

TIBET DIGEST

SEPTEMBER 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- September Tibet Digest

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In September, Tibet saw increased efforts by China to tighten control. Tibetan government workers raised concerns over a plan to raise the retirement age, fearing corruption and youth unemployment. The closure of the Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School highlighted China's suppression of Tibetan culture. Meanwhile, security crackdowns intensified, with calls for stricter action against separatism.

China launched an international propaganda center to reshape global discourse on Tibet, while a dam project submerged the historic Atsok Monastery, displacing thousands. The government also reaffirmed control over Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations, further escalating tensions with the exile community. This month's digest also covers legal crackdowns on Tibetan activists, increasing protests in China, and the rising environmental impact on Tibet's natural landscape

CCP'S Tibet Policies

Concerns Over China's Plan to Raise Retirement Age in Tibet: Tibetan government workers are concerned about China's plan to gradually increase the retirement age starting in 2025. Many fear this will limit their ability to retire early and pursue private business ventures. Workers are dissatisfied with political indoctrination in offices and worry the new policy will worsen corruption related to retirement benefits and increase youth unemployment in Tibet.

China's Legal Warfare Closes a Beloved Tibetan School: A Tibetan vocational school in Qinghai, renowned for promoting Tibetan language and culture, was forcibly closed despite legal battles that initially favored its operations. The Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School, established in 1994, faced increased pressure as Chinese authorities targeted Tibetan schools to enforce Chinese language instruction. This closure is seen as part of China's broader campaign to suppress Tibetan language and cultural identity. The school's alumni, teachers, and supporters fear increased repression of Tibetan heritage, as Tibetan activists claim that such closures are key to China's assimilation policy.

China's Security Chief Convenes "Anti-Secession" Meeting in Tibet: China's security chief Chen Wenqing held an anti-secession meeting in Tibet, emphasizing crackdowns on separatist activities. During his visit to Tibetan regions, Chen underscored the need for political and legal efforts to manage religious affairs and maintain security. This visit follows the recent passing of the U.S. Resolve Tibet Act, which reaffirms Tibet's unresolved international status. Chinese officials have tightened security in the region, potentially signaling increased surveillance and restrictions on Tibetan communities.

China's Security Chief Calls for 'Resolute Crackdown' on Separatists in Tibetan Area: On a trip to Tibet, Chen Wenqing, head of China's Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, called for strong action against separatist activities and religious management. His visit aimed to ensure security in Tibetan regions ahead of China's National Day and followed a recent meeting between U.S. officials and the Dalai Lama. Chen highlighted the need for continued efforts to maintain stability and counter separatism across Tibetan areas, urging security personnel to promote national identity among ethnic minorities.

China Launches Massive International Propaganda Effort on Tibet: China launched the "Xizang [Tibet] International Communication Center" to bolster its international propaganda on Tibet. The initiative aims to counter Western narratives and assert Chinese control over the global discourse on Tibet. CCP officials expressed concerns that the West dominates international media on Tibet and demonizes China's policies. The new center, heavily funded by the CCP's Propaganda Department, is intended to shift this balance and promote China's development narrative about Tibet in the coming years.

Buddhism

Buddhist Monastery Submerged Due to Chinese Dam Project: The 135-year-old Atsok Monastery and a nearby Tibetan village were submerged after water levels rose from the expansion of the Yangqu hydropower station in Qinghai province. Tibetans criticized the project as a disregard for their culture and environment. The dam, completed in 2024, displaced over 15,500 ethnic Tibetans. Despite promises to reconstruct parts of the monastery, sacred murals and stupas were destroyed. Satellite images confirmed the area's complete submersion by late August.

China-Appointed Panchen Lama Urges CPC Control Over Reincarnation: Gyaincain Norbu, the China-appointed 11th Panchen Lama, reaffirmed the Communist Party of China's authority over the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist leaders. During a tour of Tibetan regions, he called for national unity and condemned separatism. Norbu, who holds various positions in Chinese government bodies, continues to be promoted by Beijing, despite the abduction of the Dalai Lama-recognized Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, in 1995.

China's World Buddhist Forum aimed at boosting soft power: experts: China will host the 6th World Buddhist Forum in October 2024 in Ningbo, inviting participants from 70 countries but excluding the Dalai Lama. Critics argue that China's main goal is political, using the event to strengthen its influence over Buddhist-majority nations, presenting itself as more central to Buddhism than India. Experts say China is misleading the global community by using Buddhism as a diplomatic tool while suppressing religious freedom within its borders, especially in Tibet, where Beijing pushes "Sinicization" to align Tibetan Buddhism with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ideology.

China hosts meeting on reincarnation of Tibetan Lamas to reinforce government control: China held a meeting in Lanzhou on Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation regulations, promoting its controversial "golden urn" method for selecting reincarnated lamas under government supervision. Tibetan exiles and human rights activists denounced the meeting as part of China's effort to legitimize its control over the next Dalai Lama's reincarnation. The Dalai Lama himself has rejected Beijing's claim, insisting that his successor will be chosen by his trusted officials, not China, which appointed its own Panchen Lama in 1995 following the abduction of the Dalai Lama-recognized Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

For Beijing, the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must follow Chinese laws: At a recent seminar in Lanzhou, China reiterated that Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations must comply with Chinese laws, intensifying tensions with the Dalai Lama, who opposes Chinese interference. The meeting reinforced China's use of the "golden urn" method, aligning reincarnations with socialist principles. China seeks control over Tibetan Buddhism, aiming to choose the Dalai Lama's successor, but the Dalai Lama has suggested that he may end the line of reincarnations to prevent Beijing's influence. Beijing's strategy includes efforts to present itself as the main protector of Tibetan Buddhism, overshadowing India.

China's Panchen reappointed to head 'Tibet' branch of PRC's Buddhist authority: The Chinese government-appointed 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaincain Norbu, was re-elected as president of the "Tibet" branch of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), tasked with overseeing the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism. China expects him to play a leading role in winning Tibetan loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) and in the selection of the next Dalai Lama. Norbu was enthroned by the government in 1995 following the abduction of the Dalai Lama's recognized Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, whose whereabouts remain unknown.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Qianjiangyuan National Park's Biodiversity Protection: Qianjiangyuan National Park in Zhejiang Province, China, is enhancing biodiversity protection with advanced scientific methods. The park is home to over 2,200 plant species, 2,400 animal species, and endangered species like the black muntjac and Elliot's pheasant. The park has implemented a comprehensive monitoring system with infrared cameras and drones to track wildlife. Local initiatives like mobile courts and ecological police contribute to restoration efforts, while digital technology improves governance and ecological protection.

Artificial Rain Operations in Tibet: In Tibet, large drones have been deployed for artificial rain and snow operations, addressing challenges in the region's high-altitude and complex weather conditions. Since 2023, 22 cloud-seeding experiments have been conducted using UAVs, improving weather modification capabilities in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. These drones offer efficiency, flexibility, and precise monitoring, marking a significant advancement in the plateau's weather modification system.

Record Drilling on Tibetan Plateau: Chinese researchers set a new record by drilling 750 meters into the Lunpola Basin on the Tibetan Plateau. This ongoing project aims to reach 1,000 meters, offering insights into the region's geological and environmental history, including climate changes over 55 million years. Fossils and ancient soils unearthed provide valuable data on the evolution of the plateau, and findings will aid in understanding the Asian monsoon's history and predicting global warming's impact on the plateau.

Tibetan Lakes Siling and Bange Could Merge by 2030: Siling, Tibet's largest inland lake, has overflowed into the nearby Bange salt lake for the first time in over 4,000 years due to climate change. Siling has expanded rapidly, rising by 13 meters since 1998. Scientists predict the lakes could merge by 2030, potentially affecting local communities. This event, driven by rising temperatures and uneven rainfall on the Tibetan Plateau, is part of a broader trend of lake expansion. Experts emphasize the need for enhanced monitoring and early warnings to mitigate the risks posed by lake bursts and other climate-related disasters.

Torrential Rains and Deadly Flooding in Qinghai, Tibet: Heavy rains in Qinghai, a Tibetan area in China, have caused severe flooding, killing at least nine people and hundreds of livestock. The floods, which began on September 2, 2024, destroyed roads, bridges, and homes, while landslides further exacerbated the damage. Tibetan rights groups attribute the increasing frequency and intensity of such severe weather events to climate change. With highways cut off and a level-one flood warning issued for several regions, the flooding has highlighted the ongoing vulnerability of the area to climate-induced disasters.

Tibet in Exile

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Discourse on the Three Principles of the Path: His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressed around 7,000 attendees, including 1,300 from Taiwan, at the Tsuglagkhang temple in Dharamsala. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the Buddhistharma in exile and shared his deep connection to Jé Tsongkhapa's teachings. His discourse focused on the Three Principles of the Path: renunciation, the awakening mind, and correct view. He encouraged attendees to cultivate these principles and the Bodhisattva Vow to benefit all sentient beings, promoting a life of compassion and wisdom. The session included blessings, teachings on ethics, and audience interactions, with His Holiness underscoring the necessity of integrating these teachings into daily life.

Passing of Sonam Sangpo Jadur: Sonam Sangpo Jadur, former Chief Justice Commissioner and Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in exile, passed away at 85 after a prolonged illness. Born in Western Tibet, he contributed significantly to the Bon community and Tibetan governance in exile. After serving in various roles, including Settlement Officer and Justice of the Supreme Justice Commission, he retired in 2004. The Central Tibetan Administration held a prayer service in his memory, and condolences were expressed by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

Taiwanese Devotees Attend Dalai Lama's Teachings: A significant number of Taiwanese devotees, alongside locals and monks, attended a teaching by the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, centered on "The Three Principal Aspects of the Path." The event showcased the Dalai Lama's universal appeal, with participants from various religious backgrounds expressing how his teachings on compassion and kindness resonated with them. Taiwanese attendees emphasized the importance of sharing the Dalai Lama's messages within their own communities, highlighting a desire for spiritual growth and the interconnectedness of all faiths.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Community in Dehradun: On September 28, 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited the Manduwala Tibetan Settlement in Dehradun, emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation and the role of youth in Tibetan Buddhism and language. Welcomed by local leaders and organizations, he praised local initiatives and pledged support from the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Sikyong highlighted the decline in the number of monks in monasteries, urging youth engagement in Buddhism.

He stressed adherence to local laws and proper registration for organizations. Sikyong condemned China's efforts to suppress Tibetan identity and announced plans to digitize Buddhist texts to preserve Tibetan culture. He also celebrated the passage of the ****Resolve Tibet Act**** in the U.S., recognizing Tibet as an unresolved international issue.

China Deepens Repression in Tibet after Passage of Resolve Tibet Act: Following the passage of the ****Resolve Tibet Act**** in the U.S., China has intensified its crackdown on ethnic Tibetans, labeling them as "separatists." This escalation comes after a visit from Chen Wenqing, the head of China's Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, who called for a "resolute crackdown" in Tibet. Reports indicate increased surveillance and suppression of Tibetan culture and religion. High-ranking Chinese officials have stressed harsh punishments for those accused of separatism. The U.S. President called for direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama and emphasized the need for protecting Tibetan human rights, culture, and language amid China's assimilation policies targeting Tibetan identity.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering's Visit to Sambhota Tibetan School: On September 27, 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited Sambhota Tibetan Day School in Herbertpur, where he emphasized the geopolitical significance and ecological importance of the Tibetan plateau. He highlighted the need for greater awareness of the Tibet issue among Indian youth, noting that despite over 65 years of exile, knowledge about Tibet remains limited. He also discussed historical ties between Tibet and India and raised concerns about the Chinese government's management of Tibetan water resources.

Cycle Rally for Tibet Awareness: Tibetan activist Jamyang Tenzin started his fifth solo-cycle rally from Tawang to Delhi on September 27, 2024, coinciding with the anniversary of the 1987 Tibetan uprising. The rally aims to raise awareness of the challenges faced by Tibetans under Chinese rule and calls for the return of Tibet to its people and the protection of Tibetan identity. The Tibetan Youth Congress also initiated a bicycle rally from Deyiling to Delhi, focusing on similar goals, highlighting the need for Indian support for Tibet.

Premiere of Tibetan Anthology Film: The Tibetan-language anthology feature film "State of Statelessness" will premiere at the Busan International Film Festival from October 2-11, 2024. The film, produced by the Drung Tibetan Filmmakers' Collective, explores themes of statelessness and migration through four stories of Tibetans in exile. The project aims to elevate Tibetan voices and foster understanding of the experiences of stateless individuals.

China's Claim of Support on Tibet Issues Amid EU Criticism: The EU expressed concerns over human rights violations in Tibet, including forced boarding schools and harassment of activists. In response, China claimed support from over 100 countries, asserting that criticism of its human rights record constitutes interference in its internal affairs. The EU reiterated its commitment to monitoring human rights in Tibet and called for greater access to the region for international organizations.

Tenzin Lekshay Discusses Middle Way Policy: Tenzin Lekshay, Additional Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, addressed students and faculty at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies on September 27, 2024. He provided insights into the Middle Way Policy, which seeks a peaceful resolution to the Tibetan issue, and engaged the audience in a Q&A session that demonstrated their interest in the topic.

Sikyong's Visit to Puruwala Tibetan Settlement: On September 26, 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering assessed damage from heavy rainfall in the Puruwala Tibetan Settlement. He stressed the responsibility of Tibetans in exile to uphold their cultural heritage amid intensified Chinese suppression. Sikyong also discussed the stalled Sino-Tibetan dialogue and expressed concerns about the geopolitical significance of the Tibetan plateau and China's management of its water resources during visits to various local Tibetan institutions.

Naming of Tsangyang Gyatso Peak: A team from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) successfully climbed an unnamed peak in Arunachal Pradesh, now named Tsangyang Gyatso Peak, in honor of the 6th Dalai Lama. This expedition emphasizes Arunachal Pradesh as an emerging destination for adventure sports.

EU Concerns on Human Rights in Tibet: During a session at the UN Human Rights Council, the European Union reiterated its concerns about the ongoing human rights violations in Tibet, including forced boarding schooling and mass DNA sampling. The EU urged China to respect the rights of Tibetans, uphold cultural heritage, and ensure bilingual education. It also called for the release of detained human rights defenders and emphasized the need for international visits to Tibet.

Museum Terminology Change: Following public protests, the Musée du quai Branly in Paris has reverted to using “Tibet” for its Tibetan artefacts, having initially labeled them as “Xizang.” The change was welcomed by Tibetans and their supporters who argued that the original terminology undermined Tibetan cultural identity. Discussions are ongoing with other museums regarding similar terminology issues.

Tibet Intergroup Advocacy: Tibetan activists participated in the Tibetan Empowerment Days in Brussels, calling for the re-establishment of the Tibet Intergroup in the European Parliament. They engaged with EU policymakers, urging stronger support for Tibet and addressing various issues, including human rights violations and environmental concerns on the Tibetan plateau.

French Museum Renames Tibetan Artefacts: The Musée du quai Branly in Paris has reverted to using “Tibet” instead of “Xizang” for Tibetan artefacts following public protests. Tibetans and their supporters argued that the term “Xizang” aligns with China’s narrative, undermining Tibetan identity. The decision was influenced by opposition from Tibetan NGOs and officials, including President Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), who condemned the use of “Xizang.”

Tibet Intergroup Advocacy in European Parliament: During the Tibetan Empowerment Days in Brussels, Tibetan activists from six European countries urged the European Parliament to re-establish the Tibet Intergroup for stronger support of Tibet. Participants met with EU policymakers to raise awareness about the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet and promote initiatives that support Tibetan rights.

Tibetan Leader Highlights Cultural Threats: Sikyong Penpa Tsering emphasized the systematic suppression of Tibetan identity by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), including the closure of cultural centers. He criticized the terminology shift from “Tibet” to “Xizang” and outlined the Kashag’s goals for Tibetan autonomy, emphasizing international support for Tibetan rights.

Tenzing Rigdol’s Installation at the Met: The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York showcases “Biography of a Thought,” an installation by Tibetan artist Tenzing Rigdol, featuring Tibetan mandala-inspired paintings. Rigdol’s work reflects on human consciousness and intertwines historical tragedies with Tibetan philosophy, advocating for stability and interconnectedness through art.

Exile Tibetan Administration Forms Committee Against Defamation: The Central Tibetan Administration announced the formation of a committee to counter defamatory remarks made against the Dalai Lama by a Tibetan man in Australia. The committee aims to address threats and misinformation that create discord within the Tibetan community, urging the public to disregard such remarks and focus on unity.

Tibetan Leaders Respond to Biden and Modi at Quad Summit: Tibetan leaders, including Sikyong Pempa Tsering and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering, expressed strong support for remarks made by President Biden and Prime Minister Modi concerning China’s aggressive behavior at the Quad Summit. They emphasized the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region, highlighted China’s threats in the South and East China Seas, and called for greater cooperation among Quad nations to counter these challenges. Dolma Tsering also urged global leaders to advocate for Tibetan rights and address the long-standing conflict between Tibet and China.

Condemnation of Defamatory Video Threatening the Dalai Lama: Eight Tibetan NGOs condemned a video threatening the Dalai Lama, attributed to a Tibetan individual in Australia. The NGOs described the actions as “terrorist behavior” aimed at undermining the Tibetan government in exile. They called for legal action against the individual and pledged support for measures to ensure the Dalai Lama’s safety. Students for a Free Tibet also condemned the video as promoting political violence and hate speech.

Tibetans Rally in Paris Against Use of ‘Xizang’: Approximately 800 Tibetan activists protested outside the Musée Guimet in Paris against the museum’s decision to replace “Tibet” with the Chinese term “Xizang” in its

exhibitions. The demonstrators accused the museums of contributing to China's efforts to erase Tibetan history and vowed to continue their protests until the terminology is reverted. Sikyong Pempa Tsering and other Tibetan leaders criticized the change, asserting that it undermines Tibetan identity and history.

Investigation into Dalai Lama Threat: The Central Tibetan Administration initiated an investigation into a social media threat against the Dalai Lama, discussed during a Tibetan Parliament session. Although the threat is deemed serious, officials assured the community there is no immediate security risk. The investigation focuses on the suspect's motives and whereabouts, believed to be in Europe or Australia.

Jonang Representation Bill Fails in Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile: A bill seeking to include the Jonang Buddhist tradition as the fifth represented school in the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile failed to secure enough votes. The outcome disappointed Jonang followers, who have long advocated for equal representation. The International Jonang Well-being Association criticized the parliament for perpetuating discrimination against their tradition.

Criticism of French Museums for 'Pandering to Chinese Wishes': The President of the Central Tibetan Administration criticized two Parisian museums for using Chinese terminology for Tibetan artifacts. In a letter to French officials, he argued that adopting terms like "Xizang" erases Tibetan identity and history. He urged the museums to represent Tibet accurately, highlighting ongoing issues with the Chinese government's policies affecting Tibetan culture and identity.

ICT Invites Presidential Candidates on Tibet Positions: As the U.S. presidential election approaches, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has urged candidates Donald Trump, Kamala Harris, JD Vance, and Tim Walz to clarify their positions on Tibet. While past candidates have addressed Tibet, current discussions primarily focus on trade relations with China. ICT emphasizes the need for candidates to articulate their plans regarding human rights and negotiations about Tibet, highlighting the importance of American support for the Tibetan cause.

Protests in France Over Tibet References: The Tibetan community in France is protesting against two major museums for replacing "Tibet" with "Xizang" in their exhibitions, a change seen as aligning with Chinese historical revisionism. Prominent figures, including Geshe Thupten Jinpa, have called for action to prevent the spread of such terminology. Researchers and NGOs have expressed their discontent and requested discussions with museum officials, arguing that this change undermines Tibetan history and identity.

Exile Tibetan Parliament Resumes Session: The Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPIE) is set to resume its 8th session after a temporary halt due to a lack of quorum. The session faced challenges as some members expressed safety concerns amid protests calling for amendments to the Charter to appoint justice commissioners. Following assurances of safety, the session is expected to continue, with members urging for timely discussions on the necessary charter amendments.

TPIE Session Aborted Due to Quorum Issues: The TPIE session was postponed due to a lack of quorum, with only 23 members attending while 22 remained absent. Protests by the "People's Movement for Securing the Central Tibetan Administration" highlighted demands for charter amendments that had been neglected. The protesting group later left peacefully after assurances from the Central Tibetan Administration's Security Department.

Premiere of 'Amala' in Vienna: The Austrian premiere of "Amala - The Life and Struggle of the Dalai Lama's Sister" drew significant attention, celebrating Jetsun Pema's contributions to Tibetan education and culture. The event coincided with concerns about cultural genocide in Tibet, with Tibetan-Canadian activist Chemi Lhamo addressing the audience about human rights violations and the systematic suppression of Tibetan identity.

Nepal Selects 'Shambhala' for Oscars: The Tibetan-language film "Shambhala" has been chosen as Nepal's official entry for the 97th Academy Awards. Directed by Min Bahadur Bham, the film features a predominantly Tibetan cast and tells the story of a pregnant woman's transformative journey in the Dolpo region of Nepal. The film has received acclaim at international festivals, highlighting themes of female self-determination and cultural representation.

"If I were in Tibet" Art Exhibition Inaugurated: The art exhibition "Dreaming Tibet," showcasing works by around 200 Tibetan students from five Tibetan schools, opened at the Kangra Art Museum in Dharamshala. The exhibition aims to raise awareness about Tibet and allow Tibetan children born in exile to express their feelings through art. It runs from September 13 to 19, 2024, and includes selected works reflecting the students' perspectives on their homeland.

Chinese Propaganda Center Condemned: The inauguration of the "Tibet International Communication Center" in Lhasa by the Chinese government is viewed as a move to control the global narrative about Tibet. The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) criticized this development as part of China's efforts to reshape public opinion and obscure the ongoing oppression in Tibet, including attempts to replace the term "Tibet" with "Xizang" in international discourse.

Tibetan Refugee Arrested for Fraud: A Tibetan refugee was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force for allegedly providing Indian bank accounts to cybercriminals operating in Nepal and Sri Lanka. The suspect was reportedly using a fake identity and engaged in activities to help defraud Indian citizens.

China's New Propaganda Efforts: China is ramping up propaganda campaigns to counter Western narratives regarding human rights abuses in Tibet and Xinjiang. Recent efforts include inviting foreign vloggers to showcase positive developments in these regions, with a focus on projecting a favorable image of Tibetan life despite ongoing criticisms from human rights organizations.

General Session of TPIE Begins: The 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile convened in Dharamshala, where nearly 1,000 Tibetans urged lawmakers to amend the Central Tibetan Administration's Charter. They called for the appointment of judges to strengthen the judiciary and announced plans for action, including potential resignations and hunger strikes if their demands are not met.

UN Experts Demand Clarity on Arrests: Following a wave of arrests related to protests against dam construction in Derge, UN human rights experts expressed deep concern over the situation. They called for transparency regarding the number of detainees and the risks posed by the dam project, emphasizing the need for international attention to the ongoing suppression of Tibetan rights.

Australian Motion on Tibet: Australian MP Andrew Wallace introduced a motion in the House of Representatives condemning China's repressive policies in Tibet. The motion calls for the protection of Tibetan rights and culture, emphasizing the need for autonomy and the ability to choose religious leaders, including the next Dalai Lama, without Chinese government interference. It also expressed concerns about China's assimilationist policies, forced labor, and cultural suppression, urging the Chinese government to engage with Tibetan representatives.

Tibetan Group Demands Judicial Amendments: A Tibetan advocacy group held a press conference in Dharamshala, urging the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile to amend its charter to allow for the appointment of the Chief Justice Commissioner and additional justices for the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission. The group criticized the parliament for ignoring previous petitions and warned of planned protests if their demands are not met.

Eighth Session of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile: The eighth session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile began with an address from Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel. Key topics included the recent surgery of the Dalai Lama, international support for the Tibetan cause, and various departmental reports. The session also involved discussions on the ongoing Sino-Tibetan conflict and efforts to preserve Tibetan culture and identity.

Tibet Lobby Day in Australia: During Tibet Lobby Day, the Australia Tibet Council and Tibetan representatives urged the Australian Parliament to impose sanctions on Chinese officials for human rights abuses in Tibet. They called for the recognition of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation and condemned China's efforts to erode Tibetan culture and identity.

UN Concern Over Kamtok Dam: Thirteen UN Special Rapporteurs expressed concern over the Kamtok Dam project in Dege County, highlighting potential human rights violations, forced relocations, and the destruction of

cultural sites. The letter detailed the crackdown on peaceful protests and the lack of consultation with local Tibetans regarding the dam's construction.

Colonial Boarding Schools in Tibet: Reports indicate that China's assimilationist education policies are leading to the forced enrollment of young Tibetan monks in colonial-style boarding schools. These policies threaten Tibetan cultural identity and religious practices, with authorities coercing families into compliance and restricting freedoms. The Central Tibetan Administration called for international intervention to protect Tibetan rights and stop these assimilationist policies.

Wangchuk's Climate March: Sonam Wangchuk and a group of marchers, including former soldiers, are on a five-day trek from Leh to Delhi to raise awareness about climate change's impact on the Himalayas. At the Tanglang La pass, Wangchuk urged immediate action against carbon emissions, warning of dire consequences for indigenous Ladakhis as glaciers melt. He appealed to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for better environmental protections and emphasized that this is a global issue, highlighting the urgent need for collective action.

Dimple Yadav Meets Dalai Lama: Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, expressing her support for the Tibetan cause. The Dalai Lama had recently returned from knee surgery in the U.S., and during her visit, Yadav reaffirmed her spiritual connection and commitment to the Tibetan people's plight. Arunachal Pradesh's Chief Minister Pema Khandu also visited the Dalai Lama to offer prayers and invite him to his state.

Khandu's Prayers for the Dalai Lama: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu met the Dalai Lama to seek his blessings and presented a residence built for him in Tawang. Khandu attended a five-day prayer offering organized by the Monpa community for the Dalai Lama's long life. The gathering celebrated multiple significant events, including the Dalai Lama's first teaching in India and the anniversary of the 6th Dalai Lama.

China's Interference in Dalai Lama's Reincarnation:: A report by the International Tibet Network details China's growing interference in the reincarnation process of the Dalai Lama, aiming to undermine international support for Tibet. The report outlines Beijing's strategies to control Tibetan Buddhism and influence global Buddhist communities, emphasizing the need for vigilance as loyalty to the Dalai Lama remains strong among Tibetans.

Tibetans-in-exile Celebrate Democracy Day: Tibetans-in-exile commemorated the 64th anniversary of 'Democracy Day' in Dharamshala, marking the establishment of the Tibetan democratic system in 1960. This event honors the arrival of the Dalai Lama and the formation of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile, reflecting on the significance of democracy for the Tibetan community following their escape from Tibet during the 1959 uprising.

Ramon Magsaysay Foundation Launch: The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation launched a seven-volume series titled "Greatness of Spirit" to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's award. The Dalai Lama received this award in 1959 for his leadership in the Tibetan community's struggle for its culture and religion. The series was launched in Dharamshala, marking the significance of the Dalai Lama's contributions to peace and non-violence.

Call for Recognition of Tibet's Independence: Penpa Tsering, head of the Tibetan government in exile, urged countries to recognize Tibet's historical status as an independent nation. He criticized nations that accept Tibet as part of China while advocating dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Tsering emphasized the need for a clear stance on Tibet's status to foster genuine discussions about its future.

Democracy Day Commemoration: Tibetans-in-exile celebrated the 64th anniversary of Democracy Day in Dharamshala, marking the establishment of a democratic system after fleeing Tibet in 1959. The event highlighted the significance of democracy for the Tibetan community, with representatives from different regions and sects of Tibetan Buddhism participating.

Support from the US and Canada: On the 64th anniversary of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, the Central Tibetan Administration praised the US and Canada for their support of Tibetan self-determination. The US enacted the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act," while Canada passed a resolution affirming Tibetans' right to self-determination, condemning China's repressive policies.

Estonian Delegation's Visit: Tibetan Democracy Day included the presence of an Estonian parliamentary delegation, which expressed solidarity with the Tibetan cause. Sikyong Penpa Tsering condemned China's oppressive rule in Tibet and highlighted the need for international support to address the situation, despite protests from the Chinese embassy.

Concerns Over Enforced Disappearances: Human rights organizations, including the UN and the European Union, condemned China's enforced disappearances of Tibetans. The statement highlighted the systemic arrests of Tibetans for expressing their identity and the long-standing case of the 11th Panchen Lama, who has been missing since 1995. The organizations called for international pressure on China to disclose information regarding the detained individuals.

Support for Tibetan Causes in Arunachal Pradesh: A Tibet Support Group delegation met with former Tibetan administration head Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche in Arunachal Pradesh. Rinpoche praised the group for its efforts and emphasized the importance of educating the younger generation about Tibetan issues to ensure continued support for the Tibetan cause.

Protests, Detention and Other News from the PRC

Prominent Tibetan Buddhist Monk Sentenced to 3 Years in Prison: Lobsang Thabkhey, a Tibetan Buddhist monk from Kirti Monastery, was sentenced to three years in prison in a secret trial for alleged "separatist activities." Arrested in June 2023, he was accused of possessing and republishing books from exiled Tibetans and contacting people outside China. His family was not informed of the trial or specific charges. Thabkhey had been interrogated previously for similar accusations, and his arrest highlights China's crackdown on Tibetan religious and cultural activities.

Gonmo Kyi Speaks Out Against Police Treatment: Gonmo Kyi, sister of imprisoned Tibetan businessman Dorjee Tashi, shared a video describing her mistreatment by Chinese authorities as she seeks a retrial for her brother. She has been repeatedly detained and beaten by police for protesting. Despite filing appeals, her petitions for a retrial have been dismissed. Dorjee Tashi, imprisoned for life on disputed fraud charges, has not had any family visits since 2019.

Tibetan monk jailed for sharing Dalai Lama's speech: A Tibetan monk, Jampa Choephel, was jailed in Qinghai province, China, for sharing a voice message on WeChat containing a speech by the Dalai Lama, coinciding with the Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10, 2024. He was arrested in March, kept in a detention center, and sentenced to one and a half years in prison in August. Despite his family's attempts to gather information, they were threatened by authorities. Jampa had previously lived as a refugee in India, returning to Tibet in 1996. He is known for his skills in Tibetan script and English.

Protests in China rise despite CCP control: Freedom House's China Dissent Monitor reported a significant rise in protests across China, documenting 805 incidents between April and June 2024, an 18% increase from 2023. The majority were labor and housing protests. Guangdong province saw the most protests, and cities like Shenzhen and Xi'an also experienced high protest rates. These protests highlight China's economic struggles, particularly with the real estate crisis. The rise in dissent signals a growing legitimacy crisis for the Chinese Communist Party, despite its efforts to suppress the protests.

China targets officials for reading banned books: China is intensifying its crackdown on high-ranking officials who read banned books, traditionally allowed for their global education. Several officials have been accused of possessing and reading restricted material, a move seen as part of President Xi Jinping's efforts to impose ideological conformity within the Communist Party. Previously allowed to access foreign publications, these officials are now being punished for such behavior. This tightening control reflects the party's fear of any subversive ideas, with the crackdown seen as a threat to intellectual independence.

CCP's TIBET POLICY

In Tibet, China's plans to hike retirement age sparks concerns

24 September 2024, [RFA](#), Sonam Lhamo and Khando Yangzom

Tibetan government workers fear the move will limit their ability to retire early.

Government workers in Tibet are voicing concern over a plan to raise China's retirement age, saying the measure will force them to work later in life and put off plans to pursue business ventures, according to sources.

China's government announced plans earlier this month to raise the country's retirement age as part of its response to falling births and a rapidly aging population — the first significant reform to China's retirement system since it was established in the 1950s.

China has one of the lowest statutory retirement ages in the world for workers to receive pensions, set at 60 for men, at 55 for women in white-collar jobs and at 50 for female blue-collar workers.

Starting on Jan. 1, the retirement age will be gradually increased over 15 years, raising it to 63, 58, and 55, respectively.

The measure has broad implications for ethnic minorities like Tibetans, who rely on retirement to transition into private business or traditional livelihoods.

"Since this is a policy of the Chinese government, it will be applied in Tibet as well," said a Tibetan official, who like others in this report declined to be named due to fear of reprisal.

"Our options will be limited," he said.

In the Tibetan Autonomous Region, many Tibetan workers aged 50 are waiting to retire early, largely due to dissatisfaction with the extensive political indoctrination they must undergo and restrictions in government offices put in place by Beijing, one of the sources said.

"These conditions have made it increasingly unpleasant for them to continue working, so many no longer wish to go to the office," he said.

'Already a bad situation'

Several Tibetans, including six who work in local government offices in Tibet, told Radio Free Asia that the policy change would likely delay their post-retirement plans, including pursuing personal business ventures and engaging in other activities.

Others complained that it could worsen corruption related to retirement benefits and raise youth unemployment in Tibet.

"There are already rampant attempts to bribe officials to secure an early retirement or a favorable retirement package," said a source familiar with the matter.

"It's already a bad situation, and this may worsen it," he said.

Another Tibetan source noted that many Tibetans have been leaving their jobs in recent years, citing poor health or mental illness due to work-related stress.

“This wave of mass resignations has led to an influx of Chinese officials from other parts of China” who are vying for the positions, he said.

Meanwhile, unemployment is on the rise in Tibet and many Tibetan graduates are already finding it difficult to land jobs, the same source said.

“The increasing presence of Chinese officials in Tibet raises concerns about future prospects for Tibetans, especially the youth seeking employment,” he added. According to the new policy, early retirement will be permitted in special cases, including for those who work in physically demanding jobs or hazardous environments.

Also, employees who have reached the minimum insurance contribution period can retire up to three years early, depending on their situation.

China’s Legal Warfare Closes a Beloved Tibetan School

18 September 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Marie Miller

A private vocational school in Qinghai has been forced to close for unspecified violations. Critics see a continuation of Beijing’s war on Tibetan language education.

Despite taking part in a momentous rite of passage, tears streaked the faces of the 110 students who graduated from Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School, located on the Tibetan Plateau in Golog prefecture, Qinghai province, this July. For months, authorities had prodded any and all excuses to find violations, pursuing various legal avenues to shutter the school. Until this summer, they were unsuccessful.

Eventually, despite legal battles that ended in the school’s acquittal, regional administration ordered the school’s closure. In a speech before his students, Gen Jigme Gyaltzen indicated the school was closing because it was not in compliance with the Qinghai Provincial Party Committee’s vague standards of vocational schools. Additional details were not disclosed. The 110 students that graduated in July will be the last the institution ever accredits.

The internationally acclaimed Tibetan school was first founded in 1994 inside the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Since then, its rich curriculum in Tibetan cultural and linguistic studies has drawn youth from across Tibet, Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia. The school’s emphasis on the preservation of specialized Tibetan language studies, medicine, and Buddhist philosophy has garnered both private and public extraterritorial support, such as from Finland and the

Netherlands. The school’s rigorous curriculum was supplemented with computer science, engineering, medicine, filmmaking, and physical education.

During his testimony at the Tibet Policy Institute’s July roundtable on the closure, Shede Dawa of Tibet Watch, a research network based in the United Kingdom, gestured to a projected image of Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling, tucked into shaded mountain foothills and rich with pine saplings. He noted the lengths these trees had grown since his years as a student there, where he was encouraged by his instructors to celebrate the arduous process of reconnecting with his own heritage in a region some scholars refer to as an “open air prison.”

The room of roundtable participants felt the reverberations this upbringing has had in the careful sincerity of Dawa, a steady advocate for peers facing systematic academic repression. He gazed out over the scholars in front of him, locking eyes with the camera lens before insisting, in the words of the school’s founder, that the preservation of the Tibetan language and script is a crucial means for the survival of the Tibetan people. People survive through stories, which are in turn cradled by linguistic exchange.

Dr. Lobsang Yangtso, program and Environment Desk coordinator for the International Tibet Network, expressed her admiration for the courage of alumni like Shede Dawa, who might now face retaliation for speaking up against the school’s closure. “There are many others like him,” she said.

In recent years, human rights monitoring networks have observed the gradual swapping out of Tibetan textbooks for those in the Chinese language. A cultural assimilation policy, which was formulated in 2010, deems that all schools in Tibet must legally use Chinese as the primary language, beginning at the kindergarten level.

Dawa Tsering, director of the Tibet Policy Institute and longtime policymaker with the Tibetan government-in-exile, contextualized the school community’s ordeals: “Presently, the Chinese government is closing monasteries and Tibetan schools... These measures are part of a broader strategy to eradicate the Tibetan language and culture.”

Tibetan activists claim, in fact, that private schools are particularly targeted in “patriotic education campaigns,” as it is more challenging for the prefecture to monitor language instruction. Eight of the remaining 16 private Tibetan schools have been ordered to close by regional administrators, while those remaining are peppered by allegations and administrative pressure.

The legal warfare started small: scrutinization of a logo used by the Pure Native Language Association, a student organization that found its home in student leaders attending the school. In 2018, as reported by Dharamshala-based Tibet Times, these student

leaders were sued and taken to court for using the images of a jewel and snow lion – would-be symbols of refuge, of a unified spiritual and secular life.

Allegations that the logo was meant to emulate emblems in the Tibetan national flag, which has been illegal in Tibet since the 1960s, offered fabricated evidence for an inquisition into the school. For the Tibetan community-in-exile, the flag represents a very simple notion: freedom from oppression, freedom of choice. To the Communist Party, the Tibetan flag is a sign of separatism – Tibetans have faced arrest and even torture in prison for simply keeping the flag's image on their mobile phones.

When the suspicions proved inconclusive, the Communist Party sought a different approach to scale back the institution's influence. The Central Tibetan Administration's sources noted the series of legal aggressions faced by Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling. The provincial government of Qinghai conducted a "search and interrogation" to determine whether they had grounds to punish the school for hosting monks or nuns under the age of 18, which is banned under Chinese law. If found out, multiple sources report authorities forcing these students to leave their monasteries and receive a "patriotic education."

Hundreds of graduates of Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling have gone on to work as researchers, government leaders, teachers, and entrepreneurs. The school, since its inception, has been a fount for Tibetan leadership – one that has now been tapped. In addition to the leaders the school has brought up, founder Gen Jigme Gyaltsen, himself having left nomadic life to found Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling, has received the title of "Zhonghua Charity Worker" at the National People's Political Consultative Conference. He was awarded by the state, a named recipient of the "National People's Education Award," and yet could not avoid the fire of corruption allegations on the pretext of his joint role as chairman of the Qinghai Tibetan Chamber of Commerce and Tibet Nomadic Management Office. On June 28, Gyaltsen published an article attesting that court proceedings had cleared him of all legal charges formally brought against him.

Editor-in-Chief of the Tibet Times Pema Tso observed that though the school had faced increasing challenges to its operation since the protests erupted across Tibet in 2008, the school's community had been "relieved" by a provincial court decision that allowed its operation to continue.

In spite of years spent patiently responding to the inquisition, the rule of law was nonetheless subverted in the state's final spear. The notice came on July 14. In an official announcement, Gyaltsen indicated the school was closing because it was not in compliance with the Qinghai Provincial Party Committee's standards of vocational schools. He

provided no details on what provisions, exactly, the school had violated.

Its forced closure, announced to the community during its last graduation ceremony, generated uncertainty for the fate of future scholars. Access to the campus remains restricted, and the professors who had for so many years volunteered their time also face an uncertain future.

At least one Tibetan individual, the sister of a former student at the school, has been arrested by the Nagchu County police for allegedly disseminating "misinformation" regarding the school's shutdown. Her whereabouts have since remained unknown.

Under international law, China is obligated to permit young Tibetans to pursue education in their preferred language. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which China ratified in 1992, states that "a child belonging to a ... minority ... shall not be denied the right ... to use his or her own language." The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights contains similar terms, although China has not expressly ratified its terms.

While children are generally considered to be people under 18, of which there were none at Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling, the former students face increasingly sparse options to engage in higher learning in their native tongue. The whittling of opportunities to engage in the Tibetan language extends from kindergarten to the university level.

Tibet Watch documents that the Dzoge County government recently ordered the disrobing of 300 young monks studying at the Taksang Lhamo Kirti Monastery – requiring the group to become lay students at government-run schools. An undisclosed source of Tibet Watch reported that Dzongce County authorities expect to close the monastic school this month.

Ironically, China has been shutting down Tibetan schools while claiming that a lack of education opportunities necessitates sending Tibetan children to study at faraway boarding schools. Xi Jinping himself visited such a boarding school in Qinghai's provincial capital in June. The school Xi visited included "800 Tibetan students from the same area of Golog" where Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling was located.

Lhadon Tethong, founder and director of Tibet Action Institute, expressed his sentiments on this political hypocrisy: "Claiming that Tibetan children must live in boarding schools due to Tibet's remote geography, while simultaneously closing down an acclaimed school serving children in one of the most remote regions, exposes China's primary justification for its coercive boarding system in Tibet as a lie."

The Tibetan community-in-exile is heeding the supplication of colleagues in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. On July 29, 100 academics – whose names are redacted in the published version for their safety –

submitted an official petition to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, urging that the high-level office increase pressure on the Chinese government to comply with international education standards outlined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

When asked how Tibetans would like to see states express their solidarity for Tibetan youth being barred from their own linguistic roots, Tibet Policy Institute Deputy Director Tempa Gyaltsen Zamlha expressed a simple yet clear request: "Raise the issue."

China orders harsh crackdown on Tibetans ahead of 75th PRC anniversary

16 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Ahead of the country's national day on Oct 1, China's security chief has issued a call for tightening security in the Tibetan territories under Chinese rule during a four-day inspection tour last week.

Maintaining stability and guarding against independence activities are the top priorities for security personnel in Tibetan areas, the *scmp.com* Sep 16 cited Chen Wenqing, head of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (CPLC), the ruling Communist Party's top security body, as saying.

The CPCL acts as the overseer and coordinator of all legal enforcement authorities, including the Ministries of State Security, Public Security and Justice, as well as the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate. Chen has said the security forces must "resolutely crack down on separatist and destructive activities".

He has said the security authorities must also "resolutely manage religious affairs, while resolutely protecting normal religious activities", so as to "prevent risks, crack down on crimes, and maintain stability."

Chen has made these remarks during his trip that included stops in the Tibet autonomous region (TAR) as well as the Ganzi (Tibetan: Kardze) Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province.

The four-day tour, which ended on Sep 13, was stated to be Chen's first regional inspection trip since the party's policymaking third plenum in July, coming in the lead-up to China's National Day on Oct 1.

This year China will mark the day as the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and security is being tightened in the sensitive Tibetan territories which include Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai province, and areas that now constitute parts of Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces.

During his trip, Chen was stated to have visited security units in the Tibetan cities of Lhasa and Chamdo, getting updates on operations in the region,

the report said, citing China's official *Xinhua* news agency.

In Ganzi, he was stated to have presided over a meeting on "anti-secession work", and to have given instructions on maintaining stability.

With nearly 80 % of the prefecture's 1.1 million residents being Tibetan, Ganzi is stated to be the second-largest such community in the PRC, after the TAR.

Chen has also ordered security personnel to carry out more propaganda and education campaigns to increase awareness of national identity among the people of all ethnic groups.

The report said Chen had cast the Tibetan security net wider in recent years to include more surrounding regions with large Tibetan populations.

It noted that China's top judges and prosecutors had also made their rounds of TAR.

Zhang Jun, the president of the Supreme People's Court, had visited Tibetan courts last week and said that it was necessary to hand down tough punishment to keep up the pressure on "violent terrorism, ethnic separatism and other serious criminal crimes", the report noted.

Also, Ying Yong, head of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, had inspected public prosecutors' offices in TAR earlier this month.

He too was stated to have stressed the need for prosecutors to "harshly crack down on all kinds of separatist infiltration, sabotage activities and crimes endangering national security in accordance with the law".

China deems as separatist not only people who call for or campaign for Tibet's independence but also virtually anyone who criticize its policy towards the Tibetan people, as shown by its record of their imprisonments.

China's security chief convenes "anti-secession" meeting in Tibet

16 September 2024, ICT

China's top security official, Chen Wenqing, visited Tibet from September 10 to 13, 2024 during which he convened a meeting on "anti-secession and stability maintenance," indicating ongoing instability in Tibet and foreshadowing a possible increase in surveillance and restrictions.



陈文清在西藏和四川调研时强调
全面贯彻新时代党的治藏方略
维护社会大局稳定和长治久安

China's top security official, Chen Wenqing, meeting security personnel in Lhasa, Tibet.

Chen, who is a member of Chinese Communist Party's powerful 24-member Politburo and Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (CPLA), went to Lhasa, Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) and Kandze (Ganzi), according to Chinese state media.

"In Kandze, Sichuan, Chen Wenqing presided over a meeting on anti-secession and stability maintenance in Tibet," state media reported, mentioning that the discussions covered not just the officially designated Tibet Autonomous Region, but also the Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai.

"Leniency and severity"

Political activism among Tibetan Buddhists appears to have been a major focus during the trip. In the meeting in Kandze, state media quoted Chen as saying, "We must resolutely crack down on separatist and sabotage activities in accordance with the law, resolutely manage religious affairs in accordance with the law, resolutely protect normal religious activities in accordance with the law, always adhere to the combination of leniency and severity, always adhere to the combination of punishment and prevention, and use the rule of law thinking and the rule of law to prevent risks, combat crime, and maintain stability."

Chen further "stressed that the political and legal organs must fully implement the important instructions of General Secretary Xi Jinping on Tibet work and the Party's strategy for governing Tibet in the new era, continue to make maintaining stability the top priority, adhere to the overall coordination of the two major domestic and international situations and the two major issues of development and security, do a good job in anti-secession work, and effectively safeguard national security."



Chen Wenqing visiting a police station of the Kandze County Public Security Bureau

Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission

The significance of this meeting is tied to the organization that Chen heads, the CPLA. According to political scientist Minxin Pei, CPLA "oversees the vast coercive apparatus of the party-state. Its main responsibilities include providing policy proposals on domestic security, supervising implementation of the party's domestic security agenda, coordinating the actions of law enforcement and the judiciary, and ensuring the political loyalty of officials in law enforcement agencies."

The CPLA's importance can also be seen in its membership, which includes Wang Xiaohong, minister of public security; Zhang Jun, president of the Supreme People's Court; and Ying Yong, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

Interestingly, both Zhang (Sept. 11 and 12) and Ying (Sept. 3 and 4) also visited Tibet around the time of Chen's visit, highlighting the issue of security. Zhang told Chinese courts in Tibet that it is necessary to hand down tough punishment to keep up the pressure on "violent terrorism, ethnic separatism and other serious criminal crimes."

Ying also stressed the need for prosecutors to "harshly crack down on all kinds of separatist infiltration, sabotage activities and crimes endangering national security in accordance with the law."

In Lhasa and Chamdo, two other Tibetan towns he visited in addition to Kandze, Chen "inspected political and legal units and the frontline of duty to learn about maintaining security and stability, promoting the rule of law, and listened to reports on political and legal work in Tibet."

Chen's record

Chen, who is a former minister of State Security, is considered close to Xi Jinping and is part of a new team of national security leaders that was brought in after the 20th Party Congress in October 2022. He has assumed key role in advancing Xi's security policies, making inspection trips to Tibet, Xinjiang (known to Uyghurs as East Turkestan). Chen has publicly supported the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law. In January 2024, Chen conveyed Xi's message to a central conference on judicial, procuratorial and public security work urging for "efforts to resolutely safeguard national security, improve political acumen and political discernment, prevent and resolve major security risks."

In August 2023, Chen convened a similar meeting on Tibet in Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province. At the Kanlho meeting, Chen underscored the need for a comprehensive implementation of the party's strategy for governing Tibet in the new era. He called for a forward-looking approach in work deployment, a concentrated focus on key tasks, diligent execution of work

responsibilities, proactive risk prevention and control measures, and a firm commitment to sustaining long-term peace and stability in Tibet.”

At that time, Li Mingjiang, associate professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, told the Lianhe Zaobao newspaper that Chen’s visits (to Kanlho and before that to Xinjiang) were “a sign of [China’s] vigilance against new US policy trends regarding religion, education and other aspects of China’s ethnic minority regions, and they are worried that this may affect national unity and harmony.”

Reaction to the Resolve Tibet Act?

Chen’s visit to Tibet this time and the meeting on anti-secession could very well be connected to the latest law, popularly known as Resolve Tibet Act, passed in support of Tibet in the United States.

On July 12, 2024, the U.S. signed into law the “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Disputes Act.” In its reaction the next day, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson mischaracterized the law as sending “a severely wrong signal to the ‘Tibet independence forces’” despite the law explicitly stating that the dispute between Tibet and China must be resolved peacefully through dialogue without preconditions, in accordance with international law.

China escalated its external propaganda efforts regarding Tibet, attempting to frame the law internationally as U.S. interference in “China’s internal affairs”. This stance directly contradicts the U.S. policy outlined in the law, which calls on China to “cease its propagation of disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama”.

The law affirms Tibet’s unresolved status under international law and recognizes the Tibetan people’s right to self-determination; a universal collective human right provided for in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Tibetan streamer faces censorship and detention by Chinese authorities

14 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tseing Dhundup



On 7 September, Gang Lhaja released his final video to date in Tibetan, expressing his frustration and disappointment regarding the situation (Screengrab/TCHRD)

A Tibetan language content creator and live-streamer Tashi Nyima, a.k.a Gang Lhaja, who was censored for his content, has reportedly been detained by local Chinese authorities.

On August 28, Gang Lhaja announced in a video posted on the Chinese social media platform KuaiShou that his live-streaming activities had been abruptly suspended following orders from local police. The restrictions primarily affected his series “Outdoor Livestream on The Plateau,” which had gained significant popularity among Tibetan communities.

According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), Gang Lhaja was arbitrarily detained from September 1 to 3 and reportedly beaten while in custody. On September 7, he released a video expressing his frustration and disappointment with the situation.

Gang Lhaja, who has over 75,000 followers on KuaiShou, is known for his efforts to promote the Tibetan language and culture through online games, quizzes, and educational activities. His content often draws from the “Chinese-Tibetan-English Dictionary of New Daily Vocabulary” by Khenpo Tsultrim Lodoe, a disciple of the renowned Nyingmapa master Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok.

Khenchen played a crucial role in reviving Tibetan Buddhism, culture and language in Tibet following China’s Cultural Revolution, during which Mao Zedong attempted to eradicate remnants of traditional Tibetan culture. Under his guidance, numerous private Tibetan language schools were founded, including Sengdruk Taktse.

Before the police intervention, Gang Lhaja had planned an extensive tour across several regions of Tibet to promote the use of new Tibetan vocabulary. This tour has now been effectively cancelled due to the restrictions imposed on him. His censorship is part of a wider pattern of repression against Tibetan language and culture in China. Recent years have seen increased

restrictions on Tibetan activists, scholars, and cultural figures. Private Tibetan language schools have been shut down, and Chinese has been imposed as the primary language of instruction in many areas. Live-streaming industry in China and Chinese-occupied countries like Tibet is subject to strict controls from regulators such as the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) and the Ministry of Public Security. Vague regulations prohibiting content that “undermines social stability” or is “harmful to ethnic and territorial unity” have led to increased censorship.

China Launches Massive International Propaganda Effort on Tibet

13 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Lopsang Gurung

The ambitious “Xizang [Tibet] International Communication Center” started its work this month. Wang Junzheng, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Secretary of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, announced earlier this month that a “Xizang [the Chinese name for Tibet] International Communication Center” has been established.

This is not the first “International Communication Center” created by the CCP. The policy started in 2018 and is becoming a key feature of Beijing’s international propaganda, part of which is now subcontracted to regional or provincial organizations.

On September 2, a conference on “Building a More Effective International Communication System Related to Tibet” was held in Lhasa in connection with the opening ceremony of the Xizang International Communication Center.

Secretary Wang explained that the aim of the Center is to reestablish “Chinese hegemony” in the international discourse over Tibet. He said that unfortunately so far “the main media and platforms for international information dissemination about Xizang [Tibet] are basically in the hands of the United States and the West.”

In the West, Wang explained, “communication is subject to various restrictions, which objectively makes it difficult for us to fully assert our right to speak. The richness of China-promoted development of Xizang [Tibet] is sometimes not conveyed; and it is sometimes difficult for us to effectively refute the dirty water thrown on China.”

Zhang Taofu, dean of the School of Journalism and Communication at Fudan University, said that, “In the powerful Western discourse system about Xizang [Tibet], China is only allowed to respond passively and is often in the passive position of being demonized and stigmatized.”



The launching conference of the Xizang [Tibet] International Communication Center, Lhasa, September 2. From Weibo.

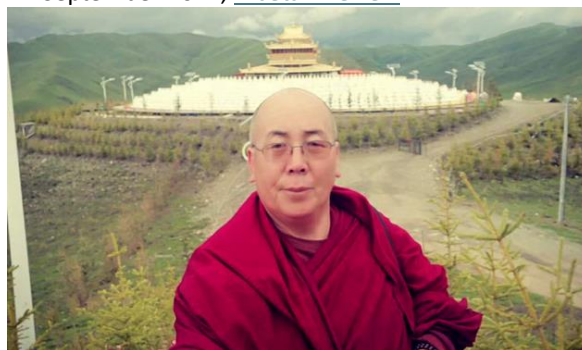
These claims are somewhat paradoxical. The CCP, which systematically suffocates any voice of dissent in Tibet, claims that there are “restrictions” about how Tibetan news are reported in the West.

The new Center is generously supported and funded by the central CCP Propaganda Department and is expected in a few years to “seize the power in the international discourse about Xizang [Tibet],” Secretary Wang said.

BUDDHISM

China jails monk for Tibetan uprising voice message, online display of Dalai Lama speech

24 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)



China has jailed a Tibetan Buddhist monk in Qinghai province for displaying a speech of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the back of his *WeChat* social media voice message meant to commemorate the Tibetan national Uprising Day of Mar 10 this year, reported the Tibetan language *tibettime.net* Sep 24.

The monk, Jampa Choephel, from Rebgong (Chinese: Tongren) County in the province's Malho (Huangnan) prefecture, was arrested from his monastic living quarter in the middle of Mar 2024 and was held in the detention centre at Gurathang in Lower Rebgong from Mar 22 onwards.

He was tried and jailed for one and half years last month.

Following his sentencing the monk was taken to a provincial prison in capital Ziling (Xining) on Sep 22 to serve the remaining one year of his term.

Throughout the period his incarceration, which began with his arrest by the Rebgong city police, continued when the city people's procuracy charged him, and when the city people's court tried and sentenced him, no notice of any kind was given about him to his family. On the other hand, his close family members were warned that the monk could be severely punished, that their visits to the Chinese government offices to seek information about his situation were by themselves severe criminal violations.

The report cited its source as saying Jampa Choephel was already always under close surveillance from the Chinese government; that on every Tibetan festive occasion, they kept spying on him from rooftops, walls and other places.

Jampa Choephel had travelled to India as a refugee in 1986 and studied for 10 years at the Buddhist Dialectics Institute in Dharamshala. He then returned home in 1996. He devoted himself to meditating and religious practices at Penkarthang Monastery in Lower Rebgong. Occasionally, he took part in events during major religious occasions. He is known for his skill in Tibetan script writing and is also conversant in English, both of which he would teach others, the report said.

Prominent Tibetan Buddhist monk sentenced to 3 years in prison

13 September 2024, [RFA](#)

Lobsang Thabkhey was arrested in June 2023 for publishing books from Tibetans in exile.



Lobsang Thabkhey, a Tibetan Buddhist monk at Kirti Monastery in southwestern China's Sichuan province, is seen in an undated photo. (Citizen photo)

A Tibetan Buddhist monk who worked as a monastery librarian was sentenced to three years in prison during a “secret” trial, two sources from inside Tibet told Radio Free Asia.

Police arrested Lobsang Thabkhey, 55, in June 2023 for allegedly engaging in “separatist activities.”

They accused him of possessing and republishing books from the exiled Tibetan community and for having contact with people outside the region when he was in charge of the library at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county in southwest China's Sichuan province. Chinese authorities consider it illegal for Tibetans inside Tibet to contact people outside the region and engage with the exiled Tibetan community or the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who China considers a “separatist.”

While the specific charges leveled against Thabkhey are unknown, sources said they were likely related to previous charges of publishing “banned books” in Tibet and having contact with “external forces.”

Thabkhey's family recently learned about the sentence, but authorities did not provide information about the date of the trial or the nature of the charges, said the sources.

According to China's Criminal Procedure Law, family members of those in custody must be notified within 24 hours of their arrest, except in crimes or cases deemed to be endangering national security where notification may obstruct the investigation.

Radio Free Asia contacted the Ngaba Public Security Bureau for confirmation, but an official there who did not provide his name said the office had no information about Thabkhey.

Prior to Thabkhey's 2023 arrest, police repeatedly summoned and interrogated him about his alleged “separatist activities,” the sources said.

Thabkhey hails from Ngaba's Meruma township, which has been the scene of many protests and pro-Tibet political activities since 2008.

EXCLUSIVE: Area where Buddhist monastery stood now under water

12 September 2024, [RFA](#), Tenzin Pema

Tibetans have decried the Chinese dam project as another example of disregard for their culture.

Rising waters from a new dam in central China have submerged the area where a 135-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monastery once stood, as well as a nearby village, according to experts who viewed satellite photos and two sources inside Tibet.

The Atsok Monastery, built in 1889, was demolished earlier this year to make way for the expansion of the Yangqu hydropower station in Qinghai province.

Tibetans have decried the dam's construction, saying it is yet another example of the Chinese government's disregard for their culture, religion and environment. After floodgates for the dam were closed around Aug. 10, reservoirs filled and water levels rose in upstream areas of the Machu River, or Yellow River in Chinese, experts who saw the satellite imagery said.

Satellite photos showed the complete submersion of the 18-hectare (44-acre) monastery area and nearby Chorten village and the partial submersion of adjacent farmlands of Yangchu village, said Y. Nithiyanandam, professor and head of the geospatial program at Takshashila Institution in Bengaluru, India.

“The water levels have risen by nearly 100 meters [328 feet] above the previous regular flow, submerging the villages. It is difficult to predict at this time whether the water storage has reached its threshold or may continue to rise,” added Nithiyanandam.

Jacob Bogle, a private satellite imagery analyst, also said the images showed that water levels reached the elevation of the monastery on Aug. 16, and that by Aug. 31, the site was completely submerged.

The growing reservoir now reaches about 30 kilometers (19 miles) upstream, possibly flooding some of the farmland around the village of Thangnak town, Bogle said.

Spiritual place

Chinese authorities said they would fund the costs of dismantling and reconstructing parts of the monastery, but many of the murals and surrounding stupas cannot be physically moved and so were destroyed.

Tibetans believe that the place where the monastery stood is sacred, and that it had been made holier over 135 years of prayers and practice by several generations.

The Yangqu hydroelectric plant — expected to generate about 5 billion kilowatts of power annually to Henan province — is an expansion of the Yangqu Dam that was first built in 2010 and began operating in 2016 as a 1,200-megawatt hydropower station.

The expansion was started in 2022 and was completed this year. China's National Development and Reform Commission, or NDRC, said it would force the relocation of more than 15,500 people — nearly all ethnic Tibetans — living in 24 towns and villages in Dragkar, Kawasumdo and Mangra counties.

Dragkar county sits in Tsolho, or Hainan in Chinese, Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the historic Amdo region of Tibet.

State media reports said on Aug. 14 that the dam had officially lowered its gate to store water, indicating that the construction had entered “the sprint stage before it is put into production and power generation.”

Local Tibetan sources, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisals, told RFA they fear that the dam could cause further flooding and destroy their homes and farmland in the nearby Yangqu village.

China-appointed Panchen urges firm upholding of final party say on reincarnation issue

11 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Chinese government Appointed “11th Panchen Lama reincarnation” Gyaincain Norbu has on Jul 18 called on the Tibetan people to firmly uphold the final say of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on the reincarnation issue while expressing strong opposition to secession.

Chairing a seminar on a themed exhibition of the reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism, he stressed the need to firmly uphold the CPC Central Committee's final say on the reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism and voiced strong opposition to secession, while calling for national unity, ethnic unity, and religious and social harmony, reported China's official *Xinhua* news agency Sep 10.

It was stated to be one of several meetings he chaired during his ongoing months-long tour of the Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China.

The report said that over the past few months, Gyaincain Norbu had performed his regular duties at the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) branch of the Buddhist Association of China, and carried out a series of Buddhist and social activities in Tibet's capital Lhasa. He was previously reported to have visited Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province, and Nagchu and Nyingtri prefecture-level cities in that order, setting out from Lhasa and returning to it each time.

On Sep 3, he was unanimously “elected” the president of the TAR branch of the Buddhist Association of China

at the first council meeting of the branch's 12th council. This was his “re-election” after his first “election” in 2021,

The report said that on Sep 1, Gyaincain Norbu concluded his Buddhist and social activities in Lhasa and arrived by train in Xigaze (Shigatse), “where he will continue with a series of similar engagements.”

Shigatse is home to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the historical seat of the successive Panchen Lama reincarnations, although the 10th Panchen Lama and his supposed successor Gyaincain Norbu have spent very little time in it as China required them to live in Beijing under close supervision and guidance of the party's United Front Work Department.

As regards the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, his fate has continued to remain unknown ever since he was abducted, with his family, by the Chinese government in 1995, just days after he was recognized and proclaimed by the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader.

Gyaincain Norbu is currently also a member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, and a vice president of the Buddhist Association of China.

The Panchen Lama is Tibet's second most prominent religious figure, although tis cannot be said of Gyaincain Norbu.

China's World Buddhist Forum aimed at boosting soft power: experts

09 September 2024, [RFA](#), Dickey Kundol and Tenzin Dickyi

State media says the October conference will ‘promote world peace,’ but real goals are political, critics say.

China will host a global Buddhist conference in October that experts and rights activists outside the country say is aimed at boosting its soft power in Asia and build on its narrative that it has greater influence over Buddhist-majority nations than India, the birthplace of Buddhism.

Monks, experts, scholars and representatives from about 70 countries are expected to attend the sixth World Buddhist Forum in mid-October in the eastern city of Ningbo, Chinese state media reported.

However, the Dalai Lama, perhaps the most prominent Buddhist leader in the world, is not invited. Regarded by Beijing as separatist, the Tibetan spiritual leader hasn't been invited to any of the past forums since the first one organized by China in 2006.

The goal of the conference, according to the state-run *China Daily*, is to “promote world peace, improve the well-being of all individuals, and gather wisdom

and strength for building a community with a shared future for humanity.”

But in fact, China has little interest in promoting or protecting Buddhism, and instead is trying to use the conference to achieve its political goals, Sana Hashmi, a postdoctoral fellow at the policy think tank Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, told Radio Free Asia.

“China has been trying to forge religious diplomacy with countries that have Buddhism as their main religion,” she said.

“It also wants to show that instead of India, which is the birthplace of Buddhism, China has more influence when it comes to Buddhism.”

By organizing the forum, China is misleading the international community by creating the illusion that the state supports Buddhism, though there is no genuine protection or support for Buddhists within the country, said Shartse Khensur Rinpoche Jangchup Choeden, secretary general of the International Buddhist Confederation.

‘Sinicizing’ Tibetan Buddhism

The conference comes at a time when Beijing is ramping up efforts to “Sinicize” Tibetan Buddhism to bring its religious doctrines into line with Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, ideology and emphasize loyalty to the party and the state.

Although China’s constitution states that its citizens “enjoy freedom of religious belief,” in practice this is not the case. Officials routinely clamp down on religious expression by Tibetan Buddhists, Uyghur Muslims and Christians across the country.

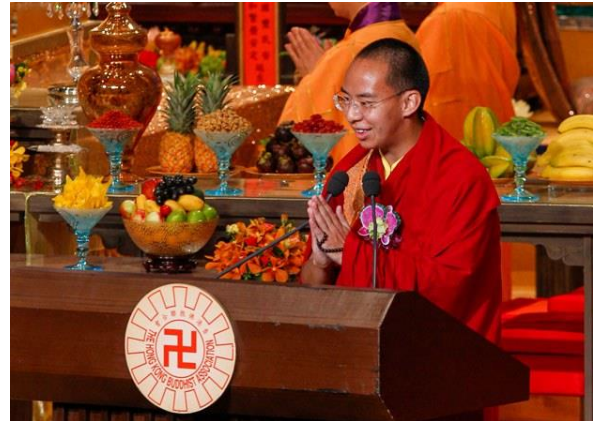
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Gyaltzen Norbu, the Chinese government-appointed 11th Panchen Lama, speaks during an opening ceremony of the third World Buddhist Forum in Hong Kong, April 26, 2012. (Kin Cheung/AP)

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Far from showing that China is preserving Tibetan Buddhism or the Buddhist religion in general, the conference will showcase Beijing’s efforts to assimilate Tibetans and other minority groups and erase their distinctive features and cultures, activists and experts say.

Yan Jue, president of the Buddhist Association of China that's organizing the conference, seemed to acknowledge as much. He said the sixth forum will "adhere to the direction of Sinicization of Buddhism" in China and "fully publicize and display the status of religious freedom in China."

'Key instrument'

The Buddhist Association of China is the official government body supervising Buddhist practice in China, which in turn is overseen by the United Front Work Department of the CCP's Central Committee.

The International Campaign for Tibet, a rights group, calls the association a "key instrument" in Beijing's strategy to assimilate and transform Tibetan Buddhism, especially when it comes to searching for and recognizing reincarnated lamas.

Beijing is using the association to "break down Tibetan Buddhism's unique characteristics and to change it into a tool of the Chinese state," the group says.

"Since 2020, under [President] Xi Jinping's leadership, the CCP has intensified efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, assigning this task to the Buddhist Association of China, which organizes conferences and events that serve as tools of soft power manipulation," said Tenzin Dorjee, a Tibetan-American and Buddhist former commissioner at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Tibetan writer and activist Tenzin Tsundue said the conference must shed light on severe restrictions imposed on Buddhist practices, particularly in Tibet and Mongolia, and oppose the CCP's "manipulation of Buddhism and religion for political gain."

China hosts meeting on reincarnation of Tibetan Lamas to reinforce government control

06 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



Chinese government's conference on the historical norms and policy laws of Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation system in Lanzhou, September 3, 2024 (Photo/Tibet.cn)

In what is seen as furthering the Chinese government's claim on authority over reincarnation of Tibetan religious figures, the Chinese government convened a meeting in Lanzhou about policies and regulations for the "reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan

Buddhism" on Tuesday, according to Tibet.cn, a Chinese mouth piece.

The gathering, attended by about 50 participants, included high-ranking Tibetan lamas and Chinese experts, including monks from the official Buddhist Association of China. According to the report, the Chinese authorities reiterated that the recognition of reincarnations must adhere to the regulations imposed by the government, stressing that the selection of Tibetan Buddhist Lamas should involve the golden urn method—a controversial system that requires Chinese government oversight and approval, which is much touted in the Chinese government narrative.

Observers and Tibetan exile authorities have condemned Beijing over its claim and raised doubts that the sinister aim of the move is to seek legitimacy over their authority over the next Dalai Lama, the central figure in Tibetan Buddhism. While the Chinese government has repeatedly pushed the idea that future reincarnations, especially that of the Dalai Lama, must be done under the Beijing's jurisdiction, the Dalai Lama himself, the Tibetan people and many governments have rubbished the claim.

The Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, who has been living in exile since China annexed Tibet in 1959, has long denounced China's attempts to control the reincarnation process. In a 2011 statement, the Dalai Lama declared that "responsibility for doing so (His Holiness's reincarnation) will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust" He vowed to leave clear written instructions regarding the selection of his reincarnation and emphasized that any successor chosen by China for political purposes should not be recognized stating, "I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, 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".

A day before the meeting in Lanzhou, on Tuesday the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, known widely as the "fake Panchen" was re-elected as president of the so-called Tibet branch of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC). Gyaincain Norbu was appointed as Panchen Lama by the Chinese government in 1995, six months after the abduction of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima who was recognised by the Dalai Lama.

The BAC, established in 1953, is a state-controlled body tasked with overseeing religious affairs, ensuring that Buddhist communities comply with state policies.

For Beijing, the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must follow Chinese laws

06 September 2024, [Asia News](#)

The concept was reiterated this week at a meeting attended by 50 monks recognised by China, but which Tibet's spiritual leader has always opposed. The Dalai Lama could end the line of succession next year on his 90th birthday, excluding Beijing from controlling Tibetan Buddhism.

The reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhists must also follow Chinese law, this according to Chinese authorities, a notion reiterated at a recent seminar in Lanzhou, Gansu province, attended by about 50 monks recognised by the Chinese government.

This event has sparked fresh tensions with the Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan Buddhists in exile in India, who is expected to announce plans for his succession next year.

A pro-Chinese website, Tibet.cn, has reported that the seminar last Wednesday reiterated that policies for the "reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" must be "compatible with socialist society".

According to the High-Level Tibetan Buddhism College of China, a Beijing-based school that trains officially recognised monks, which organised the meeting, historical customs, including government approval, are "an important principle to be followed in the reincarnation".

As with all religions recognised in the country, the Chinese government demands that the clergy swear allegiance to the Communist Party of China (CPC); in the case of Tibet, the issue of reincarnation is intertwined with that of sovereignty over the territory. China fears that the death of the current Dalai Lama, who has opposed Chinese intrusion since 1950, could generate social unrest in the region.

Tibet's spiritual leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate had said that he would address the issue of reincarnation at the age of 90, that is, in July next year. According to Tibetan tradition, the Dalai Lama, upon his death, is reincarnated in a child. Over the centuries, the child was found through a series of searches and rituals. But Beijing now insists that reincarnation must follow Chinese rules.

To this end, Beijing has introduced the ritual of the Golden Urn, an ancient imperial practice taken up by the CPC and incorporated into official Chinese regulations since 2007.

With this method, in 1989 China identified a Panchen Lama, another important religious leader in Tibetan Buddhism who, according to tradition, approves the recognition of the next Dalai Lama.

But Tibet's current spiritual leader has stressed the illegitimacy of this process, and never recognised

Beijing's Panchen Lama, hinting that he wants to end his line of reincarnation, to exclude Beijing from having a say in the matter.

For some time now, Chinese authorities have been organising meetings aimed at monks to "sinicise" Tibetan Buddhism and bring it under their control.

In March, a seminar like the one in Lanzhou was held in the capital, while in mid-October the World Buddhist Forum will meet in the eastern city of Ningbo. The Dalai Lama has not been invited to this event since its start in 2006.

Experts note that Beijing wants to show Asian countries that "instead of India, where Buddhism was born, it is China that has the most influence," said Sana Hashmi, a researcher at the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation think tank, speaking to *Radio Free Asia*.

The goal is to convince the world that is preserving Tibetan Buddhism.

"Since 2020, under [President] Xi Jinping's leadership, the CCP has intensified efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, assigning this task to the Buddhist Association of China, which organizes conferences and events that serve as tools of soft power manipulation," said Tenzin Dorjee, a Tibetan-American Buddhist, and a former commissioner at the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

China's Panchen reappointed to head 'Tibet' branch of PRC's Buddhist authority

04 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The "Tibet" branch of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) has a new president, and he is the Chinese government-appointed 11th Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu again. He is being groomed and has been mandated by China to Sinicize Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism.

On Sep 3, "Panchen Erdeni Chos-kyi rGyal-po" was unanimously "elected" president of the "Xizang" branch of the BAC at the first council meeting of the branch's 12th council, reported China's official *Xinhua* news agency Sep 3.

The meeting began on Sep 2 in Tibet's capital Lhasa.

The BCA is the official government supervisory organ of Buddhism in the People's Republic of China (PRC). It is overseen by the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

The report said that earlier, on Jun 22, 2019 too, Gyaincain Norbu was unanimously "elected" to the same post, for the first time.

China expects him to play a leading role in Sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism, in the tough task of winning Tibetan loyalty to the CPC-ruled PRC, and in China's selection and appointment of the reincarnation of the current, 14th Dalai Lama.

To make a point of legitimizing his credentials for that role, the Chinese government media report said “Panchen Erdeni” is one of the most influential Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism. It noted that he was born on Feb 13, 1990 in Lhari County of Nagqu City in Tibet Autonomous Region.

“On Nov 29, 1995, he was approved and confirmed by the State Council as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen after a lot-drawing from a golden urn. He was then enthroned as the 11th Panchen Erdeni,” the report added.

The report said nothing about the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was abducted by the Chinese government in May 1995, just days after being recognized and proclaimed by the Dalai Lama, and whose fate has continued to remain one of China’s best kept secrets to this day.

STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

National park in E China enhances biodiversity protection

29 September 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

At Qianjiangyuan National Park, technician Jiang Yongqing carefully collected fallen seeds using a magnifying glass and tweezers. By analyzing the contents of withered leaves, including small tree branches, flowers, and fruits, researchers can gather data to support the scientific protection of the forest. Jiang is a member of the Zhejiang Qianjiangyuan Forest Biodiversity National Observation and Research Station. The station employs four technicians, including Jiang, who are responsible for collecting samples in the wild, recording data, and monitoring changes in data on vegetation throughout its life cycle. Qianjiangyuan National Park, situated in Kaihua county, Quzhou city, east China's Zhejiang Province, covers an area of about 252 square kilometers. It consists of three protected areas and the ecological areas that connect them.

The park is situated in a mountainous region with lush forests and diverse wildlife, earning the nickname the "natural water tower" of the Yangtze River Delta. Its exceptional ecological significance is highlighted by the pristine and distinctive ecosystem, conserving a vast expanse of untouched subtropical low-altitude evergreen broad-leaved forest vegetation in its purest form.

According to the latest research data, Qianjiangyuan is home to 2,234 species of higher plants, 449 species of large fungi, and 2,427 species of animals. It is a globally concentrated distribution area for the black muntjac and the Elliot's pheasant, two endangered species endemic in China that are under first-class state protection.

According to Yu Jianping, a senior engineer at the management bureau of the Qianjiangyuan National Park, the park has established a comprehensive biodiversity monitoring system, an unmanned drone inspection system, and installed infrared cameras. Qianjiangyuan is divided into 267 grids, each measuring 1km×1km. In each grid, two to three infrared cameras are set up to monitor wildlife.

Kaihua county has taken significant steps to protect biodiversity by establishing an environment and resources mobile court, an ecology, environment and resources case center, an ecological police center and a joint operations workstation.

Through a comprehensive approach that includes integrated restoration of mountains, waters, forests, fields, lakes, and grasslands, and the rescue and protection of rare and endangered species, Kaihua county is continuously restoring its ecological resources, preserving the habitats for wildlife.

In 2022, the park launched an ecological smart governance system, utilizing digital technology to

enhance ecological protection. This system includes eight perception systems, such as drone-based disaster prevention inspections and wildlife identification, as well as 25 sub-scenes.

Together, they create a comprehensive monitoring and early warning system covering sky, space, land, and human activities. This system allows for continuous monitoring of the entire park, key ecological systems, and critical species, providing strong support for scientific research.

Artificial rain (snow) operations in Tibet fill the gap, and large drones fly over Shigatse

27 September 2024, [Passionate Geekz](#)

Passionategeekz reported on September 27 that according to the China Meteorological Administration, on the afternoon of September 24, a large drone equipped with cloud precipitation detection and artificial weather modification equipment flew into the clouds from Shigatse, Tibet Autonomous Region, and successfully carried out artificial increase rain (snow) operations. Large-scale drones have become regular in weather modification operations in plateau areas, filling the gap in aerial weather modification capabilities in Tibet. According to reports, due to the high altitude, complex terrain, and changeable weather environment of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, it has long been difficult to carry out artificial rain (snow) operations by aircraft.

With the rapid development of large civilian drones in recent years, the China Meteorological Administration responded to local needs and applied them in plateau areas. Tengdun "Twin-tailed Scorpion A" artificial weather modification type and other large UAVs carrying out scientific experiments on air-space-ground comprehensive detection and rain (snow) enhancement based on large drones in the "one river and two rivers (Passionategeekz Note: Yarlung Zangbo River, Nianchu River, and Lhasa River)" basin on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau (hereinafter referred to as the "Test"), promote the regular operation of large-scale drones to increase rain (snow) in the "One River and Two Rivers" basin.

Since 2023, with the strong support of the projects of the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Finance of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Weather Modification Center of the China Meteorological Administration has organized experiments in conjunction with the Autonomous Region Meteorological Bureau and other units. Targeting typical cloud systems in the plateau area, based on cloud precipitation observations with airborne equipment, Combining special air- and ground-based observation methods such as satellites, radars, raindrop spectrometers, and microwave

radiometers, up to now, A total of 22 cloud precipitation observations and rain (snow) enhancement experiments were carried out using large UAVs, with a total flight time of 67 hours and a catalytic time of more than 25 hours.

Officials from the China Meteorological Administration said that during operations, large UAVs demonstrated characteristics such as high efficiency and flexibility, high flight ceilings, strong endurance and load capacity, and high safety. They were less restricted by terrain and responded quickly to mission needs; they were also equipped with high-precision sensors and equipment to enable precise positioning, monitoring and measurement of the work area. As of September this year, The meteorological department explored and initially established a normal operation service system for aircraft artificial weather modification on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

750 meters! Chinese researchers set new record for environmental science drilling on Tibetan Plateau

11 September 2024, [Global Times](#), Leng Shumei

A team led by Chinese academician Fang Xiaomin from the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research (ITP) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) has reached 750 meters, during their environmental science drilling in the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, or the Tibetan Plateau, setting a new record, the Global Times learned from the ITP on Tuesday.

大型增雨（雪）无人机飞越日喀则 青藏高原飞机人工影响天气作业

Artificial rain (snow) operations in Tibet fill the gap, and large drones fly over Shigatse



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9月24日下午，一架搭载云降水探测与人工影响天气作业装备的大型无人机，从西藏自治区日喀则飞入云层，成功实施人工增雨（雪）作业。大型无人机在高原地区开展人工影响天气作业实现常态化，西藏地区人工影响天气空中作业力量的空白得到填补。



大型无人机起飞 摄影：张冀光

The project is currently ongoing in the Lunpola Basin with the goal of drilling beyond 1,000 meters, marking the first initiative of its kind on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, according to the ITP.

The Lunpola Basin is situated in the central part of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, with an average altitude of 4,600 meters. It contains the most continuous Cenozoic strata of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau dating back to 55 million years and is the first oil-producing basin in the core area of the plateau.

Numerous fossils, such as tropical palm trees, camphor trees, golden rain trees, split-belly fish and climbing perch, as well as water spiders, have been unearthed, along with multiple layers of ancient soils and volcanic ash. These findings provide a detailed record of the uplift of the central Tibetan Plateau and the historical changes in climate and ecological environment, making it one of the key areas for studying the co-evolution of tectonics, climate, biology and ecology.

In previous research, scholars have reconstructed the ancient elevation history of the Lunpola Basin using various methods, including the analysis of fossils as well as the oxygen isotopes found in ancient soil carbonates. However, significant debate remains concerning when the basin reached its present elevation. The comprehensive understanding of the co-evolution of tectonic, climatic, biological, and ecological processes has yet to be fully established.

In the past 20 years, Fang and his team have utilized the absolute dating of volcanic ash to establish a high precision paleomagnetic chronological sequence of the Cenozoic strata in the basin. They discovered that the Lunpola Basin has a distinct history of two phases of formation, evolution, and deformation: the early phase involved slow subsidence from approximately 42 million to 26 million years ago, while the later phase involved rapid uplift from about 26 million to 20 million years ago.

In the future, the research team plans to combine analyses from paleoclimate, paleobiology, and paleoecological environments, along with tectonics, sedimentology, and geochemistry, to reveal the history of the Asian monsoon's entry into the Tibetan Plateau over the past 40 million years, the co-evolution of climate, environment, and biodiversity in the heart of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, as well as the formation processes of hydrocarbon source rocks and arid salt lake deposits. This will provide important scientific evidence for simulating and predicting the impact of global warming across the plateau, in addition to protecting its ecological environment, and guiding the exploration and development of hydrocarbon and salt lake resources, according to the ITP.

Scientists find 1,700 viruses trapped in Tibetan Glacier

15 September 2024, News Nine, Aditya Madanapalle

The genetic variations in the viruses track closely with historic climate change on Earth.

Scientists have identified 1,700 species of viruses after carefully reconstructing strands of DNA recovered from ice core samples in the far northwestern Tibetan Plateau. While dormant viruses trapped for millenia within glacier ice being released and reintroduced into the environment by human caused climate change is an existential threat looming over the citizens of Earth, this story is about the valuable information on the history of Earth's climate, gleaned by the genetic analysis of the uncovered viruses. About three-fourths of the viruses found in the ice core samples are new to science.

Most of the viruses likely infected dominant microbes as against animals or humans, with the genetic material preserving information on the adaptations necessary to survive in extreme conditions during the variations because of the climate cycles of the Earth. As global warming threatens the Himalayan Glaciers, the knowledge embedded within the ice only increases in scientific value. The ice core sample preserved snapshots of virus evolution and behaviour over the previous 41,000 years.

A connection between viruses and climate change

The researchers were able to identify a distinct viral community that emerged about 11,500 years ago, just when the Earth was transitioning from the last Ice Age to a warm Holocene period. The researchers used sophisticated genetic sequencing techniques to look for signatures in the DNA, and discovered that most of the viruses were unique to the Guliya Snow Cap, with some overlap with species found elsewhere, indicating that viruses from as far away as the Middle East or even the Arctic made it to Tibet.

A paper describing the findings has been published in *Nature Geoscience*. Lead author of the study, ZhiPing Zhong says, "Before this work, how viruses linked to large-scale changes in Earth's climate had remained largely uninvestigated". Apart from providing valuable insights on the relationship between climate shifts and viruses on Earth, the techniques used by the researchers can help find microbes in the ice fields on Mars, or beneath the kilometres thick ice shells of potentially habitable moons of the Gas Giants, such as Enceladus and Europa.

After millennia apart, these Tibetan lakes are now linked and could merge by 2030

10 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Zhang Tong

Tibet's largest inland lake, Siling, has spilled over into another nearby salt lake, Bange, for the first time in more than 4,000 years, after decades of rising water levels driven by climate change.

The Tibetan Plateau, known as "Asia's water tower", has more than 1,000 lakes and is the source of 10 major rivers in Asia that provide water resources to about 2 billion people in downstream countries.

Scientists monitoring the two lakes on the plateau – which are about 6km (4 miles) apart – say they could merge, and that might have significant implications for people living nearby.

A team from the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences published their analysis of the changes at Siling lake in the peer-reviewed *Science Bulletin* in July.

Siling has significantly expanded in the past two decades. It covered an area of some 1,640 sq km (630 sq miles) in the 1970s, but by 2023 the lake had swollen to 2,445 sq km (945 sq miles), according to Lei Yanbin, a professor with the institute and lead author of the study.

Siling and nearby lake Bange – once a source of borax – have been part of separate watersheds with no hydrological connection for more than 4,000 years but potentially as far back as 8,200 years ago, when glaciers melted and sea levels rose.

"While Bange [lake's] water level decreased by about 1 metre [3 feet] over the last decade, Siling [lake's] rose by 4 metres [13 feet]," Lei wrote.

Siling spilled over into an ancient riverbed between the two lakes in September last year, breaking up a provincial road and forming a channel that was 200 metres at its widest and nearly 2 metres deep.

"The outburst flood ... will lead to the rapid expansion of Bange," Lei said in a statement released by the institute.

"Satellite data revealed that within a month of the overflow, Bange's area had increased by more than 10 per cent."

Lei said the immediate cause of the overflow was a continued rise in water levels over the past 20 years, noting that it had risen by more than 13 metres from 1998 to 2023. Increased rainfall in the area in August and September last year had pushed the water levels to the point where the lake spilled over.

He said rapid climate change on the Tibetan Plateau was driving the problem.

"From 1970 to 2014, the average annual temperature on the plateau rose at a rate of 0.35 degrees Celsius [32.63 Fahrenheit] per decade – twice the global average – accompanied by a marked unevenness in precipitation patterns, with increases in the plateau's

interior and decreases on its southern and eastern edges," Lei said in a previous paper.

The impact of climate change is being seen across the Himalayan region. Song Chunqiao, a professor at the academy's Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology, has also studied watershed reorganisation on the Tibetan Plateau.

Song said there were 11 such events between 2000 and 2018, and the most severe one in 2011 had put the railway between Qinghai and Tibet at risk.

"Considering the ongoing trend of warming and moistening on the plateau, there is a pressing need for enhanced monitoring of potential watershed reorganisation areas – especially for sudden events like lake bursts and glacier collapses, which could lead to further geological disasters and ecological risks," Song said.

Lei's team also observed unprecedented expansion of lakes in the central Tibetan Plateau from 2017 to 2018, when the water levels of five lakes rose by between 1.4 metres and 2.8 metres.

Based on their modelling, the team expects Siling's water levels to continue rising – potentially by another 16.8 metres by 2100.

They said even under the most conservative scenario for emissions growth, the lake is predicted to expand and it could merge with Bange around 2030.

Lei said that change could affect people living near the lakes. He urged authorities to identify potential hazards from the expansion of inland lakes on the Tibetan Plateau caused by climate change.

"Real-time monitoring and early warnings for critical lake water level changes are needed to protect surrounding roads, bridges and villages from emerging threats," he said in the statement.

Torrential rains, deadly flooding hit Tibetan areas of Qinghai province

06 September 2024, [RFA](#), Chakmo Tso and Dickey Kundol

Rights groups say the severe weather is the result of climate change.

Heavy rains in Tibetan areas of central China's Qinghai province have triggered severe flooding, destroying infrastructure and killing at least nine people and hundreds of livestock, three Tibetans from inside Tibet said.

The rains have drenched the area since Sept. 2, flooding roads, damaging bridges and causing landslides, they said. Chinese state media reported that heavy rains have inundated houses and swept away vehicles.

Tibet is experiencing heavier annual rainfalls and flooding than in the past, which some Tibetan rights groups say is due to climate change.

Six people died in Trelmag township of Serchen (Gonghe in Chinese) County in Tsoilho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the sources said, insisting on not being identified to avoid reprisals from authorities. Five of them died while traveling in a vehicle when a bridge collapsed, one source said.

Three others died due to a landslide in Honaguk village in Minhe county of Tsoshar (Haidong in Chinese) prefecture.

Some areas experienced severe hailstorms, which shattered windows and glass panes in the homes of nomads, the sources said.

Livestock dies

The flooding killed livestock as well. Nearly 400 cattle and sheep died in Tsekhok (Zekog) county in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Residents there needed help pulling dead cattle from the water and mud.

In Minhe district, houses were damaged, and highways and bridges were washed over, while grasslands were covered by mud.

As of Sept. 4, the Chinese government elevated the weather-damage alert for Qinghai from level 4 to level 3.

Chinese state media reported a level-one flood warning has been issued for Siling (Xining) city as well as Tathang, Kumbum and Tongkor counties. As a result, officials suspended bus transportation from Siling to these areas.

Roads and bridges connecting Tongkor and Siling have been severely damaged by the flooding, the sources said.

Additionally, roads leading from Dashi (Haiyan) and Kangtsa (Gangcha) counties of Tsojang (Haibei) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and Themchen (Tianjun) county of Tsonub (Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture) to Siling (Xining) city have been cut off, making travel in and out of these areas impossible.

The areas have been hit by flooding before.

In 2022, five people died and over 2,000 head of livestock died due to flooding in parts of Qinghai province, including Mangra (Guinan), Serkog and Rebgong counties, as well as Labrang town in Sanchu (Xiahe) County of Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Gansu province.

TIBET IN EXILE

The Three Principles of the Path

30 September 2024, [His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama](#)

This morning His Holiness the Dalai Lama made a circuit of the Tsuglagkhang, the Main Tibetan Temple, on his way to address an estimated 7000 people, including 1300 from Taiwan, as well as many monks on vacation from the monasteries in South India. He smiled at those he saw as he passed, occasionally extending a hand to an elderly man or woman who caught his eye.

In the temple His Holiness warmly greeted the Ganden Throneholder and took his seat on the throne. The 'Heart Sutra' was chanted in Chinese, following which a mandala was offered to him.

"Today we're going to hold a spiritual discourse," His Holiness began. "When I was on my way here, listening to your chanting the 'Mig-tsé-ma' prayer to Jé Tsongkhapa reminded me that not only was I born close to his place of birth, but that I also share his philosophical views. However, the survival of the Buddhadharma is not linked to a particular location and those of us in exile have done our best to keep it alive. Jé Rinpoché's teaching has spread around the world and I've done my best to clarify it.

"When I was in Tibet, and also since leaving the Land of Snow, one of my most important practices has been to read the 18 volumes of Jé Rinpoché's Collected Works. I have a special regard for them and feel a close connection to them. Today, I'll read his 'Three Principles of the Path'.

"Tibetans' core identity is focussed on the Buddhadharma. We have kept it alive and we have kept it well through study and practice. Consequently, many who have an interest in the Dharma are paying attention to our tradition.

Tea and bread served to the congregation were blessed with the recitation of a verse that celebrates His Holiness's names:

I pray to you, O Supreme Noble Lotus Holder (Padmapani):

*You are the adamantine Gentle Glory who has Mastery
of Speech,
Your vase of Sublime Insight is replete with the nectar
of Exalted Wisdom,
And you are embellishing jewellery of (Beautifully
adorning) the Vast playful Ocean of Upholders of
Dharma!*

"There was a prediction at the time of the Buddha," His Holiness continued, "that the Buddhadharma would spread from the north to the north. After his enlightenment the Buddha began his teaching by explaining the Four Noble Truths. In due course, what he had to say spread throughout Tibet, which is north of India, and on to Mongolia, which is north of Tibet. Tibetans in Tibet and in exile have kept the tradition alive through study and practice of the Three Higher

Trainings—ethics, concentration and wisdom. Interest has grown around the world because these trainings are rooted in reason and logic.

