious since Xi Jinping became China's leader, with the suppression of freedoms in Hong Kong, its use of debt traps, and the militarization of islands in the South China Sea.

Further igniting the flames of protest in the Tibetan diasporic community were the arrests of more than 1,000 Tibetans, including monks, for protesting against the construction of a dam expected to destroy six monasteries and forcefully relocate two villages in Dege County, in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The recently concluded Ninth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups held in Brussels came out with a statement against this crackdown in Tibet, highlighting the clear and evident duress in Tibet.

One now awaits the verdict of the U.N. report on China's human rights, which is set to be adopted in either June or July. It remains to be seen whether it will recognize these and other ongoing human rights violations occurring in China.

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'Tibet's path to freedom mirrors challenges faced by Palestine, Ukraine'

10 March 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#)

Tenzin Tsundue is a leading Tibetan activist and a writer. While speaking to The Sunday Guardian on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising, Tsundue reflects on Tibet's struggle for independence, comparing it to global movements like Palestine and Ukraine. He highlights Tibet's

historical bid for independence in 1913 and the 1959 uprising against Chinese rule, resulting in over a million deaths and cultural destruction. Tsundue talks about China's systematic suppression of Tibetan culture, including population influx and language restrictions. While acknowledging India's support for Tibet, he calls for a more active international involvement. Edited excerpts.



Q: March 10 marks the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising which is perhaps the most significant event that Tibet witnessed since 1900 apart from declaring its independence from China in 1913 (proclamation of independence in 1913), an independence that lasted till 1950. My question to you is whether that brief time period of independence is now a part of history which is unlikely to be witnessed again? Given the military and diplomatic might that China now enjoys, do you believe that another uprising can happen?

A: The Tibetan National Uprising of 10 March 1959 marked the Tibetan people's unrest all across Tibet against the Chinese invasion that slowly occupied Tibet in every sense. This uprising raised a robust Tibetan national resistance across three provinces of Tibet, and also resulted in His Holiness' exile into India. China took twenty years to crush this wave of resistance, and by early 1980s, over a million Tibetans had been killed (one sixth of Tibetan population), more than six thousand monasteries destroyed and the treasures of the monasteries looted by Chinese communist leaders. Tibet was not the only victim of Chinese expansionism. East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and Manchuria had been invaded and occupied. All of these four occupied countries today make 60% of China's 9.6 million KM2.

I am happy you mentioned the thirteenth Dalai Lama's Proclamation of Independence of Tibet of 1913. This gives me the opportunity to explain how this modern day China-Tibet conflict started. The 1911 Chinese war of Independence, Xinhai Revolution was overthrowing the 250 years of Manchu occupation as the foreigner rule and the first independent government was Republic of China with Dr Sun Yat Sen as the first Chinese President. In the enthusiasm, the Chinese freedom fighters were attempting to occupy neighbouring countries as an inheritance of power. When the Chinese war reached certain parts of Tibet, the 13th Dalai Lama escaped to India, but the Chinese were thwarted by the Tibetan army. Returning to Tibet, the Dalai Lama initiated legal reforms to draw Tibet out of backwardness and isolation.

That year in 1913, Tibet signed a treaty with Mongolia where the two neighbouring countries recognized each other's independence (we must remind Mongolia this). And the next year Tibet signed the McMahon Treaty on 24 March 1914, which India recognizes even today as Tibet's ceding of Tawang Region (Arunachal Pradesh) to British India in lieu of British India's promise to intervene in demarcating the borders between Tibet and China. Today, freedom struggles are no longer unilateral efforts but multi-interest geopolitics; Ukraine and Palestine are good examples right in front of us. Revolutions rise in those moments of hope when people are beaten to despair and are left with nothing to lose. Xi Jinping's insecurity, international isolation of China are windows of hope for us, but ultimately the stringent measures in Tibet will push Tibetans towards another uprising.

Q: The uprising had brought the global focus on the human rights violations and the suppression of cultural and religious freedoms by the Chinese government in Tibet. How would you describe the situation in Tibet now?

A: In 1959, when the issue of Tibet was raised, small countries like El Salvador, Malaya, Ireland, Malta, Nicaragua, Thailand and

Philippines spoke up for Tibet in the United Nations. The People's Republic of China was not even a member of the UN. It was the time when Taiwan's Republic of China represented the One China policy. Three resolutions were passed in the UN, 1959, 1961 and 1965 that condemned China's atrocities in Tibet and recommended the right to self-determination for Tibet. Today, even though China wields a veto power in the UN, we are still able to shame China on its disastrous human rights records. And we are not alone. We have freedom fighters from East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and Manchuria with us in doing this. Even the Chinese democracy activists from China and Hong Kong join us, Taiwan too.

Tibet's second uprising of 2008 at the time of Beijing Olympics was a defining moment in the history of the Tibetan freedom movement. That year the uprising spread all across the Tibetan Plateau like forest fire, mostly led by anonymous youngsters. That year, we lost more than 500 Tibetans to Chinese bullets, thousands wounded and more than 10,000 arrested, some of whom are still in jail today.

The international community's dependence on China trade and supply chains has tremendously raised pressure on mining in Tibet. China has been bombing Tibetan mountains and pasturelands to mine natural resources. China has been mining among others, lithium, gold, copper and rare-earths from Tibet and in the process rough swept Tibetan nomads and farmers from their ancestral lands and resettled them into "reservation" type artificial villages. The natural resources from Tibet and other occupied countries go into making cheap Made-in-China products, and countries around the world have benefited at the cost of Tibet.

This makes me believe that there is international community's complicity in China's occupation of Tibet. But the culture of consumerism in globalization has made consumers blind and apathetic to the sources of their profits. I have asked intellectuals, politicians, and the media in western countries

to do more for Tibet because they have far too long benefited at the cost of Tibet. Rivers from Tibet that feed more than one and half billion people in South and South East Asian countries and also China are being further dammed and parts of river and electricity diverted to power the industries in China. The recent case of Tibetan protest against further damming of the Yangtze River in Dege region in South Eastern Tibet is a case in point. Monks and nuns have been beaten during the peaceful protest, and over a thousand Tibetans have been arrested.

Q: A major concern in the international community regarding Tibet is the influx of Han Chinese migrants into Tibet that has led to dilution of Tibetan's culture. Can you elaborate on that?

A: The last time I studied population influx in Tibet was China's 2011 census where I saw the Tibetan population was one point less than six million, but the Chinese population in Tibet was standing at 13 million. The 2021 census was opaque and confusing. The statistics didn't spell out racial proportions.

We are concerned about the homogenizing machinery that is Sinicizing culture, language and race in the occupied countries. Not only are inter-racial marriages encouraged, cultural practices like Buddhist pilgrimages, celebration of Buddhist festivals are discouraged, observation of Ramadan is banned in East Turkestan, Muslim women banned from wearing burqas and men from sporting beards. Since three years, teaching Tibetan language in Tibet has been shut out of the system. Government run boarding schools do not teach Tibetan in China's "bilingual policy". Colonial boarding schools are turning Tibetan children into Chinese.

Racial profiling mechanisms in Tibet include DNA sampling. The Chinese government has been collecting DNA samples from children as young as six years old. Such scrutiny has shocked the world.

Q: India has—despite voices from certain quarters to not accommodate the Tibetan exiles as it would anger China—continued to

stand with the Tibetan people for years now. How do the young members of the community see this relationship between India and Tibetan people?

A: Let me start by saying I am not a believer in charity in politics. Policies are driven by short or long term self-interest. As a Tibetan born in India, I believe Tibet attaches soft power value for now when India is not able to assert her full power against China's expansionist aggression in the Himalayas.

But India's relationship with China has been undulating from warm and cold, and now "abnormal" as Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar reiterates again and again. Younger generation Tibetans feel our relationship must go beyond "gratitude" and practically participate in dealing with China. Uprisings in Tibet and revolution within China can truly change the dynamics. There is no military solution between the two Asian giants.

Q: Don't you think that the Tibetan freedom movement is more active on social media and international forums but has become subdued on the ground?

A: It's the first time we are able to speak and be heard, even as we experiment vocalizing on social media platforms. Tibet has been always written about by others, today we are able to write our story ourselves, speak our mind in foreign languages and be there where our voices never reached. For the first time we have 80,000 Tibetans who are citizens of different countries in the world and they are able to demand governments to take action, pass resolutions. The new generation of Tibet is making this happen on platforms that our parents never had. The "ground" for us is no longer the street where our slogans were seldom heard, the ground has changed; it's the media, parliament, academia, think-tanks, public debates, and conferences where old notions are thrashed out and new narratives are created.

Q: The Dalai Lama is the most prominent voice of the Tibetan movement. Why has the movement not been able to produce any other prominent face of the movement who is as

commonly recognized as the Dalai Lama? Would you ascribe it to the policies followed by China at domestic and at the global level?

A: The fact that we have such a Dalai Lama is everything. We have one person among us who is the most respected and revered living person in the entire world among business tycoons, presidents, dictators and saints. But, we must also work towards leadership in the post Dalai Lama scenario, and it's not easy. You must understand it's been only 65 years since we emerged from isolation and experimented with democracy. The fact that we not only survived, but thrived as a refugee community is a huge success. And this is made possible due to India's humanitarian support.

I believe as long as the US, India and all other countries affected by the dictatorial regime run by the Chinese Communist Party fight this evil, this will naturally support freedom for Tibet and democracy in China.

Q: What can countries like India and the United States do more to strengthen the Tibetan movement?

A: The United States' global supremacy is being challenged and India's Himalayan territorial integrity is being challenged, and the common adversary i.e. China is making these countries natural allies. In the long run they will realize that the only way to deal with China is work with the people of China's occupied countries who have been fighting China for 75 years. Even the US and India were friends with China at one point of time. We have suffered every possible torture and trauma as a people and nation, and yet survived.

Q: You are a prominent member of the Tibetan exile community. How does it feel to be in exile and look forward and wait for something that perhaps might never happen?

A: "Tenzin, what's your chance?" friends often ask me out of sympathy and sometimes mockingly, even the "educated" ones interrogated me. Once, I was even told "Go back if you want to protest". I had gone to Tibet to fight. Got arrested, beaten, jailed and later thrown out saying "You are born in India. You are Indian. Get out."

I understand. When China seems to have overwhelming power with menacing weapons, money and dictating terms on half of the world on business, people cannot imagine a free Tibet. But what has blighted the world's imagination: money and weapons are exactly the same "power" that is causing China their agony in recent years and now. Increasingly the world over the definition of "development" has become unilateral—material growth.

My answer: "यार, गांधी से भी कभी पूछा गया होगा, यार तेरा भी कोई चांस है?" Gandhi too must have been asked the same question: "Gandhi, do you stand any chance?" Looking at the British Empire ruling two thirds of the world and arrogantly saying "The sun never sets on the British Empire". Today, the entire UK can fit inside Rajasthan, one of the states of India. Empires come and go. India took 200 years and the Jews, 2000.

In 70 years of Chinese occupation, China has changed into the world's industry and the only religion left in China is money. We fight with nonviolence and His Holiness the Dalai Lama is our leader. Our country may not be free today, but we are. And one who has freedom in the heart will remain free. Of course, Tibet will be free.

How exiled Tibetans keep alive the culture of a homeland most have never dared visit

10 March 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#)

Tibetans will on March 10 mark the 65th anniversary of the 1959 uprising against Chinese forces that led to their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fleeing into exile, followed by tens of thousands of compatriots.

From teaching centuries-old crafts to cataloguing their language, exiled Tibetans guard the cultural identity of a homeland most have neither seen nor dare visit, and where they say Beijing is eradicating their heritage.

Crouched over a minutely detailed devotional "thangka" painting depicting Buddha, artist Lobsang Tenzin teaches students in northern India.

“It is important to keep the traditions of our history,” said the 49-year-old, dipping a needle-thin brush into rich blue paint made from crushed lapis lazuli as six young Tibetan trainees watch.

“These skills were nearly lost, but we pass on the skills by teaching young artists.”

Tibetans will on March 10 mark the 65th anniversary of the 1959 uprising against Chinese forces that led to their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fleeing into exile, followed by tens of thousands of compatriots.

Inside Tibet, the chaos of China’s 1966-76 Cultural Revolution left temples razed and monasteries reduced to ruins, destruction that continued in the decades that followed.

Today, activists decry what they say are Beijing’s determined efforts to erase what is left of Tibet’s cultural and religious identity.