“The three principles of the path are renunciation, or a determination to be free, the awakening mind and the correct view. The determination to be free does not lead to enlightenment directly, it needs to be augmented by the other two principles.

“Shantarakshita, among Indian masters invited by Tibetan kings to Tibet, established the Buddha’s teachings there. We have studied and meditated on what was taught and put the Three Higher Trainings and the Three Principles of the Path into practice.

“When we develop a determination to be free, we’ll no longer be drawn to the pleasures and attractions of this life or future lives in cyclic existence. We’ll turn away from them. However, we will not reach the state of omniscience without the awakening mind of bodhichitta and a correct view of emptiness.

“From the very beginning of my day I cultivate the awakening mind and an understanding of emptiness. When I hear sad news, these principles help me develop a determination to be free. Understanding the workings of the mind and emotions, and seeing how things are dependently arisen, we can come to an appreciation that suffering is rooted in ignorance.

“The Three Principles of the Path need to be integrated within us. They need to become part of our inner experience.”

His Holiness began to read briskly through the text noting that without a pure determination to be free there is no way to still attraction to the pleasures of cyclic existence. We need to reverse attraction to this life as well as reversing attraction to future lives. When we do not for an instant wish for the pleasures of cyclic existence, and day and night remain intent on liberation, we will have produced a determination to be free.

However, a determination to be free without a pure awakening mind of bodhichitta does not bring forth enlightenment. Therefore, Bodhisattvas generate the excellent awakening mind. They reflect on how all beings, our mothers, are swept by the current of the four powerful rivers, tied by strong bonds of actions so hard to undo, caught in the iron net of self-centredness, completely enveloped by the darkness of ignorance, born and reborn in boundless cyclic existence, and are ceaselessly tormented by the three miseries. Thinking of them in this way they generate the awakening mind.

The text touches on how, despite these realizations, without wisdom, the realization of emptiness, we cannot cut the root of cyclic existence. Therefore, we must strive to understand dependent arising.

Jé Tsongkhapa states that appearances are infallible dependent arising, while emptiness is free of assertions. But as long as these two understandings

are seen as separate, we will not have realized the intent of the Buddha. And yet, when these two realizations are simultaneous and concurrent, analysis of the profound view is complete. He goes on to reveal that appearances refute the extreme of existence, and emptiness refutes the extreme of nonexistence. When we understand the arising of cause and effect from the viewpoint of emptiness, we will not be captivated by either extreme view.



Members of the audience from Taiwan taking notes during His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s teaching at the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamsala, HP, India on September 30, 2024. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

Jé Rinpoché counsels his disciple Ngawang Drakpa, to whom he sent these verses to realize the Three Principles of the Path, to depend on solitude and strong effort, and quickly reach the final goal.

His Holiness announced that he would offer the Bodhisattva Vow. He remarked that he finds reading books about the awakening mind of bodhichitta and its qualities, such as Shantideva’s ‘Entering the Way of a Bodhisattva’ to be both moving and inspiring. He said such books encourage us to work for all sentient beings throughout space.

“When the Buddha first set out on the path to enlightenment,” His Holiness advised, “he generated such an awakening mind. We should emulate him.”

His Holiness read the verses for taking refuge in the Three Jewels and generating the awakening mind, encouraging members of the congregation to generate the awakening mind and take the Bodhisattva vow themselves. Next, he repeated verses from ‘Entering into the Bodhisattva’s Way’ in celebration.

Today my birth is fruitful, my human life is justified. Today, I am born into the family of the Buddha, now I am a child of the Buddhas.

So that there may be no blemish upon this spotless family, I must now act as becomes my family.

“People around the world seem obsessed with weapons and the use of force,” His Holiness observed. “As practitioners of the Buddhadharma we should avoid this. Nothing good comes from the use of force. Killing so many people only brings further suffering. Setting aside attachment, anger and hatred we should work instead to benefit all sentient beings. Much better that developing bodhichitta within ourselves should be our primary aim.”

Among several questions from the audience His Holiness was asked what is the main cause not to be separated from the spiritual master. He answered that heeding the teachings you've received and putting them into practice creates a strong link with your teacher.

Another questioner wanted to know whether steady cultivation of practices like the exchanging of self and others would lead to genuine experience. His Holiness replied that if you familiarize your mind with such practice, it will eventually give rise to experience. In terms of bodhichitta you'll feel ever closer to it. He repeated the verse concerning the four immeasurable wishes.

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May all beings rejoice in the well-being of others.

May all beings live in peace, free from greed and hatred.

"If we familiarize ourselves with bodhichitta, in time we will become imbued with it. I cultivate bodhichitta and the view of emptiness on a daily basis and I feel it has created a solid experience within me."

Asked how a beginner should act to prevent their sense of bodhichitta from slackening His Holiness simply advised that if you persevere with a practice, it will not decline. Finally, he declared that main cause of higher rebirths in the future is to cultivate the awakening mind of bodhichitta and an understanding of emptiness.

The Taiwanese disciples expressed their pleasure at His Holiness's advice with a burst of applause. He left the temple, walked steadily to the lift, smiling at well-wishers as he went, and in the courtyard boarded the golfcart that would carry him home.

Former Chief Justice Commissioner and Deputy Speaker Sonam Sangpo Jadur passes away at 85

30 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Sonam Sangpo Jadur, former Tibetan Chief Justice Commissioner and Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan parliament in exile, passed away at the age of 85 on September 28 at his residence in Dolanji Bon settlement after a prolonged illness.

Born on September 28, 1939, in Jadur, Western Tibet, Sonam Sangpo began his education at the age of six at Jadur Monastery, where he learned reading and writing and later served as the monastery's treasurer. After fleeing into exile, he worked as a Hindi translator for Tibetan labourers involved in road construction projects in the Shimla and Kullu regions.

In 1966, under the guidance of His Holiness Menri Trizin, the spiritual head of the Bon tradition, Sonam

Sangpo assisted in securing land to establish the Bon settlement in Dolanji. By 1979, he had become the Settlement Officer of Dolanji Bon settlement.

From September 2, 1982, to May 11, 1990, Sonam Sangpo represented the Bon tradition in the 8th and 9th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, then known as the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD). He was re-elected to the 11th, 12th, and 13th terms of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile from May 29, 1991, to September 24, 2003. During his tenure, he served as Deputy Speaker in the 11th term and again briefly from June 1, 2001, to September 24, 2001, during the 13th term, before resigning to become a Justice.

On September 26, 2001, Sonam Sangpo was appointed as a Justice of the Supreme Justice Commission of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, later becoming the Chief Justice on October 1, 2002, a position he held until his retirement on September 28, 2004. After his retirement, he continued to serve as Vice President of the Tibetan Bon Foundation following the instructions of the 33rd Menri Trizin.

On Monday, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) held a prayer service to honour the memory of Sonam Sangpo Jadur. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has also sent a letter of condolence to his family and relatives.

Taiwanese devotees attend teachings of the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala

30 September 2024, [The Print](#)

The 14th Dalai Lama recently delivered a spiritual discourse on 'The Three Principal Aspects of the Path' (lamtso namsum), a key text by the revered Tibetan scholar Tsongkhapa.

The event was organised at the request of Taiwanese devotees and took place at the Tsuglagkhang, the main Tibetan temple in Dharamshala. More than 5,000 people, including 1,200 Taiwanese devotees, foreigners, Tibetan monks, nuns, and locals, gathered for this special teaching in the northern Indian hill town.

This discourse attracted people from diverse religious backgrounds, reflecting the Dalai Lama's message of universal compassion. Tien Nai-Wen, a Taoist from Taiwan, expressed how meaningful the experience was for him.

"This is very important for me because I am from Taiwan, and many people in Taiwan appreciate the Dalai Lama's teachings. Even though I come from a different religion, the Dharma says all religions can come together to share these holy teachings, so I came here. I feel very happy to be part of this," Tien told ANI. Tien also emphasised how the teachings on compassion and kindness resonated with him personally, and she expressed a desire to share these lessons with his Taoist community back in Taiwan.

“We have over 1,200 people from Taiwan here, but I am the only Taoist. I hope to bring these teachings back to Taoism because they, too, can benefit from it,” she added.

Another Taiwanese devotee, Lin Yaan Yi, echoed these sentiments, noting the spiritual enrichment gained from attending the Dalai Lama’s teachings. “I’m very happy to be here, and it’s been beneficial for me to develop compassion for others and *Bodhichitta* in my mind. We came to wish His Holiness a happy birthday and to gain insight from his wisdom,” she said.

The event, highlighted the Dalai Lama’s enduring appeal across cultures and religious backgrounds, offering a moment of unity and spiritual growth for all those in attendance. (ANI)

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Community in Dehradun: Emphasises Cultural Preservation and International Support

29 September 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering Visits Manduwala Lingsang Settlement, Calls for Youth Engagement in Tibetan Buddhism and Language Preservation. Photo / Tenzin Tenkyong / bod.asia / CTA

Dehradun: On the morning of 28 September 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering began his official visit to Tibetan Settlements in the Dehradun area. Upon arrival at Manduwala Tibetan Settlement, Sikyong was warmly welcomed by the local Tibetan Settlement Officer Dondup Gyalpo, the President of the Local Tibetan Assembly, the President of the Local Tibetan Freedom Movement, representatives from various monasteries, and representatives from both governmental and non-governmental Tibetan organizations in the area.

After the welcome, Sikyong visited Gesar Temple, Zamön Gyalyung Ling Monastery, and Palpung Kunkhyab Chöling Monastery. Subsequently, he delivered a speech to the public at the Lingsang Community Hall (Manduwala).

At the beginning of the speech program, Dehradun Tibetan Settlement Officer Dondup Gyalpo welcomed the Sikyong and presented the annual report of the settlement. Afterwards, Sikyong addressed the gathering.

In his speech, the Sikyong praised the local organisations of Lingsang settlement for their ongoing efforts to address their local issues. He also promised that the Central Tibetan Administration would provide as much support as possible based on the fundamental needs of the local people.

Sikyong highlighted the challenge of the decreasing number of monks in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in exile and stressed that, according to the records of the Department of Religion and Culture, the number of monks has decreased over the past three years. He further noted that the majority of current monks are from Himalayan communities.

Sikyong underscored the significance of Tibetan Buddhism as a source of pride for the Tibetan people and urged the youth to engage with its teachings. He articulated that the global attention towards the Tibetan cause is, in part, a reflection of the worldwide dissemination of Buddhism, a phenomenon attributed to the benevolence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

He pointed out that among all refugee communities worldwide, only Tibetans have a fully democratic system in exile. For the future stability of the Tibetan community, including the Central Tibetan Administration, he stressed the importance of abiding by local laws, properly registering organisations, following correct procedures for receiving foreign funds, and carefully preserving land ownership documents. He announced that the CTA plans to offer workshops to raise awareness about Indian laws.

Similarly, Sikyong explained that Chinese President Xi Jinping is forcibly transforming all ethnicities into Chinese people with communist ideology. He clarified that in Tibet, there are increasing restrictions on teaching the Tibetan language, and private schools teaching Tibetan are being closed.

He reminded everyone of the value of the Tibetan language, especially as the medium for priceless Buddhist scriptures and philosophical texts. In connection with this, he explained that the Department of Religion and Culture is digitising important texts to create a Tibetan digital library to preserve Tibetan Buddhism.

Furthermore, he mentioned that the Tibetan language has now entered the field of artificial intelligence.

Additionally, Sikyong explained that this year, through the joint strategic efforts of the Central Tibetan Administration, the International Campaign for Tibet, and other Tibet-related organisations, they were able to establish the Resolve Tibet Act in the United States. He elaborated that this act recognises the Tibet-China conflict as an unresolved international issue,

acknowledges Tibetans' right to self-determination, Shows that the U.S. government is challenging China's false narrative that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times, clarifies that "Tibet" refers to all three traditional provinces of Tibet.

Sikyong emphasised that the establishment of such legislation marks a new step forward in the Tibetan freedom struggle.

China deepens repression in Tibet after passage of Resolve Tibet Act in US

29 September 2024, [News Day](#)

Top security official of China Chen Wenqing visited Tibet in the second week of September and instructed the local authorities to step up a crackdown against ethnic Tibetans, branding them as 'separatists.' It is a different question who these separatists are as China is in illegal occupation of Tibet. The move by the Chinese Communist Party to step up security in Tibet is believed to be a knee-jerk reaction to the passage in the U.S. Congress of the Resolve Tibet Act which empowers the U.S. government to put pressure on Beijing to hold talks with the Dalai Lama.

Coming from the Head of the dreaded Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the CCP, the threat is a cause of serious concern for the Tibetan people. The Commission oversees the vast coercive apparatus of the party-state. It is the main agency of the CCP, headed by a politburo member of the party, to maintain the supremacy of the CCP over the coercive apparatus of the state, to organize surveillance and to supervise campaigns of repression.

In his three-day stay in Tibet, Chen went to the Tibet Autonomous Region and some of the Tibetan autonomous prefectures outside TAR, across Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai; calling for "resolute crackdown" against separatists, asking local officials to "maintain stability and guard against pro-independence activities." In the plateau he presided over a meeting on "anti-secession and stability maintenance in Tibet," indicating a possible increase in surveillance and restrictions.

Reports from the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamshala in India indicate that the occupation forces of China have already started putting into practice its threat of a "resolute crackdown" in Tibetan areas. They have been trying to suppress the religion, culture and language of the Tibetan people. Now in the name of crackdown on separatists the degree of oppression on the Tibetan people will increase.

Top judges and prosecutors of China have also gone round Tibet in recent weeks. President of the Supreme People's Court Zhang Jun has visited Tibetan courts and said it is necessary to hand down tough punishment to keep up the pressure on "violent

terrorism, ethnic separatism and other serious criminal crimes," says a report in South China Morning Post. Head of the Supreme People's Procuratorate Ying Yong has inspected the office of the public prosecutors in Tibet. He has stressed on the need for prosecutors to "harshly crack down in accordance with the law on all kinds of separatist infiltration, sabotage activities and crimes endangering national security."

The Central Tibetan Administration quotes a report by Radio Free Asia that Lobsang Thabkhey, a 55-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk, has lately been sentenced to three years in prison after a secret trial. Arrested in June 2023, he was accused of possessing and republishing books from the exiled Tibetan community and for having contact with people outside the region when he had been in charge of the library of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County in the Sichuan province.

While signing into law the Resolve Tibet Act, a bipartisan legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in July last, U.S. President Joe Biden had said it showed the bipartisan commitment in America to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage. He also called on Beijing to resume direct dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to "seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet." The Act empowers State Department officials to actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet by the Chinese government. It also rejects Beijing's claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times,"

The move of the U.S. government to take steps to protect human rights of Tibetans and to preserve their language, culture and religion has been a badly needed one. According to reports from Tibet reaching the Central Tibetan Administration, in a systematic move to erase Tibetan identity the Chinese government has introduced a policy for education aimed at assimilation of the Tibetans with the Han Chinese identity. Colonial-style boarding schools have been set up in the plateau and young monks from monasteries as well as children from Tibetan families are being asked to join these schools where they are brought up in the Han Chinese way of life and brainwashed to forget their Tibetan identity, language, culture and religion.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Talks on Significance of Tibetan Plateau and Tibet's Water Resources at Sambhota Tibetan School, Herbertpur

28 September 2024, [CTA](#)



On the morning of 27 September 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited Sambhota Tibetan Day School in Herbertpur. Upon his arrival, Sikyong received a warm welcome from the school's Principal, Sonam Palkyi, along with faculty members and students. Following this, Sikyong toured the classroom and observed the class sessions.

Afterwards, during a gathering, Sikyong discussed the spiritual connection between Tibet and India and emphasised the geopolitical significance of the Tibetan plateau and its ecological importance. Sikyong also commended the Tibetan and Indian teachers and students at the school for exemplifying harmony and appreciated the coexistence of two different cultures within the same educational environment.

In this connection, Sikyong Penpa Tsering mentioned that although Tibetans have been in exile in India for over 65 years, awareness about the Tibet issue among the Indian public remains very low. Therefore, he considers it important to raise awareness about the Tibet issue among the Indian public, especially among the youth. Sikyong stated that he has been giving talks about Tibet at various Indian educational institutions, including universities. Similarly, since many local Indian students are studying at the Sambhota Day School in Herbertpur, he felt it was important to give a talk about Tibet there as well.

In his talk, Sikyong narrated the historical accounts of the first Tibetan king, who originated from India, and the derivation of Tibetan scripts and religion from India. Likewise, Sikyong also spoke about the current relations between the two nations and expressed his appreciation to the government and people of India for extending assistance to Tibetan refugees following His Holiness-led Tibetans' flight into exile.

Similarly, Sikyong discussed the significance of the Tibetan Plateau, which is also known as the "Roof of the World," the "Third Pole," or "Asia's Water Tower." Sikyong said, "The rivers originating from Tibet, such as Yarlung Tsangpo, Machu, and Dzachu, have become the lifeline for hundreds of millions of people in Asia". Sikyong further pointed out that two of the world's

oldest civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization and the Chinese Civilization, also depended on Tibet's rivers.

However, Sikyong shared his concerns regarding the Chinese Communist government's ongoing mismanagement of Tibetan rivers, which will have severe repercussions in the future.

Tibetan activist begins 5th cycle rally for Tibet cause

September 28 2024, [Phayul](#)



TYC activists during the cycle rally from Dehradun to Delhi (Photo/TYC)

Jamyang Tenzin, a 64-year-old Tibetan activist, embarked on his fifth Tibet Awareness Solo-Cycle Rally from Tawang to Delhi on September 27. The rally started at Urgenling, the birthplace of the 6th Dalai Lama in Tawang. His rally coincides with the 37th anniversary of the revival of Tibetan protest uprising in Lhasa in 1987.

The veteran cyclist's journey will span from Mon Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh to Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. Throughout his route, Tenzin plans to highlight issues faced by Tibetans under Chinese occupation, including the forced closure of educational institutions and the systematic attempts to eradicate Tibetan identity, language, and culture.

Tenzin's objectives for this rally focus on three points; demanding the return of Tibet to the Tibetan people; the end to Chinese policies that aim to eliminate Tibetan identity. and appeals to the Indian government and citizens for support for Tibet.

This rally marks Tenzin's fifth awareness cycle. His previous journeys covered distances across India. The first took him from Dharamshala to Bodhgaya, spanning 3000 km. The second journey went from Bylakuppe in Karnataka to Dekyiling in Dehradun, also covering 3000 km. His third rally went from Dekyiling to Delhi, a distance of 250 km. The fourth journey took him from Ladakh Khardung La to Dharamshala, covering 800 km

The Tibetan Youth Congress also launched a bicycle rally campaign a few days prior on September 24th, set to conclude on October 1st, marking the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. The rally, which involves over 50 Tibetans of all ages, began

in Delying and will pass through Chandigarh before culminating in New Delhi.

Gonpo Dhondup, President of the Tibetan Youth Congress, stated that the campaign's objectives are to demand an end to policies aimed at eradicating Tibetan identity, call for human rights for Tibetans inside Tibet, and appeal for increased support from India for the Tibetan cause.

Tibetan anthology feature showcasing stories of exile and identity to premiere at Busan Film Festival

27 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

'*State of Statelessness*', a Tibetan-language anthology feature film, has been officially selected for the 29th Busan International Film Festival, where it will have its world premiere from October 2-11 in the 'A Window on Asian Cinema' section. This prestigious selection is a major milestone for Tibetan cinema, as Busan is one of Asia's leading film festivals, known for showcasing unique voices and compelling stories from across the continent.

Produced by the Dharamshala-based Drung Tibetan Filmmakers' Collective, the film poignantly explores themes of statelessness and migration through four distinct stories about Tibetans living in exile. Directed by Tibetan filmmakers based in India, America, and Vietnam, the anthology sheds light on the painful realities of displacement faced by Tibetans scattered around the world.

According to the film's synopsis, the anthology tells four compelling stories; In one, a Tibetan father in Vietnam explains to his young daughter how the Mekong River, which originates in his homeland, flows into the sea in their new country, symbolising their journey into exile. Another story follows two estranged sisters who reunite to cremate their mother, only to discover that years of separation have created deep emotional complexities they must confront. The third narrative focuses on Sonam, who is recovering from a family tragedy when a visit from a long-lost school friend from America forces him and his wife to face the fragility of their lives. In the final tale, a son returns to his late father's home in Dharamshala, where he uncovers a family secret that challenges his understanding of both his heritage and identity.

Tenzin Tsetan Choklay, the New York and Dharamshala-based filmmaker who also produced '*State of Statelessness*', told *Phayul* that the film's selection for the prestigious Busan International Film Festival marks a significant milestone for Tibetan filmmakers. He believes this recognition elevates Tibetan voices and highlights the diversity and complexity of their narratives.

"The global stage provided by Busan brings much-needed attention to our stories. This recognition not

only validates the artistic merit of our work but also gives momentum to the broader Tibetan filmmaking community, encouraging younger generations to share their own stories and, hopefully, attracting more support and opportunities for Tibetan cinema. This has been our goal at Drung Tibetan Filmmakers' Collective since the very beginning," the Tibetan filmmaker told *Phayul*. Tenzin Tsetan Choklay's feature documentary film "Bringing Tibet Home" also premiered at the Busan International Film Festival in 2014 in its Wide Angle section.



A still from the film (Photo/BIFF)

He said that the film is deeply rooted in the themes of exile, migration, and identity. "Through the personal and intimate stories in the film, we aim to evoke empathy and understanding for those who live without a state to call their own. We hope that viewers will leave with a greater appreciation for the shared human experience, realising that the struggles of stateless people are universal, and that we all face similar challenges regardless of nationality or borders," he further said.

The film director also spoke about how the film is shaped by the personal and collective experiences of exile. "The anthology format allows different filmmakers, including myself, to bring our unique perspectives from various corners of the Tibetan diaspora. Even within our own exile community, there are diverse experiences. The style of the film is influenced by where each of us comes from and the transient spaces we inhabit. My own experience of living in Dharamshala, South Korea, New York, and Europe has shaped the way I see the world and tell stories. The themes of disconnection, longing, and identity that run through the film are deeply personal to all of us who worked on it," he shared.

Drung is a collective of Tibetan filmmakers based in Dharamshala fostering a community that shares knowledge, skills and connections to tell stories about Tibet, India and beyond. The group is dedicated to the advancement of story-telling in the Tibetan exile communities by building a community of story-tellers through workshops, film screenings and other educational programs.

Amid EU, others' criticisms, China claims over 100 countries' support for its stance on rights situation in Tibet etc

27 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The European Union (EU), a body of 27 countries, on Sep 24 reiterated its concerns about the continuous dire human rights situation in Tibet, highlighting the obligatory boarding schooling, mass DNA sampling and closure of Tibetan schools, said the Central Tibetan Administration on its Tibet.net website Sep 26. China, on the other hand, claimed the support of over 100 countries for its position on issues related to Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong regions, namely that any criticism of human rights there amounts to interfering in China's internal affairs, according to its official globaltimes.cn Sep 25.

The Tibet.net report also said the EU highlighted the harassment, intimidation and surveillance faced by human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, media workers, writers and intellectuals, including at transnational level. They also continue to face exit bans, house arrest, torture and ill-treatment, unlawful detention, sentencing and enforced disappearance including though Residential Surveillance in a Designated Location (RSDL) that could amount to torture and ill-treatment.

The EU was also stated to have urged China to uphold its obligations under national and international law, including its own Constitution to respect, protect and fulfil human rights for all, including Tibetans.

The EU has reaffirmed its commitment to closely monitoring the preservation of fundamental freedoms, cultural heritage and identity of Tibetans and called on China to ensure full bilingual education both in Tibetan and Chinese at all levels of the schooling system.

The EU also wanted China to allow more visits from the International Community, UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders and civil society organisations to Tibet. It has also called for the immediate and unconditional release of Anya Sengdra, Chadrel Rinpoche, Go Sherab Gyatso, Golog Palden, Semkyi Dolma and Tashi Dorje, among others.

The Chinese claim of opposing the politicization of issues on human rights followed statements made "by the US and a handful of countries which smear China's human rights situation during the ongoing 57th session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council," said the official globaltimes.cn report.

The report cited a joint statement made by Cuba "on behalf of nearly 80 countries" as saying "issues related to Xinjiang, Xizang, and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region are internal affairs of China".

"They oppose the politicization of human rights issues and the application of double standards, as well as using human rights as an excuse to interfere in the

internal affairs of other countries," the report quoted those more than 100 countries as saying.

Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay Addresses Students and Faculty of the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies on the Middle Way Policy

27 September 2024, [CTA](#)



A Moment from the Address at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies

Tenzin Lekshay, Additional Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, spoke about the Middle Way Policy at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath on 27 September 2024.

The Honorable Vice Chancellor of the Institute welcomed the gathering, attended by all the teachers and students. The audience remained attentive throughout the talk, taking into account the historical context and current implications of the policy.

Students and faculty alike posed insightful questions during the Q&A session, demonstrating their deep interest in and understanding of the Middle Way Policy.

-Report filed by the Tibet Advocacy Section, DIIR, CTA

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Assesses Damages Caused by Heavy Rainfall at Puruwala Tibetan Settlement

27 September 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering visits Puruwala Tibetan Settlement. Photo / Tenzin Tenkyong / bod.asia

On the morning of 26 September 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited Puruwala Tibetan Settlement to assess the damages caused by heavy rainfall that disconnected several roads.

Following this, Sikyong visited the Tibetan Children's Village School (TCV) in Selakui and its affiliate, the Tibetan Private Industrial Training Institute (ITI), in Dehradun.

Upon arrival, Sikyong was warmly welcomed by school's teachers and students, including Tsultrim Kelsang, the Principal of the Tibetan Children's Village School, Selakui, and Tenzin Choesang, the Director of ITI.

At a gathering later that day, Sikyong addressed the students and staff members, stressing that Tibetans outside Tibet have a special responsibility to uphold the unique Tibetan identity and maintain the rich Tibetan cultural heritage as the Communist Party of China's intensified suppressions inside Tibet by enforcing strict regulations. While sharing insights on Tibetan history, Sikyong advised students to go through ancient histories of Tibet to properly comprehend the facts amidst China's increasing distortion of Tibet's past.

Furthermore, Sikyong provided an overview of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue, noting that since 2010, there has been no communication between the two sides. However, Sikyong disclosed the existence of a back-channel communication, over which he opined his pessimism for its effectiveness. Therefore, Sikyong emphasised that Tibetans must explore every opportunity that the current domestic and international political situations of the PRC offer.

Additionally, the exile Tibetan political leader spoke about the geopolitical significance of the Tibetan plateau and China's mismanagement of Tibet's water resources, which feed billions of downstream residents. Thereafter, Sikyong and his aides toured the school and training centre's premises.

After concluding his official visit to TCV Selakui, Sikyong visited Khera Camp Tibetan Settlement and Baluwala Tibetan Settlement later that afternoon. At Khera Camp, Sikyong made obeisance inside Gongkar Choede monastery.

Sikyong's day-long engagements ended at Herbertpur Tibetan Settlement, where he was extended a welcome reception by Settlement officer Dolma Tsering, the President of the Local Tibetan Assembly, Tenzin Sungrab, and the President of the Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement, Thupten Gyaltsen.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering was accompanied by Additional Secretary Tashi Dickey from the Department of Home, Pema Youdon from the Department of Health, and Thupten Rinzin from SARD.

Gonmo Kyi speaks out about her treatment in new video

26 September 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

Gono Kyi, the sister of imprisoned Tibetan businessman Dorjee Tashi, has shared a new video talking about her efforts to raise her brother's case with authorities.

In the video, released 24 September, Gonmo Kyi talks about her efforts to secure a retrial for Dorjee Tashi. She states how her protests in front of the court in Lhasa have seen her repeatedly being detained and beaten by Public Security Bureau officers and that she is in poor health.

On 27 July, the Court of Chengguan District of Lhasa City dismissed an appeal that she lodged against her treatment by PSB officials. Tibet Watch has seen the court's documents in which court authorities stated that "petitioner, Gonmo Kyi, actions constitute breaking of the social rules and laws of the state." It further stated that "Chengguan District of Lhasa City Public Security Bureau has warned her on several occasions but she didn't obey the warning. Therefore, the Public Security Bureau had detained her".

Tibet Watch reported in April that Gonmo Kyi was severely beaten that month, one of several occasions when she suffered ill-treatment or was threatened. On other occasions, police have simply attempted to obstruct her protest from public view. In December 2023, Gonmo Kyi was held in detention for a week.

Gonmo Kyi's brother, Dorjee Tashi, is serving a life prison sentence. Prior to his arrest in 2008, he was a hotelier and philanthropist. He was charged with loan fraud, a charge his family and those following his case vigorously contest. He was also reportedly subject to torture in detention in 2010.

Gonmo Kyi and other family members have pushed for a retrial and to be able to visit him in prison. No in-person visit has been permitted since 2019.

"I have petitioned the Lhasa Court to retry Dorjee Tashi's case in accordance with the law of the State but they have refused to address it. The Public Security Bureau repeatedly detained me, dragged me and beat me! So, presently, I'm in an ill health condition, afflicted by these repeated beatings! I have no power/right to petition for a retrial of my brother's case! I will continue to protest and petition unless and until the Lhasa Court addresses this appeal."

Unclimbed peak in Arunachal Pradesh named after 6th Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso

26 September 2024, [CTA](#), Bikash Singh

A team from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) has successfully scaled an unnamed 20,942 ft high peak in Arunachal

Pradesh's Gorichen range. The peak, now named Tsangyang Gyatso Peak, honors the 6th Dalai Lama. This challenging expedition highlights Arunachal Pradesh as a key destination for mountaineering and adventure sports.

Guwahati: A team from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS), has successfully scaled an unnamed and unclimbed 6383 MSL or 20,942 ft high peak in Gorichen range of Arunachal Pradesh Himalayas on Tawang-West Kameng region.

The peak was one of the most technically challenging and unexplored summits in the region. After overcoming immense challenges including sheer ice walls, treacherous crevasses, and a 2-kilometer-long glacier, the team has immortalized the momentous feat by naming the peak "Tsangyang Gyatso Peak" in honour of His Holiness the 6th Dalai Lama Rigzen Tsangyang Gyatso. [Click here](#) to read more details.

European Union Reiterates Concern about the Continuous Dire Situation in Tibet and Calls for the Preservation of Tibetan Identity

26 September 2024, [CTA](#)

In a comprehensive statement delivered under item 4 during the ongoing 57th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the European Union reiterated its concerns about the continuous dire human rights situation in Tibet, highlighting the obligatory boarding schooling, mass DNA sampling and closure of Tibetan schools.

Additionally, the EU highlighted the harassment, intimidation and surveillance faced by human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, media workers, writers and intellectuals, including at transnational level. They also continue to face exit bans, house arrest, torture and ill-treatment, unlawful detention, sentencing and enforced disappearance including through Residential Surveillance in a Designated Location (RSDL) that could amount to torture and ill-treatment.

Furthermore, the EU urged China to uphold its obligations under national and international law, including its own Constitution to respect, protect and fulfil human rights for all, including Tibetans.

The EU reaffirmed its commitment to closely monitoring the preservation of fundamental freedoms, cultural heritage and identity of Tibetans and called on China to ensure full bilingual education both in Tibetan and Chinese at all levels of the schooling system.

Finally, the EU encouraged China to allow more visits from the International Community, UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders and civil society organisations to Tibet. It also called for the immediate and unconditional release of Anya Sengdra, Chadrel

Rinpoche, Go Sherab Gyatso, Golog Palden, Semkyi Dolma and Tashi Dorje, among others.

Welcoming the statement, Representative Rigzin Genkhang of the Office of Tibet Brussels expressed gratitude to the European Union for its commitment to addressing the dire human rights violations in Tibet and urged for continued support.

The full statement is available [here](#).

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Brussels

French Museum removes "Xizang", reverts to 'Tibet' for artefacts after public protest

26 September 2024, [Phayul](#)

The Musée du quai Branly in Paris has removed the term "Xizang" from its descriptions of Tibetan artefact, following widespread public outcry. The museum has reverted to using "Tibet" in its catalogue and exhibition labels for items related to Tibet.

The museum's decision comes after strong opposition from Tibetans and their supporters in France, who swiftly mobilised, launching petitions and making repeated appeals for the museum to correct its labelling. Scholars and activists argued that the use of "Xizang" – the Chinese term for Tibet – aligns with China's official narrative, which they say undermines Tibet's distinct cultural identity and historical autonomy.

However, the Musée Guimet, which renamed its Tibetan exhibition spaces as the "Himalayan World," has yet to respond to similar appeals. Meanwhile, the Branly Museum is scheduled to meet with representatives from six Tibetan NGOs in France, who had previously sent formal letters to both museums, seeking discussions on the implications of these terminology changes.

President Penpa Tsering, the political leader of the exile Tibetan government officially known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), also condemned the change in terminology. In a letter sent to French officials and the directors of both museums on September 14, Tsering argued that using "Xizang" is part of a broader Chinese strategy to erode Tibetan identity. He urged the museums to reinstate "Tibet" in their exhibits to uphold historical accuracy.

Echoing these concerns, the Tibet Museum of the CTA released a statement, calling the museums' decisions an alarming distortion of history and an attack on Tibet's cultural identity. Tenzin Topdhen, the museum's director, called on both the Musée Guimet and Musée du quai Branly to correct the terminology to ensure an accurate representation of Tibetan heritage.

Tibetans and their supporters in France have been actively protesting these changes, organising petitions, contacting museum officials, and raising awareness across social media platforms. Many view

the museums' actions as part of China's broader effort to control the global narrative around Tibet and its cultural legacy.

Tibetans and activists call for Tibet Intergroup at the European Parliament

26 September 2024, [ICT](#)

This week a group of determined Tibetans and Tibet activists from six countries in Europe participated in the Tibetan Empowerment Days. The event, organized by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) from September 23-26, brought together 12 Tibetans and Tibet activists from six European countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands – to Brussels.

Participants engaged with 15 EU policymakers and their representatives, shared their stories and pushed for stronger support for Tibet within European institutions. They urged their representatives in the European Parliament for the re-establishment of the Tibet Intergroup and appealed for stronger support for Tibet at the European Union level.

ICT's EU Policy Director Vincent Metten said: "Tibetan Empowerment Days are an excellent opportunity not only to train and empower young Tibetans to become effective advocates for Tibet, but also to raise awareness about the critical situation in Tibet within the new European Parliament following the 2024 European election. As the human rights situation inside Tibet deteriorates at an alarming pace, it is crucial that Tibet remains on the European political agenda and that Members of the European Parliament take new initiatives in support of the Tibetan people." This year's edition of the Tibetan Empowerment Days was a direct follow-up to the EU4Tibet campaign – during which over 100 European elections candidates signed a "Pledge for Tibet" committing to support the Tibetan people in the European Parliament if elected – and focused on transforming those pledges into concrete actions. One key recommendation that participants passed on to their representatives was the need for the re-establishment of the European Parliament's Tibet Intergroup, which has historically played a pivotal role in keeping Tibet on the European agenda.

The four-day program began with a comprehensive training on EU-China policies, recent developments in Tibet as well as advocacy and communication techniques. Participants then had the opportunity to meet with dozens of Members of the European Parliament from different political groups to raise awareness about the alarming situation in Tibet and appeal for EU action on issues such as transnational repression, Chinese government's interferences in the succession of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, the

environmental degradation on the Tibetan plateau as well as China's increasing interferences in Europe. Participants also engaged in discussions with an official from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and with representatives from NGOs working on China – including Amnesty International and the World Uyghur Congress.

The Executive Director of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Ms. Tenzin Dawa, also participated in the meetings to present her organization's latest report on China's transnational repression of Tibetans.

The event was supported by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy as well as the Office of Tibet in Brussels.

Tibetan leader claims cultural identity threats from Chinese policies

26 September 2024, [Awaz The Voice](#)

Exiled Tibetan leader Sikyong Penpa Tsering has emphasised that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is making systematic efforts to suppress Tibetan identity, including shutting down cultural and religious centres.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the political leader of the Kashag (the executive branch of the Central Tibetan Administration), explained that these actions are part of a larger strategy to make Tibetan culture more Chinese and erase its unique heritage, according to a press release from the Central Tibetan Administration. He also expressed concern about the government's recent change in terminology, using "Xizang" instead of "Tibet," which he believes is an attempt to distort Tibet's historical and cultural identity.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering made these remarks during his visit to the Sakya Tibetan Society Settlement in Puruwala as part of his tour of Tibetan communities in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

During his visit, Sikyong shared updates on the 16th Kashag's political and administrative work, focusing on the serious situation in Tibet under the CCP. He also spoke about the importance of the Tibetan plateau in global politics and reaffirmed the Kashag's commitment to the Middle Way Approach.

This approach aims for genuine autonomy for Tibet within China. He shared the Vision Paper, which outlines the Kashag's long-term goals and emphasises the need for ongoing international support for Tibetan rights.

After interacting with the community, Sikyong visited several local institutions, including the Sakya Magon Shedra and Sambhota Tibetan School. He then went to the Paonta Cholsum Tibetan Settlement, where he visited Shalu Monastery and continued to raise awareness about the challenging situation of Tibetan culture and religion under Chinese rule.

He also informed attendees about current projects, like digitising important documents and creating a Tibetan digital library, which are designed to strengthen the administration of the Tibetan community in exile.

Senior officials from the Central Tibetan Administration accompanied Sikyong during his visit, highlighting their commitment to supporting Tibetans living outside Tibet.

Tibetan artist's installation 'Biography of a Thought' exhibited at Metropolitan Museum of Art

24 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has recently unveiled a remarkable installation titled "Biography of a Thought", featuring an intricate series of Tibetan mandala inspired paintings by renowned Tibetan artist Tenzing Rigdol. Based between Nepal and New York, Rigdol's work reflects a deep engagement with Tibetan spiritual traditions, reinterpreted through his lens.

Dissecting his thoughts, Rigdol shared that the conceptualisation and creation of the mandalas took a span of five years. He dedicated two years to the work in New York and an additional three years in Kathmandu, Nepal, with the support of his team. The "Biography of a Thought" mandalas delve into the complex layers of human consciousness. Drawing inspiration from the ancient tradition of sand mandalas, Rigdol has reimagined this sacred art form using modern materials, with a particular emphasis on at least 50 shades of blue, which serves as the dominant colour throughout the installation. The use of blue, symbolic of both the sky and ocean, evoking the vastness and depth of thought.

The installation is structured into two halves, with four large paintings adorning the walls. The first panel introduces the fundamental principles of tantra, which are central to Tibetan Buddhism. At the core of the exhibit is a striking visual element—the artist's own head wrapped in cloth, an image that recurs throughout Rigdol's body of work.



"In most of my work, I have this one element that is repeated. I am in the painting with my head wrapped around. In all my paintings, it mostly symbolises not

that I celebrate ignorance, but I am saying I am ignorant. I don't know everything, but the little that I know, I want to share with you," Rigdol explained in an interview with the MET.

Rigdol's philosophical exploration is also reflected in the acronym of the exhibit's title, 'Biography of a Thought', which spells out BOAT. He elaborated on the significance of this in one of the paintings, "In the first painting, you have myself thrown into the world, ready to learn, ready to unwrap a little bit more. When I was young, I studied in computer class, and they used to say, G.I.G.O.—garbage in, garbage out. I thought it was talking about karma. The first panel is really about how we throw garbage and everything into the ocean, and you can also see the karma—where everything you plant comes back," he said.

The second panel delves into the idea of how an unstable mind can create an unstable world, highlighting how human conflicts arise. It referenced significant historical tragedies like the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Another powerful image in the panel is the Twin Towers, evoking memories of 9/11. Rigdol explained that during the creation process, the George Floyd incident occurred, stirring widespread anger and frustration. The artwork also addressed the heart-breaking issue of gun violence, particularly involving children, a pressing concern in America.

Rigdol connected these events to a deeper tantric philosophy. "In Tantra, you don't revisit the past to inherit hatred or to worsen things. You only visit the past to inherit its wisdom," he noted, emphasising the importance of learning from history without being consumed by it.

In the third panel, the focus shifts toward finding stability. Rigdol opened with a nod to Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, portraying five women. At the center of the piece, he placed an image of *Ardhanari*—a half-male, half-female figure from Sanskrit tradition. This duality, he explained, symbolises the balance of masculine and feminine energies that make up human existence. "Tantra is really about finding commonality—what is unique in me, but also in you. We are unique, yet the same," he noted.

The contemporary Tibetan artist also referenced modern whistle-blowers like Haugen, Manning, Snowden, and Julian Assange—individuals exposing hidden truths. "These people are warning us, yet our attention is being trained out of us by technologies like the iPhone," he reflected, suggesting that society is losing focus. This concept sets the stage for the fourth panel. The imagery of multiple hands mimics the iconography of a deity, with the American Sign Language phrase "Up is down" appearing in the palms. Rigdol used this metaphor to propose a radical idea: "Wouldn't it be nice if our brain functioned like a stomach? We would only think enough. Once the

stomach is full, we vomit. Now is the time to limit your thoughts.”

The fourth panel brings the viewer to a place of stillness and reflection. “Now, just sit,” Rigdol suggested. “Calm yourself, and observe—what remains, the residue, is likely who you truly are.” He played with the metaphor of clouds representing thoughts. “Some clouds are playful, some are angry, while others are simply relaxed,” he explained. Gradually, in the fourth panel, these clouds of thought begin to settle, revealing the sky as a symbol of awareness. “The goal,” he said, “is to have fewer thoughts and more love.”

At the heart of this panel is the idea of interdependence—the notion that, in the end, we are all connected. Rigdol’s centrepiece emphasised that individual existence is the interconnectedness of actions and their consequences.

Renaming Tibet “Xizang”: Are French Museums Backing Off?

24 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)

After having been named and shamed for their abject subservience to Xi Jinping, Musée Guimet and Musée du quai Branly are trying to save their reputation.

Or was it just a clerical mistake? A misunderstanding, perhaps? Having been accused of abjectly “bowing to China’s demands to rewrite history and erase peoples,” two leading Paris museums are trying to back off.

What happened, exactly? On September 1, 2024, “Le Monde” published an op-ed signed by la crème de la crème of French academic Tibetologists and experts of Asian art accusing the Musée Guimet and the Musée du quai Branly of having sold their soul to Xi Jinping. The Musée du quai Branly had changed the name “Tibet” to “Xizang,” according to Beijing’s diktat, in its catalogues. The Guimet had changed the title of its “Tibetan” rooms to “Himalayan World” rooms.

The scholars reminded the readers of “Le Monde” that calling Tibet “Xizang” is a historical fraud. Readers of “Bitter Winter” know this already, and with all the details. While they were at it, the French scholars also repeated that “Xinjiang” is a questionable Chinese name for East Turkestan, too, and that neither Tibet nor “Xinjiang” were historically part of Imperial China. They noted, however, that “this is well known to specialists but probably less so to admirers of modern China’s successes, achieved at the cost of economic exploitation of these territories and the relentless Sinicization of these peoples, thanks to the establishment of a dictatorial regime and the Han’s demographic domination.”

Adding that hosting the Confucius Institutes, whose real aim is spreading Chinese propaganda, as some

French cultural institutions and universities do, is not acceptable either, the scholars wrote that, “Our institutions want to preserve their access to Chinese research fields, sources and archives at all costs, as well as benefit from the financial largesse and loans of museum objects that depend on the goodwill of the Chinese regime. As a result, they are coaxing the threatening power that Xi Jinping’s China has become and are bowing to its demands to rewrite history and erase peoples.... That French museums should accept to be dictated to in the rewriting of history is a sign of great weakness. Our scientific and cultural institutions must, as a matter of the utmost urgency, reject any interference by undemocratic foreign regimes.”

Normally, faced with the power and money of China, these appeals have no consequences. However, the criticism directed at two prestigious (and beautiful) museums was echoed by media all over the world, which ridiculed France and those who took the decisions about Tibet.

For once, it seems that the campaign had some success. After all, French use to say that ridicule kills. Finally, the Musée du quai Branly stated that it “uses the appellation Tibet in its cartels of the permanent collections and has never ceased to use this appellation in its work on the collections.” “Xizang” replaced “Tibet” on the Internet, but this was due to a “technical update in progress that may be misleading.” The Musée Guimet claims that, on the contrary, it keeps using “Tibet” on the Internet, and “Himalayan” means that the same rooms are now devoted to both Tibet and Nepal.

We wait for the results of the “technical updates in progress”—and to what will happen when the international media will look the other way. For the time being, we applaud the French scholars who tried to stop the shame before it would be too late—and perhaps succeeded.

Tibetan leaders respond to Biden and Modi's remarks on China at Quad Summit

23 September 2024, [ANI](#)

Tibetan leaders have reacted strongly to remarks made by President Biden and Prime Minister Modi regarding China during the recent Quad Summit. Sikyong Pempa Tsering, President of the Central Tibetan Administration, expressed his views on the evolving dynamics within the Quad alliance.

He stated, “It looks like the Quad formation is getting more entrenched and as we have been mentioning over the years the reality of China’s threat is very visible so I think India’s role particularly in this grouping will be very-very crucial.” Tsering also noted the significance of increased

cooperation between the United States and India, particularly on issues like microchips.

"There is a convergence of strategic alliance that needs to be formed because of China and China's behaviour so that's very much clear in this grouping," he said. Tsering pointed out that the competition for influence in the Global South is also an important factor in this geopolitical landscape.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region, Tsering remarked, "Indo Pacific is a very busy maritime trade route from Malacca Strait to Indian Ocean so it is important not only for the countries in this region but it involves a lot of trade." He emphasized that concerns over China's hegemonic claims in the South China Sea and East China Sea have intensified discussions about security and economic issues.

"I think it is very clearly mentioned South China Sea and East China Sea that is where Australia comes into," he said to ANI during the interview. The Sikyong further indicated that nations in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, are also ramping up their defence spending in response to China's actions. He pointed out, "So all of these countries announce many more money on defence only because of China's behaviour." Dolma Tsering, Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in-exile, also weighed in on the importance of the Quad and the remarks from Biden and Modi. "I think these statements are very important that too coming from America and India. India becoming a leading power is a very positive thing that's happening around the world so I want to congratulate Prime Minister Modi for that," she stated. Dolma noted that the Quad Summit reflects a unified stance against threats to the rule of law and democratic sovereignty.

She remarked on China's expanding influence, saying, "Looking into Xi Jinping's global ambition of expending to wherever they are touching is not only intimidation endanger to South Asia but also to the whole world." Dolma echoed President Biden's concerns, adding, "Therefore, I think President Biden has well said that China is testing us. Us in the sense is the whole world, the democratic setup," Dolma said to ANI. Dolma Tsering also highlighted the need for a peaceful resolution to global conflicts. "Prime Minister Modi has also told that they are looking for a possible peaceful resolution of conflicts happening around the world," she said. She expressed a specific request to Modi regarding the situation of Tibetans in exile. "The majority of Tibetans are in India, so we want Prime Minister Modi and the stakeholders of the Quad, in America also we have sizeable American Tibetans, in Austria also, Australia also we have a sizeable number of Australian Tibetans," she stated.

Dolma urged global leaders to advocate for Tibetan rights, emphasizing, "We want the leaders to raise the issue of Tibet, the occupation of Tibet also and try to resolve this long-standing decades old conflict between Tibet and China in a most amicable way." Earlier on Saturday, the Wilmington declaration of the Quad grouping expressed serious concern about the coercive and intimidating manoeuvres in the South China Sea.

In the joint declaration, the leaders from the US, India, Australia, and Japan opposed efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities, and reaffirmed that maritime disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law.

The leaders asserted that they are of strong conviction that international law, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, along with the maintenance of peace, safety, security, and stability in the maritime domain, should be kept at the topmost priority.

Tibetan NGOs condemn defamatory video threatening the Dalai Lama

23 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Eight Tibetan non-governmental organisations held a press conference on Monday, strongly condemning the defamation and death threats directed at His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the revered exiled spiritual leader. The coalition of NGOs denounced the actions and views of an individual identified as Senge, known online as Gangser, a Tibetan resident of Adelaide, Australia

In a video, Senge is seen inciting the assassination of the Dalai Lama and the sabotage of the exile Tibetan government known officially as the Central Tibetan Administration. The video surfaced on micro-messaging apps, sparking discussions during the recently concluded 2024 parliamentary session.

The NGOs labeled his actions as "terrorist behaviour," asserting that they threaten Tibetan unity. The statement emphasised that Senge not only issued life-threatening remarks against the octogenarian spiritual leader with the intent to undermine the Tibetan government in exile but also incited others to defame His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Additionally, he portrayed the exile government as an enemy through his actions and inflammatory rhetoric.

The NGOs called on the Central Tibetan Administration to pursue legal action and ensure the matter is addressed according to the host country's laws. They pledged full support for any campaigns or legal measures undertaken. They also committed to providing the Indian government and relevant local authorities with information on the audio and visual

materials Senge has circulated publicly, as well as details of his background. The group said that they will appeal to prevent his entry into India, citing concerns for the safety and security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Dawa Tsering, President of the U-Tsang Cholkha Central Executive Committee, told reporters, “We are committed to providing both financial and human resource support. As discussed in parliament and stated by the Security Minister, this act is illegal and will face prosecution. We will not leave this responsibility solely to the Central Tibetan Administration. All members of the eight organisations will contribute as much as possible to ensure legal action is taken.”

Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), a global network of activists headquartered in New York, also issued a statement on September 20, condemning the video as a “promotion of political violence and hate speech”. The statement reiterated that both non-violence and *rangzen* (freedom) are core tenets of SFT’s mission. “We will continue to teach and train young people and activists around the world to use strategic nonviolence as the most effective path to achieve freedom in Tibet,” the statement affirmed.

Tibetans rally in Paris against museum’s use of Chinese term ‘Xizang’ for Tibet”

23 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

Around 800 Tibetan activists and supporters gathered in front of the Musée Guimet on Saturday to protest the recent terminology change in the museum’s exhibitions, which replaced “Tibet” with “Xizang,” a Chinese name for the country.

The demonstration came after [reports](#) that two Parisian museums had altered their terminology regarding Tibet. The Musée du quai Branly had replaced “Tibet” with “Xizang Autonomous Region,” the romanised version of the Chinese term, in its catalogue of Tibetan artefacts. Similarly, the Musée Guimet renamed its exhibition spaces related to Tibet as the “Himalayan world.”

Six Tibetan NGOs in France had earlier sent formal letters to both museums, seeking meetings to discuss the implications of the terminology changes. While the Musée du quai Branly agreed to meet with the groups, the Musée Guimet did not respond, prompting the protest to be centered at its premises.

Protesters carried banners that read “Tibet belongs to Tibetans” and “World leaders should not succumb to Chinese pressure,” accusing the museums of contributing to China’s efforts to erase Tibetan history by using the term “Xizang.” The demonstrators vowed to continue their protests until both museums reverted to using the term “Tibet.”



Tibetans worldwide expressed solidarity via social media for the cause, where they denounced the terminology change as a blatant attempt to rewrite history. Many have called on cultural institutions to uphold historical truth and resist political pressure from Beijing.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the political leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, also [spoke out](#) against the change. In a letter sent to French officials and the directors of both museums on September 14, Tsering argued that the use of “Xizang” was part of a broader Chinese strategy to diminish Tibetan identity. He urged the museums to restore the term “Tibet” in their exhibits to reflect historical accuracy.

The Tibet Museum of the Central Tibetan Administration echoed these concerns, issuing a statement labeling the museums’ decisions as an alarming distortion of history and an attack on Tibet’s cultural identity. Tenzin Topchen, the museum’s director, called on the Musée Guimet and Musée du quai Branly to correct the terminology and ensure that Tibetan heritage is accurately represented.

Tibetans and supporters in France have been actively protesting the museums’ changes, organizing petitions, contacting museum directors, and spreading awareness across social media platforms. Many see the actions of these museums as symptomatic of China’s broader effort to control the global narrative around Tibet and its cultural legacy.

Central Tibetan Administration Launches Investigation Over Dalai Lama Threat

21 September 2024, [Dev Discourse](#)

The Central Tibetan Administration’s Security Department is investigating a social media threat against the Dalai Lama. The incident was discussed in the Tibetan Parliament, with MPs expressing concern and condemning the act. Authorities assure there is no security threat, attributing the issue to possible foreign influences.

The Central Tibetan Administration’s Security Department is investigating a recent social media

threat against the Dalai Lama. The threat was reportedly issued by a person of alleged Tibetan origin in a video message. Discussed during a session of the Tibetan Parliament in exile in Dharamshala, the matter has been handed over to the administration's Security Department for a thorough investigation. Dorjee Tseten, a Tibetan Parliamentarian in exile, confirmed, "This issue was discussed in the recent Tibetan Parliament session. As a member of parliament, I have condemned this criminal act. We have directed the Security Department to conduct a thorough investigation, ensuring the culprit is held accountable according to the law." Tseten noted that the suspect is believed to be based either in Europe or Australia, and a comprehensive investigation will reveal the motive behind the threat. Despite the seriousness of the threat, she reassured the community that there is currently no security threat to the Dalai Lama. Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar, another MP in exile, expressed disappointment but confidence in the security measures provided by the Indian government for the Dalai Lama. She noted, "China uses various measures to create unrest within the Tibetan community, but I trust the security that India's government has provided. The Tibetan community's love for His Holiness is profound, and I am confident he will continue to spread his message of love, peace, and compassion for a long time."

Bill to include Jonang in Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile fails floor test

20 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

A bill proposing the inclusion of the Jonang as the fifth Buddhist tradition represented in the parliament fails the floor test on the final day of the eighth session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile leading to disappointment among Jonang followers and supporters.

The bill which received 21 votes out of the required 30 was introduced by the the Kashag (cabinet) on Wednesday, aiming to add Jonang alongside the currently represented schools of Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, Gelug, and Yungdrung Bon in the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

MP Karma Gelek, in support of the bill, stated "The composition of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has undergone many changes. When the parliament was first introduced in September 1960, there were only 13 MPs—one member each from four religious traditions and three members each from the three provinces. In 1976, Yungdrung Bon was included, increasing the number of MPs representing religious traditions to five and adding one member for each province. In 1991, amendments were made to the charter, allowing for two MPs from each of the five

religious traditions, 10 MPs from each province, and the inclusion of MPs from abroad. So, there have been changes, and Jonang leaders have persistently requested the parliament and submitted applications to gain representation in the parliament."

The International Jonang Well-being Association issued a press release shortly after the bill failed to secure the necessary votes to pass, expressing regret over the outcome. The association urged the Tibetan parliament to take full responsibility for any critical issues that may arise in the future concerning the Jonang tradition.

In their statement, the association highlighted that the current charter and related regulations have created discrimination against the Jonang tradition for the past 27 years. They pointed out that despite numerous petitions, appeals, and even peaceful protests, including a hunger strike in 2015, their pleas for equal rights have been ignored.

The association also noted that in 2011, during the 11th Religious Conference presided over by the Dalai Lama, religious leaders unanimously recognized Jonang as an independent school of Tibetan Buddhism. However, this recognition has not been reflected in the charter of the exile government.

The failure to pass this amendment has sparked disappointment and criticism on social media platforms, with many expressing dissatisfaction with the decision. Supporters of the Jonang tradition argue that this continued exclusion undermines the unity and equality within the Tibetan exile community.

CTA Prez criticizes French museums for 'pandering to Chinese wishes'

20 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The President of the Central Tibetan Administration has expressed concern over two prominent Parisian museums' decision to adopt Chinese terminology in their catalogues of Tibetan artefacts.

In a letter dated September 14, the Tibetan political leader criticized the Musée du quai Branly and the Musée Guimet for replacing the term "Tibet" with "Xizang" or "Himalayan World" in their collections.

The letter, addressed to several high-ranking French officials including the Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Paris, as well as museum directors and members of the Tibetan Support Group in the French Senate, denounced the museums' actions as "pandering to the wishes of the People's Republic of China (PRC) government."

He argued that this terminology shift, initiated by China's United Front Work Department in 2023, is part of a broader strategy to erase Tibet's identity as an independent cultural entity. He emphasized that the term "Tibet" historically encompasses three

traditional provinces inhabited by Tibetans and that the use of “Xizang” distorts Tibet’s history as an independent nation.

“It is particularly disheartening that the said cultural institutions in France—a nation that cherishes liberty, equality, and fraternity—are acting in complicity with the PRC government in its design to erase the identity of Tibet,” the letter stated.

The Tibetan leader urged the museums to reconsider their position and accurately represent Tibet in accordance with historical facts, international laws, and the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

This controversy unfolds amid ongoing tensions between Tibet and China, with recent actions by the Chinese government exacerbating the situation. The letter highlighted several measures, including the forced enrollment of over a million Tibetan children in state-run boarding schools, efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism by exerting control over monasteries and religious education, and the forced relocation of Tibetan nomads, alongside land confiscation under the pretext of environmental protection.

The Tibetan President’s letter also highlighted the recent enactment of the Sino-Tibetan Dispute Act by the U.S. government on July 12, 2024. This legislation challenges China’s historical claims over Tibet and acknowledges the Chinese government’s systematic suppression of Tibetan culture and way of life.

The Tibet Museum also released a statement expressing concern over the museums’ decisions, calling it an alarming distortion of history and a denial of Tibet’s cultural identity. The museum’s director, Tenzin Topdhen, urged the Musée du quai Branly and Musée Guimet to reverse their decisions and restore accurate representation of Tibetan heritage.

Tibetans and supporters of the Tibetan cause in France have initiated various protests against the museums for adopting Chinese names for Tibetan artifacts. They are using petitions, writing to the museum directors, and actively raising awareness on social media platforms.

ICT invites presidential candidates to state positions on Tibet

17 September 2024, [ICT](#)

As the November 5, 2024 American presidential election approaches, the candidates and campaigns are presenting their positions on key questions, including America’s relationship with China. As the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) recently noted, however, these positions have largely focused on trade relations. Issues such as Tibet and human rights have not been in the foreground.

ICT wrote to candidates Donald Trump, Kamala Harris, JD Vance, and Tim Walz in August requesting statements of their positions on Tibet. The release of such statements would not be unprecedented; in the 2016 election cycle Marco Rubio, then a contender for the Republican candidate for president, answered ICT’s questionnaire on Tibet. Four years later Democratic candidate Joe Biden articulated his promises of support for Tibet and the Tibetan people during the 2020 campaign.

Although ICT does not endorse candidates for office, our 50,000 members across the United States have a strong interest in learning more about where each candidate stands on Tibet. We await their responses and will be ready to inform our members and the general public when we receive them.

The text of the letters sent to Trump and Harris campaigns are given below as an example:

On behalf of the 50,000 active American members of the International Campaign for Tibet, please allow me to congratulate you for securing the nomination of your party to run for the presidency of the United States of America.

If elected, among the many issues your administration will confront in the White House is the Chinese Communist Party’s ongoing occupation of Tibet, which subjects the Tibetan people to grave human rights abuses. Previous administrations under both parties have supported the Tibetan people and called for human rights and democratic freedoms in Tibet.

They have done this by meeting with the Dalai Lama and representatives of the elected Central Tibetan Administration in exile, by calling on China’s leaders to reach a negotiated solution that respects Tibet’s unique cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage, and by maintaining America’s indefatigable, bipartisan tradition of supporting Tibet. Our laws provide invaluable tools for the White House to insist on a peaceful resolution of the Tibet situation, including the Tibet Policy and Support Act 2020, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 and the Resolve Tibet Act of 2024.

Between 2002 and 2010 the Chinese leaders and Tibetan representatives repeatedly engaged in dialogue in pursuit of peaceful, mutually beneficial resolution with the support of contemporary American administrations. American policy dictates that the United States should take a leading role in fostering the resumption of these negotiations, and we hope that you will take this as a core of America’s China policy if elected.

As our members are deeply concerned about the situation in Tibet, I am writing to ask for your position on Tibet and your plan for bringing Beijing back to the negotiating table. While the International Campaign for Tibet cannot endorse candidates for office, we would like to share your responses with our members

*and the public as we believe that it is highly important for our members and all citizens to be informed of each candidate's position.
I look forward to your response.*

Exile Tibetan parliament to resume session Sep 17 morning

16 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The 8th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in exile (TPIE) is to resume on Sep 17 morning following a meeting of the Speaker, the Kashag and TPIE members, reported the Tibetan-language *Tibettimes.net* Sep 16.

The regular, biannual session began on Sep 11 but could not be resumed from Sep 14 afternoon for lack of quorum after some members claimed that “general public” Tibetans who took their protest before the parliament building that day posed a threat to their personal safety.

Those Tibetans have been protesting on a nearby basketball court under the banner of “People’s Movement for Securing the Central Tibetan Administration”, organized by a group calling itself “The Advocacy of the General Public for the Sustainability of CTA”. They have been calling for the TPIE to carry out the long-ignored amendment of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission (TSJC), to which the absentee members have been vehemently opposed thus far.

The session did not resume today also as the absentee members were demanding an assurance for their personal safety from the Central Tibetan Administration’s Department of Security.

As attending members of the TPIE kept asking the Speaker to find a way to enable the continuation of the session, the “general public” protest organizers issued a press statement this afternoon, denying that the protest action on Sep 14 posed any danger to the personal safety of the TPIE members as alleged by a section of its members, that the Department of Security of the CTA was assured of it on Sep 15 and it was being repeated in today’s press statement as well. Seizing on TPIE member Geshe Monlam Tharchin’s remark that it was incumbent on the TPIE to amend the Charter to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners of the TSJC, and that all the TPIE members fully knew it, the press statement pleaded for this amendment to be carried out at the earliest, rather than the matter being relegated towards the end of the session.

Then, a little after 4:30 pm, religious constituency member Geshe Atuk Tseten, speaking on behalf of four Dotoe and religious constituency members, was reported to have spoken of having remarked that

yesterday (Sep 15), the religious and Dotoe constituency members of the TPIE had informed the Speaker and Deputy Speaker that they would not attend the session if the Kashag and the Department of Security were not in a position to assure their personal safety. He has also said that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker had now called them over, and informed them that the Kashag had assured them that the Department of Security would take responsibility for the security arrangement.

“The situation is now such that we will continue to attend the TPIE session,” Atuk Tseten has added.

Meanwhile, Geshe Monlam Tharchin and Dotoe TPIE member Mr Kunchok Yangphel indicated in their media interactions that the issue on which a section of the TPIE members were not allowing the Charter to be amended to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners continued to remain.

Exile Tibetan parliament session aborted by lack of quorum

15 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPIE), meeting for its 8th session since Sep 11, had to be postponed until further notice from the afternoon of Sep 14 due to lack of quorum. Only 23 members appeared while 22 remained absent, reported the Tibetan-language *tibettme.net* Sep 15. Three were already on leave at least till Sep 16.

The development followed the appearance before the parliament building of members of a group called “People’s Movement for Securing the Central Tibetan Administration”, shouting slogans calling for the long-aborted amendment of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission to be carried out.

Although the item was on the session’s agenda, and due to be taken up later on, movement members, who had been protesting on the nearby basketball court since Apr 11, felt that their demand was being ignored and so took the protest in front of the parliament building, seeking a meeting with the Speaker.

However, following an assurance from the CTA’s Security Department Kalon (minister) Ms Dolma Gyari, the protesters peacefully left the scene. Even so, when the TPIE session resumed in the afternoon, there was lack of quorum and so could not continue, the report said. The Speaker undertook to inform the members whenever the session could be resumed.

On this issue, Bonpo TPIE member Geshe Monlam Tharchin has said, “It is our duty to amend the Charter and to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners (of the TSJC). It is being stated that this matter is already included in the agenda; but it is yet

to come up. However, despite claims being made in the name of appeal and peaceful movement of the general public, everyone has seen what they did today. What was supposed to happen was that the movement organizers had to sit down; and we needed to pay heed to the documents they gave us. However, just by looking at the TPIE session's activities in the past three days, they claimed that the general public was being ignored and they rushed here.

"When the matter was discussed with the Department of Security Kalon, Secretary, and other staff, they expressed the department's inability to guarantee security; that the protesters had their rights under the law of the land, and they were not acting on the basis of any right given by the department. And because the Department of Security could not guarantee our security, we could not attend the TPIE session."

On the other hand, President Tenzin Yangkar of the Advocacy of the General Public for the Sustainability of CTA group, has said: "For four days, the participants from the general public had maintained ethical propriety in their conduct. Last year (too), the general public was ignored. Even so, IF we had been told that because the item to amend the Charter to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners was already on the agenda this time, we should rest assured, the general public would certainly have felt at ease. However, no response or message of any kind came to us from the TPIE authorities over the past four days. This was what drove members of the general public to proceed to the ground before the TPIE building one after another. ...

"And then, later on, we were assured, following a meeting with the Department of Security Kalon, the Deputy Speaker (because the Speaker was presiding over the TPIE meeting), officers from the local police authority, that the Speaker would meet with us. And the protesting members of the general public peacefully left the scene."

Meanwhile, Geshe Monlam Tharchin and Dotoe TPIE member Mr Kunchok Yangphel indicated in their media interactions that the issue on which a section of the TPIE members were not allowing the Charter to be amended to provide for the appointment of the justice commissioners continued to remain.

The 23 TPIE members who arrived to attend the session in the afternoon were stated to include seven Amdo, all the 10 U-Tsang and all the five overseas members. Those who stayed away included nine religious and all the 10 Dotoe members. One Domey member had taken leave for the entire session while two were on leave until Sep 16.

Vienna: Premiere of 'Amala' shines light on Tibetan struggle amid "cultural genocide"

15 September 2024, [ANI](#)

A large audience gathered at a local theatre in Vienna on Saturday for the Austrian premiere of 'Amala - The Life and Struggle of the Dalai Lama's Sister,' a movie that chronicles the life of Jetsun Pema, the Dalai Lama's younger sister. The event, organised by the 'Students for a Free Tibet' group and the Tibetan Diaspora in Austria, was a heartfelt tribute to Pema's enduring contributions to Tibetan education and culture. Affectionately known as "Amala," meaning 'mother,' Jetsun Pema is celebrated for her leadership in the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV), a network of schools she established to educate Tibetan refugee children in India.

The film captures her personal challenges and triumphs as she took over the Nursery for Tibetan Refugee Children and transformed it into a flourishing institution for displaced Tibetan youth.

The premiere took on a deeper resonance as it coincided with growing concerns about the ongoing cultural genocide in Tibet. Following the screening, Tibetan-Canadian activist Chemi Lhamo, a member of the International Tibet Network's Steering Committee, addressed the audience virtually. In her impassioned speech, Lhamo highlighted the Chinese government's systematic efforts to suppress Tibetan identity. She revealed that over one million Tibetan children have been forcibly enrolled in Chinese-run colonial boarding schools, where they are stripped of their language, culture, and traditions. Lhamo's address underscored the urgency of the Tibetan plight, while brochures and flyers detailing human rights violations in Tibet were distributed to ensure attendees left with a deeper understanding of the ongoing struggle. Despite the inclement weather, the event became a powerful moment of solidarity, demonstrating the Tibetan community's resilience in the face of adversity. Events like these, the organisers emphasised, are crucial in keeping the Tibetan cause in the international spotlight and resisting the erasure of their culture and identity. The Tibetan Diaspora in Austria continues its mission to raise awareness, ensuring that the voice of Tibet remains heard across the globe.

Tibetan cast film "Shambhala" selected as Nepal's official entry for 97th Oscars

14 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Nepal has officially selected Tibetan-language film "Shambhala" as its official submission for the 97th Academy Awards, commonly known as the Oscars. Directed by Nepalese filmmaker, Min Bahadur Bham, the film features a predominantly Tibetan cast, marking a milestone for both Tibetan and Nepali cinema on the global stage.

The film first garnered international attention at the 74th Berlin International Film Festival, premiering in the Main Competition on February 23 at the Berlinale Palast. *Shambhala* also earned the Best Cinematography award at the 2024 Bishkek International Film Festival in Kyrgyzstan. Its lead actor, Thinley Lhamo, a Tibetan refugee, received the prestigious Boccilino d'Oro Prize for Best Acting Performance at the 77th Locarno Film Festival.

Filmed entirely in Tibetan, the story revolves around Pema, played by Thinley Lhamo, a pregnant woman living in the remote Dolpo region of Nepal. Pema is part of a polyandrous marriage with Tashi and his two younger brothers. When Tashi fails to return from a trading trip, raising questions about the legitimacy of her unborn child, Pema embarks on a transformative journey to find him. As her search for Tashi unfolds, it becomes a profound spiritual quest for self-discovery and liberation, transcending the mere need to reunite with her husband.

In a statement on [social media](#), the film's team expressed their excitement over the Oscar selection, "The stunningly crafted "Shambhala", directed by Min Bahadur Bham makes its way to the 97th Oscars. The film is contextualised in the Northern part of Nepal, and defines the concrete journey of Female Self Determination. And now, the film becomes a true inspiration itself."

Currently, *Shambhala* is being screened in nine theatres within Kathmandu Valley and in 39 locations outside the valley.

"If I were in Tibet" Art Exhibition of Tibetan students inaugurates in Dharamshala

14 September 2024, [The Tibet Post](#), Yangchen Dolma

The art exhibition "Dreaming Tibet" or "If I were in Tibet" by about 200 Tibetan students of classes 6 to 12 from five Tibetan schools inaugurates at the Kangra Art Museum, Dharamshala, on Friday. The aim of this exhibition is to raise awareness of Tibet among Indians and to create an opportunity for Tibetan children born in exile, under the title "If I were in Tibet", to express their feelings and thoughts through art form.

Hemraj Bairwa, Deputy Commissioner of Kangra District, inaugurates the art exhibition "Dreaming Tibet" or 'If I were in Tibet' by about 200 Tibetan students of classes 6 to 12 from five Tibetan schools at the Kangra Art Museum, Kotwali Bazar, Dharamshala, on September 13, 2024. Sonam Sichoe, President of the Tibetan Village School (TCV), Tibetan activist Tenzin Tsundue, Tibetan writer Bhuchung D Sonam and other artists, Tibetan students and the general public attended the exhibition opening and visited the students' art exhibition. The exhibition will be held from September 13 to 19, 2024.

The "Dreaming Tibet" exhibition is organised by KHADHOK, a collective of Tibetan artists based in Dharamshala. The "If I were in Tibet" art exhibition features works of Tibetan students from Upper TCV, Sambhota Petoen, TCV Gopalpur, TCV Suja and TCV Chauntra. A group of Tibetan and Indian artists has selected 50 works of art to be shown at the exhibition. The organiser explained that everyone can have a dream, no one can limit the dream, even if we can't go to Tibet, but we can dream of Tibet, which is why we called the exhibition "Dreaming Tibet", we organised workshops in these schools to involve the students more in the creative process. Art is the expression of our feelings and thoughts, we can raise awareness of the issue of Tibet, the true situation in Tibet, politics and culture through art forms and people can receive more messages from these artistic forms.

"After over 60 years of occupation, Tibetan children are growing up in exile, disconnected from their homeland. With Khadhok's first-ever Youth Art Engagement Project, we aim to encourage them to reflect on their roots, identity, dreams, and aspirations. This unique exhibition brings together a vibrant collection of artworks that reflect how our young artists imagine life in Tibet," the organiser said. Tsering Chospal, from the TCV Suja School, drew a picture of Tibetan nature. He explained his drawing: "For us, Tibetan nature was beautiful, everything was green, the water was fresh, you could drink water straight from the river, all the mountains were covered in snow, the clouds were white and everyone was kind. But after China invaded Tibet, Tibetan nature was destroyed."

Tennor Samkey, a student from TCV Suja School, explained her drawing (a head that is half Chinese and half Tibetan, half Tibetan cloth and half Chinese school uniform) by saying: The drawing is called 'Who am I?' because I have heard that in Tibet, parents are forced to send their children to a Chinese board school. If I were in Tibet, I would learn and speak Chinese and live in a Chinese environment that would make me think about who I am. Because, my parents always told me: "You are a Tibetan". But the teacher is telling me and forcing me to believe that I am a Chinese! In a situation like this, the biggest and hardest question is who I am."

Tibet rights organisation condemns launch of Chinese propaganda centre in Lhasa

13 September 2024, [ANI](#)

China's attempt to boost its efforts at controlling the world narrative on Tibet was witnessed yet again when the Chinese government recently inaugurated the "Tibet International Communication Center" in Lhasa.

Such a step by the Chinese administration is another way to promote the country's ongoing campaign to reshape global public opinion on Tibet, a report by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) stated. The ICT claimed that the establishment of such institutions in Tibet is a boost to China's propaganda on Tibet, which it had previously pointed out. And it expects further escalation by China in the future in an attempt to dominate the global conversation with China's propagandistic narrative and storytelling. In an earlier report released in January this year titled 'China's External Propaganda on Tibet: Erasing Tibet to tell a good Chinese story', ICT claimed that "China's Tibet policy has been a subject of international scrutiny ever since its invasion and subsequent occupation of Tibet in 1959. The Chinese government knows that there is a political problem in Tibet. But rather than resolve it, one of its approaches is to falsify the situation and employ various methods to control the narrative around Tibet, aiming to reshape its portrayal in global discourse. This report examines China's recent external propaganda efforts concerning Tibet, highlighting the objectives and the tactics". According to the ICT report, the latest propaganda centre by China was established after a "Roundtable Meeting on Building an Effective International Communication System for Tibet" which was jointly organised by the Propaganda Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee and the China Foreign Language Bureau. This centre is an outcome of the group study session of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee in May 2021. The ICT claimed that the immediate outcome of the Politburo CCP Central Committee appears to be the CCP's push to replace the internationally recognised country name "Tibet" with the sinicised term "Xizang" on the global conversation. Furthermore, the same report claimed, that such a renaming policy, discreetly initiated in late 2021 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, aligns with the CCP's General Secretary Xi Jinping's decade-old vision to "tell a good Chinese story" on the global stage. The report also claimed that soon, China is likely to intensify its use of state-controlled media platforms to spread its narrative on Tibet.

The ICT also raised concerns that such an institution will be used to marginalize Tibetan voices and obscure the ongoing oppression in Tibet. The report claimed that "This concern is well-founded, given China's extensive use of modern technology and media platforms to control information and shape narratives about Tibet".

UP-STF arrests Tibetan refugee for providing Indian bank accounts to cyber criminals

13 September 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Arun Singh

Investigation revealed that Therchin was in contact with cybercriminals operating from Nepal and Sri Lanka to dupe Indian citizens. He provided them Indian bank accounts for ₹4.5 lakh per account, said investigators

Uttar Pradesh special task force (UP-STF)'s Noida unit has arrested a 37-year-old Tibetan refugee for being allegedly involved in buying Indian bank accounts at cheap prices from financially weak people and providing these account details to cyber fraudsters operating in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, said UP-STF officials on Thursday, adding that the suspect was residing in Delhi under a fake identity.

China tries to reshape Tibet, Xinjiang narratives with new propaganda efforts

12 September 2024, [VOA](#), William Yang

Chinese authorities have rolled out new propaganda efforts aimed at countering Western narratives about the human rights situation in the northwest Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Tibet.

In recent weeks, they have continued to invite foreign vloggers to visit Xinjiang, home to millions of Uyghur people, a majority Muslim ethnic minority group. Also this month, China inaugurated an international communication center to produce content portraying some "positive developments" in Tibet, such as Tibetan people's growing income.

Since 2017, the United States, United Nations, European Parliament and rights organizations have condemned China for interning up to 1 million Uyghurs, forcing hundreds of thousands of Uyghur women to go through abortion or sterilization, and forcing Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang to work in factories, which prompted the United States to pass the Uyghur Forced Labor Protection Act in 2021.

In Tibet, human rights organizations and Western countries, including the U.S., have accused the Chinese government of erasing the Tibetan language and culture through compulsory Chinese language education for Tibetan children, forcing hundreds of

thousands of rural Tibetans to relocate to urban areas and replacing the name “Tibet” with the Romanized Chinese name “Xizang” in official documents.

Taiwan said on September 5 it knows of reports China has been recruiting Taiwanese influencers to visit Xinjiang and help promote a more positive narrative about the region through their videos.

Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, which oversees cross-strait exchanges, said it was still looking into the recent surge of Xinjiang-related content produced by Taiwanese influencers and urged them to avoid violating an anti-infiltration law by accepting payment from Beijing.

Taiwanese Youtuber Potter Wang claimed in June that the Chinese government had been inviting Taiwanese influencers on paid trips to China to produce content. His claims prompted several Taiwanese YouTubers who have recently published videos about Xinjiang to deny receiving payment from Beijing.

In response to warnings from Taiwanese authorities, China’s Taiwan Affairs Office said Beijing welcomed “Taiwan compatriots” to visit China and enjoy “the magnificent mountains and rivers, taste the various kinds of food, experience the local customs, and share what they have seen and heard.”

Apart from inviting Taiwanese influencers to visit Xinjiang, Beijing has been inviting foreign journalists and vloggers to visit Xinjiang since the start of 2024.

In several reports, China’s state-run tabloid Global Times said these foreigners learned about “Xinjiang’s latest economic achievements, religious freedom, and ethnic integration” following visits to local industry, religious venues and residential homes.

Some experts say Chinese authorities usually impose tight control over foreign influencers’ itineraries in Xinjiang to ensure the content they produce is aligned with the positive narrative that Beijing aims to promote, which is contrary to existing foreign media reports about mass internment of Uyghurs, forced labor of ethnic minorities or harsh birth control programs.

“Foreign influencers usually spend time in Xinjiang’s capital, Urumqi, and visit places like the Grand Bazaar, where they will try local food and watch dance performances that could seem to suggest that cultural forms of the Uyghur people are protected,” said Timothy Grose, a professor of China Studies at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana.

In addition to showcasing aspects of Uyghur culture, Grose said, foreign influencers’ Xinjiang videos will often portray Uyghurs being employed and local signs containing Chinese and Uyghur characters.

“Beijing believes this is an effective strategy [to counter existing international narratives about Xinjiang] if they are indirectly controlling the types of pictures that are exported out of Xinjiang,” he told VOA by phone.

By flooding social media platforms with Xinjiang content produced by these foreign influencers, Grose said, the Chinese government is trying to reach and influence casual viewers, especially younger audiences, with no deep knowledge about China or Xinjiang.

“These casual viewers don’t have expertise in China, so they won’t know where to find signs of oppression in the videos since they are unfamiliar with the Uyghur culture or China’s ethnic policy,” he said.

Since China is directly or indirectly filling social media platforms with content aligned with their preferred narrative for Xinjiang, Grose said, it will be difficult for academics, activists, and journalists to counter Beijing’s propaganda efforts with content that reflects the reality in the region.

Telling the Tibet stories

Beijing has also launched a new initiative to “tell the Tibet story well.”

On September 2, several local and central Chinese government agencies inaugurated an “international communication center” in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, that aims to enhance Beijing’s ability to promote its preferred narratives about Tibet.

During a roundtable event focusing on “building a more effective international communication system for Tibet-related issues,” French writer Margot Chevestrier, who works for China’s state-run China International Communications Group, said that many young Chinese people are affected by “biased reporting” on global social media and that these misunderstandings often stem from “misleading reporting by some media or individuals.”

The new international communication center will “enable more people at home and abroad to know Tibet, understand Tibet, and love Tibet,” according to China’s state-run China News, an online news website. Some analysts say the communication center may serve as a centralized institution to “coordinate” Beijing’s propaganda efforts focusing on Tibet.

“Since there doesn’t seem to be as much propaganda efforts on Tibet as on Xinjiang, Beijing might be thinking how they can use this tactic,” said Sarah Cook, an independent researcher on China and former China research director at nonprofit organization Freedom House.

Cook said the amount of propaganda effort that China dedicated to Xinjiang and Tibet shows that these two issues are of a high priority for Beijing.

“While Tibet and Xinjiang are their priorities, the tactics that the Chinese propaganda apparatus deploys are similar, including spreading disinformation through fake accounts, restricting foreign journalists’ access to certain places, and suppressing information that contradicts their preferred narrative,” she told VOA by phone.

Since its propaganda efforts have been seemingly successful, Grose said, Beijing will continue to employ the same set of strategies to challenge existing facts about the situation in Xinjiang and Tibet.

To push back against Beijing's campaigns, he said, Xinjiang and Tibet-focused groups should try to increase their presence on social media platforms and create more "captivating and moving" visual content that is "properly contextualized" but can influence young audiences.

Additionally, Cook said it's important for individuals concerned about the situation in Tibet and Xinjiang to work with like-minded research groups and expose the different propaganda campaigns that China is pushing. "They can try to produce short videos informing people of Beijing's tactics," she said.

'General Session' of TPIE begins, Tibetan advocacy group urges Charter amendment

11 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

As the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile convened its eighth session in Dharamshala on Wednesday, nearly 1,000 Tibetans from the Indian subcontinent and abroad, under the banner of 'The Advocacy of the General Public for the Sustainability of CTA,' made a direct appeal to lawmakers. They called for urgent amendments to the Charter of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to enable the appointment of the Chief Justice Commissioner and two judges to the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission (TSJC), the apex judicial body of the CTA.

The group stressed the urgency to appoint the Chief Justice Commissioner and two additional justices of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission (TSJC) to establish a robust judiciary capable of administering oaths for future leadership of the exile Tibetan government.

In a press conference on Monday, the advocacy group stated that if the charter amendment is not enacted in this session of the parliament, they plan to set in motion a series of action plans including; Call for the resignation of all the 45 current members of parliament; Begin a hunger strike campaign; Submit a petition to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, invoking his authority under Article 1(ii) of the Charter; Campaign for equal voting rights for MPs from religious sects, Call for changes to be made to the allocation of standing committee members, and the right for overseas Tibetan representatives to be on the standing committee.

The ongoing session of the current parliament, also known as the 'General session' will deliberate on the activities and workings of each department of the CTA. On the first day of the session on Wednesday, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, in his address, reminded

parliament of the vital role the democratic system plays in Tibetan governance, a system bestowed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He urged Tibetans to work towards fulfilling the Dalai Lama's aspirations, particularly his four commitments.

The Speaker also expressed gratitude for international support, citing the passage of the Resolve Tibet Act in the US, a motion supporting Tibetan self-determination in Canada, the Australian Parliament's raising of the Tibetan issue, and the formation of a convener and co-convener for the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet.

CTA's executive head, Sikyong Penpa Tsering responded to many questions from parliamentarians, particularly issues related to the Department of Religion and Culture. Key among them was the issue of reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. President Tsering emphasized that the current Kashag has prepared measures to prevent interference from China on the matter and that his administration has drafted a 'blue book' outlining strategies for managing national emergencies.

Tibet: UN experts demand clarity after wave of arrests

10 September 2024, [Table Briefings](#)

In February, a wave of arrests swept through the Tibetan region of Derge. The reason: People were protesting against the construction of a dam. Now the UN has raised its concerns.

UN human rights experts are "deeply concerned" about the Chinese authorities' crackdown on dam protests in the Tibetan region of Derge (Mandarin Dege). 13 special rapporteurs had already sent a letter to this effect to the Chinese government in July. They demand transparency about how many people are still being detained for participating in the demonstrations and where they are being held. They also demand information on what risks the dam's construction actually poses to people and nature.

Michael Brand, Chairman of the Tibet Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, laments China's "extremely worrying" actions "also given the international escalation that the regime in Beijing is practicing more and more frequently." He urged that the protection of Tibetans and "the country of Tibet" should be high on the agenda of international geopolitics.

Kai Müller, Executive Director of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) in Berlin, warns: "What is being sold with the dams as climate-friendly and green energy is in reality a ruthless strategy of exploiting an oppressed country and disenfranchising those affected." He continued that the international community should not fall for this sales pitch and that

the Chinese development policy in Tibet should be resolutely questioned. Earlier, the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) had already welcomed the letter from the UN human rights experts and called on governments to defend Tibetans' fundamental rights. On February 14, numerous people protested in front of the government building in Derge in the autonomous prefecture of Kardze (Ganzi) against the planned Kamtok (Gangtuo) hydropower project. Soon after the protests, reports of several hundred arrests and mistreated demonstrators emerged. It is unclear how many people are still in custody. The Derge protests are significant in that there was an apparently coordinated effort to document the peaceful resistance and disseminate video footage of the protests.

Motion on Tibet moved in Australian House of Representatives

10 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



Members of the Australian Tibetan community with Australian MP Andrew Wallace (Photo/CTA)

A member of parliament of the Australian House of Representatives moved a motion addressing China's repressive policies towards Tibet, calling for the protection of Tibetan rights and culture on Monday. The motion, introduced by Andrew Wallace MP in the lower house of the Australian parliament called out China's systematic cultural assimilation of Tibetans. It affirmed the Tibetan people's rights to freely choose their economic, social, cultural, and religious policies without external interference. It highlighted the right of religious communities to select their own leaders, including the reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama, without Chinese government intervention. While moving the motion, Representative Wallace stated, "The Chinese Communist Party is not content with simply trying to wipe out the culture of Tibet and Tibetans; they also want to remove their religious background. The CCP wants to control who will become the successor to the Dalai Lama. Australia's parliament stood in solidarity, united by the convention that we cannot remain silent in the face of evil."

Susan Templeman MP, Co-Chair of Parliament Friendship of Tibet, seconded the motion, urging

Chinese authorities to release the Panchen Lama and reiterating Australia's stance against interference in selecting the next Dalai Lama. Dr Daniel Mulino- MP and Hon. Dr David Gillespie- MP also spoke in support, highlighting the forced assimilation of Tibetan children and suppression of religious and cultural practices in Tibet.

The motion expressed concern over China's assimilationist policies, including forced labour transfer programs, separation of Tibetan children from their families through state-run boarding schools, detention of Tibetans for the peaceful expression of political views, suppression of Tibetan religious expression, and excessive security measures against Tibetans.

In response to these concerns, the Australian Parliament called on China to re-engage with representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama to establish genuine autonomy for Tibetans within China, repeal discriminatory legislation, end arbitrary detention and family separation programs, remove restrictions on Tibetan culture and language, and allow access to Tibet for independent human rights observers.

The motion also referenced recent international developments, including United Nations reports on the assimilation of Tibetan children through residential schools, the European Union's resolution on the forced abduction of Tibetan children in December 2023, Canada's resolution supporting Tibet and the United States 'Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Act' passed in June 2024. The motion reaffirmed Australia's concern over China's assimilationist policies, which include forced labour programs, the coerced separation of Tibetan children from their families, detention for peaceful political expression, and the suppression of religious practices.

Tibetan group calls for charter amendments to appoint judge of TSJC

10 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



(L-R) The executive members of the group - Tseten Phuntsok, Tenzin Yangkar and Tsering Siten during the press conference at Akash Hotel, Dharamshala on Sept. 10.

A group of Tibetans under the banner of the 'People's Movement for Securing the Central Tibetan

Administration' held a press conference on Monday at Dharamshala's Akash Hotel calling on parliamentarians of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile to amend the charter to enable the appointment of the Chief Justice Commissioner and two additional justices of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission (TSJC), the apex judiciary body of the Tibetan Government in Exile.

The press statement of the group, 'The Advocacy of the General Public for the Sustainability of CTA' stated that since October 8, 2021, they have repeatedly submitted detailed applications of thousands of petitioners to the parliament to safeguard the democratic system of the Tibetan exile administration. However, their efforts have been consistently ignored and disregarded.

"Last year, during the sixth session of the parliament in September, nearly a thousand people from various places in India, Nepal, and other foreign countries gathered in Dharamshala to launch an appeal campaign. Subsequently, during the March 2024 parliamentary session, there were discussions on the report of the 'Charter Review Committee' and the draft amendments to the charter. Based on these developments, we were hopeful for amendments that would allow the appointment of the Chief Justice Commissioner and two other commissioners. Therefore, we refrained from organising any mass gathering campaigns," said Tenzin Yangkar, President of the advocacy group.

The statement also highlighted that instead of amending the charter to allow for the appointment of the Chief Justice Commissioner and two judges, the house made other amendments that allows the oath-taking to be administered by authorities other than the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commissioners, which they said, undermines the importance of appointing the Chief Justice Commissioner and the two remaining justices, and in effect, the legitimacy and standing of the apex Tibetan court.

Tsetan Phuntsok, one of the executive members for the group told the press, "The exile Tibetan government is crucial for the sustenance of the Tibetan movement to protect its identity, language and culture. Hence, it is irresponsible of the exile Tibetans to be mute spectators to the deliberate destruction of the Tibetan democracy founded by His Holiness the Dalai Lama." Speaking on the campaign, he emphasised that their movement is non-violent, and in accordance to the laws of the land. He said that around 1,000 Tibetans from 28 different locations, including from India, Nepal, North America and Europe, are participating in the campaign.

The organisers further stated that if the charter amendment is not enacted in this session of the parliament, they plan to set in motion a series of action plans including: Call for the resignation of all the

45 current members of parliament; Begin a hunger strike campaign; Submit a petition to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, invoking his authority under Article 1(ii) of the Charter; Campaign for equal voting rights for MPs from religious sects, Call for changes to be made to the allocation of standing committee members, and the right for overseas Tibetan representatives to be on the standing committee.