Lhadon Tethong, head of the Tibet Action Institute, condemns what she calls “cultural genocide” — including Beijing’s sharp restrictions on Tibetan language, with children “indoctrinated” at state-run boarding schools. Beijing, which maintains “Tibet is part of China”, fiercely rejects the accusations.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning this week said that people in Tibet are “living a happy life”, in response to UN rights chief Volker Turk’s assertion that China was violating fundamental rights.

Tibet enjoys “social stability, economic growth, solidarity among all ethnic groups and harmony among various religious beliefs”, she said.

‘Former glory’

Tibet scholar Robert Barnett, from SOAS University of London, called Beijing a “foreign ruler deciding what’s best for a people whose culture it barely knows”.

“There is a gradual whittling away of a culture and a history,” Barnett said.

“It is a process where you gradually eliminate all the elements of a history, a people, culture and of a society that are inconvenient to the new rulers.”

Tibetan authorities say there are 130,000 Tibetan exiles, many in India and Nepal but also

in more than 25 countries worldwide — just a fraction of the seven million living under China’s control.

As the decades pass, that makes the preservation of cultural identity even more challenging.

Tenzin studied and now teaches at the Norbulingka Institute, a social enterprise centre training more than 300 men and women in painting, embroidery, weaving and woodcarving.

The complex of red and green Tibetan-style buildings, close to the Dalai Lama’s base in India’s Himalayan hill town of Dharamsala, was launched in 1995 to employ highly skilled artisans eking out a living with repair jobs.

“After the great masters came to India, they ended up doing odd jobs, trying to build their lives in a new country,” said Tsultrim Dorjee, a senior manager at the institute.

“The institute helped them use their skills... the goal was to return Tibetan art to its former glory.”

Others take a more modern approach, like 29-year-old artist Tashi Nyima, with his bright cartoon-style canvases that nonetheless still reflect his people’s heritage and political battles.

Born and brought up in Dharamsala, where red-robed monks and nuns crowd streets alongside Tibetans in baseball caps and jeans, Nyima said younger generations struggle with a “very mixed identity”.

But he remains committed to the cause.

“I’ve always believed that Tibet will be free one day,” he said, in front of his painting of a shackled monk.

“If I didn’t have this belief in me, I wouldn’t have done these kinds of works — I would have just stopped.”

‘Long haul’

Another battle is keeping the language alive.

While Google Translate offers 133 languages, Tibetan is not among them — but exiles in 2022 released their own 223-volume dictionary, available online.

“Once the language is preserved, then everything falls in place,” said Dorji Damdul,

director of Tibet House in New Delhi, founded by the Dalai Lama to promote his people's heritage.

"Language is like the medium through which all the flow of culture and philosophy happens."

But young Tibetans in India are increasingly seeking opportunities in Europe and North America.

Damdul, born in India in 1968 and a former translator for the Dalai Lama, admits that keeping an identity alive is a "major challenge".

"In Tibet, assimilation by force happens with the communist Chinese," said the Buddhist scholar. "In the West, natural assimilation can happen because it's too free."

Tibet's Dharamsala-based government in exile says it is looking to keep the increasingly scattered community connected, including via online conferences teaching younger generations about their history.

"If they understand Tibet a little more, they could be the best advocates," said Penpa Tsering, elected as the government's sikyong, or leader, by Tibetans worldwide.

"Even though we are physically distant, we are mentally close together."

Tsering's administration oversees more than 60 Tibetan language schools in India and Nepal and supports nearly 300 monasteries and nunneries.

"We are here for the long haul," said Tsering. "Don't think that we'll vanish just like that."

Reassessing Tibet's Plight in the 21st Century

09 March 2024, [Financial Express](#)

Tibet has a recorded history dating back to the year 602 when the central Tibetan states were united under the leadership of Namri Songsten.

We have many other examples of Chinese occupation in its different neighbouring regions, from Xinjiang to Hong Kong. However, it all started with Tibet, which became a test case for the Chinese idea of the world where oppression and a pervasive police state have become the new normal. It is also critical to

understand that Tibet's plight has become so typical in our daily lives that it has no global momentum like other struggles against oppression in general. Tibet existed as an independent state from 1912 to 1951 until the People's Republic of China annexed the roof of the world and made it an experimental ground for totalitarian practices.

A Brief History of Tibet

Tibet has a recorded history dating back to the year 602 when the central Tibetan states were united under the leadership of Namri Songsten. It was also the time when Lhasa became the capital. From the year 602 to 842, it is called the imperial age in Tibetan history. During these long 200 years' time, Chinese and Tibetans have had many border conflicts, which ended with the China-Tibet Peace Treaty of Year 821, where it was established that Tibet is an independent entity. The treaty famously mentions, "Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet, and Chinese shall be happy in China". From 1240 to 1250, Mongols invaded Tibet from Central Asia. However, as Mongol Prince Godan Khan met Tibetan lama Sakya Pandita, the lama became the spiritual leader of the prince, and it yielded significant autonomy for Tibet, and Buddhism spread across Inner and Central Asia.

From 1270 to 1350, there was a priest-patron relationship between Mongols and Tibetans. It is also essential to mention that during the Mongol rule too, Tibet was separated from China, which was also occupied by Mongols. In 1370, the Mongol empire in China fell to the ethnic Han Chinese. However, Tibet had already broken its ties with Mongols and did not pay any tributes to the Ming rulers of China.

A crucial turning point in the Tibetan nation occurred when Mongol ruler Altan Khan gave the title Dalai Lama to Sonam Gyatso, then leader of the Gelugpa school of Buddhism. In return, the Dalai Lama announced Altan Khan as a reincarnation of Kublai Khan. It gave legitimacy to Altan Khan's rule. This event is now a normal priest-patron relationship, but if translated through the Western

understanding, it is an example of how the Church (Tibetan monks) gave legitimacy to the State (Mongols in Central Asian highlands).

Things suddenly got haywire for Tibet when, at the start of the 18th century, Dzungar Mongol tribes invaded the nation. To quell the invasion, the Chinese Qing Emperor sent his military, but he took advantage of the volatile situation of Tibet, annexed the Kham and Amdo area, and called Tibet a tributary state. Qing dynasty's influence was not only limited to Tibet but also felt in other neighbouring countries of China, such as Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, and [Nepal](#).

The reign of the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, also known as 'the Great Fifth', marked the unification of Tibet. He created a religious state in Tibet and did not become a subservient to the Ming Chinese empire. It was during the fifth Dalai Lama's reign that the legendary Potala Palace was built. In the subservient time, the hold of Ming China over Tibet started eroding, and as the 13th Dalai Lama described it, it was more of a 'patron and priest' rather than an Empire and subject.

In 1912, the Ming empire in China collapsed, paving the way for the Republic of China. Tibet also reaffirmed its independence from the titular rule of China and expelled the Chinese troops from Lhasa. While reaffirming the independence, the Dalai lama said, 'we are a small, religious and independent nation'. In 1914, the Shimla treaty occurred between British [India](#), Tibet and China. It gave secular control of Qinghai to China, and the rest of Tibet was considered independent. The refusal to sign this treaty by China made Tibet go under the British Indian fold, where all the Tibetan communications with China happened with the British mediation. After the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, the nationalist government in China led by Kuomintang ratified the current 14th Dalai Lama and a representative from the government of China named General Wu Zhongxin was there at the ceremony. This event has been widely documented in the international media.

During the height of World War II, Tibet established its foreign office and sent congratulatory missions to China and India. A letter given by the Tibetan Mission in China addressed to Chiang Kai-shek maintained that 'We shall continue to maintain the independence of Tibet as a nation ruled by the successive Dalai Lamas through an authentic religious – political rule'. In 1947, when India organised the Asian Relations Conference, Tibet sent its delegation to New Delhi.

Tibet's Annexation by China and Aftermath

In 1949, the Communist Party of China won the civil war and started one-party rule in mainland China. Tibet became the culprit of the first geopolitical ambitions of an expansionist China. In seizing the control of Tibet, China called it a 'peaceful liberation from feudalistic serfdom'. However, it is still unclear how the Dalai Lama's rule was a 'feudalistic serfdom'. In October 1950, about 40,000 Chinese troops invaded Tibet, which had virtually no military in its possession. Details of the Chinese invasion of Tibet reached its hinterland around 1952, which was the connectivity status in Tibet. Any rational person in their right mind could ask how it was serfdom if there was no connectivity between the ruler and subject present.

In 1951, under unstable circumstances, the 17-Point Agreement was signed between China and Tibet, and it was maintained that China 'would not alter the existing political system in Tibet'. After agreeing on all this on paper, the Chinese maintained repression in Tibet, causing Lhasa to become the Tibetan refugee home. On March 10th 1959, which is commonly known as Tibetan Uprising Day, around 300,000 Tibetans gathered around the Potala Palace, where the Dalai Lama resides, fearful that Chinese authorities may assassinate the Dalai Lama. Heavy Chinese artillery fires compelled the Dalai Lama to go into exile. March of 1959 in Tibet was flooded with bloodshed, and it was just a trailer of what was coming for the nation.

In the coming decade, Mao applied all the policies of mainland China to Tibet, in which

hundreds of thousands of Tibetans died, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. Geographically, Tibet is around the size of Western Europe. China first made one of its three provinces, U-Tsang, as the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and kept the other two provinces under its direct control. However, the region defined as 'autonomous' was not autonomous at all, and Tibet's representation in the CPC administration of TAR is negligible. If Tibet had been independent, it would have been the world's 10th-largest state.

Since the last 60 years of rule by China, there have been multiple kinds of repression faced by the Tibetan people. The living embodiment of their faith in different Buddhist Monasteries has been destroyed. In 1995, six-year-old Gendun Choekyi Nyima, who was recognised as the 11th Panchen Dalai, was imprisoned by China. He became the world's youngest political prisoner. China has tried creating an alternative 'patriotic re-education campaign' aimed at assimilating Tibetans into the Chinese fold.

At the start of the 21st century, Tibetans have used self-immolation as a way of protest. There have been over 135 self-immolation incidents in Tibet. In 2012, around 80 such incidents were counted. Interestingly, it was also the year when Xi Jinping was about to assume Chinese leadership.

March 10th every year marks the anniversary of the Tibetan uprising worldwide, where Tibetans protest against the repressions of the Chinese regime. However, the Chinese regime has used brute force to destroy the faith-based civilization. China has signed extradition agreements with countries like Nepal for the dissenting Tibetan refugees. Today Tibet is a live example of a panopticon where no information goes outside. March 10th every year marks a dent in the history of different movements that Tibetan story of survival is alive.

Tibetan Soldiers in the Chinese Army. 2. "Tibetans Are Useful but the CCP Doesn't Trust Them"

09 March 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)

Second part of "Bitter Winter" exclusive report on Tibetans enlisted in Beijing's People's Liberation Army. There are various reasons why China recruits them.

Tibetans are recruited in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), China's military force. Why? The proximate cause is that, wanting to strengthen its military presence around the "Line of Actual Control" (LAC) at the contested border with India, the Chinese regime encountered difficulties in acclimatizing its usual troops at those extreme environments. Han Chinese are accustomed to the average mainland China weather conditions, which are milder. Additionally, the PLA noted the prowess of the Vishesh Seema Bal, the Special Frontier Force of India, many of whom are Tibetan refugees and Gurkhas, during the Indian Army's operations on August 29–30, 2020, that secured the high peaks of the Kailash ranges of the Trans-Himalaya. Extending over China, India and Nepal in parallel to the Himalayas, this is a strategic area in the western part of the Tibetan Plateau, which is included only partially in the TAR.

But there is also a remote, deeper cause for drafting Tibetans into the PLA. One of the main theatres of collision during the Spring and Summer 2020 confrontation between China and India was the Galwan Valley, in Ladakh. In the face of that, the Chinese regime felt the urgency to strengthen Tibetans' loyalty and keep surveillance over their families, the second goal being very often the tool to obtain the first. Thus, Beijing directed the PLA's senior commanders to enlist at least one soldier from each Tibetan family. This ideally reminds the "home-stay" program imposed by the CCP to Uyghurs in the XUAR. In that case, over a million party officials invaded Uyghur families as "guests," while in the TAR "guests" are taken from families to serve party officials: in both cases, the regime brutally interferes with

households in name of its capillary control over its citizens.

Another fact proves it. The never forgotten seriousness of the Galwan Valley incident pushed the political and military authorities also to coerce around 20 fighters from the Enbo Fight Club (EFC) to form the Plateau Resistance Tibetan Mastiffs, based in Lhasa and stationing in the Tibetan plateau. EFC, known for mixed martial arts, is a gym located in Chengdu, the capital city of the Chinese province of Sichuan. It was founded in 2001 by a Chinese ethnic Tibetan citizen and retired army police officer. It often does charitable work for impoverished families.

But the PLA is employing the EFC fighters to provide hand-to-hand combat training to soldiers in the region. This reflects the regime's efforts to address its perceived security concerns in the area, yet what may seem a normal employment of local resources—including civilians, a decision that Beijing has been now implementing for a while—is instead another form of oppression. In fact, information gathered by “Bitter Winter” from Tibetan informants makes it evident that those EFC fighters were induced into joining the military only after threats against their families. However, their decision to join led—our sources report—to severe backlash from their own community. Consequently, they suffered a loss of financial and emotional support from fellow Tibetans. In fact, these individuals, once celebrated and supported by Tibetans both within and outside the TAR, have been later facing ostracism and scorn. Criticism and disdain towards them become pronounced—our informants told us—, particularly on DouYin, a popular Chinese social media platform, where Tibetans have begun labelling them as “Chinese dogs,” a deeply derogatory term in Tibetan culture.

Now, what is glaringly missing in this scenario is a distinct Tibetan regiment within the PLA structures. This underscores Beijing's apprehensions regarding Tibetans. Sources reported to “Bitter Winter” that the Chinese government has been heard saying it will never

provide arms and ammunition to them since it fears that, once equipped with weapons, Tibetans may also retaliate against the regime. Furthermore, the 2008 protests against the PRC's persecution that took place across all the Tibet plateau and caused tens of victims, to which almost 160 confirmed cases of self-immolations followed, only increased the CCP's fears. It is evident from several of its policies. For example, China is aggressively constructing and upgrading numerous airports and heliports in the western regions of the TAR and the XUAR. This infrastructure development started in 2017 but was reinforced after the 2020 LAC incident, accompanied by the enhancement of roads, railways, and other logistic capabilities, which facilitate swifter troop movements and weapon deployment for the PLA.

Also, the establishment of new and improved airports around the LAC is expected to stimulate economic growth and tourism by connecting these areas more closely with the PRC's major commercial and political hubs—as far as all this fits and benefits the regime's astute way to totalitarianism “with Chinese characteristics,” i.e. controlled, scrutinized, and spied liberty.

The Chinese dual-use approach, serving both military facilities and granting more securitization devices, has been well described by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Strategic & International Studies's “ChinaPower” observatory. Nonetheless, the overarching strategy of the PRC, driven by internal insecurities and external geopolitical considerations, had already been detected in 2016 by Tsering Topgyal, Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Department of Politics and International Studies of the University of Birmingham, the UK, in his book “China and Tibet: Perils of Insecurity.”

Beijing's profound sense of unsafety, he argued, fueled by its perception of sociopolitical vulnerability, significantly influences its policies regarding Tibet's religious, linguistic, educational, and economic spheres. The regime's refusal to acknowledge

the existence of a “Tibet Issue” and its rejection of proposals for real Tibetan autonomy stem from fears of undermining its nation-building endeavors. Years have passed since, but this “Chinese complex” over Tibet (and Xinjiang, that its non-Han inhabitants call East Turkestan) has only increased with the unfolding and progress of the Xi Jinping-era. Since President Xi’s rise to top power at the highest level of the CCP and the state, respectively in 2012 and 2013, secured virtually forever through *the removal of the two-term limit on the presidency* in 2018, the Communist nomenklatura in Beijing has in fact constantly grown in its deep concerns about instability and the purported potential for “separatist” movements using “terrorist” tactics in both the TAR and the XUAR. All the efforts to increase the already extensive surveillance measures and massive control over the populations of those two regions especially aim in fact at suppressing their ethnic non-Han components on a scale that has become paroxysmal and at a pace justified only by—unjustifiable panic.

Tibetan Soldiers in the Chinese Army. 1. The Context

08 March 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)

“Bitter Winter” exclusive report on Tibetans enlisted in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. But first, we should understand the area’s geography and geopolitics.

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is constantly at war with its citizens, its neighbors, and yes, the entire world. Ideological in nature, revolutionary in means and goals, aggressive always, its war is waged at many levels and employs different weapons. Some of them plays on the chords of the subconscious, the emotional, and the imaginative, shrewdly mixing intimidation, propaganda, and a strategic pression on the collective self of societies. In this respect, several of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) techniques can be compared to the functioning

of the levers that have been famously described by French anthropologist and sociologist Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931) in his 1895 book “Psychologie des foules”—published in English as “The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind”—and the exploitation of the mechanisms addressed by American journalist and social commentator Vance Packard (1914–1996) in his 1957 book “The Hidden Persuaders.”

The CCP attempts to both impress and intimidate “ad intra” and “ad extra” alternates boasting shows of strength and arrogant assertions of “faits accompli.” In this peculiar art of war, geography plays a key role. University of Pisa’s Marco Tangheroni (1946–2004)—an Italian specialist of navigation and trade in the Mediterranean sea during the Middle Ages—taught that the dynamics of human civilizations become clearer when the study of history is organically connected to that of geography. This consideration is also reported—by way of a real life anecdote—in the introduction to a posthumous collection of essays by Tangheroni, penned by Italian social commentator Giovanni Cantoni (1938–2020), who himself underlined another important truth through a maxim: if your history is wrong, your politics will be wrong as well.

Anti-communist as they were, Tangheroni and Cantoni would not be surprised to see the CCP among their most diligent pupils. In fact, communists do always do their homework, never stopping elaborating and manipulating. And while it should be a fatigue to daily reinvent the wheel of Chinese history, modern and ancient, the CCP gladly and constantly plays also with geography. Both fabricated history and geography are in fact used by the Chinese leadership and apparatchiks to tame facts, twisting them into a surrealistic new version of the world shaped by ideology, where cultures, religions, and ethnic identities are customized and orchestrated to build and maintain a political consensus that both produces and praises the final aim of Sinicization. Recently, “Bitter Winter” had the occasion to reflect upon the

imposition of a fake semantization of that concept that the CCP uses to perform its totalitarian goal.

The CCP's frequent re-designing of the PRC's both national and regional borders on the world map is a case in point, normally justified by Beijing with supposedly strategic necessities, but mainly performed just to exhibit muscles. The latest—and surely not the last—unilateral redefinition of the national boundaries of the country came on August 28, 2023, with the publication of the 2023 edition of the “China Standard Map” by the PRC's Ministry of Natural Resources. Of course, this provoked outraged reactions by India, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and the Republic of China (Taiwan) for the arbitrary annexations of parts of or all their territories to Chinese sovereignty, but it is interesting to note that Moscow didn't protest for the similar and illegitimate appropriation of territories belonging to the Russian Federation. We would probably not go astray if we imagine that this silence is probably due to the new alliance between the PRC and Russia, somewhat sealed also by Beijing's simultaneous mute concession to some of Moscow's territorial claims.

A constant major center of local geopolitical controversy is the border between PRC and India that is called “Line of Actual Control” (LAC). It separates PRC's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in the north from India's Ladakh union territory, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh states in the south, along the Himalayas. On that gigantic mountain range, the borders between PRC in the north, and Nepal and Bhutan in the south make the India-China boundary discontinuous. The LAC is roughly divided into three sectors, the western between India's Ladakh and PRC's XUAR and TAR being the most disputed of several contested bordering areas.

Totally informal, the LAC was designed as a de facto compromise following the cease-fire that

froze the Sino-Indian War of 1962. In 1993, the two Asian countries agreed to respect it, yet there are neither official maps nor clear demarcations of lands; and so disputes continue.

Therefore, on occasions soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA), or the PRC's armed force, cross the LAC and ignite new open contentions. In 1963, the Publications Division of the Government of India in New Delhi published a pamphlet, entitled “China Aggression in Maps” (now available online at the web site of French journalist, sinologist and Tibetologist Claude Arpi), to document the problem, which of course continued well after that year.

The most recent and serious of those military altercations took place in 2020, starting on May 5 (and factually dragging as late as January-February 2021), along all the three sectors of the LAC, but with particular intensity in the west, in the valley of Galwan. This is a river that flows from Aksai Chin into Ladakh, the first being occupied by the PRC but claimed by India as part of the latter. There, the clash between the armed forces of Beijing and New Delhi peaked in a physical brawl that resulted in casualties on June 15–16, 2020, bringing military buildup on both sides and more territorial disagreements, mainly the claimed, reported occupation by the PRC of about 2,000 square kms of Indian territory in eastern Ladakh that haven't been returned yet.

Some may wonder how it comes that two regional and world giants can shed blood for a handful of square kilometers in what “Bloomberg” media outlet efficaciously described as “a freezing high-altitude desert,” “a mostly uninhabited terrain” where, “during winter months,” “temperatures can drop to 40 degrees below zero.” The principal reason is that a substantial part of politics is made of liturgies, rites, and symbols, national sovereignty being one of the most importantly perceived. Another is the strategic role played by boundary areas: for example, the PRC has no intention to give easily up Aksai Chin, a desert area with no natural resources that

nonetheless preciously connects the XUAR and the TAR. A third, very pragmatic, reason is that for the CCP all is a good occasion and tool to tighten control on its citizens and impose its power.

The Spring and Summer 2020 battle on the roof of the world—a low intensity conflict, but highly rated by both sides—caused widespread international reactions and a broad press coverage, but there is another aspect of its aftermath that goes little noticed. After the skirmishes, the Chinese regime initiated the military recruitment of Tibetans in the PLA to bolster its standing presence in the area, i.e. maintain the occupation of Indian territories as part of its strategic long-term deployment plans.

Reincarnation and realpolitik keeps Dalai Lama's succession in dilemma

08 March 2024, [The Hindu](#)

As Tibetans mark on Sunday the 65th anniversary of the failed uprising against Chinese forces that led to the 88-year-old spiritual leader fleeing into exile in India, the question of who will succeed him is in sharp focus.

Esoteric questions of reincarnation rarely have real-world political consequences, but many fear the search for a successor to Tibet's Dalai Lama could inflame regional rivalries.

The 88-year-old spiritual leader, Tenzin Gyatso, has shown no indication of serious health issues, and has said that his dreams suggest he could live until he is 113.

But as Tibetans mark on Sunday the 65th anniversary of the failed uprising against Chinese forces that led to him fleeing into exile in India, the question of who will succeed their ageing leader is in sharp focus.

Tibetan activists are keenly aware that his death will mark a major setback in his push for more autonomy for the Himalayan region.

It would deprive the cause of a Nobel Prize winner whose moral teachings and

idiosyncratic humour have made him one of the world's most popular religious leaders.

Many expect China will name a successor.

That raises the likelihood of rival nominations for the six-century-old post, including one chosen by exiled Tibetans based in India, a regional rival of China.

Tensions between the world's two most populous countries have already flared after a deadly Himalayan border clash in 2020.

Here, AFP explains how realpolitik may impact the question of reincarnation.

Reincarnation or emanation?

While the bodies of previous Dalai Lamas have been entombed in stupa burial mounds, Tibetans believe their soul carries on, living in a new being.

Tibetan monks traditionally choose the Dalai Lama through a ritualistic search that can take years, seeking telltale signs a child is the reincarnation of a spiritual leader first born in 1391.

The 14th Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in the northern Indian town of Dharamsala since the failed uprising in 1959, has floated the possibility of a non-traditional succession. He already ended the post's political powers in 2011 in favour of an elected Tibetan government-in-exile.

Keeping Beijing on its toes, he has alternatively suggested that his reincarnation could be a girl for the first time, or that he might be the last Dalai Lama.

Instead of reincarnation -- whereby the soul returns in a newborn -- there is also the intriguing possibility of "emanation before death".

In that case, Tibetans believe the Dalai Lama's spirit could transfer to an adult successor.

autonomy for his Tibetan homeland. | Photo Credit: AP

Esoteric questions of reincarnation rarely have real-world political consequences, but many fear the search for a successor to Tibet's Dalai Lama could inflame regional rivalries.

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intriguing possibility of "emanation before death".

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"It is possible for the Lama to appoint a successor who is either his disciple or someone young who is to be recognised as his emanation," the Dalai Lama said in 2011.

What will China do?

China's officially atheist government has called the Dalai Lama a separatist.

In 1995, Beijing detained a child that the Dalai Lama had recognised as the Panchen Lama -- another influential religious figure.

China, meanwhile, selected another child to become the Panchen Lama.