The campaign is scheduled to commence from Wednesday at the Gangkyi Basketball Court in the CTA compound. The 8th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile is also scheduled to begin from Wednesday until 19th of September 2024.

Eight Session of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Begins

10 September 2024, [CTA](#)

The eighth session (general session) of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, scheduled from 11 to 19 September 2024, commenced today at 9:30 a.m. with the Speaker's announcement of session commencement.

The parliament hall assembled with Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Kalons, and parliamentarians sang the Tibetan national anthem.

In his session commencement address, the Speaker highlighted several significant events: the successful knee surgery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the USA, a recent long-life prayer offering made by the people of Monyul, and the celebration of His Holiness's 90th birth anniversary according to the Tibetan calendar, attended by key leaders from Arunachal Pradesh, led by the Chief Minister.

The Speaker emphasised that the current democratic system of the Central Tibetan Administration is a blessing from His Holiness the Dalai Lama and encouraged Tibetans to work towards fulfilling His Holiness's aspirations, including his four commitments.

He also expressed appreciation for international support, noting the US adoption of the Resolve Tibet Act, Canada's motion supporting Tibetan self-determination, the raising of the Tibetan cause in the Australian parliament, and the appointment of a convener and co-convener to the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet.

The Speaker also briefed the house on the agenda of the 8th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and concluded by underscoring that resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict remains a primary responsibility as outlined in the Charter of Tibetans in exile.

A panel of Chairpersons and an Ad Hoc Committee were appointed in accordance with the 'Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile'.

An official obituary reference to former Tibetan Parliamentarian Dhangshar Yonten Gyatso was read by parliamentarian Tenpa Yarphe. A minute of silence was then duly observed in the house to mourn the official reference.

The session continued with Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the incumbent Kalon of the Department of Religion and Culture, presenting the précis 2023-24 annual report of its main ministry office and of institutions under it. The review of the detailed annual report of the Department of Religion and Culture by the Standing Committee was presented by parliamentarian Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong.

Motion for debate on the DoR&C's précis report and its review by the Standing Committee was tabled by parliamentarian Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltsen and supported by parliamentarian Tenzin Jigdal. Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the incumbent Kalon of the Department of Religion and Culture, presented the Kashag's clarification.

Members of Parliament participated in the deliberation over the Department of Religion and Culture's overall undertaking, applauding it.

In response to queries from lawmakers, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the current Kalon of the department, provided detailed clarifications on recognising the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He addressed the measures the Central Tibetan Administration is preparing to counter potential interference from China. Additionally, Sikyong Penpa Tsering provided insights into efforts to preserve major Tibetan traditional studies, including crafts, arts, and thangka painting.

He also responded to questions about various departmental projects and programs. These included the Tibetan Digital Library project, scholarships for newly arrived Tibetan monks and nuns, the Non-Sectarian Tibetan Buddhist Scholars' Conference, and other initiatives undertaken by the department.

The session proceeded with the presentation of the précis 2023-24 report of the Department of Home (DoH) by Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the incumbent Kalon of DoH. This was followed by the presentation of the Standing Committee's reviewed report on the detailed annual report of the Department of Home by parliamentarian Geshe Ngaba Gangri.

The motion for debate on the aforementioned report was tabled by parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen and supported by parliamentarian Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltsen. After that, Sikyong Penpa Tsering provided Kashag's (Cabinet) clarification to the reviewed report of the Department of Home by the Standing Committee.

The deliberation on the undertakings of the Department of Home remains open for tomorrow's seating.

The first day of the eighth session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile was adjourned at 5 pm.

Tibet Lobby Day in Australia urge sanction against Chinese officials, support for Dalai Lama's reincarnation process

10 September 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



The Australia Tibet Council, along with 20 Tibetan delegates across Australia at the 13th Tibet Lobby Day (Photo/ATC)

As part of this year's Tibet Lobby Day, the Australia Tibet Council (ATC), along with 20 Tibetan representatives from across Australia, including delegates from Canberra, Sydney, Queensland, Victoria, Wagga Wagga and Nowra, engaged in discussions with around 35 members of the Australian Parliament, including Foreign Minister Penny Wong.

During the meetings, the Tibetan-Australian community urged the Co-Chairs of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet (AAPGT) to invoke the Global Magnitsky Act against five Chinese officials responsible for human rights abuses in Tibet. The officials named include Wu Yingjie, former Party Secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) from 2016 to 2021; Zhang Hongbo, Director of the Tibetan Public Security Bureau (TPSB) from 2018 to 2022; Chen Quanguo, former Communist Party Secretary of TAR from 2011 to 2016 and Xinjiang from 2016 to 2021; Ao Liuquan, former Party Secretary of Naqchu City and Prefecture from 2016 to 2020; and Zhang Qingli, who served as Party Secretary of TAR from 2006 to 2011.

The delegates also voiced concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet, emphasising the need for the Australian government to formally recognise the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to adopt policies aimed at preventing China's interference in this religious process.

The ATC led the advocacy by presenting key demands to the Australian Parliament and the Department of Foreign Affairs' China and Human Rights divisions. These demands included: the Australian government to adopt measures to prevent China from interfering in the reincarnation process of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; The Australian government to condemn the

Chinese government's efforts to systematically erode Tibetan identity, language, and culture since the 1950 illegal invasion; Australia to strongly oppose China's policies of forced settlement and the establishment of draconian colonial boarding schools in Tibetan areas, which are tools for further assimilation; The Australian government to implement Magnitsky sanctions against Chinese officials responsible for the repression of Tibetans, restricting their travel and economic activities in Australia; and the Australian government to explicitly recognise that the Tibetan issue remains unresolved under international law and affirm the Tibetan people's right to self-determination.

UN Raises Concern Over Kamtok Dam

10 September 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

Letter from Special Rapporteurs seeks further information on the dam construction and crackdown in Dege County.

On 8 July 2024, a group of 13 United Nations Special Rapporteurs issued a letter to the Chinese government expressing concern over human rights ramifications of the Kamtok Dam project in Dege County.

The letter, which was made public on 6 September after China failed to respond, addresses both the crackdown on peaceful protesters in February and the forced relocation of Tibetans should the dam be built. It further describes the *"irreversible destruction of important cultural and religious sites"* as well as *"irreversible environmental impacts"* to the area.

The Kamtok Dam, which is due to be constructed along the Drichu River in Dege County, would see thousands of Tibetan people displaced, at least six ancient monasteries destroyed, and the local environment devastated by the flood of water.

The dam project has been opposed by local residents since it was proposed in 2012. This opposition culminated in protests in Dege County in February 2024 in which hundreds of protesters were detained and many of them beaten by armed police. "The allegations described below reportedly form part of a general crackdown against the Tibetan people, in breach of the human rights to take part in cultural life, freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. Similar concerns have been raised in previous communications."

– *UN letter to the Chinese government*

Special Rapporteurs share that local Tibetans *"do not appear to have been consulted in a meaningful way"* about the dam, and express that the dam *"will have an irreversible impact on many of their human rights"* including Tibetans' cultural rights to *"maintain their*

way of life, to access and enjoy heritage, and to exercise their religious and cultural practices".

Alongside the Chinese government, the letter was also sent to China Huadian, the company responsible for the construction of the Kamtok Dam.

Despite the letter only requesting further information, rather than any specific actions, both the Chinese government and China Huadian did not respond within the 60-day deadline given. As a result, the letter was published publicly without a response.

It remains unknown if any response from China Huadian and the Chinese government will be forthcoming, however the letter and its lack of response will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council as a part of regular reporting.

The letter by the UN human rights experts was written following based on information supplied by Tibet groups, including Free Tibet and Tibet Watch. It also comes in the context of an international campaign to halt the Kamtok Dam, which has been running since August.

Read the full letter [here](#).

Central Tibetan Administration Expresses Concern Over China's Expansion of Colonial Boarding Schools in Eastern Tibet

09 September 2024, [CTA](#)

According to reports received from reliable sources in the Ngaba region in Tibet, China's assimilationist education policies in Tibet and its strengthening of compulsory colonial-style boarding schools across Tibet are resulting in cultural erasure and loss of Tibetan identity. Targeted mainly at young Tibetan monks and nuns, these coercive practices pose a severe threat to the preservation of traditional Tibetan culture, religion, and way of life.

Over 1,700 young monks from Kirti Monastery and two monasteries in Dzoge County—all these three monasteries located in Ngaba in the traditional province of Amdo now incorporated into Sichuan Province—have been forcibly ordered to leave monastic life and enrolled in government-run colonial boarding schools. These expulsions and forcible enrollment of monks under the age of 18 are being conducted against the wishes and consent of both the affected children and their parents.

At these schools, the young clergy undergo intensive political indoctrination, including mandatory praise of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). These children are primarily taught in Mandarin Chinese and are further prohibited from visiting their own monasteries during school holidays. These measures lead to a loss of Tibetan language skills and the gradual severance of their ties to Tibetan cultural identity, spiritual traditions and religious practices.

In order to ensure strict enforcement of these policies, the local authorities are threatening to revoke public benefits and even imprison parents who resist sending their children to these government-run boarding schools. Restrictions have also been placed on Tibetans building new houses on their land and on nomads from increasing their livestock numbers.

It is evident that considering the deteriorating human rights conditions in Tibet under the draconian rule of the PRC government, Tibetan cultural and religious freedoms are being suppressed and annihilated at an alarmingly rapid rate. These concerning developments in recent times have coincided with a visit in July this year by Wang Huning, a high-ranking member of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo Standing Committee, to the Tibetan areas of Karze, Ngaba and Kyungchu counties.

In light of the critical situation, we urge for an immediate intervention to this critical situation from the international community including governments, the United Nations, human rights organizations, educational institutions that are committed to protecting cultural diversity and religious freedom as well as to promoting human rights and fundamental freedom for all. We reiterate the need for the PRC to uphold their international legal obligations of safeguarding the rights and freedom of the Tibetan people to express, preserve and promote their Tibetan identity. We strongly call upon the PRC government to stop the assimilationist policies being practised in the Tibetan areas through the operation of colonial boarding schools.

Wangchuk Sends Climate SOS from Tanglang La at 17,400 ft to World Citizens

08 September 2024, [Himbu Mail](#), Kuldeep Chauhan

Sonom Wangchuk, the renowned Ladakhi innovator, and his band of fellow marchers – including Ladakhi ex-army men – are five days into their grueling climate march from Leh to Delhi.

Their mission is simple yet urgent: wake up the world to the ticking climate clock and the fragile fate of the Himalayas.

As they crossed the towering Tanglang La pass at 17,450 feet and made their way to the Debring plains on the Tibetan Plateau, Wangchuk had a powerful message for the world – cut down on carbon emissions now or face irreversible consequences.

"We have less than five years to act before things spiral out of control," Wangchuk warned, standing in the biting cold at one of the highest motorable passes on the planet.

"While world leaders are setting carbon neutrality targets, India and China – two of the world's biggest polluters – are pushing timelines that simply won't cut

it. We need immediate action, like Finland, not promises for decades down the line."

Through steep climbs and treacherous paths, the marchers are determined to amplify their message as they push towards the icy heights of Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh.

Battling snowstorms and constantly shifting weather, the group has already covered nearly 200 kilometers, and the journey is only getting tougher. Yet, their resolve remains iron-clad.

"Our glaciers are melting fast, causing flash floods and droughts".

These glaciers are our lifelines, and if they disappear, we, the indigenous people of Ladakh, will become climate refugees. The clock is ticking," Wangchuk said, urging the people and leaders of the world to act now before it's too late.

In a heartfelt plea to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Wangchuk called for the protection of the fragile ecosystems of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, empowering local communities to steward their environment.

"This isn't just our fight," he added. "It's a global one. We're sending out an urgent SOS from the roof of the world. The Himalayas are dying, and if they go, we all go."

And though their bodies may be weary, their spirits remain unshaken.

Their destination: Delhi's Rajghat, where they hope to deliver their urgent message to the nation's leaders. As they push on through Lahaul-Spiti, they call on every citizen, every voice to amplify this cry for help. "Our time is running out," Wangchuk repeated, as the march continued, undeterred, towards its final destination.

Dimple Yadav meets Dalai Lama in Dharamshala: 'We support cause of Tibet'

07 September 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

"I have come here with a spiritual purpose. His Highness Dalai Lama is here today for his 'darshan'. So, I came to visit him," the Samajwadi Party MP said.

Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav on Saturday met Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. She also visited the main Tibetan temple in the city.

Interacting with media persons after the visit, Dimple Yadav also tendered support for the cause of Tibet.

"I have come here with a spiritual purpose. His Highness Dalai Lama is here today for his 'darshan'. So, I came to visit him," the MP from Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri said. "We support the cause of Tibet."

The Dalai Lama [returned to Dharamshala](#) on September 28 after undergoing a knee replacement surgery in the United States. The 89-year-old spiritual

leader was welcomed by his devotees and well-wishers outside the Gaggal airport in Kangra.

Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu also visited McLeodganj, Himachal Pradesh on Friday to meet the Dalai Lama.

The chief minister participated in the special prayers organised by the people of Tawang for the long life of the Dalai Lama. The five-day prayers began on September 3 and will conclude on September 7.

“His health has improved a lot. So, we also pray for the long life of His Holiness. This morning, I had a very good discussion with His Holiness. The people of Arunachal Pradesh share a very good relation with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama,” he said, according to ANI.

“So, on behalf of people of the state, I have invited him to visit Arunachal Pradesh as and when he feels so. He was kind enough to accept the invitation on behalf of the people and in coming days, he will definitely be visiting Arunachal Pradesh.”

‘Democracy day’ in Dharamshala

Last week, Tibetans-in-exile commemorated the 64th anniversary of ‘Democracy Day’ in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh September 2.

The day marks the inception of the Tibetan democratic system in exile. On this day, the Tibetan parliament-in-exile was established in 1960 following the arrival of the Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetans in exile in Dharamshala.

Last year also, Tibetans-in-exile celebrated the 63rd anniversary of Democracy Day in Dharamshala, where leaders of the exiled Tibetan Government, including Tibetan parliamentarians and other dignitaries, gathered at the main Buddhist temple, Tsuglagkhang in the north Indian hill town Dharmashala.

Arunachal Chief Minister participates in long-life prayers offering to Dalai Lama

07 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Chief Minister Mr Pema Khandu of India’s Tibet-border state of Arunachal Pradesh has on Sep 6 called on His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his exile residence at McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, to seek his blessing and has gifted to a trust in his name a residence for him built at the spot where he had temporarily resided upon entering India in 1959 to seek asylum. Khandu has again invited the exile spiritual leader of Tibet to visit his state.

“Humbled and grateful for a warm audience with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama at his residence... I felt deeply blessed to receive his compassionate blessings,” Khandu wrote on X.

Khandu also wrote that he had invited the Dalai Lama to visit Arunachal Pradesh and that the latter said he would visit “whenever he feels the call.”

The chief minister also presented to the Dalai Lama a framed photo of a Phodrang (residence) the state had built for him at Pungteng in Tawang District. The building stands on the spot where the Dalai Lama had spent a few days after arriving in India from Tibet in 1959, reported the *timesofindia.com* Sep 7.

The chief minister was visiting Dharamshala in connection with a long-life prayers offering being made by the Monpa community of his state to which he also belongs. The preparatory rituals began on Sep 3 and concluded on Sep 7, when the actual offerings were made.

He was accompanied by Mr Tapir Gao, Lok Sabha member from Arunachal Pradesh and the Co-convenor of the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet; Mr Pasang Dorjee Sona, the state’s minister for Education and Tourism; and MLA’s from the state.

Also on Sep 7 morning, along with the delegation, the Monpa Community of Arunachal Pradesh, joined by Tibetan residents and other followers of the Dalai Lama, gathered at the Tsuglakhang, the main local Buddhist temple, to celebrate the confluence of three auspicious occasions: the 65th anniversary of His Holiness’s first dharma teaching to the people of Monyul since his arrival in India; the 341st birth anniversary of the 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso, who was born in Tawang; and the 90th birthday of His Holiness as per Tibetan calendar.

After his 1959 escape, the Dalai Lama has visited the state seven times so far, namely in 1983, 1996, 1997, twice in 2003, 2009, and 2017, noted *arunachal24.in* Sep 6.

UN human rights experts deeply concerned over repression of dam protests and Chinese hydropower policies in Tibet

06 September 2024, [ICT](#)

A powerful [letter published today](#) by 13 independent UN Human Rights Special Procedures expressed “deep concern” regarding the Chinese government plans to build the Kamtok dam in the Tibetan region of Derge. The scathing letter was sent to the Chinese government in July.

It demands a clarification from the Chinese government on the numerous reports of arrests and repression inflicted by Chinese government officials on local Tibetan protesters. It also requests details on how transparency, consultation, and respect for human rights will be ensured.

The Kamtok dam will submerge at least six monasteries and two villages and expel hundreds of residents. The 13 UN special procedures emphasized their distress regarding the irreversible destruction of religious and cultural heritage sites, as well as Tibetan ways of life. The letter also documented the lack of

meaningful consultation with affected communities, a pattern of recent reprisals against protesters, and the irreversible impacts of dams on the environment and climate.

Kai Müller, Head of the UN Advocacy Team at the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), said: “This communication by 13 UN special procedures is a methodical examination of the Chinese government’s violent response to Tibetan protests against the Kamtok dam in Derge, as well as China’s so-called ‘sustainable renewable energy’ plan. In their letter, the UN human rights experts shine a bright light on the consequences of the Chinese government’s false claims about its development policy in Tibet. While Beijing pitches it as a climate-friendly and sustainable energy policy with hydropower dams as a key pillar, the reality is a ruthless strategy to exploit an oppressed country and marginalized people.

Müller continued: “The international community, governments, parliaments and civil society must not fall for China’s propaganda claiming that dam projects are clean and equitable “renewable” energy sources. Tibetans who are directly affected by environmental changes need to be consulted. Above all, Chinese development schemes in Tibet must be vigorously investigated and Tibet’s status as an unresolved political conflict must be honestly and seriously addressed.”

Meanwhile, the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) has also [welcomed](#) the letter from the UN human rights experts and urged “respective governments to make strong representations against this construction, in favour of the fundamental rights of Tibetans.”

China’s Interference in Dalai Lama's Reincarnation Sparks International Concern

05 September 2024, [Devdiscourse](#)

China has intensified its interference in the reincarnation process of the next Dalai Lama, according to a report by the International Tibet Network. The report outlines Beijing’s strategic plans to diminish international support for Tibet and reshape Tibetan identity through control over religious practices.

China has intensified its interference in the reincarnation process of the next Dalai Lama, according to a report released on Wednesday by the International Tibet Network (ITN). The 30-page document, titled 'Tibet, the Dalai Lama, and the Geopolitics of Reincarnation,' alleges that Beijing aims to use the Dalai Lama's passing as an opportunity to end global support for Tibet's cause and exclude the spiritual leader from his own succession planning.

The report highlights two Chinese policy documents revealing a strategy to control Tibetan religious identity and influence the international Buddhist community. In response to Chinese propaganda in 2011, the 14th Dalai Lama issued a document stating he might appoint a successor while alive—a practice with historical roots in Tibet—though this was swiftly rejected by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which insists that only Beijing can approve his successor.

The report claims China's 'Sinicization' of Tibetan Buddhism aims to sever the deep connection between Tibetans and the Dalai Lama, involving high-tech surveillance, policing of religious sites, and campaigns of 'patriotic re-education' that have included torture and sexual abuse. The CCP's strategy, according to internal briefings, also aims to influence Western governments and media to end international support for Tibet in the 'post-Dalai era.' The case of the 11th Panchen Lama, replaced controversially by a Chinese candidate in 1995, serves as a precedent for Beijing's plans. Despite these measures, loyalty to the Dalai Lama among Tibetans remains strong.

Tibetans-in-exile mark 64th anniversary of 'Democracy Day' in Dharamshala

04 September 2024, India Bloom

Tibetans-in-exile recently marked the 64th anniversary of ‘Democracy Day’ in Dharamshala to mark the day of establishing democracy for Tibetans. The day marked the inception of the Tibetan democratic system in exile.

On this day, the Tibetan parliament-in-exile was established in 1960 following the arrival of the Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetans in exile in Dharamshala, reported ANI.

While speaking to ANI, a resident of Dharamshala expressed his pleasure on the occasion and said the day is very special for Tibetan people.

“In 1960, Dalai Lama declared the democracy system, started some members of parliament from the different regions of Tibet and then set up the democracy parliament system. A huge number of people from the three regions and also five sectarians of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. Since that, we have got a democracy system, as gradually we have the increased members of parliament from different regions,” he added.

In early 1959 during the Tibetan uprising, their spiritual leader (Nobel Peace Winner) spiritual leader Dalai Lama and his retinue fled Tibet with the help of the CIA's Special Activities Division, crossing into India on 30 March 1959.

He is based in Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh since then.

Ramon Magsaysay Foundation launches series to mark 65th anniversary of Dalai Lama's award

04 September 2024, [Lokmat Times](#)

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation on Wednesday launched a seven-volume series titled 'Greatness of Spirit' in the presence of the Dalai Lama to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the award presented to the Tibetan spiritual leader.

In August 1959, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in recognition of "his leadership of the Tibetan community's gallant struggle in defence of the sacred religion that is the inspiration of their life and culture".

Susanna B. Afan, President of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, launched the seven-volume series at the Dalai Lama's residence in the hill town of Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh in the presence of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, selected partners, and Indian laureates.

On April 26, 2023, the Dalai Lama was presented the 1959 Ramon Magsaysay Award personally by the members of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation after 64 years at his residence.

The Nobel Peace laureate, known for his simplicity and jovial style and for whom Mahatma Gandhi was the most influential leader of the 20th century for his idea of non-violence, prefers to participate in meetings with religious leaders, and lectures students and businessmen on ethics for the new millennium and the art of happiness.

In 2007, the Dalai Lama received the US Congressional Gold Medal, even in the face of protests by China.

Born on July 6, 1935, at Taktser hamlet in Tibet, the Dalai Lama was recognised at the age of two as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso. He fled Tibet after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959, basing his government-in-exile here that never won recognition from any country.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award, often called the 'Nobel Prize of Asia', is an annual award established to perpetuate former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society.

The prize was established in April 1957 by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund based in New York with the concurrence of the Philippine government.

Disclaimer: This post has been auto-published from an agency feed without any modifications to the text and has not been reviewed by an editor.

Countries should accept Tibet's historic status as independent nation: Penpa Tsering

03 September 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Rezaul H Laskar

Tsering questioned the logic of countries accepting Tibet as a part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) while simultaneously pushing talks between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government.

Countries around the world should accept Tibet's historic status as an independent country to help foster a serious dialogue with China on the future of the region, the head of the Tibetan government in exile said on Tuesday.

Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong or head of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), said the Dharamshala-based government in exile intends to work with the US to convince more countries to challenge Beijing's contention that Tibet has historically been a part of China.

Tsering questioned the logic of countries accepting Tibet as a part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) while simultaneously pushing talks between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. Such an approach, he said, helps the Chinese avoid any serious discussions with the Tibetan side.

Participating in the opening session of a festival with the theme of "Spirit of Tibet", Tsering described this approach as part of a new strategy that is based on Dalai Lama's "middle way" policy to find accommodation with the Chinese.

After working with the US administration for two years to pass the Resolve Tibet Act, which focuses on the historical status of Tibet as an independent country, the CTA intends to convince more countries about this position.

"We would like to work with other governments to see whether similar positions can be adopted to push the Chinese government to come to the negotiating table," Tsering said.

Tsering questioned the approach of countries that keep saying Tibet is part of the PRC while supporting negotiations between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese. "You are removing the very ground for negotiations. When every country says Tibet is part of the PRC, where is the reason for the Chinese government to come and talk to us?," he said.

He contended the Chinese government knows "they have no legitimacy for their rule in Tibet", and added, "We have to puncture those theories."

Tsering acknowledged that the "middle way" approach – proposed by the Dalai Lama, approved by a majority of Tibetans and ratified by the Tibetan parliament in exile – remains the official policy to find a lasting solution with China based on non-violence and negotiations. However, he said there has been a change in strategy based on "polarities or extremities",

including the current situation in Tibet under the “repressive Chinese government” and the historical state of Tibet.

Tsering also warned India about the consequences of China’s current policies in Tibet. Noting that Chinese authorities have forced more than a million Tibetan children into “colonial style boarding schools”, he said this is aimed at erasing Tibet’s long-standing relations with India going back more than 2,000 years.

“The Chinese government knows exactly what they’re doing to destroy the Tibetan identity right now,” he said, adding this will change the “emotional quotient” among Tibetans towards India. If younger Tibetans are forced to adopt the Chinese way of thinking, the emotional quotient will change, and they won’t have the same reverence and affinity towards India, he said. China, Tsering pointed out, is renaming places to reinforce its claims on disputed regions. While noting that China refers to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh as “southern Tibet”, he suggested India should refer to the frontier as the “Indo-Tibetan border”.

Describing China as the “biggest bully” in the world, he said the country is working with “other bullies” to create a new world order. “It started from the invasion of Tibet in those days and now you have the Chinese on the Indian border, right next to you,” Tsering said, in an apparent reference to the India-China military standoff on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since April-May 2020.

Himachal Pradesh: Tibetans in-exile celebrate 64th anniversary of Democracy Day in Dharamshala

03 September 2024, [ANI](#)

Tibetans-in-exile commemorated the 64th anniversary of 'Democracy Day' in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh on Monday and highlighted the significance of the day in establishing democracy for Tibetans. The day marks the inception of the Tibetan democratic system in exile. On this day, the Tibetan parliament-in-exile was established in 1960 following the arrival of the Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetans in exile in Dharamshala.

While speaking to ANI, a resident of Dharamshala expressed his pleasure on the occasion and said the day is very special for Tibetan people.

"In 1960, Dalai Lama declared the democracy system, started some members of parliament from the different regions of Tibet and then set up the democracy parliament system. A huge number of people from the three regions and also five sectarians of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. Since that, we have got a democracy system, as gradually we have the increased members of parliament from different regions," he added.

He further added that now the Tibetans have a "full-fledged democratic system" as well as the 46th member of the parliament. "Now we have the 46th member of the parliament. This is a fully democratic system. And the Dalai Lama has given, especially in 2011, that he has given full power to the Tibetan people and the electing there as president of the Tibetan people, the president of the exile and also from Tibet."

On September 2, 1960, a year after thousands of Tibetans were forced to flee their homes due to the 'Chinese invasion', the first elected representatives of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile took their oaths in Bodh Gaya to inaugurate the Tibetan democratic system.

Last year also, Tibetans-in-exile celebrated the 63rd anniversary of Democracy Day in Dharamshala where leaders of the exiled Tibetan Government including Tibetan parliamentarians and other dignitaries gathered at the main Buddhist temple, Tsuglagkhang in the north Indian hill town Dharamshala.

A 13-member delegation including Swedish parliamentarians led by MP Margareta Elisabeth Cederfelt joined the occasion as distinguished guests. The democratic system of government is based on a political ideology that does not differentiate people on the basis of the question whether a person is strong or weak, rich or poor, male or female, or on the basis of their race or lineage, and so forth with regard to their status in society. Rather, it postulates the founding of a society in which everyone is seen as equal, viewed through the prism of the generality or commonality of everyone, according to the Central Tibetan Administration.

Tibetans praise US, Canada for support on 64th founding anniversary of Parliament-in-exile

02 September 2024, [The Morung Express](#)

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) on Monday commemorated the 64th founding anniversary of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile by acknowledging the US and Canada for advocating the right to self-determination.

The Kashag (executive) said in support of the aspirations of the Tibetan people, US President Joe Biden signed the “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act” on July 12 this year.

The Act highlights that “the current policies of the People’s Republic of China are systematically suppressing the ability of Tibetans to preserve their religion, culture, language, history, way of life, and environment”.

The Kashag mentioned in its statement on His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s 89th birthday that the Act recognises

the US government's position on the historical status of Tibet that the Sino-Tibet dispute is unresolved and that it is the official policy of the US government to promote a negotiated resolution to the dispute through dialogue.

The Kashag also acknowledged the unanimous resolution passed by the Canadian Parliament on June 10. This resolution asserts that the Tibetan people and their country have the right to self-determination and are empowered to freely choose their economic, social, cultural, and religious policies without interference from any external power.

The resolution also condemned the Chinese government's systematic policy implementation of cultural assimilation against Tibetans.

"The aspiration of Tibetan people to preserve our national identity and to develop our own culture cannot be crushed by any form of brute force. More so, it is the important responsibility of Tibetans living in free countries to make every effort so that the Chinese government corrects and ends its misguided and repressive policies in Tibet," said the Kashag, urging every Tibetan to make collective efforts in unity. "While we celebrate the Tibetan democracy day, we must also acknowledge that there is still considerable scope for improving our democratic system. In particular, it is the need of the hour to strengthen completion and effectiveness of the laws and regulations that ensure fairness and justice for all," it said.

The Dalai Lama, who along with many of his supporters fled the Himalayan homeland and took refuge in India when Chinese troops moved in and took control of Lhasa in 1959, views himself as a simple Buddhist monk.

He believes in a "middle-way" approach, meaning greater autonomy for Tibet rather than outright independence.

Reiterating its commitment to non-violence and to pursue the 'middle-way policy' -- the only way to resolve the China-Tibet conflict based on mutual benefit and negotiation -- the Tibetan government in exile, called the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), has blamed Beijing for the lack of political will to continue with the dialogue process that has remained deadlocked since 2010.

Tibetans mark 64th Democracy Day with Estonian guests

02 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) commemorated the 64th Tibetan Democracy Day of Sep 2 at the Tsuglakhang courtyard, Dharamshala, by expressing gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his gift of full democracy to the Tibetan people, condemning China for its continued hardline

repressive rule in occupied Tibet, and urging international support for the resolution of the issue of Tibet in the presence of guests for the occasion from the Baltic state of Estonia.

The guests were members of the Estonian Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet led by its Chairman, Mr Juku-Kalle Raid, who is a Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Estonia Parliament. The other MP delegates were Mrs Karmen Joller, Member of Social Affairs Committee; Ms Ester Aruse, Member of Foreign Affairs Committee; and Mr Roy Strider, who coordinated the visit, said the CTA on its *Tibet.net* website Sep 2.

The report said the delegation continued their participation in the event despite strong opposition from the Chinese embassy in Tallinn. It said the embassy had issued a statement on Aug 30, expressing "strong opposition" to the visit of the Estonian Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet to the "Tibetan government-in-exile."

The statement was stated to include China's routine claims about Tibet being an integral part of China since ancient times and the "Tibetan government in exile" being an illegal organization, while accusing the Dalai Lama of "engaging in anti-China separatist activities." The Dalai Lama has for decades sought a negotiated, meaningful autonomy for an undivided Tibet under Chinese sovereignty on the basis of his middle way proposal, which remains the official policy of the CTA. But China has continued to refused to talk to him, including by setting impossible preconditions.

In their keynote speeches, both Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel also strongly condemned China for the current phase of its policy of rapid assimilating Tibet, which has seen Tibetan children being forced into colonial style boarding schools, Tibetan language and culture schools being forced to shut down, and the activities of the religious centres being greatly curtailed.

In his speech, Mr Juku-Kalle Raid condemned the Communist Party of China (CPC) dictatorship while praising the democracy practised by the Tibetan diasporic community. He has called the Chinese statement criticizing his delegation's visit a "love letter" and denounced the CPC's dictatorship as "dictator-shit".

This was Juku-Kalle Raid and Roy Strider's second visit to the Tibetan exile capital this year, having previously attended the 35th birthday of the Chinese government-abducted 11th Panchen Lama in April, the report noted.

Each of the other delegation members also spoke in similar terms.

Human rights organisations express concern over enforced disappearances in Tibetan region

01 September 2024, [ANI](#)

The United Nations, the European Union, and the Central Tibetan Administration, in a joint statement, expressed their concerns over the ongoing enforced disappearances orchestrated by China in the Tibetan region.

The organizations strongly condemned the continued rampant cases of enforced disappearances of Tibetans in the region by the Chinese government's practice of torture and ill-treatment of Tibetans while in custody. The statement claimed that each year, the Chinese authorities arbitrarily arrest several Tibetans and subject them to enforced disappearances, including religious and community leaders, writers and musicians, and human rights and environmental activists, mainly for their expression of Tibetan national identity and opposing repressive policies. And in most of these cases, they often result in prison sentences based on trumped-up charges, whereas many who have been imprisoned continue to be unseen and unheard of. "The systematic practice of enforced disappearances at any time under any circumstances is a crime against humanity. The first Article of the UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance stipulates any act of enforced disappearance constitutes a violation of the rules of international law guaranteeing, the right to recognition as a person before the law, the right to liberty and security of the person, and the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment," the statement read.

The statement further mentioned that China, despite being a member of the UN, has consistently demonstrated a complete disrespect for international human rights law, systematically disregarding global standards in its treatment of Tibetans and people of other nationalities under its oppression.

As per the statement, among the most prominent enforced disappearance cases is the abduction of Tibet's 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, one of the highest Tibetan Buddhist leaders. At just six years of age, the Chinese administration abducted the 11th Panchen Lama, along with his family and Chadrel Rinpoche in 1995. Despite repeated expressions of concern over the matter and intervention by various UN bodies to date, China has still withheld credible information about his whereabouts or well-being for the last 29 years, making him one of the world's longest-serving political prisoners, it added. The joint statement also claimed that just this year, several Tibetans have "disappeared" after Chinese authorities arbitrarily detained them for various

reasons, from staging peaceful protests to publishing books.

These cases include the enforced disappearances of Phuntsok, Pema, Samten, Zomkyi, Tamdin, and Lobsang Thabkhey, whose fates continue to remain unknown. One prominent case in recent years is Gendun Lhundup's arbitrary arrest in 2020. Even after more than three years since his arbitrary arrest, his whereabouts and well-being remain unknown to his family, the statement claimed. Enforced disappearance has an impact on the victim, but its paralyzing effects on the family members, who are left uninformed of the fate of their loved ones for extended periods, are horrid. Recently, news from Tibet reported the tragic death of Phude, a 53-year-old Tibetan mother of writer Tenzin Khenrab. Her 29-year-old son was arrested in 2023 for keeping a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his phone, along with several e-books. Despite her repeated attempts, the Chinese police refused to disclose any information about her son's whereabouts. After suffering from depression from worrying about her son's well-being for over a year, the mother Phude passed away earlier this year on 17 February, the statement added. The human rights organisations urged international governments and organizations, including the United Nations, human rights organizations, rights activists, and supporters around the world, to continue to press China to disclose information about the Tibetans arbitrarily arrested and disappeared, including the 11th Panchen Lama case. Enforced disappearance constitutes a grave violation of international human rights standards, and China is obligated to ensure that enforced disappearances are thoroughly investigated and that it provides integral reparations for those who have been subjected to this inhuman and illegal act by international standards, it added.

Tibet group welcomes former exile Tibetan administration head to Arunachal Pradesh capital

01 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

A delegation of the Tibet Support Group of Arunachal Pradesh (TSGAP), led by its president Mr Tarh Tarak, has called on former executive head Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, of the Central Tibetan Administration at the state guesthouse in the state capital Itanagar on Aug 31. He is in the city for a four-day visit beginning Aug 30, reported *arunachaltimes.in* Sep 1 and others.

On Sep 1, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, a distinguished scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, is to give a teaching on the Three Higher Trainings and Ways to Practice them (*bslab pa gsum*) at the Buddhist Gompa Itanagar. During the meeting, Rinpoche expressed hope that the "BJP-led government under the dynamic

leadership of Chief Minister Pema Khandu will be performing best for greater interest of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and will be extending support for the Tibetan cause,” the reports said.

Prof Rinpoche was stated to have commented the TSGAP for its continued support to the Tibetan cause and urged it for long-term policies on Tibet issues.

He has also stressed on the need to generate awareness among the younger generation on Tibet and the Tibetan issues, “so that it can carry forward the Tibetan cause.”

TSGAP was established in 2013 under the aegis of the Core Group for Tibetan Cause India, an umbrella group for Tibet support groups across India.

Tarak has assured Rinpoche that the TSGAP will support the Tibetan freedom struggle “with its best effort,” work for the basic welfare of the Tibetan community residing in Arunachal Pradesh, and organise a series of awareness programmes about Tibetans and the Tibet issues.

TSGAP vice president Mr Hinium Tachu has also stressed on freedom of Tibet from the People’s Republic of China.

Earlier, on his arrival in the state capital on Aug 30, Rinpoche was stated to have been welcomed to the state guest house by a team led by TSGAP, joined by the Itanagar Buddhist Culture Society, Tuting Memba Welfare Society, Khamba Welfare Society, Mon Mimang Tsokpa, and other dignitaries.

Prof Samdhong Rinpoche has already been touring Arunachal Pradesh before arriving in Itanagar. On Aug 12, Chief Minister Pema Khandu led a procession to welcome him for his teaching at the request of Sherab Sangpo Society Mon in Jang sub-division of Tawang District. Mon refers to the region of the state’s Tawang and West Kameng districts.

China calls Arunachal Pradesh Zangnan (south or southern Tibet) and therefore part of its territory on the basis of its armed annexation of Tibet in the middle of the last century. It does not have any support in the state for its claim, but expresses strong protests whenever any top Indian leader or the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exile spiritual leader, visits it.

US president Joe Biden on Jul 12 signed into law the “Resolve Tibet Act” passed by the two houses of the US Congress with super-majority votes. The Act calls China’s annexation of Tibet illegal under international law, rejects its claims of Tibet being part of it since ancient times false, and urges a negotiated solution to the Himalayan territory’s legal status.

Prof Rinpoche’s visit is relevant in view of Resolve Tibet Act, 2024, which aims to promote a peaceful resolution to Tibet-China dispute according to international law and the United Nations Charter through peaceful dialogue without preconditions and empower the international community to stand up for justice and peace in Tibet.

Building on Past Achievements and Forging Ahead Together Toward a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

29 September 2024, [MFA](#)



Statement by H.E. Wang Yi
Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China At the General Debate of the 79th Session of The United Nations General Assembly New York, September 28, 2024

Mr. President, Colleagues,

Today, humanity has once again come to a historical crossroads. We are facing a changing and turbulent world. Challenges of insecurity, imbalanced development and ineffective governance are increasingly prominent. Hotspot conflicts, major-country confrontation and geopolitical tensions keep emerging. The future of this planet is becoming a cause for growing concern. Meanwhile, we are also embracing a world full of hope. Multipolarity and globalization have become the unstoppable trend of our times. The aspirations of the Global South nations for modernization has never been stronger. Our stride toward modernization has never been more steadfast. This institution, the United Nations, embodies the aspirations of people across the world for lasting peace and common prosperity, and bears witness to the glorious journey of the international community coming together in pursuit of progress. President Xi Jinping stressed on multiple occasions that the role of the U.N. should be strengthened, not weakened. Amid global transformation not seen in a century, what China calls for is to follow the trend of the times, keep to the direction of human progress, and make the right choices of history. What China proposes is to uphold peaceful coexistence and put in place a security architecture that ensures enduring stability; uphold openness and inclusiveness and foster a development paradigm that promotes shared prosperity; uphold harmony without uniformity and adopt an approach to civilizations that promotes exchange and mutual learning; and uphold fairness and justice and develop a governance structure that pools strengths for shared benefit.

CHINA POLITICS

In today's world, the security of all countries is tied together. In face of various kinds of global challenges and risks, no one can stay immune or enjoy security alone. Countries need to be guided by a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. We should respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, take the legitimate security concerns of others seriously, and resolve disputes and differences through dialogue and consultation. We should actively explore a path for major countries to coexist in peace, and work for a new type of international relations characterized by mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation.

In today's world, the development of all countries is deeply integrated. If the rich get richer while the poor remain poor, then "everyone is born equal" would become an empty slogan, and fairness and justice would be even more elusive. Achieving modernization is a legitimate right of the people of all countries, not a prerogative of a few. We should be committed to advancing global modernization, and ensure that no one and no country is left behind on the journey toward modernization. We should advocate a universally beneficial and inclusive globalization, unequivocally oppose unilateralism and protectionism, and help developing countries leap over the development divide, to maintain the vitality of global economic growth.

In today's world, each civilization has its own strengths. President Xi Jinping pointed out that there is no such thing as a superior or inferior civilization, and civilizations are different only in identity and location. We should respect the diversity of civilizations, and strive to replace estrangement and clash of civilizations with exchanges and mutual learning. We should advocate humanity's common values, namely, peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom, refrain from conducting values-oriented diplomacy, and oppose ideology-based confrontation. We should respect each other as equals, and help each other succeed with an inclusive mind. In today's world, countries should all enjoy sovereign equality. As a large number of Global South nations are growing with a strong momentum, gone are the days when one or two major powers call the shots on everything. We should advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world, and see that all countries, regardless of their size, have their own place and role in the multipolar system. We should practice true multilateralism, oppose hegemonism and power politics, and make international relations more democratic. We should follow the principle of extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, and make global governance more just and equitable.

Mr. President,

Peace is the most precious thing in our world today. You may wonder if there is a path leading to peace. In fact, peace is the path. Without peace, development will not sustain; without peace, cooperation cannot happen. For the sake of peace, a single ray of hope is reason enough not to give up; the slightest chance deserves a hundredfold effort.

An end to the Ukraine crisis remains elusive. The top priority is to commit to "no expansion of the battlefield, no escalation of fighting and no provocation by any party," and push for deescalation of the situation as soon as possible. China is committed to playing a constructive role, engaging in shuttle mediation and promoting talks for peace, not throwing oil on the fire or exploiting the situation for selfish gains. At this session of the General Assembly, China, Brazil and other Global South countries have jointly launched the group of Friends for Peace. Its very purpose is to uphold the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter, build consensus for a political settlement of the crisis and contribute to a prospect of peace.

The question of Palestine is the biggest wound to human conscience. As we speak, the conflict in Gaza is still going on, causing more civilian casualties with each passing day. Fighting has spread to Lebanon; might must not take the place of justice. Palestine's long-held aspiration to establish an independent state should not be shunned anymore, and the historical injustice suffered by the Palestinian people should not be ignored any longer. There must not be any delay in reaching a comprehensive ceasefire, and the fundamental way out lies in the two-State solution. China has always been a staunch supporter of the just cause of the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate national rights, and a staunch supporter of Palestine's full U.N. membership. We have recently helped to bring about breakthroughs in intra-Palestine reconciliation, and will continue to work in concert with like-minded countries for a comprehensive and just settlement of the question of Palestine and durable peace and security in the Middle East.

The issue of Afghanistan concerns regional peace and security. It is important to help Afghanistan exercise prudent governance, fight terrorism effectively, improve people's life and reinvigorate the economy, to open up a better future for the Afghan people.

The Korean Peninsula should not experience war again. The important thing is to make persistent effort for deescalation, commit to seeking solutions through dialogue and consultation, realize a transition from the armistice to a peace mechanism, and safeguard peace and stability on the Peninsula.

China is deeply aware that Asia needs stability and development and opposes division and conflict. As an important origin of human civilization and a key engine of global growth, Asia has the wisdom and capability

to stabilize the situation through regional cooperation and handle differences properly through dialogue and consultation. We are firmly against the meddling by countries outside the region, and will resolutely resist attempts by any force to stoke trouble and confrontation in the region.

Mr. President,

As the world faces increasingly serious challenges, China has never opted to be an indifferent spectator. Instead, we have been playing a bigger part in global governance than ever before. President Xi Jinping has put forth the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative in recent years. They carry China's wisdom for resolving various difficult issues confronting humanity, and bring impetus from China for improving global governance.

In the face of uneven and inadequate global development, China's proposal is to put development at the top of the global agenda, focus on delivering the Sustainable Development Goals of the U.N. 2030 Agenda, increase input in development, and help developing countries better respond to different risks and challenges. At the recent Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping outlined 10 partnership actions to be taken together with Africa to advance modernization, and announced the decision to give over 40 LDCs, including those in Africa, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines. China is the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a significant step.

In the face of unilateral, bullying acts such as sanctions and blockade, China firmly supports countries in defending their legitimate rights, upholding the equity and openness of the international system, making global development more coordinated and beneficial for all, and jointly opposing technology blockade and rejecting decoupling or severing supply chains. Sanctions and pressure will not bring monopolistic advantages. Suppressing and containing others will not solve problems at home. The right of people of all countries to pursue a better life should not be taken away. Here, we once again urge the United States to completely lift its blockade, sanctions and terrorism-related designation against Cuba.

In the face of aggravating ecological challenges, China is firmly committed to a path of green, low-carbon and sustainable development. We will move from carbon peaking to carbon neutrality in the shortest time span in world history, contributing China's efforts to harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. At the global level, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must be upheld, and the Paris Agreement must be implemented in earnest. Developed countries should assist developing countries in building their capacity to cope with

climate change. Touting the need of climate response while suppressing the green industries of others will only hold back global progress in green transition.

In the face of burgeoning artificial intelligence (AI), China is committed to taking a people-centered approach, developing AI for good, and putting equal emphasis on development and security. We are working to explore and establish widely-recognized international rules and standards. China supports the U.N.'s role as the main channel for global AI governance and is committed to strengthening international cooperation on AI capacity-building. China has put forth the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All, and is ready to make more contributions to the sound, orderly, fair and inclusive development of AI.

In the face of the task of human rights protection, China maintains that all countries' right to independently choose their path of human rights development should be respected. No country should impose its own will on others, or arbitrarily interfere in others' internal affairs citing human rights as an excuse. In human rights protection, China is committed to putting people first and promoting the free and well-rounded development of the people. We have found a path of human rights development that suits China's national conditions. China is ready to engage in dialogue and exchanges with all countries and U.N. human rights bodies on an equal footing, and jointly promote the sound development of the global human rights cause.

Mr. President,

Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. This is the history and the reality. Both the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation stated in explicit terms that all the territories Japan had stolen from the Chinese, such as Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, shall be restored to China, and this constitutes an important part of the post-war international order. Right here in this august hall 53 years ago, the 26th session of the U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758 with an overwhelming majority, deciding to restore all the rights of the People's Republic of China at the U.N., to recognize the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representatives of China to the U.N., and to expel forthwith the representatives of the Taiwan region from the U.N. and all the organizations related to it. Once and for all, the resolution resolved the issue of the representation of the whole of China, including Taiwan, in the U.N. It made clear that there is no such thing as "two Chinas," or "one China, one Taiwan." On this matter of principle, there is no gray zone or room for ambiguity. The complete reunification of China will

be achieved. Taiwan will eventually return to the embrace of the motherland. This is the overwhelming trend of history that no one and no force can stop.

Mr. President,

In a few days' time, the People's Republic of China will celebrate the 75th anniversary of its founding. Over the past 75 years, no matter how the world changes, China's dedication has not changed. It is dedicated to pursuing happiness for the Chinese people and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is also dedicated to human progress and world harmony. In the course of seeking its own development, China has kept in mind the common interests of the whole world, generating new opportunities for the world through its own development. Not long ago, the Third Plenum of the 20th CPC Central Committee made an important decision on further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. It set in motion a new journey where China joins hands with the world in common development and progress. Chinese modernization will contribute robustly to world peace and stability. The Chinese culture values peace, and the Chinese nation has no tradition of external expansion. China, once a victim of foreign power bullying, knows full well the value of peace and the hard-won gains of development. In fact, China is the only major country that has written peaceful development into its constitution, and the only country among the five nuclear-weapon states to pledge no-first-use of nuclear weapons. We are actively exploring and putting into practice the Chinese way of addressing hotspot issues, boosting the prospects for resolving the security dilemma and improving security governance, and paving the ground for conflict settlement and peacebuilding. Every step in China's development is an increase in the force for peace.

Chinese modernization will contribute robustly to the common development for all. China does not only care about its own development. We are ready to develop hand in hand with all countries. By further expanding high-standard opening up, China is aligning proactively with high-standard international economic and trade rules to foster a market-oriented, law-based and world-class business environment. China has realized full mutual visa exemption with many countries, and is expanding its unilateral visa waiver program to facilitate two-way personnel flows. China is vigorously promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, a concrete step to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China will also speed up the implementation of the eight measures in support of Global South cooperation and the series of initiatives supporting Africa's peace and development, in order to help countries in the Global South stride toward modernization.

Chinese modernization will contribute robustly to improving global governance. China has been an abiding supporter of the U.N.'s continued reform and development to bring about a modernized "U.N. 2.0."

The international financial system needs to be more fit for the times and global governance should be more balanced and effective. China will continue to fulfill its international obligations, provide financial support and send our best minds to the United Nations. The U.N. system needs to respond to the legitimate calls of developing countries and increase the representation and voice of those in the Global South.

Chinese modernization will contribute robustly to the advancement of human civilization. Chinese modernization is rooted in China, but has also drawn on the achievements of other civilizations. It has created a new form of human advancement, and provided a new choice to other countries in exploring modernization paths. China believes that different civilizations should respect and learn from one another, and jointly contribute to the progress of human civilization. China has proposed the setting up of an International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. We call for more people-to-people exchanges and cooperation across the world, to strengthen mutual understanding and amity among people of all countries.

Mr. President,

Next year will mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of this very Organization. China stands ready to work with all countries to renew the founding purposes and mission of the U.N., reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the U.N. Charter, advocate and practice true multilateralism, build a community with a shared future for mankind, and jointly usher in a better world. Thank you.

China's top political advisor calls for broadest patriotic united front at National Day reception

29 September 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)



Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), delivers a speech at a reception to celebrate the upcoming 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, in Beijing, capital of China, Sept. 28, 2024. The reception was jointly held by the General Office of the CPPCC National Committee, the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, and the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese. (Xinhua/Li Tao)

China's top political advisor Wang Huning on Saturday called for consolidating and developing the broadest possible patriotic united front to rally the people's support, foster consensus, and pool their strength to advance Chinese modernization.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, made the remarks at a reception held in Beijing to celebrate the upcoming 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

"To accomplish Chinese modernization, it is essential for all Chinese people to unite and collaborate collectively," he said.

On Hong Kong and Macao, Wang stressed the determination to continue to fully, faithfully, and resolutely implement the policy of One Country, Two Systems, see that Hong Kong and Macao are administered by patriots, inspire more people in Hong Kong and Macao to love both the country and their own regions, and support Hong Kong and Macao in better integrating themselves into the country's overall development.

On Taiwan, Wang stressed adherence to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, expressing the willingness to promote peaceful development of cross-strait relations and advance integrated development in all fields.

He called for efforts to resolutely oppose "Taiwan independence" separatist activities and foreign interference and unswervingly advance the cause of national reunification.

About 2,000 representatives from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities attended the reception.

'Get things done': China tries to rally risk-averse officials to revive economy

27 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang and William Zheng

China's leaders are again seeking to rally risk-averse cadres to the cause of decisive economic action by stressing the need to "get things done" and its tolerance of mistakes in a policy known as the "three exempts".

The Politburo, the ruling Communist Party's inner circle, signalled the renewed political commitment in a statement after a meeting on Thursday to, in part, address the lack of action among many officials to help revive the economy.

"Party members and officials are urged to take responsibility and be willing to innovate, using challenges as opportunities to grow and achieve results," state news agency Xinhua quoted the Politburo as saying.

"The 'three exempts' framework must be effectively applied to support those who take on responsibilities and get things done. Major economic provinces should be encouraged to take the lead and play a greater role in driving the economy forward."

The meeting came a day after financial authorities unveiled a series of sweeping stimulus measures and in the lead-up to National Day celebrations, underscoring Beijing's desire to prop up growth over other priorities.

It also stressed the need for proactive policies, effective financial measures and support for the private sector.

President Xi Jinping launched the three exempts policy in 2016 to tackle the challenges officials face in advancing reforms.

Many civil servants are reluctant to innovate and fear making mistakes, daunted by the system's centralisation, tight controls and lack of flexibility. Stringent oversight by the party's formidable disciplinary bodies is also a deterrent.

The three exempts policy differentiates between "mistakes" made during reforms, suggesting leniency for those stemming from inexperience rather than deliberate violations of discipline; those made in exploration; and those made unintentionally to promote development rather than for personal gain.

In 2020, the party's Central Committee went one step further to protect the rights of members to make mistakes, aiming to encourage initiative among its cadres.

The three exempts were underscored by Xi in January and again at a major party meeting in July to encourage officials to "forge ahead in a pioneering spirit and demonstrate enterprise in their work".

In a first, the July meeting referred specifically to the need to seriously investigate and handle “false accusations” against officials.

“It’s a clear signal from the party’s top leadership, telling officials down the command chain that now the economy is their priority”

- *Deng Yuwen, former Study Times editor*

Deng Yuwen, former deputy editor of Study Times, the official newspaper of the Central Party School, said the three exempts reference on Thursday was a clear message to officials down the line that economic recovery was now the top performance indicator on their report card.

“It’s a clear signal from the party’s top leadership, telling officials down the command chain that now the economy is Beijing has tried to strike a balance between national security and economic growth as “external hostilities” have grown, but mixed messaging and ambiguity have long made cadres fearful of taking action.

Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Strategic Studies at Tsinghua University, said trial and error were a part of any difficult task.

“The party has to value those cadres who have the guts to test the water, because its reform and opening up is entering deep waters, with all the low-hanging fruit already picked,” Xie said.

Victor Shih, a specialist in Chinese elite politics and finance at the University of California San Diego, said the sloganeering was an attempt to encourage local officials to take more risks as their counterparts did in the 1980s and 1990s to drive growth.

“Local initiative would indeed help with growth today,” Shih said.

But there were big differences between then and now. “First, local governments are much more indebted so are less able to take initiatives on their own. They will need to dovetail their initiatives with central projects in order to take advantage of central transfer payments,” he said.

“Second, given the strong national security concern in Beijing, local officials still will be hesitant to collaborate with foreign investors. This was not the case in the 1980s and 1990s, when foreign investors were seen as highly desirable by the central leadership.”

To foster genuine economic recovery, Beijing must demonstrate that officials who take risks and innovate will be rewarded, according to a political scientist at Peking University who declined to be named.

He said motivated officials were “the most critical driver” to China’s growth but tougher regulations and anti-corruption campaigns over the past decade had made officials more risk-averse and hesitant to engage with the business community.

“So many just don’t push for new initiatives, don’t do extra, just pass the bosses’ instructions down,” he said.

“Beijing needs to reward them and let the whole party know, so that more will follow. Without such examples, few will take a first step because the previous few years have fixed their view.”

their priority. It essentially relaxes the current strict political requirements so that officials know what they should focus on,” Deng said.

“As the economy continues to worsen, the party’s leadership is getting more anxious than before, because they know a stagnant economy will mean major political risk in the future.

“They have also come to realise that besides the stimulus from the central bank and the Ministry of Finance, they also need to stimulate the enthusiasm of cadres.”

Top Chinese economist disappears from public life after criticizing Xi Jinping

27 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China sought to deny that Xi Jinping is a dictator when criticized as such by US President Joe Biden in Nov 2023, but a leading economist at a government thinktank has reportedly disappeared after being disciplined for criticising the Chinese President in a private online chat group.

Zhu Hengpeng, 55, reportedly made disparaging remarks about China’s economy, and potentially about the Chinese leader specifically, in a private *WeChat* group. He was subsequently detained in April and put under investigation, according to the *Wall Street Journal* which cited anonymous sources.

The specifics of what Zhu wrote in the private *WeChat* group are not known, although Hong Kong’s *Sing Tao Daily* has said he “improperly discussed central policies”. The *Wall Street Journal* has also reported that he allegedly made a reference to “Xi’s mortality”.

Zhu worked at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Cass) for more than 20 years, most recently as the Institute of Economics deputy director and director of the Public Policy Research Center.

He has reportedly not been seen in public since April when he spoke at an event organised by Chinese media outlet *Caixin*, which he had done previously. Efforts by the *Wall Street Journal* to contact him at home were reportedly unsuccessful. The Cass has not responded to queries, reported *theguardian.com* Sep 25.

Zhu’s loss of position at the Cass also saw a shakeup of the institute’s senior ranks, with the director and secretary also removed from their posts, the report said, citing Hong Kong media reports earlier this month. While those two officials were reassigned, Zhu

was not, the report said, citing *Sing Tao Daily*. He is no longer listed on the Cass website.

Websites related to his work at Tsinghua University have also reportedly been taken offline.

Cass is a state research think tank that reports directly to China's top leadership. Chen Daoyin, a former associate professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, described it as a "body to formulate party ideology to support the leadership," noted *businessinsider.in* Sep 24.

While Cass sometimes provides relatively frank analysis, under the increasingly authoritarian rule of Xi, criticism of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and his individual leadership has become increasingly frowned upon, and treated punitively, said *theguardian.com* report.

Notices on the Cass website were stated to show staff engaging in several political education sessions in recent months, with a heavy focus on party loyalty and adherence to Xi Jinping Thought – the name given to the enshrined political ideology of the CPC leader.

China's economy is struggling, and there are concerns that the world's second-largest economy will miss its own 5% annual growth target, a relatively modest ambition by historic standards. However, Xi is seen as giving greater importance to his and the party's grip on power than the nation's economy.

Reforms key to better protection of human rights

25 September 2024, [China Daily](#)

Experts at a human rights symposium in Beijing on Tuesday called for stronger judicial protection of human rights, enhanced oversight of law enforcement, and reforms to address issues in the application of coercive legal measures.

Organized by the China Society for Human Rights Studies, the symposium aimed to promote the comprehensive development of human rights across the country.

Zhang Wenxian, director of the Academic Committee of the China Law Society, stressed that the rule of law is the most effective means to protect human rights.

He noted that despite progress, misuse of administrative and coercive measures — which sometimes constitute infringement on personal and property rights — still exists. Zhang said the need for further reforms to safeguard citizens and the legal representatives of entities and organizations is critical. His comments came after the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China reaffirmed the importance of the judicial protection of human rights, calling for a "correct outlook on human rights" and more robust legal safeguards.

In July, the CPC Central Committee issued a resolution aimed at advancing Chinese modernization, highlighting the need for stronger protection of personal and property rights through law enforcement and judicial mechanisms. The resolution stressed improving systems for oversight and redress, particularly in cases involving coercive measures such as illegal detentions, the use of torture and the freezing of assets.

Zhang acknowledged that systemic shortcomings remain, particularly in ensuring personal and property rights are respected in law enforcement. He called for a comprehensive plan to improve human rights awareness among judicial personnel and more intensive reforms to prevent abuses of power.

Ma Huaide, president of China University of Political Science and Law, pointed to the problematic application of coercive measures such as the seizure and freezing of property, which often leads to human rights violations.

Ma cited a recent case in Shandong province, where a market regulation official was investigated for threatening a business operator, illustrating the need for greater oversight.

Li Xiao, a senior inspector at the Supreme People's Court, highlighted progress in reforming the trial-centered criminal procedure system, leading to the correction of several wrongful convictions.

However, she noted that misconduct by some law enforcement officers, including illegal detentions and abuse of power for personal gain, continues to undermine public trust in the judicial system.

Li stressed the importance of further reforms to strengthen supervision at all stages of law enforcement and related judicial processes, ensuring that abuses of power are checked and human rights are protected.

Xi stresses imperative to give full play to CPPCC's political strengths

22 September 2024, [The State Council](#)

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) convened a grand gathering to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the CPPCC. The event took place in the auditorium of the National Committee of the CPPCC on the morning of September 20. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese president, and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attended the conference and delivered an important address. Xi underscored the imperative of having greater confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture, giving full play to the salient political strengths of the CPPCC in advancing

the whole-process people's democracy, and continuously consolidating and fostering a vibrant, stable and united political landscape.

Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi, who are members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, and Vice President Han Zheng, attended the conference. Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC, chaired the conference.

The conference commenced with the majestic national anthem. Xi delivered an important speech. He pointed out that the practice in the past 75 years has fully demonstrated that the CPPCC stands as a remarkable achievement the CPC has made in adapting the united front theory, political party theory, and democratic politics theory of Marxism-Leninism to China's realities and to the best of its traditional culture. The CPPCC is a great invention by the CPC leading other political parties, personages without party affiliation, people's organizations and people from all walks of life and all ethnic groups in the development of China's political system. It has a profound cultural, theoretical and practical foundation, distinct Chinese characteristics and significant political strengths. It is a scientific and effective institutional arrangement, and has distinctive political value unique in the development of the political systems of mankind.

Xi stressed that since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, we have adapted to the situation and tasks of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, promoted innovation in theories on the development of the CPPCC based on practice, and constantly deepened the understanding of how the CPPCC should function and develop. The fundamental principles are as follows: the Party's overall leadership over the CPPCC must be upheld, the nature of the CPPCC must remain unchanged, the role of the CPPCC as a specialized consultative body must be given full play, China's new socialist political party system must be adhered to and improved, great unity and alliance must be maintained, strengthening ideological and political guidance and building a broad consensus must be taken as the central link, the central tasks of the Party and the country must be the focus when the CPPCC performs its duties, serving the people must be what the CPPCC pursues, the responsibilities of its members must be strengthened, and the CPPCC's capacity for performing its duties must be built in the spirit of reform and innovation. These 10 principles constitute our Party's important thinking on strengthening and improving the work of the CPPCC, Xi said. They epitomize the experience the CPPCC has accumulated in its development in the past 75 years, especially since the beginning of the new era, and are

fundamental guidelines for the CPPCC's work on the new journey in the new era. They must be implemented in a complete, accurate and comprehensive manner, and continue to be enriched and developed in practice.

Xi pointed out that consultative democracy is an important component of the whole-process people's democracy, a unique form and distinctive advantage of China's socialist democratic politics, and an important embodiment of the Party's mass line in the political sphere. On the new journey in the new era, we must adhere to the correct political direction, improve the system of consultative democracy in an integrated manner, make efforts to improve the mechanism of consultative democracy, continuously expand the methods and platforms of consultation, and actively create a good atmosphere and favorable conditions so as to promote extensive, multilevel, and institutionalized development of consultative democracy.

Xi noted that, on the new journey in the new era, the CPPCC should carry forward its fine traditions, shoulder its political responsibilities, ensure the integration of Party leadership, the united front, and consultative democracy, and give full play to the role of a specialized consultative body, so as to rally the people's support, build consensus, draw on collective wisdom, and pool strengths for advancing Chinese modernization.

Xi pointed out that upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics is the linchpin of consolidating the common ideological and political foundation, and the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is the general guideline for the work of the CPPCC. The CPPCC must have a thorough understanding of the distinct political attributes of its system and its organizations, thoroughly study and implement the Party's innovative theories, constantly consolidate the common ideological and political foundation for unity and hard work, and do its work well for promoting political unity and cooperation, common ideological progress, and concerted action among all political parties, organizations, and people of all ethnic groups and from all walks of life.

Xi stressed that the CPPCC should leverage well its strengths in gathering talent and pooling wisdom, and further advance consultation and deliberation on state affairs with focus on major, challenging and hotspot issues concerning advancing Chinese modernization, further comprehensively deepening reform, promoting high-quality development and safeguarding social harmony and stability. He said that the CPPCC should also give full play to its strengths in consultative oversight, and help ensure that the Party and the state's major decisions and plans deliver substantially.

Xi noted that the CPPCC should improve its working mechanism that propels the role of the united front in rallying the people's support and pooling strengths. He said the CPPCC should strengthen the political guidance on intellectuals who are not Party members, those working in the non-public sector, people from emerging social groups and those from the religious sector, extensively unite and stay engaged with overseas Chinese, and expand the convergence of interests in building a strong country and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Xi stressed that it is imperative to improve the working institutions and mechanisms of the CPPCC, and strengthen the coordination and cooperation between its consultation and other forms of consultation. It is essential to refine the mechanisms under which in-depth consultations and interactions are conducted, opinions are fully expressed, and broad consensus is built. It is equally important to strengthen the building of mechanisms under which the CPPCC can know better about social realities and public opinions, and stay engaged with and serve the people. The CPPCC should do more work to know more about people's actual conditions, address their concerns and make them feel that we do care about them.

Xi pointed out that building a team of CPPCC members who have profound understanding of the CPPCC, are adept at political consultation and discussion of state affairs, and abide by discipline, value norms and moral integrity, is an important guarantee for the CPPCC to perform its duties in high quality. All CPPCC members should cherish their political identity, temper their political morals, improve their capability to do political work, and have a stronger sense of mission and responsibility so that they can devote themselves to the practical work of pooling collective wisdom and strength, consulting on decision-making, consultative democracy and national governance.

Xi emphasized that CPC committees at all levels should strengthen the leadership over the work of the CPPCC and support the CPPCC in performing its duties. The leading Party members group of the CPPCC National Committee should play a leading role in commanding the direction, managing the overall situation, and ensuring implementation of related policies, and improve and implement the organizational system and institutional mechanism for the CPC's leadership over the work of the CPPCC. With the progress of the CPC's political work as guide, it is imperative to promote the CPPCC's Party building in a comprehensive way so that a clean political ecology will be created for the CPPCC to perform its duties well.

Presiding over the meeting, Wang Huning pointed out that in his important speech, General Secretary Xi Jinping spoke highly of the historical contribution of the CPPCC, profoundly expounded on the CPPCC's distinct Chinese characteristics and significant political

strengths, put forward clear requirements for continuously promoting extensive, multilevel, and institutionalized development of consultative democracy, and made comprehensive arrangements for the work of the CPPCC at present and in the future. The speech has pointed out the direction forward and provided fundamental guidelines for the high-quality development of the CPPCC work on the new journey in the new era. The speech is insightful and in depth, has rich connotations and is of political, ideological, and guiding significance. It is essential for us to earnestly study and implement the essence of the speech, Wang said. It is imperative to thoroughly study, comprehend and implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's important thinking on strengthening and improving the work of the CPPCC, understand the decisive significance of the "Two Establishments," consciously act on the "Two Upholds," and guarantee the integration of the Party's leadership, the united front, and consultative democracy, striving to make new contributions to the development of the Party and the country.

Those present at the meeting included members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in Beijing, members of the CPC Central Committee Secretariat, some vice chairpersons of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, state councilors, the president of the Supreme People's Court, the procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, vice chairpersons of the National Committee of the CPPCC, and former leading officials of the CPPCC National Committee who have retired. Approximately 800 attendees were present at the meeting, including the leading officials from relevant central Party and state departments, and relevant people's organizations and units, leaders of the other political parties' central committees and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and personages without party affiliation, members of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee in Beijing as well as representatives of relevant sectors.

China sees significant rise in protests despite CCP regime's tight control: Report

21 September 2024, [Zimbabwe Independent](#)

An American nonprofit human rights organization, in its latest report released on August 28, documented 805 incidents of dissent in China between April and June, which marks an 18 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023, despite the Chinese communist regime's stringent controls.

According to the report by Washington-based Freedom House's China Dissent Monitor (CDM), most of the dissent incidents recorded across 370 provincial cities in China were related to labour disputes (44

percent) and homeowners' protests (21 percent), with the remainder involving diverse groups like rural residents, students, parents, investors, consumers, members of religious groups, activists, Tibetans, ethnic Mongolians, and members of the LGBT+ community.

Guangdong Province saw the highest number of protests, accounting for 13 percent of the total, followed by Shandong, Hebei, Henan, and Zhejiang. Shenzhen, Xi'an, and Sanya were among the cities with the highest rates of protests over economic issues.

Additionally, several cities in Guangdong Province also experienced a significant percentage of protests, as per the report.

Freedom House's CDM, documenting nearly 6,400 dissent events over two years, logged 805 dissent incidents in the second quarter of 2024, as per the report.

"The top regions for protest events were Guangdong (13 percent), followed by Shandong, Hebei, Henan, and Zhejiang. CDM has logged a total of 6,300 cases of dissent since data collection began in June 2022," the report read.

The CDM documented 228 protests led by rural residents over the past two years, most of which were linked to forced relocation and unfair land acquisition. These cases shed light on the corruption and discontent that arises from widespread land expropriation, the report said.

The report analyzed 91 protests led by taxi, ride-hailing, delivery, bus, and truck drivers in China, while many of these events were sparked by policies affecting transportation workers, such as regulation on ride-hailing apps and self-driving taxis.

Dissent by homeowners and construction workers constitute 44 percent of all dissent cases in CDM's database, reflecting the major impact of the real estate crisis on citizens' livelihoods.

Despite the Chinese government's attempts to abate the real estate sector's collapse, CDM data indicates that protest frequency has not declined.

Analysis of CDM's data collected over two years indicates that Shenzhen, Xi'an, and Sanya have more protests over economic grievances on a per capita basis than any other cities in China, while many other highly ranked cities are located in Guangdong Province.

Meanwhile, despite Beijing's intervention efforts, China's economy is sliding into stagnation after four decades of growth.

The communist regime's measures have been unable to resolve key obstacles to economic advancement, such as the real estate crisis, a trade war with the United States, restrictions on the private sector, and the prolonged negative impacts of its stringent Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, as per the report.

The report indicates that many of the protests were suppressed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) due to concerns that they might pose greater political risks. China observers suggest that the rise in protests, despite the CCP's stringent control, signals a legitimacy crisis for the party.

Chairman of the board of Taiwan's New School for Democracy, Tseng Chien-Yuan, told The Epoch Times that the current situation in China is unlike anywhere else, as even the middle class, including property owners, have stood up to protest, which shows that China's economic situation is very serious.

"People are forced to live in poverty, and the legitimacy of the CCP's rule, which is built on economic development, is greatly weakened," Yuan said.

"Under strict surveillance, people still come out to protest, which is a warning sign of a major crisis," he added.

Speaking to The Epoch Times on the matter, Wu Se-Chih, a researcher at Cross-Strait Policy Association in Taiwan, said, "Generally speaking, social protests occur when people's forbearance has reached its limit."

He claimed that the real number of the protests is much larger than what the CDM was able to collect because of the CCP's control and its censorship.

Freedom House acknowledged the media restrictions in China and the "risks associated with collecting information from within the country about dissent and protest" in the report.

Freedom House's CDM "was created in response to the information gap" through data collected from "news reports, civil society organizations, and China-based social media," as well as other sources.

Wu Se-Chih said that the Chinese regime always suppresses protests and blocks information from reaching the public and outside world.

The CCP also "used other methods to ease the backlash from the people or society," Wu said, adding that "the CCP now has fewer and fewer means that it can use, especially as it's facing serious financial problems."

The researcher said when Chinese society as a whole falls into economic despair, it will be more difficult for the CCP to control the power of the people to counter its regime.

"In the end, the CCP will collapse due to the social unrest," he told the publication.

Translation: Chinese Universities Install Software to Identify and Punish Students Who Circumvent the Great Firewall

18 September 2024, [China Digital Times](#)

A recent WeChat post reveals that some Chinese schools and universities are using special software to identify and punish students who “scale the wall”—that is, circumvent China’s Great Firewall (GFW) to access overseas websites and portals. The post begins with a not-very-convincing exchange of WeChat messages between three students—identified as “student A,” “student B,” and “student C,” respectively—discussing **their university’s use of the ABT Online Behavior Management System** (安博通上网行为管理, *Ānbótōng shàngwǎng xíngwéi guǎnlǐ*) to identify and punish fellow students who circumvented the GFW to access blocked overseas websites and engage in “illegal discourse.” In their conversation, one of the students writes that it was “lucky the school caught the offenders before they ruined the school’s reputation.” The text that follows this exchange reads like advertising copy and praises the various “advantages” of the software.

Below is a partial translation, with some added explanatory links, of the WeChat post. The post includes a statement—ostensibly from a teacher in the university’s department of information management, though it reads more like an ABT product pitch—touting the four “advantages” of ABT’s software:

1. High performance equipment, simple installation. [...] Tailor-made for colleges and universities.
2. Cutting-edge capability for identifying 116 types of GFW-circumvention proxy utilities, including popular utilities such as Shadowrocket, Clash, Freerate, and more.
3. A variety of authentication methods to meet the real-name requirements of different clients. [...] Utilizes overseas IP-address tracing and real-name registration to accurately pinpoint and “apprehend” violators.
4. Detailed and comprehensive reports, displayed in a separate interface.

How did the school discover which students “scaled the wall” to visit overseas websites? [...] The school had installed the ABT Online Behavior Management System, which utilizes reverse IP lookup and real-name identification to accurately pinpoint students who circumvent the Great Firewall.

[...] Universities in various cities and provinces have also issued similar notices. For example, the National University of Defense Technology [in Changsha, Hunan province] issued a notice declaring, “This wall cannot be scaled! Do not test the law,” and Jilin University of

Finance and Economics issued a set of “regulations regarding students’ illegal use of GFW-circumvention software.”

[...] What are some university test-cases?

Five universities in Jiangxi province: Thanks to the product’s outstanding accurate proxy-identification capability and robust library of proxy-identifying features, [ABT] successfully won the bid involving both 40Gb/s- and 60Gb/s-bandwidth equipment.

During a test at a certain university in Jiangxi, the Internet Supervision Office reported that a student had used a VPN to circumvent the GFW. ABT’s technical staff worked closely with teachers in the university’s Information Management Office to check the VPN logs and NAT (Network Address Translation) logs on ABT’s Online Behavior Management System, and were able to accurately identify the suspected violator. A subsequent inspection of the student’s computer revealed evidence that the suspect had accessed VPN software and illegal online forums. This efficient collaboration and precise investigation won high praise for our equipment and service from the teachers at the university’s Information Management Office, which not only laid the groundwork for cooperation between our two parties, but also smoothed the path to ABT winning the bid for the project.

[...] In addition to countering circumvention, ABT’s Online Behavior Management System also has sophisticated capabilities for identifying, controlling, and auditing more than 7,000 common software applications such as instant messaging, P2P downloads, stock trading, online gaming, online video-streaming, and more. By combining powerful bandwidth-management features, sophisticated management of network application behavior, and user-friendly logs and other functions, it can help academic institutions and companies alike to achieve visual control and worry-free security. [Chinese]

There is a long history of prosecutions and punishments of individuals in China who use VPNs to circumvent the GFW and access the uncensored Internet. One recent case involved the retroactive administrative punishment of a man in Ningde, Fujian province, for using a VPN back in 2020. In 2023, a programmer in Chengde, Hebei province, was fined three years of “illegal income,” totaling over one million yuan, for using a VPN to do work for an overseas client. VPN-related prosecutions of Uyghurs in Xinjiang have been even stricter than in other areas: in 2017, a computer science student in Urumqi was sentenced to 13 years in prison for using a VPN to bypass Internet censorship and view “illegal information.” Other double standards abound: in November of last year, current affairs blogger Xiang Dongliang had his Weibo account banned for reporting nationalist pundit and former Global Times

Editor-in-Chief Hu Xijin for illegal VPN use and posting to overseas websites such as X. (Xiang was punished, but authorities ignored his complaint about Hu's violation of the law.) In late 2022, CDT translated a censorship directive about a crackdown on censorship-circumvention tools. The crackdown was likely aimed at suppressing news about the nationwide spate of anti-lockdown demonstrations that came to be known as the "White Paper protests."

Xi urges continuous efforts to run people's congresses to good effect

16 September 2024, [The State Council](#)

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) held a grand meeting at the Great Hall of the People on the morning of Sept. 14 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the NPC. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attended the meeting and delivered an important speech. He stressed the need to further firm up confidence in the path, theory, system and culture, develop whole-process people's democracy, and continuously uphold, improve and run the system of people's congresses to good effect to provide a solid institutional guarantee for the Party and the people to achieve their goals on the new journey in the new era. Li Qiang, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi, who are members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, and Vice President Han Zheng, attended the event. The meeting was presided over by Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee.

The meeting commenced amidst the resounding national anthem. Xi delivered an important speech. He pointed out that the system of people's congresses is the result of the arduous exploration and long-term struggles of the Chinese people under the CPC leadership. It is an entirely new political system that has grown from the Chinese soil and a great invention in the evolution of political institutions. The establishment of this system marked a great transformation in China's political system, signifying a great shift from a power structure where the power was concentrated in the hands of a few while the majority faced oppression and exploitation, to one that is led by the Party and empowers the people to govern the country as its masters.

Xi emphasized that over the past 70 years, the system of people's congresses has, under the Party's leadership, effectively ensured that our country

continues to advance along the socialist path. It has demonstrated significant political advantages in guaranteeing that the Party leads the people in governing the country according to law, ensuring that the people are the masters of the country, maintaining political life that is both vibrant and orderly, promoting the rule of law in all aspects of national governance, and safeguarding long-term stability and peace. This system has provided an important institutional guarantee for creating miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability. Practice has proven that the people's congress system is a sound system that accords with China's national conditions and realities, embodies the nature of socialist countries, and effectively rallies the strength of all Chinese people to advance Chinese modernization.

Xi pointed out that since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, our Party has stood at a new historical juncture, gained a deep understanding of the new changes to the principal contradictions in Chinese society, actively responded to the people's new demands and aspirations for democracy and rule of law, and improved the organizational and working systems of people's congresses, making historic achievements in its work. We adhere to adapting the basic tenets of Marxism to China's specific realities and fine traditional Chinese culture, deeply grasp the laws governing the development of socialist democracy, and continuously promote theoretical and practical innovations in the system of people's congresses. Noting that the system of people's congresses is an important institutional vehicle for realizing whole-process people's democracy in China, Xi said it is imperative to uphold the CPC's leadership, adhere to the use of a system of institutions to ensure that the people run the country, exercise law-based governance on all fronts, uphold democratic centralism, and stick to the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics. Efforts must be made to modernize China's system and capacity for governance, give full play to the role of deputies to people's congresses, strengthen the self-improvement efforts of people's congresses at various levels to uphold their four-fold role as political, working, representative institutions, and institutions of state power. This series of new concepts, ideas and requirements form the Party's important thoughts on upholding and improving the system of people's congresses, providing fundamental guidance for the high-quality development of people's congresses in the new era, Xi said.

Xi emphasized the need to give full play to the role of people's congresses in ensuring full and effective implementation of the Constitution and laws. People's congresses at all levels and their standing committees must fully perform their functions, firmly safeguard

the unity, dignity, and authority of the country's legal system, ensure effective implementation of the Constitution and laws, and make sure that all state organs fulfill their duties and carry out their work within the scope permitted by the Constitution and laws.

It is important that people's congresses play a leading role in legislative work, Xi said. He urges efforts to improve the legislative framework featuring guidance from Party committees, the leading role played by people's congresses, support from the government, and participation by all parties. Efforts should be made to step up legislation in key, emerging, and foreign-related fields, improve the quality of legislation, and continuously improve the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics. He also urged efforts to accelerate the improvement of a legal system featuring equal rights, equal opportunities and fair rules for all to ensure that citizens fully enjoy their rights.

Xi emphasized the need to give full play to the key role of the oversight by people's congresses in the Party and state supervision systems. It is imperative to improve the system through which people's congresses oversee the government, the supervisory commissions, the people's courts and the people's procuratorates. Xi urged people's congresses to strengthen oversight of the implementation of the Constitution and laws, and intensify the review and oversight of government budgets and final accounts and the oversight over the management of state-owned assets and government debts. People's congresses should work to promote the implementation of the CPC Central Committee's decisions and plans, and ensure that all state organs exercise their powers by law and that the legitimate rights and interests of the people are safeguarded and realized. Administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory and procuratorial organs at various levels should readily accept oversight from people's congresses and effectively fulfill their respective supervisory duties, he said.

Xi pointed out that people's congresses should play an exemplary role in maintaining close ties with the people. All state organs and their employees must foster a strong sense of service to the people, put the people above all else, and maintain close ties with them. Deputies to people's congresses shoulder the honorable duties entrusted to them by the people, Xi noted, urging them to faithfully represent the interests and will of the people, and serve as the bridge that links the Party and the state with the people. He stressed the need for all state organs to provide support for the deputies to the people's congresses to perform their duties in accordance with the law, improve the systems and mechanisms for contact with deputies, and ensure that deputies reach out to the

public on a greater variety of issues and in more diversified ways.

Xi emphasized that party committees at all levels should strengthen their overall leadership over the work of the people's congresses, and support the people's congresses and their standing committees in exercising their powers and carrying out their work in accordance with the law. The leading Party members groups of the standing committees of the people's congresses at all levels should always adhere to the centralized and unified leadership of the Party Central Committee, fulfill their main responsibilities for comprehensively and strictly governing the Party, and strengthen the political, ideological, organizational, work style, and disciplinary construction of the people's congresses in line with the requirement to uphold the four-fold role. They should train personnel that maintain political resolve, serve the people, respect the rule of law, promote democracy, and are diligent and responsible, and continuously improve the quality and level of the people's congress work in the new era and on the new journey.

While presiding over the meeting, Zhao Leji said that General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speech reviewed the glorious course of the CPC leading the Chinese people in establishing and improving the system of people's congresses, and profoundly expounded on the remarkable political advantages of the system. The speech has systematically summarized the major achievements in theoretical and practical innovations of the system in the new era, and made comprehensive arrangements and clear requirements for upholding, improving, and running the system at a new historical starting point. The speech is forward-looking and inspires people to forge ahead. It enriches and develops Xi's important thoughts on upholding and improving the system, and is a guiding document shining with the brilliance of the truth of Marxism. We must study and comprehend it earnestly and firmly implement it. We must gain a deep understanding of the decisive significance of establishing Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and establishing the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and consciously uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and uphold the Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership. We must unwaveringly keep to the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and uphold, improve and run the system of people's congresses to good effect. The meeting was attended by members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, vice chairpersons of the NPC Standing Committee, State Councilors, president of the Supreme People's Court,

procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, some vice chairpersons of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, senior comrades who had assumed leading positions at the NPC Standing Committee, as well as members of the Central Military Commission in Beijing.

Approximately 3,000 people attended the meeting, including leaders from various departments of the CPC Central Committee, government, military and people's organizations as well as leading officials from Beijing, leaders of the central committees of democratic parties and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, representatives of non-party personages, members of the NPC Standing Committee and various special committees, senior officials from the standing committees of people's congresses at the provincial, regional and municipal levels, some NPC deputies, representatives from all walks of life in the capital, and foreign envoys in China.

China is poised to amend its anti-corruption law for the first time

14 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Yuanyue Dang

China is set to amend its anti-corruption law, allowing bail for corruption suspects during investigations but also extending the detention period during which suspects are denied access to a lawyer.

A draft amendment to the Supervision Law was under review by the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, China's top legislative body, during its four-day session that ended on Friday, state news agency Xinhua said.

It would be the first amendment since the legislation's introduction in March 2018. The draft was published on the NPC website on Friday afternoon as a month-long public consultation starts.

The Xinhua report did not say when and whether the standing committee would approve the amendments but legislative amendments are generally adopted after three reviews.

Some lawyers said that the draft did not give them more leeway in defending their clients while providing anti-corruption agencies more legal tools to carry out investigations.

Under one new provision, investigators are authorised to "compel an individual who is suspected of serious dereliction of duties or committing a crime by abusing power to make himself available for investigation".

The same provision also stipulates that investigators can only hold a suspect for 12 hours under normal circumstances, though the detention may be extended to 24 hours if it is deemed necessary considering the safety and psychological conditions of the suspect.

Investigators would not be allowed to hold a suspect indefinitely by repeatedly extending the detention.

Another proposal would allow suspects of minor corruption offences to be released on bail for a maximum period of 12 months.

In addition, one provision would permit investigators to hold suspects of minor offences in a detention facility even if the suspects are not officially detained but deemed to pose "real security risks", such as flight risk or the risk of suicide.

Under such circumstances, investigators would have to send the suspect to detention facilities within 24 hours after they identify the risk and decide within seven days whether to formally hold him in detention or release him.

Under the amendment, the period of disciplinary detention – commonly known as *liuzhi* – may be extended.

Under current law, disciplinary detention allows anti-corruption investigators to hold a suspect at designated facilities for up to six months. Such detention could apply to anyone employed in the state sector or on a public payroll, including officials, academics and teachers as well as those suspected of offering bribes.

A new provision would let investigators extend the detention another two months if they determine that a suspect's offence could warrant more than 10 years' imprisonment and that their inquiry cannot be completed within six months.

However, the extension would require approval from the country's top anti-corruption body, the National Supervisory Commission – which is essentially the same body as the Communist Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

Additionally, the provision states, if the anti-corruption agency at or above the provincial level discovers that the suspect has committed other serious crimes, it can apply to the national agency for a renewal of their detention period, which can be as long as eight months.

The change means that suspects in corruption cases may not be able to see a lawyer for more than a year before prosecutors charge them.

According to the CCDI, China's top anti-corruption body, some 26,000 disciplinary detentions were ordered in 2023.

The most controversial feature of the Supervision Law has been that people detained by anti-corruption authorities are not allowed access to lawyers until they have been formally charged.

Despite years of calls from lawyers and legal scholars to change the rule, the proposed amendment does not modify it.

Xie Dan, a partner at Beijing Ronghe Law Firm, said: "We lawyers have been concerned over the years about how the authorities can protect the rights of

suspects during investigations. The amendment partly addresses these concerns by providing alternatives to *liuzhi* and providing more details about how the system works.”

But, he added, “I still think that the authorities should allow them [suspects in corruption cases] to meet with lawyers during detention.”

Jin Hongwei, a partner at Beijing Huayi Law Firm, said that under the current Supervision Law, investigation almost automatically means detention, and that the new measures of the draft amendment make the transition from investigation to detention “more nuanced”.

Jin said the changes were expected to have a major impact on those under investigation, but “not on lawyers”.

For the first time, the draft also states that anti-corruption agencies should not “use their power to illegally interfere in the operation of enterprises” and should protect the “rights and interests of personal freedom and property” of entrepreneurs under investigation.

Beijing has called for protection of private businesses to create a more favourable business environment as China endures a weak economic recovery.

Report details how China retaliates against people for engaging with UN

13 September 2024, [VOA News](#), Liam Scott



FILE - Jimmy Lai walks through the Stanley prison in Hong Kong on July 28, 2023.

China is among the foreign governments that retaliate against people for engaging with the United Nations, according to a report released this week by the U.N. Secretary-General.

The report highlights how hard Beijing tries to silence its critics, according to Sophie Richardson, an expert on human rights in China.

“These [U.N.] mechanisms are some of the only ones available to people inside China, at least on paper, to provide any modicum of redress or justice for the human rights abuses either they’ve endured or the communities they work with have endured,” Richardson told VOA.

“That’s why you see the Chinese government go to extraordinary lengths to silence people who are simply trying to take reports to some of these human rights experts or bodies,” Richardson said.

A former China director at Human Rights Watch, Richardson is currently a visiting scholar at Stanford University.

The annual report chronicles government retaliation against people for engaging with the U.N. In addition to China, other countries named in the report include Colombia, India, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Russia. “In my perfect world, governments that get referenced in these reprisals reports shouldn’t be members of the Human Rights Council,” said Richardson, who is based in Washington. China is a current member of the council in Geneva.

China’s Washington embassy, as well as its U.N. offices in New York and Geneva, did not reply to VOA’s emails requesting comment for this story.

One of the incidents included in the report’s China section is harassment against two members of the international legal team supporting Jimmy Lai, a pro-democracy publisher.

Lai is on trial in Hong Kong on national security charges that are widely viewed as politically motivated. The 76-year-old is in prison following convictions in other cases that supporters also view as sham cases.

Members of Lai’s legal team have faced death and rape threats, as well as attempts by unknown sources to hack their email and bank accounts, according to the report.

Sebastien Lai thanked the U.N. for shedding light on his father’s case.

“These intimidation tactics will not succeed. I will not rest until my father is freed,” he said in a statement. Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, a barrister leading Jimmy’s international legal team, also condemned the attacks. The reprisals “are personally unpleasant and distressing,” Gallagher said in a statement. “But they are also an attack on the legal profession and on the international human rights system.”

The reprisals make it harder for Jimmy Lai to use U.N. mechanisms to achieve justice in his case, Gallagher said.

Hong Kong’s government has tried to argue that the legal team interfered in Hong Kong’s judicial process by bringing his case to U.N. human rights mechanisms, according to the report.

“It’s just so nakedly in tension with its obligations under international law,” Richardson said.

On Thursday, Lai’s international legal team submitted an urgent appeal to the U.N. special rapporteur on torture. The appeal raised several concerns, including that the elderly publisher has been in solitary confinement since late 2020 and that the British national has been denied access to independent

medical care, according to a statement from his legal team.

Lai's trial began in December 2023. It was initially expected to last around 80 days but is now expected to resume in November.

Press freedom groups have called the trial a sham, and the U.S. and British governments have called for his immediate release. Hong Kong officials, however, have said he will receive a fair trial.

Other incidents cited in the U.N. report include the case of Cao Shunli, a Beijing-based human rights defender who was arrested following an attempt to engage in a universal periodic review of China's human rights record at the Human Rights Council. Cao died in custody in 2014.

Another case is that of the Beijing-based activists Li Wenzu and Wang Quanzhang, who are married. The couple have faced significant retaliation, including police surveillance and evictions, and their son is unable to enroll in school due to pressure from state authorities, the report said.

"If one reads these cases, you get a sense of what risks — what unbelievable risks — people are taking to do this kind of work," Richardson said.

The report doesn't mention specific incidents involving Uyghurs or Tibetans, but Richardson says their absence underscores how difficult it is for some groups to access U.N. mechanisms in the first place, as well as how some people may be too scared to report such incidents to the U.N.

The Chinese government has engaged in severe human rights abuses against both ethnic groups, according to myriad reports. Multiple governments and international human rights organizations have accused Beijing of committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the Uyghurs, which the Chinese government rejects.