Rights groups have described the boy who was detained as the world's youngest political prisoner, and his whereabouts remain unknown.

The Dalai Lama is determined his successor will not face the same fate.

"No recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China," he warned in 2011.

"It is particularly inappropriate for Chinese communists who explicitly reject even the idea of past and future lives... to meddle in the system of reincarnation," he added.

He has also preemptively dismissed suggestions his successor's name must be plucked from a "Golden Urn" -- which Beijing controls -- by saying its use "lacked any spiritual quality".

India, meanwhile, which has long-hosted tens of thousands of Tibetan exiles, would be expected to continue its support and back a successor approved in the process set out by the Dalai Lama.

But that could raise tensions between the neighbouring powers, who have already clashed in contested border areas, including Ladakh, home to a sizeable Tibetan population.

What has the Dalai Lama said?

The Dalai Lama has promised to write a "predictive letter" for monks to follow around his 90th birthday in July 2025.

He has said responsibility for choosing any successor will "rest primarily" on his Gaden Phodrang Trust, a Zurich-headquartered foundation.

But he has also suggested he may be the last Dalai Lama.

"If I die before Tibetans regain their freedom, it is only logical to assume that I will be born outside Tibet," he wrote in his autobiography, "Freedom in Exile".

"Of course, it could be that by then my people will have no use for a Dalai Lama, in which case they will not bother to search for me," he added.

"So I might take rebirth as an insect, or an animal -- whatever would be of most value to the largest number of sentient beings."

Exiled Tibetans Guard Heritage From 'Cultural Genocide'

07 March 2024, [Barron's](#)

From teaching centuries-old crafts to cataloguing their language, exiled Tibetans guard the cultural identity of a homeland most have neither seen nor dare visit, and where they say Beijing is eradicating their heritage. Crouched over a minutely detailed devotional "thangka" painting depicting Buddha, artist Lobsang Tenzin teaches students in northern India.

"It is important to keep the traditions of our history," said the 49-year-old, dipping a needle-thin brush into rich blue paint made from crushed lapis lazuli as six young Tibetan trainees watch.

"These skills were nearly lost, but we pass on the skills by teaching young artists."

Tibetans will on March 10 mark the 65th anniversary of the 1959 uprising against Chinese forces that led to their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fleeing into exile, followed by tens of thousands of compatriots.

Inside Tibet, the chaos of China's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution left temples razed and monasteries reduced to ruins, destruction that continued in the decades that followed.

Today, activists decry what they say are Beijing's determined efforts to erase what is left of Tibet's cultural and religious identity.

Lhadon Tethong, head of the Tibet Action Institute, condemns what she calls "cultural genocide" -- including Beijing's sharp restrictions on Tibetan language, with children "indoctrinated" at state-run boarding schools. Beijing, which maintains "Tibet is part of China", fiercely rejects the accusations.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning this week said that people in Tibet are "living a happy life", in response to UN rights chief Volker Turk's assertion that China was violating fundamental rights.

Tibet enjoys "social stability, economic growth, solidarity among all ethnic groups and harmony among various religious beliefs", she said.

Tibet scholar Robert Barnett, from SOAS University of London, called Beijing a "foreign ruler deciding what's best for a people whose culture it barely knows".

"There is a gradual whittling away of a culture and a history," Barnett said.

"It is a process where you gradually eliminate all the elements of a history, a people, culture and of a society that are inconvenient to the new rulers."

Tibetan authorities say there are 130,000 Tibetan exiles, many in India and Nepal but also in more than 25 countries worldwide -- just a fraction of the seven million living under China's control.

As the decades pass, that makes the preservation of cultural identity even more challenging.

Tenzin studied and now teaches at the Norbulingka Institute, a social enterprise centre training more than 300 men and women in painting, embroidery, weaving and woodcarving.

The complex of red and green Tibetan-style buildings, close to the Dalai Lama's base in India's Himalayan hill town of Dharamsala, was launched in 1995 to employ highly skilled artisans eking out a living with repair jobs.

"After the great masters came to India, they ended up doing odd jobs, trying to build their lives in a new country," said Tsultrim Dorjee, a senior manager at the institute.

"The institute helped them use their skills... the goal was to return Tibetan art to its former glory."

Others take a more modern approach, like 29-year-old artist Tashi Nyima, with his bright cartoon-style canvases that nonetheless still reflect his people's heritage and political battles.

Born and brought up in Dharamsala, where red-robed monks and nuns crowd streets alongside Tibetans in baseball caps and jeans, Nyima said younger generations struggle with a "very mixed identity".

But he remains committed to the cause.

"I've always believed that Tibet will be free one day," he said, in front of his painting of a shackled monk.

"If I didn't have this belief in me, I wouldn't have done these kinds of works -- I would have just stopped."

Another battle is keeping the language alive.

While Google Translate offers 133 languages, Tibetan is not among them -- but exiles in 2022 released their own 223-volume dictionary, available online.

"Once the language is preserved, then everything falls in place," said Dorji Damdul, director of Tibet House in New Delhi, founded by the Dalai Lama to promote his people's heritage.

"Language is like the medium through which all the flow of culture and philosophy happens."

But young Tibetans in India are increasingly seeking opportunities in Europe and North America.

Damdul, born in India in 1968 and a former translator for the Dalai Lama, admits that keeping an identity alive is a "major challenge".

"In Tibet, assimilation by force happens with the communist Chinese," said the Buddhist scholar. "In the West, natural assimilation can happen because it's too free."

Tibet's Dharamsala-based government in exile says it is looking to keep the increasingly

scattered community connected, including via online conferences teaching younger generations about their history.

"If they understand Tibet a little more, they could be the best advocates," said Penpa Tsering, elected as the government's sikyong, or leader, by Tibetans worldwide.

"Even though we are physically distant, we are mentally close together."

Tsering's administration oversees more than 60 Tibetan language schools in India and Nepal and supports nearly 300 monasteries and nunneries.

"We are here for the long haul," said Tsering.

"Don't think that we'll vanish just like that."

Tibetans fear for future as they recall failed uprising against China

07 March 2024, [The Hindu](#)

Tibet has alternated over the centuries between independence and control by China



Buddhist monks walk down a street in McLeodganj near Dharamsala. While once thousands fled to India annually, fewer than a dozen escaped last year, Tibet's exiled government says. File | Photo Credit: AFP

The Dalai Lama, wrapped in red and yellow robes, urged chanting monks and nuns in his latest public prayers to help heal the world with their "compassionate heart".

"Being a good human being is everybody's responsibility," he said, weeks ahead of Sunday's commemorations of the failed Tibetan uprising against China that saw him flee into exile in neighbouring India.

"I urge all of you to strive towards it."

The 88-year-old Buddhist leader says he has decades yet to live, but Tibetans who have followed him abroad are bracing for an inevitable future without him.

China says Tibet is an integral part of the country, and many exiled Tibetans fear Beijing will name a rival successor to the Dalai Lama, bolstering control over a land it poured troops into in 1950.

Tibet has alternated over the centuries between independence and control by China, which says it "peacefully liberated" the rugged plateau and brought infrastructure and education.

But Tsultrim, a sprightly 95-year-old Tibetan former CIA-backed guerilla, offers a warning from the past.

He recalls how he took up a gun when Tibetans rose up against Chinese forces 65 years ago on March 10, 1959, in a revolt whose crushing forced the Dalai Lama across snowy Himalayan passes into India.

Tens of thousands followed.

"We were asked to rise up to resist the invading Chinese army and to escort the Dalai Lama to exile," Tsultrim told *AFP*, dressed in a black puffer jacket, still with a soldier-like manner with close-cut grey hair and a strong handshake.

Today, he is among the last of a generation to remember what he calls a "free Tibet", and tells younger Tibetans not to trust Beijing.

"Before Tibet lost its independence, we were herders and farmers," said Tsultrim, who uses only one name and is based in the Dalai Lama's adopted hometown of Dharamsala in northern India.

"Life was good, and our living was good... We had nothing to do with money, the herders sold meat and butter and farmers sold grains."

The past

Tsultrim later joined Tibetan insurgents based in Nepal's mountainous kingdom of Mustang in 1960, trained and supplied with rifles and radios by the CIA.

For more than a decade they snuck into Tibet to lay ambushes, including blowing up Chinese army trucks.

"We were volunteers with our own horse, and carried our own rifle and food," he said. "We kept waging war."

Washington used the 2,000-strong force as a covert Cold War proxy.

But after the CIA cut funding, and the Dalai Lama in 1974 urged fighters to lay down arms and follow his call for a peaceful solution, Tsultrim left for India.

After working as a farm labourer for decades, he retired to an old people's home near where his leader lives.

"I came to see the Dalai Lama before dying," he said.

His comrade Ngodup Palden, 90, clings to a fading dream.

He became a paratrooper in India's special Tibetan force for 24 years, seeing combat in the China-India war of 1962.

"Before we lost our country, we lived a comfortable life," he said, staring out at the snow-capped Himalayan peaks that divide him from his homeland.

"It is my hope to return to a free Tibet during my lifetime," he said, prayer beads clicking through his fingers.

"I have some hope in my heart, to be back in my homeland, my happy homeland."

The present

Those coming from Tibet today say Palden's hope is fantasy.

While once thousands fled to India annually, fewer than a dozen escaped last year, Tibet's exiled government says.

Activists say Tibetans' movements in their homeland are monitored, and that many fear arrest or retaliation against relatives should they make it out.

"I feel like a bird that has been caged for a long time and is now free to flap its wings and fly," said 37-year-old Tsering Dawa, a former bank manager from Tibet's main city Lhasa.

He abandoned his middle-class life in 2020 fearing re-arrest after contacting journalists about China's "vocational training centres".

U.N. experts say the centres are used to "undermine Tibetan religious, linguistic and cultural identity" — charges Beijing denies.

Dawa said he had been detained without trial in 2015 for nearly a year after messaging an exile group to report passport restrictions for Tibetans.

He said his detention included a brutal beating and interrogation that pushed him to "the brink of insanity".

"I told my mother that if we stay in Tibet, we are bound to die," he said, warning her she would be punished if he left without her.

"If we leave, there is a 50% chance of making it."

With routes across the mountains to Nepal barred by China's security forces, he packed a bag and posed with his 68-year-old mother as "tourists heading on holiday".

Swallowing their terror, they smiled and snapped photographs at Lhasa airport, starting a journey that would eventually bring them to India.

In his cramped one-bedroom apartment he described leaving behind 600,000 yuan (\$83,000) in his account, two houses and a car. "The reason I got out was because of my willingness to sacrifice it all."

The future

Younger generations who grew up in exile fear threats ahead.

"China is hell-bent on appointing their own Dalai Lama once he passes away," said Tenzin Dawa, a 31-year-old activist.

Born in India, she heads the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

She worries that the younger generations have lost hope of seeing their ancestral home.

"We grew up stateless in India... and, we never know what might happen when His Holiness the Dalai Lama passes away," she said.

"That's why we're seeing a lot of emigration of Tibetans to Europe and North America."

Tens of thousands of Tibetans have left India since 2011, according to Indian government figures.

"It is a big concern," the activist added. "The younger generations, it is they who have to carry on the movement."

The Dalai Lama: Tibet's Spiritual Leader, Bane Of Beijing

07 March 2024, [Barron's](#)

The Dalai Lama, the charismatic Buddhist spiritual leader celebrated worldwide for his tireless campaign for greater autonomy for his Tibetan homeland, has been a thorn in China's side for decades.

Tenzin Gyatso, who describes himself as a "simple Buddhist monk", became the face of the Tibetan cause as he crisscrossed the globe, mixing with royalty, politicians and celebrities. The 88-year-old, with his famous beaming smile, has become a global symbol of peace whose message transcends religion, regarded by his many supporters as a visionary in the vein of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

The Dalai Lama was just 23 when he fled the Tibetan capital Lhasa in fear for his life after Chinese troops crushed an uprising that began on March 10, 1959 -- 65 years ago this Sunday. It took him 13 days to trek across the Himalayas to the Indian border. He has never returned.

His life in exile has centred around the northern Indian hill-town of Dharamsala, home to thousands of fellow Tibetans who maintain traditional customs, even though many have never set foot in their ancestral homeland.

In Dharamsala, he set up a government-in-exile and launched a campaign to reclaim Tibet, evolving to embrace a "middle way" -- relinquishing independence for greater autonomy.

In 1989 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his bid to "seek reconciliation despite brutal violations".

The award catapulted him into the global spotlight, courted by world leaders and Hollywood stars.