China to train 3,000 foreign law enforcement officers to protect overseas interests

10 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Phoebe Zhang

Public Security Minister Wang Xiaohong says Beijing will also send consultants to help countries improve law enforcement and tackle cross-border crime.

China will help to train 3,000 foreign law enforcement officials over the next year to tackle global security issues and better protect Chinese interests beyond its borders, the country's public security minister said.

Wang Xiaohong made the pledge in a speech on Monday at the opening of the 2024 Conference of the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum in Lianyungang, in eastern China's Jiangsu province, China Daily reported.

China will also send police consultants and working units to countries to help improve their law

enforcement capacity, conduct joint patrols and investigations, and tackle cross-border crime, Wang said.

Beijing is seeking ways to boost its presence beyond its borders to protect overseas interests while offering an alternative to Western-led global security governance. In the past year, China has worked with all parties to implement in-depth global security initiatives, and will continue to promote the development of the global public security governance system in a "more fair, reasonable and efficient direction", Wang said, according to state news agency Xinhua.

This year's conference was themed "Win-win cooperation under changing circumstances: building a global public security community". More than 2,100 people from 122 countries, regions and international organisations attended this year's event, which also featured forums on tourist security, police education and law enforcement capacity building, according to The Paper.

On Monday, Wang met security officials from Malaysia, Myanmar, Zambia, Nicaragua and Russia, and told them that China was willing to cooperate in the fight against telecoms fraud, drug trafficking and other cross-border crimes, boost security along belt and road infrastructure projects and offer criminal judicial help, Xinhua reported.

Francisco Javier Diaz Madriz, director general of Nicaragua's national police, told Xinhua his country was "looking forward to learning from China's successful experience".

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At last year's conference, Wang discussed the need to build a cooperative public security network, and said global powers "with more resources and advantages" should take the lead in upholding fairness and justice in the international community and take a stand against hegemony.

That forum also issued several documents, including proposals on data security, artificial intelligence governance, and a talent programme for global public security.

Beijing released a concept paper in February 2023 on its Global Security Initiative, a plan announced by President Xi Jinping almost a year earlier, as China tries to take a bigger role in global governance and security. In the paper, Beijing repeated a call for countries to strengthen strategic dialogue to improve mutual trust and manage differences.

Questions continue to swirl around China's 'disappeared' foreign minister

10 September 2024, [VOA](#), Xiaoshan Xue

More than a year after China's former foreign minister, Qin Gang, disappeared from public view, raising a host of questions, the Chinese government remains silent on his whereabouts.

A new report this week from *The Washington Post*, citing two former U.S. government officials, suggests Qin has been spared any jail time and now is nominally holding a low-ranking position at a publishing house under the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Earlier reports speculated that he was sentenced to life in prison or had died from suicide or torture.

Some are skeptical about the *Washington Post* report, while others see it as evidence of uncertainty and impermanence within the political system directed by the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP.

According to Sunday's *Washington Post* report, Qin, 58, now works, at least on paper, for the World Affairs Press, a state-owned publishing house under the Foreign Ministry.

One of the former officials said Qin is "not going to jail, but his career is over."

Before he disappeared from public view in July of last year, Qin was the youngest foreign minister since the founding of the CCP. A leading theory among Chinese political analysts is that Qin was removed because he had an affair with Fu Xiaotian, a prominent Chinese television journalist, and that the pair had a child born out of wedlock in the United States.

Some reports suggested that the Chinese government suspected Fu of sharing state secrets with foreign intelligence agencies, but these rumors have never been confirmed. Like Qin, Fu disappeared from public life for more than a year ago.

During a top-level political meeting in July, the Third Plenum of the 20th Central Committee, the CCP agreed to Qin's request that he be removed from his post as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Chinese state media reported. That followed an official announcement in February that said Qin had resigned as a parliamentary deputy.

A reporter from *The Washington Post* recently visited the bookstore of the World Affairs Press in Beijing, but employees there told the newspaper that they had not heard that Qin worked at the publishing house. A staff member who answered the phone said she did not know if the news was true. China's Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

Some observers pointed out that the *Washington Post*'s report is based on an anonymous source who has left office, and the authenticity still needs to be verified.

Neil Thomas, a fellow on Chinese politics at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis, said on social media platform X, "The rumors of Qin Gang moving to World Affairs Press have been around for months. Sources are U.S. ex-officials and I don't know what they do. But @nakashimae & @cdcshepherd are top reporters."

Charles Smith, an encryption security expert, said on X that he doesn't believe the article, which "even notes the 'bookstore' employees have never seen Qin. ... He's on an extended fishing vacation." His tweet was accompanied by an image of a skeleton fishing underwater.

Last December, online news outlet Politico reported that Qin had been arrested for undermining national security and was tortured to death or committed suicide.

Yen-Ting, an X user who frequently comments on China's social and political issues, tweeted, "It's almost poetic justice, a 'Wolf Warrior' reduced to selling books while the regime's whispers suggest he's paid off the hook rather than locked up. This is China's way of dealing w/ its wayward wolves: not through the claws of justice but by shoving them into obscurity."

Kalpit A. Mankikar, a fellow in the Strategic Studies Program with the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi, tweeted, "Once seen as Stalin's heir, Soviet politician Georgy Malenkov fell from grace and was banished to Kazakhstan to manage a power plant. In #China, ex-foreign minister Qin Gang seems to have rehabilitated at a Party-run bookshop, says @washingtonpost."

The *Washington Post* report also quoted current and former U.S. officials who had dealt with Qin as saying he lacked the diplomatic skills of his experienced colleagues to break out of the "Wolf Warrior" model.

One example is that Qin appeared to threaten the U.S. with China "erasing" Taiwan Strait's median line, in a heated exchange with U.S. officials amid former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022.

American columnist James Pinkerton tweeted a reader's online comment on the *Washington Post* report.

The reader Paul Messina said, "I believe that now that the Chinese economy is falling apart, Xi has realized that this 'Wolf Warrior' tactic has actually exacerbated the fall of Chinese industry. Besides aggravating the West, particularly the United States with this nonsense, it has led to multiple Western corporations leaving China, permanently closing their doors and factories in search of friendlier nations to do business. "Vietnam and other nations have greatly benefited. Thus this idiot actually decreased the CCP's prestige in the world. I believe that this is why his new 'career' is librarian. Xi made a big mistake with his 'Wolf Warrior'

attitude towards the world. I believe that he now realizes this fact."

Liu Jianchao, the head of the International Liaison Department of the CCP Central Committee, who is relatively moderate in terms of rhetoric and image, is considered a possible candidate to succeed Wang Yi as the next foreign minister.

According to *The New York Times*, as China is already seeking to soften its image in the U.S. and Europe and improve relations with some of its neighbors, appointing Liu may mean China is abandoning its "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy.

Chinese legal community asks: where is the line on death penalty for corrupt officials?

08 September 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Inner Mongolia court dismisses appeal by party official who pleaded guilty to pocketing more than US\$422 million and was sentenced to death.

China may see more death sentences handed down to corrupt officials in the future as President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption efforts reach into lucrative sectors and the spoils of corruption rise, according to Chinese law practitioners and observers.

The Chinese legal community's latest discussion about standards for the death penalty come after a court in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region upheld the death sentence of a local official who pleaded guilty to pocketing more than 3 billion yuan (US\$422 million) in total.

On August 27, Inner Mongolia's regional high court dismissed an appeal by Li Jianping, 64, former party secretary of the economic and technological development zone in Hohhot, the region's capital city, according to its website.

Li's death sentence is awaiting final approval by the Supreme People's Court in keeping with a practice observed since 2006.

Li was also found guilty of condoning a local mafia organisation that carried out numerous illegal and criminal activities.

Even though more than 4 million officials have been caught up in China's sweeping anti-corruption campaign since Xi Jinping came to power at the end of 2012, it is rare for death sentences not to be suspended in corruption cases.

Li is only the third known case among officials handed the death penalty in the past decade. The others were Lai Xiaomin and Bai Tianhui, the former chairman and general manager of China Huarong International Holdings, one of the country's largest state-controlled asset management firms.

Lai was put to death by a court in the northern city of Tianjin in January 2021 after he was indicted for taking

almost 1.8 billion yuan in bribes, as well as other forms of corruption and bigamy. His former subordinate Bai was handed the death penalty in May for accepting bribes exceeding 1.1 billion yuan.

Two Chinese lawyers who handle corruption cases said the recent death penalty rulings were being closely watched by China's law practitioners for strong hints about the standard for the death penalty in such cases. Both declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

"If Bai is sentenced to death without a two-year suspension, then the 'death line' will be around 1.1 billion [yuan] in Bai's case," said one Beijing-based lawyer.

There is no official information about an appeal by Bai, but his death sentence has not been sent to the Supreme Court for final approval, meaning the ruling is not yet final.

A Shanghai lawyer concurred. He also noted that Zhang Zhongsheng – a former deputy mayor of Luliang city in Shanxi province who was indicted of taking 1.04 billion yuan – avoided execution when in 2021 he was granted a two-year reprieve on his death sentence on his appeal to Shanxi's provincial high court.

Under the presidency of Hu Jintao between 2003 and 2013, death penalties handed to corrupt officials were also rare but the sums involved were smaller.

Xu Maiyong and Jiang Renjie, former mayors of the eastern cities of Hangzhou and Suzhou, respectively, were corrupt officials who paid the ultimate price. Both were put to death in 2011.

Xu pleaded guilty to accepting more than 160 million yuan in bribes and embezzling more than 53 million yuan, while Jiang pocketed more than 100 million yuan.

Zheng Xiaoyu, director of the State Food and Drug Administration of China from 2003 to 2005, was sentenced to death for taking more than 6.49 million yuan. He was executed in 2007 in a case that was deemed extraordinary because he oversaw a sector considered highly consequential to the health of all Chinese.

Liu Changsong, director and founder of Beijing Mugong Law Firm, said although today's 1 billion yuan red line was "a rough threshold", any final decision on death penalty sentencing involved many other factors, including harm to the country and society from the crime, and mitigating circumstances such as a sincere confession of guilt, expression of repentance and efforts to return the proceeds of crime.

"In some cases, if the harm caused is extremely terrible, even if the bribe amount is not much, or just over the limit, the death penalty may be imposed," he said, noting the case of Lin Shiyuan, former deputy secretary of Chongqing's Qijiang county in 1999.

Lin was found guilty of accepting bribes of 110,000 yuan, which was just over the 100,000 yuan limit

deemed to be serious corruption. But he was sentenced to death because the bribes he took led to the neglect of a local bridge that collapsed in 1999, killing 40 people. He managed to plead to a suspended death sentence in the second instance by reporting his boss for corruption.

Li Jianping, who is accused of receiving bribes from mining businessmen in the resource-rich Inner Mongolia region, was charged with pocketing 3 billion yuan in total – a record amount in recent decades. It is an example of what China’s anti-corruption agency calls “small officials with big corruption”.

According to Deng Yuwen, a former deputy editor of the Study Times, the Central Party School’s official newspaper, China is likely to see the death penalty handed down to more corrupt officials as Xi puts hugely lucrative sectors – including finance and mining – in the cross hairs of anti-corruption investigators.

“Despite his rank, the total amount on Li’s charge paper is even bigger than [that for] Lai Xiaomin, who was of deputy-ministerial rank, and held the previous corruption record,” Deng said.

“That shows that while rank can be important, the position and what sectors under their control is key. If he is in charge of approving land usage, mining rights, etc, people will be willing to pay him top money or give him shares in the business to get a bite of the cake.”

Rock ‘n’ roll, internet are potential Western ‘colour revolution’ traps: Chinese textbook

04 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Alcott Wei

Rock ‘n’ roll, pop music and the internet are Western vices that can be used to sow the seeds of “colour revolution” among Chinese youth, according to China’s latest college textbook on national security.

The textbook, which was officially launched last week, represents the latest move from Beijing to strengthen ideological control and promote national security among young Chinese.

The book, *National Security Education Reader for College Students*, will be used in the foundational course on national security education in universities, according to Community Party mouthpiece People’s Daily.

According to the book, university students must remain vigilant against Western popular culture and beware of “colour revolution” traps when surfing online.

“Colour revolution” is Beijing’s code for subversion instigated by Western powers, and their attempts to infiltrate various sectors of society and fuel unrest with the purpose of overthrowing the ruling establishment. “The internet is a key channel of communication; popular culture like pop and rock music are often used as covers for [colour revolution],” the textbook warns.

It cites the 2010 Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia and the Arab spring movement that followed as examples of colour revolutions, arguing that these movements led to national turmoil.

The new textbook is based on various speeches on national security by President Xi Jinping and includes several essays tailored for university students.

The Ministry of Education, which held a symposium on Friday to mark the launch of the book, has urged teachers to make full use of it to boost awareness of national security risks.

“Comprehensively promote the use of the textbook, effectively equip university students to have a proper understanding of the concept of overall national security, guide them to become the firm practitioners of national security,” the ministry said in an announcement on the launch.

Students are also required to study the meaning of “overall national security” – a concept put forward by Xi in 2014 about raising such awareness and written into the National Security Law a year later.

The book argues that the internet is a crucial platform for shaping public opinion, and China must defend cyberspace as it is a key battleground for national security in its ideological struggle with the West.

It also says that failure to safeguard national security was the main reason behind the collapse of the former Soviet Union, which had abandoned Marxism and one-party rule.

Xi has repeatedly called on his party to learn from the lessons of the Soviet Union’s disintegration to avoid a similar fate.

It uses quotes from ancient Chinese texts to argue that university students should have a sense of crisis about national security, saying that they must be conscious about their roles in safeguarding national security, actively take part in related activities on campus and be vigilant against foreign infiltration.

“It’s imperative to heighten sensitivity about national security on campus, and individuals must take the initiative and dare to struggle.”

Primary and junior high schools have also been issued new textbooks that emphasise national security and traditional culture, state broadcaster CCTV reported as the autumn semester began on Sunday.

Since Xi came to power over a decade ago, the leadership in Beijing has stepped up national security education in school as a defence against what it calls infiltration by Western forces among Chinese youth.

In 2015, China designated April 15 as National Security Education Day, with numerous related activities organised in schools every year on this day since then. In a speech delivered at the National Education Conference in 2018, Xi attacked Western countries for their attempts to “westernise” Chinese youth and orchestrate colour revolutions, as he stressed the importance of ideological education in classrooms.

The speech was recently published in the party journal Qiushi.

China is pushing divisive political messages online using fake U.S. voters

03 September 2024, [NPR](#), Shannon Bond

A long-running Chinese influence operation is posing as American voters on social media in an attempt to exacerbate social divisions ahead of the 2024 presidential election, according to a new report from the research company Graphika.

The push by the campaign known as “Spamouflage” includes accounts claiming to be American voters and U.S. soldiers. They posted about hot-button topics including reproductive rights, homelessness, U.S. support for Ukraine, and American policy toward Israel. They criticized President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris as well as former President Donald Trump and the Republican Party, and sometimes used artificial intelligence tools to create content.

The group of fake accounts Graphika identified is small — 15 accounts on X (formerly known as Twitter), one on TikTok, as well as a persona impersonating a U.S. news outlet across platforms. They claimed to be U.S. citizens or U.S.-focused activists “frustrated by American politics and the West,” the report said. With the exception of one TikTok video, they didn’t gain much traction with real users online.

Still, the activity underscores how China is “engaging in these more advanced deceptive behaviors and directly targeting these organic but hyper-sensitive social rifts” as part of a broader effort “to portray the U.S. as this declining global power with weak political leadership and a failing system of governance,” said Jack Stubbs, Graphika’s chief intelligence officer.

The U.S. intelligence community said in its most recent election security update in late July that China’s influence operations “are using social media to sow divisions in the United States and portray democracies as chaotic.”

However, intelligence officials say they do not believe Beijing plans to influence the outcome of the presidential election, which may explain why the Spamouflage cluster Graphika identified targeted both Democrats and Republicans.

“Generally, the accounts were very critical of Biden, but we also saw them criticizing Trump as well, and in more recent weeks, actually increasingly targeting Kamala Harris since Biden dropped off the ticket,” Stubbs said. “It looks to us like they were attempting to build their fake identities less around an individual party or individual party candidate and more around the idea of U.S. patriotism or national pride.”

Graphika is a research company that studies social networks and online communities for companies, tech platforms, human rights organizations and universities.

The findings build on another report earlier this year from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a nonprofit which studies extremism and disinformation, that uncovered four other Spamouflage accounts on X posing as supporters of Trump and the MAGA movement.

Graphika first publicly identified the Spamouflage operation in 2019. It’s grown into one of the most sprawling networks of fake accounts across the internet. It has largely focused on pushing pro-China narratives, including attacks on pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong, praise for China’s COVID-19 response, and AI-generated news videos promoting Chinese leadership. More recently, it has also begun posting about American politics and elections. Last year, Facebook owner Meta linked the operation to Chinese law enforcement.

The accounts Graphika identified bore many hallmarks of Spamouflage activity, including coordinated posting and sharing content that has previously been linked to the operation. Some accounts occasionally slipped up and posted in Chinese. One account on X, calling itself “Common fireman,” was previously branded as a pro-China media outlet, Graphika said.

Stubbs cautioned that the cluster of accounts Graphika found is “one small sliver of this wider operation.” He noted a larger portion of the Spamouflage network is also targeting the U.S. using different types of accounts. “And then there are huge parts of the network that are targeting issues in Hong Kong, for example, or the broader Indo-Pacific, that aren’t directly concerned with the upcoming U.S. election.” While the cluster’s efforts went largely unnoticed by real people, it did strike one success. A TikTok account posing as a conservative American news outlet and social media influencer posted a video mocking Biden in July that was viewed 1.5 million times, Graphika said.

TikTok said it has taken the account down for violating its policies, as well as the other accounts Graphika identified.

“The TikTok accounts referenced in this report have been banned, and we will continue to remove deceptive accounts and harmful misinformation as we protect the integrity of our platform during the US elections,” a TikTok spokesperson said.

The fake news outlet also has an account on X, and previously had a YouTube channel and Instagram account, both of which have been taken down.

Stubbs said it wasn’t clear why that particular video had been removed, but that occasional hits are possible with a “high volume, low impact” operation like Spamouflage.

“They’re just throwing a lot of stuff out there, and every now and then a little bit of it will stick,” he said. “But it’s probably worth noting that throwing spaghetti at the wall and hoping that occasionally a piece will stick doesn’t feel to be a recipe for longer term success.”

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

China targets high-ranking officials who read banned books

21 September 2024, [RFA](#), Zhu Liye

The crackdown on restricted content could upend a system that once gave senior officials a more global education.

China's Communist Party is clamping down on the secret hobby of some high-ranking officials: reading banned books, a series of state media reports suggest. Officials from glitzy Shanghai to poverty-stricken Guizhou have been accused in recent months of "privately possessing and reading banned books and periodicals," according to state media reports, which typically surface when the officials are probed by the party's disciplinary arm.

Senior officials have traditionally enjoyed privileged access to materials banned as potentially subversive for the wider population, via the "neibu," or internal, publishing system, former Communist Party officials told RFA Mandarin in recent interviews.

Now it appears that President Xi Jinping is coming for their personal libraries and private browsing habits in a bid to instill the same ideas in all party members regardless of rank.



A man walks past posters about Chinese political books displayed at the Hong Kong Book Fair in Hong Kong, July 18, 2012. (Philippe Lopez/AFP)

During the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, any foreign book could be considered a "poisonous weed that promotes the bourgeois lifestyle."

Books banned since 2000 have typically been works about recent Chinese history or inside scoops on senior leaders, including memoirs from Mao Zedong's personal physician, late ousted premier Zhao Ziyang and a book about the later years of Mao's trusted premier Zhou Enlai.

Overseas publications are often banned or tightly controlled in China, either online, or via a complex process of political vetting by the authorities, including a 2017 requirement that anyone selling foreign publications in China must have a special license.

Wider knowledge makes better leaders

Former Party School professor Cai Xia said officials were generally allowed to read whatever they liked until the turn of the century. The arrangement encouraged officials to broaden their perspective, making them better leaders.

"Politics, like art, requires imagination," Cai said.

"Because experience shows that the more single-minded and closed-off the thinking of the Communist Party, especially the senior cadres, the narrower their vision and the poorer their thinking, and the harder it is for them to grasp the complex phenomena and situations that have emerged in China's rapid development," she told Radio Free Asia.

Wider reading encourages deeper thought, which helps China "to move forward," she said.

Du Wen, former executive director of the Legal Advisory Office of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region government, said the purge of readers of banned publications is worrying.

"This phenomenon is so scary, because it sends the message that there is no independence in the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party," Du said. "Even dialectical materialism and critical thinking have become evidence of guilt."

Nearly 20 officials have been accused of similar infractions, Du said, basing the number on his observation of media reports.

Officials have been tight-lipped about the names of the books and periodicals these officials were reading, yet the accusations keep coming.

Those targeted

In November 2023, the party launched a probe into former Zhejiang provincial Vice Gov. Zhu Congjiu, accusing him of losing his way ideologically.

In addition to making off-message comments in public, Zhu had "privately brought banned books into the country and read them over a long period of time," according to media reports at the time.

In June 2023, the Beijing branch of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection expelled former state assets supervisory official Zhang Guilin for "possessing and reading books and periodicals with serious political issues," alongside a slew of other alleged offenses including "engaging in power-for-sex and money-for-sex transactions."

Many of those targeted have been in the state-controlled financial system, while some have been concentrated in the central province of Hunan and the southwestern megacity of Chongqing, according to political commentator Yu Jie.

"Interestingly, a lot of officials in the political and legal system, national security and prison systems, which are responsible for maintaining stability and persecuting dissidents, are also keen on reading banned books," Yu wrote in a recent commentary for RFA Mandarin, citing the case of former state security police political commissar Li Bin.

In Hubei province, the commission went after one of their own in party secretary Wang Baoping, accusing him of "buying and reading books that distorted and attacked the 18th Party Congress."

"Monitoring what people are reading shows the authoritarian system's determination and ability to maintain its power and to destroy any resources that could be subversive and any doubts about the legitimacy of the authorities' rule," Yu wrote in a Chinese-language commentary on May 28.

"Xi Jinping's ... goal is to turn more than 80 million party members into marionettes or zombies, and follow him, like the Pied Piper, in a mighty procession that leads to hell," he said.

Categories

Zhang Huiqing, a former editor at the People's Publishing House, told RFA Mandarin that "gray" books were allowed to be published under the watchful eye of the party's Central Propaganda Department, which also reviewed and vetted foreign-published books for translation into Chinese, for distribution as "*neibu*" reading material.

Divided into categories A, B and C, where A was restricted to the smallest number of officials, "reactionary" books were those that could potentially cause people to challenge the party leadership, and they were once distributed in a highly controlled manner, Zhang said.

Du Wen said that while he was an official in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region government, he had access to a slew of foreign news outlets not usually sold on the streets of Chinese cities, including Bloomberg, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and newspapers published in democratic Taiwan. "These were all allowed because if you want to do research, you have to understand what's going on overseas," Du said. "How can you research something if you don't understand the situation?"

Yet recent changes to party disciplinary regulations have brought more publications into the danger zone. Nowadays, any publication not entirely in line with orthodox Marxism-Leninism or the official view of Communist Party history is likely to be seen as "reactionary," as is any information about China's highest-ranking leaders, both past and present, according to a senior figure in the Chinese publishing industry who spoke to RFA Mandarin on condition of anonymity.

"There's a lot of randomness and contingency that affects whether something winds up being labeled as reactionary," the person said. "It also depends on the level of understanding and personal ambition of the person in charge of an investigation."

And times change, making it hard for officials to stay on the right side of the rules.

"A book that was reactionary yesterday may not be reactionary today, and vice versa," the person said.

Public hotline

Typically, Chinese publishing houses take direct instructions from the General Administration of Press and Publication and its provincial branches about what they can and can't publish.

But a public hotline and a highly cautious attitude in recent years has meant that a book can be banned on the basis of a single phone call from a concerned individual.

The senior publishing industry figure said one work of non-fiction was canned on the say-so of the widow of a senior cadre because she didn't like the way her late husband was portrayed. The man had only played a minor role in the book.

"All of our editing, proofreading, binding, design, printing, marketing and distribution work was wasted," the person said. "We had already printed several thousand copies of the book, but we had to send them to be pulped."

The Chinese Communist Party's internal rule-book entry on what constitutes a banned book offense has been amended three times since 2015, with categories being added each time.

Article 47 of the original regulations issued in 2003 warn: "Anyone who brings reactionary books, audio-visual products, electronic reading materials and so on into the country from abroad shall be criticized and educated; if the circumstances are serious, they will be given a warning or a serious warning; more serious offenses will be disciplined by removal from party post, probation or expulsion from the party."

Since 2015, the rules have been updated three times to include anyone "reading privately, browsing or listening" to banned material, which now includes "online text, images and audiovisual material."

Another senior media figure who requested anonymity said the key factor that makes a book reactionary these days is whether or not it tells the truth, especially about the Chinese government.

"Actually, the most reactionary thing is the truth," the person said, "because the truth could shake the foundations of party rule."

Chinese police 'stalling' after school attack on dissident's son

18 September 2024, [RFA](#), Qian Lang

Poet and artist Wang Zang is barred from talking to the media, while his wife says police are dragging their feet.

Police in the southwestern province of Yunnan have refused to set up a case file after the son of dissident poet Wang Zang was sent to hospital following an attack by older students at his high school, according to the boy's parents.

Wang Nianci, 15, was hospitalized following an attack by four older boys at the Zixi High School in Yunnan's Chuxiong region at around 9:30 p.m. local time on Sept. 12, Wang Zang's wife Wang Li told RFA Mandarin service in an interview on Wednesday.

The boys surrounded Wang Nianci in the bathroom, beating him and leaving with a fractured skull and broken nose, according to a CT scan carried out at the hospital, she said.

The attack came after authorities slapped a gag order, travel ban and round-the-clock surveillance on Wang Li and the couple's children as part of a nationwide "stability maintenance" operation during the National People's Congress in Beijing last year.

Wang Zang and Wang Li were both jailed behind closed doors in May 2020 by the Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture Intermediate People's Court, which found them guilty of "incitement to subvert state power" after they gave interviews to foreign media organizations.

Wang Zang said he was unable to comment on Wednesday, as he was banned from speaking to the media following his release from prison in May at the end of his four-year jail term. Wang Li was released in 2022 after serving a two-and-a-half year jail term.

"The police made it clear to me the day before yesterday that I'm not allowed to give interviews," he said. "I have asked my wife to talk to you about this."

Wang said the couple had gotten a call at around 10 p.m. on Sept. 12 and rushed to the school, where they were asked by school officials to wait in the security guard room.

"They wouldn't let us in to see my son's injuries [at first]," she said. "When he came out, his nose and face were swollen and his hands were covered in blood."

'We're still waiting'

The couple took Wang Nianci to the local police station to report the incident, where police took their statement, before calling in the four alleged attackers, but issued no official documents regarding the case, Wang Li said.

According to the medical report from the Chuxiong People's Hospital, a copy of which was shared with RFA Mandarin, Wang Nianci had sustained a fracture to the parietal bone, which forms part of the skull, and suffered from headaches as a result of that trauma.

But police didn't seem to take the attack very seriously, and suggested instead that her son leave the school he is currently enrolled in, Wang Li said.

"We asked them to open a case file, but they kept saying we had to wait," she said. "We're still waiting."

"We were supposed to meet with the police from the local police station today, but we haven't received a call from them yet, so it's still unclear what's happening," she added.

Last year, the couple called for a police investigation into the drowning death of Wang Zang's two-year-old

nephew, which Wang Li said had occurred in “suspicious circumstances,” but no further information about the tragedy has been forthcoming. In May 2020, police in Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture arrested both Wang Zang and Wang Li for “incitement to subvert state power,” with the charges citing his poetry, essays, interviews with foreign media, and performance art since his earlier release from prison in 2015.

Wang’s earlier sentence came after he posted a performance art selfie in support of Hong Kong’s pro-democracy movement, and he was subjected to torture and mistreatment while in Beijing’s No. 1 Detention Center, his lawyer said at the time.

In the photo, Wang holds up an umbrella, a symbol of the 2014 Occupy Central movement, and makes a middle-finger gesture.

Chinese dissidents cut off from families at Mid-Autumn Festival

18 September 2024, [RFA](#), Chen Zifei

The authorities often use family separation as a way to punish critics of the ruling Chinese Communist Party.



Chang Weiping is seen before (L) and after (R) he went to prison in undated photos.

The Mid-Autumn Festival is usually a time of family reunions in China, but the country’s prisoners of conscience have scant hope of seeing their loved ones face-to-face any time soon, relatives told RFA Mandarin in recent interviews.

Chen Zijuan, the U.S.-based wife of rights attorney Chang Weiping, said that while her husband was released in July following a prison term for taking part in a gathering of dissidents in Xiamen in December 2019, he remains under a travel ban, and can’t be with them.

Mid-autumn festival takes place around the autumn equinox in September, and involves family gatherings to eat mooncakes, light lanterns and admire the full moon. The moon also symbolizes togetherness for people forced to be apart, with countless poems dedicated to moon-viewing and feelings of loss or nostalgia.

Mid-Autumn Festival, traditionally a harvest celebration, starts on the 15th day of the eighth lunar

month, when the moon appears at its roundest and largest.

This year’s Mid-Autumn Festival fell on Tuesday and coincided with worldwide viewing of the supermoon eclipse.

But not everyone in China is in a position to take part. “In recent years, the Chinese Communist Party has increasingly used family separation as a form of punishment for dissidents,” Chen told RFA Mandarin ahead of the festival. “Even two years after his release, I’m not optimistic. I think they’ll claim that his departure would endanger national security.”

“It’s very damaging for a family not to be able to see each other over a long period of time,” she said. “They just want to make you suffer — it’s also a way to intimidate everyone else in society.”

For the spouses and children of political prisoners, national holidays, when everyone else is meeting up with loved ones, are the hardest and saddest times.

“I worry about him — he looks thinner and kind of sallow,” she said of Chang. “He has lost his lawyer’s license, and it’s hard for him to get by now that he has lost his career.”



Chen Zijuan (L) and Chang Weiping (R) pose together with their son in an undated photo taken before Chang’s imprisonment. (Chen Zijuan)

“He is very anxious right now, and doesn’t know what he can do,” Chen said. “I don’t have a good solution — all I can do is take good care of the kids; at least he doesn’t have to worry about us any more.”

‘They just cut you off’

Meanwhile, the U.S.-based wife of jailed rights attorney Ding Jiayi, who is currently serving a 12-year jail term for subversion after taking part in the Xiamen gathering, said she misses her husband very much, and is very worried about his health in prison.

“I worry about his health on a daily basis,” Luo Shengchun told RFA Mandarin in a recent interview. “He has high blood pressure and needs to take medication.”

“In China now, the way the authorities do things is not to tell you anything, not to respond to anything, and not to pass on any information — they just cut you off,” she said.

Luo has appealed to her local Congress representative, but the Chinese government won't discuss Ding's situation with them either, she said.

But she still gets letters from Ding, who was jailed in 2023 alongside prominent rights activist Xu Zhiyong, and says he is her inspiration.

"I feel his influence from his letters and his actions — I believe in the resonance of souls," Luo said.

And she refuses to buckle despite the pressure of spearheading a public campaign to support her husband.

"I won't let them succeed in silencing Ding Jiayi and Xu Zhiyong's voices, and I won't let them turn me into someone who weeps every day," Luo said.

"I am a total believer in non-violent resistance," she said. "The more the Chinese Communist Party tries to stop me from doing something, the more I will do it."

Xu's partner, the feminist activist Li Qiaochu, has since been released from prison.

Ahead of the Mid-Autumn Festival this year, she posted a photo of herself and Xu together in a moon-shaped frame to social media, calling on people to write to him in prison to offer their support during the festival, according to Luo.

Political Shakeup at China's Top Social Sciences Institute Over Alleged Dissent

16 September 2024, [China Scope](#)

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) has reportedly experienced a "political earthquake" in its Institute of Economics. The entire leadership was replaced due to allegations of "inappropriate discussions about the central government." This marks another political incident at CASS following an "espionage case" over a decade ago.

The event was triggered by the alleged misconduct of Deputy Director Zhu Hengpeng, leading to a complete overhaul of the institute's leadership. Zhu, 55, was also the director of CASS's Public Policy Research Center, focusing on public hospital reforms and medical security systems.

By the end of last month, the institute's director, party secretary, and deputy directors were all replaced. The CASS Party Committee appointed new leadership, including Gong Yun as party secretary, Li Xuesong as director and deputy party secretary, and Song Hong as deputy director.

CASS, China's highest academic institution for philosophy and social sciences research, also serves as a central think tank and ideological center. This incident follows a previous espionage case involving two CASS researchers over a decade ago.

Beijing officials frequently emphasize that CASS is "first and foremost a political organ, with political

nature as its primary attribute and political consciousness as its foremost requirement."

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

China confirms 'successful' intercontinental ballistic missile test

25 September 2024, [RFA](#)

Beijing says its first ICBM test in decades was routine and not aimed at any country.

The Chinese military said that it successfully launched an intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, into the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday, its first such test in more than 40 years.

ICBMs are primarily designed to carry nuclear warheads, and China's latest generation ICBM — Dongfeng-41 (DF-41) — has an operational range of between 12,000 kilometers and 15,000 kilometers (7,500- 9,300 miles), which means it can reach the U.S. mainland.

China's defense ministry said in a statement that the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force successfully launched an ICBM carrying a training simulated warhead into the high seas of the Pacific Ocean early on Wednesday.

China tests intercontinental ballistic missile

China fired an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean.



Map: Paul Nelson/NSA - Source: Damien Sannon (Reuters), AP

"It accurately landed in the designated sea area," the ministry said.

It was not clear what type of ICBM was tested.

The ministry said that the launch was a routine arrangement of the force's annual military training, "in line with international law and international practice, and is not aimed at any specific country or target."

China's first publicly known ICBM test launch was in May 1980 when it fired at least two missiles into the South Pacific as a gesture of deterrence to the Soviet Union but since then the PLA has not announced any further test.

In its 2023 China Military Power report, the Pentagon said that China had completed construction on at least 300 ICBM silos in 2022. It also said that as of May 2023, it had more than 500 operational nuclear warheads, and that number would likely grow to more than 1,000 by 2030.

The intercontinental missile test sends a strong signal to the world that China is determined to build up its nuclear capabilities, analysts said.

"A significant factor is to respond to growing international skepticism about the internal stability and combat readiness of China's Rocket Force," said Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Senior Fellow Zhao Tong, adding that in recent years, international public opinion has focused on issues of corruption within the Rocket Force, equipment quality problems, and leadership changes.

Some U.S. officials even argue that, given those issues, the Chinese military is unlikely to conduct large-scale military operations in the foreseeable future, Zhao said.

“For China’s political leaders, such international doubts have a highly negative impact on the perception of China’s military power. Chinese leaders are very concerned that Western skepticism about China’s military capabilities might lead to more aggressive containment or suppression policies, or even proactive military provocations from Western nations.”

‘New era of nuclear competition’

China’s Xinhua News Agency said relevant countries had been notified about Wednesday’s test launch in advance but it did not elaborate.

Taiwan’s ministry of national defense said it had recorded “intensive” Chinese missile firing activities but did not provide further details.

This month, China’s neighbor North Korea has also conducted several short-range ballistic missiles.

Meanwhile, Beijing has protested against the deployment of U.S. Mid-Range Capability missile system Typhon in the Philippines since April, saying it undermined peace and stability in the region.

With the ICBM test, China is sending the signal that it is going to continue to build up its global nuclear capabilities, said Richard Fisher, a senior researcher who specializes in Asian military affairs at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, a U.S. think tank.

“China’s ICBM test is another reminder that the world is moving into a new era of nuclear weapon competition, and in order to deter China and Russia, it is necessary — vitally necessary — for the United States to increase its nuclear arsenal,” he told Radio Free Asia.

Wang Weizheng, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Adelphi University, said the missile launch was China’s way of expressing dissatisfaction with recent developments in the Indo-Pacific.

“With President Biden announcing that he will not seek re-election and having only about three months left in his term, Xi Jinping seems intent on delivering a stern message to the U.S. before a new president is elected,” the political science professor told RFA,

“Xi wants the U.S. to recognize the reality that China’s strategic weapons capabilities are no longer what they once were.”

China builds laser communication ground station for massive satellite data transmission

16 September 2024, [Global Times](#)

A laser communication ground system with a 500mm-caliber antenna was successfully deployed Sunday on the Pamir Plateau in northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which is expected to significantly enhance the country’s capacity for massive satellite data transmission.

The system, developed by the Aerospace Information Research Institute (AIR) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, marks the end of relying solely on microwave ground stations for satellite data reception. With the rapid advancements in China’s aerospace technology, the volume of data generated by satellite detection is growing exponentially. The current inability to transmit this massive amount of data promptly has become a significant problem, limiting the efficient utilization of China’s space resources, said Li Yalin, a senior engineer of AIR.

Satellite-to-ground laser communications have abundant spectrum resources and a wider bandwidth, about ten times to nearly a thousand times wider than that of microwave communications. Additionally, this equipment is lighter, the system size is smaller, and it has lower power consumption. Li said it can address the growing demand for efficient and reliable transmission of information gathered by satellites. However, weather conditions and atmospheric turbulence significantly affect the performance and availability of space-to-ground laser communications. Therefore, selecting an appropriate site can greatly mitigate the impact of complex and unstable atmospheric conditions.

The atmospheric conditions in the Mount Muztagata region on the Pamir Plateau are excellent, with high visibility and a dry and low rainfall climate, allowing for year-round space-to-ground laser communication operations, said Wang Jianping, another senior engineer of AIR and chief of the remote-sensing satellite ground station in Kashgar.

Facilities were constructed at 4,800 meters and 3,300 meters above the sea level, and the system will be operated remotely.

“Our team traveled about 300,000 kilometers on the Pamir Plateau to select the site of the station, and we faced tremendous difficulties,” said Wang. Recently, the project team successfully completed the first operational trial of daytime space-ground laser communications.

Huang Peng, a researcher with AIR and director of China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station, said the normalized operation of the newly built station will provide valuable engineering experience in satellite-ground laser communications, laying a solid foundation for planning China’s next-generation

massive satellite data transmission system. AIR is planning and evaluating the feasibility of a laser communication ground station network to overcome the adverse weather conditions and improve the reliability of laser communications, according to Huang.

China mulls national military training for children, college students

13 September 2024, [RFA](#)

The ruling Chinese Communist Party wants to cultivate the next generation of recruits to prepare for war.



Kindergarten children in military uniforms hold toy guns at a park in Dongyang city, Zhejiang province, China, Oct. 25, 2013.

China's National People's Congress is considering amendments to the law that would expand compulsory military training at universities and 'national defense education' in high schools.

Under the amendments, branches of the People's Liberation Army will be stationed in colleges, universities and high schools across the country to boost a nationwide program of approved military education and physical training to prepare young people for recruitment, state news agency Xinhua reported on Sept. 10.

"The second draft of the revised bill clarifies that ordinary colleges, universities and high schools should strengthen military skills training, hone students' willpower, enhance organizational discipline, and improve the level of military training," the agency said in a summary of the amendments.

China has long had a culture of military training in schools and universities, with military-style boot-camps for kids on vacation and 'defense education bases' catering to corporations and tour groups. The authorities in Hong Kong have also imposed such training on former young protesters, alongside "patriotic education."

People's Armed Forces departments already exist at every level of government, in schools, universities and state-owned enterprises to strengthen ruling Chinese

Communist Party, or CCP, control over local militias, guard weapons caches and find work for veterans.

After decades of relative invisibility throughout the post-Mao economic boom, they are once more mobilizing to build militias in big state-owned companies and consolidate party leadership over local military operations.

But analysts say the amendments, if adopted, will standardize these activities under guidelines laid down by the CCP's military arm, in a bid to create more potential recruits as part of preparations for war. While Chinese citizens have an obligation to serve in the People's Liberation Army on paper, this hasn't been implemented since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

'Glorious' military service

Under the planned amendments, high schools will also be obliged to teach children about military service, and create an atmosphere in which military service is seen as "glorious," Xinhua said.

Primary and junior high schools are included in the plan, which calls on them to "combine classroom teaching with extracurricular activities," according to the China News Service.

"Students in colleges and high schools are required to offer compulsory basic military training, while junior high schools may also organize such activities," the report said.

According to a report in the *Legal Daily* newspaper, the amendments aim to build a nationwide program of military training that connects schools at all levels and of all types.

They also guarantee funding for these activities, which will include military camps and "national defense education bases," the paper said.

"They want students to know about national defense, an awareness of who the enemy is, at a much younger age," Shan-Son Kung, an associate researcher at Taiwan's Institute for National Defense and Security Research, told RFA Mandarin in a recent interview.

"[They also] want kids to get basic military training, which is being extended lower down the system, so as to universalize basic military knowledge," he said. "The aim is to step up preparations for a future war, so that there will be more conscripts available following the passing of the Mobilization Law."

The National Defense Mobilization Law of the People's Republic of China took effect on July 1, 2010, with the aim of setting up a nationwide structure for national defense mobilization.

Currently, the Chinese military mostly relies on recruitment, and most of the standing army are professional soldiers, Kung said.

"In the next few years, we could see growing tensions between China and the United States, and China may look to strengthen its economic and military mobilization as well as the frequency and scope of

exercises sooner rather than later," Kung said. "They may be making advance preparations for a large-scale war."

'Educational brainwashing'

China already requires graduates in fluid mechanics, machinery, chemistry, missile technology, radar, science and engineering, weapons science and other technical disciplines to join the People's Liberation Army.

Taiwan-based Chinese dissident Gong Yujian said the Chinese Communist Party is aware that it may face great difficulty in recruiting young people to the military, given the shrinking of that age group due to the one-child policy, so it's stepping up pro-military propaganda while they're still young.

"They need to cultivate high school students to be loyal to the party and patriotic, and worship the People's Liberation Army," Gong said. "It's educational brainwashing."

"That way, they can join up after graduation and boost the People's Liberation Army's recruitment figures," he said.

Gong said he still has memories of some military training exercises from when he was in high school.

"When we were in school, we had seven days' military training, but it was just a formality," he said. "The local armed police force sent soldiers to our school to teach the students how to march, and how to fold a blanket." "But we didn't even so much as touch a firearm," he said.

Construction begins on 1.1 GW solar project in Tibet

11 September 2024, [PV Magazine](#), Patrick Jowett

JA Solar has supplied its n-type DeepBlue 4.0 Pro modules for a 1.1 GW solar installation in Tibet. The project is believed to be the world's largest combined animal husbandry facility and solar array now under construction.

Construction has begun on a 1.1 GW solar project in Tibet, China.

The project includes two sites combining animal husbandry and solar power, located in Angduo Township, Mangkang County, and Gongjue Township, Latuo County, in eastern Tibet. China Huadian Corp. is funding the project.

Once operational, the sites will work in conjunction with hydropower stations along the upper reaches of the Jinsha River. A JA Solar spokesperson told **pvmagazine** that the project will generate 6.518 billion kWh of electricity per year.

"It will effectively maintain soil and water, increase land green coverage, improve the local ecological environment and promote animal husbandry, achieving a coordinated development of economic growth and environmental protection," added the spokesperson.

The projects are among the first to integrate wind, solar, hydropower and energy storage in the region. The installation in Angduo Township is also believed to be the largest animal husbandry and complementary solar project under construction in the world.

JA Solar supplied its n-type DeepBlue 4.0 Pro solar modules for the project. The company said the modules have passed tests for IEC standards, thresher, salt mist corrosion, ammonia corrosion, dust and sand, non-uniform snow load, and wind tunnel conditions. They were also demonstrated outdoors in Mohe, Heilongjiang province – one of China's coldest regions. The company's DeepBlue 4.0 Pro modules were previously used in a 200 MW project in Chamdo, Tibet, which was connected to the grid in November 2023. In March of this year, the module received the highest + Rating Certificate in the Frontrunner Plus Cold Climate Field Test from the China General Certification Center. Earlier this year, the Chinese authorities switched on 50 MW of solar, paired with 40 MWh of battery storage, in southeastern Tibet.

Exclusive: US expected to send senior Pentagon official to China military forum

04 September 2024, [Reuters](#), Idrees Ali and Laurie Chen

The United States is set to send Michael Chase, the deputy assistant secretary of defence for China, Taiwan and Mongolia, to China's top annual security forum in mid-September, a U.S. official told Reuters.

The choice of Chase has not been previously reported. He is more senior than the U.S. official who attended the Xiangshan Forum last year, but his rank is in line with historical norms for the Pentagon.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for China Chad Sbragia attended the forum in 2019.

There is some hope that this could signal deeper working-level engagement with China amid regional disputes. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Chase's expected attendance was not unprecedented, but sent a message that the United States prioritises engagement at the military level with China even at a time of heightened tensions.

More than 90 countries and international organisations plan to send delegations to the Sept. 12-14 forum in Beijing, Chinese state media reported Wednesday.

Washington sent Xanthi Carras, China country director in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, when the forum resumed last year after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. It was a sign of thawing military ties; however Carras' title is of a lower rank than Chase or Sbragia.

Chase co-chaired U.S.-China military talks in Washington in January - the first such working-level

talks since 2022, when most bilateral military engagement was suspended after then-U.S. Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

Taiwan and the South China Sea remain contentious flashpoints in the U.S.-China relationship, with both sides unwilling to compromise on "core issues". U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said no new agreements had been reached on the South China Sea during a [visit](#) to China last week.

China has repeatedly criticised U.S. deployments in the Asia-Pacific region, including the placement of long-range missiles in the Philippines, as well as U.S. arms sales to democratically governed Taiwan, which China considers its own territory, over the strenuous objections of Taipei.

Meanwhile the U.S. has raised concerns over China's "aggressive" actions in the South China Sea, its frequent military manoeuvres in the air and waters surrounding Taiwan, and what it says is the opacity of China's nuclear buildup.

Official nuclear talks were halted by Beijing in July in protest over U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. But both sides have agreed that U.S. Indo-Pacific Command leaders would soon speak by phone to their counterparts in China's southern theatre command, which covers its southern seas.

CHINA IN THE REGION

China- Hong Kong

Prison sentences to Hong Kong journalists highlight China's suppression of opinion

27 September 2024, [ANI](#)

China continues to suppress the people who raise views critical of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In the latest attempt at suppressing freedom of expression, China gave a jail sentence to journalists on sedition charges.

Two journalists belonging to a closed Hong Kong news site were sentenced to prison on Thursday for sedition charges. These journalists were former Stand News journalists Chung Pui-Kuen and Patrick Lam who were found guilty and fined last month for conspiring to publish and reproduce seditious articles VOA News reported.

The sentenced journalists had received sentences of 21 and 11 months respectively. However, Lam among the two had been immediately released due to medical reasons. Chung, Stand's former editor-in-chief, and Lam, the outlet's former acting editor-in-chief, both have denied all charges against them since their offices were first raided in 2021. The same news report claimed that Chung aged 54, and Lam aged 36, had already spent more than 300 days in pretrial detentions. However, employees of the news website run by the sentenced journalists and the journalism fraternity claim that the news organization was a liberal one and followed long-standing principles and ethics of journalism. According to the VOA News report Ronson Chan, a former editor at Stand News, said "I'm happy that Patrick Lam could be released at once, with the judge giving the sentence for the appropriate period, but I still feel sorry Chung needed to go back to jail for 10 months. He created a very good and liberal platform for us, journalists, and the staff of Stand News. We enjoyed a very good freedom of news and freedom of press. We had our own view to make what we thought was valuable to do. It seems Mr. Chung is the only person to pay for our liberalism and freedom."

Additionally, the Hong Kong Journalists Association said that the sentences given to these journalists expose the "real risks" for journalism in the region. A statement released by the organization over the matter stated

"The two men's convictions and sentences reflect the ongoing decline of press freedom in Hong Kong and the real dangers media workers in the territory are facing while performing their duties."

The VOA report added the statement of Aleksandra Bielakowska member of the Paris-based organization Reporters Without Borders stated that the sentences constitute "Yet another nail in the coffin for press

freedom in Hong Kong, dangerously laying another red line for journalists in the city. Deliberately targeting independent media and its journalists has left a huge void in Hong Kong's media landscape that will be very difficult to rebuild. There are still a few independent media that try to keep up operations, but they are already tremendously afraid for their safety. This verdict is only underlining the reality that judges and courts are not fulfilling [their] duty of protecting residents but have become a political tool, used to threaten those who dare to speak independently, including [journalists](#)."

The VOA News report claimed that organizations like Stand News are among Hong Kong's last remaining media outlets which openly criticize the government. Organisations like these were aggressively attacked by the Beijing-backed political crackdown on pro-democracy protests in 2019. After 2019, Beijing had imposed a National Security Law which had provisions of banning any secession, subversion and foreign interference. This law has resulted in arrests of at least 28 journalists and press freedom advocates out of which 10 still remain jailed. Moreover, this crackdown has forced shut shutdown of more than a dozen media outlets. "There is nothing wrong with safeguarding national security, but allowing journalists to speak out and enabling society to speak freely is necessary to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and is also an important part of promoting the city's international image. Officials may insist that Hong Kong's press freedom is unhampered, but the public knows the truth." Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) said in a statement. As a result of suppression acts like these Hong Kong's international press freedom ranking has nosedived in recent years, to the 135th place in the Reporters Without Borders rankings for 2024 which once ranked at 18 in 2002, according to the group. (ANI)

China calls on Hong Kong tycoons to help kickstart national economy

27 September 2024, [RFA](#), Ng Chi Ping

But the city's business families, many from Shanghai and Ningbo, have scant trust for the Chinese Communist Party.

The ruling Chinese Communist Party has called on Hong Kong's leader to mobilize the city's wealthiest families into kick-starting economic growth, although signs that any are answering the call have been thin on the ground.

Xia Baolong, who heads the ruling party's Hong Kong and Macao Work Office, "expressed the hope that all sectors of Hong Kong society, especially the business community and entrepreneurs, will unite as one and seize the opportunity to strive for economic

development," the city's Chief Executive John Lee told reporters following a Sept. 20 meeting with Xia, as he attended an investment cooperation conference in Beijing.

Hong Kong's business community should "transform their love for their country and for Hong Kong into concrete and practical action, and work together to promote Hong Kong's ... prosperity," Xia told Lee during the meeting.

Xia's call to action echoes recent policy moves from Beijing to find a role for the private sector in boosting flagging economic growth, under Chinese President Xi Jinping's concept of "public-private partnerships," which analysts have warned could be a disguised asset grab by the government.

It also comes after Xi wrote to the descendants of the "Ningbo Gang" – wealthy Hong Kong families with roots in the eastern port city of Ningbo – in July, calling on them to "contribute to the dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," state media reported.

They included Anna Pao, eldest daughter of the late shipping magnate Sir Pao Yue-kong, and Ronald Chao, eldest son of the late industrialist Chao Kuang-piu, families whose business operations formed the backbone of much of Hong Kong's growth under British colonial rule.

Lee said the private sector in Hong Kong "are not bystanders, but participants, contributors and beneficiaries" of the city's economic rewards.

'Serve the country'

But commentators said there hasn't exactly been a big rush to respond to Beijing's call for investments on the part of Hong Kong's entrepreneurs.

The city's richest man, Li Ka-shing, has instead been stepping up his investments in the United Kingdom, with his CK Infrastructure Holdings acquiring a wind farm portfolio in from Aviva Investors for £350 million (US\$450 million) in August, renewable power generator UU Solar for £90.8 million (US\$122 million) in May, and natural gas distributor Phoenix Energy in April.

Exiled Hong Kong businessman Elmer Yuen, whose family hails from Ningbo, said Beijing has repeatedly called on Hong Kong's tycoons to "serve the country." But he said there is unlikely to be much response, given that few business families from Ningbo and Shanghai trust the Chinese Communist Party.

"You can lump all of us together, us Shanghainese, most of whom are from Ningbo, and say that we have absolutely zero trust in the Chinese Communist Party," Yuen said.

"Maybe a small number of people will invest, but the rest already know who they're dealing with."

According to Xia Ming, professor of political science at the City University of New York, Lee is being tasked by Beijing to step up integration with neighboring

Guangdong province and Macau, and provide a much-needed shot in the arm for the sluggish Chinese economy.

"Policy in today's Hong Kong is clearly about how to perfectly integrate Hong Kong into what Xi Jinping calls the China rejuvenation strategy, which is basically about controlling the economy," Xia told RFA Cantonese in a recent interview. "[Lee's aim] is to more perfectly integrate Hong Kong into China's accelerated regression."

Xia said the overall aim is to integrate Hong Kong into the mainland Chinese economy and "ultimately sell Hong Kong off to Beijing and to Xi Jinping."

"The goal of Xi Jinping's reforms is not that mainland China will become more like Hong Kong, but that Hong Kong will become more like Yan'an," he said in a reference to the revolutionary wartime base of Mao Zedong's communists.

Stimulus measures

The call for investments came as Chinese leaders announced a slew of stimulus measures to boost demand for real estate, including lower mortgage rates, fewer restrictions on buyers and tax cuts as part of "a new model" for real estate development.

On Tuesday, China's central bank, top securities regulator and financial regulator announced a raft of monetary stimulus, property market support and capital market strengthening measures to boost "high-quality economic development," state news agency Xinhua reported.

The top economic meeting, attended by Xi, also called on officials to "foster a favorable environment for the development of the non-public sector," with efforts made to boost consumption among low- and middle-income groups.

China has also extended a helping hand to Hong Kong in the form of pandas, with a ceremony at the Hong Kong International Airport on Thursday to welcome An An and Ke Ke, described by Lee as "just entering adulthood and full of energy" and likely to be a successful draw for tourists.

The giant pandas will live in a newly refurbished suite at the Ocean Park theme park complete with climbing frames and more plants.

"Citizens will join in welcoming the two giant pandas to Hong Kong, and the whole city is looking forward to it," Lee told reporters on Tuesday, adding that images of the pandas will be added to the Oct. 1 National Day drone and light show over Victoria Harbour.

Hong Kong is expecting an influx of up to 1.2 million mainland Chinese tourists to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Lee said.

"We hope that everyone can celebrate the 75th anniversary of National Day together, and also bring in many business activities to increase business and tourism revenues," he said.

Hong Kong man jailed 14 months under new security law for 'seditious' online statements

21 September 2024, [HongKong PF](#), James Lee

Au Kin-wai, 58, on Friday became the third person to be sentenced under Article 23 after pleading guilty to one count of "knowingly publishing publications that had a seditious intention" over statements he made online.

A Hong Kong court has convicted a third person under a new security law, sentencing him to one year and two months in prison for sedition over statements made on social media platforms.

Au Kin-wai, 58, appeared before Chief Magistrate Victor So at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on Friday, where he pleaded guilty to one count of "knowingly publishing publications that had a seditious intention" over statements he made online. He was charged on June 21 over posts on social media platforms Facebook, X, and YouTube calling for the dissolution of the Chinese Communist Party, and for Chinese president Xi Jinping and Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee – both of whom he dubbed "dictators" – to step down.

He also invoked a Cultural Revolution-era slogan: "Revolution is no crime, to rebel is justified."

Au was charged under the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, known locally as Article 23. Separate to a national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020, the new legislation came into effect on March 23 after it was fast-tracked by the city's opposition-free legislature. An early attempt to pass Article 23 in 2003 ended in failure after mass protests.

Au's lawyer Steven Kwan said on Friday that he would withdraw a constitutional challenge on the law's limitations on free speech, after the city's top court last month allowed a similar challenge but not on the grounds that the sedition law imposed a disproportionate restriction on free speech.

Limited effect

Kwan on Friday contended that the court had to consider the minimal impact of Au's actions, saying that most of Au's 200-odd posts were repetitive, and that he only had about 20 followers on all four of his social media accounts. The counsel asked the court not to give too much weight to the protection of society as a sentencing factor, considering the defendant's limited reach.

However, So ruled that the court had the power to consider public safety in sentencing, as the concept fell within the scope of national security. The fact that Au made the posts with accounts under his real name was an indication that he had no regard for the law, So ruled.

"The element of deterrence in sentencing aims to prevent others from copying the crime... which is a general sentencing principle long established," So said.

So set the starting sentence at 18 months and added three months for further deterrence, having taken into account Au's prior conviction for sedition last December. Au was afforded a one-third sentence discount – the maximum given to a defendant for a timely guilty plea – bringing his sentence down to 14 months.

Third Article 23 conviction

Au is the third person to be sentenced for sedition under Article 23. On Thursday, Chung Man-kit was jailed for 10 months after pleading guilty over "seditious" bus graffiti, and Chu Kai-pong was sentenced to 14 months for sedition over wearing a T-shirt with 2019 protest slogan.

Under Article 23, sedition carries a maximum penalty of seven years in jail, or 10 years if the offender is found to have colluded with an "external force." The offence was previously punishable by up to two years in prison for a first offence, and up to three years for re-offenders.

The new legislation also raised the threshold for the early release of those imprisoned for offences endangering national security. Typically, prisoners can trim a third off their sentence for good behaviour.

The law has been criticised by rights NGOs, Western states and the UN as vague, broad and "regressive." Authorities, however, cited perceived foreign interference and a constitutional duty to "close loopholes" after the 2019 protests and unrest.

US lawmakers call on China to free Hong Kong Catholic, democracy advocate Jimmy Lai

20 September 2024, [NCR Online](#)

Abipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers gathered Sept. 18 to call for the immediate release from prison of prominent Hong Kong Catholic, philanthropist and media mogul Jimmy Lai, who is facing a trial on what they called bogus charges.

Lai, who founded the now-defunct pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily, protested in favor of democratic freedoms — such as freedom of the press and expression — in Hong Kong, which was designated a Special Administrative Region of China in 1997, when British rule of that region ended after more than 150 years. Following pro-democracy protests in 2019, China implemented a purported national security law the next year, which critics have said has been used to silence the Chinese Communist Party's critics.

Under that law, Lai was arrested in August 2020 and has been imprisoned since December 2020. He pleaded not guilty to the charges and faces life in prison.

U.S. lawmakers have called those charges trumped up and evidence the Chinese Communist Party is seeking to silence dissent.

Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said lawmakers were seeking to draw attention to Lai ahead of the first day of the U.N. General Assembly's high-level general debate Sept. 24. The 79th session of the General Assembly opened Sept. 10.

"We've got all a lot of world leaders in New York, they're there in one place," he said. "Jimmy Lai's story needs to be told."

Lai's son, Sebastien Lai, who was in Washington at the lawmakers' event, said his father faces indignities in prison including solitary confinement.

"For his strong Catholic faith, he is denied Communion," the younger Lai said of his father.

The event featured several Catholic lawmakers who have been critical of the Chinese government including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who still represents her state's 11th Congressional District, which includes most of San Francisco, and Reps. Chris Smith, R-N.J., and Jim McGovern, D-Mass. Acknowledging Smith in the audience, Pelosi said, "What's beautiful about this issue is that it has always been strongly, unequivocally bipartisan in the House and in the Senate."

"The freedom of speech is the biggest, biggest defender of democracy, because it sheds light on what is happening, and that's why Jimmy, to me, was ... so courageous to do it, because he knew what the consequences could be, because they knew how powerful his voice has been, is and will continue to be in the future," Pelosi said. "So it's an honor for me to be with each and every one of you and others who have been working on this issue."

Smith thanked Pelosi for her efforts toward Lai's release and Hong Kong's freedom. He argued, "Injustice need not be forever."

"The time will come and I hope, will come soon, if we are resolute, if we use every lever at our disposal, every way of trying to influence Xi Jinping and his really murderous Chinese Communist Party" that Lai's release could be secured, Smith said.

McGovern issued a similar message, arguing Hong Kong's story "is still being written."

"For the government of the People's Republic of China and its newest puppet, the Hong Kong government, criminalizing the exercise of human rights is a sign of weakness," McGovern said. "It is a sign of fear. It means you don't think you can win the battles of ideas, the battle for the hearts and minds of your people. It means you are elevating power over the well-being of your people."

On its website, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, a bipartisan religious freedom watchdog, said Lai's imprisonment "inhibits religious freedom advocacy."

Hong Kong man sentenced to 14 months in jail for 'seditious' T-shirt

19 September 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Chu Kai-pong is the first person to be convicted under Article 23, the China-ruled city's tough new national security law.

A Hong Kong man has been sentenced to 14 months in jail for wearing a T-shirt and a mask with protest slogans deemed "seditious", the first person to be convicted under the city's tough new national security law.

Chu Kai-pong, 27, was sentenced on Thursday at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts, having pleaded guilty earlier in the week to one count of "doing acts with seditious intention", an offence carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail under the new legislation, known as Article 23.

Chu was arrested for wearing a T-shirt reading "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times" and a yellow mask printed with "FDNOL" – shorthand for another pro-democracy slogan, "five demands, not one less" – on June 12, a date marking the fifth anniversary of the city's huge pro-democracy protests in 2019.

The 2019 protest movement was the most concerted challenge to the Hong Kong government since the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997. It waned because of widespread arrests, the exile of democracy activists, the COVID-19 pandemic and China's imposition of an earlier security law in 2020.

Referring to the 2019 protests, Chief Magistrate Victor So – a judge handpicked by the government to hear national security cases – said on Thursday that Chu "took advantage of a symbolic day with the intention to reignite the ideas behind the unrest".

In January, the judge had sentenced Chu to three months in jail for wearing a similar T-shirt at the airport and possessing publications deemed seditious. He noted that Chu's "subsequent act" showed the "deterrent effect of his previous sentence was insufficient".

Quelling dissent

The sedition offence was created under British colonial rule, which ended in 1997, but was seldom used until Hong Kong authorities revived it in 2020 after the protests.

With the protests quashed, China imposed a national security law on the city in mid-2020 to quell further dissent.

The new national security law – the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, also known as Article 23 – came into force in March.

The revised law augments the offence of sedition to include inciting hatred against China's communist leadership, upping its jail sentence to a maximum penalty of 10 years if the sedition is conducted in collusion with an "external force".

Critics, including Western nations such as the United States, say Article 23 will further erode freedoms and silence dissent in Hong Kong – a finance hub once considered one of the freest territories in China.

As of this month, 303 people have been arrested under the two security laws, with 176 prosecuted and 160 convicted.

Hong Kong man jailed for 10 months under new security law over 'seditious' graffiti left on back of bus seats

19 September 2024, [Hong Kong FP](#), James Lee

Chung Man-kit pleaded guilty to three counts of "doing with a seditious intention an act or acts that had a seditious intention" over messages written on the back of bus seats in March and April.

A Hong Kong man charged under Hong Kong's new security law has been sentenced to 10 months in jail after pleading guilty over writing "seditious" graffiti on bus seats.

Chung Man-kit appeared before Chief Magistrate Victor So at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on Thursday, where he entered a guilty plea for three counts of "doing with a seditious intention an act or acts that had a seditious intention." He was then sentenced to 10 months in jail.

The 29-year-old also faced two property damage charges, which were dropped on Thursday.

Chung was arrested on June 23 on suspicion of "writing words with seditious intention on multiple occasions on the back of bus seats on different public buses in March and April" in contravention of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance.

The offending phrases, written between March 23 and April 21, included the 2019 protest slogan "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times," and others advocating independence, including "Hong Kong independence, the only way out." The former was ruled capable of inciting secession during the city's first trial under a Beijing-imposed security law in 2021. The court on Thursday heard that Chung admitted to writing the slogans under police caution. In a recorded interview, he said that he was aware that the slogans he wrote were widely used during protests five years ago.

Chung also said that he had written the slogans as he believed he had the right to criticise the government and to exercise his right to free speech, even though he knew there was a risk that he would be prosecuted for endangering national security.

So ruled that Chung had written statements endangering national security and advocating Hong Kong independence on multiple occasions. He added that although the slogans were written on seats towards the back of the bus, they were still visible to the public. Society would “fall into chaos” if he was not stopped, So ruled.

So handed down a partial concurrent sentence for the three offences starting at 15 months, then discounted to 10 months after taking into consideration Chung’s guilty plea.

Homegrown security law

Article 23 targets treason, insurrection, sabotage, external interference, sedition, theft of state secrets and espionage. It was fast-tracked through the city’s opposition-free legislature earlier this year and enacted on March 23, two decades after an attempt to pass similar legislation failed after mass protests in 2003.

The legislation was criticised by rights NGOs, Western states and the UN as vague, broad and “regressive.” Authorities, however, cited perceived foreign interference and a constitutional duty to “close loopholes” after the 2019 protests and unrest.

Under Article 23, sedition carries a maximum penalty of seven years in jail, or 10 years if the offender is found to have colluded with an “external force.” The offence was previously punishable by up to two years in prison for a first offence, and up to three years for re-offenders.

Musical “Patriotic Education” in Hong Kong

12 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)

“Patriotic Education” is the name of the most massive campaign of domestic propaganda in the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) recent history. Hong Kong is regarded as being particularly in need of this medicine, which is at the same time reluctant to take.

A “Working Group on Patriotic Education” has been established, with pro-CCP legislator Lee Wai-king (Starry) as its leader. The Working Group has both “official members” and “non-official members.” However, the “non-official members” are officially listed in its official web page as well.

One of the “non-official members” is veteran singer Kwong Mei-wan (Cally), another well-known CCP loyalist.

It seems that the CCP believes in music as a tool of “Patriotic Education” in Hong Kong. With great fanfare, a song by Cally Kwong has been launched both in a regular and a karaoke version. The song, called “Our Home,” was introduced at a press conference of the Working Group on Patriotic Education on September 3, to coincide with the the 79th anniversary of the Victory Day of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance

Against Japanese Aggression. The lyrics hail the unity of all Chinese around the Beijing government and its leaders.

Last month, the Working Group on Patriotic Education inaugurated a new thematic gallery at the Hong Kong Museum of History, presenting the necessity and alleged benefits of the repressive National Security Law.

The National Security Gallery also teaches children through cartoons to become “young guardians of National Security.” For example, a video shows a beetle who violates the National Security rules and ventures away from the Butterfly Garden (China), ending up in a hostile land (the West, or a mental locus where Western ideas prevail). There, the beetle is about to be eaten by a huge spider (Western imperialism). Happily, armed with the National Security Law, the young Guardians of National Security from the Butterfly Garden come and save it. The beetle cries profusely and promises that it will always respect National Security Law in the future. A good lesson for young Hongkongers...

China’s central government will ‘expand’ Hong Kong’s role in Belt and Road Initiative

11 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Kahon Chan and Edith Lin

Officials at Belt and Road Summit throw support behind city, while Vietnam’s deputy prime minister calls for more two-way exchanges with Hong Kong.

The central government has pledged that Hong Kong will play a bigger part in the Belt and Road Initiative, with mainland Chinese officials throwing their weight behind the city’s “irreplaceable” role in financial and professional services at a high-level conference.

Beijing made the assurance at the opening of the Belt and Road Summit at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday, where the newly appointed deputy prime minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Hoa Binh, also called on city authorities to promote two-way tourism and business links with his country.

Li Yongjie, China’s deputy international trade representative, said in opening remarks that the Ministry of Commerce would further “expand the space” for Hong Kong to participate in joint developments in the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing’s push to link economies across Asia, Europe, Africa and South America into a China-centred trade network.

“We will jointly promote practical cooperation projects to further elevate Hong Kong’s participation in the Belt and Road Initiative and continue to support mainland and Hong Kong businesses to strengthen information exchanges and deepen cooperation on belt and road projects,” she said.

Listing the areas in which Beijing would support Hong Kong in expanding into overseas markets, Li said: “We will continue to guide Hong Kong businesses to leverage their international advantages in service industries such as finance, the legal sector, shipping and accounting, and provide high-level professional services for overseas economic and trade cooperation zones, foreign investment and contracting projects.”

She added that Hong Kong would also receive support from Beijing to secure more free trade and investment protection agreements with other jurisdictions, and to enter the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) “as soon as possible”.

Nguyen, who also delivered a keynote speech at the opening session, said Vietnam had consistently and actively participated in key international cooperation frameworks, including the belt and road plan, noting his country shared many characteristics with Hong Kong in innovation, sustainable development strategies and effective use of scientific advancement. “Building on this important foundation, we look forward to Hong Kong’s more active and greater contribution to connecting the ‘two corridors, one belt’ framework [of Vietnam] with the Belt and Road Initiative [of China]. Hong Kong can leverage its role as a gateway to enhance connectivity and cooperation between Vietnam and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area,” he said.

The two corridors, one belt strategy was first mooted by Vietnam in 2004 to cover infrastructure projects supported by China.

Nguyen, who was appointed Vietnam’s deputy prime minister in late August, also listed five priorities for collaboration between his country and Hong Kong: cooperation in financial services, promotion of bilateral trade, high tech investment, infrastructure connectivity and people-to-people exchanges.

“I appreciate Hong Kong’s support for skilled Vietnamese workers and hope that the Hong Kong government will further facilitate links between the people and businesses of both sides, [including] promote two-way tourism,” Nguyen added.

The ninth edition of the two-day summit drew about 6,000 participants from around 70 countries and regions, according to Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu.

The city chief underscored Hong Kong’s strengths as a global hub for financial and professional services, and pointed to the potential of emerging economies covered by the Belt and Road Initiative.

“Between 2013 and 2023, Hong Kong’s external trade with belt and road economies other than the mainland surged by almost 60 per cent, 3.8 times the growth rate of our trade with all economies,” he said.

“Last year, belt and road economies accounted for more than 43 per cent of Hong Kong’s external trade with the rest of the world, other than the mainland.

That value was less than a third in 2013. These figures reflect the enormous potential and promise of the Belt and Road Initiative.”

Also present at the summit was a 300-strong delegation representing 38 of China’s state-owned enterprises, led by Gou Ping, vice-chairman of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission.

Gou said Hong Kong “effectively served” the country’s needs as an important “partner and bridge” for state enterprises to participate in belt and road developments, and played an “irreplaceable” role in Chinese firms’ international project investments and financing, as well as the offshore yuan business, professional services support, and economic and trade exchanges.

“[Hong Kong’s] network of friends has further expanded and the areas of cooperation have continued to grow and deepen. The momentum for cooperation has become more robust, forming a new pattern of high-quality external exchanges. We believe that in the new golden decade of the Belt and Road Initiative, Hong Kong will play a greater role in connecting the world,” Gou said.

Elsewhere at the summit’s policy dialogue session, senior officials from other Southeast Asian nations expressed interest in collaborating with Hong Kong.

Lim Lork Piseth, Cambodia’s secretary of state of commerce, said Hong Kong would contribute significantly upon joining RCEP, the world’s largest free-trade pact, noting his country could work with the city to develop standards and protocols in customs clearance.

Rachmat Kaimuddin, Indonesia’s deputy coordinating minister for maritime and investment affairs, echoed city leader John Lee’s previous remarks, saying Hong Kong could play a big role as a “superconnector” in helping his country seek foreign investment and support.

Stand News Editors Convicted of Sedition by Hong Kong Court, Marking Setback for Freedom of Press in Hong Kong

09 September 2024, [China Scope](#)

During the 2019 “Anti-Extradition” protests in Hong Kong, local media outlet Stand News featured extensive coverage of the events. On August 29 the Hong Kong District Court found the former and acting editors of the media outlet guilty of “conspiracy to publish seditious publications.” The judge delivered the verdict but postponed sentencing to September 26, allowing the defendants to be temporarily released on bail. This case marks the first time that senior members of a news organization in Hong Kong have

been convicted of "sedition" since the city's handover to China.

The Hong Kong Journalists Association condemned the ruling, stating that it represents a serious setback for freedom of the press.

In December 2021, Hong Kong's National Security Department froze Stand News' assets, worth HKD 60 million (US\$ 7.7 million), forcing the media outlet to cease operations.

German Activist For Tibet Issues Says Denied Entry To Hong Kong

08 September 2024, [Barron's](#)

A German working on Tibet rights issues was denied entry into Hong Kong this weekend, he said, after he tried to fly into the city from Beijing -- at least the second activist turned back this year.

David Missal, of the Berlin-based advocacy group Tibet Initiative, posted on social media platform X Sunday that he was grilled for hours by officials before being denied entry.

"After 13 sleepless hours under immigration examination... I was told that I could not enter the city and was eventually allowed to take a plane to Vietnam," Missal, the group's vice executive director, wrote.

"I was able to travel to China within the visa-free policy, but not to (Hong Kong)," Missal said, adding that his luggage was also searched.

China last year granted visa-free entry to Germans and a few other European passport holders, allowing them to transit through the mainland for up to 15 days.

Earlier this year, international media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said one of its representatives was stopped and questioned when she tried to enter Hong Kong, before being deported. Missal told AFP some colleagues -- including him -- had their visa applications to mainland China rejected in the past, but that he had studied in Hong Kong in 2018 and 2019.

He added that his trip -- initially planned for China, then Hong Kong and Vietnam -- was "not work-related" as he was on vacation.

Hong Kong's immigration department said it "does not comment on individual cases".

The department "acts in accordance with the laws and policies in handling each immigration case", it said.

The former British colony was once considered one of the freest territories within China.

After massive and at times violent democracy protests in Hong Kong in 2019, Beijing imposed a sweeping security law to quash dissent.

Earlier this year, Hong Kong authorities enacted a second law to punish more security crimes -- drawing condemnation from Western nations including the

United States about the curbing of freedoms in the city.

China- Mongolia

After 'Xizang' for 'Tibet', is it 'Northern frontier' for 'Inner Mongolia'?

04 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

After a new insistence on using the Chinese term "Xizang" (western treasure) to refer to Tibet (and Tibet Autonomous Region) even in English-language media, party authorities in China are now calling for the phrase "northern frontier culture" rather than "Mongolian" for China's Inner Mongolia region, said US-based journal *Foreign Policy* in its weekly *China Brief* email service Sep 3.

The linguistic change may signal another target in ongoing attempts by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to crush minority cultures in (People's Republic of) China, especially those in the border regions, the report said.

The report noted that until 1911, all of Mongolia was under the control of the Qing Empire, which also ruled China. Out of ecological and cultural concerns, the Qing's Manchu rulers blocked Han Chinese settlement in Mongolia.

However, after the 1850-64 Taiping rebellion and the resulting sharp decline in Qing power, Han settlers flooded into Inner Mongolia. And the region continued to remain under Chinese control.

On the other hand, the present-day Mongolia became a Soviet satellite and later on an independent country. The report noted that although clashes between Han Chinese and Mongols left tensions that lasted through the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, until recently, Inner Mongolia was seen as a model of relative peace and assimilation.

However, in the last four years, educational changes have targeted Mongolian language and culture, and protests in the region in 2020 were met with repression, the report noted.

China- Nepal

Nepal surveys damage after deadly floods kill at least 193 people

30 September 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Search and rescue teams in Nepal's capital have been picking through wrecked homes as floodwaters have started to recede.

Officials reported on Monday that the death toll from the monsoon floods and landslides had risen to 193 around the Himalayan nation. At least 31 others were missing and many others injured, police said.

Entire neighbourhoods in Kathmandu were inundated after the heaviest rains in more than two decades, with the capital temporarily cut off from the rest of the country after landslides blocked highways.

“Our focus is on search and rescue, including people who have been stranded on highways,” said Ministry of Home Affairs spokesman Rishi Ram Tiwari.

Deadly floods and landslides are common across South Asia during the monsoon season, lasting from June to September, but experts say climate change is making them worse. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, a Nepal-based think tank, said the disaster had been made worse by unplanned urban encroachment around the Bagmati River, which courses through the capital.

Nepal’s army said more than 4,000 people had been rescued using helicopters, motorboats and rafts.

Bulldozers were being used to clear nearly two dozen sections of main highways leading into Kathmandu that had been blocked by debris.

Nepal’s weather bureau said preliminary data from stations in 14 districts measured record-breaking rain in the 24 hours to Saturday morning.

A monitoring station at the Kathmandu airport recorded about 240mm (9.4 inches) of rain, the highest since 2002.

The monsoon season brings 70-80 percent of South Asia’s annual rainfall and is vital for agriculture and food production in a region home to about two billion people.

But monsoon rains also bring widespread death and destruction in the form of floods and landslides.

Experts say climate change has worsened their frequency and intensity.

More than 300 people have died in Nepal in rain-related disasters this year.

Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli Meets with Wang Yi

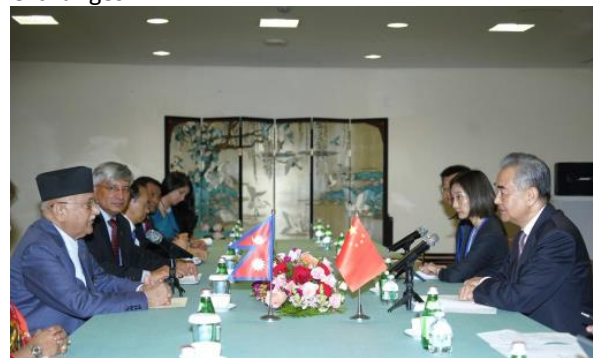
27 September 2024, [MFA](#)

On September 26, 2024 local time, Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli met with Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Wang Yi conveyed Chinese leaders' cordial greetings to Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli. He said, China and Nepal are linked by mountains and rivers with a shared future and have established a strategic partnership of cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity, which builds on history and heralds a bright future. China has always placed Nepal in an important position in its neighborhood diplomacy and is committed to building an even closer China-Nepal community with a shared

future. Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal. The two sides should take this opportunity to push for more fruitful results from Belt and Road cooperation and other cooperation programs to benefit the two peoples.

Wang Yi said, China will, as always, support Nepal in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. China hopes that Nepal will find a successful development path suited to its national conditions. China appreciates Nepal's reiteration on many occasions that it will not allow any force to use its territory for anti-China activities. China has decided to grant zero-tariff treatment on 100 percent of taxable items from the least developed countries that have diplomatic relations with China, which will facilitate the entry of more Nepalese specialty products to China. China welcomes Nepal's declaration in China of 2025 as the Year of Tourism in Nepal and is ready to work with Nepal to jointly plan a series of activities to promote people-to-people exchanges.



Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, in New York, Sept. 26, 2024. (Xinhua/Wu Xiaoling)

Nepal's Deputy PM, Chinese Vice Premier discuss bilateral relations; implementation of projects in time bound manner

27 September 2024, [PTI](#)

Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel and China's Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang agreed on accelerating the timely implementation of bilateral agreements, including key infrastructure projects like the Kathmandu-Kerung railway and cross-border transmission lines.

Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel held a bilateral meeting with China's Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang where the two leaders discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including the implementation of projects in a time-bound manner.

Paudel, who is also Nepal's Finance Minister, during Thursday's discussion stressed the need for working collectively to accelerate the implementation of agreements signed between the two governments in a time-bound manner, a Foreign Ministry statement said. Appreciating the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries, Ding stressed on the importance of practical cooperation between Nepal and China for mutual benefit.

The Chinese vice premier also responded positively to the proposal for time-bound implementation of the agreements, the statement said. "The two leaders further agreed to advance the projects under the Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, particularly Kathmandu-Kerung railway, cross-border transmission line, Kimathanka-Hile, and Hilsa-Simikot roads," it said.

They also discussed the ways of enhancing cooperation in various sectors, including infrastructure, tourism, education, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people relations, the statement said.

Earlier, Paudel met China International Development Cooperation Agency Chairman Luo Zhaohui to discuss various aspects of Nepal-China development cooperation. During the meeting, Paudel highlighted the need to further deepen cooperation in the areas of infrastructure development, connectivity, trade and transport, and dry ports, among others. Luo expressed support for the Chinese government in accelerating the ongoing projects as well as those relating to livelihood and good governance. The two leaders also discussed cooperation on agricultural and industrial parks as well as Madan Bhandari University of Science and Technology, according to the statement. Paudel, who was on a six-day visit to China, will return to Kathmandu on Saturday.

China committed to building closer China-Nepal community with shared future: Chinese FM

27 September 2024, [Xinhua](#)

China has always placed Nepal at an important position in its neighboring diplomacy, and is committed to building a closer China-Nepal community with a shared future, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Thursday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks at a meeting with Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York.

Wang said that China will continue to support Nepal in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and hopes Nepal will find a successful development path that suits its national conditions.

China's decision to grant zero-tariff treatment to 100 percent of tariff items of products from all the least developed countries having diplomatic relations with China will facilitate more Nepalese specialty products to enter China, Wang added.

For his part, Oli said Nepal firmly adheres to the one-China policy, and is committed to enhancing cooperation with China.

Nepal, China see surge in border trade

25 September 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

Nepal-China trade through border routes rose around 70 percent during the first two months of Nepal's current 2024-25 fiscal year starting in mid-July, official figures showed.

Garments, footwear, electronic items, smartphones and electric vehicles are among goods imported from China through Rasuwagadhi and Tatopani border crossings ahead of Dashain and Tihar, two major festivals in Nepal which fall in mid-October and November.

"We're seeing good growth in trade through Rasuwagadhi border point in the last two months," said Rabindra Prasad Pyakurel, information officer at Rasuwa Customs Office.

"One obstacle to increasing trade through this route is, however, the poor road and customs infrastructure on the Nepal side," he told Xinhua.

China, Nepal launch joint military training

23 September 2024, [AA](#)

Exercise to focus on counter-terrorism and disaster relief operations

China and Nepal began a joint military exercise Sunday in southwestern China's Chongqing Municipality.

It marks the fourth joint training session between the two countries' armed forces, with the last one held in 2019.

Under the theme of "joint counter-terrorism operations in urban blocks," the training involves activities such as small arms shooting for special operations, counter-terrorism squad tactics, drone operations, emergency rescue drills and comprehensive counter-terrorism exercises.

Scheduled to run until Oct. 1, the training also includes joint research and exchanges on disaster response strategies, particularly concerning earthquakes, avalanches and landslides.

Cultural exchange events will further promote mutual trust and understanding between the two military forces.

Nepal and China set to resume military drill

10 September 2024, [The Annapurna Express](#), Shambhu Kattel

Nepal and China are set to resume their joint military drill, which had been stalled since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The fourth edition of the drill will be held in China later this month. According to sources at the Nepali Army headquarters, the exercise will begin on Sept 21 and last for 10 days. Although China had been hesitant to restart the drill in the early years following the pandemic due to strict health restrictions, it has now agreed to move forward.

Outgoing Army chief Prabhu Ram Sharma played a key role in reviving the joint drill between the Nepal Army and China's People's Liberation Army, according to officials. Army spokesperson Brig Gen Gaurav Kumar KC confirmed that discussions are ongoing to finalize the details, although he did not provide further specifics.

Sharma has reportedly proposed to the Chinese side that the dates for the exercise be confirmed before his retirement. Sharma officially retired on Monday, passing the leadership of the Nepali Army to Ashok Raj Sigdel. In preparation for the exercise, Sharma had earlier dispatched senior official Prem Dhoj Adhikari to Beijing for discussions. The final dates were set shortly after Adhikari's return.

The drill, known as the Sagarmatha Friendship exercise, first began in 2017, drawing attention from both New Delhi and Beijing. This year's edition will take place in Chengdu, China. Prior to 2017, while Nepal and China had engaged in training and exchanges, no joint military drills had been held between the two countries.

India, the US, and other nations have expressed concerns about the growing military cooperation between Nepal and China, viewing it through the lens of rising geopolitical tensions. Recently, China has introduced new global initiatives in both the development and security sectors, such as the Global Security Initiative (GSI), which has raised further apprehension in India and Western nations. Nepal, however, has informed China that it cannot be part of the GSI.

The Nepali Army maintains that these joint drills are routine, similar to the military exercises it conducts with other nations, including India and the US. For example, Nepal and India hold the Surya Kiran military drill annually, rotating the location between the two countries.

A special team from the Nepal Army, including an observer group led by senior official Pradeep Jung KC, will visit China to participate in the drill, which will focus on counterterrorism and disaster management. Each country will send a delegation of 18 members.

The previous three editions of the drill were held in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Nepal trade point of Khasa opens for cargo trucks to Kathmandu after 2 week closure

04 September 2024, [News On Air](#)

In Nepal, the trade point of Khasa opens for cargo trucks to Kathmandu after closure for two weeks on Tuesday. Due to the construction of a tunnel in the Nyalam and Khasa regions of Tibet in China as part of the Chinese smart city project, goods containers to Nepal were restricted from entering the Khasa border trade point with Nepal from August 30. The trade points north of Bagmati Province were opened, giving a sense of relief to traders in Nepal.

As Nepal's biggest festival, Dashain, is scheduled for next month, the restriction in these trade points stressed Nepali businesses whose consignments were in cargos to Kathmandu. Nepal's trade deficit with China remained negative at Rs 296.18 billion.

Since March, 14 trans-Himalayan trade points have reopened after four years that were closed during COVID-19 times, but there is no cross-border trade taking place from these points. Rasuwagadhi-Kerung and Tatopani-Zhangmu/Khasa are two international trade routes connecting Nepal and China. Tatopani-Khasa has historically been the main land route for trade with China.

The Rasuwagadhi-Kerung customs point was being used as an alternative route after the closure of the Tatopani-Khasa point in 2015.

China-Pakistan

Zong expands its footprint in Gilgit Baltistan

30 September 2024, [Trade Chronicle](#)

Zong, Pakistan's leading cellular and digital services provider, has officially launched its network in Gilgit Baltistan, marking a significant milestone in the region's digital development. The launch event was held at the prestigious Gilgit Serena Hotel. It was graced by prominent dignitaries, including Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, Minister of Law and Tourism, Government of Gilgit Baltistan, who graced the event as the chief guest. The event, held on September 27th, celebrated the commercial activation of 59 4G sites across the region, with further expansion plans slated for next year. Zong's presence in Gilgit Baltistan promises to empower local communities, enhance connectivity, and contribute to the area's socio-economic development.

The launch event was attended by distinguished guests, including Miss Suraya Zaman, Advisor IT,

Government of Gilgit Baltistan, Mr. Gul Abid Wazir, Zonal Director PTA Gilgit, Mr Ehsan ul Haq Assistant Zonal Director PTA Gilgit, Lt. Col. Muhammad Ali Ahmed, Commanding Officer of Special Communication Organization (SCO), and Riaz Ahmad, Secretary IT, Government of Gilgit Baltistan. Their participation underscores the strong collaboration between the public and private sectors in advancing digital infrastructure in the region.

Khawaja Shehzad Ullah, Executive Director of Sales & Distribution at Zong, highlighted the significance of connectivity in the region, stating, "We are thrilled to bring Zong 4G's high-speed internet to Gilgit Baltistan. This launch reflects our commitment to bridging Pakistan's digital divide, empowering local communities, boosting tourism, and supporting economic growth through our advanced technology and expansion plans."

Mr. Huo Junli, CEO of Zong, thanked the teams who made this expansion possible. In his message, he stated, "By enabling 4G services in Gilgit Baltistan, Zong is bridging connectivity gaps and fueling Pakistan's journey towards digital transformation. This step amplifies our role in enhancing the Belt and Road Initiative, as seamless communication is key to economic growth, cross-border trade, and regional integration. We proudly empower local communities, support tourism, and contribute to a brighter, more connected future for Pakistan and the broader region." He thanked Zong's strategic partner, the Special Communications Organization (SCO) and Pakistan's Telecommunications Authority (PTA) for playing a significant role in enabling the deployment of advanced communication networks in Gilgit Baltistan. Zong's commitment to bringing digital services to the people of Gilgit Baltistan highlights the company's continued efforts to support the national digital agenda and drive inclusive connectivity in all regions of Pakistan.

China to establish special agricultural industrial park in Pakistan

29 September 2024, [Pakistan Today](#)

LU'AN: China's Anhui Annongda Agricultural Science and Technology Company will collaborate with Pakistan to establish a Special Agricultural Industrial Park. In this connection, it inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pakistan Carium Healthcare Innovation Company, marking the beginning of a collaborative venture aimed at establishing the Park.

This is a move to bolster the essential oil sector in Pakistan. The partnership will focus on research and development in essential oil extraction, along with the cultivation of plants and herbs rich in essential oils and

traditional medicinal properties, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

The MoU underscores the shared commitment to harnessing Pakistan's natural resources and fostering innovative practices that will elevate the Pakistan's position in the global essential oil industry.

The collaboration aims for the production of high-quality, pure essential oils, catering to the burgeoning demand across sectors such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and wellness products.

As part of the initiative, they will cultivate stevia, Japanese mint and sweet potatoes, with the first batch of crops in the Park for the extraction of essential oils destined for the pharmaceutical industry.

Essential oils, renowned for their therapeutic properties, have witnessed a surge in popularity due to their diverse applications.

From aromatherapy and skincare to natural remedies, these oils have become an integral part of modern wellness routines.

Pakistan, with its diverse climatic conditions and soil, is ideal for growing herbs and plants that are rich in essential oils.

Under the partnership, Anhui Annongda will transfer state-of-the-art cultivation techniques to Pakistani farmers, which will not only enhance crop yields but also ensure sustainable and efficient production of high-quality essential oils.

The two companies also plan to establish a cutting-edge research laboratory specializing in advanced cell and tissue culture techniques.

The facility will serve as a hub for the propagation of new plant varieties, fruits and vegetables through cell and tissue culture, thereby increasing the diversity and quality of essential oil-producing plants and medicinal herbs.

Pakistan prepares over 70 projects for China's cooperation in CPEC phase II

23 September 2024, [Profit](#)

Infrastructure, energy, and digital economy top the agenda in expanded China-Pakistan partnership .

Pakistan has finalized a list of over 70 projects for potential collaboration with China under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

These projects, covering various sectors such as infrastructure, energy, trade, and technology, will be presented to the Chinese Prime Minister next month, according to sources from the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives.

According to a media report, the Ministry highlighted that while CPEC's first phase has concluded successfully, the second phase aims to deepen cooperation between the two countries.

To advance CPEC's scope, Pakistan and China have agreed to focus on five new development corridors: growth, innovation, green development, livelihood improvement, and regional connectivity. These corridors are designed to broaden the scope of CPEC, making it more comprehensive and inclusive.

During his recent visit to China, the Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal held discussions with the Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reforms Commission (NDRC). The meeting resulted in an agreement to hold a high-level workshop aimed at aligning Pakistan's 5Es framework with the proposed five corridors and the eight-point agenda of President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative.

Among the key projects identified for collaboration are the follow-up technical support for the New Gwadar International Airport project, the second phase of the East Bay Expressway, and the realignment of the Karakoram Highway (Raikot-Thakot section).

The government is also keen on advancing the Main Line 1 (ML-1) railway project and the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), both of which are seen as critical to boosting Pakistan's infrastructure.

Additionally, energy-related projects such as the GEIP LNG terminal and the upgrading and expansion of the National Refinery have been included in the proposed plans.

Pakistan is also looking to develop the Suki Kinari Hydropower Station and the Siyadik Copper Project, showcasing its focus on expanding the country's energy and mineral resources.

On the industrial front, projects like the Dhabeji Special Economic Zone and the Rashakai Industrial Park Project are being proposed to strengthen economic cooperation between the two nations.

The Omara Port ship repair project and agricultural initiatives, such as the buffalo breeding and dairy processing project, are also part of the wider cooperation framework.

In the fields of science and technology, Pakistan is seeking China's help in constructing the China-Pakistan Earth Science Research Centre and promoting the participation of five Pakistani universities in the China-Pakistan Belt and Road joint labs for disaster prevention.

Livelihood initiatives also feature prominently, with plans for a vocational and technical exchange program, the joint agricultural technology laboratory, and assistance for repairing flood-affected houses in Pakistan. These projects aim to uplift communities while addressing critical climate change challenges.

The digital economy is another major focus, with Pakistan looking to partner with Chinese firms to develop digital infrastructure, enhance cooperation in software, cloud computing, and big data, and promote exchanges in network security.

The list of projects reflects Pakistan's efforts to further strengthen its economic ties with China, building on the success of the first phase of CPEC. The proposed projects are expected to bolster Pakistan's infrastructure, energy resources, industrial development, and digital transformation, while also enhancing regional connectivity and promoting sustainable development.

China emerges as stabilizing force in global affairs under CPC leadership: Pakistani president

22 September 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

China, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), has emerged as a stabilizing force in global affairs, bolstering the global economy and showing tremendous progress in the fields of science, innovation and technology, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said on Thursday at a ceremony celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

China is poised to achieve significant milestones in the coming decades, which would not only bolster its development but also reshape the global landscape in politics, economics and culture, Zardari said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has helped Pakistan to transform its economy as the first phase of the project brought socio-economic benefits to the people.

"We are entering into the second phase of CPEC, which has huge potential for cooperation in agriculture, information technology, mines and minerals, and many other important areas of mutual interests," the prime minister said.

Speaking at the event, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said that China and Pakistan would further accelerate the construction of a closer China-Pakistan community of shared future in the new era, bringing more welfare to the peoples of the two countries and making greater contributions to the modernization of the world.

Pakistan's potential Brics entry seen as benefiting China at India's expense

22 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Junaid Kathju

Russia's support for Pakistan's bid to join 'China-centric' Brics could further enhance Beijing's clout in the bloc, analysts say

Russia's backing of Pakistan's entry into Brics has sparked a debate over India's stance on the matter, with analysts suggesting the inclusion could enhance China's influence within the bloc at New Delhi's expense.

Last week, Russia said it would support Pakistan's bid to join Brics – an intergovernmental organisation aimed at counterbalancing Western-dominated institutions – with both countries agreeing to boost trade and cultural ties.

"We are glad that Pakistan has applied ... We will support this," Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk said at a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday following talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Abhishek Sharma, a research assistant in the strategic studies programme at Observer Research Foundation, a Delhi-based think tank, said it was unlikely that India would support further expansion of Brics in the coming years.

"Even if the next tranche of membership happens down the line, it will be difficult for Pakistan to qualify for membership given the stringent criteria, procedures and rules that it is likely to have to qualify for," Sharma said, adding any new Brics member should have friendly relations with all existing members or substantial trade with member states.

"India sees the current Brics as a brand that represents the concerns of the developing world and the exemplifier of the multilateral order," he said. "With Pakistan's inclusion, if it happens, China's position will further consolidate, weakening India's standing in the group. This will erode the true characteristics of Brics." Brics was formed in 2006 with Brazil, Russia, India and China as its founding members. South Africa joined in 2010 while Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia were granted full membership on January 1.

In November 2023, Pakistan submitted a request to join Brics this year. If successful, China might use Pakistan's entry to further Beijing's interests, Sharma said.

"India started its diplomatic initiatives such as the Global South Summit and got support for its cause from Western countries like the US, Italy and Germany, and groupings like the EU and G7, unlike China," Sharma said.

"Therefore, China sees India as a growing competitor in this space. Hence, with Pakistan's inclusion, China will try to block India's positions as a proponent of Global South interests," he added.

Saheli Chattaraj, an assistant professor of Chinese studies at Somaiya Vidyavihar University, said China started the process of expanding Brics when it served as the bloc's chair in 2022, a move supported by Russia.

"This move might have many implications. Brics as a grouping has often been a China-centric group, often primarily pursuing anti-US agendas," Chattaraj said.

"Russia's support for Pakistan to enter Brics means Pakistan would be a part of one of the greatest emerging economic cooperation groupings, which

implies that China would also have more leverage to push its agendas within the grouping with one extra member's support," she added.

Russia will hold the Brics summit in Kazan from October 22 to 24. With the country holding the Brics presidency this year, Moscow would focus on furthering the bloc's partnerships in politics and security, the economy and finance, and cultural and humanitarian ties, Russian presidential aide Yury Ushakov told state news agency TASS in March.

As of 2023, the original five Brics countries represent 40 per cent of the world's population and 31.5 per cent of global gross domestic product, surpassing the G7 nations' 30.7 per cent share, according to a report published in March last year by the news analysis website countercurrents.org, citing data from the macroeconomic research company Acorn Macro Consulting.

Under Brics rules, leaders of the founding countries will decide on new membership applications after full consultation and consensus.

If India were to object to Pakistan's application, it was hard to see how the rules could be circumvented, said Antoine Levesques, a Research Fellow for South and Central Asian Defence, Strategy and Diplomacy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). The pace of Islamabad's membership could be "slow and conditional", Levesques told This Week in Asia.

Pakistan had an interest in seeking closer ties with Russia and China, the latter of which was already one of its top trading partners even as it sought more engagement with the US, Levesques said.

In comparison, Brics was not a high priority for India with its activities in the bloc calibrated accordingly to accommodate its goals, he added.

"India will have by now well factored into its policy planning Pakistan's nearly year-old request for Brics admittance. Russia's DPM Overchuk's support to Pakistan, tempered by a clear reference to consensus, does not effectively leave India more exposed than a week ago," he said.

A key factor that would shape India's decision on the matter is its growing misgivings at being seen as supporting any initiatives linked to China's interests within Brics, according to Levesques.

"It is doubtful that India would seek to wholly support an initiative pleasing Moscow, which would enhance Beijing's standing and ... placing Moscow in an increasingly junior position to Beijing," he said.

Pakistan's Brics membership would therefore be seen as being counterproductive and self-defeating for India, Levesques added.

Brics' expansion momentum

More than 40 countries, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Algeria, Bolivia, Indonesia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Comoros, Gabon and Kazakhstan have

expressed interest in joining Brics, according to the bloc's 2023 summit chair South Africa.

Noting the reality of Brics expansion, former Indian diplomat Anil Trigunayat said China would push for Pakistan's inclusion, just as it has done for Islamabad's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Delhi's reaction to Pakistan's potential inclusion depends on how Islamabad would address cross-border terrorism targeting India, according to Trigunayat.

Levesques suggested that India might sense an opportunity to allow Pakistan's admission to Brics as a step towards rebuilding their strained ties.

Walter Ladwig, a senior international relations lecturer at King's College London, said there was an emerging battle between India and China on the future direction of Brics, whether it should be a vehicle for advocating on behalf of the Global South or a means of pursuing anti-US agendas.

It would appear that Russia was showing less regard for Indian interests within the bloc regarding Pakistan's potential inclusion, he said.

"Pakistan's inclusion supported by Russia would seem to bolster China's vision ... you could not think of a better move than including Pakistan alongside India."

Pakistan set to strengthen counter-terrorism collaboration with China

21 September 2024, [Geo News](#)

Both sides agree to conduct joint police and paramilitary forces exercises in Gilgit-Baltistan or Xinjiang

Pakistan and China have agreed to strengthen strategic cooperation in key areas, including counter-terrorism efforts, cross-border cooperation, and measures to combat smuggling.

The agreement was reached during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and a high-level Chinese delegation led by the Minister for Political and Legal Affairs, Chen Mingguo, in Islamabad.

The Chinese delegation included Xinjiang's Deputy Secretary of the Committee of Parliamentary and Legal Affairs, the Executive Director General of Police, and the Vice President of the Xinjiang Police Academy.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to conduct joint police and paramilitary exercises in Gilgit-Baltistan or Xinjiang, with GB police officers set to train at the Xinjiang Police Academy.

In this regard, a Pakistani delegation, led by the Federal Secretary of Interior, will soon visit Xinjiang to enhance cooperation.

It was also agreed that comprehensive measures would be taken against terrorism, which is a global

issue. Speaking on the occasion, Naqvi said that Xinjiang province is of vital importance for Pakistan in its relations with China.

He underscored that, besides being Pakistan's neighbour, Pakistan shares a 600-kilometre-long border with Xinjiang. "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project also passes through Xinjiang and Islamabad aims to eliminate the smuggling of drugs, arms, and other goods," Naqvi said.

He noted that the visit of the Pakistani delegation to Xinjiang would open new avenues for strengthening cooperation. For his part, Minister Mingguo expressed a desire to enhance relations with Pakistan in all fields.

"Terrorism is a common problem and Xinjiang has suffered from it for many years," said Mingguo, highlighting that Pakistan could benefit from Xinjiang's counter-terrorism experience.

In March this year, at least six people, including five Chinese nationals, were killed after a suicide bomber rammed into a bus transporting staff working on the Dasu hydropower project in Bisham, Shangla district.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) found Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) responsible for the attack and arrested four key terrorists.

This was the second attack in the last three years on Chinese engineers working in the area. In July 2021, 13 people, including 9 Chinese nationals, two Frontier Constabulary personnel, and two locals, were killed when their coach was bombed in the Dasu area of Kohistan.

Chinese military officials vow 'unfettered commitment' to Pakistan in meeting with top general

16 September 2024, [Arab News](#)

Two top Chinese military officials highlighted their country's "unfettered commitment" to standing in solidarity with Pakistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Saturday, as they met with Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza during his visit to Beijing. China and Pakistan's strategic partnership, rooted in decades of close ties, has expanded beyond defense cooperation to encompass infrastructure development and regional connectivity. Through projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the administration in Beijing has bolstered Pakistan's economy by billions of dollars of investment.

Simultaneously, Pakistan remains firmly committed to the One-China policy, underscoring its support to Beijing on key issues like Taiwan and Tibet, while China continues to deepen its defense ties with Pakistan, to serve mutual security interests.

“General Sahir Shamshad Mirza ... on an official visit to [the] People’s Republic of China held separate meetings with General He Weidong, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), and General Liu Zhenli, Chief of CMC Joint Staff Department, and delivered a talk in 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum on the Role of Pakistan toward regional peace and stability,” the ISPR said. It informed that both sides appreciated the deep and historic relationship between Pakistan and China in multiple domains and acknowledged progress related to bilateral strategic and defense cooperation. “The Chinese leadership ... reaffirmed their unfettered commitment to support Pakistan on its territorial integrity and sovereignty,” the ISPR added. Just a day ago, the Pakistani general told a major forum in Beijing that CPEC was not just beneficial for his country’s economy but also a “stabilizing force” for South Asia. He also maintained that the strategic cooperation between the two countries was “a cornerstone for peace and stability” for a region fraught with security challenges.

Pakistan and China pursue corridor dream, despite risks

13 September 2024, [Dialogue](#), Atika Rehman

Recent attacks in Balochistan highlight security challenges for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, but both countries remain committed

More than 50 people were killed in late August during multiple attacks in Pakistan’s impoverished southwestern province of Balochistan. Despite extensive infrastructure investments made in the region, mostly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a decades-long insurgency has only intensified, raising concerns about the sustainability of ongoing and future investments.

The attacks in Balochistan follow a similar pattern. Separatist militant groups, such as the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), have long targeted Pakistani security forces and Chinese nationals, accusing them of exploiting the province’s resources. In Gwadar, home to the port often hailed as the crown jewel of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), resentment is growing among local communities, particularly fishermen, who have protested against the construction and the lack of basic amenities like water and electricity in their city.

Despite these challenges, there is little evidence that either Pakistan or China will abandon CPEC, with policymakers from both countries continuing to tout it as a “game-changer”. However, the reality on the ground is one that falls short of the lofty claims

promoted by officials. Although some energy and infrastructure projects have been completed, CPEC is hardly the vibrant trade route it was billed to be.

Energy projects hit roadblocks

A key issue remains energy. Last year, Pakistan experienced an enormous blackout, a symptom of its creaky infrastructure and decades of underinvestment. Many of the CPEC energy projects, such as the Suki Kinari hydropower project and a coal power plant in Thar, were designed to address chronic energy shortages. Yet, according to Haneea Issad, an energy finance specialist at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), the issues run far deeper than simply building more plants.

“The government currently owes Chinese IPPs capacity payments to the tune of a billion dollars,” Issad told *Dialogue Earth*. “Any investor owed such a huge sum would be wary of further investments after this.” She added: “There is also the issue of surplus capacity on the national grid and a shrinking consumer demand amidst slow economic and industrial growth. With the grid’s inability to absorb any new power projects, there aren’t many avenues for new investment opportunities opening up. From the Pakistan government’s end, it doesn’t have any more fiscal space to bring on any imported fuel-based new capacity, at least not on the traditional ‘take or pay’, fixed-price contractual model.”

Given these constraints, Issad argues that “any new contracts on the same model will not be feasible for both sides.”

CPEC: A multi-billion project in a struggling province

Perhaps more importantly, CPEC projects have yet to deliver meaningful benefits to the people of Balochistan, a province that makes up 44% of Pakistan’s land mass,. According to the UNDP, Balochistan has the second highest headcount for multi-dimensional poverty out of all the provinces at 71.2%. It also has the lowest literacy rate in the country, especially among women.

Two energy projects under CPEC are located in Balochistan; both are troubled. The first, a 300 MW imported coal power project in Gwadar has yet to be built and there is speculation the project will be shelved due to financing challenges. Meanwhile, the China Power Hub Generation Company’s 1,320MW coal-fired plant at Hub, has faced frequent liquidity problems, shattering investor confidence and leading to appeals for intervention from the Chinese ambassador to the prime minister.

Of the two road projects in Balochistan, the Khuzdar-Basima road has been built, but the second road from DI Khan to Zhob is not yet complete.

The BRI’s flagship project, the Gwadar port, is operational but has, thus far, failed to attract significant economic activity. It remains far from the bustling transshipment hub officials envisioned would

“connect South Asia to the world”. Gwadar Airport, though reportedly complete, has yet to be inaugurated due to persistent security threats.

‘We don’t let saboteurs sabotage it’

Over the years, militant groups have frequently threatened China against pursuing its development objects in the region via video messages. These groups have carried out numerous attacks, including assaults on Chinese engineers, an attack on the Chinese consulate in Karachi and the killing of three Chinese teachers.

In response, both Pakistan and China have reaffirmed their commitment to counter-terrorism and continued development. Pakistan’s defence minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, told *Dialogue Earth*: “The Chinese are invested and will not desert us. Of course, they have security concerns — it’s not just financial for them, it also involves Chinese workers on the ground. From Khunjerab to Gwadar, Chinese workers are present, making it a serious matter.”

Ahsan Iqbal, Pakistan’s minister for planning and development, expressed a similar sentiment, adding: “The Chinese understand that these incidents are isolated and they know that the forces behind them are trying to disrupt CPEC. We won’t let saboteurs succeed.”

Nonetheless, the persistent militant attacks have added pressure on CPEC projects, according to security expert Amir Rana. He pointed out that a recent high-level meeting between Pakistan’s army chief, the prime minister and Chinese president Xi Jinping featured security as “the foremost topic”.

He said: “They returned [from China] and announced ‘Azm-e-Istehkam’ [a military operation] ostensibly in response to Afghanistan, but it also reflects Chinese interest in making Balochistan safe — where the threat is highest and attacks are frequent.”

Rana added that resolving the insurgency in Balochistan and the ensuing militant attacks is far from straightforward: “It’s complicated because it’s not just a terrorist threat [and has] political elements.” On Pakistan’s response, he said “the political part of the resolution is missing.”

A pivot towards ‘Smart CPEC’

China, meanwhile, has adjusted its approach to investment in Pakistan in light of these challenges. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former secretary general of the Pakistan Democratic Movement coalition that governed the country from April 2022 to August 2023, noted that China had shifted away from large-scale infrastructure projects with long-term payoffs. “Earlier in the CPEC process there was joint identification, feasibility and due diligence of potential projects and investments. But then the Chinese focus shifted to smaller and sharper interventions with quick returns; which was sometimes referred to as ‘smart CPEC’, i.e. not large infrastructure projects with long gestation

periods, but smaller ones with faster results,” he explained.

At the third Belt and Road Forum in October 2023, president Xi placed great emphasis on “small yet smart” projects as part of BRI. These investments, focusing on a thousand small-scale livelihood programmes, aim to address local needs through targeted, manageable projects.

An Islamabad-based politician, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Chinese business leaders had revealed unofficial instructions from their government to avoid investing in long-term projects. “They’ve been told to continue investing in Pakistan but to select projects that are near-ready or already operational with revenue streams. The direction changed after the slow pace and poor returns on existing projects,” he said.

This pivot reflects a broader reset in China’s overseas investment strategy, according to Isabel Hilton, founder of China Dialogue (which became Dialogue Earth in 2024) and visiting professor at King’s College London. “Large-scale BRI investments peaked around 2017, as many of the projects became problematic for a number of reasons,” she told Dialogue Earth. “Last year, the 10th anniversary of BRI was a relatively subdued affair and today Beijing stresses a different development model — the Global Development Initiative. Chinese banks and government entities have become much more cautious in their lending and finance policies and there is a much greater realisation that due diligence matters in a world of low growth and mounting levels of debt.”

China shows interest to invest in Pakistan’s diverse sectors

10 September 2024, Radio Pakistan

A high level Chinese business delegation has evinced keen interest for investment in major sectors of Pakistan’s economy and relocating Chinese industries here.

The expression was made by the delegation comprising four prominent Chinese business groups during their visit to Special Investment Facilitation Council in Islamabad today.

The delegation was apprised of potential investment opportunities in priority sectors including agriculture, livestock, Information Technology, energy, minerals, tourism and industry.

The delegation was also informed about the policy level measures taken by SIFC to improve the overall business environment in the country and salient features of industrial development in Pakistan.

The visit of the delegation will further stimulate the ongoing engagement between Pakistan and China under the Business to Business framework.

Pakistani scholars hail China's modernization, envision CPEC cooperation

09 September 2024, [Xinhua](#)

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is beneficial for both countries as it creates many trade opportunities and helps Pakistan to speed up the industrialization drive, Nadira Panjwani, chairperson of the Karachi-based Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR), has said.

Addressing a seminar hosted by KCFR on Friday, the chairperson said the CPEC was a flagship project symbolizing tremendous potentials that exist for trade and regional connectivity.

The expert said friendship between Pakistan and China is unbreakable, adding that as the world undergoes transformative changes and the global geopolitical landscape evolves, the two countries need to strengthen cooperation and strive to build a more interconnected, peaceful and sustainable world.

Talking to Xinhua on the occasion, Habib Paracha, a member of KCFR and a film producer, said that China's modernization shows the world how a populous country alleviated poverty.

"Pakistan should make good use of its resource advantages and learn from China's experience to solve the problem of unbalanced development and gradually move toward modernization," he said.

Paracha said that agricultural cooperation between Pakistan and China should be broader, adding that it would benefit the Pakistani people, and the two countries should continue to strengthen cultural exchanges to promote mutual understanding.

Speaking at the event, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said that China is willing to strengthen exchanges on state governance with Pakistan and work together to promote the modernization of both countries.

Launched in 2013, the CPEC, a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, is a corridor linking Gwadar Port in southwest Pakistan's Balochistan province with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport and industrial cooperation in the first phase, while the new phase expands to agriculture and livelihood, among others.

Pakistan committed to enhancing cooperation with China: foreign office

09 September 2024, [Xinhua](#)

Pakistan has remained committed to deepening cooperation with China in various sectors, including agriculture, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday.

Spokesperson of Pakistan's Foreign Office Mumtaz Zahra Baloch emphasized the robust and multifaceted relationship between the two countries.

Baloch said that bilateral cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, has continued to grow steadily over the years.

"Pakistan and China are all-weather strategic cooperative partners, and our relationship is multifaceted," said the spokesperson.

According to official sources, the Pakistani government is working on training of 1,000 Pakistani agricultural experts in China under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Pakistan resolves IMF issues to unlock \$7 billion loan

13 September 2024, [The Tribune](#), Shahbaz Rana

Board scheduled to meet this month, 37-month deal will mark beginning of a new journey.

Pakistan on Thursday announced that it had amicably resolved all outstanding issues with the International Monetary Fund paving the way for the approval of the \$7 billion loan this month, as it is also set to further tighten the noose around the necks of existing taxpayers after retreating against the traders.

The government has prepared amendments to deny the existing filers of the income tax returns the right to purchase assets if the value of their declared cash balances and income is less than the cost of the new assets.

The step is being taken after the new Federal Board of Revenue chairman analysed the data of the existing less than six million filers of the income tax returns for the tax year 2024. It turned out that hardly 45,000 Pakistanis out of the six million income tax returns filers were showing annual income of more than Rs10 million.

"Thank God, all issues have amicably been resolved with the IMF and this month the IMF board will give final shape to these issues", said Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday.

His statement brings to an end the uncertainty around the approval of the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility that is pending for the final board nod for the past two months.

IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack said in Washington on Thursday that the board is scheduled to meet on September 25 to consider the approval of the \$7 billion loan package for three years' term.

Pakistan took longer than the anticipated time in securing rollover of the \$16 billion cash deposits and commercial loans and arranging another \$2 billion in commercial financing.

The new 37-month IMF deal approval will mark the beginning of a new journey, which will bring more economic difficulties but its implementation can provide stability.

Compliant taxpayers to pay more

The sources said that the government was working on a new piece of legislation to take measures for enhancing the tax collection, which is facing huge shortfalls against the agreed targets with the IMF.

The government believes that the majority of the existing nearly six million filers, mainly business individuals, associations of persons and companies, have under-declared their assets and incomes in the annual statements filed with the FBR, said the tax authorities. It has been decided that the people and the firms, already in the tax net, would be targeted to cough more revenues.

The government's decision to charge higher tax rates on the purchase of assets by non-filers is the core reason for a narrow tax base and low taxpayers by the filers. However, the government is still not willing to abolish this uncalled for category of the non-filers, which encourages people to stay away from the tax net.

The government is considering to amend the Income Tax Ordinance to target the majority of the existing nearly six million income tax return filers by either promulgating an ordinance or introducing a bill in the National Assembly, said the sources.

As per the proposal, despite being filers and taxpayers, individuals and firms having assets not worth buying homes, plots and cars would be denied to purchase these assets, said the sources. They would also be denied the right to withdraw their cash balances from the banks, if their aggregate cash withdrawals are less than the amounts shown in their tax returns.

The FBR has proposed to implement these new stringent legal measures with effect from October 1, according to the government sources.

The government officials said that the FBR would give access to the information of the existing taxpayers to the government departments and the commercial banks to deny them the right to purchase the assets.

The proposals are being framed days after the government conceded to the retailers and exempted them from the legal requirement of disclosing their bank accounts and the details of the assets.

Pakistan's industrialists have already started establishing their businesses overseas and people are finding avenues to stay away from the heavy taxation that has broken the back of the salaried and business individuals. The salaried persons pay up to 39% of their gross salary in taxes while this ratio for business individuals is around 50% of their net income.

Despite the limited tax base and the burden being borne by these people, the government has the

audacity to prepare and consider proposals to further tighten the noose around the existing taxpayers.

The FBR sources said that the government was also proposing to deny the right of investing in mutual funds and stock market to non-filers. According to another proposal, the non-filers may also be denied the right to purchase properties. But it is not clear whether the government can afford to implement this recommendation given the pressure by the strong lobbies.

The FBR believes that the existing taxpayers were not coughing up enough revenues. It is going to send them nudging notices, detailing their incomes, assets and the tax liabilities. The notices will go to the existing tax filers.

Civil servants first target

The sources said that in the first step, the income tax returns of the nearly two million federal, provincial and the state-owned enterprises employees would be pre-populated aimed at encouraging them to pay their due taxes.

The FBR plans to go after the business individuals who are already filers but according to its assumption they are not paying due taxes. There are 3.7 million filer business individuals, and 2.4 million of them did not pay income tax last year. Only 20,000 showed more than Rs10 million in annual income while another 921,000 showed less than Rs10 million in annual income.

Out of two million salaried class filers, about 630,000 were below the Rs600,000 annual income tax threshold, according to the FBR officials. There were about 15,000 salaried persons having annual income of Rs10 million or more and paid Rs93 billion in income tax, according to the FBR officials.

However, less than 1.3 million salaried individuals also declared less than Rs10 million annual incomes and paid Rs157 billion income taxes. These people are mostly middle to upper-middle income earners and are bearing the burden of the nation.

According to the tax authorities, there are 80,000 registered companies but less than 6,000 showed more than Rs10 million in annual income. These below 6,000 firms paid the 940 billion income tax, which is 99% of the total income tax paid by all the companies. There were 47,000 companies that filed nil returns and another 26,000 that declared less than Rs10 million in annual income. The FBR is going to target these existing registered companies.

Likewise, out of nearly 100,000 associations of persons, less than 5,000 showed Rs10 million annual incomes. There were 60,000 such associations, which showed nil income. Less than 5,000 associations declared Rs10 million worth income people and paid Rs150 billion in income tax.

China- Taiwan

Taiwanese military report says China lacks full invasion force

27 September 2024, [The Washington Times](#), Bill Gertz

An annual military report produced by the Taiwanese Defense Ministry concludes that the Chinese military has improved capabilities for conducting offensive landing operations on the island, but the People's Liberation Army still lacks sufficient forces to invade, according to a copy of the report obtained by Japan's Yomiuri newspaper.

The ministry report was submitted to the Taiwan legislature in August and described Chinese military combat drills in May targeting Taiwan shortly after President Lai Ching-te took office. According to the report, China's drills sought to promote division and confrontation in Taiwan and affect the morale of the military and the public. The May exercises also used the Chinese coast guard for patrols and inspections of vessels in waters east of Taiwan for the first time, said to be tests of a potential blockade during a military assault on Taiwan.

China has stepped up deployments of new types of anti-ship ballistic missiles and ultra-high-speed hypersonic missiles, which will provide opportunities for strikes against foreign military forces in the seas between the Chinese coast and what Beijing calls the "second island chain" — islands stretching from Japan to Guam, the report said.

The report also disclosed that the Chinese coast guard is being bolstered with new weapons and the addition of small warships from the Chinese navy.

But despite China's overall buildup, the report concludes that China's current capabilities are not sufficient to move large amounts of forces across the 100-mile Taiwan Strait that would be needed in a military strike. The lack of amphibious forces and supply capabilities for cross-strait warfare means the Chinese military is "not fully prepared to conduct a full-scale invasion on Taiwan," the report said.

A military source said one of the lessons China has learned from Russia's invasion of Ukraine is that an assault on Taiwan will be much more difficult than originally anticipated.

China fails to promptly notify Taiwan on detention of citizens: MAC

27 September 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#)

For the past eight years the Chinese authorities have failed to observe cross-strait agreements and promptly inform its counterparts in Taiwan of cases where Taiwanese citizens have had their freedom of

movement restricted in China, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said Thursday.

The notification mechanism regarding Taiwanese whose personal freedoms are restricted in China is part of past cross-strait agreements, MAC deputy head and spokesperson Liang Wen-chieh (梁文傑) said at a news conference.

"Since May 20, 2016 (the date when former President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) took office), the implementation of these cross-strait agreements has been disrupted by political interference from the Chinese authorities," Liang added.

He urged the Chinese authorities to fulfill their commitments in accordance with the original agreements.

One of the cross-strait agreements related to the notification mechanism is the Cross-Strait Joint Crime-Fighting and Judicial Mutual Assistance Agreement (the Agreement), established by the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) in Taiwan and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) in China.

The SEF is a semi-official organization in Taiwan that handles technical matters in cross-strait relations and the ARATS is its Chinese counterpart.

According to Article 12 of the Agreement, both parties "agree to promptly notify the other side regarding persons whose personal freedom has been restricted."

In other words, when a Taiwanese citizen is detained in China, the Chinese authorities are required to promptly inform their Taiwanese counterparts. Similarly, Taiwan is required to do the same for Chinese citizens under similar circumstances.

Liang's remarks came in response to a statement made by China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) spokesperson Zhu Fenglian (朱鳳蓮) at a Wednesday news conference, where she said the reason for the disruption in the implementation of cross-strait agreements are "well known" when addressing the case of Taiwanese citizen Kuo Yu-hsuan (郭宇軒).

Twenty-two-year-old Kuo is currently under investigation in China for his alleged involvement in fraud. He went missing soon after arriving in Shanghai on Aug. 27, and his friends and relatives have been unable to contact him since.

However, it was not until Sept. 23, when the TAO issued a news statement confirming Kuo was under investigation by relevant agencies in China due to alleged involvement in fraud, that his whereabouts were made known.

The MAC issued a news statement later on Sept. 23, expressing "strong dissatisfaction" with the Chinese authorities as Kuo's situation was not disclosed until almost one month after his apparent detention.

Liang said at the press conference that Kuo was likely detained since early September, and the absence of a

proactive notification from the Chinese authorities led to concerns on the part of his family and media speculation.

"It wasn't until after the incident surfaced, when we made inquiries and even publicly demanded answers, that they (the Chinese authorities) revealed he is currently being investigated for fraud," he added.

Kuo's case clearly demonstrates the necessity of a notification mechanism, which provides both sides of the Taiwan Strait with more accurate information, Liang noted.

In terms of the number of cases notified by China to Taiwan since the Agreement came into effect in 2009, information on the MAC website shows that, as of the end of July this year the Chinese authorities have notified Taiwan of a total of 8,123 cases in which Taiwanese citizens were detained in China.

Of the 8,123 cases, the primary types of criminal cases involved were fraud, smuggling, dangerous driving, drug-related offenses, including both drug trafficking and drug use, and traffic incidents.

In addition, 4,203 of the total were notified from the end of May 2016 (around the time Tsai took office) to late May 2024 (around the time President Lai Ching-te (賴清德) took office), and zero cases from then until the end of July.

Taiwan opposition faces test over motion denying China's U.N. claim

27 September 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#)

Taiwan's opposition faces a crucial test over a parliamentary motion mirroring recent international statements denying China's interpretation of a historic United Nations resolution.

Some hope the main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) will come around to back the motion proposed by the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which rejects Beijing's view of U.N. Resolution 2758. The resolution, passed in 1971, acknowledges the People's Republic of China as "the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations." Beijing claims the resolution "confirmed" its "One China principle," which asserts that there is only one China and Taiwan is an "inalienable" part of it.

But the [Australian](#) and Dutch parliaments recently backed their own motions stating that this does not give China rights to Taiwan. With a growing number of governments and legal experts calling China's take a distortion, the pro-sovereignty DPP tabled its motion when the Taiwanese legislature recently reconvened. The KMT demurred and dithered. After initially saying it "respects" the DPP's move, the party warned against "weaponizing" the motion and proposed its own motion to demand that the U.N. allow the Republic of China to "return."

As the senior party in the opposition coalition and the biggest in parliament, the KMT's position illustrates the deep divisions in Taiwan's political class over issues of statehood and foreign affairs. It also hints at KMT wariness of any moves that they suspect would dilute their ideology that modern Taiwan belongs to a greater Chinese polity. But if the KMT ultimately refuses to back the idea that the U.N. resolution does not determine Taiwan's status, it could undermine the willingness of foreign governments to support Taipei. Some experts were taken aback by the KMT's stance. "Frankly, I'm baffled," said Bonnie Glaser, the managing director of the Indo-Pacific program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. "I assumed that the KMT opposes the resolution because they don't want to offend China."

Glaser said that calling for the ROC to return to the U.N. is a "nonstarter" and that "it's the KMT's fault that it wasn't tested in 1971." This, too, "will irk China," she said. "So what are they up to? I don't get it."

Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and his forces, which were exiled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war, were expelled from the U.N. in 1971 and had their seat taken by Communist China. For a long time, Chiang insisted that his KMT regime represented all of the Chinese ancien regime, rather than considering alternatives. In subsequent decades, the Taiwanese largely kept the old Chinese polity imposed on them but transformed into a democratic entity.

"The KMT's call for Taiwan to return to the U.N. as the Republic of China is not a serious proposal," said Raymond C-E Sung, vice president of the Taiwanese think tank Prospect Foundation and a scholar on international law. "It's an attempt to block the DPP's motion with a so-called alternative. Essentially, the KMT wants to block Taiwan's legislature from saying that the U.N. resolution doesn't involve Taiwan."

Sung told Nikkei Asia that in his view, the KMT "wants to change the international and domestic narrative -- which is increasingly that the U.N. doesn't endorse China's claims over Taiwan -- back to their camp. They insist on their own interpretation of the ROC constitution, and created a fantasy that ROC can return to the U.N. in the place of the PRC, as in the pre-1971 state of affairs."

Others have a more positive view.

Luke de Pulford, executive director of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) -- a group of hundreds of lawmakers from 35 countries concerned about Communist China's threat to global democracy -- said that "the fact that a cross-party conversation on 2758 is underway in Taiwan is unexpected and exciting."

IPAC lawmakers agreed during a summit in Taipei in July that Beijing's attempt to rewrite international law over Resolution 2758 was unacceptable, and potentially dangerous. "For that reason they resolved

to campaign for their own governments to restate their policies on 2758, against Beijing's distortions. ... I know international politicians will be watching [Taiwan's debate] in the hope that consensus can be achieved."

The KMT and its scandal-hit ally the Taiwan People's Party collectively hold a narrow majority in the legislature and have sought to challenge Lai's agenda. But a backlash against some of their proposals and TPP leader Ko Wen-je's corruption and campaign finance scandals have created a sense of disarray inside their coalition.

Still, the two parties remain defiant, sending back the entirety of the government's 2025 budget proposal last week and repeatedly lashing out at President Lai Ching-te. The TPP has yet to state a clear position on the U.N. issue.

Opposition politicians and KMT-leaning intellectuals have criticized the DPP's proposal that Resolution 2758 does not involve Taiwan.

Huang Kwei-bo, a professor at National Chengchi University and a former KMT official, told local media that the DPP's motion "is simply unnecessary and not pragmatic."

Huang argued that "what should be unanimously resolved by the government and the opposition is that they neither recognize nor accept Resolution 2758." This position should be "adopted to safeguard the national integrity of the Republic of China and highlight the shortcomings of global governance in which 23 million people in Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu were deprived of participation in the U.N. system."

But for many experts and observers, the top priority should be opposing China's use of force and coercion against Taiwan, not U.N. participation.

"The KMT's advocating bringing back the Republic of China's formula at the U.N. is switching the clock back to then-President Ma Ying-jeou's era," Sung cautioned. "It runs contrary to what the Australian and Dutch parliaments are saying recently."

DPP lawmaker Puma Shen, an expert in China's disinformation, warned that Resolution 2758 is merely the beginning of China's legal warfare against Taiwan. If Taiwan is to counter this, he argued, it needs to control the narrative.

"Taiwan's Legislative Yuan must swiftly reach a consensus on this issue to highlight the determination of Taiwanese society to defend the nation's sovereignty," Shen told Nikkei Asia. "Unfortunately, the KMT's position on this issue is still focused on competing with the People's Republic of China for the right to represent 'China,' while the DPP firmly stands on the position of 'two countries that are not subordinate to each other.'"

A Taiwanese diplomat, who declined to be named, insisted that "the problem of 2758 is Beijing's distortion, and not us."

"We have the right to fight back," the diplomat said. "Whether we can succeed is another matter. We can't let Beijing expand their 'One China principle' without pushbacks and kill our only remaining international space."

China targeting Taiwanese military: expert

25 September 2024, [Taipei Times](#)

Beijing is using its "22 guidelines," designed to punish "die-hard" Taiwanese independence separatists, to target active-duty Taiwanese military personnel, a cross-strait expert said yesterday.

Similar tactics by China intended to threaten or harm morale are expected to increase in the coming weeks ahead of Double Ten National Day next month, Taiwan Thinktank researcher Wu Se-chih (吳瑟致) said.

The Chinese Ministry of State Security on Monday posted a message on WeChat accusing a hacker group called "Anonymous 64" of launching cyberattacks against China, Hong Kong and Macau starting earlier this year.

The group was seeking to seize control of Web sites, electronic billboards, and other devices and platforms to spread disinformation to sow division in China and distrust in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the ministry said.

The ministry added that "Anonymous 64" is a front for the Taiwanese Ministry of National Defense's Information, Communications and Electronic Force Command, a claim the defense ministry denied.

The Chinese state security ministry also identified three people it said are members of the Taiwanese military, adding that it was investigating them for alleged involvement in the cyberattacks.

Beijing said the investigation was necessary to ensure that its anti-separatist guidelines are thoroughly implemented.

"This is a typical cognitive warfare tactic that China uses against Taiwan. Only this time, they are poisoning the well by pre-emptively claiming the hackers are from Taiwan," Wu said. "It serves no other purpose than to confuse Taiwanese, affect their morale and cause them to lose trust in their government."

The CCP's tactics to punish advocates of Taiwanese independence have had a limited effect and are more a formality, Wu said.

"It is likely that these tactics were rolled out to influence what President William Lai (賴清德) would say in his Double Ten National Day address next month and pressure the Democratic Progressive Party government," he said.

The government should closely watch whether the incident would serve as an example of how the CCP would incriminate Taiwanese for supporting Taiwanese independence, namely by distributing photographs of people that they allege have committed crimes without providing specific evidence, he said.

"The difference this time is that none of the three people are on the list of 'die-hard' separatists or have political influence. It shows that active-duty military personnel could be incriminated based on the anti-separatist guidelines," he said.

China are the real hackers not us, Taiwan says after cyber accusations

24 September 2024, [Yahoo Finance](#)

China are the real hackers not Taiwan and accusations from Beijing of a Taiwanese hacking group are fake news, senior government officials said in Taipei on Tuesday.

China's national security ministry said on Monday a Taiwan military-backed hacking group called Anonymous 64 has been carrying out cyberattacks against targets in China, urging people to report "anti-propaganda sabotage."

It also named three Taiwanese it said were part of the group and published their pictures.

Democratically governed Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, frequently complains it is a victim of Chinese hacking and disinformation, but it is rare for Beijing to turn the tables and make the accusation back at Taipei.

Speaking to reporters at parliament, Taiwan Defence Minister Wellington Koo said it was China who was the main hacker around the globe.

"China is the first country when it comes to daily cyber attacks, doing it against Taiwan and countries with similar democratic ideals. They are the real originators," he said.

China's accusations are untrue, Koo added.

"As for what they have publicised, the military has the conviction to defend the country and will not shirk from doing so because of this, and nor will it have a chilling effect."

Also speaking at parliament, Premier Cho Jung-tai said China was spreading fake news to attack Taiwan.

"We must respond forcefully to fake news accusations against us," Cho said.

China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control. Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims, saying only the island's people can decide their future.

China detests Taiwan President Lai Ching-te and calls him a "separatist". It has rebuffed Lai's repeated offers of talks.

China urges vigilance against Taiwanese cyberattacks

23 September 2024, [Reuters](#), Joe Cash and Ben Blanchard

China's national security ministry said on Monday a Taiwan military-backed hacking group called Anonymous 64 has been carrying out cyberattacks against targets in China, urging people to report "anti-propaganda sabotage."

Taiwan's defence ministry denied the allegations, saying China was the real disturber of the peace with its cyber attacks and military harassment.

Since the beginning of this year, Anonymous 64 - which China's national security ministry said belonged to Taiwan's cyber warfare wing - has sought to upload and broadcast "content that denigrates the mainland's political system and major policies," on websites, outdoor screens and network TV stations, it said in a blog post.

Taiwan frequently accuses Chinese groups of seeking to spread online disinformation or carry out cyberattacks across the democratically governed island. China claims sovereignty over Taiwan and has ramped up military and political pressure against over the past five years to assert its claims.

The Taiwan defence ministry's Information, Communications and Electronic Force Command said China's accusations were untrue.

"The current enemy situation and cyber threats are severe," it said in a statement. "The Chinese communist military and forces that coordinate with it continue to use aircraft, ships and cyber attacks to harass Taiwan and are the originators of undermining regional peace."

Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims.

The hacking group's X account said it was set up in June 2023 and showed screenshots of efforts to broadcast videos likening Chinese President Xi Jinping to an emperor, marking the second anniversary of protests against Beijing's strict COVID curbs and commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations.

One video was an address from an Anonymous 64 member wearing the Anonymous hacking group's Guy Fawkes mask in the style of the graphic novel and film *V for Vendetta*.

Neither the X site nor the blog post from China's national security ministry said whether Anonymous 64 had any affiliation with the international hacking group.

Reuters was not immediately able to verify where the group was based or whether they had actually carried out the hacking attacks they were accused of.

In the blog post published on its official WeChat account, the national security ministry said its investigation into the group had found many of the

websites Anonymous 64 claimed to have accessed were fake or had little no traffic. Posts showing it having infiltrated numerous university and media websites had been photoshopped, the ministry added. The security ministry published screenshots of the group's X account with heavily redacted text. It also said it had opened a case against three members of Taiwan's cyber warfare wing.

"We advocate that netizens should not believe in or spread rumours and should promptly report cyberattacks or cases of anti-propaganda activity to the national security authorities," the blog post said.

China blocks Taiwan executive from returning home

19 September 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Thompson Chau

Incident seen fueling further Taiwanese concerns about doing business in China

A senior executive at one of Taiwan's top industrial conglomerates has been barred from leaving China, heightening concerns about the risks of traveling there amid tense cross-strait relations.

The unidentified Formosa Plastics Group official was questioned after landing in Shanghai via a flight from Taipei on Sept. 1, according to local media. The Taiwanese government confirmed the incident but declined to comment further, citing the individual's safety.

After being released following interrogation, the executive was not allowed by Chinese authorities to return to Taiwan, according to the Central News Agency here.

The company did not comment on the case.

The case, which hit the news the same night that China announced tariffs on dozens of Taiwanese goods, will likely spark widespread alarm in the Taiwanese business community, which had previously been less affected by the Chinese government's crackdown on individuals who defend Taiwan's sovereignty.

Chinese authorities have in recent years stepped up military aggression and political pressure toward Taiwan, an island democracy that Beijing claims as its own territory. But rarely has it targeted the business community.

During Taiwan's presidential campaign last October, China launched an investigation, which concluded with a \$2,800 fine, into contract-manufacturing giant Foxconn after founder Terry Gou joined the race as an independent.

"While it remains unknown why this business executive was subjected to border restrictions, China's actions send a clear message: Anybody can be subject to Beijing's rule by law," said Marcin Jerzewski, a Taipei-based fellow at Visegrad Insight, referring to the term that China often uses to attack Taiwanese individuals who support their own sovereignty.

"Intimidation and coercive actions do not merely target a few 'die-hard secessionists.'"

Jerzewski said this is a typical example of China's instrumental use of laws to achieve political objectives -- also known as lawfare -- as one aspect of Chinese interventions in Taiwan.

"But this strategy might push Taiwanese people even farther away from China due to the increased risks associated with cross-strait travel," the analyst told Nikkei Asia.

China announced late Wednesday that it would end tariff exemptions on 34 agricultural products from Taiwan, effective Sept. 25. The items include fresh fruits, papaya, coconuts, vegetables and aquatic products, according to a statement from the Chinese government's Customs Tariff Commission. Taiwan's Ministry of Agriculture estimated that China's move will affect about \$1 million a year in tariffs.

The Chinese government has in recent years banned, or raised tariffs on, a growing list of Taiwanese products, such as pineapples, grouper fish and wax apples, as part of a broader pattern of economic coercion.

In response to the detention of Taiwanese people in China, the Mainland Affairs Council -- Taiwan's top body in charge of relations with Beijing -- has repeatedly reminded people to assess the risks before visiting.

The recent number of cases shows that Taiwanese people going to China "to engage in academic, economic, cultural, religious or visiting relatives and friends and other exchange activities" have been questioned and have had their personal freedom restricted by the Chinese authorities without explanation, the council warned last year.

It also urged Beijing to "immediately stop the bad and unreasonable detention behavior and treat each other with courtesy." This will "promote healthy and orderly exchanges" between Taiwan and China, it said.

Formosa Plastics, headquartered in the southern port city of Kaohsiung, manufactures and sells plastics and owns a diverse range of businesses and subsidiaries. With a market capitalization of 307.15 billion New Taiwan dollars (\$9.5 billion), it is one of the region's leading industrial giants.

Soon after Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te took office in May, China swiftly encircled Taiwan and outlying islands with military drills as a warning to Taiwanese sovereignty.

China's leadership has refused to engage with Taiwan's elected government since the pro-sovereignty Democratic Progressive Party took over in 2016. It has sought to undermine the DPP, including through backing opposition politicians and giving them a platform. China has also stopped recognizing maritime boundaries in the Taiwan Strait that both sides had respected for decades.

Taiwan will 'never succumb,' official says amid intensifying pressure from Beijing

12 September 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#)

Faced with the “unprecedented pressure, our determination to safeguard our sovereignty and democratic system has never been so strong. This is our bottom line,” Chiu Chui-cheng said at a defence forum in Taipei.

The head of Taiwan’s top China policy body said Thursday that the democratic island will never surrender in the face of intensifying pressure from a “more aggressive” Beijing.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has said it would never renounce the use of force to bring the self-ruled island under its control.

Beijing has ramped up military and political pressure on Taipei in recent years, sending warplanes, drones and naval vessels around the island on a near-daily basis.

The head of Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council — which manages China-related issues — said on Thursday that Beijing’s “attempts to erase the sovereignty of the Republic of China (Taiwan)” have threatened peace and stability across the region.

But faced with the “unprecedented pressure, our determination to safeguard our sovereignty and democratic system has never been so strong. This is our bottom line,” Chiu Chui-cheng said in an English-language speech at a defence forum in Taipei.

“On this point, there is no room for compromise. We never succumb to the sabre-rattling and intensifying pressure from China. Taiwan never surrenders.”

Chiu also warned that Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s policy towards Taiwan will “only become more assertive and aggressive” as he hopes to achieve “national unification” with Taiwan.

“This ambition is no doubt the root causes of risks in the Taiwan Strait,” he said.

China maintains a military presence around Taiwan, as well as the nearby South China Sea, as Beijing has increasingly pressed on its territorial claims.

On Thursday, Taipei’s defence ministry said 29 Chinese military aircraft, eight naval vessels and one official ship were detected in a 24-hour window ending at 6 am (2200 GMT Wednesday).

In May, three days after Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te was sworn into office, Beijing conducted war games to simulate a blockade of the island.

Lai — whom Beijing regards as a “dangerous separatist” — rejects China’s claim of Taiwan, just as his predecessor Tsai Ing-wen did.

He has repeatedly made overtures to restart dialogue with Beijing — which were severed after Tsai came to power in 2016 as relations plunged — to no avail.

Chiu reiterated Thursday that Taiwan is willing to talk with Beijing “without any political preconditions on the basis of mutual respect, dignity, and equality”.

“We hope the leaders of the other side will display wisdom and flexibility towards a win-win future for both sides of the Taiwan Strait.”

China says it is verifying email tipoffs about Taiwan 'separatist' activity

11 September 2024, [Reuters](#)

China's government said on Wednesday it would carefully review email tipoffs it has received about Taiwan "separatist" activity, adding that "good people" have nothing to worry about, drawing a rebuke from Taipei that Beijing was simply lying.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, over the strident objections of the government in Taipei.

Beijing has been stepping up its campaign against those it accuses of being "separatists", including in June threatening to execute "diehard separatists", and in August announced an email address where people could report tipoffs about the crimes committed by such people.

Asked at a routine news conference in Beijing how the new email system was working, Chen Binhua, spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, reiterated that their measures targeted only a very small minority.

"After the establishment of the mailbox for reporting diehard Taiwan independence elements, people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits have responded with practical actions," he said.

This is a reflection of the "common aspirations" of people on either side of the strait, Chen added.

"We will carefully verify and screen the clues we receive," he said. "We will never let a single Taiwan independence element off the hook, but we will never wrongly accuse good people either."

Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council said Beijing's claims to be targeting only a small number of people was "obviously a lie" given its vague definition of being an independence supporter.

"We call on the mainland side to stop repeatedly intimidating and threatening the Taiwanese people," it said in a statement.

Taiwan's government, which says only the island's people can decide their future, has condemned China's new campaign, and warned against all but absolutely necessary travel to the country. China says that is alarmist nonsense.

China has a particular hatred of Taiwan President Lai Ching-te, inaugurated in May, but has not placed him on its list of "hardcore separatists", unlike Vice

President Hsiao Bi-khim, Defence Minister Wellington Koo and some others in his administration and party. "Taiwan independence is a scourge, a dead end; it won't come to pass," Chen said, speaking of Lai's first 100 days in office.

Lai has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing but been rebuffed, and also repeatedly warned of the danger Taiwan faces from its giant neighbour and the need to strengthen their defences.

China accuses Taiwan president of 'hunting down' rivals like Ko Wen-je

11 September 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Thompson Chau

China has accused Taiwan's president of persecuting Beijing-leaning rivals, days after the leader of the second-largest opposition party was detained amid swirling corruption allegations.

"Since the Lai Ching-te administration came to power, it has repeatedly manipulated judicial and administrative means, used public weapons for private purposes, opposed party members and dissenters, and created 'green terror' on the island," Chen Binhua, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, told reporters on Wednesday.

The representative of China's top body in charge of relations with Taiwan was replying to a question about his assessment of the scandals plaguing Ko Wen-je, leader of the Taiwan People's Party.

The TPP and its larger opposition partner, the Kuomintang (KMT), have been a thorn in the side of the pro-sovereignty Lai's fledgling administration. But Ko and his party have found themselves fighting for their political future after he was arrested last week in connection with a real estate deal during his past stint as mayor of Taipei.

Hours before his arrest, Ko portrayed himself as the victim of a witch hunt in an interview with Nikkei Asia. Chen's "green terror" comment was a reference to the White Terror period when the KMT regime, exiled from China, imposed brutal authoritarian rule across Taiwan after 1949.

Comparisons between the Democratic Progressive Party's elected government presiding over a free society and the martial law era are not uncommon among more radical opposition figures in Taiwan, despite obvious differences. During the White Terror, dissidents and civilians were jailed, tortured and executed, and prosecutors did not need a court's permission to detain people.

Ko, who is also embroiled in a campaign finance scandal that prompted him to take a leave of absence from the party's leadership, accused Taiwan's judiciary of being "political tools" of the government in his interview with Nikkei Asia. He also took aim at Taiwan's submarine program, intended as a deterrent against China, and questioned the defense ministry's

plans to locally manufacture seven more subs, although he pledged to support raising the defense budget.

Chen accused Lai of trying to "hunt down people from all walks of life who do not support the DPP and do not agree with 'Taiwan independence' in order to pursue the personal interests of one person and one party, and to remove obstacles for them to implement 'Taiwan independence.'"

Ko has argued that China and Taiwan are "one family" and voiced support for economic pacts with Beijing during the campaign for the January elections. Chen did not provide evidence to substantiate his accusations against Lai. The president, who has been invited for an interview with Nikkei Asia, has on TV emphasized the importance of an independent judiciary in which the executive cannot intervene. Other politicians, including a DPP minister in Lai's administration, have also faced finance scandals recently and been held in custody.

Beijing weighed in on the Ko drama after months of lashing out at Lai's administration through a combination of military incursions and political coercion. Days after Lai took office in May, Chinese forces swiftly encircled Taiwan and its outlying islands with military drills -- underscoring the Communist Party's threat to the Asian democracy and tech powerhouse, which it claims despite never having ruled.

The drills were only one in a series of actions that have raised alarm about Chinese intentions. China's leadership has refused to engage with Taipei's elected government since the DPP took over in 2016. It has sought to undermine the DPP, including by backing opposition politicians and giving them a platform. China has also stopped recognizing maritime boundaries in the Taiwan Strait that both sides had respected for decades.

"I want to emphasize again that 'Taiwan independence' is a countercurrent to history and a dead end; reunification is the historical trend and the right path," Chen said.

The spokesperson added, "No matter how the situation on the island changes, no matter who is in power, it cannot change the fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China, and it cannot change the relationship between the two sides."

Advocates of "Taiwan independence" are defined in Taiwan, the U.S. and much of the world as those who want to remove Taiwan's current Republic of China constitution and polity, and officially declare the island as a de jure sovereign state.

In China, however, the term is increasingly used to describe anyone who supports the status quo and rejects subjugating Taiwan under President Xi Jinping's China, including Lai and his allies.

US House passes bill to financially deter aggression against Taiwan

10 September 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Fion Khan and Kayleigh Madjar

The US House of Representatives yesterday unanimously passed the Taiwan Conflict Deterrence Act, which aims to disincentivize Chinese aggression toward Taiwan by cutting Chinese leaders and their family members off from the US financial system if Beijing acts against Taiwan.

The bipartisan bill, which would also publish the assets of top Chinese leaders, was cosponsored by Republican US Representative French Hill, Democratic US Representative Brad Sherman and seven others.

If the US president determines that a threat against Taiwan exists, the bill would require the US Department of the Treasury to report to Congress on funds held by certain members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), including how they were acquired.

The treasury must then "prohibit significant transactions" between US financial institutions and the officials, and potentially their immediate family, with allowance for exceptions.

It still needs to be approved by the US Senate to become law, but with less than two months before the presidential and congressional elections, it is not clear it is to become law this year.

"If we want to see the world's communist and autocratic dictatorships change course, we must expose their wealth, corruption and financial privilege of their elites to the citizens suffering daily under their rule," Hill said in remarks during deliberation of the bill.

"This bill goes beyond just naming and shaming. It will also cut off access to the US financial system for those CCP officials and their immediate family," he said.

"It is time for China to give up the idea of intimidating the people of Taiwan and to recognize that America's response will involve the military, will involve broad-based economic response, and will involve very personal economic disclosures and response. That is the way to prevent what could cause an incredible disruption in the world and even possibly a world war," Sherman added.

In Taipei, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lin Chia-lung (林佳龍) today expressed gratitude toward the US Congress for using a "creative and effective way" to deter Chinese military aggression toward Taiwan.

"This kind of legislation allows us to jointly deter Chinese Communist expansion and to uphold peace in the Indo-Pacific region, especially cross-strait stability and security," Lin said.

The bill was part of a package of legislation in the US Congress this week aimed at China.

The US House yesterday also voted to bar new drones from Chinese drone manufacturer DJI from operating in the US.

The bill, which still needs to be approved by the US Senate, would prohibit the company's products from operating on US communications infrastructure.

It would not prevent existing DJI drones from operating in the US.

DJI, which sells more than half of all drones in the US, opposes the bill that it said "restricts the ability of US drone operators to buy and use the right equipment for their work, solely on the basis of the equipment's country of origin."

Another bill approved yesterday would bar the US Department of Homeland Security from buying batteries from six Chinese companies, including CATL.

The US House is also expected to vote later this week on tightening rules barring US electric vehicles tax credits with Chinese content.

China's harsh sentencing of Taiwanese activist sparks tensions in cross-strait relations

10 September 2024, [Lokmat Times](#)

Efforts to maintain exchanges between Taiwanese and Chinese citizens are facing severe challenges following China's harsh sentencing of a Taiwanese activist.

Analysts warn that Beijing's decision to jail Yang Chih-yuan, a political activist, to nine years in prison under secession charges will have an effect on Taiwan's civil society, Voice of America reported.

According to the report, on September 6, China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) confirmed that a court in Wenzhou had sentenced Yang under accusations of secession, stating that he was involved in organizations advocating for Taiwan's independence.

"His acts are egregious and the court reached the decision according to law," the office said in a statement. Yang, who was arrested in 2022 while teaching and participating in competitions for the board game Go, was accused of long-standing involvement in secessionist activities.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), overseeing cross-strait exchanges, condemned the ruling, urging Beijing to reveal the verdict and evidence. "Beijing is trying to use Yang's case to intimidate Taiwanese people under the pretext of penalizing Taiwan's independence," the MAC said in a statement last week.

VOA further states that this is the first time China has used secession charges against a Taiwanese individual. It follows China's introduction of 22 new guidelines in June aimed at punishing so-called "die-hard Taiwan independence activists," with potential sentences reaching the death penalty.

Observers believe Yang's case is a troubling signal that Beijing is adopting a more hardline stance against Taiwan. "This shows that Beijing means business when it comes to using legal instruments to crack down on what it regards as 'separatism,'" said J Michael Cole, a senior fellow at the Global Taiwan Institute. He noted that the case will inevitably dampen civil society exchanges between the two sides.

In response to China's growing hostility, Taipei has postponed the scheduled visits of two academic delegations from Xiamen University. While some Taiwanese media claim the delay is due to "obstacles" imposed by local authorities, the MAC maintains that it is part of routine procedures.

China, however, wasted no time twisting the narrative, with the state-run Global Times accusing Taiwan of deliberately blocking the delegations. This deliberate mischaracterization is yet another example of Beijing's aggressive tactics to shift blame onto Taiwan while it continues its campaign of intimidation.

The tension has also affected other platforms of communication, such as the annual Shanghai-Taipei City Forum. The event, one of the few remaining opportunities for Taiwanese and Chinese officials to meet, has yet to schedule a 2024 gathering. The absence of such exchanges only highlights Beijing's refusal to engage with Taiwan diplomatically, focusing instead on divide-and-conquer strategies within Taiwanese society.

China's increasing military pressure against Taiwan under President Lai Ching-te's leadership reflects Beijing's desire to suppress any notion of Taiwanese sovereignty. "Such delays serve as a clear reminder that even lower-level engagement is difficult to sustain when one side rejects core aspects of the other's existence," said Timothy Rich, a political scientist at Western Kentucky University.

Beijing's relentless pressure is not just military. The sentencing of Yang Chih-yuan is part of a broader effort to suppress pro-independence sentiment within Taiwan. By criminalizing legitimate advocacy, China is attempting to stifle dissent and sow fear among Taiwanese activists and citizens alike.

However, this strategy risks further alienating Taiwan. As Cole pointed out, Beijing's refusal to engage in formal dialogue with Taipei while keeping doors open to interactions with other elements of Taiwanese society is a calculated effort to divide and weaken Taiwan's unity. Yet, this heavy-handed approach may ultimately backfire, as it deepens mistrust and fuels resentment toward Beijing's authoritarian grip.

Taiwan detects increase in Chinese military activity near its territory

08 September 2024, [Business Standard](#)

In response to China's military action, Taiwan sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed coastal-based missile systems to monitor PLA activity

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) said that it detected seven Chinese military aircraft, six naval vessels, one official ship and two of the aircraft entered its Air Defence Identification Zone from 6 am (local time) on Saturday to 6 am (local time) on Sunday. Of the seven Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), two aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's southeastern and southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). Taiwan's MND said that it has monitored the situation and responded accordingly.

In response to China's military action, Taiwan sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed coastal-based missile systems to monitor PLA activity.

In a post on X, Taiwan's MND said, "7 PLA aircraft, 6 PLAN vessels and 1 official ships operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 2 of the aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's eastern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

On Saturday, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence said that nine Chinese military aircraft, seven naval vessels operating around Taiwan from 6 am (local time) on Friday to 6 am (local time) on Saturday.

According to Taiwan's MND, one of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's eastern Air Defence Identification Zone.

In a post on X, Taiwan's MND said, "9 PLA aircraft, 7 PLAN vessels and 1 official ships operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 1 of the aircraft crossed the median line. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

This latest incident adds to a series of similar provocations by China in recent months. China has increased its military activities around Taiwan, including regular air and naval incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ and military exercises near the island.

Exclusive: Staff member at US consulate general in China openly spreads 'Taiwan independence' rhetoric

07 September 2024, [Global Times](#)

A staff member responsible for translation at a US consulate general in China has repeatedly spread rhetoric related to "Taiwan independence" during public activities, deliberately translating "the People's Republic of China" as "the Republic of China," a source

familiar with the matter told the Global Times. The source added that the person, if she insists on behaving in such a way, is certainly unwelcome by the Chinese people.

According to the source, after the Chinese side pointed out the mistake, the US staff member refused to admit and instead accused the Chinese side of slander. In contact with Chinese personnel, this US staff member repeatedly issued extreme remarks such as "Taiwan is an independent country."

She even aggressively pushed local Chinese officials on foreign affairs during external events, displaying an arrogant demeanor, the source said.

The aforementioned source told the Global Times that "A staff member dispatched by the US government to China has behaved in such an inappropriate manner. It raises questions about whether the issue lies with her personally or with the lack of discipline within the US diplomatic missions in China."

But one thing is certain -- her words and actions have offended Chinese society, violated the US government's commitment to the one-China principle, and breached both the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the Consular Convention between the People's Republic of China and the United States.

The person, if she insists on behaving in such a way, is certainly unwelcome by the Chinese people, the source said.

Taiwan court sentences three retired officers for spying on China's behalf

07 September 2024, [Business Standard](#)

Taiwan News reported that Chang, Chou, and Yueh reaped benefits from China for their business.

Taipei District court sentenced three retired officers Taipei District court sentenced three retired officers from the Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB) to prison on the charge of forming a spy ring to collect sensitive information on China's behalf, Taiwan News reported.

The Taipei District Court verdicts can still be appealed. Former Major General Yueh Chih-chung was sentenced to 10 months in jail, retired Colonel Chang Chao-jan received a prison term of 18 months, and ex-Colonel Chou Tien-tzu was sentenced to 14 months. Ex-Colonel Wang Ta-wang was found not guilty, as per Taiwan News report on Friday.

Taiwan News reported that Chang, Chou, and Yueh reaped benefits from China for their business, and were invited on free trips, according to prosecutors. A national security official in the Chinese province of Guangdong told them to form a spy ring and collect secret information from Taiwan.

Chang was accused of arranging a trip to China for Wang, who revealed personal background information about colleagues to the Chinese officials.

After completing their investigation, prosecutors decided to charge the suspects with breaking the National Security Act by forming a spy organization and the National Intelligence Work Act by leaking secrets, Taiwan News reported.

On August 30, the Taiwanese Supreme Court sentenced a father and son duo for eight years in prison on the charge of enticing active military officers to pass on secret information about the annual Han Kuang drills to China.

The Supreme Court rejected final appeals on August 29. The two suspects, surnamed Huang, first came into contact with Chinese intelligence officials in 2015 when they were doing business in Xiamen.

As per Taiwan News, the duo recruited two officers in separate air defence and missile units, Yeh and Su.

The group passed on eight secret documents about the Han Kuang exercises. They delivered the information personally to China or sent images and graphics by messaging softwares.

China-Xinjiang

Beijing's Transnational Repression of Dissidents: From Bad to Worse

26 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)

That the repression exerted by the Beijing's communist regime on Uyghurs has extended beyond the borders of the People's Republic of China (PRC), employing a strategy of transnational repression to target the diaspora communities worldwide, is today a known fact.

This involves a variety of tactics aimed at silencing, intimidating, or surveilling abroad individuals who are critical of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) policies or who advocate for Uyghur rights.

Recently, Paris-based international human rights organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF) shared the testimony of a Uyghur journalist exiled in the United States whose friends who are still in the PRC were detained in retaliation for his work.

The exiled journalist's story illustrated the transnational repression carried out by the CCP to extend censorship beyond its borders. International news reporter Kasim Abdurehim Kashgar, who left China for the US in 2017 due to the Chinese regime's intense repression in the XUAR, said Uyghur journalists like him find no escape from the CCP, even in exile. According to the report by RSF, following Kashgar's emigration, those in his entourage in the PRC were interrogated and, in some cases, imprisoned.

“The Chinese authorities wanted me to stop my investigations and work for the regime’s propaganda. In the months following my refusal, at least twelve people with whom I had worked in a language school were arrested and questioned about me. Some were even sentenced to up to seven years in prison,” the exiled journalist, who investigates crimes committed against Uyghurs for the American public media Voice of America (VOA), explained. The journalist said one of his friends was sentenced to nine years in prison, while four of his former colleagues were sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment on obscure charges, and only one was released, while the fate of the others remains unknown.

Working under a pseudonym for many years, the journalist revealed his identity in the documentary “From Fear to Freedom: A Uyghur’s Journey” broadcast by VOA in June last year. As per the RSF report, that reporter’s mental health suffered as his close circle was targeted by the Chinese authorities. “After learning about their detention, I developed anxiety and depression,” Kashgar said. “I am asking the authorities to release them because they have nothing to do with my work,” he added.

Kashgar remains determined to continue his investigations, despite the pressure. Through extensive research, he discovered his former colleagues were being detained. “It took me three years to reveal their arrests. I only decided to go public recently, when I had gathered solid evidence from five different and unrelated sources,” Kashgar told RSF.

Commenting on the matter, RSF Asia-Pacific Bureau Director Cédric Alviani said the journalist’s chilling testimony “illustrates the full extent of the transnational repression carried out by the Chinese regime to prevent exiled journalists from revealing the atrocities it is committing in Xinjiang.” He added: “The international community must mobilise to protect journalists making the difficult decision to go into exile, as well as their families who remain in China.”

Also, in 2024 the police of the PRC arrested two journalists from the Kazakh minority working for the local public channel Xinjiang Television, as well as several other journalists whose identities have not yet been confirmed, reports RSF. The organization counts at least 79 detained individuals among journalists and press freedom activists, including renown Sakharov prize winner Ilham Tohti.

In fact, the PRC is ranked 172nd out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2024 World Press Freedom Index. And according to a report by the Washington-based human rights group Freedom House, the parts of the Chinese communist party-state apparatus involved in transnational repression are as diverse as the targets and tactics of the campaign.

The importance of extending the party’s grip on overseas Chinese and ethnic minority exiles originates

with the highest echelons of the CCP, Freedom House said. “Besides CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping’s own advancement of sweeping anti-corruption campaigns, leaked speeches from other members of the Politburo high up in the security apparatus are explicit about the priority that should be given to the ‘overseas struggle’ against perceived party enemies,” the report added.

VOA recently reported that many exiled Uyghurs in the United States claimed the Chinese regime has ramped up transnational repression against them, using their relatives who still live in China to threaten them into silence abroad. VOA reported that the United States’ domestic intelligence and security service Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is aware of such activity targeting Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups in the US.

“Tactics and patterns morph with advancements in technology,” the FBI said in a statement to VOA. These acts, “often identified as transnational repression,” represent “severe violations of international norms, US law, and individual rights and freedoms. TNR conducted by any government, against any person including Uyghur Americans, is unacceptable,” the federal police agency was quoted as saying by VOA.

Earlier in May this year, UK-based human rights group Amnesty International reported some Chinese and Hong Kong students studying in Europe and North America claimed they were being photographed and followed at protests in their host cities, while many said their families in China had been targeted and threatened by police in connection with the students’ activism overseas.

But this transnational repression, a grave violation of human rights, extending the reach of its authoritarian control beyond its borders, not only affects Uyghurs but also poses broader challenges to global human rights and international diplomacy.

Addressing these issues requires coordinated international action, robust support for Uyghur advocacy, and continued scrutiny of Beijing practices, as all experts on the PRC say. As the situation evolves, the global community’s response will play a critical role in shaping the future of Uyghur rights and freedoms.

China: Free Uyghur Economist Ilham Tohti From Life Sentence

23 September 2024, [HRW](#)

Sakarov Prize Winner in Solitary Confinement, Denied Family Visits

The Chinese government should quash the conviction and release Ilham Tohti, the prominent Uyghur economist and government critic, on the 10th anniversary of his sentencing, Human Rights Watch said today.

In 2014, the Xinjiang People's High Court convicted Professor Tohti on politically motivated charges of "separatism" and sentenced him to life in prison. His family has not been allowed to visit him since early 2017 and he is believed to have been in solitary confinement since his arrest.

"The life sentence for Ilham Tohti marked the beginning of the Chinese government's severe crackdown on the Uyghur region in 2014," said Maya Wang, associate China director at Human Rights Watch. "Tohti's life imprisonment for his peaceful criticism and torturous solitary confinement reflects the Chinese government's heightened repression and relentless abuses against Uyghurs."

Tohti, 54, was teaching at Central University of Nationalities of China when he established "Uighurs Online," a website aimed "to provide Uyghurs and Hans with a platform for discussion and exchange" in late 2005. The Chinese government shut down the website in 2008 and sentenced the manager, Gheyret Niyaz, now 65, to 15 years in prison in 2010 for "endangering state security."

At least six of Tohti's students, Abduqeyum Ablimit, Perhat Halmurat, Akbar Imin, Mutellip Imin, Shohret Nijat, and Atikem Rozi, are believed to have been sentenced to between three-and-a-half and eight years in prison in 2014, based on a document leaked to Xinjiang Victims Database. It is unclear whether they were released when their sentences ended.

In May 2014, the Chinese government launched the "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" in Xinjiang. Since late 2016, the Chinese authorities have dramatically increased its repression in the region, targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims living there with policies that amount to crimes against humanity.

They include mass and arbitrary detention, unjust prolonged imprisonment, forced labor, family separation, violation of reproductive rights, torture, and the use of transnational repression. In 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report concluding that these abuses "may constitute ... crimes against humanity."

Tohti was awarded the European Parliament Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2019. On the 10th anniversary of Tohti's imprisonment, the European Union issued a statement calling for "the immediate and unconditional release of Tohti and other human rights defenders, lawyers, and intellectuals who are arbitrarily detained in China."

The Chinese government's harsh crackdown on Uyghurs includes the mass detention and imprisonment of intellectuals, the backbone of Uyghur culture and society. They are among more than half-a-million Uyghurs who were sentenced between 2017 and 2021 to prison terms without due process. Among them are the retired physician Gulshan Abbas,

sentenced to 20 years in prison, the prominent anthropologist Rahile Dawut, sentenced to life, the writer and literary critic Yalqun Rozi, 15 years, and the literature professor Abduqadir Jalalidin, 13 years.

The authorities continue to detain and imprison Uyghurs on vague charges, though precise information is limited due to the severe government control of information in the region. On September 19, Radio Free Asia reported that Tohti's prison guard, Ghopur Abdurreshit, 51, was sentenced to seven years in prison for disclosing information related to Tohti's health.

"Foreign governments should counter the Chinese government's false claim that there are no abuses in Xinjiang by demanding the release of Ilham Tohti and the hundreds of thousands of other Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims who remain arbitrarily imprisoned," Wang said. "The UN Human Rights office should promptly issue a comprehensive update on the current situation in Xinjiang and present an action plan to hold the Chinese government accountable."

The Uyghur Democratic Reform Movement Needs Unity and Support

23 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)

We the undersigned are a group of Uyghur scholars, professors, and intellectuals exiled around the world due to the Chinese government's brutal repression of ethnic culture, religion, human rights, democracy, and freedom.

Seven years into Beijing's atrocities in our homeland—which the United States and 11 other parliaments have declared amount to genocide, and the United Nations has affirmed may constitute crimes against humanity—we wish to stress the increasing urgency for action, and a deep need for unity and support for the Uyghur cause. To this end, we call on all democratic leaders, international organizations, and allies to reaffirm their support for Uyghur organizations, and stand with us to fight for justice and freedom.

This autumn is a pivotal moment for the Uyghur democratic movement in exile. On October 24-27, the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) will hold its eighth General Assembly in Sarajevo, gathering over 150 delegates from dozens of countries to elect its leadership and form a consensus on strategy. This exercise of a free and fair election, undertaken once every three years, demonstrates its co-its commitment to democratic values, and stands in sharp contrast to Beijing's imposition of totalitarian rule in our homeland.

Like many elections worldwide, including those held in over 70 countries this year, our process will face challenges. As autocratic regimes like China, Russia,

North Korea, and Iran threaten global democracies, the Uyghur movement must overcome similar obstacles. We aim to strengthen democratic reforms, promote social cohesion, and embrace diversity. While division is a constant threat, our resilience lies in our ability to reform and grow. Since its founding in 2004 by a group of leaders, WUC has evolved into a global force of hundreds of Uyghur activists and supporters. Since 2017, it has implemented reforms, improving structure and leadership roles.

Through WUC's leadership, Uyghur organizations have leveraged scholarly research and witness testimony to focus increased attention on Beijing's crimes, leading to official recognition of the genocide, government bans on forced labor products, and company divestments from tainted supply chains. In addition, the WUC has taken several legal actions in different jurisdictions to hold China accountable. They have reminded countries of their obligations under the Rome Statute to protect victims of the genocide, and to combat China's transnational repression. They have encouraged nations to grant safe harbor to victims, such as Canada's recent decision to accept 10,000 Uyghur refugees. And they have pressed policymakers to address the atrocities in key lawmaking bodies in the UN, EU, U.S. Congress, and the parliaments of Canada, the UK, and EU countries.

WUC's efforts to expose Beijing's repression have inspired other victim groups, from Tibetans and Falun Gong to Hongkongers and the Taiwanese. By fostering solidarity and inclusivity, WUC has become a model for constructive collaboration among oppressed groups fighting for freedom and democracy. It has mobilized the Uyghur diaspora, strengthened ties with other groups affected by Beijing's repression, and deepened collaboration with Uyghur Academicians and Uyghur researchers, notably during the Uyghur Tribunal, when we, the Uyghur scholars and many university students voluntarily edited and translated more than 10,000 pages of evidentiary documents.

These successes have caught the attention of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which has increasingly devolved into fear, consternation, and paranoia. In the past year alone, it spent significant resources organizing over 400 delegations and sending more than 5,000 handpicked individuals on propaganda tours to the Uyghur region, many of whom were chosen for their willingness to echo China's narrative abroad.

Such successes are made only by great sacrifice. For decades leaders of Uyghur organizations, both at WUC and elsewhere, have endured targeted attacks by the CCP, from Interpol "red notice" arrest warrants to harassment, blackmail, and even death threats, putting immense strain on their lives, livelihoods, and families.

As WUC becomes a more significant threat to the CCP, we have also seen increasing efforts to undermine the organization's credibility by exploiting individual shortcomings or amplifying slander campaigns against Uyghur organizations and their leaders. These developments are deeply concerning, as they threaten to discredit the broader movement and drain vital energy from our community, at a time when we need all the strength, we can muster to expose the CCP and pursue accountability for its crimes.

Like all human beings, Uyghur leaders are not immune to making decisions that may not yield the best outcomes. What matters is to identify core issues, introduce internal and external mechanisms to strengthen the organization's ability and legitimacy. We believe that is precisely what WUC is committed to doing right now and will continue to do under each new generation of leaders.

As we fight against China's deception with limited resources, financial constraints, and the pain of having family members held hostage by the regime, it is essential to maintain a long-term perspective. Over 20 years, the Uyghur diaspora has built the WUC, securing important but fragile successes. Now, more than ever, we must support and protect this vital organization, which continues to be a strong voice for Uyghurs and a lifeline for the community.

As Uyghur scholars devoted to preserving our ethnic culture, we call on all leaders in the international community to support WUC, to welcome its ongoing democratic reforms. It is crucial for the WUC to take further steps internally by implementing structural reforms, creating a transparent and accountable framework in areas such as law, professional ethics, work efficiency, technology dissemination, and public services. This will enable the WUC to more effectively advance democracy and protect Uyghur rights. In unity against China's oppressive policies, and to contribute to the global movement for democracy. In the face of significant threats and challenges, we must continue to advance WUC's democratic reforms, working alongside the new generation of leaders within the organization.

With high hope for the future, we here rededicate ourselves to the cause, and stand ready to cooperate closely, provide support, and face any difficulties that may lie ahead to achieve justice and freedom for the Uyghur people.

First and Last name (City and Country):

Prof. Dr. Alimcan İnayet, İzmir, Türkiye

Prof. Dr. Erkin EMET, Ankara, Türkiye

Prof. Dr. Alimzhan Tilivaldi, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Dr. Muhtar Abdurahman, Tokyo, Japan

IT Engineer Gheyret Kenji, Tokyo, Japan

Dr. Memet Emin, New York, USA

IT Manager Dolkun Tarim, Columbia, Maryland, USA

Sawut Muhammad, MA, Tokyo, Japan

Dr. Erkin Sidick, Los Angeles, California, USA
Dr. Yakup Ismayil, Hamburg, Germany
Dr. Ablet Semet, Berlin, Germany
Dr. Erkin Ekrem, Ankara, Türkiye
Dr. Rishat Abbas, Philadelphia, USA
Dr. Muhittin Canuygur, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Atawulla Shahyar, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Sevket Nasir, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Ömer Kul, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Ismail Amat, Saitama, Japan
MD-PhD. Mewlan Bayyüz, Osaka, Japan
Exmetjan Letip, MS. Tokyo, Japan
Dr. Abliz Abduqadir, Virginia USA
Dr. Mamatimin ABBAS, Bordeaux, France
Dr. Magfired Yunusoglu, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Memet Tash, Texas, USA
Dr. Ahmetcan Polat, Newcastle, United Kingdom
Muzappar Dolan, S.P Manager, Houston, USA
Dr. Alip Mohammed, Montreal, Canada
Dr. Askar Yimit, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Dr. Nurnisa Kurban, Santa Clarita, USA
Dr. Abduxukur Abdurixit, Bern, Switzerland
Associate Prof. Dilnara Kassymova, Almaty, Kazakhstan
Dr. Alimcan Bugda, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Raziye Mahmut, Ottawa, Canada
Dr. Furkat Yunus, Delft, The Netherlands
Dr. Abdukader Kayser, Bern, Switzerland
Dr. Andeli Memetkerim, Zürich, Switzerland
Ilzat Yusup, Calgary, AB, Canada
Dr. Ablet Uygur, Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Payzulla Zaydun, Maryland, USA
Dr. Gülnar Eziz, Boston, MA, USA
Dr. Anwar Mamat, Virginia USA
Dr. Gulnisa Nazarova, USA
Abduweli Ayup, Researcher, Bergen, Norway
Dr. Adilcan Eruygur, Konya, Türkiye
Dr. Erkin Abliz, Virginia, US
Dishat Abudurahman, M.A, Saitama, Japan
Dr. Ayjamal Abdurahman, Montréal, QC, Canada
Dr. Gülmire Berdash, Essex, UK
Merwayit Hapiz, Painter, Munich, Germany
Abdulhamit Karahan, MSc Engineering, Ankara, Türkiye
MD. Rena Karahan, Ankara, Türkiye
Dr. Abdulkirim Buğra, Ankara, Türkiye
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Reyila Kaşgarlı, İstanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Gülzadem Tanrıdağlı, İstanbul, Türkiye
Abduresit Niyazkaramay, Editor, Istanbul, Türkiye
Av. Cevlan Sir, Lawyer, Istanbul, Türkiye
Prof. Dr. Sultan Mahmut Kaşgarlı, İstanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Maisam Mitalipova, Boston, USA
Mettursun Udun, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Dr. Mamatjan Yasin, Kamloops, BC, Canada
Dr. Waris Abdukerim Janbaz, Paris, France
Memet T. Atawulla, MA, İstanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Farhad Idikut, Helsinki, Finland
Muhtar Abdukerim, Musician, Stockholm, Sweden

Dr Maxmut Abla, San Francisco, USA

Xi Jinping stresses cultivating more high-caliber officials for Xinjiang

21 September 2024, [CGTN](#)

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, has stressed cultivating more loyal, upright, responsible and high-caliber officials for Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Xi, also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in an instruction upon the 70th anniversary of a training program for ethnic officials in Xinjiang under the Party School of the CPC Central Committee.

Xi pointed out that the training program has played an important role in strengthening the ranks of officials, boosting economic and social development, promoting social stability and long-term security in Xinjiang over the past 70 years.

Emphasizing the need to fully and faithfully implement the Party's policy for the governance of Xinjiang, Xi urged efforts to foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation throughout the process of the training program.

It is important to strengthen research on the basic theories and key issues of ethnic affairs and improve the quality and effectiveness of the training program, Xi said.

Xi's instruction was read out by Chen Xi, president of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee and National Academy of Governance, at a symposium held on Saturday to mark the 70th anniversary of the training program.

China tried to influence MPs to vote against Uyghur genocide motion, documents show

18 September 2024, [National Post](#)

After the vote the People's Republic of China began efforts to 'build profiles on a number of MPs' who supported the motion

OTTAWA – Chinese government officials tried to influence Canadian MPs to vote against a 2021 motion condemning China's genocide of Uyghurs and even looked to build "profiles" on certain parliamentarians after the vote.

That's according to a summary of intelligence by Canadian security agencies and departments that was tabled at the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference (PIFI) on Wednesday.

The document reveals that People's Republic of China (PRC) officials made "initial" efforts to influence an unspecified number of MPs to vote against the motion

recognizing the country's treatment of its Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim minorities as "genocide."

The motion ultimately passed unanimously in the House of Commons. But after the vote, the document states the PRC began efforts to "build profiles on a number of MPs" who supported the motion.

"This research may have informed the PRC's decision to impose economic sanctions on some of those MPs or may have informed other actions," reads the unclassified summary of intelligence produced for the inquiry.

Those were just some of the examples of suspected or confirmed foreign interference efforts by China against Canadian MPs brought up during Michael Chong's testimony on Wednesday.

The Conservative MP also revealed that in October last year he was approached by an individual in the street offering him "political support, assistance with elections, and political advice here on (Parliament Hill)," he told the inquiry.

The twist: he realized shortly after that the individual was Haiyan Zhang, a former senior analyst at the Privy Council Office who was fired for being a suspected Chinese spy in 2003.

But when Chong raised the encounter with government officials and asked if Zhang was still a potential "national security threat," he was told they had destroyed all files regarding Zhang.

"It's another example of the government failing to provide information to members of Parliament to help them protect themselves against potential threats to Parliament and to our democracy," Chong told reporters after his testimony.

Chong has been a key figure in the government's controversial handling of foreign interference since 2023, when *The Globe and Mail* revealed that Canadian intelligence agencies knew for at least two years that the PRC had been collecting information about Chong as well as his family members in Hong Kong.

On Wednesday, the inquiry showed Chong a CSIS issues management brief dated May 31, 2021, that revealed that he and then Conservative MP Kenny Chiu were the target of foreign interference attempts by PRC officials.

A summary of redacted information in the 2021 brief shows CSIS already knew that China was interested in Chong's relatives in the PRC, though the MP only found out in media reports in the spring of 2023.

It was only in the hours following the publication of the story that Chong was offered a briefing by the prime minister, his staff and the CSIS director on PRC activities targeting him and his family.

Chong was outraged that he wasn't informed by the government for years and described the Liberals' handling of foreign interference to date as "gross negligence."

"I think they should be providing this information because it will allow those parliamentarians to take actions, to protect themselves, to be situationally aware. I think that's so important," he said Wednesday.

He was also shocked to find out that the information in 2021 was provided by the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service to then Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, but that Blair never read it for undisclosed reasons.

"It's inconsistent with the practice of this government, or alternatively, it's alarming incompetence not to be reading and actioning intelligence that is being sent up the chain," Chong said.

Chong said the government needs to release "much more" information about foreign interference to the public than it has in recent years.

He pointed to the fact that the government still hasn't significantly changed how foreign interference threats are shared with Canadians despite years of media revelations.

"We're buried in a mountain of process," he said. "This is not how our institution should function. This is not how Parliament should work. This is not how the government of Canada should treat threats to our national security. We're buried under process. This should have been dealt with a long time ago."

Uyghur-American politician calls out lack of global attention towards Xinjiang human rights crisis

17 September 2024, [Indian Narrative](#)

The Foreign Affairs and Security Minister of the East Turkistan Government-in-Exile, Salih Hidayar, called out the lack of global attention on the human rights crisis in China's Xinjiang province, and said the perception of the province receiving substantial media and US policy attention is misleading.

In a post on social media platform X, Hidayar said, "The claim that Xinjiang is a focus on intense media and U.S. policy attention is far from the truth. Let's be clear: Occupied East Turkistan—our country's true name—gets little to no media and policy attention."

Emphasising a disparity in international support between Tibet and East Turkistan, Salih stated, that while Tibet's government in exile receives extensive financial, training, and even diplomatic support, the Uyghurs don't get this recognition.

"Unlike Tibet, which is rightly recognized as an occupied nation, not as "Xizang," East Turkistan remains buried under China's propaganda. Tibet has had U.S. support with a Special Coordinator at US State Department since 1997, backing their right to self-determination," the minister stated

"Tibet's government in exile and movement receives extensive financial, training, and even diplomatic

support. Meanwhile, our people face Uyghur genocide with no similar recognition of our nation as occupied nor any dedicated support. The world must stop turning a blind eye to China's brutal campaign of colonization, genocide, and occupation in East Turkistan," he added.

Salih's post came as a reaction to a news article stating that Xinjiang has garnered significant media coverage and become a key focus of US policy in recent years.

Salih Hidayar is a Uyghur-American politician dedicated to the cause of East Turkistan's independence. He established the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement and has been at the forefront of efforts advocating for the restoration of East Turkistan's independence.

East Turkistan is a region in Central Asia that is the traditional name used by many Uyghurs and their supporters to refer to what is officially known as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The Xinjiang and Uyghur issue centers on the complex and contentious situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China.

The Uyghurs are a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority group with distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious practices. In recent years, there have been widespread reports and allegations of human rights abuses by the Chinese government against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

These allegations include mass detentions in so-called "reeducation camps," extensive surveillance, forced labor, and the suppression of religious and cultural practices. The Chinese government describes these measures as part of a counter-terrorism and de-radicalization effort aimed at combating extremism.

However, international human rights organizations and some governments have criticized these actions as severe human rights violations and cultural repression.

China's Xinjiang accelerates development of 'Air Silk Road'

12 September 2024, [Emirates News Agency](#)

Urumqi Diwopu International Airport in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region added or resumed four international passenger and cargo routes in the first week of September, according to relevant authorities.

According to Xinhua News Agency, these air routes are a direct flight from Urumqi to Moscow; a direct tourist charter flight from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia to Urumqi; a direct cargo flight from Urumqi to Baku in Azerbaijan and a direct flight from Urumqi to Armenia. Since the beginning of this year, Xinjiang, which is located in the core area of the Belt and Road, has added or resumed eight international passenger routes and nine international cargo air routes,

promoting transport connectivity and accelerating the expansion of the "Air Silk Road".

So far, Urumqi Diwopu International Airport has opened international passenger routes from Urumqi to 20 regions in 16 countries including Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

There are 13 international cargo transport routes from this airport covering 12 countries in Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia and Europe. The main imported commodities include camel milk, clothing, shoes and boots, cherries and the main export commodities are fresh-cut flowers, medicines, and clothing, among other items.

China ramping up transnational repression, Uyghur exiles in US say

11 September 2024, VOA, [Kasim Kashgar](#)

Many exiled Uyghurs in the U.S. say China has ramped up transnational repression against them, using their relatives who still live in China to threaten them into silence abroad.

"I've been targeted online with fake accounts. ... Chinese trolls even registered for a webinar using fake emails and posted my home address, saying, 'We are watching you,'" Elfidar Iltebir, president of the Uyghur American Association, a rights group, told VOA last week in a phone interview.

The harassment prompted her to increase her home security. Iltebir said the repression has intensified, especially over the past two years.

"People are afraid to come out and advocate, fearing for their families' safety," she said.

From 2017 to 2020, she said, nearly every Uyghur American had at least one family member detained in Xinjiang, spurring many to activism. But as China increased pressure on these exiles, many of them are thinking twice about their activist work.

She described a climate of fear within her organization. "Some of our supporters now ask if they can help behind the scenes, afraid to be seen publicly," Iltebir said. Chinese agents, sending messages through Uyghur relatives in Xinjiang, "tell us not to attend political or cultural events, not to join any organizations, to stay away from activists.

"They even dictate who to invite to weddings. I've seen community members receive these orders."

VOA reached out to the Chinese Embassy in Washington for comment on the allegations of transnational repression targeting Uyghur Americans. The embassy did not respond to multiple inquiries.

However, the FBI says it is aware of such activity targeting Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups in the United States.