In his maroon robes, simple sandals and wide-rimmed spectacles, the Dalai Lama made an unlikely celebrity.

But his sense of mischief -- he once announced he would like to reincarnate as an attractive blonde -- and infectious chuckle proved

irresistible, and made him a darling of the world's media.

The Chinese government, however, has remained impervious to his charm, branding him a separatist and a "wolf in a monk's robe". Tibet has alternated over the centuries between independence and control by China, and Beijing says the region is an integral part of the country.

The Dalai Lama wants greater autonomy for his people, including the right to worship freely and to preserve their culture, which many Tibetans say has been crushed under Chinese rule.

Formal negotiations with Beijing broke down in 2010.

A year later, the Dalai Lama retired from politics to make way for a new leader elected by exiled Tibetans around the world.

Born into a farming family in the Tibetan village of Taksar on July 6, 1935, he was chosen as the 14th incarnation of Tibetan Buddhism's supreme religious leader at the age of two.

He was given the name Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso -- Holy Lord, Gentle Glory, Compassionate Defender of the Faith and Ocean of Wisdom -- and taken to Lhasa's 1,000-room Potala Palace to be trained to become the leader of his people.

He indulged a precocious scientific curiosity, playing with a watch sent to him by US president Franklin Roosevelt and repairing cars, one of which he crashed into a palace gate.

But his childhood ended abruptly at age 15 when he was hastily enthroned as head of state after the Chinese army invaded Tibet in 1950. Nine years later, as Chinese troops crushed a popular uprising, he escaped to India.

When told the Dalai Lama had fled, Chinese leader Mao Zedong reportedly said: "In that case, we have lost the battle."

He was welcomed by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who offered Dharamsala as a base for him and thousands of fellow Tibetan refugees.

Throughout the Dalai Lama's life, he has been treated as an honoured guest in India -- an

official policy stance that has been a source of tension with Beijing.

It is unclear how, or even whether, his successor will be named, with his predecessors chosen by monks according to ancient Buddhist traditions.

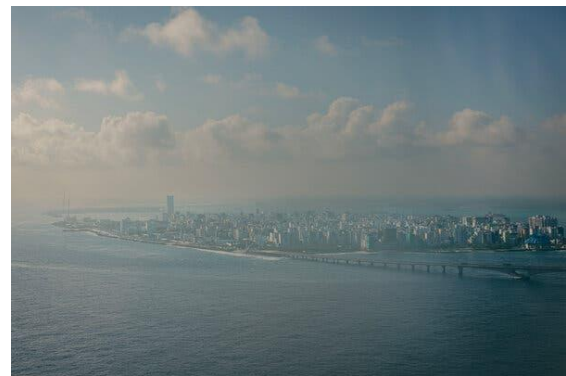
He has alternatively suggested the next Dalai Lama could be a girl, that his spirit could transfer to an adult successor, or that he could even be the last in the line -- and that he might be reincarnated as an animal or an insect instead.

But he has always been clear on one point -- that any successor named by China would not be credible.

"No recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China," he has said.

The Maldives Is a Tiny Paradise. Why Are China and India Fighting Over It?

05 March 2024, [The New York Times](#)



Malé, the capital and most populous city of the Maldives.

Asia's two giants are crowding the island nation with building projects, tossing its newborn democracy to and fro.

Between a few flecks of coral in the Indian Ocean, a ribbon of highway more than a mile long swoops up from the blue. Since 2018, the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge has connected this archipelago's hyper-dense capital, Malé, and the international airport -- expanded by Chinese companies -- one island to the east.

But China is not alone in chasing friendship with the Maldives. A 20-minute walk across the capital, next to Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, an even longer sea bridge will link Malé with islands to the west. This one is being built by Indian workers, with money from India. The Maldives, a tiny tourism-dependent country of 500,000 people, barely registers as a blip alongside India and China, the world's most populous nations. Yet every blip counts in the two giants' competition for influence across South Asia, and that has set the Maldives on a zigzagging course between them.

India, at the heart of the vast region, has long been its most powerful economic and military force. Still, China has made significant inroads with its much larger financial resources, signing infrastructure deals and securing access to ports in countries surrounding India.

The Maldives' location makes it a strategic priority for both of Asia's superpowers. China needs a military presence on the Arabian Sea to safeguard its access to oil from the Persian Gulf. And India, which has been clashing with China along their Himalayan border, wants to make sure that the Maldives, its island neighbor, doesn't become too cozy with Beijing.

In January, India found itself in a sudden [blowup with the Maldives](#) over a perceived threat to the islands' tourism lifeblood. But the great-power competition across the Maldives' sky-blue lagoons has yet to reach a boil. Gains and losses are marked more by the tilts of the Maldives' own politicians — more pro-India at some points, more pro-China at others — and, most of all, by the money that both sides spend to win Maldivian hearts and minds.

From his high-rise office looking out over Malé's marina, Mohamed Saeed, the Maldives' minister of economic development and trade, puts his country's needs in stark terms. Its economy is now worth about \$6.5 billion a year, of which \$6 billion is earned by tourism, and most of the rest by fishing tuna. The goal is

to make it a \$12 billion economy within the next five years.

The Maldives discovered tourist dollars in 1972, and it now draws more than a million visitors a year to the "water villas" that branch out from wooden boardwalks and define its high-end resorts.

The country became a democracy only in 2008, with the election of a charismatic young leader, Mohamed Nasheed. The current president, Mohamed Muizzu, was elected five months ago, in the latest swing of the pendulum between India and China. Mr. Muizzu took office after campaigning on an "India Out" platform, which called for expelling about 80 Indian military personnel stationed across the Maldives to provide support.

Mr. Saeed, a Muizzu appointee, was also a cabinet minister during the last "pro-China" government, when the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge was opened. He oversaw a free-trade agreement with China. But these days he sticks to the line that Mr. Muizzu's government is pursuing only a "pro-Maldives" policy.

There is no preference for China, he says — "we extend our invitation of free trade to all countries," because "we would like to get the best value for our tuna."

Pursuing cordial relations with China and India simultaneously might seem the wisest course. But that became more difficult, said Mimrah Ghafoor, a writer and former career diplomat, as both countries stepped up their influence campaigns just as the Maldives was making its transition to democracy.

China has the deeper pockets, with development banks that dwarf India's. But, Mr. Ghafoor noted, if China "has mostly carrots," India "has both carrots and the stick." That is because the Maldives depends on its near neighbor in times of intense need.

Mr. Ghafoor rattled off a list of crises in which Indian help proved indispensable, from fighting back a coup launched from Sri Lanka in 1988 to rescue work after the tsunami of 2004 to a delivery of 1,200 tons of freshwater by airplane and tanker during a shortage in 2014 — a time

when the Maldives was led by a China-leaning president.

Beyond money and geography, there is another important difference between India and China as competitors, one that was illustrated during the Maldives' flare-up with India earlier this year.

Three junior ministers attacked India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, on social media after he had promoted his country's own paradisaic atoll, an even smaller and far less developed archipelago called Lakshadweep. These "India Out" Maldivians inferred a threat to their economy. In the much louder backlash, nationalistic Indians urged a boycott of the islands.

The disruption to relations offered a contrast with China, which exerts supreme message control. That gives it the ability to negotiate effectively with smaller countries behind closed doors. Beijing may be less comfortable with the Maldives' new democracy than New Delhi is, but it has navigated relations just as adeptly.

One fierce democracy advocate, Eva Abdulla, a high-ranking member of Parliament, is proudly pro-India. But mostly she is anti-oscillation.

"Flip-flopping on foreign policy is clearly not good for us," she said. Not in terms of security, and "it doesn't allow for any kind of stability in development projects."

Ms. Abdulla, a cousin of Mr. Nasheed, the former president, argues that there are many reasons to stand by India as a partner. She mentions their cultural affinities, as South Asian democracies. Along with hospitals and schools on the far-flung islands, India funds things like a cultural center in Malé, to promote yoga and Indian dance.

Mr. Modi's pro-Hindu policies at home rub many the wrong way in the Maldives, which is supposedly a 100 percent Muslim society. Even so, "we can't afford a fistfight with India," Ms. Abdulla said. On this, she and the president, Mr. Muizzu, whose parties will be battling each other in parliamentary elections in April, agree. Mr. Muizzu has stepped up his calls for a generic Maldivian nationalism, in favor of the

islands' own language and its Islamic values, while steering clear of an anti-India tone. He has reluctantly made good on his promise to expel the Indian military personnel, but India has not quit its development projects.

One of the most visible is a giant expansion of an airport on the island of Hanimaadhoo, an hour's flight north from Malé. It is home to one of the planes used by the Indian airmen. And it is the kind of project that makes some Maldivians fear that their sovereign territory is being prepared as a potential battleground in somebody else's war.

Hanimaadhoo, population 2,664, hardly seems to need the extra runways being built by an Indian firm. Nor do the little-touristed islands nearby. Yet digging machines are at work 24 hours a day, in effect re-engineering the delicate island to make it capable of landing enormous aircraft. A similar airport, built by Indians at the opposite end of the country, makes Hanimaadhoo seem like part of a pattern.

Maldivians are not the only ones to think that. An Indian laborer at the site named Ranjit said he thought it was obvious why India needed to build a military-ready facility here. "China is coming," he said. "Don't you see the Chinese ships getting ready?"

On Feb. 22, the Xiang Yang Hong 03, officially a Chinese research vessel, pulled into Malé. The Maldives' government said it was just a port call. But as with the Indian airport projects, the ship left an air of ambiguity about possible military uses in its wake.

Book Review: Echoes from the Forgotten Mountains

04 March 2024, Vijay Kranti, [Phayul](#)

Jamyang Norbu's book 'ECHOES FROM FORGOTTEN MOUNTAINS: TIBET IN WAR AND PEACE' is a monumental documentation of the brave armed fight of Tibetan people against a powerful and ruthless colonial power. It is going to stay as one of the most detailed and authentic monographs on this subject for

coming generations of Tibetans, students and researchers

Dominance of Buddhism and Dalai Lama in most of popular narratives on Tibet has led to a common belief that occupation of Tibet by China in 1950-51 was a cake walk. Chinese systematic and concerted propaganda about presenting the colonial grabbing of Tibet as 'peaceful liberation' too has made many outsiders believe further that Tibetan people's faith in Buddhism and Dalai Lama's commitment to non-violence had converted Tibet into a land of the timid and the Tibetan masses as indifferent people who had neither the desire nor capacity to push back the Chinese communist aggression. Hence the destiny of Tibet to live with the curse of colonial occupation for over seven decades now.

This popular but unfounded belief about Tibet needed an authentic, explosive and monumental book like "Echoes From Forgotten Mountains" (891 pages) to shatter it into pieces. This book, written by famous Tibetan writer and researcher Jamyang Norbu, successfully brings out the self-respecting, brave and heroic facet of Tibetan people who vigorously fought, though vainly, against a far better placed Chinese Communist Party and its People's Liberation Army (PLA) which outweighed the ceremonial Tibetan army enormously in terms of equipment, manpower, fighting experience and, more than everything else, the strategic wisdom of the national leadership. There have been surely some books, focused on Tibet's armed resistance against the Chinese occupation – some by the CIA operatives and other outsiders who had authentic knowledge of Tibetan guerrilla operations (e.g. Roger McCarthy's 'Tears of the Lotus'; Conboy and Morrison's 'The CIA's Secret War in Tibet'; Mikel Dunham's 'Buddha's Warriors'; Carole McGranahan's 'Arrested Histories'; and John Kenneth Knaus' 'Orphans of the Cold War'). And then there was an eight volume autobiographic 'Resistance' by Lhamo Tsering who himself was among the top ranking leaders of Tibet's most fearsome

guerrilla force 'Chu Shi Gangdruk.' But Jamyang's book is unique in many ways. The strongest point of this book is that it is based on Jamyang Norbu's years long research of all available material on the Tibetan resistance movement and his one to one personal meetings with surviving Tibetan soldiers, guerrilla fighters, secret agents, peasants, merchants and even some surviving beggars who were either direct participants or were firsthand witnesses to many important developments or their close associates and family members.

Jamyang being himself a Tibetan guerrilla soldier of 'Chu Shi Gangdruk', now defunct but has been the most respected national guerrilla freedom army of Tibet between 1950s and mid 1970s, and a highly acclaimed political commentator, historian, novelist and a popular playwright is among the most suitable Tibetans to write on the subject of this book. His earlier books like 'Illusion and Reality', 'Buying the Dragon's Teeth', 'Shadow Tibet' and 'Don't Stop the Revolution' have been received quite well both by Tibetan as well as non-Tibetan scholars on China and Tibet. His novel 'The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes' won the Crossword Book Award in 2000 and has been translated in over a dozen languages.