"Tactics and patterns morph with advancements in technology," the federal police agency said in a statement to VOA. "These acts – often identified as

transnational repression (TNR) – represent severe violations of international norms, U.S. law, and individual rights and freedoms. TNR conducted by any government, against any person including Uyghur Americans, is unacceptable.”

The agency says it has worked to raise awareness of the problem among state, local and university law enforcement partners and has conducted training to help vulnerable communities recognize repressive tactics and examples of transnational harassment. It also provides resources in 60 languages, including in Uyghur.

Iltebir detailed her organization’s work with the FBI to support the estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Uyghur Americans in combating China’s transnational repression.

China, Uyghurs and human rights

Uyghurs are a largely Muslim minority group. Approximately 12 million Uyghurs live in China’s northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, where accusations of mass detention, forced labor and other human rights abuses have drawn global attention and condemnation.

In recent years, the U.S., U.N., European Parliament and rights organizations have condemned China or its policies in the Uyghur region. Some have accused Beijing of committing genocide and crimes against humanity.

Allegations include the arbitrary mass imprisonment of Uyghurs and other Muslim and Turkic groups, forced labor, forced sterilization, family separation and other abuses.

China denies any wrongdoing in the region, labeling the targeted Uyghurs as extremists, terrorists and separatists and justifying its policies as necessary measures to combat terrorism and separatism.

Fear and anonymity

Fear often keeps exiles from speaking out or enabling the media to confirm accusations.

One such U.S.-based Uyghur rights activist is a man who came to the U.S. for his education. He spoke to VOA on the condition of anonymity, fearing retaliation and increased harassment of his family members in Xinjiang.

In 2017, he said, his sibling and extended family were arbitrarily detained in Xinjiang.

"The only thing I was obsessed with was my academic work," he said, but the detentions forced him into activism.

After joining a Washington-based rights group advocating for human rights in China, including the Uyghurs, in 2019, he began receiving intimidating social media messages from Chinese authorities.

"I started receiving all sorts of intimidation from [Chinese] police through WhatsApp and other social media platforms," he recalled. "They even invited me to a third country to meet them there. I never agreed."

Despite the evolving nature of these tactics, he said, the harassment has never ceased.

"I have submitted details of these incidents to the FBI at least 15 times in the past and provided them with all the details of the communications I've received over the past few years," he said.

But ultimately, he said, the FBI can do nothing because the harassers are based outside the U.S.

However, the agency has taken legal action against China’s transnational repression schemes in the U.S.

In a case last month, Wang Shujun of New York was found guilty of acting as a covert Chinese agent. The FBI said he supported transnational repression by posing as a member of a pro-democracy group while feeding Beijing information about its members.

Political response

"Chinese Communist agents should not be able to threaten and intimidate American residents without consequences, anywhere — especially and including here in the United States," said Republican U.S. Representative Chris Smith, chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, in an email to VOA on Tuesday.

Smith emphasized that while the FBI has made efforts, "more can and must be done to stop transnational repression and abuse."

According to the FBI, China has long targeted diaspora communities, particularly what China describes as the "five poisons" - groups seen as threats to Chinese Communist Party rule, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, democracy activists, Falun Gong practitioners and Taiwanese independence advocates.

"The PRC has used proxies, including private investigators, to harass dissidents in the U.S.," the FBI told VOA.

Despite the challenges, Iltebir remains determined to speak out.

"We cannot be silenced. If we don't speak out, who will? Seeing non-Uyghurs stand with us inspires me to continue this fight for freedom, justice and human rights," she said.

China bishop leads patriotic education tour in Xinjiang

09 September 2024, [UCA](#)

Bishop Zhan Silu went to Uyghurs to preach doctrines promoted by the ruling communist party, alleged Bitter Winter

An Italy-based human rights and religious liberty magazine has accused a Catholic bishop in China of organizing a "patriotic education" tour for priests to the controversial Xinjiang region.

The study tour led by Bishop Zhan Silu of Xiapu from Aug. 18-26 to Xinjiang can be seen as an example of how religious personnel of the five state-sanctioned

religions are deployed as propaganda agents, *Bitter Winter* said.

The magazine alleged that the tour was part of the study and practice of “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era,” an ideological doctrine promoted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

During the tour, Silu had emphasized that “Xinjiang is an inseparable part of China’s territory,” calling the ethnic groups there “blood-related family members of the Chinese nation,” according to the *Bitter Winter*.

“Religious personnel should be politically dependable and study and preach Xi Jinping’s thought diligently,” Silu was quoted as saying by the *Bitter Winter*.

Earlier in January, Chinese authorities had ratified a law on “patriotic education,” aimed at promoting CCP’s massive domestic propaganda effort.

The state-approved religious groups had issued detailed guidelines on how the clergy are expected to cooperate in this propaganda system.

Silu “has not changed his political proclivities,” the *Bitter Winter* alleged pointing out that he was excommunicated by the Vatican for 18 years because of his appointment by Chinese government authorities.

The matter of bishop appointments in China has been a bone of contention between Beijing and the Vatican. While Beijing insists that it must approve bishop appointments as a matter of its national sovereignty, the Vatican argues that these appointments fall under the pope’s authority to choose the successors of Christ’s apostles.

Silu’s appointment was approved by the Vatican and his excommunication was lifted as part of a China-Vatican deal in 2018, the *Bitter Winter* said.

The magazine pointed out that Silu and his group may not have succeeded in persuading and converting anyone to the “CCP gospel.”

Xinjiang has gained international attention for the alleged mass incarceration of ethnic groups including Muslim-majority Uyghurs.

It is estimated that some 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims have been detained under flimsy pretexts during mass detentions that began more than seven years ago in 2017.

Travel warning issued over CCP Xinjiang efforts

06 September 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Chen Yun, Chung Li-hua and Jonathan Chin

The Executive Yuan yesterday warned against traveling to or doing business in China after reports that Beijing is recruiting Taiwanese to help conceal the use of forced Uighur labor.

The government is aware that Taiwan-based influencers and businesses are being asked to make

pro-Beijing content and offered incentives to invest in the region, Executive Yuan acting spokeswoman Julia Hsieh (謝子涵) told a news conference.

Taiwanese are urged to be aware of the potential personal and reputational harm by visiting or operating businesses in China, Hsieh said, adding that agencies are fully apprised of the situation.

A national security official said that former Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) members who served under former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) are to lead a delegation of Taiwanese investors to Xinjiang on Sept. 19.

China since last month has been arranging for business groups to tour the region in a move to evade international outcry over China’s use of forced Uighur labor and support for the Russian war effort in Ukraine, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Beijing officials “encourage Taiwanese entrepreneurs to establish a presence or facilitate the flow of logistics through Central Asia,” the source said. “The purpose is to conceal the point of origin labels on their products and draw investments for cotton.”

Chinese Communist Party regional head Ma Xinrui (馬興瑞) is overseeing these activities, the official said.

Taiwanese investments might help Beijing’s efforts to stabilize its flagging economy, especially the real-estate sector and capital flows, they said.

State-affiliated studios produce content on daily life, consumer goods and tourism pushing narratives that deny instability in Hong Kong and mass incarceration of Uighurs in Xinjiang, they said.

These studios are followed by up to 130 million people on social media and the introduction of artificial intelligence allowed some to generate the same content in 40 to 50 languages, the official said.

On Tuesday, Oakland University associate professor of journalism and public relations Su Chiao-ning (蘇巧寧) told a conference in Washington that Taiwanese are being co-opted in Beijing’s cognitive warfare activities. Beijing is accused of committing human rights abuses including torture, compulsory institutionalization and sexual violence against incarcerated Uighurs, Su said, citing a UN report on China’s alleged crimes of humanity dated 2022.

Travel content promoting the beautiful rustic landscape and simple honest folk of Xinjiang is flooding Taiwanese social media amid a violent Chinese campaign to wipe out the Uighur language and culture, she said.

The spread of propaganda created by the communist regime’s apologists is a dangerous trend for Taiwan, Su said, adding that the government must do more to promote public awareness about Beijing’s influence on media.

The MAC yesterday said there has been a significant rise in content produced by influencers designed to

promote Xinjiang as an ideal destination for travel and investment.

“We are still trying to understand the real motives behind this so-called ‘Xinjiang fever,’” MAC Deputy Minister Liang Wen-chieh (梁文傑) told a news conference.

Some of the promotional content about Xinjiang is attempting to whitewash Beijing’s human rights record in the region, Liang said.

“Due to human rights issues, clothes made from Xinjiang-grown cotton is now boycotted by many countries in the international community. Those seeking business opportunities there should be aware of the situation,” he said.

If Internet celebrities received funding from the Chinese government to produce videos or other content, they could be contravening the Anti-Infiltration Act (反滲透法) for receiving instructions, sponsorships or petitions from hostile foreign forces to disrupt social order, disseminate false information and interfere in elections in Taiwan, he added.

CHINA- US

China taps into AI to ramp up fake-news campaign amid U.S. election

28 September 2024, [Fortune](#), Didi Tang, David Klepper

When veteran U.S. diplomat Kurt Campbell traveled to the Solomon Islands to counter Beijing's influence in the South Pacific country, he quickly saw just how far China would go to spread its message.

The Biden administration's Asia czar woke up one morning in 2022 to a long article in the local press about the U.S. running chemical and biological labs in Ukraine, a claim that Washington calls an outright lie. Started by Russia, the false and incendiary claim was vigorously amplified by China's vast overseas propaganda apparatus.

It was another example of "clearly effective Russian and Chinese disinformation," Campbell told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in July.

Two years later, the claim still reverberates online, demonstrating China's sprawling effort to reshape global perceptions. The campaign, costing many billions per year, is becoming ever more sophisticated thanks to artificial intelligence. China's operations have caught the attention of intelligence analysts and policymakers in Washington, who vow to combat any actions that could influence the November election or undermine American interests.

The key tactic: networks of websites purporting to be legitimate news outlets, delivering pro-China coverage that often parallels official statements and positions from Beijing.

Shannon Van Sant, an adviser to the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, tracked a network of dozens of sites that posed as news organizations. One site mimicked The New York Times, using a similar font and design in what she called an attempt at legitimacy. The site carried strongly pro-Chinese messages.

When Van Sant researched the site's reporters she found no information. Their names didn't belong to any known journalists working in China, and their photos bore telltale signs of being created with AI.

"Manipulation of the media is ultimately a manipulation of readers and the audience, and this is damaging to democracy and society," Van Sant said.

Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in the U.S., said allegations that China uses news websites and social media to spread pro-Beijing information and influence public opinion in the U.S. "are full of malicious speculations against China, which China firmly opposes."

In addition to its state media, Beijing has turned to foreign players — real or not — to relay messages and lend credibility to narratives favoring the Communist Party, said Xiao Qiang, a research scientist at the

School of Information at the University of California, Berkeley. Xiao also is editor-in-chief of China Digital Times, a bilingual news website that aggregates information from and about China.

Beijing's methods are wide-ranging and links to the government are often difficult to prove, Xiao said. But whether it's journalists with American-sounding names or an Indian influencer, the consistently pro-Beijing messages give them away.

"The implicit message is the same — that the Chinese Communist Party works for its people," Xiao said.

Analysts at the cybersecurity firm Logically identified 1,200 websites that had carried Russian or Chinese state media stories. The sites often target specific audiences and have names that sound like traditional news organizations or defunct newspapers.

Unlike Russia or Iran, which have displayed clear preferences in the U.S. presidential campaign, Beijing is more cautious and focused on spreading positive content about China.

While the sites aren't owned by China, they run Chinese content. When Logically looked at content specifically about the U.S. election, 20% could be traced back to Chinese or Russian state media.

"There's a decent likelihood that these articles could influence U.S. audiences without them even knowing where it comes from," said Alex Nelson, Logically's senior manager for strategy and analysis.

According to the Gallup World Poll, more countries surveyed view the U.S. positively, but the share of countries where views of both the U.S. and China are negative overall is higher than 15 years ago, signaling the U.S. doesn't appear to be making gains over China. Some U.S. officials want to increase spending to even the playing field. The House of Representatives this month approved a bill that would authorize \$325 million annually through 2027 to counter China's global influence, including its disinformation campaigns. The measure still needs Senate approval.

"We are in a global competition for influence with China, and if you want to win it, then you cannot do it on a middle-power budget," said Rep. Gregory Meeks, a Democrat from New York.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has demanded a systematic buildup of Chinese narratives that would give his country a global voice "commensurate with" its international stature.

Beijing has invested in state media such as the Xinhua news agency and China Central Television to convey its messages to global audiences in various languages and platforms. Media groups at the local level are creating "international communication centers" to build an overseas presence with websites, news channels and social media accounts.

Beijing also has struck media partnerships worldwide, and the article Campbell read in the Solomon Islands is likely a result of those.

China's outreach is tied to the global race for economic dominance in electric vehicles, computer chips, AI and quantum computing, said Jaret Riddick, a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

"The countries that lead on emerging technologies will be the countries that have a great advantage going forward," Riddick said.

To tell its story, Beijing has not shied away from using fake personas. A 2023 State Department report detailed the case of a published writer named Yi Fan, originally described as a Chinese foreign ministry analyst. Yi morphed into a journalist, then became an independent analyst.

Yi's details changed, but the message did not. Through published commentaries and writings, Yi trumpeted close ties between China and Africa, praised Beijing's approach to environmental sustainability and argued that China must counter distorted Western narratives. Then there was Wilson Edwards, a supposed Swiss virologist quoted in Chinese media as a COVID-19 expert who criticized the U.S. response. But Swiss officials found no evidence he existed.

"If you exist, we would like to meet you!" the Swiss Embassy in Beijing wrote on social media.

Legislation to curb US investment in China is top priority, lawmaker says

26 September 2024, [Reuters](#), Alexandra Alper

The Republican chair of the House of Representatives' select committee on China said on Wednesday that the panel's top priority is legislation restricting U.S. investment in China to stop investors from "funding our own demise."

"We have to have an outbound investment regime that basically says 'No investment in these businesses that are on some kind of a list,' that says 'We shouldn't be helping the Chinese military, we shouldn't be supporting genocide,'" Representative John Moolenaar said, speaking on a panel at the American Enterprise Institute.

"That's probably our number one priority right now," he added. "We are actually funding our demise."

A committee spokesperson confirmed that "genocide" referred to China's alleged treatment of its Uyghur minority in Xinjiang.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington said Beijing firmly opposes "the U.S. overstretching the concept of national security and abusing state power to go after Chinese products and companies." It added that China would "continue to firmly protect the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies."

Moolenaar's remarks signal Congress could revive long-sought restrictions on U.S. investment in China, which have faced a rocky path in Washington.

A measure restricting outbound investment was stripped out of the Chips Act before it was signed into law in 2022. In August 2023, Democratic President Joe Biden issued an executive order giving the Treasury Department the authority to bar or restrict U.S. investments in Chinese entities in three sectors: semiconductors and microelectronics, quantum information technologies and certain artificial intelligence systems.

But rules implementing that order, proposed in July, have yet to be finalized. The Treasury did not respond to a request for comment on the status of the proposed rules.

Moolenaar said House Speaker Mike Johnson "would like to have something before the end of the year." Johnson's office did not respond to a request for comment.

The United States and other Western countries have imposed sanctions on Chinese officials for human rights abuses in Xinjiang, which the United States has said have amounted to genocide.

China rejects allegations of abuses, including use of forced labor in Xinjiang, and describes the camps it has set up there as vocational training centers for Uyghur Muslims that help combat religious extremism.

Moolenaar also flagged specific Chinese companies that he said pose national security threats including Chinese crane maker Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Co (ZPMC), which was featured in a recent committee report

U.S.-bound cranes made by ZPMC, which accounts for 80 percent of ship-to-shore cranes in operation at U.S. ports, contain unauthorized cellular modems, creating a "significant backdoor security vulnerability," he said. "ZPMC could disrupt U.S. maritime equipment and technology at the request of the Chinese government, including during a conflict over Taiwan," he said, referring to the democratically governed island that China claims. The company, he said, is a "loaded gun". Neither ZPMC nor the Chinese embassy in Washington immediately responded to requests for comment on that issue, but ZPMC has in the past said it does not pose a cyber security threat.

Eric Adams Indictment: China Could Lose a Friend in New York

26 September 2024, [News Week](#)

An investigation into the campaign finances of New York's Mayor Eric Adams, which resulted in charges of bribery, fraud and soliciting illegal donations from abroad on Thursday, could strip China of an important friend in the United States. Prosecutors allege that Adams took money from wealthy foreign businesspeople and at least one Turkish government official ahead of his 2021 campaign. Adams has

already declared his innocence. City Hall did not immediately return a written request for comment.

Adams has been a successful example of the Communist Party building relationships deep within America and Newsweek reported last year on donations to his campaigns by groups in New York linked to China's ruling party.

"Adams is just one target," said Cheryl Yu, China Studies Fellow at the Jamestown Foundation, a nonpartisan international affairs think tank.

Newsweek's reporting has shown that it has been a mutually beneficial relationship maintained through proxies on both sides. In New York and other major U.S. cities, the Communist Party holds sway over hundreds of pro-Beijing groups, whose members help promote the Chinese government's narrative on core issues including democratic freedoms in Hong Kong and the political status of Taiwan.

Winnie Greco, one of Adams' closest aides, is the mayor's strongest link to these myriad Chinese business and cultural nonprofits. She has represented his office at their events and praised the contributions of their senior figures, who have in turn encouraged their members to back his campaigns with votes.

Adams himself has been a regular at quasi-political events organized by the overseas Chinese groups, which often had members of the Chinese consulate in attendance. Rights groups have accused Adams of inadvertently legitimizing Beijing's overseas influence work by rubbing shoulders with pro-Beijing figures, one of whom was arrested last year for running a secret Chinese police station in Manhattan.

Adams' office previously said his attendance was a demonstration of his support for the Chinese American community and not an endorsement of their political positions. Adams' office previously said his attendance was a demonstration of his support for the Chinese American community and not an endorsement of their political positions. Adams was not the only New York politician with close Chinese connections in his administration. Linda Sun, a former chief aide to New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, was charged this month for seeking to influence New York politics on Beijing's behalf.

In May, Newsweek's review of hundreds of pages of City Hall emails, obtained under a freedom of information request, found that New York's celebrated Asian-American parade was set up in 2022 by the founder of a media company that the Justice Department had designated a foreign agent of the Chinese government.

The parade was arranged in conjunction with Greco, who has worked with Adams since his time as Brooklyn borough president and who has traveled with him to China in the past.

The investigation into Adams' administration began last November when federal agents raided the home

of his top fundraiser Brianna Suggs, who worked on his successful mayoral campaign in 2021.

Last year, a Newsweek investigation revealed dozens of pro-Beijing figureheads—all suspected of involvement in the Communist Party's overseas influence network—had donated at least \$1 million to political campaigns in New York alone since the 1990s. Adams' campaigns received nearly \$40,000 in donations from 2015-2023. About two-thirds went toward his last run for City Hall.

Newsweek was not able to establish whether federal prosecutors suspected his campaign of accepting unlawful donations from Chinese foreign nationals. U.S. law forbids green card holders from making financial contributions if they are considered a "foreign principal" or to be acting on behalf of a foreign government without prior registration.

Republicans propose bill that would double tariffs on Chinese imports and end favored trade status

26 September 2024, [Fox News](#)

A group of Republican senators is unveiling a new bill that would cease all permanent normal trade relations with China and double the tariffs on Chinese Communist Party (CCP) goods.

The bill would, over five years, increase tariffs by 100% on imports deemed "strategic" to national security by the Biden administration in an effort to force the growth of the domestic market for national security-related goods.

It would boost tariffs on non-strategic goods by a minimum of 35%.

The bill, led by Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., and cosponsored by Sens. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Josh Hawley, R-Mo., would also grant the president the authority to institute further tariffs, quotas and bans on specific Chinese goods. It would end "de minimis treatment" for China, or the value threshold below which imports are not subject to customs duties.

The revenue generated from this, according to the bill, would go towards farmers and manufacturers injured by potential Chinese retaliation, the purchase of key munitions important to a Pacific conflict, and paying down the debt.

This comprehensive repeal of China's PNTR [Permanent normal Trade Relations] status and reform of the U.S.-China trade relationship will protect American workers, enhance our national security, and end the Chinese Communists' leverage over our economy," Cotton said in a statement.

"Giving Communist China the same trade benefits that we give to our greatest allies was one of the most catastrophic decisions that our country has ever made," said Rubio.

Economists forecast that China's GDP is expected to grow by nearly 5% in 2024. The U.S.'s forecasted GDP growth is half that.

The legislation falls in line with one of Trump's top priorities: during the presidential debate this month, the former president said again that he would impose a 60% tariff on Chinese goods and a 10% baseline tariff on all imported goods. Vice President Kamala Harris scoffed at that plan as a "a sales tax on the American people."

Earlier this month, China instituted new export controls on a batch of minerals that are critical to the U.S. defense industry, including antimony products.

The little-known flame-retardant metal is used in ammunition, infrared missiles, nuclear weapons and night vision goggles, as well as batteries and photovoltaic equipment. China produced nearly half of the world's antimony last year.

BIDEN ROLLS OUT NEW CHINA TARIFFS

In 2000, the U.S. Congress voted to grant China permanent normal trade relations. The designation fundamentally changed China-U.S. trade relations: American consumers gained access to low-priced Chinese imports and between 2001 and 2021, the value of goods imported from China quadrupled to \$500 billion.

"More than two decades ago, Washington elites granted China most favored nation trading status, enabling Beijing to exploit our working class. Congress must revoke this sweetheart deal to protect American workers from our greatest adversary and to bring back the millions of manufacturing jobs shipped overseas," said Hawley.

The Biden administration earlier this month finalized plans to increase tariffs on certain Chinese-made products: the tariff rate would double for electric vehicles, go up 50% on solar cells and 25% on EV batteries, critical minerals, steel, aluminum, face masks and ship-to-shore cranes beginning September 27, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Tariff hikes on other products, like semiconductor chips, are expected to go up over the next two years. Trump implemented sweeping tariffs on about \$300 billion worth of Chinese-made products. Biden kept those in place and slapped more tariffs on about \$15 billion of Chinese imports.

China is widely expected to respond with tariffs on U.S.-made goods.

Chairman McCaul on House Passage of the STOP CCP Act

25 September 2024, [Committee on Foreign Affairs](#)

Washington, D.C. — House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman McCaul (R-TX) issued the following statement after the House passed Rep. Lisa McClain's (R-MI) H.R. 3334, the Sanction Tyrannical and Oppressive People within the Chinese Communist Party (STOP CCP) Act of 2024, which sanctions top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials responsible for threatening Hong Kong and Taiwan, violating human rights in China, and infringing upon the sovereignty of Tibet.

"Weakness invites aggression. The Biden-Harris administration's failure to confront the malign actions of the CCP has emboldened Chairman Xi and the perpetrators of territorial aggression across the Indo-Pacific to commit egregious human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet. Earlier this year, I met with the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, India and learned firsthand about the abuses the CCP has committed against the Tibetan people, as well as CCP efforts to undermine Tibetan culture, language, and religious beliefs. When the U.S. projects strength through action like this, the world listens."

China to Investigate U.S. Retailer, Sending a Message Over Xinjiang

24 September 2024, [The New York Times](#), Keith Bradsher

PVH, which owns Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, is targeted for allegedly avoiding purchases from the region where the Chinese government has cracked down on Muslim minorities.

China said on Tuesday that it would investigate whether PVH, the American retailer that owns the Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger brands, has taken "discriminatory measures" against products from Xinjiang in China's far west.

The announcement, by China's Ministry of Commerce, is a new escalation of China's effort to fight bans or consumer boycotts of goods from Xinjiang.

Many Western governments have begun restricting or banning products from Xinjiang following mass arrests and evidence of forced labor among the region's predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, particularly the Uyghurs. Researchers have cited evidence that cotton production in Xinjiang has been tainted by coercion.

Beijing is sending a message to multinational corporations that if they comply with consumer boycotts or government bans on products from Xinjiang, they may face retaliation in China.

China's action underlines how big companies increasingly find themselves sandwiched between pressures from the Chinese government, which defends its policies in Xinjiang, and Western countries and human rights advocacy groups.

PVH, which is based in New York, said in a statement that it was in communication with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. "PVH maintains strict compliance with all relevant laws and regulations in all countries and regions in which we operate," the company said.

On Friday, the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, a group with lawmakers from at least 22 countries and the European Union, issued a statement calling for Volkswagen to withdraw from Xinjiang. Volkswagen, Germany's largest automaker, has a 190-employee joint venture in Xinjiang with a carmaker owned by the Shanghai municipal government. Chinese state-owned enterprises like Volkswagen's partner follow Beijing's lead in opposing any withdrawal from Xinjiang.

The alliance issued its statement after Adrian Zenz, the director in China studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, issued a report that cited a leaked audit that Volkswagen had commissioned. His report said the automaker had failed to properly investigate accusations of complicity in Xinjiang's coercive policies toward Uyghurs. Volkswagen has said that the audit shows it behaved appropriately.

Volkswagen said on Monday that it was not building cars in Xinjiang, where workers prepare cars for delivery to dealerships.

China is not only a large consumer market but also the world's largest manufacturer. Many companies, particularly apparel retailers, depend heavily on factories in China and could be vulnerable if Beijing decided to impose sanctions on their subsidiaries or suppliers.

In the United States, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act bans the import of any goods from Xinjiang unless the importer can prove to American customs officials that the products were made without forced labor. The law took effect in June 2022.

Proving that has become practically impossible, as China has banned independent investigations of labor practices in Xinjiang. Advocacy groups say that forced labor is widely used in Xinjiang's vast cotton fields, which supply textile factories all over China. Xinjiang produces more than 90 percent of all the cotton grown in China.

The European Union is in the process of imposing a ban similar to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. When consumer and human rights groups in the West began organizing boycotts several years ago of brands that used cotton from Xinjiang, big clothing brands initially tried to shun Xinjiang suppliers. PVH said in July 2020 that within the next 12 months, it would

cease all business relationships with factories and mills that produced garments or fabric in Xinjiang, or that supplied cotton from the region.

China responded the next year by allowing nationalist groups to use the country's heavily censored internet to organize their own boycotts of Western brands that did not buy from Xinjiang. H&M soon found shoppers were shunning its stores.

Influential personalities who had endorsed Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, as well as Adidas, Nike and Converse, in China quickly stopped working on behalf of the brands. Burberry had to give up an online video game partnership.

Western companies quickly stopped saying much about their policies in Xinjiang. But the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act has given them a strong incentive to avoid Xinjiang products anyway.

China has quietly passed its own laws that ban compliance with laws, sanctions or boycotts in other countries. The commerce ministry has authority to deem commercial decisions as a threat to China's national security.

The Ministry of Commerce said Tuesday that it would allow PVH 30 days to provide documents regarding whether it had avoided buying from Xinjiang. If PVH is found to have violated China's laws, the ministry said, the penalties could include a halt to the company's imports and exports from China, restrictions or bans on investments in China, restrictions or bans on PVH employees from working or entering China, and possibly fines on the company.

The ministry could impose these penalties if it decides to put PVH on its "unreliable entity" list. The ministry added three U.S. defense companies to that list in May because they had sold weapons to Taiwan, an island democracy over which Beijing claims sovereignty. But that decision made little difference because the United States does not allow the defense contractors to sell arms to mainland China anyway.

China's strong threat to PVH comes as the Chinese government has been trying to woo foreign investors. The ministry tried to send a reassuring message, saying that its actions against PVH were aimed at preserving free trade, not suppressing it.

"The Chinese government is determined to promote high-level opening-up, firmly safeguard the multilateral trading system, and firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of various market operators," the ministry said. "Honest and law-abiding foreign entities have nothing to worry about," it added.

Biden tells Quad leaders that Beijing is testing region at turbulent moment for Chinese economy

21 September 2024, [News Nation](#), Zeke Miller and Aamer Madhani

President Joe Biden told Indo-Pacific allies on Saturday that he believes China's increasing military assertiveness is an effort to test the region at a turbulent moment for Beijing.

Biden's comments were caught by a hot mic after he and fellow leaders of the so-called Quad delivered opening remarks before the press at a summit he's hosting near his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. He said his administration sees Beijing's actions as a "change in tactic, not a change in strategy."

China is struggling to pull up its economy that was pummeled by the coronavirus pandemic and has seen an extended slowdown in industrial activity and real estate prices as Beijing faces pressure to ramp up spending to stimulate demand.

"China continues to behave aggressively, testing us all across the region, and it's true in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, South China, South Asia and the Taiwan Straits," Biden told Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. He added, "At least from our perspective, we believe (Chinese President) Xi Jinping is looking to focus on domestic economic challenges and minimize the turbulence in China's diplomatic relationships, and he's also looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest."

Starting with a trade war that dates back to 2018, China and the United States have grown at odds over a range of issues, from global security, such as China's claims over the South China Sea, to industrial policy on electric vehicle and solar panel manufacturing.

The administration has repeatedly spoken out about concerns about Chinese aggression toward Taiwan and more recently on the frequent clashes between Chinese and Philippine vessels in disputed areas of the South China Sea.

At the summit, the leaders agreed to expand the partnership among the Quad nations' coast guards to improve interoperability and capabilities, with Indian, Japanese and Australian personnel sailing on U.S. ships in the region. But U.S. officials would not say if those transits would include the contested South China Sea. China also has longtime territorial disputes involving other claimants including Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei. U.S. officials worry about China's long-stated goals of unifying Taiwan with China's mainland and the possibility of war over Taiwan. The self-ruled island democracy is claimed by Beijing as part of its territory.

The leaders in a joint declaration issued following their talks expressed “serious concern about the militarization ... and coercive and intimidating maneuvers in the South China Sea.”

Biden last month dispatched his national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, to Beijing for three days of talks with Chinese officials. Sullivan during that visit also met with Xi.

Both governments are eager to keep relations on an even keel ahead of a change in the U.S. presidency in January. And both sides have said they remain committed to managing the relationship, following up on a meeting between Xi and Biden in San Francisco last November.

The concerns about China were raised as Biden showed off a slice of his Delaware hometown to the leaders of Australia, Japan and India as he hosted what is likely the last gathering of the Indo-Pacific partnership that has grown in prominence under his White House tenure.

When Biden began his presidency he looked to elevate the Quad, which until then had only met at the foreign minister level, to a leader-level partnership as he tried to pivot U.S. foreign policy away from conflicts in the Middle East and toward threats and opportunities in the Indo-Pacific. This weekend’s summit is the fourth in-person and sixth overall gathering of the leaders since 2021.

“It will survive way beyond November,” Biden told the leaders.

The president, who has admitted to an uneven track record as a scholar, also seemed tickled to get to host a gathering with three world leaders at the school he attended more than 60 years ago. He welcomed each of the leaders individually for one-on-one talks at his nearby home before they gathered at the school for talks and a formal dinner.

“I don’t think the headmaster of this school thought I’d be presiding over a meeting like this,” Biden joked to fellow leaders.

Albanese, Modi and Kishida came for the summit before their appearances at the U.N. General Assembly in New York next week.

“This place could not be better suited for my final visit as prime minister,” said Kishida, who like Biden, is set to soon leave office.

Earlier, the president warmly greeted Kishida when he arrived at the residence on Saturday morning and gave the prime minister a tour of the property before they settled into talks.

White House officials said holding the talks at the president’s house, which sits near a pond in a wooded area several miles west of downtown, was intended to give the meetings a more relaxed feel.

Sullivan described the vibe of Biden’s one-on-one meeting with Albanese, who stopped by the house on Friday, as “two guys — one at the other guy’s home —

talking in broad strokes about where they see the state of the world.” He said Biden and Albanese also swapped stories about their political careers.

The Australian leader remarked that the visit had given him “insight into what in my view makes you such an extraordinary world leader.”

Modi also stopped by the house on Saturday to meet with Biden before the leaders gathered for their joint talks.

“There cannot be a better place than President Biden’s hometown of Wilmington to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Quad,” Modi said.

Biden and Modi discussed Modi’s recent visits to Russia and Ukraine as well as economic and security concerns about China. Modi is the most prominent leader from a nation that maintains a neutral position on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Biden and Kishida, who are both stepping away from office amid sliding public support, count the tightening of security and economic ties among the U.S., Japan and South Korea as one of their most significant accomplishments.

The improved relations between Japan and South Korea, two nations with a deep and complicated history that have struggled to stay on speaking terms, have come amid worrying developments in the Pacific, including strides made by North Korea in its nuclear program and concerns about China.

Biden during their face-to-face meeting commended Kishida for demonstrating “courage and conviction in strengthening ties” with South Korea, according to the White House. They also discussed China, Russia’s war against Ukraine and emerging technology issues.

The U.S. and Japan are dealing with a rare moment of tension in the relationship. Biden, as well as presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, have opposed a \$15 billion bid by Japan’s Nippon Steel to take over American-owned U.S. Steel. Biden administration officials indicated this week that a U.S. government committee’s formal assessment of the proposed deal has yet to be submitted to the White House and may not come until after the Nov. 5 election.

The summit declaration also condemned North Korea’s continued ballistic missile testing and expressed “deep concern about countries that are deepening military cooperation with North Korea.” The leaders were expected to discuss the issue in more depth over dinner.

The U.S. has publicized intelligence findings that show North Korea and Iran have provided Russia with ballistic missiles and other weaponry for its war in Ukraine and that Moscow is in turn tightening its relationship with Pyongyang and Tehran.

The leaders announced their four countries are committing \$150 million for HPV vaccines, screening and therapeutics in the Indo-Pacific. Relatively few

women in the region get screened for the virus that causes nearly all cervical cancers.

U.S. Navy doctors and nurses will also launch a program to train their Pacific counterparts on conducting cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccinations.

The announcement is related to Biden's Cancer Moonshot Initiative, a long-running passion project of the president and his wife, Jill Biden, aimed at reducing cancer deaths.

The Bidens' son Beau died in 2015 at age 46 of brain cancer.

FBI says it has disrupted major Chinese hacking operation that threatened US critical infrastructure

18 September 2024, [CNN](#), Sean Lyngaas

The FBI has used a court order to seize control of a network of hundreds of thousands of hacked internet routers and other devices that Chinese government-linked hackers were using to threaten critical infrastructure in the US and overseas, FBI Director Christopher Wray said Wednesday.

"It is just one round in a much longer fight," Wray said in a speech at the Aspen Cyber Summit in Washington, DC. "The Chinese government is going to continue to target your organizations and our critical infrastructure."

The massive web of hacked devices — known as a botnet — was a menace that the Chinese hackers could have used to conduct targeted cyberattacks on US companies or government agencies, according to an advisory released by the US and its "Five Eyes" allies (the English-speaking alliance that includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom). As of June, the botnet included over 260,000 hacked devices from all over the world, from North and South America to Australia, according to US officials. Those hacked devices ranged from webcams to DVRs to routers, and about half of them were located in the US, according to Wray.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington called the US allegations "groundless" and accused the US government of conducting cyberattacks against China.

It's the latest tit-for-tat in the often-tense relations between US and China in cyberspace. The US government has long warned that another Chinese government-backed hacking group has been lurking in US transportation and communication networks, waiting to use that access to disrupt any US response to a potential Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

That Chinese hacking unit is preparing to "wreak havoc and cause real-world harm" to the US, Wray told Congress in January.

A tool of choice

The botnet targeted by the FBI and its allies on Wednesday was an active menace, Wray said in his speech.

The botnet caused "an all-hands-on deck cybersecurity incident" for one unnamed California-based organization, causing "significant financial loss," the FBI director said.

But Wednesday's takedown was more about what the botnet could have done than what it did. The army of zombie computers has been a quiet and looming threat to US government networks for many months, according to experts. In late December 2023, the botnet's operators "conducted extensive scanning efforts" of US military and other government agencies, according to US tech firm Lumen Technologies, which investigated the activity.

Botnets are a tool of choice for both cybercriminals and state-backed hackers because users around the world are often unaware that their computers have been hijacked for scamming or espionage. The FBI said in February that it had helped disrupt a network of over 1,000 hacked internet routers that Russia's military intelligence agency was allegedly using for cyber espionage operations against the United States and its European allies.

The Chinese botnet targeted on Wednesday had an array of capabilities, including the ability to conduct tailored cyberattacks using the devices it had compromised, according to Lumen researchers.

Lumen researchers are watching for signs that the Chinese hackers will resurrect the botnet. But for now, "we assess that the botnet has been taken offline due to a combination of law enforcement efforts and null routing as of September 18," Danny Adamitis, principle information security engineer at Lumen's Black Lotus Labs threat intelligence division, told CNN.

Null routing is a process that internet technology providers can use to stop data from being sent to a specific IP address.

A Chinese company named Integrity Technology Group managed the botnet for the last three years, according to US officials. CNN has requested comment from the company.

The Chinese tech firm is "involved in many of China's most important programs and efforts to improve its hacking capabilities," Dakota Cary, a consultant at security firm SentinelOne who focuses on China, told CNN. "The naming of the company is significant as it demonstrates allied governments' visibility into China's operations, as well as enabling researchers to further investigate the company."

China sanctions 9 US firms over military sales to Taiwan

18 September 2024, [RFA](#), Taejun Kang

The U.S. announced on Monday the sale of aircraft spare parts to Taiwan.

China imposed sanctions on Wednesday on nine U.S. military-linked firms for their sale of equipment to Taiwan and it denounced what it called the “dangerous trend” of U.S. military support for the democratic island.

On Monday, the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency announced the sale of aircraft spare parts and related logistics and support worth about US\$228 million to Taiwan, adding that the spare parts would boost the island’s “ability to meet current and future threats.”

The sale included both classified and unclassified components for the aircraft, as well as related engineering, technical and logistics support services. Washington’s arms sales to Taipei “seriously interfered in China’s internal affairs, and seriously damaged China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” said China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday.

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province that should be reunited with the mainland, by force if necessary. The democratic island has been self-governing since it effectively separated from mainland China in 1949 after the Chinese civil war.

Despite their lack of formal diplomatic ties, the U.S. has long been a key supplier of arms to Taiwan. Washington is bound by U.S. legislation, the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, to provide Taiwan with arms for its defense.

A spokesperson for China’s foreign ministry on Wednesday, however, urged the U.S. to immediately stop the “dangerous trend” of arming Taiwan.

“Stop conniving and supporting Taiwan independence, and stop undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait,” said Lin Jian at a regular press briefing. While the U.S. maintains strong informal ties with Taiwan, it has not declared support for the island’s independence.

China’s steps taken against the firms, including Sierra Nevada Corporation and Stick Rudder Enterprises LLC, come into effect on Wednesday and will freeze their property within China, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

It described the sanctions as countermeasures and said they also applied to Cubic Corporation, S3 Aerospace, TCOM Ltd Partnership, TextOre, Planate Management Group, ACT1 Federal and Exovera.

Organizations and individuals within China are prohibited from engaging in transactions with the firms, the ministry added.

China previously sanctioned and banned firms, including units of Lockheed Martin, for selling arms to Taiwan.

The latest sales were the 16th military sale to Taiwan authorized by the administration of President Joe Biden.

Taiwan’s Foreign Ministry expressed its appreciation for the U.S. support for Taiwan’s security while its Ministry of National Defense highlighted the strategic importance of the sale, noting that China’s gray zone tactics – a tactic using the threat of force to create fear and intimidation – had affected Taiwan’s training and operational readiness.

The aviation-related equipment would enhance the combat readiness and security of Taiwan’s air force, the ministry said.

China says it tailed a US spy plane through the sensitive Taiwan Strait

17 September 2024, [AP](#), Simina Mistreanu

Chinese warplanes tailed a U.S. military aircraft through the sensitive Taiwan Strait on Tuesday, China’s military said.

The U.S. aircraft was a P-8A Poseidon patrol and reconnaissance plane, capable of conducting long-range anti-submarine warfare, according to a statement by the People’s Liberation Army’s Eastern Theater Command.

Chinese military forces “organized warplanes to tail and monitor the U.S. aircraft’s flight and handled it in accordance with the law,” said Li Xi, a senior colonel and spokesperson for the command.

“Theater command troops will remain on constant high alert and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability,” he added.

The U.S. Navy didn’t immediately comment on the incident.

China claims the self-ruled island of Taiwan as its own territory and bristles at other countries’ patrolling the body of water separating it from the island.

On Friday, [Germany sailed two warships through the Taiwan Strait](#) in its first transit of the disputed waters in more than two decades, drawing criticism from Beijing.

In 2001, a U.S. surveillance plane and a Chinese navy fighter collided mid-air near the Chinese island province of Hainan, resulting in the Chinese pilot’s death. The U.S. said its plane was in international airspace and the accident was the result of reckless flying by the Chinese side.

China frees American pastor after 18 years in detention

16 September 2024, [NPR](#), Emily Feng

An American pastor jailed in China for more than 18 years has been released this week, according to the State Department on Monday.

68-year-old David Lin, a naturalized US citizen, had gone back to the country of his birth in 2006, after applying for permission from the Chinese government to open a Christian church building there.

But he was detained shortly afterwards and was handed a life sentence in 2009 for contract fraud, a charge Lin and his family deny.

According to the Dui Hua Foundation, a U.S.-based human rights advocacy group, Lin's sentence had been reduced several times since 2012. And prior to the most recent reduction, he was set to be released in December 2029.

The State Department considers Lin as "wrongfully detained" in China and said it "welcomed" his release from the Chinese prison.

"He has returned to the United States and now gets to see his family for the first time in nearly 20 years," it says in a statement shared with NPR.

"No words can express the joy we have — we have a lot of time to make up for," his daughter, Alice Lin, told Politico.

Lin was released the week before a U.S. congressional hearing to be held on Washington on other Americans considered "wrongfully detained" in China. The detainees' families say they suffering from serious health issues.

Among them are Kai Li, a businessman detained in 2016 on spying charges, and Mark Swidan, a businessman who was detained in 2012 for alleged narcotics trafficking. The families of both men have denied the charges.

During his last trip to China this April, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it remains "a top priority to resolve the cases of American citizens who are wrongfully detained or subject to exit bans in China." Since 2012, China has increased the imposition of exit bans on both Chinese and foreign national, according to human rights groups. Beijing rejects these characterizations.

Last summer, the State Department revised its travel advisory for China, urging Americans to "reconsider" travel to mainland China due to the risk of arbitrary detention and exit bans there.

China's foreign ministry said the revision was "totally unwarranted" and called on Washington "to remove this stumbling block in China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges."

Top US, Chinese military brass hold first call to stabilise ties

10 September 2024, [Reuters](#)

The United States and China held theatre-level commander talks for the first time on Tuesday, Chinese authorities said, amid efforts to stabilise military ties and avoid misunderstandings, especially in regional hot spots such as the South China Sea.

Washington seeks to open new channels of regular military communication with Beijing since ties sank to a historic low after the United States downed a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon last year.

Admiral Sam Paparo, head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, held a video telephone call with his counterpart Wu Yanan of the Southern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's areas of responsibility include the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, two hot spots for regional tension that are also flashpoints in U.S.-China bilateral ties.

Both sides had an "in depth exchange of views on issues of common concern," the Chinese defence ministry said in a readout.

Paparo urged the PLA "to reconsider its use of dangerous, coercive, and potentially escalatory tactics in the South China Sea and beyond", the Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement that described the exchange as "constructive and respectful".

He also stressed the importance of continued talks to clarify intent and reduce the risk of misperception or miscalculation.

The call followed a meeting in Beijing last month between U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Chinese leader Xi Jinping's leading military adviser, at which the talks were agreed.

U.S. and Chinese troops were also taking part in large-scale military exercises led by the Brazilian Armed Forces this week in the Brazilian city of Formosa in the state of Goiás.

American and Chinese troops had not trained side by side since 2016, when Beijing participated in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, or Rimpac, led by the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

Most two-way military engagements between the U.S. and China were suspended for almost two years after Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, visited Taiwan in August 2022.

"I certainly worry about an unintended conflict between our military forces, an accident, an accidental collision," Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to China, told the magazine Foreign Policy in an online interview.

Later this week, the United States plans to send a senior Pentagon official to a major security forum in China.

China says it is ending foreign adoptions, prompting concern from US

06 September 2024, [The Guardian](#), Helen Davidson

US diplomats seeking clarity for hundreds of families in the process of international adoption.

The Chinese government is ending its international adoption programme, and the US is seeking clarification on how the decision will affect hundreds of American families with pending applications.

At a daily briefing on Thursday, Mao Ning, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, said Beijing was no longer allowing intercountry adoptions of children from [China](#), with the only exception for blood relatives to adopt a child or a stepchild.

Mao did not explain the decision other than to say that it was in line with the spirit of relevant international conventions. “We express our appreciation to those foreign governments and families, who wish to adopt Chinese children, for their good intention and the love and kindness they have shown,” she added.

In letters sent to some adoption agencies on Wednesday, and shared on social media, the US state department said it had been told by Chinese authorities that all other pending adoptions were cancelled, except those with already issued travel authorisations.

In a phone call with US diplomats in China, Beijing said it “will not continue to process cases at any stage” other than those cases covered by an exception clause. The embassy is seeking clarification in writing from China’s ministry of civil affairs, the US state department said on Thursday.

The state department said: “We understand there are hundreds of families still pending completion of their adoption, and we sympathise with their situation.”

Many people have adopted children from China over the decades, visiting the country to pick them up and then bringing them to a new home overseas. Lengthy delays in the process meant many couples who were approved to adopt still waited years, sometimes near a decade, to receive their child.

US families have adopted 82,674 children from China, the most from any foreign country.

Intercountry adoptions had been largely suspended since 2020 because of the Covid pandemic, and changes in China’s political, demographic and economic situation had led many in the sector to expect an end or tightening of the adoption policy.

The Chinese government had resumed adoptions for children who had received travel authorisation prior to the suspension, the US state department said in its latest annual report on adoptions, but the numbers appeared small.

A US consulate issued 16 visas for adoptions from China from October 2022 through to September 2023, the first in more than two years, the state department

report said. It was not clear if any more visas had been issued since then.

In January, Denmark’s only overseas adoption agency said it was winding down operations after concerns were raised about fabricated documents and procedures, and Norway’s top regulatory body recommended stopping overseas adoptions for two years pending an investigation into several cases.

The response on social media from prospective and current adoptive parents, and from adoptees themselves, was mixed. Some feared the announcement could also close off avenues for adoptees connecting with their former orphanages and birth families. Some said it was “long overdue” and they hoped children would be taken care of in their country of origin.

The Nanchang Project, a US-based group that works with Chinese adoptees and their adoptive parents to help adoptees find their biological families said the announcement marked “the end of an era” but the programme was “already on its way out”.

It added: “It is our profound hope that the remaining children in China receive the attention, medical care, and love they deserve.”

The charity said on social media that the number of adoptions had already seriously declined in the years before the pandemic pause, and there were fewer children put up for adoption overall, attributing it to China’s improved economy, falling birthrates, and a social preference for male children waning.

The number of newborn babies in China fell to 9.02 million in 2023, and the overall population declined for the second consecutive year. Amid a series of government measures designed to encourage more births, China’s decades-long one-child policy – which was a key driver of babies, especially girls, being put up for adoption – was phased out.

Former aide to New York governor charged as ‘agent’ of Chinese government

03 September 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Linda Sun and husband are accused of having ‘laundered millions of dollars’ on behalf of China, receiving kickbacks in return.

The United States Justice Department has filed charges against a former top aide to New York Governor Kathy Hochul, accusing the aide of pursuing unlawful “political activities” on behalf of the Chinese government.

The aide in question, 41-year-old Linda Sun, was appointed as Hochul’s deputy chief of staff in 2021 and previously worked under Hochul’s predecessor, Governor Andrew Cuomo.

But in an indictment unsealed on Tuesday, federal prosecutors accused Sun and her husband Christopher Hu, 40, of using her position to benefit the Chinese government and profit from the exchange.

“Linda Sun, a former New York State government employee, acted as an undisclosed agent of the Chinese government while her husband, Christopher Hu, facilitated the transfer of millions of dollars in kickbacks for personal gain,” Christie Curtis, the acting assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), said in a press release.

The indictment is the latest in a series of moves the Justice Department has taken to counter the “national security threats” it perceives from China.

Sun and Hu were both arrested on Tuesday morning. They appeared for their arraignment at a federal court in Brooklyn later that afternoon.

In the indictment, Sun was accused of violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act by failing to register as an agent working on behalf of China and by having “actively concealed” her relationship with its government.

The document also alleged she had committed visa fraud and alien smuggling, as well as entering a money laundering conspiracy.

Hu, meanwhile, was charged with the money laundering conspiracy, as well as conspiracy to commit bank fraud and using a family member’s identity to open new bank accounts.

In the indictment, federal prosecutors detailed how they believe the couple “laundered millions of dollars” for China in exchange for kickbacks to buy “luxury vehicles and million-dollar properties” in New York.

That includes a \$4.1m property in Manhasset, New York, and a \$2.1m condominium in Honolulu, Hawaii. Prosecutors also say the benefits afford Sun and Hu the ability to buy a 2024 Ferrari luxury vehicle.

They also accused Sun of offering Chinese officials letters of invitation to travel to the US and arranging meetings with New York State leaders.

She even provided some Chinese government representatives “official New York State proclamations” without receiving the proper authorisation to do so first, according to the indictment.

That contrasts with her treatment of Taiwanese officials, the indictment alleged. It accused her of preventing representatives from Taiwan’s government from meeting with New York officials.

The government in Beijing has long denied Taiwan’s claims to sovereignty, as part of its “one China” policy. Rather, it maintains that the self-governing island is an integral part of China, under the authority of its government.

US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York Breon Peace explained in a news release that the “illicit

scheme enriched the defendant’s family to the tune of millions of dollars”.

“While appearing to serve the people of New York as Deputy Chief of Staff within the New York State Executive Chamber, the defendant and her husband actually worked to further the interests of the Chinese government,” Peace said.

The US Justice Department has been cracking down on alleged interference from the Chinese government in recent months.

Less than two weeks ago, on August 22, it also filed an indictment against a New York resident who reportedly took part in the protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989, a major flashpoint for the pro-democracy movement in China.

The Justice Department accused that person of acting as an agent for China’s Ministry of State Security.

And last year, federal prosecutors announced charges against two men accused of running a “secret police station” in New York City. The Chinese government has refuted such claims of foreign espionage.

For her part, Sun left the New York governor office’s employ in 2022.

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

Jaishankar Puts China And Pakistan On Blast at the U.N.

28 September 2024, [India Today](#)

India's external affairs minister Dr S. Jaishankar rebuked Pakistan and China during his address at the U.N. He made it clear that India will not back down in the face of aggression and provocations. He drew attention to the role of Pakistan in fostering terrorism and China's assertive tactics, the Foreign Minister emphasized that India's patience has its limits and actions have repercussions.

Dr Jaishankar also replied to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's speech, in which he raised the Jammu and Kashmir issue. He said "A dysfunctional nation coveting the lands of others must be exposed and must be countered. We heard some bizarre assertions from it at this forum yesterday. So let me make India's position perfectly clear. Pakistan's cross-border terrorism policy will never succeed. And it can have no expectation of impunity. On the contrary, actions will certainly have consequences. The issue to be resolved between us is now only the vacation of illegally occupied Indian territory by Pakistan. And of course the abandonment of Pakistan's longstanding attachment to terrorism."

Though not named directly, China was a clear target in the Minister's speech when he spoke about the erosion of trust in international processes. "Any connectivity that flouts sovereignty and territorial integrity acquires strategic connotations," he warned, a likely reference to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its contentious projects in the region.

China sends 'deterrent message' with missile intercept test near Indian border

28 September 2024, [SCMP](#)

China's missile intercept test near the Indian border is a clear message of deterrence for its neighbour, observers say, as the two sides step up diplomatic talks over their long-running territorial dispute.

The test was part of a live-fire exercise involving surface-to-air missile operations on the Karakoram Plateau, state news agency Xinhua reported on August 29.

It was conducted by the People's Liberation Army Xinjiang Military District, which is responsible for the Chinese side of the border in the western region.

A subsonic cruise missile was successfully intercepted at an altitude of 5,300 metres (17,390 feet) for the first time during the exercise, showing that the interceptor missile was stable and effective in harsh conditions, according to the report.

The specific location of the test was not disclosed, nor is it known when the test took place, but analysts say

its proximity to the border suggested it was part of a deterrence strategy.

China and India share an ill-defined, contested border – known as the Line of Actual Control – that spans some 3,488km (2,167 miles).

Their border dispute has been the most contentious aspect of relations for decades. Tensions worsened after a clash in 2020 in a disputed Himalayan border area in which at least 20 Indian and four Chinese troops were killed – the first deadly skirmish between the two sides in at least 45 years.

Lin Minwang, deputy director of Fudan University's Centre for South Asian Studies in Shanghai, said the PLA had been testing weapons and equipment in China's border plateau region since 2020 amid tensions along the frontier with India, and the latest test was in line with that practice.

"It carries a certain deterrent message. To avoid war, we must first possess the capability to fight," Lin said.

He said strains in the relationship had shown signs of easing this year.

"Both sides are intensifying efforts to reach an agreement on border issues as soon as possible," he said. "[But] it is impossible for China to meet India's demands ... in this context, the test signifies to India that China possesses military capabilities – and the choice now lies with India."

State media reported the missile intercept test on the same day that China and India held their 31st meeting on border affairs in Beijing, during which they agreed to strengthen dialogue and maintain peace along their border.

During talks in St Petersburg two weeks later, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval agreed to work together to create the conditions needed to improve bilateral relations.

Song Zhongping, a Chinese military commentator, said the PLA test could be seen as a "guarantee of strength" to support those talks.

"The goal was to intercept all incoming targets, whether they're subsonic or hypersonic [missiles]," Song said. "Negotiations without that guarantee of strength are unlikely to produce results."

The test is likely to heighten concerns in New Delhi, according to Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedy, an associate professor with Nalanda University's School of Historical Studies in India.

He said the test had "significant implications for regional security dynamics" and suggested that China was "actively enhancing its military capabilities, focusing on creating a more sophisticated arsenal that improves its overall lethality and effectiveness".

"The strategic objective behind such advancements appears to be a shift towards damage limitation, particularly through the deployment of missile defence systems," Chaturvedy said.

He said the timing of the test amid ongoing dialogues between the two sides could prompt India to reassess its defence priorities. "The emphasis on building a more robust deterrent force is imperative, as it could catalyse an arms race in the region," he added.

India could be compelled to accelerate its own military capabilities, including developing hypersonic missiles, long-range air-launched cruise missiles and nuclear ballistic missile submarines, according to Chaturvedy.

China demanding patrolling right in Indian held Arunachal territory?

28 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has been demanding patrolling access to two Indian held areas of Arunachal Pradesh during the past four years of discussions on restoring the pre-2020 situation in the eastern Ladakh border region, according to the *tribuneindia.com* Sep 28. It suggested that China tried to create an eastern Ladakh-like situation there too, to prevent India's patrolling of its own Tibet-border territory.

The two spots — one in the Yangtse area north-east of Tawang, where the two sides had a deadly clash in Dec 2022, and the second in central Arunachal along the Subansiri river valley — have been firmly under Indian control for decades, the report said.

The Chinese side was stated to have been making the demand during the 21 rounds of talks held over the past four years, to discuss the dispute on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh which arose from China's incursions in 2020.

Chinese troops have since been denying access to Indian troops to "patrol points" 10, 11, 12 and 13 (also known in military jargon as PP) on this part of the LAC. All of these originate from "the bottleneck", a geographical feature on the eastern flank of the 972 sq km Depsang plateau, the report said.

Indian government sources, speaking to *The Tribune* on the condition of anonymity, have said the Chinese demands were "unreasonable" and "devoid of logic". "The last Indian Army patrol to the PP areas was (undertaken) in Jan 2020," a source has said.

The report cited Indian government sources as reiterating that the so-called Chinese demand to allow its troops to patrol the two spots in Arunachal Pradesh was not a "quid pro quo", as both had been in Indian control for decades.

On the other hand, the issue of patrolling PP 10, 11, 12 and 13 in eastern Ladakh is a dispute that cropped up in Apr 2020. Ever since, the two armies have been locked in a military standoff, the report noted.

India's External Affairs Minister Mr S Jaishankar, speaking at an event in the US on Sep 24, referred to the problems of India's loss of access to the patrolling

areas in eastern Ladakh after the Chinese incursion in 2020.

“The main issue right now is the patrolling,” Jaishankar said, pointing out that the patrolling arrangements since 2020 had been disturbed. He went on to describe the India-China relationship as “significantly disturbed” as a result of it.

The report cited Indian military sources as separately confirming that since Apr 2020, Chinese troops had not allowed Indian soldiers to patrol areas PP 10, 11, 12 and 13. Indian side had patrolled there until the Chinese incursions.

China tried to achieve eastern Ladakh-like situation in Arunachal Pradesh too in 2022. After the Dec 2022 clash at Yangtse, Defence Minister Singh had told Indian Parliament: “The PLA (People’s Liberation Army) troops on Dec 9 tried to transgress the LAC in Yangtse area of Tawang sector and unilaterally change the status quo.”

There were also face-offs in the Yangtse area in the past, a major one being in Oct 2021, the report noted. The Chinese attempt was to get access to the top of the 17,000-foot-high peak that provides a commanding view on both sides of the LAC. India has remained in firm control of the top and its access routes from its own side, the report said.

Elsewhere in Arunachal Pradesh, the two armies have had face-offs in the past at the second spot, in the Subansiri valley in central Arunachal.

Over the past 21 rounds of talks, India was stated to have been suggesting to China a graded three-step process for resolving the Eastern Ladakh issue. The first involves disengagement of troops within close proximity to each other in grey zones along the LAC and getting back to positions as on Apr 2020. The next two steps — de-escalation and de-induction — entail pulling back troops and equipment to the pre-Apr 2020 levels, the report added.

China calls India’s conquest, naming of Arunachal peak after 6th Dalai Lama ‘illegal’

27 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

On the basis of its claim that Tibet “belongs” to it and, by extension, Arunachal Pradesh too, China has called the recent scaling of a hitherto unclimbed peak in the Indian state by a team of Indian mountaineers and its naming of it after the 6th Dalai Lama of Tibet “illegal”. A team of 15 members from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) successfully climbed the 20,942-foot-high, previously unclimbed peak in a 15-day expedition and named it as the “Tsangyang Gyatso Peak”.

NIMAS, based in Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh, operates under the ministry of defence, noted the [hindustantimes.com](#) Sep 27.

In a press release, the defence ministry stated that naming the peak after the 6th Dalai Lama pays homage to his enduring wisdom and significant contributions to the Monpa community and beyond.

China has condemned the entire exercise, calling it “illegal and null and void”.

While noting he was not aware of the entire exercise, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian has told a media briefing, “Let me say more broadly that the area of Zangnan is Chinese territory, and it’s illegal, and null and void for India to set up the so-called ‘Arunachal Pradesh’ in Chinese territory. This has been China’s consistent position.”

“Zangnan” is Chinese for “southern Tibet”. China claims that the state belongs to it on the basis of its claim over Tibet. India recognized Tibet as an autonomous region of the People’s Republic of China but denies that this includes Arunachal Pradesh also. India has not yet reacted to China’s remarks but has maintained that Arunachal Pradesh was an integral part of India and assigning “invented” names does not alter this reality, noted [indiatoday.in](#) Sep 27, referring to China’s renaming of places in the state in recent years.

Meanwhile, Arunachal Chief Minister Mr Pema Khandu has extended his wishes to the NIMAS team for its achievement.

“Led by Director Ranveer Jamwal, they’ve successfully summited an untamed peak in the Gorichen Massif of Mon Tawang Region of Arunachal Pradesh, reaching an impressive 6,383 meters!” he wrote on X.

Renaming of Arunachal peak illegal: China

27 September 2024, [TOI](#), Prabin Kalita

Days after an Indian mountaineering team scaled an unnamed and unconquered peak in Arunachal Pradesh’s Tawang region and named it after the sixth Dalai Lama, a furious China on Thursday hit out at what it called an illegal operation in “Chinese territory”.

A team of 15 mountaineers from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) in Dirang successfully scaled the peak last Saturday, and named it “Tsangyang Gyatso Peak” in honour of Tsangyang Gyatso (17th-18th century CE), the sixth Dalai Lama, who was born in Tawang.

While the Army sends several adventure expeditions, many see these as dual-purpose endeavours aimed also at rebuffing the claims of China on Arunachal Pradesh. China insists on calling the Indian state ‘Zangnan’.

Naming the peak after the 6th Dalai Lama would not have also gone down well with the Chinese who have tried to belittle the significance of the institution which

serves as a reminder of Tibet's existence as an independent entity before it was grabbed by Beijing. A defence ministry statement saying the choice of name of the 6th Dalai Lama is a tribute to his timeless wisdom and his profound contributions to the Monpa community and beyond, seemed to rub it in. When asked for his reaction, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a media briefing in Beijing: "I'm not aware of what you mentioned." "Let me say more broadly that the area of Zangnan is Chinese territory, and it's illegal, and null and void for India to set up the so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh' in Chinese territory. This has been China's consistent position," he said.

Reached 'some consensus' with India: Chinese military on disengagement process in Ladakh
27 September 2024, [The Hindu](#)

China and India were able to "reduce differences" and build "some consensus" on disengaging troops from friction points to end the standoff in eastern Ladakh and agreed to maintain dialogue to reach a resolution acceptable to both sides at an "early date", the Chinese Defence Ministry said on Thursday (September 26, 2024). Under the guidance of two leaders, China and India have maintained communication with each other through diplomatic and military channels, including between two foreign Ministers and China's Foreign Minister and India's National Security Advisor, and through the border consultation mechanisms, Mr. Zhang Xiaogang said. Both China and India, through talks, were "able to reduce their differences and build some consensus besides agreeing to strengthen dialogue to accommodate each other's legitimate concerns", Mr. Zhang, a spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defence, told a media briefing in Beijing. "The two sides agreed to reach a resolution at an early date acceptable to both sides," he said.

He was replying to a question on the talks between the two countries on disengagement from the remaining friction points especially Demchok and Depsang to end the over four-year-long military standoff in eastern Ladakh resulting in a freeze of relations between the two countries.

Mr. Zhang referred to the meeting between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi as well as the recent meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS meeting in Russia between Wang and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

On September 3, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning, while commenting on the talks between Wang and Doval, said the "front-line armies of the two countries have realised disengagement in four areas in the Western sector of

the China-India border, including the Galwan Valley". In his reply to the question, Mr. Zhang didn't comment on the progress of the disengagement from the remaining areas including Depsang and Demchok but said both sides will continue to consolidate the outcomes.

"We will continue to consolidate the outcomes we have reached and respect bilateral agreements and confidence-building measures to safeguard peace and tranquillity at the border," he said.

His comment respecting bilateral agreements came as Jaishankar, while addressing an event hosted by the Asia Society and the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York on Tuesday (September 24, 2024), said there were a series of agreements between the two countries that went into greater and greater detail on how to make sure the border remained peaceful and stable. "Now the problem was in 2020, despite these very explicit agreements, we saw that the Chinese - we were all in the middle of Covid at that time - moved a large number of forces in violation of these agreements to the Line of Actual Control. And we responded in kind," he said.

Meanwhile, Li Jinsong, Director-General of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Foreign Ministry, met with Indian Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat here, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said, without providing any details.

China's high-altitude heliports in Tibet a sobering reminder of threat to India along LAC

26 September 2024, [The New Indian Express](#)

The military dynamics of Tibet are undergoing a fresh change with the construction of high-altitude helicopter infrastructure in the area.



An under-construction heliport in Gar County The Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) presents unique challenges for air infrastructure superiority, with its high altitude and rugged terrain. While the expansion of airports and deployment of fighter jets and sophisticated radar systems have been traditional measures of this superiority, a less recognised but equally critical aspect is China's increasing rotary-wing capabilities at extreme altitudes.

Our research reveals that nearly 90% of heliports in the TAR are located at elevations between 3,300 and 5,300 m (10,000–17,400 ft), with 80% concentrated above 3,600 m. These advancements signal that China's once-significant limitations in helicopter operations at such altitudes are swiftly diminishing. China's critical military infrastructure at higher altitudes is rapidly expanding in the challenging environment of the TAR. A vital part of this expansion is the proliferation of high-altitude heliports and helipads, which are quickly becoming crucial nodes in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) ground and air operations strategy.

These helipads, strategically placed near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China, disputed areas with Bhutan, and critical infrastructure like surface-to-missile (SAM) sites and military barracks, serve as logistics hubs. Their role in facilitating rapid troop and equipment movement underscores their strategic significance.

The figure above shows the distribution of 109 helipads based on their elevation. Surprisingly, only two helipads are positioned at an elevation of 780 to 2600 m. However, 32 helipads are located between 2700 and 3600 m, 44 helipads between 3700 and 4300 m, and 25 helipads between 4400 and 4700 m. Six more helipads are positioned at elevations between 4800 and 5400 m. These helipads exhibit a wide range of elevations, from a minimum of 780.50 m to a maximum of 5374 m, with an average elevation of approximately 3930 m.

Once considered to be a handicap in PLA's air operation, China's high-altitude capabilities have seen a significant and rapid expansion. This development underscores the urgency of the situation and the growth of the PLA's air operations in a way that cannot be ignored.

A new approach of extending heli strips to allow Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to land on strips shorter than 1,000 m highlights China's forward-thinking military infrastructure, making these sites useful for both helicopters and UAVs.

Over the past decade, the PLA has substantially invested in helicopter infrastructure, which has increased its operational capability. These expenses are not merely reactions to disputes like the 2017 Doklam standoff or the 2020 Galwan Valley clash. Instead, they are a calculated approach aimed at guaranteeing long-term gains in a zone where the topography and elevation seriously challenge the PLA's troops.

For example, the Z-20 and Z-8L helicopters have been specially built to operate under the difficult circumstances of the Tibetan plateau, highlighting China's will to overcome the obstacles presented by the hostile surroundings.

Modernising and Expanding: A Strategic Choice

While the rate of heliport construction is slower than the growth of airfields, it reflects the PLA's approach of aggressively expanding its military infrastructure. Some of the heliports studied in our research are undergoing infrastructure upgrades/expansion, while a few are newly established.

India displays battle readiness as eastern Ladakh standoff continues amid Chinese buildup

25 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

As China continues its military and strategic infrastructure buildup in occupied Tibet while refusing to pull back from eastern Ladakh to restore the pre-2020 border situation, India has sought to make clear its readiness to defend its territorial integrity. On Sep 22, the Indian Army troops displayed multiple tactical tank exercises in the icy heights of Nyoma in eastern Ladakh, reported *newindianexpress.com* Sep 24.

The exercises, carried out by the armoured unit, saw modern war horses T-90, T-72 and BMP-2 pass through rapid enemy assault in the undulating surface of the valley. Nyoma stands at a height of about 13,700 ft and is around 30 km inside the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the report said.

Speaking about the T-90 tank, soldier tradesman Manoj Kumar has said, "We are fully prepared to destroy our enemy at this altitude. It can be deployed anywhere and remove its obstacles to cross the area. It is capable of deep-fording (a technique used to cross deep water by driving a vehicle on the riverbed, lakebed, or seabed)."

"This is one of the best tanks in the world. We are very proud that this tank is being manufactured in India," he has said, adding, it is effective in any weather condition, day and night.

Also, this tank, which is fitted with a 1000-hp engine, can cross any obstacles anytime. It can be deployed in deserts and marshy land.

Speaking about the tank's combat capability, the report said India's front-ranking Bhisma T-90 tank is equipped with 'hunter killer' capabilities — combat power, reconnaissance capability, and survivability.

The LAC runs through eastern Ladakh for 832 km and is dotted with open valleys. The Indian Army had to induct a significant number of T-72 and T-90 tanks in operational areas, gaining tactical surprise over the adversary, forcing it on the back foot, the report noted.

India rules out joining world's largest trade deal, accuses China of 'very opaque' trade practices

22 September 2024, [CNBC](#), Lee Ying Shan

India's commerce minister rejected the idea of joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world's largest trade deal, maintaining that it is not in the country's interest to be part of a free trade agreement with China.

"India is not going to join the RCEP because neither did it reflect the guiding principles on which ASEAN was started, nor is it in the nation's interest to do a free trade agreement with China," India's Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal told CNBC's Tanvir Gill in an interview.

The RCEP deal was signed in 2020 by 15 Asia-Pacific countries — which makes up out 30% of global GDP — and came into force in January 2022. The countries are the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and five of their largest trading partners, China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Negotiations for the RCEP started in 2013 and initially included India, which some members viewed as a counterbalance to China. However, in 2019, India chose not to join RCEP, citing unresolved "core interest" issues. Back then, India did not expand on what some of those core unresolved interests were.

Goyal noted that at that time, India already had a free trade agreement with ASEAN, Japan and Korea, as well as a bilateral trade with New Zealand worth \$300 million.

"It was not in our farmers' interest, RCEP did not reflect the aspirations of our small and micro medium industries and sector, and in some form, was nothing but a free trade agreement with China," he said.

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"It was not in our farmers' interest, RCEP did not reflect the aspirations of our small and micro medium industries and sector, and in some form, was nothing but a free trade agreement with China," he said.

"Certainly nobody back home would like to have an FTA with [a] non-transparent economy, very opaque in its economic practices, where both trading systems, political systems, the economy — the way it is managed — is completely different from what the democratic world wants."

Goyal also accused China of using the World Trade Organization's policies to its advantage, flooding various economies with goods at low prices which often do not meet quality standards.

From solar panels to cars to steel, China has recently been churning out more goods in an economy that has been slow to absorb, resulting in a surge of cheap exports to foreign markets.

Semiconductor ambitions

The minister also made a strong case for India to become a Taiwan "plus one" semiconductor country.

"China Plus One" is a phrase used to describe a supply chain strategy that sees companies diversifying manufacturing and sourcing, by continuing operations in the mainland while also expanding into other countries. This approach aims to reduce risks linked to complete reliance on a single country's market or supply chain.

Spinning off that idea, Goyal thinks India can become an alternative place in the region for companies that want to diversify outside of Taiwan for semiconductors.

"We are encouraging [the] semiconductor industry in a big way. We started building up the ecosystem, which is essential before we can see more and more foundries coming into the country for the actual chip making," Goyal said.

"We expect the demand for semiconductor products to be about \$100 billion by 2030, and will grow exponentially thereafter," he said, adding that interest in India's semiconductor industry is expanding "by leaps and bounds."

India aims to establish itself as a major chips hub similar to the U.S., Taiwan, and South Korea, actively seeking foreign companies to set up their operations in the country.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated three semiconductor plants, bringing the total count of plants under development in India to four. One of those plants is a joint venture between Tata Electronics and Taiwan's Powerchip

Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. The plant, which is set up in Dholera, Gujarat state, is expected to deliver its first batch of semiconductors by late 2025 or early 2026.

Asked if India can be Taiwan's "plus one" in the semiconductor space, Goyal said that his country's size, democracy and rule of law means it is a "safe harbor."

"It provides an alternative where you will always have a youthful population in life, huge demand, and you will have the rule of law to back it. I think that's a very compulsive case," he said.

The world recognizes that excessive concentration in any one region is fraught with serious risks, Goyal added.

India's chip strategy has two main components: attracting foreign companies to establish operations and invest in the country, as well as forming partnerships with other major semiconductor nations, such as the U.S. In 2021, the government approved a \$10 billion incentive program for the sector, which is also available to foreign companies.

As of 2024, Taiwan, the world's chipmaking powerhouse, is expected to hold around 44% of global market share, followed by China with 28% and South Korea with 12%, according to a report. The U.S. and Japan account for 6% and 2%, respectively.

The authors of the report, Taiwan consultancy Trendforce, said Taiwan's global capacity share in advanced manufacturing processes is expected to decrease to 40% by 2027, while South Korea's could see a 2% decline. In the same time period, China's is expected to increase by 3% to 31%. "When you see from the lens sitting outside the country, you don't realize how difficult it is to compete against a non-transparent economy," the minister continued, in reference to China.

China welcomes more Indian investments, ambassador says

20 September 2024, [Reuters](#)

China would welcome more Indian investments and commodities in the Chinese market and also hopes that India will provide a "sound business environment" for Chinese firms in the country, Beijing's ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, said on Thursday.

The comments signal a willingness from Beijing to forge deeper economic ties with New Delhi that have been strained since a deadly clash between their troops on a Himalayan frontier in 2020.

India heightened scrutiny on Chinese investments after the clash and created new layers of red tape for Indian firms with Chinese stakeholders. But the Indian government is now looking to loosen some of these

restrictions as its firms struggle to scale up manufacturing.

Ambassador Xu, speaking at an event in New Delhi, said that China is also willing to advance cooperation with India on science and technology, and hopes India will take measures to resume direct flights and facilitate visas for Chinese citizens.

He said China would welcome more Indian commodities and investment by Indian enterprises, adding, "It is hoped that the Indian side could provide sound business environment for the Chinese enterprises in India".

China continues to be India's biggest source of goods and was the largest supplier of industrial products last year. India's trade gap with China fell briefly after the border clash but later doubled to \$85 billion as of March 2024.

Indian minister cites Tibet-border progress with China, cites a host of other difficulties in bilateral ties

13 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said Sep 12 that roughly 75% of the "disengagement problems" with China in the eastern Ladakh border area with Chinese-ruled Tibet had been sorted out, citing this as a progress. However, he has added that the bigger issue remained the increasing militarization of the frontier and the complex relationship between the two sides on a host of other issues as well.

India's relations with China cannot become normal until peace and tranquillity is restored on the border between the two countries, *thestatesman.com* Sep 12 cited him as reiterating.

The minister has said the two countries had negotiated for the last four years in the aftermath of the Jun 2020 clashes in the Galwan Valley that killed 20 Indian troops.

That year, Jaishankar has said, China moved a large number of troops to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) "in violation of multiple agreements for some reason, which is not entirely clear to us".

So, "the first step to that (solving the border stand-off) is disengagement... We have made some progress. You can say roughly 75% of the disengagement problems have been sorted out," he has said.

He has said the border confrontation had affected the entirety of the bilateral relationship.

"Because, you cannot have violence at the border and say the rest of the relationship is insulated from it. Trade has got affected. The exchanges have gotten affected. It is not normal," *theprint.in* Sep 12 quoted him as saying, speaking with Jean David-Levitte, the former French permanent representative to the United Nations at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), a think-tank.

Jaishankar was visiting Switzerland from Sep 12 to 13, following a two-day stop in Germany.

India took a series of measures after the Galwan Valley clash. It banned a large of Chinese apps in a series of announcements, including the highly popular and profitable short video app TikTok. It also tightened restrictions on Chinese investments in India.

Besides, India is yet to lift the Covid-era restrictions of direct flights to China, while the number of visas issued to Chinese citizens has fallen to 5,500 in 2023 from nearly 2,00,000 in 2018, the report noted.

The minister has also called trade ties between India and China "very unfair," saying the imbalance was extremely high. In 2023-2024, India imported \$101.74 billion worth of goods from China, while exporting only about \$16.66 billion — nearly a \$85 billion deficit. "We do not have the market access there. They have much better market access in India. We have concerns in various areas — in technology, telecommunications, digital. We also monitor what happens in the Indian Ocean," Jaishankar has added.

He has said any "radical change" of presence in the Indian Ocean would require India to scrutinize it under its "security calculus".

The external affairs minister indicated that the relationship could improve if there is a resolution to the border row. "We hope that if there is a solution to the disengagement and there is a return to peace and tranquillity, then we can look at other possibilities," *firstpost.com* Sep 12 quoted him as saying.

India, China agree to redouble efforts for complete disengagement along border

12 September 2024, [Reuters](#)

India and China agreed to redouble efforts to ensure complete disengagement on the contested Himalayan frontier, New Delhi said on Thursday after India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Russia.

"Both sides agreed to work with urgency and redouble their efforts to realize complete disengagement in the remaining areas," the Indian government said in a statement.

China occupied land the size of Delhi in Ladakh': Rahul Gandhi makes big claim, attacks PM Modi

11 September 2024, [Business Today](#)

Rahul Gandhi's claims that China has occupied Indian territory in Ladakh are not new.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday made a huge claim regarding the occupation of land in Ladakh by Chinese troops. While attacking the Modi government, Gandhi said that the

Chinese troops have occupied land the size of Delhi in Ladakh.

"Well, if you call having Chinese troops in 4,000 square kilometres of our territory handling something well, then maybe we've got Chinese troops occupying land the size of Delhi in Ladakh," Gandhi said while speaking at the National Press Club in Washington DC. He went onto India's handling of the situation a "disaster". Claiming that the media does not question the government on the same, Gandhi asked: "How would America react if a neighbour occupied 4,000 sq kms of your territory? Would any president be able to get away with saying that he's handled that well?"

Rahul Gandhi also seized this opportunity to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "So I don't think PM Modi handled China well at all. I see no reason why Chinese troops should be sitting in our territory," the Gandhi scion said.

Gandhi's claims that China has occupied Indian territory in Ladakh are not new. Last year, Rahul Gandhi accused PM Modi of lying to the opposition over the Indo-China border situation in Ladakh. He also repeated his claim that China has snatched Indian territory.

Modi told leaders of all political parties that neither has anyone entered nor is anyone present in Indian territory. The Prime Minister also told the leaders that no Indian post was captured.

Earlier this year, the Congress accused the Modi government of giving a "clean chit" to China and asserted that the encroachment will be halted decisively when the party comes to power.

At the time, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh claimed that the Prime Minister and Home Minister are denying that China has occupied around 2,000 sq km of Indian territory.

He further said the Chinese have taken over 26 out of 65 patrolling points in Ladakh, while adding that China has built complete villages 50-60 km deep inside Arunachal Pradesh. Ramesh said that this fact was confirmed by satellite imagery and the issue was also raised by BJP MP Tapir Gao in the Lok Sabha.

The statement came after Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that China could not encroach upon a "single inch" of land under the Modi dispensation. He also claimed that people will never forget how former PM Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said "bye-bye" to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh during the 1962 Indo-China war.



presented by China's growing military presence in the Himalayas.

An under-construction heliport near Qugaer Jiamu, located northeast of Pangong Tso Lake.

India has to change its policy if it wants to attract more Chinese investment: China Daily editorial

11 September 2024, [China Daily](#)

There have been positive signs of improving China-India economic relations recently, as evidenced by Indian officials talking about easing restrictions on Chinese investment, and New Delhi making moves to expedite visa approvals for Chinese technicians.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, India's minister of state for electronics and information technology, said recently that his country is "open" to investments from China, while Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said "we are not closed to business from China".

New Delhi has also launched a new portal to streamline the issuing of business visas for Chinese technicians whose expertise is key to India's manufacturing facilities that use Chinese machinery.

These developments are encouraging considering how trade and investment between the two giant neighbors have been disrupted due to the restrictive measures New Delhi adopted after a deadly clash between the two countries' border troops in June 2020.

Since then, India has banned hundreds of Chinese apps including TikTok on the grounds of addressing national security concerns, and launched so-called regulatory investigations against major Chinese high-tech companies such as Xiaomi and Oppo.

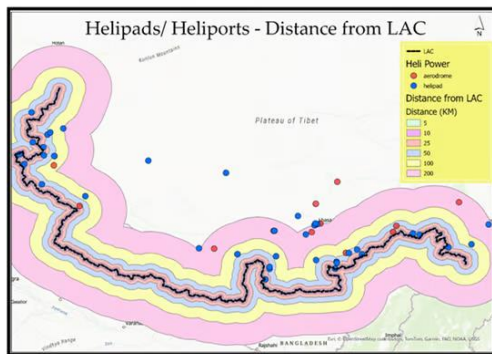
The crackdown has disrupted the previously good economic relations India had with China.

The seeming softening of attitude by New Delhi toward Chinese investment may have been made out of expediency, as declining foreign investment is likely to pose a challenge to India's economic ambition to become a developed country by the middle of this century.

Foreign direct investment in India plummeted by more than 40 percent to \$28 billion last year, according to a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, compared with an annual average of around \$40 billion in recent years. Analysts attributed the decline in FDI inflows to red tape and India's discriminatory economic policies.

Yet a recent survey by India's chief economic adviser suggested that boosting FDI inflows from China in nonsensitive sectors such as solar panels and battery manufacturing, where India lacks expertise, "appears more advantageous than relying on trade" for its economy to achieve sustained growth.

Heliport in Lhasa



The figure above shows helipads/heliports and aerodromes located 5, 10, 25, 50, 100, and 200 km from the LAC. The spacing of these heliports highlights their strategic importance.

Heliport concentrations close to the LAC and other disputed regions highlight their importance in supporting ground operations and preserving a continuous military presence in disputed territory. Combining these heliports with other military installations, such as radar stations and Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) sites, can create a dense network of military capabilities that can be rapidly mobilised in response to any border escalation.

These heliports' proximity to the Indian border allows the PLA to quickly deploy hop-on, hop-off forces in case of a confrontation, matching Indian defences in high-altitude locations with supply lines and logistics. Over the years, China may have a significant advantage over its neighbours if it keeps constructing such infrastructure at this rate. This underscores China's long-term approach to defending its territorial claims and establishing hegemony by incorporating these heliports in a more extensive military infrastructure network.

These advances will impact the strategic calculus in the Himalayan borderlands, serving as a sobering reminder of how the threat is changing for India along its northern front. As the PLA keeps improving its capacity in Tibet, India must react with similar steps to guarantee it is ready to handle the difficulties

India's exports to China, its largest trading partner, stood at \$16.65 billion last year, while imports from the country reached \$101.75 billion, leaving a trade deficit of more than \$85 billion.

Despite the tensions in bilateral relations and India's curbs on Chinese investment, China continues to play an irreplaceable role in India's economic development. For example, China has remained the biggest supplier of components and parts for the development of India's booming electronic and automobile industries, hallmarks of India's economic success. All this attests to the resilience and potential of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

China views India as an important investment destination and has expressed interest in expanding its investment footprint in various sectors in India, and it continues to promote and encourage bilateral investment cooperation between the two countries.

Increased trade and investment from China can help boost India's economy. However, despite the increasing calls to attract more investment from China, India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal insisted there is no "rethinking" to support Chinese investments in the country.

Since the two countries are not rivals or threats to each other but partners in cooperation and development, creating opportunities for each other benefits both sides.

New Delhi should work to strengthen its economic partnership with China, and provide a fair, just, transparent and nondiscriminatory business environment for Chinese investment.

Indian foreign minister Jaishankar says "not closed to business from China"

10 September 2024, [Reuters](#)

India is not "closed to business from China", but the issue is in which sectors the country does business with Beijing and on what terms, foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said in Berlin on Tuesday. Ties between the nuclear-armed Asian giants have been strained since clashes between their troops on their largely undemarcated Himalayan frontier left 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead in 2020.

India subsequently tightened its scrutiny of investments from Chinese companies and halted major projects.

However, government officials, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, have recently backed suggestions to allow more Chinese investment in the country.

The latest annual economic survey released in July suggests that to boost its global exports, India can

either integrate into China's supply chain or promote foreign direct investment (FDI) from China.

"We are not closed to business from China...I think the issue is, which sectors do you do business and what terms do you do business? It's far more complicated than a black and white binary answer," Jaishankar said at a conference in Berlin.

Reuters reported in July that India could ease restrictions on Chinese investment in non-sensitive sectors such as solar panels and battery manufacturing where New Delhi lacks expertise and which hinders domestic manufacturing.

Diplomatic and military talks to end the military standoff in the Himalayas have made slow progress.

Along with investments scrutiny, India has also virtually blocked visas for all Chinese nationals since 2020, but it is considering easing them for Chinese technicians, as it had hindered investments worth billions of dollars.

Mere painting of marks does not mean China encroached our land: Rijiju

09 September 2024, [Business Standard](#)

The union minister's comments came amidst reports that the PLA allegedly entered inside Indian territory in the Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh last week and they were camping in the Kapapu area



But we will not allow anyone to come near the Line of Actual Control: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju | (Photo: PTI)

Amidst reports of incursion by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Arunachal Pradesh, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said the mere painting of marks in undemarcated locations doesn't mean the areas have been encroached upon.

Rijiju, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh, also said that overlapping of patrolling by Indian and Chinese forces does take place in the undemarcated areas along the Sino-Indian border but that does not lead to encroachment of Indian territory.

The union minister's comments came amidst reports that the PLA allegedly entered inside Indian territory in the Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh last week and they were camping in the Kapapu area of the district for some time.

Pictures of bonfires, painting of rocks and Chinese food materials found at the site have been shared on social media, the reports said.

"China can't take our land. Overlapping of patrolling does take place in the undemarcated areas. They are not allowed to construct anything permanent. There is strict vigil from our side. Mere painting of marks in undemarcated locations doesn't mean the areas have been encroached on," Rijiju told PTI here.

The union minister said India has been building infrastructure along the border and that will continue.

"But we will not allow anyone to come near the Line of Actual Control," he said.

The latest incident came at a time when the Indian army continues to engage in a stand-off with the PLA in Ladakh. The stand-off has been going on since April 2020.

India shares a 3,400 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. China continues to claim that Arunachal Pradesh has "always been" its territory, a claim India termed as "absurd" and "ludicrous".

China, which terms 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.

COMMENTARIES

Communist China is celebrating its 75th birthday and its stock market is soaring. But not everyone is in the party spirit

30 September 2024, [CNN](#)

For much of the past year since China reopened to the world following the Covid-19 pandemic, a pall has hung over large swathes of the country as its economy struggles to regain momentum.

The country's bright young minds are having a hard time landing a job; its white-collar professionals are hit by pay cuts and layoffs; its entrepreneurs struggle to finance their businesses and pay off debts; its middle-class families are seeing their wealth slashed by crumbling housing prices; and its rich race to move money out of the country.

In the months leading up to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic on Tuesday, the mood was encapsulated by a new buzz phrase: "the garbage time of history." Like the final minutes of a basketball game with one team trailing so far behind that all efforts to win seem futile, some Chinese believe their country is trapped in a similarly bleak period with little hope for a turnaround.

The pessimism was a far cry from the buoyant outlook just five years ago, during the last major National Day celebrations in 2019. Back then, economists were rushing to predict when China might overtake the United States to become the world's largest economy. Those conversations aren't happening much anymore. These days, the talk centers on how Beijing can avoid a repeat of Japan's "lost decade" of economic stagnation following bursting of its housing bubble in the 1990s.

Last week, after months of increasingly grim economic data, Chinese leader Xi Jinping finally gave the nod to a much-needed stimulus package in a bid to shore up faith in the world's second largest economy.

On Tuesday, the country's central bank unveiled a raft of measures to counter falling prices, including freeing commercial banks to lend more money and making it cheaper for households and companies to borrow.

Officials kept up the positive drumbeat the next day by announcing rare cash handouts to disadvantaged citizens and pledging subsidies for recent graduates struggling to find a job.

And on Thursday, the ruling Communist Party's 24-member Politburo continued the bullish messaging. In a break with tradition, Xi dedicated the group's September meeting to economic affairs.

The top officials acknowledged that "new situations and problems" have arisen in the economy and demanded urgent action, vowing to boost fiscal spending, arrest the decline of the property market and improve employment for fresh graduates and migrant workers.

According to Xu Tianchen, senior economist at the Economist Intelligence Unit, the “rare, simultaneous rollout of so many measures underscored the urgency for policymakers to prop up the economy.”

The policy blitz gave an adrenaline shot to the country’s dismal stock market days before the week-long national holiday, which starts on Tuesday. China’s blue-chips stocks soared more than 15% last week in its biggest single-week gain in nearly 16 years. Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index surged 13%, notching its best week since 1998, according to Reuters.

The frenzy continued on Monday, when the combined turnover on the Shanghai and Shenzhen bourses exceeded 1.8 trillion yuan (\$228 billion), logging a record high, according to the Securities Times, a state-run financial newspaper. That’s despite a key measure of factory activity, the official purchasing managers’ index (PMI), shrinking for another month in September.

Remarkable turnaround

Even some big-name investors are excited by the rally. David Tepper, the billionaire founder of American hedge fund Appaloosa Management, told CNBC in an interview Thursday that he was buying more of “everything” related to China.

The stock market may be in the midst of one of its most remarkable turnarounds, but economists say reversing China’s economic downturn will require much more work.

“Stimulating the stock market doesn’t really do much for the real economy in China. Very few people invest in the stock market compared to other major markets,” said Logan Wright, director of China markets research at Rhodium Group.

Chinese households have suffered a massive loss of wealth from a slump in the housing market, amounting to an estimated \$18 trillion, Barclays economists said in a research note earlier this month. It’s as if each three-person household in China has lost around \$60,000, an amount that is almost five times China’s per capita gross domestic product.

Wright said the stimulus package “makes the leadership look more reactive, more responsive to the downturn in the economy. And that is what’s generated some of the more positive sentiment (last) week. But nothing really changes in terms of the structural outlook.”

China’s decades-long investment-led growth has reached “a dead end,” and fundamental overhauls of its fiscal system — including a redistribution of income and greater transfers to households — are needed to rebalance the economy toward a more sustainable consumption-led growth model, Wright said.

There has been little in the barrage of measures announced last week to address the underlying structural problems weighing down economic growth.

China has long had one of the highest saving rates in the world. While one-off cash handouts and subsidies may boost short-term consumption, robust social welfare and healthcare are needed to make Chinese households feel comfortable to spend more in the long run, especially following the collapse of the property sector, where most Chinese invest their savings.

Property woes

The outlook for the real estate industry, which makes up about a quarter of the Chinese economy and 70% of household wealth, remains dim.