And more than all this, Jamyang is a unique Tibetan writer among the Tibetan diaspora who has inspired and educated all three generations of opinion leaders and ordinary Tibetans over past seven decades through his forceful theatre and writings. Within my limits of knowledge of Tibetan society over past five decades I can say that Jamyang leads the class of Tibetan thinkers and opinion leaders who, like Lhasang Tsering, Karma Choephel, Karma Yeshi, Tenzin Tsundue or the brave Tsering Woeser from inside Chinese occupied Tibet, have kept the fire of national independence alive. Their job has been surely not easy in the face of serious disagreement and opposition from the highly influential and powerful section of the exile Tibetan establishment who have formally given up the demand for national independence ('*Rangzen*') in return for

'genuine autonomy' for Tibet within the Chinese constitution. This is one more reason which is going to make this book popular among the pro-'Rangzen' section of Tibetans in exile and those living inside Chinese occupied Tibet. Jamyang's popularity among this section of Tibetan society reflects from the Beijing-based Tibetan poet and blogger (Ms.) Tsering Woenser who has described him as the "Lu Xun of Tibet".

Jamyang has liberally used his personal life story and the history of his own family to make this massive narration interesting, authentic and easy to understand the story of Tibetan armed resistance. Jamyang's courage to present his perspective of history to his audience makes his voice stand out in the cacophony of present day Tibetan society which stands divided along a deep trench between its **Rangzen** and the **Umaylam** (middle path of rapprochement with China) factions. One example is his description of the events of 1950 which led to Chinese PLA's first major and key victory in the eastern Tibet. While the Tibetan **Kashag** (Cabinet of Dalai Lama's exile government) paid glowing tributes to its former minister colleague Ngabo Ngawang Jigme on his death in Beijing as an active collaborator of China in 2009, Jamyang has exposed his role as a coward and traitor Governor of the Tibetan region. In this context it is interesting to remember that on Ngabo's death the Chinese government officially described him as "a great patriot, renowned social activist, good son of Tibetan people, outstanding leader of China's ethnic work and a close friend of CPC." Surprisingly, the Kashag in Dharamshala also issued an official tribute which referred to Ngabo as "Honest and Patriotic who always spoke truth even under the most trying and difficult circumstances". Jamyang writes in details (page-81/82) how keen was Ngabo to surrender his brave and ready to fight 2,500 Tibetan soldiers including the Tibetan commander General Muja before just one hundred 'exhausted' PLA soldiers. Jamyang's

narration includes his interviews with Robert Ford (1923-2013), the only radio operator of the Tibetan government and the only foreigner living permanently in Tibet when China's PLA attacked and occupied a big part of Eastern Tibet. Quoting Ford he writes, "When Muja finally came out of the monastery, he was angry and grim-faced. He told Ford that Nagabo had ordered him to surrender. He apologized to Ford for delaying him and ordered his men to make camp. Then Muja, Ford and the 2,500 soldiers of the Tibetan army of Chamdo waited haplessly before the walls of Drugu Monastery till eventually ... one hundred exhausted PLA troops from the Ngamda crossroad arrived, and Ngabo was finally able to surrender."

The book also presents Jamyang's eye for details and his narration of very simple and obvious looking things to make his story interesting and informative. For example, he describes striking similarities of architecture and other characteristics between various towns at the entry points to Tibet even if they were located hundreds of kilometers apart from each other. His observations about such similarities between Kalimpong and Darjeeling from Bengal direction; Gangtok from Sikkim side; Dartsedo (Kangding) from Sichuan and Satham Lijiang from Yunnan are interesting.

The variety and quality of a good number of old and historic photos included in the book add extra glamour and value to it. For example, vintage photos from Jamyang's own family album; many historic personalities and scholars related to Tibet; heroes of Tibetan battles and public uprisings against the invading PLA; prominent guerrilla fighters of Chu-Shi-Gangdruk; real photos of Chinese atrocities during the Cultural Revolution; and photos of Chinese, Tibetan, British and Japanese spies make it a rich collection. However, nearly complete set of photos of the CIA-trained Tibetan guerrilla fighter paratroopers who were secretly air dropped in Tibet make this book unique and a collectors' pride.

Another set of visuals which help the reader in grasping the story of Tibetan resistance against the PLA are the maps included in the book. Some maps which deserve to be preserved by the reader include a detailed map of Tibet of 1950s showing location of all major towns and cities; routes connecting Tibet to Gangtok and Darjeeling; a large map depicting routes and directions of Chinese advance and Tibetan fighters' retreat in early 1950s; the routes taken by Chu-Shi-Gangdruk's founder commander and the supreme hero of Tibetan guerrilla resistance Andrug Gonpo Tashi right from Paksho in the East to Nyemo and Shigatse in the West; and, of course, the map of Mustang guerrilla bases in Nepal showing the location of each of the 16 Company camps of Chu-Shi-Gangdruk.

What makes Jamyang unpopular among the Tibet's exiled establishment is his frankness and courage to speak up his mind on sensitive issues. This book highlights this aspect of his personality at many places. And all this comes from his enthusiasm about conducting his own studies and research. A major part of his book is based on his personal and detailed interviews, spread over many years, with numerous individuals who were first hand witness to Tibet's war with China. His description of the daring role of many Tibetan women fighters like Gyari Dorje Yudon of Nyarong, Ani (Nun) Pachen Lemdatsang of Gonjo and Lhalu sonam Deki as well brave political leaders like Ani (Nun) Glingshar, Gurten Kunsang, Dolma Chonzom, Sampho Ngudup Wangmo and Lobsang Dekyong reflect the widespread anger and opposition to the Chinese colonial rule in Tibet.

Ford told Jamyang about his discussions with General Karchung of Tibetan army who had faced first attack of PLA on 7 Oct 1950 at Riwoche and later was in Chinese captivity along with Ford. Quoting from his long interviews with Ford, Jamyang points out that there was only one radio receiver at Ford's command when PLA entered Tibet. If Tibetan army had one more radio at Riwoche and another at Markham then the history of Tibet

would have been different. "In just, possibly, a week or so, the many high passes in that region would have become snowbound..... Chinese would have had to force their pack animals and porters through the many snowbound passes to Chamdo, and that would unquestionably have led to a disaster (for PLA)...."

In the chapter titled 'Requiem' Jamyang has, like a surgeon, finely analyzed the reasons behind the defeat of Tibetan army and guerrilla warriors at the hands of invading PLA. He writes, "The organization of the Tibetan army was indeed archaic. The individual Tibetan soldier was not as well trained, certainly not as well equipped as his European, American or Chinese counterpart. But he had native toughness, courage and *amor patriae*. No Tibetan soldier threw down his weapon and fled at the first sign of the enemy. Even when defeated he gave a good account of himself....." While describing the valor and fighting spirit of the Tibetan warriors Jamyang also points out some weak points too. At one point the book says, "...When (Tibetan people's) troops went to the front line, they took their families with them. With (General) Muja's men now came as many women and children, with all their household goods and personal belongings piled up on yaks and mules...."

The formal Tibetan army was defeated on the Eastern front in the very first Chinese attack in October 1950. This defeat was quick and decisive against an enormous, well equipped and experienced PLA as the Tibetan army not only lacked drastically on its manpower front but also because of utter paucity of necessary training, equipment. Moreover, it was near total absence of planning, vision or desire on the part of Lhasa government to have and maintain a good national army. The role of Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, the Tibetan governor of the region, who was already known for his pro-China tilt and who decided to not only to surrender to the PLA but also ordered blasting of entire Tibetan armory which proved as the proverbial last straw for the Tibetan side. His

decision not only deprived the willing Tibetan soldiers to fight back but it also closed door on the arms and ammunition reaching those soldiers and lay people who had decided to carry on the fight. But thanks to the self-respecting and fighting spirit of the ordinary Tibetans, especially those from the frontline provinces of Kham and Amdo, entire responsibility of armed resistance against the occupying PLA across Tibet for coming decades was shouldered by groups of local chieftains, ordinary citizens, Lamas and Nuns.

Jamyang's book is a systematic, the most voluminous one so far and commendable documentation of this struggle which, unfortunately, could not keep up against a giant and shrewd opponent. He has presented a detailed history of various stages and forms of Tibetan armed struggle through stories and deeds of individual freedom fighters belonging to various big and small groups across Tibet. However, a good part of the book is dedicated to the Chu-Shi-Gangdruk (i.e. 'Four Rivers Six Ranges') which was a volunteer guerrilla force lead by legendary Andrug Gompo Tashi, the most fearsome, brave and highly respected fighter of modern Tibetan history. The book tells the force's story right from its formation as a volunteer army and later its adoption by American secret service CIA for training at Colorado's secret Camp-Hale and subsequent armed operations inside Tibet. Unfortunately the US and CIA's support lasted only until the US government started its love affair with Mao's China in 1970s. CIA's sudden decision to pull out its hands from under the guerrilla force and leaving it unprotected only to be massacred jointly by the Nepal's Royal Nepal Army and the Chinese PLA in mid 1970s.

In addition to telling stories of many individual Tibetan guerrilla soldiers Jamyang has also interviewed many of CIA's American trainers and the coordinators who were involved in training the Tibetans in handling arms and ammunition, running battery less transmitters, secret coding of wireless messages and air dropping of arms and paratroopers deep inside Tibet. He has also described the role of Dalai

Lama's two elder brothers Taktser Rinpoche and Gyalo Thundup in the CIA operations.

Jamyang describes in good details how Taktser Rinpoche personally stayed at Colorado and was provided a special house at the Camp Hale as he played an important role in the training of Tibetan guerrillas. Gyalo Thundup's role, true to his nature and specializations was focused on liaison with the US government and, as described by Mikel Dunham in his CIA focused book 'Buddha's Warriors', was involved in managing the American CIA funds for Chu-Shi-Gangdruk. In their later years Taktser Rinpoche finally joined California University as a professor and remained a vocal and strong supporter of the idea of complete freedom (i.e. 'Rangzen') for Tibet till his last breath. However, Gyalo Thundup has been living in his so many avatars which include his close and controversial association with Beijing that has led to convincing Dalai Lama to shift his goal from 'Rangzen' to the 'Middle Way Approach' (MWA) which means accepting Tibet as a part of China under Chinese constitution in exchange for 'genuine autonomy' for Tibet. It is not surprising that Jamyang as one of the most vocal proponents of 'Rangzen' and strongest opponents of the MWA has invited all kinds of reactions, including opposition and condemnation, from many Tibetan quarters including the exile Tibetan establishment in Dharamshala. I am amused to note that while he has given details about the valor and the role played by many less known individual participants of Tibetan armed struggle, Gyalo Thundup is conspicuous by his near total absence from this voluminous book despite latter's prominent role in the CIA sponsored armed guerrilla war.

A good section of the book is focused at the aggressive conduct of the Chinese Communist Party and the PLA after occupation of Tibet. He has probed and described in details how ordinary Tibetan people including monks, nuns and nomads across Tibet opposed and resisted the Chinese imposition of the communist system in the guise of 'Democratic Reforms'. He also describes the 1959 Lhasa-Uprising of

Tibetan people against Chinese rule which finally prompted Dalai Lama to secretly escape from Tibet to India.

The fact remains that the armed struggle of helpless and friendless Tibetan people failed to match Chinese power machine over past seven decades. In the face of millions of new Han settlers across Tibet, a massive machine of soldiers, policemen, informers and a sophisticated digital surveillance system has left no space for an armed resistance inside today's Tibet. But the unending stream of self-immolation by Tibetan people which has seen over 150 young boys and girls, monks and nuns making the supreme sacrifice over recent years to give voice to the Tibetan people's refusal to accept China's rule and dominance over their country is an unambiguous indication of Tibet and Tibetans' resolve for freedom.

It may not be easy to comment on all issues covered in this 891-page book in a single review but one can say for sure that this book is a monumental documentation of the brave armed fight of Tibetan people against a powerful and ruthless colonial power. On the strength of my, whatsoever limited, knowledge and understanding of Tibet and the people of Tibet over past five decades I can safely predict that this book is going to prove one of the most detailed and authentic monographs of Tibetan people's armed struggle and their desire for national independence.