“There’s not much Beijing can do,” Wright said. “In many ways, the adjustment in the property sector is almost complete, and policy hasn’t been very effective in stabilizing it.”

After decades of boom, China’s real estate sector is now in its fourth year of contraction since falling into a deep crisis in 2020, when the government cracked down on excessive borrowing by developers to rein in their high debt. Beijing’s efforts to rescue the market have struggled to revive demand, with prices of new homes continuing their freefall.

In a concerted push to prop up the embattled property market, the southern metropolis of Guangzhou became China’s first tier-one city to lift all restrictions on home purchases on Sunday, while Shanghai and Shenzhen also eased rules for home buyers.

The country now has so many empty apartments that not even all of its 1.4 billion people are enough to fill them. To make matters worse, the population has been shrinking for two years, a demographic shift that could further hobble future growth.

The Chinese government’s efforts to encourage births has also failed. More and more young people are delaying marriage and childbirth, if not foregoing them all together. Many feel jaded or burnt out from “involution” — a catchphrase describing the intense competition that has dominated their lives, from striving for academic excellence to building a successful career. Some are resorting to “lying flat” or “letting it rot,” a form of passive resistance against society’s pressure by doing just enough to get by.

These buzzwords sum up a growing sense of despair among China’s disenchanting youth. Some are finding the arc of their lives increasingly out of sync with the expected upward trajectory described in Xi’s “China dream,” a grand vision of “unstoppable” national rejuvenation.

Having grown up in an era of breakneck economic growth and ever-improving living standards, China’s Gen-Zs are now reckoning with the possibility that they might not do better than their parents, whose generation accepted limited freedoms in exchange for promised prosperity.

Over the past years, China's youth have watched their personal freedoms shrink under Xi's authoritarian rule and their job prospects dim in a flagging economy.

Xi's crackdown on the private sector, from big tech to private tutoring, has eliminated many jobs once available to China's fresh graduates. The youth unemployment rate soared to 18.8% in August, the highest since authorities changed the methodology last year to exclude students.

That poses a potential problem for the Communist Party, which has for decades staked its legitimacy on the country's unprecedented growth. As the economy slows, Xi has bolstered another pillar of the regime's legitimacy: nationalism, which he is expected to invoke to mark the country's 75th anniversary on Tuesday.

But Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, said Chinese leaders are not "planning on giving up the economic performance argument yet."

"They want to restore confidence in the economy, but the most troublesome headache for the Communist Party is they don't have effective solutions to the economic slowdown."

The 57th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and Chinese Stance

28 September 2024, [Modern Diplomacy](#), Prof. Engr. Zamir Ahmed Awan

The ongoing 57th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) continues its critical work of promoting and protecting human rights globally.

The ongoing 57th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) continues its critical work of promoting and protecting human rights globally. Established in 2006 by the UN General Assembly, the UNHRC replaced the Commission on Human Rights, aiming to address human rights violations and ensure accountability. Based in Geneva, the Council comprises 47 member states, elected by the General Assembly, and meets regularly to discuss pressing human rights issues.

Historical Background and Importance

The creation of the UNHRC marked a significant shift in the global human rights landscape. It was founded to address concerns over the politicization and inefficacy of the earlier Commission, emphasizing a more objective and credible approach to human rights. Since its inception, the Council has served as an essential platform for addressing a wide range of human rights violations, conducting investigations, and holding governments accountable for their actions.

Functions and Aims

The UNHRC's primary function is to promote universal respect for the protection of all human rights—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural. The Council reviews human rights situations in UN member states through mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), where every nation's human rights record is assessed periodically. It also responds to urgent crises, commissions fact-finding missions, and offers recommendations to governments.

The Significance of the 57th Session

The 57th session comes at a critical time when global human rights issues such as conflict-related abuses, migration crises, and environmental challenges are at the forefront of international debate. This session is particularly important as it continues the Council's work in addressing new and emerging threats to human rights, while promoting dialogue, cooperation, and international standards.

The UNHRC serves as a vital institution in the global effort to ensure human dignity, freedom, and justice. Its ongoing work in the 57th session reaffirms the international community's commitment to uphold human rights for all, in line with the principles of the United Nations.

Politicization of Human Rights

It has been observed that some countries are increasingly politicizing human rights issues, using them as tools to advance their geopolitical agendas. A clear example of this is seen in the selective nature of the United States' annual human rights reports, which tend to target nations like Russia, China, and a few others that are perceived as political adversaries. While these countries face scrutiny, glaring human rights abuses by other nations, particularly those aligned with U.S. interests, are conspicuously overlooked.

For instance, Israel, widely regarded as one of the most significant violators of human rights throughout modern history, is rarely, if ever, mentioned in U.S. reports. The ongoing oppression of Palestinians, destruction of civilian infrastructure, and repeated violations of international law have been largely ignored. Similarly, India, which has consistently faced accusations of gross human rights violations, particularly in Kashmir and against religious and ethnic minorities, escapes substantial criticism from the U.S. government. Despite India surpassing many nations in terms of human rights abuses, the U.S. remains largely silent, prioritizing strategic alliances over human rights advocacy.

Even within its own borders, the U.S. faces serious human rights concerns. Issues like systemic racial discrimination, police brutality, and the treatment of migrants have reached alarming levels, yet these problems are rarely acknowledged in the same critical manner the U.S. reserves for other nations. This selective focus undermines the credibility of human

rights advocacy, revealing a double standard where violations are condemned based on political convenience rather than universal principles.

In light of this, the international community must strive to ensure that human rights are defended impartially and consistently, free from political bias. Selective enforcement and politicization only weaken global efforts to uphold human dignity and justice.

Chinese Stance and global support

Over 100 countries expressed their support in various ways, both jointly and individually, for China's position on issues related to China's Xinjiang, Xizang, and Hong Kong regions and opposed the politicization of issues on human rights following statements made by the US and handful of countries which smear China's human rights situation during the ongoing 57th session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council.

The representative from Cuba made a joint statement on behalf of nearly 80 countries during the council, emphasizing sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, in addition to non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, are the basic norms of international relations, according to a release from the Permanent Mission of China to the UN Office in Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland on Wednesday.

The joint statement noted that issues related to Xinjiang, Xizang, and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region are internal affairs of China. They oppose the politicization of human rights issues and the application of double standards, as well as using human rights as an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

All parties should adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, follow principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity, and respect the right of the people of each state to choose independently the path under their national conditions.

Ambassador Chen Xu, permanent representative of China to the UN Office in Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, said the current atmosphere of politicization and polarization in the Human Rights Council is intensifying.

The Human Rights Council should not be a venue for confrontation and pressure, but it should play its role in helping countries build trust and promote cooperation through dialogue and communication, Chen said.

Other representatives also emphasized that all parties should view the human rights conditions in other countries objectively and engage in dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues based on equality and mutual respect. They called for avoiding selective and double standards and jointly resisting the erroneous practices of politicizing, instrumentalizing, and weaponizing human rights issues.

The Chinese delegation also described the real situation of human rights protection in China, exposing the serious human rights violations existing in countries like the US, and urging these countries to effectively protect human rights and contribute more to the international human rights cause.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian stated on Wednesday that the support expressed by more than 100 countries at the UN for China once again demonstrates that the politicization of human rights issues by the US and a few other countries is unpopular and destined to fail within the international community.

China urged the US to seriously reflect on and address its own grave human rights issues, including racism, gun violence, social injustice, and violations of immigrants' rights. Lin further called on the US to safeguard the rights of its citizens, stop interfering in other countries' internal affairs, and engage constructively in international human rights cooperation.

What is China doing at such heights in Tibet? The research report revealing the truth about PLA is surprising.

28 September 2024, [Press Wire](#)

China is laying a network of helicopter bases in Tibet. This is a big challenge to India's security. Research by the Takshashila Institution has revealed that about 90% of China's helipads in Tibet are at an altitude of 3,300 to 5,300 meters (10,000 to 17,400 ft) above sea level. 80% of these helipads are at an altitude of more than 3,600 meters. This disclosure is an alarm bell for India because China can use these helipads to rapidly transport troops and weapons to the border.

China's conspiracy on India-Bhutan border

Research has also shown that China is building these helipads near the border with India and Bhutan. These helipads are an important part of China's military strategy and have increased the threat to India. 109 helipads have been studied in the research. Of these, only two helipads are at an altitude of 780 to 2600 meters. 32 helipads are located at an altitude of 2700 to 3600 meters, 44 helipads are located at 3700 to 4300 meters and 25 helipads are located at an altitude of 4400 to 4700 meters. Six helipads are at an altitude of 4800 to 5400 meters.

Shocking revelations in the research report

Professor Y Nithyanandam, head of the geospatial research program at the Takshashila Institution in Bengaluru, has written an article for The New Indian Express. In this he/she said that China can use these helipads for military operations. he/she can use them for movement of troops and weapons, to increase

surveillance and to provide help in emergency situations.

The research report led by Dr. Nithyanandam states that China is rapidly increasing its military capability in the highlands. Earlier, flying helicopters in high altitude areas was considered a weakness of China, but now it is rapidly overcoming this shortcoming. As part of its military strategy, China is also expanding helipads as well as airstrips. It plans to use airstrips less than 1,000 meters long for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

China is continuously increasing its military capability

Over the past decade, China has invested heavily in helicopter infrastructure, increasing its military capability. This investment is not just a response to incidents like the 2017 Doklam standoff or the 2020 Galwan Valley conflict. Rather, it is a deliberate strategy aimed at ensuring long-term gains in an area where geographical conditions and altitude pose serious challenges to PLA (People's Liberation Army) troops. For example, the Z-20 and Z-8L helicopters are specifically designed to operate in the difficult conditions of the Tibetan Plateau, demonstrating China's will to overcome obstacles posed by adverse conditions.

The report said, 'The speed with which China is building heliports reflects its aggressive military expansion.' Some heliports included in the study are being modernized and some new heliports are being built. China is laying a network of helicopter bases near LAC. Helipads and airports have been built at a distance of 5 kilometers, 10 kilometers, 25 kilometers, 50 kilometers, 100 kilometers and 200 kilometers from the LAC.

Are there any preparations for war?

These helipads will help in military operations and deployment of troops on the border. By combining these helipads with other military facilities such as radar stations and surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites, China is creating a strong military network that it can quickly deploy in the event of any border dispute. The report says that India needs to be cautious of this move by China. India will have to strengthen its military capability and keep a close watch on China's actions.

Securing the Legacy: The Future of the Dalai Lama and Tibet. A Tibetan Point of View

27 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Ugyen Gyalpo

To avoid Chinese maneuvers, the 14th Dalai Lama may consider self-emanating when he is still alive, i.e., appointing a successor and recognizing him as his "emanation."

Just few weeks ago, the Tibetan community of New York and New Jersey offered Tenshug, long life prayer ceremony for His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the UBS

Arena in New York. Seventeen thousand Tibetans and other devotees of His Holiness showed up who were lucky enough to get the tickets for this small venue arranged by the able organizers at a short notice.

A poignant moment of the whole ceremony was the time when four hundred Tibetan children facing His Holiness sitting on the traditional Buddhist throne sang the song "Tashi Sho." The arena's massive screen alternated between images of children singing and the crescendo of their emphatic voices echoing through and the visibly smiling image of the Dalai Lama which looked noticeably frailer as he was recovering from a knee surgery. The cropped-out video of the children singing went viral on Chinese social media within Tibet, although it omitted the stage where His Holiness was seated.

I was deeply moved by this powerful moment, and many others were similarly reduced to tears. Witnessing somebody who embodies Avalokiteshvara and has served as a fatherly figure for the Tibetan people was profoundly emotional.

His Holiness has guided the Tibetan movement through tumultuous times and has been instrumental in preserving Tibetan language, culture, and the future of Tibetans born in the diaspora, who are now thriving globally. The thought of Him slowly succumbing to aging and the forces of nature was a sinking feeling. Despite His Holiness's assurances through prophetic dreams that he would live up to the age of 113, the reality of the Tibetans people's vulnerability without him is undeniable. The Chinese government, with its "long wait game," seeks to exploit this vulnerability.

China is known for employing the stratagem of "long wait game" and the issue of Dalai Lama's reincarnation process is no exception. For almost three decades now dating back to 1995, China already hatched the plan to hijack the reincarnation process of the Dalai Lama and set the foundation of its sinister campaign by conspiring and executing the abduction of the 11th Panchen Lama, a six-year old boy recognized by the Dalai Lama, next in line on the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy. After the abduction of the six-year-old child and the arbitrary arrest of the entire family, China soon after installed their own fake Panchen Lama approved by an atheist Chinese Communist Party. Today this fake Panchen Lama groomed by the CCP tours Tibet, conducts Kalachakras amidst a captive audience who are forced to worship him under the barrel of the gun and advocates allegiance, adherence, and total submission to the ideology of the Party and thought of Xi Jinping.

China always has a thirty-year plan, forty-year plan, and fifty-year plan in all its policy agendas and the plan to totally hijack the Dalai Lama institution is already on the thirty-year mark when His Holiness is precariously treading on the age of ninety.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the soul of Tibet. Tibetans have been led politically and spiritually by fourteen reincarnations of the Dalai Lamas, and he is synonymous to Tibet itself. Imagining Tibetan existence without Him is like envisioning a lost herd of sheep without its shepherd. The hopes and aspiration of Tibetans rest on one person, and the [CCP](#) is hellbent on exploiting this. To win over the Tibetan spirit, controlling the fate of the Dalai Lama to tame the Tibetan resistance against Chinese rule has become the paramount objective of the Party. To impose their version of a manufactured Dalai Lama “made in China” to subvert, influence, manipulate, defeat, and win over the hitherto indomitable spiritual world of Tibetan Buddhism is their foremost priority.

We may lack the leverage to engage in international diplomacy and politics with China. However, in order to fight against China in its own dirty game, Tibetans, along with the Tenshug offering for the long life of His Holiness, must also request His Holiness and pray that he considers self-emanating within this lifetime. If His Holiness wishes his reincarnation to be sought outside of Tibet, then request to self-emanate into a soul of a child born in the United States of America should be included in our prayers. An American-born Tibetan child should be a “game changer.” Being an American is a strong currency of its own and it comes with political clout and direct representation of the people of Tibet, in a land where many legislative measures for Tibet have been passed, and bi-partisan support remains steadfast and rock-solid to this day across the aisle of the Congress.

Whether Tibet has been used for geopolitical self interest by the Americans is the debate for another day! Whether or not we acknowledge this, a vacuum without a reincarnation and looming threat of the [CCP](#) hyenas hovering around to alter the course of our history is a real concern. Therefore, ensuring a continuous presence of His Holiness without a gap between reincarnations is crucial. Imagining the 15th Dalai Lama while the 14th is still present, particularly if the child is a Tibetan American groomed by the greatest Ocean of Wisdom could thwart China’s effort to hijack the Dalai lama institution and take over Tibet entirely.

Xi Jinping Is Prioritizing Political Survival Over Economic Prosperity

26 September 2024, [Foreign Policy](#), Raja Krishnamoorthi

China is missing out on growth because the Communist Party comes first.

If the citizens of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) were asked, “Are you more hopeful for the future now than you were before Chairman Xi came to power?”

the answer for most, if they were able to answer freely, would likely be a resounding “no.”

China’s economy is facing its gravest challenges since the Maoist era amid a collapse in public confidence. Growth has slowed, the unemployment rate is high, and the housing market is tumbling. But at the recent Third Plenum, a meeting of top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials held roughly every five years and centered on economic policy, President Xi Jinping made clear that he has decided to stay the course and is doubling down on state control of the economy. At the same time, Xi has been baselessly claiming that the economic reform goals set at 2013’s Third Plenum were met.

Xi believes in the central role of the CCP in everything—including the economy. The CCP has taken an increasingly direct hand even in private businesses, and using this leverage, his government has pursued a policy of prioritizing the expansion of manufacturing capacity through massive subsidies, embracing an export-driven economy rather than one linked to expanding domestic consumption in China. With this excess capacity, Xi hopes to gain market share by driving foreign competitors out of business through dumping the subsidized goods below cost.

Xi’s plan has alarmed foreign political and business leaders while leaving the Chinese public and even local officials resigned to the fact that they have no ability to impact central policymaking. By doubling down on this policy, the Third Plenum crushed any lingering hope that the PRC would be able to break out of sputtering growth or address long-standing economic imbalances that leave it increasingly at odds with the rest of the world.

Since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, the CCP has maintained its power not only through force, but also through an implicit compact with its citizens that the party would deliver economic growth as long as its primacy remained unquestioned. With the current slowdown, the CCP is failing to uphold its end of that political bargain. Protests in China over labor issues and housing have become more frequent as the unemployment rate ticks up; meanwhile, the PRC has seen the largest exodus of high-net-worth individuals from the country in its history.

The path to strengthening the PRC’s economy and restoring confidence in increasingly skeptical Chinese consumers is clear: loosen the CCP’s political stranglehold over the economy, acknowledge the severe problems that China is facing, and offer a realistic plan for addressing the needs of the Chinese people. Instead, Xi has chosen to tighten his grip, consolidating powerful state-owned enterprises, elevating CCP ideology, ignoring the drivers of demand and consumption, and prioritizing his political control over China’s prosperity.

The Third Plenum painfully confirmed what we already know: The PRC under Xi lacks the ability to self-correct because Xi does not allow it. Xi's centralization of power has minimized opportunities for expert dissent and public discourse, sharply curtailing considerations of alternative economic policies. The results of the Third Plenum made clear that Xi believes China's economic policies are already on the right track and that better results will come when officials better implement his directives.

According to one recent analysis, party cadres and economists were demonstrably less willing to speak up and provide comments during this Third Plenum drafting process for the conference's central "decision" policy document than they were at the Third Plenum held in 2013. Xi was also less willing to listen. According to the Asia Society Policy Institute, there were 25 percent fewer written suggestions submitted for the text by cadres during this year's session than in 2013, and of those suggestions, only a meager 12 percent were accepted in the final document as 88 percent were rejected.

One of China's most loyal "wolf warriors" and CCP propaganda insiders, former *Global Times* editor Hu Xijin, was recently banned from Chinese social media for incorrectly interpreting the Third Plenum decision as signaling more support for the private sector. In this environment, why would any official stick their neck out to propose significant reform, no matter how necessary they believed it to be?

Xi believes that China must dominate the advanced technologies of the future, and he remains committed to that priority, even as it comes at the expense of the public good. In Xi's economic vision, social welfare programs, which would decrease the current trend of Chinese people saving more than a third of their income, would divert resources away from the PRC's pursuit of technological dominance that would support its military capacity.

In Xi's worldview, national security is based on political security, which means the security of the party. As an unfortunate result, we should expect the CCP's grip to tighten. Xi will continue to view the economy through the lens of national security even at the expense of the PRC's sagging economy and the wealth of its people. It also means that Xi will double down on nationalism, censorship of discontent, and international bellicosity to distract from domestic challenges.

China's economic struggles have continued through Xi's crackdowns at home and increasingly aggressive stance toward Taiwan and the Philippines. Xi will continue to face trade-offs between his nation's prosperity and his total control. Based on the recent signals, we should not expect changes in the PRC's government, economic priorities, or foreign policy any time soon.

Restoring Tibetan Supreme Justices: An Ode to the Supreme Strength of Public Mobilization

26 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While not claiming a direct causal link to the recent and widely welcomed amendment of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile—which allows for the appointment of Justices to the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission, Prof. Nawang Phuntsog highlights that the "People's Movement for Securing the Central Tibetan Administration," which campaigned for this change, exemplified the power of unity and collective strength when people rally around a shared cause.*

In the past four years, the Tibetan Parliament in Exile has, by its own doing, subjected the Tibetan public to a tumultuous ordeal, with clear signs foreshadowing the weakening of the Tibetan establishment in exile. However, during its final session, the recently concluded 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile marked a significant turning point—much to the relief of many, particularly those involved in the well-organized "People's Movement for Securing the Central Tibetan Administration." The participants of this movement were visibly emotional, with many moved to tears as they heard the TPIE's charter amendment announcement. Although no direct causal link is suggested here, the timing of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile's (TPIE) decision to amend the Charter of Tibetans in Exile at the last moment of its session and the mounting wave of public advocacy were on full public display. The advocacy participants watched the Tibetan Parliament session proceedings in real-time on a big screen, with the anxious eagerness of high school students waiting for the announcement of the final school examination result.

It is puzzling why the Tibetan Parliament in Exile members, supposedly the sacred representatives of the public, had the audacity and inclination to prolong an ordeal that was both unnecessary and entirely avoidable. Yet, it lasted for over three years. The deadlock originated from the infamous Resolution 39, which sought to remove the justices in what seemed like a bitter act of retaliation. This occurred after the supreme justice commissioners, fulfilling their judicial responsibilities, imposed a nominal penalty on the TPIE's Standing Committee for failing to convene a meeting during the COVID pandemic. The Parliament's Standing Committee could have quickly resolved the issue through an online meeting or handled it internally, given that the pandemic forced everyone to adapt without exception.

After years of stalemate in the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, many Tibetans have questioned the relevance of Parliament members representing various Tibetan Buddhist schools. These clergy representatives, skilled in parliamentary debate and rhetoric, have been seen

as obstructing resolutions that could have broken the deadlock. As a result, the Parliament's focus has been diverted from critical issues, such as the ongoing suppression of religious and linguistic rights in Tibet. While religion itself is not to blame, the clergy's frequent attempts to inject unnecessary polemics into parliamentary sessions have disillusioned the general public, leaving many to painfully reflect on how religion, in the political context of Tibetan exile, can be both a blessing and a curse. While the participation of clergy in the parliamentary process is a unique feature of the Tibetan exile establishment, recent questionable events have left an obnoxious and repulsive taste in the general public's mouth.

The gravity of the situation became unmistakable when several individuals questioned the wisdom of Resolution 39 from the outset, yet the TPIE remained as immovable as a stubborn mule. This resolution had far-reaching consequences, the chief among them being that the judiciary—one of the three pillars of Tibetan democracy in exile—was left in limbo for more than three years. The issue became so severe that the public could no longer sit idly by. This gave rise to the "Advocacy of the General Public for the Sustainability of the Central Tibetan Administration," a grassroots movement aimed at restoring the judicial branch. The movement was built on voluntary participation and led by three remarkable leaders: Mr. Tseten Phuntsok La, Ms. Tenyang La, and Mr. Tsering Siten La, who conducted numerous online meetings as part of their mobilization efforts. These leaders deserve recognition for their commendable public service, cooperative spirit, and ability to present a clear, powerful, and rational case. With humility and grace, the three leaders spoke in public and in online meetings with dignity, integrity, and courage, leaving a lasting impression on all who heard them. Many wish them to be members of the Tibetan Parliament and elevate it to greater success for the common good. Ms. Tenyang La appeared as anyone's loving sister, but when she spoke, she delivered her message with force and a clear sense of purpose. She always folded her hands and paid sincere homage to His Holiness before beginning her speech, leaving all with deep admiration for her courageous humility.

The dynamism of this leadership trio became evident when they successfully mobilized nearly 1,000 Tibetans, young and old, monks, and nuns from multiple countries, who assembled in Dharamshala just as the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile was set to convene on September 11, 2024. This massive gathering included members from 25 regional chapters from India, Nepal, Europe, Australia, and North America. Thanks to the active engagement of members from these Chapters, the advocacy was a mobilization force to reckon with. It is difficult to recall a public mobilization as effective and impactful as this

one, which brought heightened attention and pressure on the need to restore the judiciary within Tibetan democracy. Funded by voluntary contributions from Tibetans across the globe, united by a common purpose, to ensure the sustainability of the Central Tibetan Administration as a viable institution capable of resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict for the welfare of six million Tibetans, this movement showcased the power of unity and strength when people rally around a shared cause.

More than just a source of inspiration, the public advocacy movement proved the transformative potential of collective action when common interests are threatened, undermined, or hijacked by partisan or sectarian forces. Like many public interest groups around the world, this advocacy movement was conceived with the sole aim of serving the collective good. The organization must continue to raise public awareness and mobilize people to act whenever needed. Its success should serve as a clarion call: this movement will be there when duty calls.

How China Soured on Nepal

26 September 2024, [ORF](#)

On July 29, China's Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song publicly mocked Nepal's efforts to locate two missing buses and their passengers following a landslide at Simaltal on the Narayanghat-Mugling road. His comments specifically targeted the Indian assistance to local rescue and search teams, ridiculing Nepal's tendency to seek support from its southern neighbor. The ambassador's remarks drew widespread criticism in Nepal, both in the media and among parliamentarians, who condemned his insensitivity toward the grieving families and his unnecessary intrusion into a domestic matter.

This incident is part of a broader pattern of Ambassador Chen's interference in Nepal's internal affairs, often resulting in diplomatic blunders. In the previous year, he had similarly mocked Nepal's electricity trade and other economic relations with India, attracting similar condemnation. In May 2024, he engaged in a contentious exchange on social media with a local journalist over a report on China's loan to Nepal for Pokhara International Airport.

Ambassadors generally adhere to established diplomatic norms, refraining from involvement in local political matters except in situations of significant national or international concern. However, China's ambassador to Nepal has recently diverged from this tradition. Chen's actions suggest a continuation of the "wolf warrior" diplomacy that Chinese envoys have employed in recent years, especially in smaller states. This behavior reflects Beijing's growing exasperation with its setbacks in Nepal and signifies a shift toward a

more assertive Chinese stance with Nepal over recent years.

The Equidistance Policy's Ramifications

China's frustration stems from its lack of progress in Nepal across multiple areas: political alignment, foreign policy, major economic projects, and military affairs. China experienced a loss of face when it failed to block the ratification of the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Nepal Compact. In addition, China could not counter India's renewed proximity in Nepal's political and military circles, or achieve substantial gains in Nepal's polity, economy, and military.

China has encountered challenges with Nepal's equidistance policy, a strategy that Beijing itself once promoted to recalibrate Kathmandu's approach, particularly concerning India. This policy advocates for Nepal to maintain balanced relations with India and China across political, economic, and military domains. However, if taken to its logical conclusion, the equidistance policy does not preclude Nepal from enhancing its bilateral relations with Western nations, including the United States. Consequently, the emphasis on equidistance has transformed Nepal into a zone of competition in South Asia, exacerbated by worsening China-U.S. and China-India relations.

Beijing's efforts to pivot Kathmandu's foreign policy predominantly toward China and away from Western countries suffered a significant setback during the controversy over the MCC Compact, which would see the United States issue a \$500 million grant to Nepal for improvements to electricity and road infrastructure.

In an unsuccessful attempt to block ratification of the agreement, Beijing employed scaremongering tactics, encouraging China-funded groups to propagate a narrative that the MCC would allow the U.S. to deploy troops in Nepal. Pro-China MPs and leaders prolonged the issue for nearly five years, but the momentum eventually waned. Following this, China openly opposed the compact. Despite China's covert and overt opposition, the MCC Compact was ratified in 2022, a development that dealt a considerable blow to Beijing's ambitions in Nepal.

A major concern for China in Nepal has always been the security of its southern Tibetan border. Beijing is particularly sensitive to Tibetan refugees in Nepal and their history of anti-China activities. China believes recent U.S. actions regarding Tibet, including the passage of the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act and a U.S. congressional delegation's meeting with the Dalai Lama in India, have emboldened these refugees. A porous Tibetan border further troubles China and therefore, it has sought greater cooperation with Nepal's army and

border security forces while looking askance at the partnership between Nepal and the United States.

Political Complexities

Nepal's political situation reveals China's next failure. Beijing has struggled to make significant progress due to frequent government changes, leaving China uncertain about its next steps. Although former communist allies of China have periodically returned to power, they have grown increasingly pragmatic over time, seeking a balanced diplomatic approach.

Pushpa Kumar Dahal, also known as Prachanda, of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Center, fostered deep ties with China during his first term as prime minister from 2008 to 2009. However, during his most recent term from 2022 to 2024, he maintained a balanced approach, adopting India-friendly policies. Similarly, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) has lately shifted toward more equidistant policies.

As expected, Oli is grappling with internal party factionalism, indirectly fueled by China, with leaders such as Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Bishnu Rizal, and former President Vidya Devi Bhandari challenging his authority. Bhandari has rejoined the CPN-UML, and China plans to support her candidacy in the 2027 general elections to unify all communist factions, a goal that Oli and Dahal have been unable to achieve. In the past, China has successfully unified the communist parties, notably through its former flamboyant Ambassador Hou Yanqi, who brokered a working arrangement between Oli and Dahal in 2020. However, this mediation proved short-lived, as Oli and Dahal frequently undermined each other.

As the widow of the late Madan Bhandari, a founding member of Nepal's Communist Party, Vidya Devi Bhandari commands decent respect across all communist factions. China aims to cash in on her status in the upcoming elections. However, both Dahal and Oli remain roadblocks, resisting China's interference in their politics. Notably, Oli has declined to allow Bhandari to visit China on a Chinese invitation. Unable to forge a strong relationship with the Nepali Congress Party due to its perceived pro-India stance and facing fragmented and indecisive Madhesi parties, Beijing finds itself with limited options in Kathmandu, primarily restricted to engaging with communist factions.

Consequently, the ongoing rivalry between Oli and Dahal significantly impedes China's political objectives in Nepal. China's failure to resolve this complex issue, partly due to its inexperience with democratic compromise, has left it feeling increasingly nervous and defensive.

Economic Doldrums

China has substantially invested in Nepal, focusing on expanding economic links across numerous sectors.

Beijing has encouraged Chinese infrastructure companies to engage in projects such as road construction, tunnel development, hydropower, and communication facilities in Nepal. However, this approach faces challenges. Nepal, with its relatively small economy, can only absorb a limited amount of Chinese investment.

China initially anticipated that its economic initiatives in Nepal would facilitate trade routes to India's northern regions, capitalizing on the potential for lucrative trade. However, these expectations have not materialized. The deterioration in China-India relations has led India to discourage Chinese trade through Kathmandu and prevent Chinese hydropower companies from exporting electricity to India. This policy has dampened the enthusiasm of Chinese energy developers in Nepal.

In another example, Pokhara International Airport, developed with substantial Chinese investment, has failed to receive Indian clearance for overflights, leading to its isolation and diminished returns on investment. The significant Chinese financial involvement and high interest rates have led Nepal to formally request that China convert the airport loan into a grant. This lobbying, however, has run into criticism in China, which perceives it as a hostile attempt by Nepali leaders to undermine Chinese investments. (The high interest rate on the airport loan was the subject of the previously referenced dispute between Chinese Ambassador Chen Song and a Nepali journalist.)

China's ambitions to advance its infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have also faltered. None of the BRI projects in Nepal has progressed, as Kathmandu prefers grants over Chinese loans and remains cautious about entering into any China-sponsored infrastructure project with sovereign-guaranteed loans. Consequently, the lack of progress in the economic sphere has heightened China's frustration.

Military Proximity

China has always sought close cooperation with the Nepali armed forces, hoping to moderate its pro-India leanings. Beijing found an opportunity in 2005 when the former king suspended Nepali democracy. Consequently, when its traditional suppliers – namely, India, the U.S., and the U.K. – refused to provide arms, Nepal began sourcing arms from China. This trend escalated after the communists came to power in Kathmandu in 2008. Bilateral visits, military grants, and aid increased annually, reaching nearly \$32 million by 2019.

China's military diplomacy extended to capacity-building efforts for the Nepali Army in disaster management, military medical facilities, and infrastructure development, in addition to arms

supplies. However, as Chinese weaponry came under global scrutiny for quality, performance, and support services, Nepal could not ignore persistent issues with Chinese arms. For instance, China-supplied armored vehicles for Nepal's peacekeeping troops have encountered significant problems, and imported Chinese transport aircraft became costly white elephants. As a result, despite China's existing arms supply relationships, an Indian company SSS Defence secured the contract to supply ammunition to the Nepal Army in an open competition in 2022.

For better military-to-military links, China encouraged a wide range of Nepali military officials, from junior to senior ranks, to opt for professional military education programs at People's Liberation Army (PLA)-run institutions. To date, about 44 senior Nepali military officials have opted to study in the Defense and Strategic Studies Course at the PLA's National Defense University (NDU)'s College of Defense Studies. Many of these China-trained officers have risen to high ranks within Nepal's Armed Forces, including the current army chief, Gen. Ashok Raj Sigdel. In May of this year, the Chinese Embassy in Nepal hosted a reception for these PLA NDU alumni to strengthen international connections and promote deeper China-Nepal relations. However, the effectiveness of these efforts has been mixed.

The China-Nepal military relationship briefly gained momentum following the unofficial blockade in 2015 of the India-Nepal border; however, it faltered during China's own COVID-related undeclared blockade of the Nepali border from 2020 to 2023. During this period, China blocked all border trading routes, and Nepali traders and communities near the Tibetan border suffered significantly. Since mid-2023, China has attempted to rekindle its ties and restart the Sagarmatha joint military exercises.

China has moreover, failed to weaken India's proximity and strong military ties with Nepal, rooted in longstanding institutional and veteran relationships. India has gradually worked to reduce suspicions with Nepal, leading to significant agreements in power purchase, petroleum pipelines, and infrastructure projects. This has fostered greater understanding between political and military institutions in both countries. Consequently, China's original objective of disrupting the close bilateral relationship between India and Nepal appears to be unraveling.

Beijing's Exasperation

China's ongoing struggle to deepen its connections with Nepali institutions across political, economic, and military sectors has led to noticeable exasperation among Chinese officials. This frustration began to build in 2019 when China's President Xi Jinping failed to secure an extradition treaty with Nepal, leading to the final two years of Ambassador Hou Yanqi's tenure ending in disappointment. The current ambassador's

controversial statements, along with his defensive, quarrelsome, and undiplomatic behavior, starkly reflect China's overall disillusionment in Nepal.

Despite Beijing's efforts to quietly maneuver and improve its position and undercut the United States' and India's prospects in Nepal, the existing regional dynamics, security architecture, and tough competition from New Delhi and Washington offer Nepal multiple options, complicating China's ambitions. As a result, Beijing faces a challenging situation in Nepal, resulting in China's growing exasperation.

India-China relationship 'significantly disturbed' but it's key for the world: Jaishankar

25 September 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The India-China relationship is key to the future of Asia and it will influence not just the continent but the entire world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, noting that the "parallel rises" of the two countries present a "very unique problem" in today's global politics.

"I think the India-China relationship is key to the future of Asia. In a way, you can say that if the world is to be multi-polar, Asia has to be multi-polar. And therefore this relationship will influence not just the future of Asia, but in that way, perhaps the future of the world as well," Jaishankar said in his address at an event titled 'India, Asia and the World' hosted by Asia Society and the Asia Society Policy Institute here on Tuesday.

Jaishankar said currently the relationship between the two countries is "significantly disturbed".

Jaishankar, who will address the General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly on Saturday, held a series of bilateral meetings with his global counterparts during the day in the UN Headquarters and the city.

Responding to a question on China during an interaction at the Asia Society event, Jaishankar noted that India has a "difficult history" with China, including a conflict in 1962.

"You have two countries who are neighbours, unique in the sense that they are the only two countries with over a billion people, both rising in the global order and who often have overlapping peripheries, including the fact that they have a common border. So it's really a very complicated issue. I think, if you look today in global politics, the parallel rises of India and China, present a very, very unique problem," he said. Jaishankar had recently said that roughly 75 per cent of the disengagement problems with China have been sorted out, a remark that was alluded to during the Asia Society interaction.

Referring to those remarks, the minister said: "When I said 75 per cent of it has been sorted out - I was asked

in a way to quantify - it's only of the disengagement. So that's one part of the problem. The main issue right now is the patrolling. You know, how do we, both of us, patrol up to the Line of Actual Control." Jaishankar said the patrolling arrangements after 2020 have been disturbed. "So we've been able to sort out much of the disengagement, the friction points, but some of the patrolling issues need to be resolved." He said once we deal with the disengagement, "there is the larger issue as both of us have brought a very large number of troops up to the border. So there is what we call the de-escalation issue, and then there is the larger, the next step is really, how do you deal with the rest of the relationship?"

Jaishankar gave a historical perspective of the relationship and of the border dispute, saying the "entire 3500 kilometre-border between India and China is disputed".

"And so you make sure the border is peaceful so that other parts of the relationship can move," he said. He added there were a series of agreements between the two countries that went into greater and greater detail on how to make sure the border remained peaceful and stable.

"Now the problem was in 2020, despite these very explicit agreements, we saw that the Chinese - we were all in the middle of Covid at that time - moved a large number of forces in violation of these agreements to the Line of Actual Control. And we responded in kind," he said.

"Once troops were deployed very close up, which is "very dangerous", it was likely a mishap could happen, and it did happen," Jaishankar added.

Referring to the 2020 Galwan clash, the minister said: "So there was a clash, and a number of troops died on either side, and that has since, in a sense, overshadowed the relationship. So until we can restore peace and tranquillity on the border and ensure the agreements signed up to are adhered to, it's obviously difficult to carry on with the rest of the relationship."

Jaishankar said the focus for the last four years had been to, in the first instance, at least disengage the troops, meaning that they go back to the camp, the military bases from which they traditionally operate. "Because right now, both sides have troops deployed forward," he said.

Reimagining human rights and China?

23 September 2024, Bangkok Post, Vitit Muntarbhorn

Should human rights be reimagined, especially in the context of China? From one angle, the answer is obvious. Plenty of norms are already agreed upon globally without the need for reimagination, and China is part of that universality. Yet given the situation on

the ground level and the evolving nature of human rights, there might be room for some innovative reimagination, and this deserves balanced reflection. Formally, the country is part and parcel of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. High-powered statements from the top of the administration cite this UN declaration as a guiding light for the country. The term "human rights" appears in the country's constitution, and various national human rights action plans exist. The country is a party to six key human rights treaties, namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw); and the conventions on racial discrimination, child rights, rights of persons with disabilities and action against torture.

It has signed but not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It has not yet become a party to the conventions on the rights of migrant workers and on action against enforced disappearances. The country participates in the peer-review process, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), under the UN Human Rights Council, and it has had its fourth review this past year. It also engages with the UN Special Procedures, such as UN Special Rapporteurs (varying between mandates).

On the constructive side, the country's achievements in the economic and social fields are well appreciated. It has overturned the serfdom of the past and the World Bank notes this achievement: "Over the past 40 years, the number of people in China with incomes below US\$1.90 (62 baht) per day has fallen by close to 800 million, accounting for close to three-quarters of global poverty reduction since 1980". In vetting the country's record on women's rights, in 2023, a Cedaw committee commended some developments, including the amendment to the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women, a new law against sexual harassment, and an anti-domestic violence law. Yet, the main quandary is in relation to the fulfilment of civil and political rights, and the treatment of minorities. This is especially evident from the various recommendations which other states, as peers, conveyed to the country during the UPR as areas needing improvement. The country rejected or noted without commitment a notable number of those recommendations during the fourth review mentioned in 2024. Out of about 400 such recommendations, it rejected nearly 100. The latter were mostly in regard to suggestions to improve the situation in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. A number of UN reports raise key protection gaps needing attention, especially concerning torture, arbitrary detention, excessive securitisation, and the mistreatment of various groups seen as adverse to the authorities.

A statement in August 2024 from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) remarks on the continuing dialogue between that office and the country's administration on "a range of critical issues, such as counter-terrorism laws and policies, criminal justice, other policies of concern that impact on the human rights of ethnic and religious minorities, including in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region, equality and non-discrimination, as well as national security and human rights concerns in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region."

A team from the OHCHR recently visited the country to discuss the issue of counter-terrorism policies and the criminal justice system. A subsequent OHCHR statement called for a full review of the legal framework governing national security and counter-terrorism and to strengthen the protection of minorities against discrimination. This is thus an invitation for progressive action, reimagining more effective human rights implementation in their totality.

Interestingly, the country has now become a party to the International Labour Organization's conventions (numbers 29 and 105), which target eliminating forced labour, and an ILO team has also visited the country to stock-take. These conventions are monitored by an ILO committee of experts, who adopt a low-profile approach since the proceedings are behind closed doors. This is complementary to the more public positions of the other UN mechanisms on human rights noted above. These synergies help to advocate the preferred path progressively.

On other fronts, there are varying degrees of convergence with other countries. For instance, the country advocates the right to development, especially to help raise the profile of developing countries in the economic field. For substantive democratisation, this needs to be contoured by respect for civil and political rights, in tandem with economic, social and cultural rights.

The country is also agreeable to the right to peace. Visibly, it is one of the top contributors to UN peacekeeping, both in terms of funding and the provision of peacekeepers in a myriad of peace operations worldwide.

On the newly formulated universal right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, while it is true that the country abstained on the vote in favour of this right in the UN, this was possibly due to the omission in the text of the flexible principle of common and differentiated responsibilities under international environmental law which the country advocates. This right is displayed in practice in the country by the many litigation cases against state enterprises, questioning lapses concerning environmental protection and climate change, such as the need to shift to renewable

energy. The call for green transition, with access to justice as part of accountability, is thus a bridge between this country and other countries.

The advent of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) has propelled reimagining on the more futuristic front regarding national and international responses. Despite superpower rivalry, there is emerging global convergence on the call for laws on personal data protection, paralleled by the need to ensure human supervision and control over AI.

Why not then – recognise universally, as a novelty, the right of humanity to AI transparency and safety for all?!

Vitit Muntarbhorn is a Professor Emeritus at Chulalongkorn University. This is the third part of his series on 'Deciphering China in a Multiplex World'. The second part was published by the 'Bangkok Post' on Sept 12 under the title 'China and Fulcrum of Peace, Security'.

Open questions | Why minority languages are disappearing from some classrooms in Xinjiang but not Tibet

23 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

What drew you to ethnic minority issues in China?

I'd been to Xinjiang perhaps three or four times many years ago. I was concentrating on a particular subject, which was preferential policies. At that time I was studying them broadly, going to different minority areas including Tibet, Xinjiang, Guizhou, Sichuan, Inner Mongolia. That was in the late 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s.

From that I got interested in ethnic minority policies more generally because there was a debate in China about them.

Some said preferential policies and ethnic policies were not broad enough and they weren't directed sufficiently to closing the socioeconomic gaps that existed between Han people and minority people.

The other side was people who said that basically ethnic regional autonomy had created a vested interest on the part of minority officials particularly.

The debate intensified after 2008, 2009 because in 2008 there were the demonstrations in Tibet, and then in 2009 there were the [riots] in Urumqi.

The people who are in favour of reform of the system of ethnic regional autonomy and the diminution of preferential policies then started to have the upper hand in the debate.

So as a result of that, there have been some significant changes and preferential policies in some places have diminished.

For example, the system of "additional points" [given to ethnic minorities in college entrance exams] has

diminished in some provinces but in places like Xinjiang it's still pretty strong.

This is absolutely necessary in my view because the whole goal is to create more ethnic minority students, particularly from Xinjiang and Tibet, but also from other areas where the ethnic minority population is still quite rural, still has a substantial number of people who are relatively poor and has lower levels of education. So these places need to have lots of people from their community go to university, get training, come back to their areas and help them in terms of economic and social development.

Have you seen any big policy shifts in the past five to 10 years under the banner of building "a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation"?

There has been a shift but it's quite variegated – it all depends upon what part of China you're talking about. In some places, there's been quite a significant shift in terms of no longer putting so much emphasis on ensuring either that there be a significant core of ethnic minority officials or that ethnic minority languages be central to the educational process in ethnic minority areas. It was also the subject of controversy in Inner Mongolia [where] there is no longer any requirement that ethnic minority languages be taught in schools.

It's still the case that in some places there are continuations of the programmes of teaching people their own indigenous language, their mother tongue. At a lot of boarding schools, for example, in Tibet or in Xinjiang, the Tibetan students or Uygur students are going to have maybe three, four, five hours a week of Tibetan or Uygur.

But in other places, it just depends. Such programmes have been discontinued. For example, a primary school [in Kashgar], one of the things they told us was starting last year, they no longer had any special classes in Uygur language for the primary school students. And this is because the parents overwhelmingly rejected the idea. They want their children to concentrate on learning biology and mathematics and Mandarin. They didn't want them to spend their time [learning Uygur]. Of course, all these students were Uygur and they're in a city where 84 per cent of the population is Uygur, so they're not going to forget how to speak Uygur. They speak Uygur every day at home and to their classmates. But in terms of learning how to read and write Uygur, nobody's teaching them now.

Their parents are less interested. They are urban people and they want their children to be competitive in terms of going to a good middle school and then going to a good high school and then going to university, et cetera.

But this remains a concern among some minority intellectuals. They think it's really necessary to preserve not only speaking ability in their languages,

but also reading and writing so they can have access to the literature of their ethnic groups.

Let's talk about Tibet. The Dalai Lama turned 89 in July and he's hinted that he will address the issue of his reincarnation when he turns 90. How should Beijing prepare for this, and what are the biggest challenges for Beijing, the Dalai Lama and his exiled government?

China has been preparing for this for decades. The central government will not just allow the Dalai Lama to name his successor without reacting to that by doing something significant.

The odds are [the Dalai Lama's preferred candidate] will be somebody outside because [if it's] somebody inside Tibet, he's going to be under the surveillance of the local authorities, and he may not have any opportunity to take up his office. But nobody knows whether the Dalai Lama will name a man or a woman, a Tibetan or a non-Tibetan, a child or an adult.

All we can conceive with some assurance is that the central government will definitely try to counter whatever the Dalai Lama does.

There's some rumours that the Dalai Lama will name an adult as a successor, despite the past practice of naming a child of four or five. Naming an adult has some advantages for the Tibetan émigrés of course, because the child will have to be studying Buddhism for many years. So there's at least going to be a 10-year hiatus where the successor named by the Dalai Lama really can't be taken seriously as a leader because he's a kid.

So if that happens, first of all, the Chinese government will denounce the Dalai Lama for diverging from the practice of naming a new Dalai Lama. The normal practice is a lottery: you wrap the names of candidates in a ball of *tsampa* [flour made from roasted barley], you put it in an urn, you have somebody pick out the winner. If it names its own Dalai Lama, the central government will probably name a kid and go through that ceremony.

There are lots of rinpoches, or reincarnated Buddha, now in Tibet who are quite loyal to the government, and they don't care much about the Dalai Lama any more, at least not openly.

For one thing, the Dalai Lama hasn't been in Tibet since 1959. The Dalai Lama is no longer a commanding presence among Tibetans generally. I think most Tibetans have heard of him, but they don't know much about him. And unless they're very devout, they probably don't care that much about him either any more.

Plus, Tibet has also been transformed economically and the level of education has gone up tremendously. A lot of Tibetans actually do think of themselves as being Tibetan and Chinese, or Chinese Tibetans anyway. They think of themselves now as part of China, and they don't hate Han people.

There was a period when there was a significant part of the Tibetan population, at least in Lhasa, who had a hostile attitude towards Han people. But that seems to have significantly subsided.

That's because now Tibetans are much more closely connected to the rest of China, not just in the literal sense of trains and planes, but mostly through language. Now a large part of the urban Tibetan population can speak Mandarin. And they have gone much further in the school system than they would have in the past, and there are a lot more Tibetan professionals. So all of this makes things radically different from even, say, in 2008 at the time of the demonstrations in Lhasa and in several other cities in Tibet.

Boarding schools in Tibet – pretty much all of them I think – have maybe five hours a week of Tibetan language instruction. So those people are taught to read and write Tibetan. They must learn Mandarin as well ... the children are completely bilingual. So it's not the same situation as the primary school in Kashgar I described earlier.

Do you see global attention on Tibet waning as the issue of Xinjiang has come up? Will it wane further with the passing of the current Dalai Lama?

I think if the Xinjiang issue didn't exist at all, the Tibet issue would still fade.

Most people in the West know nothing about Tibet. But a lot of people have heard the name Dalai Lama, and they are mistaken about the Dalai Lama in the sense that most people think the Dalai Lama is the world leader of Buddhism, which of course he isn't.

He might be called the head of Tibetan Buddhism but at most he's really just the head of its Gelug [yellow hat] school. But there are 12 million Tibetan Buddhists in the world and there are 250 million or more Buddhists in total.

When the Dalai Lama is no longer around, the Tibet issue will almost recede into oblivion.

The Tibet issue was very much around the Dalai Lama's personality, and of course he was framed in a certain way ... as being this sort of childlike adult, very friendly and effusive and laughing and telling stories and being kind and all that.

I interviewed him once before ... in the 1990s. He was a nice guy, but maybe now his image is no longer the same. He's seen as somebody who can't get around any more, and also there was the incident about him kissing this young boy. I think given the current perspective that people have about such matters that, at least in some quarters, he's going to be a bit discredited as a result of that.

You've recently been to Xinjiang. In the current climate, how did it compare to earlier trips in terms of carrying out research and people's lives?

One thing is it's more difficult to talk to people. Foreigners can go to Xinjiang without any special

permission, in contrast to Tibet. But to actually interview people is another matter – especially to get access to officials.

The first time I went to Xinjiang – in the late 1990s, early 2000s – I went to Kashgar. I wanted to interview an official from the education department, and I had a reference letter from the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. But I went to the office of this official and he just picked up a newspaper and started reading it. He wouldn't talk to me at all.

I also interviewed the head of the Religious Affairs Bureau in Kashgar. He had just got back from the Hajj – he's Uyghur of course – and I showed my reference letter. He said, "I'll answer any question you want." I was really surprised. No official ever says that. He said, "I'm close to retirement." He's a member of the Communist Party, but he was saying that.

But nowadays, I think it's more difficult because lots of people, particularly officials, are cautious about how they interact with outsiders. I'm the ultimate outsider since I'm a foreigner. But I think they're cautious even with regard to people from the mainland who come to Xinjiang. And they're even cautious with people who are Xinjiang locals at Xinjiang institutions because everything is so sensitive there now. Researchers just really have no confidence any more that they can do their research and be assured that they'll be allowed to get the data they need. And this is even more true with regard to statistical data. It's really a big problem now.

What do you think of international criticism of China's minority policies?

All these claims made about Uyghur genocide, or forced labour, arbitrary detentions – basically they have no cases to present with regard to any of those claims. There's absolutely no evidence of any person being forced to labour.

As for arbitrary detention, well, there certainly were a lot of people detained and many people imprisoned, and some of them given quite long prison sentences. But this was an anti-terrorism campaign. This was also an anti-separatist and anti-religious extremism campaign.

And the terrorism in Xinjiang was very real. Although the government has really only talked about hundreds of people being killed by terrorists, every scholar I've talked to says that this is a gross underestimate – that actually thousands of people were killed by terrorists. Different governments of course act in different ways in anti-terrorist campaigns. Terrorists of Isis, al-Qaeda are still very much around, still carrying out terrorist attacks in many places in the world. China basically defeated the terrorists in Xinjiang, and it defeated them by some degrees of repression. That's true. They mobilised the army, they mobilised armed police, the Public Security Bureau.

The main method was to try to do something to alleviate the conditions which create terrorism, religious extremism and separatism. So they constructed these vocational educational training centres, which people in the West love to call concentration camps, internment camps, detention centres. But actually, none of this is accurate in terms of describing what was done in those places.

And they only existed from April of 2017 to October of 2019, after which they were closed down.

The centres had three missions. One was to teach people Mandarin – they learn some rudimentary standard Chinese. They were also taught about laws that they're supposed to obey – stay away from religious extremism, terrorism, separatism. And then there were vocational skills – there were eight primary vocational skills that were available.

The people who went through that system – and they may or may not have been happy about going through it – some of them were sent there because they had violated laws. Other people were sent there just because they were suspected of being religious extremists.

How do you think China's handling of the Xinjiang issue will impact its relationship with Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries and its Belt and Road Initiative?

For Xinjiang, what's most important in terms of the Belt and Road Initiative are the neighbouring Central Asian countries.

What's interesting in that regard is that the governments of Central Asia have a harder line than even China does against terrorism, against Islamic fundamentalism.

Now these are all Muslim countries, but their governments are dead set against religious extremism because they realise that there's a direct relationship between adopting Salafist religious views – Salafism being the Islamic fundamentalist school of thought – and becoming a member of Isis or al-Qaeda or some other terrorist organisation.

So take for example this question of suppressing women wearing burkas in Saudi Arabia. China since 2014 has suppressed that. They've also suppressed men having long beards. Where did China get this idea? Directly from the Central Asian countries which passed laws earlier than China's law about this. In Tajikistan, in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, people have been arrested for having long beards. People in China have also been arrested, but they've been treated much more leniently in Xinjiang than people are treated in Central Asia. Most people are just given a warning and then they obey it. They cut their beard shorter and women will no longer wear burkas.

These governments have a much more repressive outlook with regard to terrorism than even the authorities do in China. Authorities in China are dead

set on ensuring that there are no longer terrorist incidents and they've been quite successful – there hasn't been any recorded terrorist incident for seven years in Xinjiang.

Do you think Han chauvinism still exists today, and if so how does it impact minority relations?

Definitely. The main way I think it still exists today is online. And unfortunately I think the government doesn't do enough to suppress Han chauvinism. It should be taking down posts and it should even be arresting people if they advocate discrimination against ethnic minority people. After all, there's a law in China against that. So Han chauvinism definitely still exists, and it still very much revolves around the idea that ethnic minority people are backward.

The proportion of people in the Han population who are Han chauvinists has actually diminished. In part, that is because the government does at least promote the idea that there's a *Zhonghua minzu* [Chinese nation]. So that includes Han people and minority people.

Looking ahead, are there any areas of minority policy where Beijing might make concessions or reforms?

It's difficult to predict but I don't think there will be any major changes, because I think major changes have already been made.

The main thing that will probably be done in terms of the minority areas is that there will be even bigger inputs to socioeconomic development. The Chinese government – while it's certainly not an egalitarian operation – nevertheless does have the idea that they want to reduce the very significant differences that still exist between the west and the east, between minority areas and Han areas, and I think they'll continue to do that.

Certainly there should be a major change in the leadership of the party and state in terms of minority people. It is not good that the Politburo – 25 people – is, first of all, male, and second of all, Han. This is a major embarrassment. There's very considerable scope for changing the nature of the top leadership to incorporate more women and more minority people. So maybe that will happen, but unfortunately it probably won't any time soon.

Understanding China's policy of forced labour towards Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang (IANS Analysis)

23 September 2024, Social News XYZ

Over the last ten years, the global community and media have persistently highlighted the extensive atrocities inflicted by China upon its minority groups, particularly the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang province. The Uyghurs represent approximately 45 per cent of the region's demographic and have endured various forms of oppression, including mass detainment and

indoctrination through what are termed 'vocational education and training centres'.

This has been accompanied by pervasive surveillance technologies, enforced sterilization, and systematic sexual abuse. In August 2022, Michelle Bachelet, the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, released a significant report indicating that China's treatment of the Uyghurs might amount to "crimes against humanity".

The report detailed large-scale arbitrary detentions, torture methods such as forced starvation and coerced medical procedures, alongside evidence of forced labour.

The so-called 're-education camps,' which have also been referred to as 'internment camps' or 'concentration camps' by various observers, first emerged in 2014 and saw substantial expansion in 2017. According to the Chinese government's narrative, these actions are framed as necessary measures to combat terrorism, extremism, and separatism.

In 2019, claims made by the governor of Xinjiang suggested that many individuals had 'graduated' from these centres, leading to perceptions that numerous facilities had been shut down.

However, in 2020, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute revealed that this closure was merely a façade for a shift towards utilising the formal prison system for detaining those deemed a 'threat' to state security, evidenced by a marked increase in prosecutions and convictions of Uyghurs.

Furthermore, to evade international scrutiny, China has been employing deceptive strategies to suppress its Uyghur Muslim minority in Xinjiang. One such tactic involves presenting forced labour as a labour transfer initiative aimed at employment generation, industrial development, and poverty alleviation.

Adrian Zenz, a prominent researcher on China's policies in Xinjiang, examined the work practices of Uyghur Muslims in 2023 and uncovered that the labour-transfer programme involved the forced relocation of Uyghur Muslims to state-assigned jobs far from their home regions.

Unsurprisingly, these workers are threatened with prosecution or imprisonment should they attempt to leave their employment. Zenz asserted that this labour-transfer initiative is utilised in the production of various goods, including cotton, tomatoes and tomato products, peppers and seasonal agricultural items, seafood, polysilicon for solar panels, lithium for electric vehicle batteries, and aluminium for batteries, vehicle bodies, and wheels.

Another method through which China compels Uyghur Muslims into involuntary labour is via the prison system. As previously noted, recent years have seen alarming rates of Uyghur prosecutions. For example, Human Rights Watch reported that

approximately half a million individuals in Xinjiang were prosecuted between 2017 and 2022.

Similarly, a leading media outlet disclosed that one county in Xinjiang recorded that one in every 25 residents was convicted on terrorism-related charges, all of whom were Uyghurs.

The accusations brought against Uyghurs by the People's Republic of China (PRC) can range from serious charges like terrorism to trivial ones such as 'picking quarrels and provoking trouble.' Given that labour is a standard practice for inmates, Uyghur Muslim prisoners are exploited to support China's industrial growth by working in agriculture, mining, and the manufacturing of goods.

The troubling reports of forced labour in Xinjiang have prompted Western governments to implement legal restrictions on imports from the region.

In 2021, US President Joe Biden enacted the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act, requiring companies to prove that their imports are not produced through forced labour involving Uyghurs. Similarly, in April 2024, the European Parliament approved legislation set to take effect in 2027 that will screen imports linked to forced labour.

Notably, by the end of the first four months of this year, the EU had already imported goods valued at \$641 million from Xinjiang. According to a 2022 study, polysilicon produced in Xinjiang, essential for solar panels, accounted for approximately 95 per cent of photovoltaic energy in the world's top 30 solar power-producing nations.

The same research indicated that Xinjiang was responsible for about 18 per cent of globally traded processed tomato products and that one in five garments worldwide contained cotton sourced from the province.

Companies face significant challenges in identifying products made with Uyghur forced labour due to China's strategic obfuscation of these practices under various pretenses, including the so-called labour transfer scheme.

Earlier this year, Human Rights Watch published a report condemning major global automotive manufacturers, including General Motors, Toyota, Volkswagen, and Tesla, for failing to adhere to responsible sourcing standards regarding aluminium linked to Uyghur forced labour in Xinjiang.

Recently, China has established itself as a leading producer and exporter of automobiles, with Xinjiang emerging as an industrial centre that experienced a dramatic increase in aluminium production, rising from one million tonnes in 2010 to six million tonnes in 2022.

Approximately 9 per cent of the global aluminium supply is sourced from Xinjiang, and since much of this aluminium is blended with other metals to create finished products, it becomes exceedingly difficult to

ascertain the extent to which forced labour contributes to these goods.

While the international community is increasingly recognising the severe abuses perpetrated by China against the vulnerable Uyghur population, existing legal frameworks are inadequate due to the intricate nature of manufacturing processes and the lack of transparency surrounding them. Consequently, persistent pressure must be exerted on China to urge a change in its practices and to halt the dehumanisation, persecution, and exploitation of Uyghur Muslims.

There's More to China's Politics than Xi Jinping

22 September 2024, [National Interest](#), Michael Mazza

Even though Xi has seized the helm of political decision-making, the intense focus on the general secretary himself—while necessary—has inadvertently exposed gaps in our understanding of the broader Chinese political system.

Over the course of three Chinese Communist Party Congresses—the eighteenth in 2012, the nineteenth in 2017, and the twentieth in 2022—Xi Jinping has cemented his position atop the CCP pyramid, eschewing old norms and rules governing elite politics in favor of his preferences. Pundits and politicians alike have been left to grapple with myriad new questions regarding the future trajectory of the regime's power dynamics, policy priorities, and its role on the global stage. The ripples of these changes extend far beyond the Great Wall, threatening to reshape the contours of great power competition in the years to come.

A clear lesson from the nineteenth and twentieth Party Congresses is that personal loyalty to Xi is now a key factor—perhaps the weightiest factor—in the Party's leadership ascension playbook, but even as personal allegiance has grown increasingly important, it has not completely supplanted the influence of legacy factors in leadership selection. Age, experience, and regional origins still play roles—to varying degrees—in determining who rises to the Party's senior ranks. These long-standing criteria remain significant at more junior levels, even as loyalty takes center stage at the pinnacle of the CCP power structure. Aspiring leaders must navigate a complex terrain where demonstrating loyalty is crucial, but not at the expense of neglecting other, traditionally required qualifications.

Xi's defiance of unwritten rules in personnel selection has become a hallmark of his leadership style. However, contrary to common belief, the CCP is still in a period of flux. Given Xi's advanced age (seventy-one years old), mounting domestic and international challenges, ambitious up-and-comers, and a continuing evolution of elite politics from the

Eighteenth to the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Congress, there is as yet no new normal. Allegiance to Xi is an ephemeral qualification for elite advancement—in part because it's unmeasurable. Moreover, Xi is mortal. The potential for a return to more familiar patterns of leadership succession and governance cannot be discounted. Another radical shift in the way power is shared, amassed, and wielded is possible.

The upcoming Twenty-First Party Congress in 2027 will be a critical juncture, with Xi's performance and the prevailing power dynamics determining the extent to which he can shape the next generation of leaders. Over the next three years, observers should keep a particularly close eye on the evolution of factional politics within China.

Factional rivalry has long characterized Chinese politics. The two factions that had dominated the period between Deng's passing and Xi's ascendance—the Chinese Communist Youth League faction and the "Shanghai Gang"—are no longer major players. In their place, a handful of new factions have risen. However, unlike their predecessors, each of these new factions is loyal to the same senior leader: Xi Jinping. This may bind inter-factional competition in novel ways. Even though Xi has seized the helm of political decision-making, the intense focus on the general secretary himself—while necessary—has inadvertently exposed gaps in our understanding of the broader Chinese political system. What resources and prerogatives do these factions compete over? How do they compete? What role does Xi play in directing, managing, or channeling that competition? These are all open questions.

Behind the facade of Xi's all-powerful rule, contemporary Chinese politics is as complex as it has ever been. Going forward, intelligence agencies and scholarly analysts alike should explore the functioning and interaction of these new factions, seeking to uncover how they define their interests, the nature of their competition, and why they may sometimes cooperate. Such efforts will illuminate how Xi shapes and navigates this political ecosystem and how that ecosystem may evolve without him.

Indeed, this new network of Xi-centered factions may have within it the seeds of future disorder. Eventually, Xi will depart the scene. With no one atop the superstructure to manage rivalries and with the old rules of elite politics long since jettisoned, vicious competition for control of the Party—and of China—may result. Before Xi, there was inherent stability in a two-faction system. But now, there is the possibility that a unipolar party may transform into a multipolar party virtually overnight.

In Communist China, the revolution has always eaten its own. In a post-Xi China, the revolution may find a feast fit for an emperor.

The India 'hiding in plain sight'

22 September 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Sanjay Siphimalani

Seventy years ago, historian A L Basham published *The Wonder That Was India*, a sweeping ode to India's ancient history, religion, the arts, language and literature. The book was a riposte to negative assessments of the country's heritage that had persisted from the time of James Mill and Macaulay to the imperial perspective of Vincent Smith.

"India's contribution to the world's cultural stock has already been very large," Basham wrote in the book's epilogue, urging us to take account of its legacy, "for it is no longer the heritage of India alone, but of all mankind". Similar views by others provide fodder to those who claim the subcontinent was the source of all that is good and great on the planet, an attitude caricatured by Sanjeev Bhaskar's character in the British comedy series *Goodness Gracious Me*: "Christianity? Indian! Leonardo da Vinci? Indian! Royal family? Indian!"

Wild claims aside, William Dalrymple writes in *The Golden Road* that "the entire spectrum of early Indian influence has always been there, hiding in plain sight". He finds it in the Buddhism of Sri Lanka, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan, in the place names of Burma and Thailand, in the murals and sculptures of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in Laos and Cambodia, and in the Hindu gods, rituals and temples of Bali.

From about 250 BCE till the founding of the Delhi Sultanate, India was a confident exporter of its civilisation, creating "an empire of ideas" that encompassed religion, the arts, technology, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, mythology, language and literature. Dalrymple's capacious and absorbing portrayal of this period of soft power blends recent archaeological discoveries with short accounts of his own travels, along with an abundance of archival sources.

Sinocentric framing

The title of the book is an attempt to rebalance the concept of the Silk Roads, the ancient overland trade routes between China and Europe that facilitated the exchange of goods and ideas. For Dalrymple, this is a "Sinocentric reframing and rebranding of history". He sets out to show how India was at the centre of a web of influence stretching between the Red Sea and the Pacific.

To make its case, the book journeys through various staging posts and destinations over time. For a start, there are accounts of boatloads of Indian goods driven by monsoon winds making their way to and from the Roman Empire.

The process intensified after Emperor Augustus's takeover of Egypt following his victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BCE. Fleets of merchant ships passed between the two worlds, making India the largest trading partner of the Roman Empire.

From diamonds to rubies, from teak to sandalwood, and of course, from pepper to other spices, they couldn't get enough. Such commerce caused the puritanical naval commander Pliny the Elder to grumble that India was "the sink of the world's most precious metals...There is no year which does not drain our empire of at least fifty-five million sesterces".

The might of the Persians, the ravages of the Goths, and the eventual decline of the Romans in the West ultimately made Indian merchants shift focus to the East. Here, they found a Suvarnabhumi, a land of gold. Dalrymple recounts in immersive detail how the Pallavas dominated lucrative Southeast Asian trade routes, with Mamallapuram emerging as arguably the greatest entrepôt of the region.

Culture travelled hand in hand with trade, as always. Indian thought, epics, plays and dance were widely disseminated all over the newly-extended Indosphere, to use the coinage of Simon Sebag Montefiore. The process would reach a magnificent flowering with the great temple complexes of Indonesia's Borobudur and Cambodia's Angkor Wat.

As *The Golden Road* fluently shows, the Indosphere's ripples carried even further. Buddhism brought about a metamorphosis in China's arts, history, society and culture; with time, it was also profoundly changed and moulded by the host country.

And no such account would be complete without mention of how Indian thought in astronomy and mathematics — such as the concept and treatment of the zero — passed to the Arabs, and from them to the wider world. For this, we have the Barmakid family to thank: Abbasid viziers descended from the line of Sanskrit-literate Buddhist abbots in Afghanistan.

These broad historical currents are leavened with engrossing portraits of influential individuals over the ages. Among them are Xuanzheng, the intrepid traveller to Nalanda and tireless disseminator of Buddhist doctrine; Wu Zetian, the only woman who became emperor in her own right in 3,000 years of Chinese history; the Pallava monarch Mahendravarman under whose rule Shaiva and Vaishnava bhakti movements bloomed; and Dandin, the polymathic Sanskrit luminary of his time.

Earlier works like *White Mughals* and *The Anarchy* have amply demonstrated Dalrymple's skill in portraying times of confluence, collaboration and conjunction: eras during which one way of life collides with and blends into another. *The Golden Road* is another fascinating addition to the list.

Is China losing the plot against the Dalai Lama?

20 September 2024, [Greek City Times](#), Paul Antonopoulos

China is taking a calculated move to pre-empt the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso from announcing his succession plan in 2025. It could be seen in the recent direction of the Communist Party of China's leadership to the state-backed Buddhist monks and religious experts to expedite the search for "reincarnated living Buddha."

With this, it has also emphasized that policies and regulations for search of the "reincarnated living Buddha" must confirm the approval by the current Panchen Lama, who is a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body.

A decision to this effect was taken at a seminar which was held in Lanzhou, Gansu province on September 3, said Tibet.cn, an official Beijing-based website.

The seminar, organised by the Beijing-based Tibetan Buddhism College of China, was attended by more than 50 Tibetan Buddhist monks and religious experts belonging to the Buddhist Association of China. The college trains officially recognised Tibetan Buddhist monks.

The top leadership of the Communist Party of China seems to be in a hurry over the selection of Beijing-endorsed Dalai Lama much before the present Dalai Lama who has turned 89 in July 2024 announces his successor next year. The Tibetan spiritual leader has indicated that he will address the issue related with his reincarnation when he turns 90.

A large number of Tibetans spread across the world and powerful international community members like the US, Europe and other countries support the 14th Dalai Lama's decision on the reincarnation issue.

The US's Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which was unveiled in 2020, maintains that the "wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama, including any written instructions, should play a determinative role in the selection, education, and veneration of a future 15th Dalai Lama." The Tibetan Policy and Support Act calls for sanctions on Chinese officials who interfere with Tibetan Buddhists' succession practices. This has unnerved China. Yet the CPC leadership feels that pre-empting the Tibetan spiritual leader's decision on reincarnation would allow it to have an upper hand in giving the world a Dalai Lama of its own choice.

However, the Dalai Lama has already made it clear that China should keep itself away from the incarnation issue as it is his prerogative to declare his successor, a tradition which has been followed since 1391, when the first of his incarnations was born. The Dalai Lama has been reincarnated 13 times since 14th century.

Experts feel that even if China moves to pick a new Dalai Lama of its choice, Tibetan Buddhists will not accept it as the Dalai Lama holds a great significance to them. He is seen as a symbol of their nationalism and identity, say experts. They further maintain that the centuries old Tibetan reincarnation system is built on Tibetan Buddhists' faith in rebirth.

As per the Tibetan Buddhism tradition, a search for the incarnated Dalai Lama follows a certain process which is based on signs that the existing Dalai Lama conveys to top Buddhist monks before his death. These senior Buddhist monks conduct an elaborate search for a child who is the Dalai Lama's next incarnation.

As per the Sydney Morning Herald, the search involves consulting oracles, interpreting visions, and reading spiritual signs. Besides, these monks try to find clues from the deceased body of the Dalai Lama. When the body is cremated then smoke emitting out of the pyre is monitored. The direction of the smoke provides clues about the direction of rebirth of the next Dalai Lama.

This apart, dreams are considered to be an important guide in the search for the incarnated Dalai Lama. For example, monks tasked to search for the Dalai Lama often meditate at the central Tibet-based Lhamo La-Tso, which has been revered for centuries by Tibetan Buddhists as an oracle lake. On the bank of this lake, monks meditate till they get a vision or insight into the whereabouts of the Dalai Lama's rebirth, the Sydney Morning Herald said.

After a child is found following these visions and signs, a series of tests are carried out to verify the rebirth. The child is presented with items, some of which belonged to the earlier Dalai Lama. If the child identifies which objects belonged to the previous Dalai Lama, it is taken as a sign.

The 14th Dalai Lama was found at the age of two when a senior monk saw his village and house in a vision during meditation at the Lhamo La-Tso, the oracle lake. The boy then named as Lhamo Thondup was able to identify items that belonged to the 13th Dalai Lama, including a drum used for rituals, rosaries, and a walking stick.

In his autobiography, "My Land and My People," the 14th Dalai Lama said that as a child, he recognised a senior Buddhist monk who had disguised himself to observe the local children, and successfully identified a number of articles that belonged to the previous Dalai Lama.

Based on belief in rebirth, not all incarnated Dalai Lamas have been found in Tibet. The fourth Dalai Lama was found in Mongolia, South China Morning Post said.

However, just opposed to Tibetan Buddhists' traditions and customs for the search of the reincarnated Dalai Lama, the Communist Party of

China follows a tradition which was tried during a Qing dynasty (1644-1911) emperor.

The said Qing dynasty emperor used to carry out a ritual known as the Golden Urn ceremony to identify the reincarnated Dalai Lama. This ritual was launched in the 18th century, but it was disrupted by political upheavals and wars in China in the early 20th century. It was again revived by the CPC and incorporated into official regulations in 2007, the Hong Kong-based English language newspaper said.

China and its appointed Buddhists want to follow this ritual in the identification of the reincarnated Dalai Lama. After the death of the Panchen Lama, the second most important spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism after the Dalai Lama, in 1989, the CPC-backed search team had identified a child as his reincarnation through the Golden Urn ritual in 1995. The 14th Dalai Lama and his followers refused to recognise him.

China watchers say if China insists on carrying out the Golden Urn ritual to find out the Dalai Lama of its choice, he may face the same rejection by Tibetan monks and their backers across the world.

Despite this, China appears ready to give the world the Dalai Lama of its choice. It means there will be two Dalai Lamas, one backed by China and other recognised by the followers of the 14th Dalai Lama. However, in the process to win the plot against the 14th Dalai Lama, China has failed to learn lessons from the past.

China appointed Panchen Lama is not recognised by Tibetan Buddhists and the world. The same is true with the Karmapa, third most important Tibetan spiritual leader. Tibetan Buddhists and the international community do not recognise the China-appointed Karmapa as the legitimate head of the Karma Kagyu sect.

In the matter of faith and spiritualism, China's interference will backfire, experts say. They argue that Beijing may have conquered Tibet by force, but it has failed to suppress Tibetan Buddhists physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. They continue to take bold steps while asserting their national identity; they protest against China's occupation of Tibet, while at the same time defending their tradition, practices and culture.

EXPLAINED: Why choosing the Dalai Lama is not just a spiritual matter

20 September 2024, [RFA](#), Lobsang Gelek

The continuity of Tibetan Buddhist leadership and culture is at stake. Little wonder there are politics.

The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, has said he will discuss the details of his reincarnation when he turns 90, next July. The China

Tibetan Buddhist Academy — a Chinese government-supported institution — isn't waiting. This month, in Lanzhou, China, the group held a seminar to promote its views on the matter. The bottom line: whatever spiritual force guides this sacred process must adhere to the strictures of the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP.

If that sounds unholy, that may be the point. China has very practical reasons why it wants a say in who is the next Dalai Lama, given the enormous popularity of the current one and his ability to maintain cohesion among Tibetans across the globe in their fight for greater autonomy for Tibet.

The current Dalai Lama has become an enormously popular figure. Winner of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, his international renown has helped maintain a unity among Tibetans in and outside Tibet, despite efforts to negate his influence by the CCP.

The September seminar in Lanzhou re-emphasized the CCP's policies on reincarnation that must align the system with Xi Jinping thought and party policies.

According to Beijing's official media, the seminar attendees were Tibetan Buddhism representatives and experts from Tibetan populated areas, including the Tibet Autonomous Region and the provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan and Gansu.

But that quickly triggered a rebuttal from the Tibetan government-in-exile, the institution the current Dalai Lama helped set up in 1959.

"While China recognizes only the Tibet Autonomous Region as the only 'Tibet,' they still recruited attendees from other Tibetan populated areas for important issues," Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the president of the current government, said in response to the seminar.

"No government nor any individual has the right to interfere in the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama," he added.

Who is the Dalai Lama?

"Lama" means teacher or master, and a lama is essentially a monk who has achieved some renown and taken on a leadership role within a community. There are thought to be hundreds of lamas within Tibetan Buddhism, which incorporates tenets of both traditional Buddhism and shamanistic practices that preceded its creation.

Worshippers consider the Dalai Lama to be the manifestation of Avalokiteshvara (Phakchok Chenri Se-འཕགས་མཚོ་ལྷན་རས་གཟིགས་ in Tibetan), the Buddhist source of compassion.

The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the 14th in a line that began in 1391. Tibetans believe that when he dies he will be reborn to continue his role as spiritual leader.

Beyond the Dalai Lama's spiritual significance, thousands of Tibetans who have fled their homeland and were forced to leave behind families view him as

a father figure who has provided for their temporal needs as well — security, education, health care — through an exile government he helped create in Dharamsala.

How is a new Dalai Lama selected?

Tibetan Buddhists believe that when the Dalai Lama dies his spirit will reincarnate in a new body. A search committee traditionally composed of high-ranking monks and lamas is formed to find a child born within a year of the Dalai Lama's death who exhibits exceptional qualities and behaviors akin to his predecessor. The present Dalai Lama was two years old when he was identified.

The method of discovery includes visions, consultations with oracles and interpretations of omens. The child must recognize belongings of the previous Dalai Lama, demonstrating a connection to his past life.

Why is choosing the Dalai Lama controversial?

The process of succession affirms the continuity of Tibetan Buddhist leadership and culture, which is why China seeks to have control over the selection. Choosing the 15th Dalai Lama could help solidify authority over Tibet and provinces where ethnic Tibetans live in large numbers. There are thought to be more than 6 million Tibetans in China, compared to 150,000 in exile.

The China Tibetan Buddhist Academy's meeting this month attempted to promulgate the Chinese government-preferred process, known as the "Golden Urn Selection." The method is considered a historical custom popularized during the Qing dynasty, but is disputed by the Tibetan way of recognizing the reincarnated lamas.



Activists and members of the Tibetan Women's Association (Central) living in exile protest the disappearance of 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, in New Delhi on May 17, 2023. (Sajjad Hussain/AFP)

A previous effort to control the selection of Tibetan leaders has met only minimal success. In 1995, Chinese authorities kidnapped a 6-year-old Panchen Lama, the second most important figure in Tibetan Buddhism, shortly after he was chosen by the Dalai Lama. The Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama traditionally participate in each other's reincarnation

recognition process, so many experts believe that Beijing will use its own Panchen to choose the next Dalai Lama.

The person they installed as a replacement continues to be viewed with suspicion by many Tibetans inside and outside China.

What has the Dalai Lama said about his reincarnation?

The Dalai Lama himself has suggested several possibilities for his reincarnation, declaring once that "If I die in exile, my reincarnation will be born in exile not in Tibet." The statement was viewed as a way to emphasize the importance of spiritual freedom.

He has also raised the possibility that the line dies with him; that a woman for the first time will be chosen; and that he may identify his successor before his death.

But despite himself engaging in speculation about the subject, questions about who will succeed him are premature, he says. He foresees living another 20 years.

The India-China standoff: One border, two systems **Columnists**

20 September 2024, [Deccan Chronicle](#), Claude Arpi

On September 12, 2024, India's national security adviser Ajit Doval met Wang Yi, a member of the politburo of the CPC central committee and de facto Chinese foreign minister. The encounter took place in St. Petersburg, on the sidelines of a Brics meeting, and a Chinese communiqué says: "The two sides discussed the progress made in the recent consultations on border affairs and believed that the stability of China-India relations is in the fundamental and long-term interests of the two peoples."

Wang Yi noted that in the face of a world in turmoil, as two ancient Eastern civilizations and emerging developing countries, "China and India should adhere to independence, choose unity and cooperation, and insist on mutual achievement and avoid mutual consumption." On the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC), it said: "Both sides agreed to work with urgency and redouble their efforts to realise complete disengagement in the remaining areas." This is much easier said than done, for the simple reason that in the first place, China has never admitted to having changed the status quo by advancing into India's territory in six places in eastern Ladakh in 2020. Another issue is that the LAC has been moving over the years. The line, which was agreed by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1956 (and reconfirmed in December 1959) is far from the present Chinese claims.

Recently, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar said that 75 per cent of the disengagement has already

been achieved in eastern Ladakh, but the remaining 25 per cent is certainly the most complex, to put it mildly. As in previous encounters with Indian leaders, Wang Yi tried to argue that India and China are in the same boat and if they work together, the two nations can change the whole world. However, one should not forget that the systems of governance of India and China are vastly different; in fact, they stand at opposite ends. While India is a democracy with all its good and less good aspects, China is a totalitarian regime with a leader appointed for life. Some examples show the difference between the two Asian nations. Today's "disputed" border is with an occupied country, namely Tibet; before 1950, India had no border dispute with its northern neighbour. Beijing tries to change this basic fact with intense propaganda. On September 11, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), a think tank based in Washington DC, released a report: "China launches new propaganda centre in Lhasa". It explains that "in the latest escalation of China's efforts to control the narrative on Tibet, a new propaganda centre called the Tibet International Communication Centre was launched in Lhasa on September 2, 2024." The Chinese propaganda would like us to believe that all is well in Tibet, which is not the case. If it was true, why should China stop visitors from coming to Tibet or Tibetans to visit their leader, the Dalai Lama, in India? In fact, the border discussed by Wang Yi and Ajit Doval is hermetically closed, even the centuries-old trade exchanges between the Indian Himalayas and Tibet have stopped; ditto for for the Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra which is not accessible for Indian devotees. The first stage of the new propaganda campaign is to replace the name "Tibet" with a Sinicized version "Xizang", and begin to manifest Chinese President Xi Jinping's old slogan "tell a good Chinese story on the global stage". Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) party secretary Wang Junzheng argued that "external propaganda is an important part of the cause of the Party and the country. We must thoroughly implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's important expositions on external propaganda [and] fully and accurately implement Xi Jinping's important instructions on Tibet work". The instructions are that all is fine in Tibet. One of the tools used by the Chinese propaganda is the Beijing-selected Panchen Lama, the second highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism. The Tibet Daily recently remarked that the lama, whom the Tibetans name as the "fake" Panchen Lama, "carried out a series of Buddhist and social activities in Lhasa, the capital city of southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region". The "Panchen" gave a talk during which he stressed "the need to firmly uphold the Communist Party of China central committee's final say on the reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism and voiced strong opposition to secession, while calling for national

unity, ethnic unity, and religious and social harmony". China is already preparing for the Dalai Lama's succession. You could ask how this is connected with the border issue between India and China? But forceful propaganda is always linked to a weakness. Remember the Great Leap Forward, during which 30 or 40 million people died of starvation following Mao's flawed agricultural policies? The years 1958-1961 witnessed more propaganda posters on the bumper harvests in the Middle Kingdom and the happiness of the masses than at any other time. Propaganda always tries to cover a flaw or a shortcoming. As Tibetans are today prisoners in their own country, they are shown enjoying Xi's policies; this is the crucial difference between populations on the Indian and Tibetan sides of the Himalayas. This should be noted by New Delhi. On September 10, the TAR announced the beginning of the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China; since the ministry of public security had already designated Year 2024 as "the year of special action to combat and rectify online rumours", it was decided "to deploy public security organs across the country to carry out a one-year special action". The public security organs "have responded quickly and taken the initiative to crack down on Internet-related crimes... making every effort to maintain the order of cyberspace and social security and stability," observed the Chinese media; quite ominous for an already over-monitored region. An article mentioned the launch of a "special action": "...the public security organs of the whole region have cleared more than 13,000 online rumour information, investigated 69 online rumour cases, and shut down 65 illegal and irregular accounts according to law. ...More than 650 offline publicity activities have been carried out, and 200,000 people have benefited and participated." It concluded that "the public security organs treated both the symptoms and the root causes, supported by special operations, and helped to maintain the security of cyberspace effectively". Let us remember that there is one border, but two opposite systems. It is certainly something that India should use to its full advantage to counter China's propaganda.

Keeping an Eye on the Watchdog: proposed revisions to the Supervision Law

19 September 2024, [China Law Translate](#), Jeremy Daum

The adoption of China's Supervision Law was a major blow to the nation's ongoing criminal justice reforms. When it took effect in 2018, accompanied by a Constitutional Amendment necessary to accommodate it, it created a new branch of government empowered to investigate corruption and

other abuses of public power outside the courts. This demonstrated a lack of confidence in the justice system to handle these sensitive cases and allowed investigators to sidestep established defense protections.

Since the law's release, additional legislation has refined the Supervision System, but draft revisions to the Law are now available for the first time since its passage and open for public comment through October 12, 2024. The major changes are noted below, followed by a comparative chart.

Expanded powers to detain suspects:

Among the most controversial provisions of the Supervision law is the '*liuzhi*' or Retention in Custody (RC) system, which effectively codified the secretive Intra-Party Disciplinary (extra-legal) system of investigative detention known as *Shuanggui*. Those ultimately found to have committed crimes are transferred to the normal criminal justice system for trial, but this can follow months of retention in custody during the investigation, sidestepping many protections for the accused, such as the right to an attorney. Further, because the Supervision Law is concerned not only with crimes, but also with non-criminal 'serious violations' by state actors (defined as those which could result in a sanction of removal from their position under the P.R.C. Law on Governmental Sanctions for Public Employees) the law authorizes this type of investigative detention even where the offense's ultimate penalty might not include imprisonment.

The draft revisions propose expanding supervision powers to include a spectrum of measures that limit suspects' freedom to different degrees, including compelled appearances, release pending investigation, Confinement, Protective Care, and Retention in Custody. These new measures closely track corresponding language and powers in the Criminal Procedure Law, but apply to the broader range of misconduct in the jurisdiction of the supervision commissions.

Sinking McLeodganj: Dalai Lama's Monastery and Army Cantonment Under Threat

18 September 2024, [The News Himachal](#), Rahul Bhandari

The popular tourist destination of McLeodganj is facing a severe environmental crisis, as large-scale land subsidence continues to affect the area, threatening vital infrastructure, including the Dalai Lama's monastery and the Indian Army cantonment in nearby regions. The sinking land and roads, along with the emergence of deep cracks, have raised alarm among local authorities and residents.

The subsidence has been reported in several areas, including McLeodganj, Farsetganj, Jogibara Road, Tihra Line, Kalapul, and other surrounding regions. Roads are sinking at multiple points, and the main road connecting Dharamshala to McLeodganj has subsided by 1.5 to 2 feet in several sections, making it unsafe for heavy vehicles. As a result, the movement of Volvo buses on this route has been banned. The damage has been further compounded by fallen poles and widening cracks on the roads.

Religious and Military Areas at Risk

One of the most significant concerns is the threat posed to the Dalai Lama's monastery, which draws both tourists and religious followers from around the world. The headquarters of the Tibetan spiritual leader and the Tibetan government-in-exile are also located in McLeodganj, making the situation even more critical. Additionally, the subsidence is impacting the Farsetganj and Tihra Line cantonment areas, where Indian Army soldiers and officers reside, further escalating the seriousness of the issue.

The area is also home to a Kendriya Vidyalaya, adding to the concerns over the safety of residents and students.

Geological Survey Report Awaited

Deputy Commissioner of Kangra, Hemraj Bairwa, has confirmed that a detailed survey report has been requested from the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to assess the full extent of the damage and determine potential solutions. "We have instructed the Municipal Corporation and the TCP to strictly monitor all construction activities in the region to ensure compliance with building regulations. This will help in mitigating further damage caused by unplanned construction," said Bairwa.

While the GSI has already conducted preliminary surveys in the area, the final report is still pending. The delay in receiving the survey findings has prompted calls for immediate action to prevent further deterioration, as McLeodganj falls under seismic zones 4 and 5, making it highly vulnerable to earthquakes and related natural disasters.

Unregulated Construction Raises Concerns

Despite its seismic sensitivity, McLeodganj has witnessed unregulated construction activities in recent years, contributing to the land subsidence problem. The presence of around 400 hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, and other commercial establishments in areas like Dharamkot, Naddi, Satowri, Farsetganj, and Jogibara Road adds to the risk. The town attracts lakhs of tourists each year, further straining the infrastructure.

Local officials are worried that if timely action is not taken, McLeodganj could face a disaster similar to Joshimath in Uttarakhand, where unchecked construction and environmental degradation led to

massive land subsidence and displacement of residents.

Need for Immediate Action

With its religious, military, and tourism significance, McLeodganj's future hangs in the balance as the administration awaits the GSI report. The focus now is on curbing further illegal construction and ensuring that the town's infrastructure can withstand the ongoing crisis. The rising cracks, sinking roads, and fragile conditions have made it clear that McLeodganj is in urgent need of comprehensive intervention to prevent a larger catastrophe.

"Buddhist Diplomacy" and China's Support of Russian Aggression Against Ukraine

19 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#)



The Russian delegation visits Master Yanjue and China Buddhist Association in Beijing, September 14. From Weibo.

Last week, a delegation from the Russian Traditional Buddhist Sangha visited the government-controlled China Buddhist Association at Guangji Temple in Beijing and traveled to other temples and monasteries in preparation of their participation in the World Buddhist Forum in Ningbo in October.

While the Forum will be another opportunity for Chinese "soft diplomacy" through Buddhism, the visit of the Russian Traditional Buddhist Sangha, led by its First Vice President Abbot Ochilov, who met with China Buddhist Association's President Master Yanjue and other leaders of Chinese state-controlled Buddhism, was an opportunity to advertise the Buryat Buddhist apology for the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

Master Yanjue expressed his support for the Buddhist establishment of Buryatia, from where Abbot Ochilov came, and emphasized Chinese (government-controlled) Buddhists' role in strengthening the cooperation between Moscow and Beijing.

The Russian Traditional Buddhist Sangha is the heir of institutions that existed in Czarist and Soviet times and allowed the government to control Buddhists in Buryatia. During the Stalin era, the Sangha was one of two Buddhist organizations allowed to exist in the Soviet Union, together with one also catering to ethnic

Buryats in the Aginsky Buryat National District in Zabaykalsky Krai. Buddhist organizations in Kalmykia and Tuva were liquidated, and only in 1988 under Mikhail Gorbachev an Association of Buddhists of Kalmykia was again authorized.

The Sangha remains largely controlled by Buryats and is led by the XXIV Pandito Khambo Lama, Damba Ayushev. The Khambo Lama's role became strategically important with the war in Ukraine, as Buddhist Buryats are over-represented in the Russian Army there. The Khambo Lama has repeatedly supported Putin's war and blessed the Buryats fighting in Ukraine.



The Khambo Lama with Putin. Credits. As opposed to this, Telo Tulku Rinpoche (Erdne Ombadykow), the Supreme Lama of Kalmykia, condemned the war in Ukraine and went into exile, with the government replacing him with a pro-war Supreme Lama.

The Khambo Lama and the Russian Traditional Buddhist Sangha have also been active since the war in Ukraine started in intensifying the exchanges with the larger China Buddhist Association, hoping to make inroads through their Chinese friends into international Buddhist organizations and present there their apology for Putin's war against Ukraine.

What lies ahead for a complete normalisation of India-China ties?