Unsettled LAC is Xi's pressure point on India to stay away from West

01 March 2024, [The Hindustan Times](#)

It seems that China is in no mood to resolve its dispute with India. On February 19, the India-China Corps Commanders met at Chushul-Moldo border point to discuss disengagement, relocation and de-escalation in eastern Ladakh.

It has been four years since the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) transgressed over Galwan, Gogra Hot Springs, Pangong Tso Lake and had accretion of forces at Depsang Plain as well as Charding Nala Junction in

Demchok. Even after four years, the disengagement has not been complete, what to talk of relocation or de-escalation.

Even now, the Chinese have packed up nearly 50,000 troops along with rocket systems, missiles and fighters on a standby in the hinterland in Tibet. Even on February 19, both the Indian and Chinese sides couldn't get past each other. The Chinese used the transgressions in East Ladakh to pressurise the Narendra Modi government.

China wary of India's ties with West?

It is a million dollar question of which one can only speculate the answers. It is quite evident that the Chinese will use the non-resolution of Line of Actual Control (LAC) to pressurise India not to go to the West. It is a clear cut pressure point that the Chinese are using the QUAD to translate into an alliance much bigger than a talk shop.

The Chinese also want to use this to ensure that the Indian borders never remain stable and India is always on the tenterhooks due to its huge army, latest advanced weapon systems and numerically high presence in eastern Ladakh.

This is happening despite the government making it very clear that the normalisation of bilateral ties with China only go through the settlement and de-escalation on the LAC, which is 3,488 kilometres long. Currently, the Chinese PLA is packed up in Ladakh, the eastern sector along Arunachal Pradesh and across Sikkim.

Even before Xi Jinping became the Chinese president for the third time in October 2022, the Chinese sent six combined armed brigade, virtually a division strength each, along the Arunachal and Sikkim borders. Those combined armed brigades are still there. As of now, the LAC is packed up with Chinese forces, who are doing all kinds of military upgradation all along the LAC.

How India is responding to China?

The Indian side has also responded in a similar fashion. It has ensured that the Chinese challenge does not go without riposte. The problem is, over the past four years, things are

not at all moving. The India-China trade is still heavily in favour of China, the trade deficit being more than \$100 billion.

The Chinese want to settle the border on their own terms. It means you impose the 1959 line, proposed by then Chinese premier Chou en Lai on East Ladakh and you give up on Arunachal Pradesh or what they call as South Tibet.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to reach out to China in 2018 at Wuhan and in 2019 at Chennai, trying to sort out the border. He tried to sort out with Xi Jinping the resolution of the boundary issue. But the Chinese responded by a transgression in May 2020.

As PM Modi told one of his senior officers, "I wanted to give support of 140 crore Indians to President Xi Jinping but he was more interested in 140 square kilometres of land".

Peace At Border Must For Improvement Of Ties With China: S Jaishankar

02 March 2024, [NDTV](#)

China must adhere to border management pacts and there has to be peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) for improvement in Sino-India ties, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar asserted on Saturday amid the lingering military face-off in eastern Ladakh.

In an interactive session at a think-tank, he highlighted how the Modi government has been focusing on boosting the border infrastructure and that there has to be an equilibrium eventually in the relations between India and China.

In an oblique reference to governments in the past, Mr Jaishankar, replying to a broad question on dealing with China, said India did not use international relationships as effectively as it could have in the past.

In this context, Mr Jaishankar identified development of national power as very crucial. "Powers rise, powers stand their ground, powers build equilibrium; not by fancy statements and clever debates. They have to do hard work of governance, putting the

resources, push the system, deliver on the ground, monitor it, supervise it and have relationships which will contribute to it," he said.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-and-half-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

The external affairs minister underlined the need for India to build deep national strength including in areas of technology and supply chains to effectively face challenges from China.

"It is a combination of all of this but the bottomline is there has to be an equilibrium and there has to be peace and tranquillity in the border areas and there has to be adherence to the agreements which were arrived at," Mr Jaishankar said at the Ananta Aspen Centre.

"Because if you do not adhere to the agreements, tell me how you would have even the basic understanding and going forward, if there isn't peace and tranquillity at the border, how can any society look at other forms of cooperation when the border is disturbed or violent," he said.

"And there has to eventually be an equilibrium, I am convinced it will. I am convinced we have to work hard for that equilibrium," he said.

Mr Jaishankar said the Modi government has significantly enhanced the border infrastructure in the last 10 years.

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process in 2021 on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

Is turbulent the new normal in Sino-Indian relations?

02 March 2024, [Observer Research Foundation](#)

On India's part, it has stood up to the China challenge on several fronts.

At the 2024 iteration of Raisina Dialogue, Asia's premier conference on geopolitics, China featured prominently in the discussions, given that there has been a tense standoff at the border between the Indian and Chinese armies for nearly four years. The clashes between the two armies in Galwan in 2020, which resulted in fatalities of on both sides, is an important turning point in the relations between the two Asian powers. Foreign minister S Jaishankar deconstructed China's approach in dealing with India. He said that while China tried to change the status quo at the border in the process violating the agreements to which it is a signatory, it was trying to stymie India's bid to get a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The minister alluded to China deploying mind games to resolve border issues with India, but that the breakthrough would come about only if other powers were kept at bay. Underlining India's response to these developments, Jaishankar stated that India would not let a competitor curtail its policy choices, and that his government would look to make use of the international system for the best outcome.

The reason for such a pessimistic assessment of the ties between the two nations is that the clashes in Galwan have been followed by China trying to change the status quo on the ground at different points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The Indian government has termed relations between the two nations as "abnormal" and also pinned the breakdown of trust between the two nations on China's aggressive action at the border. The reason for such a pessimistic assessment of the ties between the two nations is that the clashes in Galwan have been followed by China trying to change the status quo on the ground at different points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). In addition to the military coercion, China has resorted to mind games, which Jaishankar alluded to. China unilaterally renamed towns in Arunachal Pradesh, to which it lays claims. It also publicised a map recently showing large parts of Indian territory as part of China. The

cartographic onslaught is also backed by a massive build-up of People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers along the border, and China creating enormous infrastructure—both civilian and military—to improve the staying power of its military. Twenty-one rounds of talks between the two militaries that have been conducted has led to resolution at some friction points, but overall troop deployment remains a cause for concern.

On India's part, it has stood up to the China challenge on several fronts. First, it has matched China's troop deployment at the border, there has also been a fillip to the development of infrastructure facilities at the border. Second, India has taken the lead in banning cellphone apps on national security grounds, and there has been curbs on infusion on Chinese capital and investment into India.

The government's approach has received public approbation. ORF's Foreign Policy survey 2023 found out that an overwhelming 83% of the respondents interviewed in urban India gave a thumbs-up to India's foreign policy. There is little constituency for peace with China since nearly 80% of those surveyed cite China's aggression at the border being responsible for the trust deficit. More so, because many of these respondents see India's seat at the UN Security Council (that China has sought to block) as a key priority. On the bright side, more than three-fourths of the respondents see India's G20 Presidency and the Quad as appropriate fora to pursue India's interests, with the same number putting great store in Australia, Japan, and the US (Quad members) as leading partners in the near future.

Leveraging the international system

Thus, faced with the China challenge, India has crafted a foreign policy that seeks greater engagement with the world. A case in point is India's G20 presidency under which more than 100 countries were invited to a 'Voice of Global South' summit, taking up issues of food and energy security, fast-tracking reforms of global financial to seek better representation to developing nations. The other central piece of this proactive foreign policy was India's

increasing engagement with the Quad, which Jaishankar described as India's riposte to those who seek to veto her policy choices. Speaking at the Quad Think Tank Forum on Feb 24, the minister highlighted nascent capacity-building initiatives that were helping policy-makers in the Indo-Pacific region better evaluate infrastructure projects on viability and sustainability criterion. Such efforts underscore Quad's commitment to the region reeling from the impact of China's debt-trap diplomacy in the wake of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The other central piece of this proactive foreign policy was India's increasing engagement with the Quad, which Jaishankar described as India's riposte to those who seek to veto her policy choices.

At the same time, China's belligerence through different means continues unabated. An important aspect of China's aggression and expansionism has been the deployment of grey-zone warfare, in which a nation uses strategies to pursue its aims, but that may not invoke a strong military response from the other side. For example, China has built 'xiaokang' villages near the Indian border in a bid to bolster its territorial claims, and now there are reports that these are being populated with settlers.

During the Raisina conclave, India's Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan drew attention to China's use of such strategies to hobble rivals. If the 2010s put strains on India-China ties due to land-based incursions, then the coming decades may see increased strife in the maritime and cyberspace spheres as well.

While China considers the South China Sea as its lake, it has stated that the Indian Ocean is not India's ocean. There have been reports of Chinese research vessels trawling the Indian ocean to collate and build a repository of data, which may give its submarines an edge in navigating in this region.

The Indian establishment will also have to be alert to increased efforts by Chinese state and non-state actors who will try to infiltrate the cybersecurity domain to steal data that may

have national security ramifications. It's a turbulent road ahead for Sino-Indian ties.

Money, power and the peril of courting Chinese nationalism

02 March 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

In January, a Chinese ultranationalist vlogger – video blogger – came across red circular stickers on the glass doors of a shopping mall in Nanjing featuring the words: "Happy 2024."

The vlogger claimed that what appeared to be innocent New Year decorations were, in fact, nationalistic Japanese motifs since the red circles resembled the rising red sun in Japan's national flag.

"This is Nanjing, not Tokyo! Why are you putting up junk like this?" he snarled at a manager at the mall.

Local police subsequently got involved and ordered staff at the mall to take down the decorations and gave the mall's management an official warning.

"It is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard," 33-year-old noodle shop owner Alice Lu from Shanghai told Al Jazeera.

"If red circles are not allowed then there is no end to the things that must be removed," Lu said.

Following the standard set by the local police in Nanjing, users on Chinese social media were quick to highlight the absurdity of all the red circular objects that would need to be banned, including the logo of China's telecommunications giant Huawei, posters of China's first Communist leader, Mao Zedong, featuring a rising sun in the background, and even traffic lights.

The fiasco drew in China's state-run CCTV which chastised the vlogger in an article on its Weibo account, calling his actions "detrimental to individuals, companies and society as a whole".

Shaoyu Yuan, a scholar of Chinese studies at Rutgers University in the United States, said CCTV's comments demonstrated an attempt by the Chinese government to maintain state

control over the narrative surrounding nationalism.

“They want to ensure that nationalism serves as a unifying force rather than being misused,” Yuan told Al Jazeera.

Steering patriotism

Under the rule of Chinese President Xi Jinping, fervent patriotic sentiment has been encouraged among the public for years.

Xi said in June that “love of our country, the feeling of devotion and sense of attachment to our motherland is a duty and responsibility of every Chinese”, and that “the essence of patriotism is loving the country, the Party and socialism all at the same time”.

The importance of state-defined patriotism was highlighted at the beginning of January when a new “patriotic education law” came into effect in China with the stated aim of instilling “love of the country and the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP)”.

During Xi’s presidency, that patriotic fervour has been projected outward from China by its “wolf warrior” diplomats, including former foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian who infamously floated the idea that the US military was responsible for the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan.

Zhao also posted a fabricated image depicting an Australian soldier holding a bloody knife to the throat of an Afghan child in 2020, at a time when relations between Australia and China were in free fall.

While the CCP promotes its own version of patriotism, it also moderates nationalistic output at times, too.

Incessant bashing of the US online is a common pastime among active Chinese nationalists. But leading up to a highly anticipated summit between President Xi and US President Joe Biden in November, China’s media and nationalist commentators suddenly dialled down their anti-US rhetoric.

Beijing adjusts the volume on nationalistic rhetoric to serve its interests, according to Yuan, engaging in a balancing act of patriotic sentiment when necessary.

“While nationalism is encouraged as a means of fostering a strong national identity and loyalty, its excesses can lead to extremism and undermine international diplomacy, social harmony and public order,” Yuan said.

Nationalism turns violent

Lu from Shanghai said the Nanjing incident was an example of how the promotion of intense patriotic feelings in China has led to a toxic environment – particularly when it comes to Japan-related topics.

“It is a bit scary actually how anti-Japanese feelings can make some people react in China,” she said.

Chinese modern nationalism directed at Japan is deeply influenced by historical conflicts, most notably the events of the Second Sino-Japanese War during World War II, Yuan said. “These have left a lasting imprint on the Chinese collective memory, fuelling sentiments of resentment and vigilance towards Japan,” he said.

Anti-Japanese sentiment was on display in 2022 when a known cosplayer was approached by police in Suzhou, a city not far from Shanghai, as she was taking pictures of herself on the street wearing a Japanese kimono. Before being taken away, a police officer was recorded shouting at the woman: “If you came here wearing hanfu (traditional Chinese clothing), I wouldn’t say this, but you are wearing a kimono as a Chinese. You are Chinese!”

A few days after the arrest, CCTV launched a social media topic promoting the wearing of hanfu-style clothing.

The Suzhou incident pales in comparison, however, to August 2012 when a dispute in the East China Sea over control of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which are administered by Tokyo but claimed by Beijing, led to large anti-Japanese protests across urban China.

While protests are often swiftly broken up by the Chinese authorities, the anti-Japanese demonstrations in several cities saw no interference, and from there they turned increasingly violent.

In the central Chinese city of Xi'an, a Chinese man in a Japanese car was pulled out of his vehicle and severely beaten, sustaining life-changing injuries.

The government-controlled People's Daily subsequently said in an editorial that it did not condone the violence, but attempted to explain it as a sign of Chinese people's patriotism.

By the time police intervened and restored order at the end of September, Japanese shops, companies and restaurants had been vandalised and China-Japan relations were bruised.

Sales representative Simon Wan, 36, remembers the demonstrations in Beijing devolving into riots at that time.

"From our apartment window, we saw people smash my father's Toyota (a Japanese car brand) which was parked on the street below," he told Al Jazeera.

"My family and me stayed indoors most of the time those days to avoid trouble. It was quite frightening."

Wan believes that the government does not want to see a repeat of the anti-Japan riots in 2012.

"So, I think they reacted to the nationalistic vlogger in Nanjing because they wanted to avoid any kind of escalation," he said.

When ultranationalist fervour leads to property damage or becomes counterproductive to China's diplomatic goals, it goes too far, according to Yuan, at which point the Chinese authorities will seek to contain it – as in Nanjing.

Making patriotism pay

The vlogger in Nanjing was not just chastised for being too nationalistic, however. He was pilloried for using patriotism to turn a profit from his video blogs.

"Patriotism is not a business," CCTV stated in its rebuke of the vlogger.

But, patriotism can in fact be a lucrative business for many nationalistic bloggers and vloggers on Chinese social media.

According to Yuan, there are many ways to monetise patriotism for people such as Hu

Xijin, a public figure and commentator who has leveraged his nationalistic stance to amass significant followings on social media.

"This business aspect of patriotism involves not only direct profits from social media platforms through advertisements and sponsored content but also endorsements and partnerships with brands that wish to align themselves with patriotic sentiments," he said. Chinese social media accounts with more than a million followers can earn their owners a few hundred thousand dollars a year, while nationalistic commentators such as Hu Xijin have tens of millions of followers. But as the vlogger in Nanjing discovered, the attention garnered by nationalistic tropes does not guarantee fame and fortune, and can instead lead to infamy and misfortune.

In 2022, blogger Sima Nan had his social media accounts across Chinese platforms blocked after he engaged in a war of words with China's tech firm Lenovo during which time it was revealed that he was a homeowner in the US state of California, despite his overt anti-Americanism.

Another nationalist, Kong Qingdong, was banned from Weibo in 2022 for undisclosed reasons. Kong was also temporarily banned in 2012 after he had sparked a public outcry when he referred to Hongkongers as "dogs" and other slurs.

"Navigating the waters of nationalistic content creation in China can be as perilous as it is profitable," Yuan said.

"While the Chinese government often supports and promotes nationalistic sentiment that aligns with its policies and image, there are red lines that cannot be crossed, and content creators who venture too far, misinterpret the government's stance or criticise its policies – even under the guise of nationalism – can find themselves facing swift repercussions," he said.

Adding to the peril, China's red lines are fluid and can quickly change depending on the situation.

The sudden shift in nationalistic rhetoric leading up to the Biden-Xi summit in

November is an example of such a rapid change.

“A nationalistic stance that aligns with the government’s current diplomatic posture might be encouraged at one time but could become problematic if diplomatic priorities shift and the stance is no longer deemed appropriate,” Yuan explained.

Such fluidity is an element of the CCP’s balancing act regarding nationalism.

“It (the CCP) aims to promote a strong sense of national identity and pride among its citizens while avoiding the pitfalls of hypernationalism that could lead to xenophobia, regional tensions, or internal dissent,” Yuan added.

“Additionally, the Chinese government has always sought to prevent any single voice or group from becoming so influential in nationalist discourse that it could challenge the authority of the Communist Party or create factions within society.”

Looking back on his experience during the anti-Japan riots in 2012, Wan, the sales rep from Beijing, said he worried that the government’s promotion of patriotism and tolerance towards nationalism would endanger Chinese society in the long run.

“I think President Xi told American President Biden a few years ago that those who play with fire will get burned,” he said.

“I think that is also the case for anyone in China that plays too much with the flames of nationalism.”

China bolsters military recruitment aimed at sharpening its military power: A warning for its neighbours

01 March 2024, [Times of India](#)

China has been intensifying its military recruitment efforts to strengthen and modernize its armed forces under Xi’s leadership, with a significant boost in the past year. The PRC is recruiting not only its former officers but also highly skilled foreign veterans and technically qualified students. Alongside, State-owned Enterprises (SOE) and private companies are raising their volunteer armies.

Several steps have been taken since last year. First, the PLA’s newly amended recruitment guidelines, which took effect on May 1, 2023, stated that conscription would be focused on preparations for war, and priority would be on recruiting highly skilled personnel, including retired personnel. It also included scope for wider mobilisation of the population in the event of war, including the recruitment of women to active service, as well as previously demobilised soldiers, who may return to their old posts and rank “if they meet the requirements.” This regulation, which has 74 articles in 11 chapters, focuses on recruiting more “high-calibre soldiers, standardising and optimising conscription procedures, and improving the system’s efficiency.” The State Council and the Central Military Commission have been given powers to adjust the methods and requirements of recruitment to enlist citizens to active service.

Second, China revised the retirement age for top reservist commanders, raising it from 55 to 60 to retain skilled professionals longer.

Third, the regulations prioritise university graduates with special skills or knowledge, particularly in science and engineering, for induction into combat forces.

Fourth, China is using foreign highly skilled veterans for training its trainers. In September 2023, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Brown warned airmen and allies that China’s PLA “wants to exploit your knowledge and skill to fill gaps in their military capability.” He further stated that “foreign companies are targeting and recruiting US and NATO-trained military talent.” China’s recruiting efforts include contracts that seem “too good to be true,” or that are scant on details about the customer. According to US officials, these job offers come from a mix of privately owned companies backed by China and those directly contracted by the Chinese government. Targets include pilots, maintainers, air operations centre personnel, and a variety of other technical experts from across multiple occupations who could provide insight into US and NATO air tactics, techniques, and

procedures. China is also using US veterans to train air force officers in third countries. In June 2023 the Department of Commerce placed the Test Flying Academy of South Africa on an export control list because it was facilitating training and technical support to the PLA using a former US military member.

Fifth, China has directed the State-owned and private companies to set up their volunteer armies. Since last year, at least 16 major Chinese firms, including a privately-owned dairy giant (Yili group), have established fighting forces. These units, known as the People's Armed Forces Departments, are composed of civilians who retain their regular jobs. They act as a reserve and auxiliary force for China's military. Yili's private army unit is under the management of the PLA garrison in Inner Mongolia and the Communist Party committee of the regional government, indicating the linkages between private armies with the PLA. These armies are to be deployed within the country. However, the Chinese definition of its area includes the disputed regions in its periphery, and therefore the possibility of their deployment there cannot be ruled out. These can be used to maintain social disorders within the country. China faces problems in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hongkong as well as labour protests. The number of labour strikes and demonstrations surged to 1,794 in 2023, more than doubling from 2022, when only 830 cases were recorded. China is crushing the dissidence with a strong hand. Crucially, as these units work under the PLA, they can help the Communist Party more effectively quell incidents of social unrest.

How China views these private armies is significant. Wu Qian, a Chinese defence ministry spokesperson, stated that the aim to raise PAFDs was part of China's whole-nation approach to national defence and that the militias are available for everything from a large-scale mobilisation to the response to a natural disaster.

Overall, China's recruitment efforts could significantly bolster its military strength. There are more than 2 million active personnel. The

People's Armed Police (1 million) adds to China's current standing army, while there are some 8 million professional reserves under the age of 45 who have already served. Experts suggest that with a potential reservoir of 10 million students and regional reserves, national mobilization could produce an army of around 30 million in varying states of training and readiness. Even if this figure is exaggerated, the realistic figure could be around 10 million personnel including technical men.

This large force could impact China's approach to regional disputes, potentially leading to increased assertiveness and use of force, as seen in its actions in areas like Taiwan, the South China Sea, and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India. It has scant regard for international law and it uses manufactured historical facts to pursue expansionism. While internal problems can be dealt with by the private armies, the regular forces can be deployed in the disputed areas. China's aggressiveness is seen as a new normal. Xi has often stated that the use of force against Taiwan cannot be ruled out. However, this high number of troops is not required for Taiwan, hence they could have different objectives. Chinese militias are already being used in artificial islands, turning them into its forward military bases. Along the LAC, China has created villages where trained personnel can be housed and used for encroachment into the Indian side. Besides, China can use technical units for more aggressive influence operations aimed at weaponising the public mind. India and other neighbours having territorial disputes with China should take precautionary counter-measures.

Make in India can dial up Chinese characteristics

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India's ambition to become a factory to the world can use a helping hand from China. The South Asian country wants to triple electronics exports to \$300 billion, opens new tab in about three years, but its firms lack the expertise to

manufacture parts like display screens and camera modules - areas dominated by suppliers from the People's Republic. Convincing them to set up factories in India will be tricky, but not impossible.

India has had a decent start so far. It became a net exporter of mobile phones in 2020 after introducing hefty import taxes, which forced handset makers including China's Xiaomi (1810.HK), opens new tab to move production to the country. As a result, and following a long push to force companies to Make-in-India, local value addition, or the share of locally-sourced components, jumped, opens new tab to 17% from just 6% between 2016 and 2018, according Counterpoint research. Taiwanese firms Foxconn (2317.TW), opens new tab and Pegatron (4938.TW), opens new tab are also assembling iPhones in the country; JPMorgan analysts reckon India might produce one in four iPhones by 2025.

Most of that, however, is in low-value manufacturing like smartphone assembly and producing batteries and chargers. To compare, Vietnam's local value addition is 24%, largely thanks to investments from the \$28 billion Shenzhen-listed Luxshare Precision Industry (002475.SZ), opens new tab and Beijing-based BOE Technology (000725.SZ), opens new tab, a top maker of TV and smartphone screens.

Wooing those firms has been a thorny issue for India because of strained political relations with its neighbour. More than a dozen Chinese suppliers including Luxshare received initial approvals to set up, opens new tab local factories over a year ago, according to Bloomberg. But progress appears to have stalled.

New Delhi is now mulling removing barriers to Chinese investments, provided the two countries' shared border remains peaceful. It also recently cut import duties on some smartphone components, though they are still much higher than in Mexico and Southeast Asia. India's deputy IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar recently warned in a government document seen by Reuters that

the country must "act fast" to lure global companies with lower tariffs, or risk losing out to Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

In exchange for investment and expertise, Chinese firms would have better access to a thriving smartphone market. That is expected to triple to \$90 billion by 2032, according to Morgan Stanley. Foreign brands operating retail stores in the country, like Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab, have to source at least 30% of the product's value locally.

India's economy is growing fast and consistently beating market expectations; GDP expanded 8.4% in the December quarter from a year earlier, official data released on Thursday showed. Foreign direct investment is lagging, however. That could hobble the dream to create jobs through manufacturing. India has had good reason to hold back the red carpet treatment on investments for a country nibbling at its border but Make in India can use some Chinese characteristics.

India risks losing out to China and Vietnam as it seeks to become a major smartphone export hub and must "act fast" to lure global companies with lower tariffs, deputy IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in government documents seen by Reuters, the news agency reported on Feb. 13.

"India has high production cost due to highest tariffs amongst key manufacturing destinations," wrote Chandrasekhar in the documents. A Jan. 3 letter and a confidential presentation drafted by Chandrasekhar was sent to the Finance Minister, Reuters added.

"The geopolitical realignment is forcing supply chains to shift out of China ... We must act now, or they will shift to Vietnam, Mexico and Thailand."