18 September 2024, [Modern Diplomacy](#), Bejoy Sebastian

This long-form article looks at how India-China relations have reached this critical juncture, the multiple dimensions underlying it, and how a restoration of ties can be worked out.

A section of Indian media has been unwarrantedly [citing](#) a statement by a spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Mao Ning, during a media briefing on 13 September 2024, who said, "in recent years, front-line armies of the two countries have realised disengagement in four areas in the Western sector of the China-India border, including the Galwan Valley. The China-India border situation is generally stable and under control". This statement is being used to create a sense of 'breakthrough' in ties, while the reality is, this is a mere reiteration of facts

already known and the last disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh happened only two years ago, in September 2022, at Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area.

Sometimes, obscured reality and half-truths are far more vicious than a complete cover-up of facts. The military situation along the LAC remains unchanged for the last two years, and thousands of troops are still on both sides of the undemarcated line. The military-to-military talks are in a stalemate since February 2024 when the last Corps Commander-level meeting took place. India seeks complete disengagement in the remaining two areas as a pre-requisite for normalising ties. Before disengagement at Hot Springs, three other points – at PP-14 (Galwan Valley), PP-17A (Gogra Post), and both banks of the Pangong lake – had witnessed disengagement since July 2020.

There have been minor skirmishes along the LAC since June 2020, amid border infrastructure development and a heavy build-up of troops on both sides, like the one that occurred in the Yangtse area of Tawang in the Eastern sector in October 2021 and December 2022. Satellite imagery shows that China has been building habitable structures on India-claimed territories in recent years, while giving Chinese [names](#) to Indian villages in Arunachal Pradesh. The armies of both countries have engaged in sporadic standoffs even before the Galwan incident, such as in Nathu La and Cho La in 1967, Tulung La in 1975, Sumdong Chu in 1987, Depsang in 2013, Demchok in 2014 and Doklam in 2017. But the most fatal of all incidents since 1975 occurred in the Galwan Valley, which resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers.

Recent bilateral engagements

There have been both positive and negative developments in the diplomatic and economic fronts lately. Earlier this month, on 12 September 2024, the Special Representatives for the India-China border talks mechanism, Ajit Doval and Wang Yi [met](#) in St. Petersburg, Russia, on the sidelines of a meeting of National Security Advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) grouping. In July 2020, the month following that of the Galwan incident, a conversation between the two veteran negotiators led to the first breakthrough at the LAC in the current standoff – the disengagement of troops from the clash site of Galwan Valley.

Fast forward four years to July 2024. The foreign ministers of India and China – Dr. S. Jaishankar and Wang Yi – met twice, first in Astana, Kazakhstan, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit and later in Vientiane, Laos, on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting. In February last year, senior diplomatic officials from India [travelled](#) to Beijing for the Working Mechanism for Consultation and

Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) talks in their first face-to-face WMCC meeting since the current LAC standoff began in 2020. It was the 26th such dialogue since this mechanism came into existence in 2012.

During all these aforementioned interactions, both sides committed themselves to resolve the remaining issues, while normalisation is yet to be achieved. India wants to return to a *status quo ante* as of April 2020 and also the resolution of legacy disputes at Depsang and Demchok, while China conveniently views the dispute or differences in perception of the LAC as a 'leftover problem' from the British rule. The Indian side has repeatedly made it clear that there can be no back to normal without resolving the border question. China's current Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, [took charge](#) in May 2024, after an 18-month delay in appointment, the longest for the post since 1976, when bilateral ties were restored following the 1962 war. The senior Chinese diplomat has been on a charm offensive since then, meeting key figures in Delhi's power circles.

Meanwhile, the legacy disputes at Depsang and Demchok, which China considers as not part of the current standoff, are yet to be resolved. Of the six friction points along the LAC in Ladakh, troops were withdrawn from the June 2020 clash site of the Galwan Valley in the weeks following the incident, the north and south banks of Pangong Lake in February 2021, Patrolling Point-17A of the Gogra-Hot Springs area in August 2021 and Patrolling Point-15 in September 2022. There are sixty-five such patrolling points along the LAC in Ladakh, of which India reportedly has lost access to twenty-six points to China and differences in perception of the line persists at multiple areas.

Underlying geopolitical games

India has been increasingly confident to play the Tibet and Taiwan cards lately and has stopped reiterating the 'One China' principle for many years now. In June, this year, New Delhi allowed the former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and a bipartisan Congressional delegation accompanying her to meet the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the 14th Dalai Lama, in Dharamshala, and later they met the Prime Minister himself in New Delhi. Earlier in the same month, PM Modi responded to a congratulatory post on X from Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te on his election victory stating that he looks forward to closer ties between India and Taiwan, to "work towards mutually beneficial economic and technological partnership".

Chinese Foreign Ministry had protested both these moves. President Xi Jinping, however, did not congratulate PM Modi on his re-election. Beijing's suspicious engagement in New Delhi's neighbourhood in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, its disapproval of India's bid for permanent membership

at the UN Security Council (the remaining four UNSC permanent members support New Delhi), the resistance to India's entry to the elite Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG), and the vetoing of UN sanctions on Pakistan-based terrorists further adds to the strategic mistrust and insecurity between the two Himalayan neighbours.

However, Indian restrictions on visas for Chinese professionals in selected industries were relaxed in November, last year, and again in July this year after several businesses in India were hit with a shortage of skilled workers. Subsequently, PM Modi toned down his rhetoric on China. In an interview given to *Newsweek* magazine, published in April 2024, the Prime Minister described relations with China as "important and significant" and expressed hope that stability along the LAC could be restored. In the same month, the Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh opined that border talks were "progressive and satisfactory" and "no fresh tension has come up".

During an interaction at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy in Switzerland earlier this month, India's foreign minister Dr. S. Jaishankar stated that "roughly 75% of the disengagement problems are sorted out". However, the Chinese media's open dislike for the veteran diplomat was clearly evident from a recent controversial article published in the state-run *Global Times* that was pulled back hours later. The op-ed piece, titled 'India's diplomacy has a 'S. Jaishankar problem'', took aim at Dr. Jaishankar's remarks on 31 August at a media forum in New Delhi where he said the world has a "general China problem" and India was not the only country debating how to deal with Beijing.

In spite of such self-goals, Dr. Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi met twice in July this year – first on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of State summit in Kazakhstan and then at an ASEAN meeting in Vientiane. Moreover, India has also doubled down on its military partnerships and joint exercises with countries in Southeast Asia. PM Modi's visit to Singapore and Brunei earlier this month is a testament to India's renewed focus on its "Act East" policy. Despite being partners in non-Western groupings such as the BRICS and the SCO, India chose to participate in the U.S.-led minilateral groupings, such as the Quad and the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA). The *raison d'être* of such flexible groupings can be explained by both 'balance of power' and 'balance of threat' theorisations in international relations.

'Paradoxical' economic ties

In July 2024, a mothership called at India's first deep-water container transshipment port at the under-construction Vizhinjam port for the first time, ushering in a new era in India's maritime history. Interestingly,

the ship embarked on its journey from China's Xiamen port, and twenty-four hi-tech cranes from China were delivered to the port since October last year. The state-owned Chinese company ZPMC, or the Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries Ltd., has provided more than two hundred such cranes for Indian ports, and port operators in India continue to install them.

Today, New Delhi's biggest challenge is to balance its age-old security imperatives with that of its rapidly expanding industrial base, for which it can't stop doing business with China, and most of the alternatives to Chinese goods and Chinese technology appear to be comparatively costly. This 'paradoxical' phenomenon is not unique to the two countries alone, as countries elsewhere in the world too engage in trade with adversaries for several reasons. Chinese technology is key to India's infrastructure development as well.

India's imports from China increased to \$102 billion recently, which is 56% more than what was four years ago, out of a total \$118 billion in bilateral trade. Thus, India's trade deficit with China has risen by around 75% during this period. Recent data from the Global Trade Research Initiative reveals that Chinese imports to India crossed \$100 billion in the financial year 2024, cementing China's status as India's largest trading partner, displacing the U.S. after a gap of two years. So, the overall nature of bilateral ties between India and China, considering this economic dimension, is adversarial and co-operative at the same time, and their economies are interlinked like never before.

However, the public sentiment in India towards China has largely turned negative owing to the border issue. Consequently, India's economic, trade and investment policies are increasingly subjected to 'securitisation', as evident from its move to block 320 Chinese apps, including TikTok and WeChat, the suspension of direct flights, restrictions on Chinese investment and diversification of supply chains away from China through its participation in Western-led groupings such as the Quad, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) and India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Today, China's defence budget is almost three times as India's, but the latter is fast catching up with rapid defence indigenisation and attempts to diversify arms supplies away from Russia.

Past standoffs and negotiations

It was quite an irony that in April 2020 – year of the Galwan incident – India and China marked the 70th anniversary of establishment of formal diplomatic relations, and in June 2024, China observed an event marking the 70th anniversary of the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*, a foreign policy concept first put forward in the Sino-Indian agreement of 1954, following which India officially recognised Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China. However, the *Panchsheel*, as it was referred to by New Delhi,

remained as a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy under Jawaharlal Nehru, until its essence and purpose were lost in the ashes of the 1962 war.

Bilateral ties remained in a state of coma for almost one-and-a-half decade after the war. Subsequently, diplomatic ties were restored in 1976. However, China has condemned India's merger of Sikkim state in 1975 and the bestowment of full statehood to Arunachal Pradesh in 1987. Back in 1979, then Indian foreign minister, and later Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a landmark visit to China, and two years later, in 1981, then Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua reciprocated the move by visiting India, paving way for both countries to begin an annual dialogue.

Seven years later, in 1988, then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China and both countries agreed to set up a joint working group (JWG) on boundary disputes. Three years later, in 1991, Chinese Premier Li Peng visited India, followed by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to China in 1993. The remaining part of the decade saw India and China signing two key agreements, in 1993 and 1996, thereby initiating steps to bring back peace and tranquillity along the border areas, in addition to an agreement to pull back troops from the Eastern sector in 1995.

The following year, 1996, witnessed the landmark visit of China's Paramount Leader Jiang Zemin to India. Both nations agreed to reduce troops on the disputed border and avoid the use of force. The decade that followed also saw a series of confidence-building measures, including the 2005 Protocol and the 2012-initiated working mechanism for consultation and coordination on India-China border affairs that replaced the old JWG process between the foreign ministries. But it fell short of preventing the Depsang standoff in March 2013.

Later, in October 2013, a Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA) was signed between the defence officials of both countries, unlike civilian officials in the previous pacts. Since then, the new Paramount Leader who rose to power in China that year – Xi Jinping – upped the ante on border disputes with not only India, but also with other countries in China's neighbourhood, including several ASEAN member-states. Experts are now of the view that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has a much larger say in shaping the Chinese foreign policy than ever before, with President Xi Jinping heading the Chinese Communist Party and the Central Military Commission.

Way ahead for rapprochement

It is worthwhile to recall that in the previous century, leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union continued to have dialogues even during the peak time of the Cold War. In the case of India and China, between 2014, when Modi first became the Prime Minister of India, and June 2020, when the Galwan

incident occurred, the Indian leader met his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping eighteen times, including in informal summits, visits to each other's countries and meetings on the sidelines of multilateral summits. Despite this, the Galwan incident couldn't be prevented, and the prospect of a repeat of similar incidents or far more fatal ones still looks imminent.

After Galwan, both leaders met twice – first in Bali, on the sidelines of the G20 summit of 2022 and then in Johannesburg on the sidelines of the BRICS summit of 2023. The Chinese leader chose not to attend the G20 summit of 2023 in New Delhi and sent Premier Li Qiang instead, the first time a Chinese Paramount Leader not attending the G20 summit since 2008, excluding the virtual summits of 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic. In July 2024, PM Modi skipped the SCO summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, while President Xi attended it. Now, there are two possibilities later this year for PM Modi and President Xi to meet face to face – the first in Kazan, Russia, for the BRICS Summit in October and the second in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the G20 summit in November.

China's \$17.9 trillion economy is the second largest in the world, only behind the United States, while India's \$3.7 trillion economy is ranked the fifth. While the latter continues to be a lower middle-income country, the former has already progressed into an upper middle-income country in the last 40 years, powered by its fast modernisation and the upliftment of nearly 800 million people from absolute poverty. Both countries started off as independent countries in the 1940s and faced similar socioeconomic problems until four decades ago. Today, there is a tremendous scope for both countries to cooperate with each other, including in trade, climate change, energy security, Global South issues, and regional connectivity. But all of it depends squarely on how diplomacy progresses forward.

The circumstances are quite different today than it was four decades ago, considering the serious power gap between the two Asian neighbours, which India must fill in the coming years. More importantly, New Delhi must not be oblivious of the fact that China today is an economic and technological superpower in competition with the world's pre-eminent superpower – the United States – and is fast catching-up on the military front as well. Dealing with such a power calls for meticulously crafted state policies – both foreign and domestic. India has been building up border infrastructure and deterrence capabilities at a pace faster than ever before. Continuing dialogue at the highest political levels makes it complete.

The two nuclear-armed neighbours must manage their competition responsibly and minimise the prospect of an unintended or accidental conflict to the best extent possible. There is also a strong need for standalone meetings to discuss and resolve the border question

and not just along the sidelines of when regional or multilateral groupings meet. Without political dialogue going hand in hand with military dialogue, a new mechanism for peaceful coexistence and normalisation of ties can never be reached. Rather than working on old and ineffective frameworks of engagement, both sides must give a fresh start to building a broad consensus and a comprehensive framework for bilateral engagement, and it ought to be in tune with the current realities, respecting each other's concerns and sensitivities.

China's Legal Warfare Closes a Beloved Tibetan School

18 September 2024, [The Diplomat](#)

Despite taking part in a momentous rite of passage, tears streaked the faces of the 110 students who graduated from Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School, located on the Tibetan Plateau in Golog prefecture, Qinghai province, this July. For months, authorities had prodded any and all excuses to find violations, pursuing various legal avenues to shutter the school. Until this summer, they were unsuccessful. Eventually, despite legal battles that ended in the school's acquittal, regional administration ordered the school's closure. In a speech before his students, Gen Jigme Gyaltsen indicated the school was closing because it was not in compliance with the Qinghai Provincial Party Committee's vague standards of vocational schools. Additional details were not disclosed. The 110 students that graduated in July will be the last the institution ever accredits.

The internationally acclaimed Tibetan school was first founded in 1994 inside the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Since then, its rich curriculum in Tibetan cultural and linguistic studies has drawn youth from across Tibet, Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia. The school's emphasis on the preservation of specialized Tibetan language studies, medicine, and Buddhist philosophy has garnered both private and public extraterritorial support, such as from Finland and the Netherlands. The school's rigorous curriculum was supplemented with computer science, engineering, medicine, filmmaking, and physical education.

During his testimony at the Tibet Policy Institute's July roundtable on the closure, Shede Dawa of Tibet Watch, a research network based in the United Kingdom, gestured to a projected image of Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling, tucked into shaded mountain foothills and rich with pine saplings. He noted the lengths these trees had grown since his years as a student there, where he was encouraged by his instructors to celebrate the arduous process of reconnecting with his own heritage in a region some scholars refer to as an "open air prison."

The room of roundtable participants felt the reverberations this upbringing has had in the careful sincerity of Dawa, a steady advocate for peers facing systematic academic repression. He gazed out over the scholars in front of him, locking eyes with the camera lens before insisting, in the words of the school's founder, that the preservation of the Tibetan language and script is a crucial means for the survival of the Tibetan people. People survive through stories, which are in turn cradled by linguistic exchange.

Dr. Lobsang Yangtso, program and Environment Desk coordinator for the International Tibet Network, expressed her admiration for the courage of alumni like Shede Dawa, who might now face retaliation for speaking up against the school's closure. "There are many others like him," she said.

In recent years, human rights monitoring networks have observed the gradual swapping out of Tibetan textbooks for those in the Chinese language. A cultural assimilation policy, which was formulated in 2010, deems that all schools in Tibet must legally use Chinese as the primary language, beginning at the kindergarten level.

Dawa Tsering, director of the Tibet Policy Institute and longtime policymaker with the Tibetan government-in-exile, contextualized the school community's ordeals: "Presently, the Chinese government is closing monasteries and Tibetan schools... These measures are part of a broader strategy to eradicate the Tibetan language and culture."

First line of defence: The role of border villages as custodians of India's frontiers

17 September 2024, [Broadsword](#), Ajai Shukla

Echoing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stated commitment to holistic development of villages located close to the Sino-Indian border, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has described these villages as not just remote habitations but also the country's first line of defence.

Addressing a Border Area Development Conclave in New Delhi on September 11, Singh said the best way of dealing with the multiple challenges posed by India's geo-strategic location was to ensure border area development.

In underlining the role of border villages as custodians of India's frontiers, New Delhi is following the example of China in Tibet, where President Xi Jinping has personally directed a new border village policy since 2017.

China in Tibet

China's new border village policy, which is aimed at setting up Tibetan villages in disputed border areas, was announced with great fanfare at the 19th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in

2017. In May 2021, noted Tibetologist Robert Barnett described the working of Xi Jinping's resettlement policy in an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine.

Barnett's article details the experience of four Tibetan nomads from the remote Beyul Khenpajong region, which remains disputed between Bhutan and China. Until 1995, like other yak graziers living along the border, the four spent their summer grazing their herds in the Beyul, before returning to their village in Tibet ahead of the winter snows.

In 1995, however, the local CCP officials told them Beyul was Chinese territory and it was their duty to guard it for China by physically remaining there through winter. For the decades that followed, the four graziers spent the bitter winters alone in the Beyul, in harsh and primitive conditions, with no contact with the outside world.

Once the Chinese completed a road to their tiny settlement, over the Himalayan crest line, a larger village was rapidly built up. In April 2020, the Communist Party Secretary of Tibet, Wu Yingjie, trekked all the way to the new grazer village, now named "Gyalphug", to hail the graziers as heroes of China.

Each summer, CCP officials organise the herders to carry out small tasks to reassert China's claims. Barnett writes: "These included driving yak herds over land grazed by Bhutanese herders in the Beyul, demanding tax payments from the Bhutanese herders, planting Chinese flags on peaks and painting the word 'China' on rocks throughout the area."

An estimated 250,000 Tibetans have been resettled thus along the border. In effect, this has transformed local Tibetan histories of border grazing and monastic claims into state-level territorial claims by China.

In July 2021, Xi Jinping visited Tibet for three days, with his focus squarely on the Tibetan town of Nyingtri (Nyingchi in Chinese). Beijing regards Arunachal Pradesh as a southward extension of Nyingtri Prefecture.

Development work

India's defence minister, speaking at the Border Area Development Conclave, pointed to the development work carried out in India's border areas during the last decade. He cited the construction of 8,500 kms of roads, 400 permanent bridges, and three major tunnels: Atal Tunnel, Sela Tunnel, and Shikun-La Tunnel, with the third currently the world's highest road tunnel.

The defence minister also cited the connection of border areas in Ladakh with the National Electricity Grid, and the provision of high-speed internet to over 1,500 villages, mainly in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, through the Bharat-Net broadband project. Singh said the government's special emphasis on border area tourism was catalysing the development of the region. "Tourism has immense potential in

border areas, but it could not reach the desired heights due to lack of infrastructure. Things have changed since this government came to power... From 2020 to 2023, the footfall of tourists in Ladakh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh increased by 30 per cent... We are taking consistent steps to make J&K a tourist hotspot," he said.

Economic development of the border areas, he said, was triggering "reverse migration", such as in Huri village in Arunachal Pradesh, where villagers who had migrated to the hinterland were returning to their original homes.

Speaking at the same conclave, army chief General Upendra Dwivedi described border area development as "a core component of national security."

New flashpoint

Like New Delhi, Beijing supports its graziers with incentives, including financial ones, to equip them for spending long periods in high-altitude pastures along the McMahon Line border. Unlike New Delhi, however, Beijing has not shrunk from using armed force in the form of border guards and frontline soldiers to intimidate and bully Indian graziers.

Indian military commanders believe Beijing covets Beyul Khenpajong as a bargaining chip to offer Bhutan in exchange for Doklam, a disputed pocket of land at the tri-junction of Bhutan, China and India.

India regards Doklam as militarily vital, being located less than 100 kilometres from the strategic Siliguri corridor, a narrow, 25-kilometre-wide strip of land that connects India's seven north-eastern states to the Indo-Gangetic heartland. Bhutan has always been careful of India's concerns vis-à-vis Doklam.

"China doesn't need the land it is settling in Bhutan: Its aim is to force the Bhutanese government to cede territory that China wants elsewhere in Bhutan to give Beijing a military advantage in its struggle with New Delhi," wrote Barnett, in *Foreign Policy*.

Since 1990, Beijing has been offering to give up its claim to 495 square kilometres in the north of Bhutan, provided Thimphu yields 269 square kilometres in the west. The territory in north Bhutan that China is offering to give up includes the Beyul Khenpajong.

The creation of border infrastructure is the new flashpoint between China and India. Among the causes cited for intrusions by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into Eastern Ladakh in the summer of 2020, the construction of the 255 kilometre-long Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi (DSDBO) road by India's Border Roads Organisation is possibly the most convincing. Following clashes between the PLA and Indian troops in the Galwan River Valley in June 2020, China's foreign ministry identified the creation of the DSDBO road as a trigger for the clash.

Clearly, New Delhi will have to walk a fine line between developing India's border infrastructure on the one

hand and assuaging Beijing's border sensibilities on the other.

For Tibetans, There Is Now a "Xi Jinping Thought on Reincarnation"

16 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Lopsang Gurung

Beijing insists it will not abandon its claim that, although officially atheistic, the Communist Party is entitled to control reincarnation of Tibetan Living Buddhas.

There is a "Xi Jinping Thought" for everything, including toilets. And Tibetans know that, while being atheistic, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2007, through the State Administration of Religious Affairs, issued a regulation claiming its right to control reincarnation.

According to the infamous "Order no. 5" of 2007, the CCP decides which Buddhist lamas are authorized to reincarnate, and they receive a card confirming the authorization. The next incarnation of a deceased lama is identified by the CCP, which has created a historical myth about the so-called "Golden Urn" to justify its theory that reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist lamas should be controlled by Chinese state authorities. Obviously, since 2007, the CCP is preparing to assert the right to pick up the next Dalai Lama when His Holiness will leave this world.

There were rumors that the farcical system where an officially atheistic state and party, which obviously do not believe in reincarnation, decide who is the reincarnation of whom, would be abandoned at least to avoid international ridicule. The rumors, however, were denied by the CCP in 2023, as "Bitter Winter" reported.

What was missing was to freeze the doctrine of CCP control of reincarnation by making it part of the omnipresent and unquestionable Xi Jinping Thought. Logically, but more quietly than usual, this step was taken this month.

A seminar on "History, Customs, Policies, and Regulations of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" was held in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, by the government-controlled China Buddhist Association..

Master Chang Zang, Vice President of the China Buddhist Association, delivered the keynote speech. CCP-approved reincarnated Tibetan Living Buddhas also spoke.

The seminar explained that Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism for the New Era also includes a "Xi Jinping Thought on Reincarnation." It teaches, Chang Zang said, the "basic principles on religious work and the CCP's strategy for governing Tibet in the new era, and guide monks, nuns and believers to have a more objective understanding of the historical customs,

religious rituals and policies and regulations of the living Buddha reincarnation system. They should fully recognize that historical customs such as domestic searches, drawing lots from the Golden Urn and government approval are important principles that must be adhered to in the reincarnation of living Buddhas. This will play a positive role in managing the affairs of the reincarnation of living Buddhas in accordance with the law, promoting the healthy inheritance of Tibetan Buddhism, and actively guiding Tibetan Buddhism to adapt to socialist society.”

With the high stamp of Xi Jinping, the CCP’s control of reincarnation will be asserted even more vigorously. All eyes continue to be on who and how will select the next Dalai Lama.

Remember Tibet?

15 September 2024, The Wire, Nithin Coca

China’s digital surveillance and censorship efforts have reached their full potential in Tibet.

There are no photos of Tibet’s top tourist attraction from the afternoon of February 25, 2022. Typically, the Potala Palace, the 1,000-room, traditional winter residence of the Dalai Lama that was built in the 1600s, is teeming with tourists — the UNESCO World Heritage Site is the majestic backdrop of countless photos on Chinese social media networks like Weibo and WeChat . Every year, some 37 million tourists visit Lhasa, Tibet’s capital, where the palace is built into the side of a mountain, and the vast majority of visitors come from China, which has governed the Tibet Autonomous Region since 1950. But despite its popularity, not a single image of the front of the palace exists from the afternoon of February 25, 2022. On that day, Tsewang Norbu, a 25-year-old male Tibetan singer and frequent guest on Chinese music shows, went up to the Barpokaling stupa, at the corner of the palace grounds, shouted “Free Tibet,” and set himself on fire.

At least, that is what experts think happened. The event has disappeared from Tibet’s digital history as well as China’s. According to *The Economist*, the Chinese government acknowledged an incident took place, but denied it was Norbu, saying instead that it was a man who had long struggled with mental illness and “attempted suicide many times.”

It took Tibetan journalists and researchers in India more than a week to verify what happened that day after piecing together bits of information from sources inside Tibet, Chinese social and state media, and by monitoring what was being censored or removed. Radio Free Asia broke the news on March 4, 2022.

“Tsewang Norbu was a really popular Tibetan singer. He did this in front of the most famous monument in Tibet, where there were likely tons of tourists and

Tibetans around,” says Tsela Zoksang , a Tibetan American with the non-profit Students for a Free Tibet. “The sheer speed that the authorities, with their various tools, were able to scrub the internet of every mention of Norbu is astonishing and frightening.”

China is famous for its digital censorship and control, but experts say the situation in Tibet is on another level. Consider what happened just a few months later, when another lone protester took action in Beijing. In October, Peng Lifa unfurled banners from the Sitong bridge calling for “freedom,” an end to Covid lockdowns and the removal of Xi Jinping. His protest went viral, both on Chinese social media and internationally. Although Peng is still in detention , his name and cause is well known. Perhaps more importantly, his actions had impact: The bridge signs are considered a precursor to the white paper protests that forced the Chinese Communist Party to dramatically change its Covid policies in December.

The contrast between Norbu and Peng illuminates a dark and underappreciated truth: that China’s digital surveillance and censorship efforts have reached their full potential in Tibet. Indeed, several experts say the autonomous region has emerged as a kind of success story, with the policies there serving as a model for other areas that Beijing wants control over, such as the Uyghur regions in Xinjiang.

Tenzin Norgay , a research analyst at the non-profit International Campaign for Tibet, says officials in Tibet and Xinjiang routinely share best practices and lessons learned with one another. In June of 2023, for instance, a delegation from Xinjiang attended a symposium in Tibet on “long-term peace and stability.” Wang Junzheng, party secretary of Tibet, reportedly stressed collaboration between the regions in “promoting social stability and rule by law.”

“At the moment, the party-state thinks that Tibet is under control, so now Xinjiang officials want to learn from authorities in Tibet about how to manage and suppress society without attracting global attention,” Norgay says.

Xinjiang has been the focus of intense media attention in recent years. Reports about internment camps and the destruction of Uyghur cultural heritage have become global issues and even U.S. policy priorities . Meanwhile, the situation in Tibet — once a hot topic of Hollywood celebrities and politicians — has faded from view.

Tibetans inside Tibet are, nowadays, so scared to talk to us. There is a sense that the government is always watching them and monitoring them, and for us, that means we can’t get first-hand information from Tibet. Self-censorship has become a huge problem.

Tenzin Dawa , an India-based Tibetan refugee and executive secretary at the Tibet Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD)

To appreciate the shift, experts point to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, when images of monks, nuns and students protesting Chinese rule spread around the world. Those sympathetic to Tibet's cause held "solidarity" protests at Olympic torch rallies in San Francisco, London, and Paris, as well as several Chinese embassies and consulates. The

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, even released a statement saying she was disturbed by "continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans" and called on China to "permit Tibetans to express their feelings without fear of retribution."

Similarly, in 2011 and 2012, activists in Tibet began a wave of self-immolations to protest what has become a multi-year lockdown of the entire region. One dramatic video shows the self-immolation of a 35-year-old Tibetan nun named Palden Choetso. In the background, you can see Tibetans offering prayers to the Dalai Lama and a woman hanging a Tibetan scarf, a symbol of respect, on Choetso's neck.

"It's one of the most powerful videos from Tibet," says Lobsang Gyato Sither, a Tibetan living in exile in India who works with the non-profit Tibet Action Institute. "It's hard to see, but images like that really hit and stick with people."

Indeed, that video took just one day to spread around the world. In its aftermath, members of Congress pushed for a fact-finding mission to Tibet, and the European parliament passed a resolution calling on China to respect human rights and have a dialogue with the Dalai Lama.

In recent years, however, acts like Norbu's don't escape the censors. There haven't been any visible, large-scale demonstrations for Tibetan

independence — either inside the country or abroad — which is, experts note, exactly what Beijing wants.

"Images, videos and personal voices are so important for human rights stories," says Yaqui Wang, a research director at the Washington-based Freedom House. "But given the government's sophisticated censorship and surveillance apparatus, we don't have the images, and that limits the ability of their plight to attract global attention."

"Fifteen years ago, there was so much more information coming out of Tibet," adds Gabriel Lafitte, an Australia-based author and expert on Tibet. "But, even more than Xinjiang, China has succeeded in closing down Tibet."

THE PLAYBOOK

By many measures, Tsewang Norbu was the model member of an ethnic minority in B China. His parents worked for organizations affiliated with the Communist Party and

sang in state-approved musical groups, he had over half a million followers on Weibo, and his songs — in

Tibetan, Mandarin and English — could be found on Chinese and global video streaming platforms.

But ever since Tibet was occupied by the People's Liberation Army in 1950, and especially since the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, Tibet has seen regular periodic protests and calls for greater autonomy or independence from Chinese rule. There were signs that Norbu may have had sympathies himself, as he avoided singing songs that overly propagandized China, and his uncle is a political prisoner.

According to Namloyak Dhungser, and author of a book on self-immolations, Norbu's act could have a long-term impact on the Free Tibet movement because it "stands out as a significant case among the new generation of Tibetans, particularly those raised under the 'red flag.'"

It's exceedingly difficult to know if this generational shift is happening or even why Norbu chose to do what he did. The Tibet Autonomous Region has been closed off entirely to independent media since protests against Chinese rule broke out in 2008. While journalists can travel around the rest of China, including Xinjiang, they can only visit Tibet on state-approved trips.

The lack of reporters, however, is only the first hurdle to corroborating information about Tibet. Repression in places like Tibet and in Xinjiang is multifaceted, experts say, creating a climate of intense fear and self-censorship among sources.

There is, of course, digital censorship and high-tech surveillance, including biometric data. Dense networks of cameras and numerous police stations keep a watchful eye, and at checkpoints, Tibetans and Uyghurs are often forced to hand over their phones and install Chinese government apps that have been identified as spyware. Over the past several years, Tibetans have been arrested and punished for merely having certain data, like a picture of the Dalai Lama or an unauthorized app like WhatsApp, on their phones. And to make matters worse, entire families can be punished for the actions of an individual.

Tenzin Dawa, an India-based Tibetan refugee and executive secretary at the Tibet Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), says the pervasive sense of fear limits the work she and others can do.

"Tibetans inside Tibet are, nowadays, so scared to talk to us," she says. "There is a sense that the government is always watching them and monitoring them, and for us, that means we can't get first-hand information from Tibet. Self-censorship has become a huge problem."

Han Chinese certainly face repercussions for exercising their right to free speech," adds Wang, at Freedom House. "But regular Tibetans and Uyghurs have been given lengthy sentences for just speaking with foreign media. It's just not of the same order of magnitude."

What we need is the context of what led a person [like Norbu] to take action... Many times we get fragments of information, and we can't fully confirm it, so we just keep that information, then sometimes, months or years afterwards, we have another fragment of information coming through.

Tenzin Choeyki, a senior researcher at Tibet Watch Liza Lin, a journalist with the Wall Street Journal, notes that reporting on the rest of China has its challenges but also its workarounds. After being based in Shanghai for 8 years, she was forced to leave China when her visa renewal was refused. Now based in Singapore, she says she notices a difference in Chinese sources when they travel to the island-nation for business trips. "They're a bit more willing to talk here than when they are in China," she says.

Tibet, however, is missing this release valve. For many years, Tibetans crossing into Nepal and India were a key source of information for people like Kate Saunders, a longtime Tibet activist and co-founder of Turquoise Roof, a Tibet-focused, collaborative research network.

"In the 2000s and up to around 2009, there were thousands of new arrivals from Tibet," she says, noting that many were coming to attend teachings of the Dalai Lama or were refugees seeking to make a new life abroad. "Talking to nomads, children, the elderly — it was the bread and butter for Tibetan organizations and media to gain an understanding of what life was like in Tibet."

Now, however, Tibetans are increasingly unable to get passports to travel abroad, and an enhanced border control system has closed the pathways through the Himalayas that used to connect Tibet refugees with exile communities in South Asia. In 2023, only 15 Tibetan refugees arrived in India and Nepal, compared to 3,000 in 2010.

"We did not expect that China would seek to close the entire gateway to India and Nepal," says Saunders.

Without human sources, says Maya Wang, associate director in the Asia division at Human Rights Watch, getting reliable information is exceedingly difficult. "If it was a video game, China is already, like, level 156 — really, really hard," she says. "But Tibet and Xinjiang are double that."

ONLY OSINT

Like many second and third generation Tibetans-in-exile, Tenzing Dhamdul grew up in India with few links to his family across the border. But the 28-year-old is part of a new generation of Tibetans who are using Open Source Intelligence, or OSINT, to uncover information about human rights or policies in Tibet.

"OSINT is a way to try to understand what Tibetans inside Tibet are experiencing and feeling," says Dhamdul, who works as a research associate at the New Delhi-based Foundation for Non-violent

Alternatives. "It is gradually becoming more prominent among the Tibetan community."

Working with two other Tibetan refugees, Dhamdul's first project analyzed Chinese documents, online maps and social media to identify how the government had changed the names of villages in parts of India claimed as "South Tibet" by China. While not a particularly complex task, the project provided insight into Beijing's attempts to strengthen its claim over disputed Indian territory and led to a flurry of reactions from the Indian government.

For Dhamdul, the OSINT process is especially valuable since its strategies can be easily replicated elsewhere. "We can work together with people who are like us Tibetans — oppressed by the current communist regime of the PRC — be it the Uyghurs, the Taiwanese or Hong Kongers," he says.

Indeed, a recent RAND Europe report on detention centers in Tibet followed in the footsteps of a Xinjiang report. Using light data, RAND estimated the size and scale of the detention

centers as well as how they've evolved over time. The analysis uncovered patterns of growth in night-time lightning, suggesting a shift towards longer detentions and imprisonments.

"Our organization had previously analyzed the evolution of detention centers in Xinjiang using geospatial data and night-time lighting measurements, so we decided to see if this method would also make sense in the Tibetan context, and it did," a RAND Europe researcher said by email. (The researcher asked to remain anonymous due to the report's sensitivity.)

Turquoise Roof, Saunders's initiative, also uses OSINT research. So far, they've released reports on lithium mining, hydropower dam development, and spyware, all without interviewing or relying on anyone in Tibet. For example, for lithium, they used satellite data to locate mines and processing centers and analyze how they'd expanded over time. They then scoured Chinese government files, business documents, scientific research and trade data to estimate the scale of production, identify the Chinese companies involved and the links to major automakers like Tesla and BYD.

"We decided we have to work to lessen dependence on dangerous means of talking to Tibetans inside Tibet," says Saunders.

This approach has its limitations, however. In some of OSINT's most successful use cases, groups like Bellingcat and the HALO Trust have combined open source data with data gathered by anonymous sources on the ground, often sent via secure communication platforms like Signal. In Russia, for example, this approach allowed for the tracking of illegal ghost ships exporting grain from occupied Ukraine. It's a tactic that isn't possible in Tibet or Xinjiang.

This erasure underscores the links between political and technological dictatorships. When these forces converge, the consequences for human society are dire.

Namloyak Dhungser, a Tibetan researcher at Curtin University in Australia

"It's difficult to triangulate information," says Saunders. "Everybody thinks you can learn everything through technological means, but that's one of the findings of Turquoise Roof. We still need Tibetans inside Tibet, with deep knowledge on the ground."

Moreover, while these OSINT reports do get media coverage, it hardly compares to the human interest stories, images and videos that used to come out of Tibet.

OSINT "has to be combined with a human being," notes Tenzin Choeyki, a senior researcher at Tibet Watch. "What we need is the context of what led a person [like Norbu] to take action — that can't be filled in by OSINT."

Norbu's youth, celebrity status and choice of location made his act stand out among the 160 known self-immolations in Tibet. It may have also played a role in his story coming to light in just a week. But Choeyki says it's a reminder of how little we still know about what is happening in Tibet.

"Many times we get fragments of information, and we can't fully confirm it, so we just keep that information, then sometimes, months or years afterwards, we have another fragment of information coming through," says Choeyki.

In September of 2015, for instance, another young Tibetan man, Shurmo, self-immolated in a remote village. It took an astounding five years before Tibet Watch could verify and share what happened, and even then, there's a lot that remains unknown about Shurmo, including what happened to his body and his family. There are no photos of Shurmo or of his act.

"It's deeply unsettling that, in our digital age, these events can be swiftly erased from public memory, leaving no trace of their sacrifice in images or videos," says Dhungser, at Curtin University.

It also brings up other questions: Are there others like Shurmo or Norbu? Just how far behind are we in terms of understanding what is happening in Tibet? When, if ever, will the CCP feel its job is done?

"This erasure underscores the links between political and technological dictatorships," says Dhungser. "When these forces converge, the consequences for human society are dire."

Western stories about Xinjiang nothing more than mythical dramas

14 September 2024, [Global Times](#), Yasir Habib Khan

Before setting foot in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, most of the members of the media delegation from Pakistan were under the influence of Western deceptive narratives that ethnic minorities are subject to injustices.

Frankly speaking, the delegation and I, as president of a think tank "Institute of International Relations and Media Research," entered China as skeptics. However, as we started visiting places, interacting with people and talking to the local minorities, it became clear that Western stories were nothing more than mythical and fictional dramas that had nothing to do with reality. Seeing is believing. Hence, myths pertaining to discrimination against ethnic minorities in China were proven to be complete fabrications. Media delegates witnessed the rise and development of Xinjiang. Delegates visited minority groups living in the modern village of Chabuchar county in Yining, Xinjiang. Seeing the living standards, bustling life, school education, civic amenities, surrounding ambience, well-furnished homes and livelihood, all their questions and doubts were answered.

"It is high time the international community pay a visit to Xinjiang. This will help distinguish fact from fiction," Asghar Ali, one delegate, said. Meanwhile, head of modern village (Uzonbrak resettlement) Ms Yang Yang welcomed the delegation, and was very informative, telling them all about the village and the lives of the villagers.

Delegates learned that impoverished local minorities living in mountains with their animal herds were resettled here under the China poverty alleviation program by providing them with plenty of resources to improve their quality of life. I witnessed how the local government made it possible for them to set up new businesses to improve their income. Each shop in the village makes between 10,000 yuan (\$1,405) to 15,000 yuan. Besides ancestral occupation of animal husbandry, minority youth have been securing jobs in nearby factories in economic zones. Some have also joined the agriculture profession, carrying on the family line of business. China's ethnic policy is rooted in the country's unique history and culture, and has four features: equality, autonomy, development and unity. The lawful rights and interests of the people of all ethnicities in Xinjiang have been effectively protected. All ethnic groups, regardless of their population size, have equal legal status and enjoy freedom of religious belief and various rights in accordance with the law. These rights include participation in state affairs, access to education, use of their own languages and preservation of their traditional culture. Additionally,

the Xinjiang government has made great efforts to improve the prosperity of Uyghur Muslims. Remarkable achievements have been made in eliminating extreme poverty.

China has been a unified multi-ethnic country as a result of multiple rounds of great ethnic integration in history. This has contributed enormously to the uninterrupted development of the Chinese civilization spanning thousands of years. Together, ethnic groups in China have long become a community with common interests and a shared future.

China's increasing influence in the UN: The role of Africa and Asia

13 September 2024, [IANS](#)

In August 2022, following the release of a report by then-UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, which asserted that China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang "may constitute... crimes against humanity," many countries in the Global South, particularly in Africa and Asia, reacted in a perplexing manner.

Rather than maintaining a neutral stance on the reported atrocities, Pakistan spearheaded a coalition of 70 nations opposing the UN Human Rights Council's perceived 'interference' in China's domestic affairs about a month after the report's publication. Notably, this coalition included fourteen Arab nations, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

In October of the same year, a UNHRC vote to discuss the report was unsuccessful, as several Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia, Qatar, the UAE, and Somalia, voted against it.

These nations were joined by nearly all but three African countries in the Council.

In contrast, when former Gambian Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou presented a case to the international rights body in 2019 against Aung San Suu Kyi for her treatment of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, he received strong backing from the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), which comprises 57 Muslim countries, including 27 from Africa.

China's deliberate strategy to revise the global order is rooted in its advocacy of a strict interpretation of Westphalian sovereignty, which prioritises non-interference in domestic affairs over universal human rights.

This principle, adopted at the June 2018 Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference, has been a driving force in China's foreign policy. To achieve its goal of reforming international institutions and norms, Beijing has focused its efforts on the Global South, particularly Africa and Asia, which together constitute 55 per cent of the votes in the United Nations General Assembly.

China's tactic has been to construct an alternative force of numbers rather than relying on the individual influence of a single country. This trend has resulted in a large number of Global South countries backing China and echoing its stance on sovereignty, even if it means disregarding universal human rights.

In recent years, China has steadily increased its financial and personnel contributions to global and multilateral development institutions. A report from 2020 indicated that China ranks second, behind the United States, in assessed contributions to both the UN's regular and peacekeeping budgets.

Additionally, China has strategically focused on leveraging the representational power of the Global South within the UN.

It positions itself as the leader of the developing world, ready to challenge the West's frameworks regarding human rights, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and imposed liberalism. By emphasising principles such as non-interference, development, South-South cooperation, and the use of multilateral institutions, China claims to advocate for the interests of the Global South.

However, the emerging solidarity between Beijing and various African and Asian nations is not solely based on ideological alignment.

Beijing's dependence on African nations in international forums dates back to the 1971 UN General Assembly debate concerning the People's Republic of China's (PRC) admission to the UN and the expulsion of Taiwan, a development significantly influenced by African votes.

For over three decades, China's foreign minister has prioritised visits to Africa at the start of each year, underscoring its gratitude and deep interest in the continent.

Currently, only one African nation, Eswatini, recognises Taiwan, while the remainder adhere to the 'one China principle'. Furthermore, bilateral and collective agreements between African countries and China emphasise mutual cooperation in global governance matters.

With the backing of the African Union, China successfully passed its first resolution in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), titled "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of Human Rights".

Three years later, another resolution proposed by China was adopted, supported by all but one African member.

These resolutions reflect China's attempt to legitimise an alternative vision of human rights, centred on state-led economic development and the principle of non-interference.

In fact, several African nations even supported China's unsuccessful attempts to defund human rights monitors and NGO observers during the 2018-19 UN

budget discussions. Unsurprisingly, in recent years, very few African countries have endorsed draft resolutions at the UN that criticise China's policies regarding Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Tibet.

One significant factor contributing to the solidarity among authoritarian regimes is their collaboration on human rights issues, which serves to bolster their political stability and international legitimacy.

In West Asia, the challenges related to women, political dissidents, and religious and ethnic minorities present complex dilemmas that these governments often address through the principle of non-interference. Consequently, they endorse Beijing's narrative regarding Xinjiang, framing it as a matter of terrorism, extremism, and separatism.

This was exemplified in 2023 when the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) visited Xinjiang and publicly commended the activities of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the region.

Moreover, economic considerations also drive this emerging 'South-South cooperation'.

For many West Asian countries, following decades of Western intervention, China is viewed as a more dependable partner, having recently become the primary foreign investor in the region.

Chinese economic and strategic influence has surged, particularly after the Arab Spring and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and is expected to grow further following the US withdrawal from the region.

For Africa, the situation is somewhat more complex. Under President Xi Jinping's vision of the 'Great Rejuvenation' and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the continent has become a central focus of China's economic and infrastructural efforts.

As the largest bilateral trade partner and creditor for Africa, China's extensive 'no-strings-attached' lending practices towards vulnerable African nations have resulted in many becoming economically entrapped or reliant on Beijing.

Consequently, Beijing's economic initiatives towards these nations and its promotion of South-South development cooperation represent a strategic effort to establish itself as a hegemonic power within the evolving global order. This dual strategy of fostering economic dependence among susceptible countries while simultaneously empowering authoritarian regimes has proven advantageous for China as it gradually ascends the ranks of global influence.

In memoriam: Chungdak Koren, former Representative of the Dalai Lama and ICT Board member

13 September 2024, [ICT](#)

The former representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Geneva, Chungdak Koren, passed away on September 10th, 2024 in a hospital in Oslo, Norway. The International Campaign for Tibet was deeply saddened by the news and conveyed its condolences to her husband Michael.

Chungdak Koren was born in Phari, southern Tibet, in 1950. After escaping to India, she studied at different schools before getting engaged in the Transit School in Dharamsala. In 1969 she was selected for a nursing education in Norway that was to become her new home. She devoted her energies both to the Tibetan refugees in Norway and to lobbying work, e.g. through the Norwegian Tibet Committee. She was deeply involved in organizing the festivities around the Nobel Peace Prize Award to H.H. the Dalai Lama in 1989.

In the years 1995-2001 she served as Representative of H.H. the Dalai Lama in Geneva. After retiring from public service, her immense energy went into advocating the Tibetan cause on many levels. She was instrumental in establishing the radio station Voice of Tibet, she served as Executive Director of the Norwegian Tibet Committee and starting in 2001 was a board member of the International Campaign for Tibet Europe. In 2011 she was elected as member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

Following a severe stroke, she had to concentrate on regaining her health. She did this with the same admirable zeal and determination as she showed in all tasks she took on. She made remarkable progress and was able to continue her work for her people.

The International Campaign for Tibet is deeply grateful to Chungdak Koren for her contributions to ICT's mission and for her energetic commitment to the cause of her people.

"Chungdak la was truly fearless, and unstoppable, and her singular dedication to Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama will remain always an inspiration to me," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso.

Tsering Jampa, former ICT Europe Executive Director, with whom she worked as the Board member, said, "I am deeply saddened by the passing of my former dear colleague and friend, Chungdak Koren la whose unwavering commitment and dedication to advocating for the rights of Tibetans were truly inspiring. Working closely with Chungdak la advocating on the human rights situation in Tibet at the United Nations Human Rights Commission was a privilege, and Chundak la's passion and hard work will always be remembered. Her passing away is a great loss, not just for those who knew Chungdak la, but for our cause she championed so tirelessly. My thoughts

and prayers are with her and family during this difficult time. Chungdak la will be greatly missed."

Musical "Patriotic Education" in Hong Kong

12 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Gladys Kwok

If regular CCP propaganda does not work with Hongkongers, the Party believes that perhaps karaoke would for adults—and cartoons for children.

"Patriotic Education" is the name of the most massive campaign of domestic propaganda in the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) recent history. Hong Kong is regarded as being particularly in need of this medicine, which is at the same time reluctant to take.

A "Working Group on Patriotic Education" has been established, with pro-CCP legislator Lee Wai-king (Starry) as its leader. The Working Group has both "official members" and "non-official members." However, the "non-official members" are officially listed in its official web page as well.

One of the "non-official members" is veteran singer Kwong Mei-wan (Cally), another well-known CCP loyalist.

It seems that the CCP believes in music as a tool of "Patriotic Education" in Hong Kong. With great fanfare, a song by Cally Kwong has been launched both in a regular and a karaoke version. The song, called "Our Home," was introduced at a press conference of the Working Group on Patriotic Education on September 3, to coincide with the the 79th anniversary of the Victory Day of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The lyrics hail the unity of all Chinese around the Beijing government and its leaders.

Last month, the Working Group on Patriotic Education inaugurated a new thematic gallery at the Hong Kong Museum of History, presenting the necessity and alleged benefits of the repressive National Security Law.

The National Security Gallery also teaches children through cartoons to become "young guardians of National Security." For example, a video shows a beetle who violates the National Security rules and ventures away from the Butterfly Garden (China), ending up in a hostile land (the West, or a mental locus where Western ideas prevail). There, the beetle is about to be eaten by a huge spider (Western imperialism). Happily, armed with the National Security Law, the young Guardians of National Security from the Butterfly Garden come and save it. The beetle cries profusely and promises that it will always respect National Security Law in the future. A good lesson for young Hongkongers...

Fallen From the Front Page: Plight of Tibetans

10 September 2024, [Wilson Center](#), Ambassador mark A. Green



The pilgrims praying outside Jokhang Temple, the most sacred temple of Tibetan Buddhism in Lhasa, Tibet, China. Shutterstock/vigules.

If things continue at their current pace, Chinese authorities will have forcibly uprooted and relocated approximately 500 Tibetan villages (including more than 550,000 individuals) by the end of 2025.

The United Nations Refugee Agency has estimated that by the end of this year, there could be as many as 130 million people displaced across the world. That includes a third of Ukrainians who have been forcibly displaced from their homes since Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion in early 2022, more than a fourth of Sudanese who have been forcibly displaced since war broke out again earlier this year, and over a fourth of Venezuelans who have been forced from their homes since 2015. And then there are the ongoing displacement crises in places like Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In other words, there are numerous forced displacement crises going on right now around the world. That inevitably means that some simply aren't getting the attention—or support—they deserve.

Many Americans have heard about China's systematic oppression of Uyghur Muslims from the northwest Xinjiang province. Between 2017 and 2019, somewhere between 800,000 to 2 million Uyghurs and other Muslims were arbitrarily detained in "reeducation" camps. Uyghurs in the region were also subjected to forced labor, sterilization, and surveillance (all considered to be crimes against humanity), and even genocide, **according to the US, UN, and others** in the international community. Although China closed many of these camps in 2019, hundreds of suspected camps remain in use. Others have been repurposed into formal prisons that **continue to disproportionately detain Uyghurs.**

While Western news services still carry the occasional story about the plight of the Uyghurs, another Beijing-led campaign against an ethnic minority group persists without much attention: the Chinese government's

decades-old effort to destroy the independence and distinctiveness of Tibetans.

China has long held that Tibet is legally (and practically) an integral part of the People's Republic of China and, therefore, under the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), despite active Tibetan resistance. While China's constitution recognizes citizens' "**freedom of religious belief**," the CCP continues to heavily restrict religious practice, forcing the Dalai Lama—the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, who compose **over 90%** of Tibet's population—into exile since China's military occupation of Tibet in 1959.

What is less well known to many Westerners is Beijing's practice of "whole-village relocations" and its broader efforts to "**Sinicize**" Tibetans and their religion by uprooting and replacing local culture. The CCP has advanced efforts to **dilute the Tibetan ethnic majority** with an influx of state-sponsored Han Chinese migrants and forcibly placing Tibetan children into **Chinese schools**. According to a **recent report** by Human Rights Watch (HRW), Beijing began the process of forcibly relocating 930,000 rural Tibetans in 2020, while pressuring another 3.36 million to change their way of life. Just as Beijing has framed its detention of Uyghurs as voluntary participation in "**vocational education and training centers**," the CCP has argued that the relocation of Tibetans is both economically beneficial and undertaken willingly by Tibetans. However, the HRW report documented systematic efforts to intimidate individuals into relocation through coercive home visits by CCP authorities and threats to cut off services. In fact, HRW said it was unable to find *a single example* of an individual Tibetan being permitted to voluntarily stay put.

According to HRW analysis of previous Tibetan relocation programs, once people have left their home villages, Chinese law essentially guarantees that they won't be able to return. And upon their move, Chinese authorities demolish the relocated Tibetans' original homes.

The relocation of Tibetan families is part of a larger effort by the CCP to fully assert regional control. Given the extensive cultural influence which the Dalai Lama holds over this population and his advanced age, Beijing is preparing to **select its own Chinese successor** once he passes—against Tibetan Buddhist custom and the **current Dalai Lama's wishes**. The United States has made its support for the aspirations of the Tibetan people clear. For example, the Resolve Tibet Act explicitly recognizes and reaffirms the distinctness of Tibet's culture and history and insists that the next Dalai Lama is to be chosen solely by the Tibetan people.

Given the many crises that seem to be raging these days, it's hardly surprising that that of the Tibetans,

which is shielded from public view by an authoritarian regime, has fallen off the front pages. That doesn't make it or others that fade from view any less important, or tragic. Just ask those who once lived peacefully in the villages of Tibet.

Bipartisan support for Tibet as US election draws near

10 September 2024, [ICT](#)

With the primaries concluded and Kamala Harris and Donald Trump confirmed as presidential candidates, the stage is set for the 2024 election. In addition to the White House, control of the House and Senate will be decided. For Tibet supporters, one question looms large: What will this election bring for Tibet?

The People's Republic of China's occupation of Tibet has long struck a chord with the American public. Beijing's repressive tactics have led to the hyper-securitization of the Tibetan plateau, recurring and egregious violations of the economic, social, and cultural rights of the Tibetan people and institutionalized an extremely oppressive environment to stifle their dissent, increase interference with Tibetan Buddhism, and inflict systematic and widespread use of arbitrary detention and torture.

Meanwhile, fourteen years have passed since the last of the contacts between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government, which aimed to resolve the Tibet conflict. Beijing's plan seems to be to eschew dialogue while cementing its control.

American interest

The situation in Tibet is contrary to the fundamental values of human rights and democracy espoused by the United States. More than 60 years after the PRC's invasion and occupation of Tibet, its rule remains completely illegitimate in the eyes of the Tibetan people, whose political, ethnic, social, cultural and religious identity is historically distinct from the Chinese.

Meanwhile, Tibetan resistance to Beijing's decades-long campaign to erode the Tibetan people's civilization remains overwhelmingly nonviolent. This is largely due to the leadership provided by the Dalai Lama. This peaceful approach is one of the key elements in the widespread public support that the Tibetan people enjoy among the American public.



The Dalai Lama speaks at a Congressional Human Rights Caucus event on September 21, 1987, where he presented his Five Point Peace Plan

Tibet also lies within the parameters of US security interests; more than human rights are at stake. Tibet occupies a geostrategic location, representing an Asian fault zone of clashing interests and big power politics. Russia, China and British India vied with each other in the past for control of Tibet. To this day tensions rise between China and India due to the PRC's occupation of Tibet. This holds implications for the Indo-Pacific region as well as potential global consequences. A stable Tibet would contribute greatly to peace in this sensitive region.

The importance of Tibet in US-China relations argues for a vigorous approach from the new Administration. In a change from the days when the United States had no coherent formalized policy toward Tibet and the Dalai Lama, today there is an institutionalized position that provides for both programmatic and policy support. American presidential administrations are mandated to implement American law which supports the Tibetan people.

Today, multiple reinforcing laws should define the next administration's approach to the Tibet conflict. In accordance with the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901) the United States of America must continue efforts to preserve and promote the "unique religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage" of the Tibetan people, ask China "to respect fully their human rights and civil liberties," and encourage a peaceful resolution to the Tibetan dispute.

Additionally, these laws reflect the US position on Tibet and the Dalai Lama: the Congressional Gold Medal to H.H. the Dalai Lama 2007 (PL 109-287; 31 U.S.C. 5111), the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 (PL 115-330), the Tibetan Policy & Support Act of 2020 (PL 116-260), and the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act of 2024 (PL 118-70).

Specifically, the following aspects of the Tibetan conflict (or situation) require the new administration's policy formulation and implementation:

US Policy: Supporting unconditional dialogue to resolve Tibet dispute

Since 1979, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama first visited the United States, there has been a consistent move towards overt American support for the Tibetan people. Many of the initiatives in recent decades have been led by Congress. Reflecting the broad support for Tibet among the American public, Congress continues to display a consistent bipartisan support when it came to Tibet-related matters.

As reiterated in the most recent Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which became law on July 12, 2024, the "long-standing policy of the United States (is) to encourage meaningful and

direct dialogue between representatives of the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama, his or her representatives, or democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community, without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences."

The United States actively supported the Tibetan-Chinese dialogue process, including the nine rounds of talks held between 2002 and 2010. Since then, the Chinese authorities have not resumed the process. Every year, the administration must report to Congress on the state of the Tibetan-Chinese negotiations. In the past, these annual reports highlighted the problems in Tibet and rightly outlined that "the lack of resolution of these problems leads to greater tensions inside China and will be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States and other nations."

On Aug. 21, 2024, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Uzra Zeya during her meeting with the Dalai Lama in New York City, "reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage."

The United States must encourage China to create conditions for a sustainable settlement, which is essential to the long-term stability of the region. Lodi Gyari, who led the Dalai Lama's delegation in the talks with China between 2002 and 2010 wrote in 2014, "... American Presidents, Cabinet members and Members of Congress have continuously encouraged the Chinese government to engage in a dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representatives. President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush gave the Tibet issue high priority, and I worked very closely with their senior aides. Their involvement was of immense value and helped sustain our dialogue with the Chinese government."

Clarity in US policy assertions on Tibet

The most recently codified law, the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, now provides clarity on how the administration should define United States policies on different aspects of Tibet, particularly on the dialogue process and history. The bill, popularly called Resolve Tibet Act, asserts that "the dispute between Tibet and the People's Republic of China must be resolved in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Charter, by peaceful means, through dialogue without preconditions."

It also calls on China to "cease its propagation of disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama."

Recent administrations have maintained that they consider Tibet to be a part of the People's Republic of

China. However, this does not accord with history and the State Department has never been able to provide a sound historical basis for the assertion. It has also sparked opposition from Congress, which has included a prohibition against funds appropriated to the State Department to be used to produce any map or document that depicts Tibet as a part of China.

The Resolve Tibet Act clarifies that at no time has the US recognized Tibet to be part of China “since ancient times,” a key component to the PRC’s stated claim over Tibet.

Policy on reincarnation of the Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama will be 90 years old in July 2025 when a new President takes office. He remains in good health. However, his level of active involvement in the Tibet issue will be reduced as he ages.

The strong bond between the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people is deeply grounded in centuries of history and has not been broken despite China’s propaganda machine. The Dalai Lama continues to enjoy enormous respect and loyalty inside Tibet. Internationally, he remains one of the most respected religious leaders on the world stage.

Beijing’s continued disregard for religious freedom and its systematic effort to claim authority over Tibetan Buddhist traditions, including the reincarnation system, particularly that of the Dalai Lama, is a matter of paramount significance to followers, many of whom are American citizens. The Dalai Lama’s succession is essential to the Tibetan people, represents a key test for the respect of religious freedom worldwide and is therefore vital to US national interests.

The Tibetan Policy & Support Act of 2020 provides clear direction for the new Administration on Tibetan religious freedom, particularly on the issue of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama:

- (1) decisions regarding the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders are exclusively spiritual matters that should be made by the appropriate religious authorities within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and in the context of the will of practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism;
 - (2) the wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama, including any written instructions, should play a key role in the selection, education, and veneration of a future 15th Dalai Lama; and
 - (3) interference by the Government of the People’s Republic of China or any other government in the process of recognizing a successor or reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama and any future Dalai Lamas would represent a clear abuse of the right to religious freedom of Tibetan Buddhists and the Tibetan people.
- (c) Holding Chinese Officials Responsible for Religious Freedom Abuses Targeting Tibetan Buddhists.—It is the policy of the United States to take all appropriate measures to hold accountable senior officials of the

Government of the People’s Republic of China or the Chinese Communist Party who directly interfere with the identification and installation of the future 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism, successor to the 14th Dalai Lama, including by—
(1) imposing sanctions pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 2656 note); and
(2) prohibiting admission to the United States under section 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(G)).

Implement the principle of reciprocity on Tibet

The Chinese government promotes Tibet as being open to the world. This flies in the face of reality. Tibet remains closed to outsiders. The Chinese government’s current strategy is to encourage Chinese tourists to visit Tibet and allow only a select few international visitors, quite a few of which are social media content creators. These people are used to drive the Chinese narrative on Tibet.

In contrast, multiple requests for visits of American diplomatic personnel and intergovernmental organizations have been refused. Scholars are routinely denied visas because of their writing, and international journalists thrown out of the PRC because they were critical of its policies in Tibet.

These delegations are an integral part of China’s sophisticated strategic disinformation operations, designed to manipulate and influence perceptions of target audiences in Western countries on Tibet and the Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan overseas community is frequently subjected to harassment, monitoring, and cyberattacks carried out by the Chinese government. It is incumbent upon the United States government and the international community to insist upon the principle of reciprocity in its dealings with the PRC, to address the asymmetry of authoritarian influence in Tibet. The concept of reciprocity is increasingly being cited by governments as an instrument for countering China’s one-way influence operations and in order to seek compliance with international standards and long-term mutual obligations.

The United States and some European governments have referred to reciprocity as a key principle in terms of their bilateral relations with the PRC. Acknowledging that reciprocity is an important tenet of international relations, members of Congress introduced and passed bipartisan legislation, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, to promote freedom of movement and an open and accessible Tibet for American citizens and for Tibetans themselves, including the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan water and international security

Tibet, which is coterminous with the Tibetan plateau, is the third largest repository of fresh water after the South and North Pole. Eight of the major rivers that

serve 1.8 billion people across Asia originate in Tibet. The PRC's plan to construct dozens of hydroelectric dams and other infrastructure over the next decades presents a direct threat to many downstream countries and is a cause of increasing regional volatility.

Underlying the importance of water on the Tibetan plateau, the TPSA mandates the Administration "to encourage a regional framework on water security through mechanisms such as the Lower Mekong Initiative, to facilitate cooperative agreements among all riparian nations that would promote transparency, sharing of information, pollution regulation, and arrangements on impounding and diversion of waters that originate on the Tibetan Plateau."

Highlighting the importance of the strategic location of Tibet to the global environmental conditions, TPSA further says that the Administration should "monitor the environment on the Tibetan Plateau, including glacial retreat, temperature rise, and carbon levels, in order to promote a greater understanding of the effects on permafrost, river flows, grasslands and desertification, and the monsoon cycle".

Where do the candidates and parties stand on Tibet?

On foreign policy, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Israeli assault on Gaza have been dominant in the campaign so far. China has remained peripheral, mainly coming into focus in regard to trade issues and its policies toward Taiwan.

During every presidential election cycle, both the Democratic and the Republican parties release their platforms. These are considered as reflecting their respective policy priorities and positions on domestic and foreign affairs. Even though these documents are considered non-binding to the presidential candidates, the fact that efforts are made to form platform committees, amend wording, and formally adopt them, do indicate that they carry weight.

This year's platforms by both parties do not contain any specific reference to Tibet, in contrast to some previous platforms. The Democratic Party Platform, which was adopted by the Platform Committee before Kamala Harris became the nominee, states that China is "America's most consequential strategic competitor." The Republican platform says "countering China" will be one of the ways the party will "return peace."

Both the platforms focus on trade relations with China. The Republican platform says, "Republicans will revoke China's Most Favored Nation status." The Democratic platform says, "we seek to "de-risk" and diversify the economic relationship between our countries, not decouple. We will protect a targeted number of sensitive technologies with focused restrictions, creating a "small yard and a high fence" that preserves our national security."

In their acceptance speeches at their respective party conventions, Trump and Harris made only tangential reference to China. In the case of Harris she refers to China while talking about AI and space saying, "I will make sure that we lead the world into the future on space and artificial intelligence; that America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century; and that we strengthen, not abdicate, our global leadership."

Trump's reference to China is on trade saying, "I will bring auto jobs back to our country, through the proper use of taxes, tariffs, and incentives, and will not allow massive auto manufacturing plants to be built in Mexico, China, or other countries..." Neither of the candidates talk about freedom and human rights in Tibet and China.

The new administration is congressionally mandated to articulate a China policy that frames the lack of a solution on Tibet as an impediment to more harmonious relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

The State Department has responsibility to coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward a negotiated settlement of the Tibetan issue. It should appoint a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the earliest and work with like-minded countries, including the EU, in undertaking coordinated initiatives to help alleviate the plight of the Tibetan people and to find a lasting solution to the issue. In the U.S.-EU Summit Joint Statement in October, 2023, the two committed to "keep voicing our concerns" about Tibet.

Sinification of Buddhism: China's manipulative quest for control

09 September 2024, [The Border Lens](#), Bidhayak Das

China's efforts to claim Buddhism's origins clash with millions of Buddhists' enduring connection to India.

As China pushes forward with its efforts to establish a Chinese variant of Buddhism, it attempts to stake a claim on the very origins of the religion. However, for millions of Buddhists across the world, the history of Buddhism's birth in India remains untouchable. "India will always be the centre of Buddhism for us—the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment," says Tswewang Dorzi, a Tibetan Buddhist scholar from Dharamshala. Dorzi's conviction underscores the deep spiritual and historical connection that Buddhists have with India, where the roots of their faith lie.

But does this mean that China's attempts to Sinify Buddhism are doomed to fail? "Perhaps," says Dorzi, though he acknowledges that the Chinese campaign to reshape the religion's narrative is relentless. He highlights how India's legacy in the growth of Buddhism, particularly through figures like

Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoche, is inseparable from the religion itself. Known in Tibetan as Slob-dpon (Teacher) or Padma 'Byung-gnas (Lotus Born), Padmasambhava's influence stretches across the high Himalayas. His teachings have deeply resonated with communities in the region known as Monyul, which extends from the Tibetan plateau into India. These communities, largely followers of Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved the spiritual traditions connected to the great guru.

Dorzi points out that the Eastern Himalayas, spanning regions under the jurisdiction of Nepal, India, Bhutan, and China (Tibet), are home to a rich diversity of communities, each with their own religious practices, including Tibetan Buddhism. Scholars have long explored how Padmasambhava spread Vajrayana, or Tantric Buddhism, across these regions, cementing India's connection to this spiritual path. Professor Jigme Yeshe Lama of the Kolkata University, for instance, writes about how Padmasambhava, an Indian tantric adept born in the Swat Valley—modern-day Pakistan—brought Vajrayana Buddhism to Tibet and founded the Nyingmapa school. "This history is unchangeable," Dorzi affirms, calling out the Chinese government for its hypocrisy in attempting to stake a claim on Padmasambhava's legacy.

China's efforts to control the narrative of Buddhism, particularly Tibetan Buddhism, have included acts of destruction aimed at erasing the tangible symbols of this heritage. According to reports in Free Tibet in January 2022, Chinese authorities in Drago County demolished a 45-foot bronze statue of Padmasambhava, which stood outside Chanang Monastery in Nyimo Township. The report further adds that this act followed an earlier incident where a 99-foot Buddha statue in Sengdeng Village was similarly destroyed under the watch of paramilitary troops.

These acts of aggression are not isolated. As per reports coming out of Tibet in 2007, statues of Padmasambhava were targeted in Ngari Darchen, Burang County, and Kardze County, among other areas within Tibet. These demolitions, orchestrated by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) under the command of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), reflect a broader strategy to erase the teachings and influence of Padmasambhava, whose spiritual legacy challenges China's narrative.

Despite these aggressive efforts, scholars like Dorzi and others insist that China's actions cannot erase the rich history of Buddhism's spread from India. Yet, China's ambitions to become the global centre for Buddhism, through initiatives like Buddhist diplomacy, are seen as a potential disruptor. Dorzi notes that China has made significant inroads in countries such as Sri Lanka and throughout Southeast Asia, where they have formed alliances with Buddhist groups that are

economically dependent on Beijing. "These relationships could shift the balance in China's favour," he warns.

The World Buddhist Forum: A political tool disguised as religious dialogue

One of China's most prominent platforms for this strategy is the World Buddhist Forum (WBF), which is set to convene its sixth session in Ningbo this October. Although ostensibly a platform for spiritual exchange, the WBF is increasingly viewed as a vehicle for China's political agenda. A Tibetan youth describes it as "an instrument of state control," pointing out how the forum, under the guise of promoting world peace, is being used to advance the Sinification of Buddhism. Launched in 2006, the WBF has grown into the largest multilateral platform for Buddhist dialogue, yet its noble goals of peace and well-being are overshadowed by China's deeper political motives.

The Chinese government's narrative posits that Buddhism, particularly Tibetan Buddhism, is fundamentally Chinese. This attempt to rewrite history erases the contributions of other cultures, particularly India, which remains central to the origins of the religion. At a 2021 National Conference on religious affairs, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasised the necessity for religions in China to embrace a distinctly Chinese character. This initiative is part of China's broader agenda to mould Buddhism in line with the CCP's political goals. Buddhism's reputation as a doctrine of peace and non-violence makes it an appealing instrument for China's diplomatic influence, particularly as it seeks to counter perceptions of secularism within the CCP.

China efforts at Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism which has gone beyond its borders has been excellently portrayed by a report in the Morung Express which highlights how Beijing has also been promoting sacred Buddhist sites and figures such as Avalokitesvara, Amitabha, and Manjushri to attract pilgrims and tourists. The report further adds that this effort includes replicating Buddhist holy sites in India, such as the Brahma Palace in Wuxi, which is designed to resemble Rajgir. Moreover, China has been backing the Shugden faction of the Gelug School, providing financial support such as in Bangladesh through initiatives like the annual Dipankar Atisha Peace Award. These actions are not limited to China's borders; Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are all key targets of China's Buddhist diplomacy.

In Pakistan, China has focused on promoting the Gandhara trail, which connects Buddhist sites in Pakistan to South Korea and Japan. According to reports China is actively positioning Pakistan as a key destination for Buddhist pilgrimage and a historical centre for international Buddhists.

The Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism: A threat to religious freedom

China's manipulation of Buddhism is not merely an attempt to claim historical legitimacy; it is central to the CCP's broader policy of Sinification. This policy seeks to reshape all aspects of religious life in China to align with the ideologies of the CCP. Tibetan Buddhism, with its deep cultural ties to Tibet, poses a direct challenge to this agenda. The CCP views Tibetan Buddhism's influence as a threat to its control over the region and, by extension, to its authority. Consequently, efforts to co-opt and Sinify Tibetan Buddhism have intensified in recent years.

In March 2024, during China's Two Sessions, Wang Huning, head of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), reaffirmed the importance Beijing's attaches to promoting the Sinification of Tibetan Buddhism. This campaign, which has been ongoing since Xi Jinping's announcement in 2012, is about stripping the religion of its unique characteristics and repurposing it as a tool of state control. The Buddhist Association of China (BAC), once a non-political organization, has now become a key instrument of this agenda, explicitly supporting the CCP's directives to align religious practices with socialist principles and Xi Jinping Thought.

As the international Buddhist community gathers in Ningbo for the upcoming World Buddhist Forum, it is crucial to confront the reality of China's attempts to rewrite Buddhism's history. What should be a forum for spiritual growth and dialogue has become a tool for state propaganda. Failing to recognize this could result in the further erosion of religious freedom and the distortion of one of the world's oldest and most profound religions.

China's ambitions to reshape Buddhism for its own political gains may seem insidious, but the global Buddhist community remains steadfast in its reverence for the true origins of the faith. For all the CCP's efforts to promote China as the seat of Buddhism, the world's Buddhists continue to look to India as the birthplace of their religion. Sites such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda hold spiritual significance that no state-sponsored narrative can erase. In the end, China's efforts to rewrite the history of Buddhism may disrupt the present, but they cannot erase the indelible link between Buddhism and its true origins—the forgotten story of India's enduring role in the religion's past, present, and future.

Attempts to keep up exchanges between Taiwanese, Chinese face obstacles

09 September 2024, [VOA](#), William Yang

Efforts to maintain exchanges between Taiwanese and Chinese citizens face new challenges after Beijing last month sentenced a Taiwanese activist to nine years in jail, a move that analysts say will create a chilling effect within Taiwan's civil society.

On September 6, China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) confirmed that a court in the eastern city of Wenzhou earlier had sentenced Taiwanese political activist Yang Chih-yuan to nine years in jail under secession charges. TAO said Yang, who was arrested in 2022 while teaching and participating in competitions for the board game Go, has long been involved in secessionist activities, playing a key role in organizations that advocate Taiwan's independence. "His acts are egregious and the court reached the decision according to law," the office said in a statement.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, which oversees cross-strait exchanges, condemned the Chinese court's ruling and asked Beijing to make public the verdict and the evidence that supports the charges.

"Beijing is trying to use Yang's case to intimidate Taiwanese people and use the pretext of penalizing Taiwan independence as a way to exercise long-arm jurisdiction," the MAC wrote in a statement released last week.

Yang's case marks the first time that China used secession charges against Taiwanese people. It comes after Beijing in June introduced 22 new guidelines to punish what they called "die-hard Taiwan independence activists." The maximum sentence could be the death penalty.

Analysts say the sentencing of Yang represents Beijing's attempt to take a "more hardline stance" against Taiwanese who promote the island's sovereignty. His case "shows that Beijing means business when it comes to using legal instruments to crack down on what it regards as 'separatism,'" said J. Michael Cole, a Taipei-based senior fellow at the Global Taiwan Institute.

"This will inevitably affect people-to-people and civil society exchanges [between Taiwan and China,]" Cole told VOA in a written statement.

Indefinite delay of cross-strait academic exchanges, city-to-city forum

Meanwhile, the scheduled visits by two academic delegations from China's Xiamen University have reportedly been postponed as Taiwanese authorities review their paperwork.

While some local media outlets said the postponement may be caused by "obstacles" imposed by Taiwanese authorities, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said the review of the Chinese delegations' applications is based on existing procedures, adding

that Taipei has no intention to prevent certain groups from visiting Taiwan.

Despite clarification from Taiwanese officials, China's state-run tabloid *Global Times* characterized the postponement as the Taiwanese government's attempt to "block" the Chinese delegations from visiting Taiwan.

"The Xiamen University delegations have completed the preparations in terms of formalities and materials, but related 'security authorities' in Taiwan have put 'a technical hold' in place while they carry out a review," Zhang Wensheng, deputy dean of the Taiwan Research Institute at Xiamen University, told the *Global Times* in an interview.

Some experts say the delay in the Chinese delegation's trips to Taiwan shows the Taiwanese government may be reviewing how to facilitate cross-strait exchanges amid growing military and political pressure from Beijing.

"In light of Beijing's heightened pressure against Taiwan, the Taiwanese government may be reviewing what might be a more reciprocal approach to manage cross-strait academic exchanges," Wen-ti Sung, a Taipei-based political scientist for the Australian National University, told VOA by phone.

In addition to the delay of cross-strait academic exchanges, the annual Shanghai-Taipei City Forum, which remains one of the few occasions for municipal officials from Taiwan and China to meet, has yet to announce a date for a potential 2024 gathering.

When asked in August about the forum, Taipei Mayor Chiang Wan-an told Taiwanese media outlets that at a time when cross-strait tensions are high, it is more necessary for Taiwan and China to maintain communication.

"Such delays serve as a clear reminder that even lower-level engagement is difficult to sustain when one side rejects core aspects of the other's existence," Timothy Rich, a political scientist at Western Kentucky University, told VOA in a written response.

Since Taiwan President Lai Ching-te took office in May, Beijing has increased military pressure against Taiwan.

Against this backdrop, Cole in Taipei said the lack of engagement between Taipei and Beijing may increase the risks of miscalculation, which could lead to accidents and escalation.

In his view, Beijing will likely maintain a two-pronged approach against Taiwan in the near future. They will uphold "a suspension of official dialogue with the Taiwanese government led by the Democratic Progressive Party while keeping the door open to sub-state interaction with other elements of Taiwan's society, with the aim of dividing both," he told VOA.

EU-China-India: Three to tango?

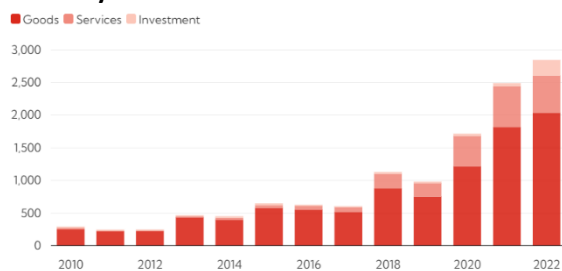
09 September 2024, [ORF](#), Swati Prabhu

With perceptible reliance in terms of trade in goods and services, the EU, India and China are dependent on each other, even as the EU attempts to reconfigure its relationship with China.

Disrupted global context

Globally, surging economic fragmentation in the form of trade barriers, restrictions, and sanctions not only increases the gap in financing for sustainable development, but also makes developing countries more fragile, vulnerable and prone to frequent meltdowns. The ongoing *polycrisis* has resulted in an increase in trade protectionism. Despite repeated reiterations by nation-states underscoring the need for building greater cooperation and robust partnerships, economic fragmentation is on the rise. As per the International Monetary Fund (IMF) new trade barriers, that were introduced on an annual basis, has almost tripled since 2019 to about 3,000 in 2023 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of trade restrictions imposed annually worldwide



Source: *Global Trade Alert & IMF*

Alongside, talks of decoupling, interrupted capital flows, increasing threat posed to the digital space, and uneven distribution of income are adding to the mounting challenges of global economic integration. As societies become more digitally-enabled and technology-driven, there are also heightened concerns about cyber-security, trade wars, surveillance, and sabotage of infrastructural capacities. This gains further traction in light of increasing Chinese footprints in artificial intelligence (AI), procuring critical raw minerals, securing energy sources, strengthening its maritime presence in the South China Sea and, subsequently, aiming to acquire global supremacy. Further, conflicts breaking out across the globe, be it Ukraine or the Gaza Strip, has resulted in stringent economic sanctions by several powers including the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) on Russia and also China.

Being one of the largest development providers in the world, the EU is known for its top-notch standards, good regulatory mechanisms, and administrative practices.

Moreover, official development assistance (ODA) equally forms a critical component in supporting the development trajectories of several low-income and other developing economies. Yet, actual on-ground implications of development cooperation continue to be fuzzy. Against this backdrop, geopolitical contestations, such as the intensifying Sino-US rivalry, are now reaching the brink of extreme polarisation in the international landscape. Naturally, the EU is unnerved and finds itself in a sticky spot. Being one of the largest development providers in the world, the EU is known for its top-notch standards, good regulatory mechanisms, and administrative practices. But even after two decades of inking its strategic partnership with India, the true potential of this partnerships remains untapped. On the other hand, the EU's relationship with China has weathered several phases from a 'competitor' and a 'systemic rival', to 'decoupling' and finally 'derisking'. Ambiguous as it seems, it lacks a comprehensive and long-term strategy of tackling China's growing power in multiple domains.

India & China: Two different tales of development

As the international development architecture witnesses an evolution of sorts, the rise of the global South like India and China is pertinent. Attempting to ably shoulder the responsibility of providing technical and humanitarian support towards establishing cooperative frameworks is their way of constructing their own development narrative. However, clubbing New Delhi and Beijing together as like-minded drivers of South-South cooperation (SSC) may not be correct. With different perspectives and praxis, China's development cooperation model is based on a market imperialist strategy aiming to expand its geographic outreach and establish its economic linkages by creating debts and dependencies. Although, post the COVID-19 pandemic, Beijing is attempting to refurbish its global image by stepping into softer sectors like humanitarian development cooperation, sustainable development, climate change, poverty reduction, and creating resilient food supply chains. But its foundational development modality remains the same. In this sense, the recently concluded 24th EU-China Summit in December 2023 yet again failed to bear any constructive results between the two.

With different perspectives and praxis, China's development cooperation model is based on a market imperialist strategy aiming to expand its geographic outreach and establish its economic linkages by creating debts and dependencies.

India's stance to put forth the concerns and voices of the Global South has been acknowledged as a welcome step by the advanced economies, including the EU. By raising issues of food, fuel and fertiliser, India has not only spoken for itself but also on behalf of the diverse set of developing economies who do not

find the platform or space to voice their concerns. Also, in the recently concluded 3rd Voice of the Global South Summit, India's shared vision of establishing a four-fold 'global development compact' for realising the SDGs is a significant step.

Further, New Delhi's development partnerships have come to occupy a pivotal portion of its development diplomacy in recent years. With an explicit recognition for diversifying sources, avenues and alternatives models of development, India is trying to put its best foot forward towards pushing the sustainability narrative. However, relations between India and China have remained unsteady and tumultuous over the years. Also, India's trade dependence on both China and the EU has increased significantly. According to UNCTAD, India's trade reliance on China and EU has increased by 1.2 per cent each in 2023 and it is expected to rise further i.e., by 2 per cent in the first quarter of 2024.

A baffled Brussels

With such perceptible reliance in terms of trade in goods and services, the EU, India and China are obviously quite dependent on each other. However, for EU to overlook either one of them is difficult and not recommended. Representing two primary engines of the Southern economies and enjoying high levels of demography, India and China are, in fact, the pivotal cogs in the development wheel. The EU certainly cannot afford to ignore either India or China if it has to sustain its presence and relevance in today's geostrategic and geoeconomics world. At the same time, it needs to choose its partners wisely. Given India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or One Earth, One Family, One Future, and its attempts to create a shared vision for charting the development journey of the Global South, Brussels must be receptive of such positive engagements. At the same time, there is an alarming need for the EU to reassess and reconfigure its China position, which can potentially balance its security ambitions with its economic aspirations. With tensions breaking out at the drop of the hat in contemporary times, formulating a robust, comprehensive, clear and long-term China strategy should be high on the EU's to-do list. It is not to say that a strategy will always safeguard Brussels from any further mistrust or hostilities, but it will certainly provide a sense of direction to its global leadership.

China and India in the multipolar global order

09 September 2024, [The Express Tribune](#), Shahih Javed Burki

There is a growing fear of China among the administrations that have come to power in Washington since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was in 1991 that the USSR broke into several geographic pieces. While the states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia parted company with Moscow, China began to grow its economy and increase its military strength. In the early 1980s while working in the World Bank I had coined the term "a multipolar world". I was mocked by several commentators for using the term. I was reminded that in English language there were only two poles, north and south. Multipolar world did not make any grammatical sense.

While that may have been the case, there is no denying the fact that there are now several centres of economic activity around the globe. Most of these have their spheres of influence. Often these overlap, which gives rise to conflict. This is the case in Eastern Europe, East Asia and the Middle East. These involve in some way or the other the United States. Washington is helping Ukraine in Eastern Europe to push back Russia which invaded its neighbouring country to recreate what was once Greater Russia. In the Middle East, Washington is aiding Israel to put down the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In East Asia, Washington is partnering with several states to check the rise of China. It is also working with India to develop a counter power to China. Today I will discuss whether India is able to counter the growing influence of China.

If global presence is measured in terms of the size of the population, India has overtaken China and is now the world's most populous country. It also has a higher rate of population growth than China. Beijing now must deal with the problem that has resulted in rapidly aging people and decline in the rate of increase in population. These demographic challenges have severe economic consequences. Countries need, if not growing than at least steady population size, to maintain reasonable rates of economic growth. With aging comes pressure on public funds. It means diverting public resources from investment in economic development and social improvement to take care of the old.

As India grows and diversifies its economy, it has become more dependent on China rather than develop independently and compete with the Asian economic giant. The subject of growing Indian dependence on China was covered in an in-depth analysis by Karishma Mehrotra in an article written for The Washington Post. The analysis was published under the title 'India's growing reliance on China poses

challenge for U.S. trade strategy'. He wrote: "American businesses looking to reduce their reliance on China have been eyeing India in the past few years as a new manufacturing hub - and as a hedge against potential disruptions in Chinese supply chains by rising geopolitical tensions or another pandemic. But as India has amped its production of goods like smartphones, solar panels and medicine, the Indian economy itself has become dependent on Chinese imports, in particular for the components that go into these products. This dynamic serves as a reality check for U.S. policymakers who have been urgently promoting efforts to diversify supply chains away from Chinese factories and 'de-risk' the commercial relationship with China."

Will the Western companies - especially those based in the United States - be successful in linking with the enterprises in India, bypassing China. The answer is no, since India is heavily dependent on China for parts and components it needs for its finished products. "Unless China stops being the third party from where components come in and we just assemble, that de-risking is not going to happen for any country producing in India," said Sriparna Pathak, an associate professor at Jindal University focusing on India-China relations. According to Global Traded Research Institute, GTRI, an Indian think tank, imports from China include finished products as well as intermediate goods. Imports from China have been growing twice as fast as those overall and now make up a third of Indian imports. India's domestic industry is deeply dependent on the parts and components that are imported from China and go into final products. Nearly two-thirds of the Indian imports of electronic components such as circuit boards and batteries now come from China, says the Confederation of Indian Industry. According to the data released by GTRI, the volume of such Chinese imports has tripled during the past five years.

India has a well-developed pharmaceutical industry. The world's reliance on Indian medicines and vaccines became clear during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, even in this industry, India relies on ingredients from China. According to GTRI, imports from China of intermediate drug products increased by more than one-half during the buildup related to the pandemic. American reliance on solar power to meet what it saw as its obligation to reduce the emission of greenhouse houses to reduce the impact on global warming was fed by imports of solar panels from China. However, when reducing the reliance on imports from China became a priority, the United States sought inputs from India. As the switch occurred, it was revealed that India sourced between half of its solar components - such as modules, cells, wafers solar glass - from China between 2021 and 2023.

According to senior America officials who spoke to Mehrotra, "We have taken a more practical view that in order to effectively diversify, the first step is to get a foothold in the parts of this supply chain where you can diversify today. And then from there you can go upstream." That is where India enters the American strategy to delink as much as possible from China. But as already discussed, India's reliance on China is increasing even in the industries in which it has had traditional advantage. To support the manufacture of Indian textiles and garments, manufacturers in the country have been ramping up imports of yarn and fabric from China. Even in the fast-growing automobile industry, India has been increasing its imports from vehicle parts and accessories from China. This is the case in particular in the electric vehicles sector. For instance, India has been successful in switching the important passenger-carrying rickshaws from using diesel to being powered by electricity.

Third plenum inspires renewed vitality into China's modernization drive

08 September 2024, [Global Times](#), Wang Changlin

The resolution adopted by the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee underscores a strong commitment to comprehensively deepening reforms to further advance Chinese modernization. The global community is closely watching China's ongoing efforts to promote high-quality economic development and high-standard opening-up, and the potential impacts on the world economy. The Global Times invited Wang Changlin, vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to share his insights.

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) adopted a resolution on further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization at its third plenary session held from July 15 to 18 in Beijing. The resolution emphasized the need to further deepen reform comprehensively with a view to advancing Chinese modernization.

Modernization is a comprehensive and profound transformation of economic and social development, as well as a profound transformation of the system and mechanism.

Modernization refers to the profound transformation of social production methods and human lifestyles, triggered by the rapid rise in productivity since the industrial revolution. It is a historical process of rapid increase in social material wealth, promoting the profound transformation of traditional society into modern society.

Its main features include highly developed productivity, leading technological innovation capabilities, effective national governance, urban-

rural integrated society structure, high-level public services, safe and beautiful ecological environment, and high levels of civic literacy.

The practice of global modernization fully proves that science and industrial revolution are the fundamental driving forces for modernization. For a country or region to achieve modernization, it must seize the opportunities of technological revolution and vigorously develop advanced productive forces. Meanwhile, institutional and cultural innovation is the guarantee for the development of modernization. The modernization of national governance system and governance capacity is not only an important part of comprehensive and complete modernization, but also a key factor and necessary condition for a country to walk a smooth path toward modernization.

Advancing Chinese modernization

Chinese modernization is continuously advancing and will open broad prospects in the process of reform and opening-up.

Reform and opening-up is the crucial policies for China to move with the times in great strides. Over the past 40 years, reform and opening-up have emerged as the defining symbol, the most widely accepted consensus, and the most remarkable spirit of contemporary China.

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, historic achievements and progress have been made in the cause of the Party and the country, relying on reform and opening-up.

China has promoted high-quality economic development with supply-side structural reform at its center, resolutely expanded high-level opening-up, decisively eliminated a range of systemic and institutional drawbacks, and achieved the transformation from partial exploration and breakthrough to systemic integration and comprehensive deepening in reform.

The basic institutional framework in various fields has been basically established, many areas have undergone historic progresses, systemic reshaping, and overall reconstruction.

The level of modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity has been further improved, providing a strong institutional guarantee for the comprehensive construction of a moderately prosperous society, promoting China's economy to embark on the path of high-quality development, and continuously enhancing the sense of gain, happiness, and security of the people. China has embarked on a new journey to comprehensively build a socialist modernized country.

On this new journey, China must continue to create new opportunities in building Chinese modernization, with a strong reliance on reform and opening-up. Currently, China faces a crucial period of promoting the construction of a strong country and national

rejuvenation through the comprehensive advancement of Chinese modernization.

China needs to start from its own national conditions, follow the general laws of modernization, strive to explore an institutional system suitable for the development of Chinese modernization, continuously promote better adaptation between production relations and productive forces, national governance, and social development, and stimulate vitality and add momentum to Chinese modernization.

Opening broader prospects

To further deepen reform comprehensively, it is essential to focus closely on advancing the theme of Chinese modernization. It is essential to closely focus on the overall goal of upholding and improving the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernizing China's system and capacity for governance and further promote comprehensive deepening of reform.

China needs to focus on building a high-level socialist market economy system. A high-level socialist market economy system is an important guarantee for Chinese modernization.

Since the reform and opening-up, a key factor in the great success of China's economic development has been the establishment of a socialist market economy system. In the new journey of promoting Chinese modernization, China needs to prioritize the construction of a high-level socialist market economy system, further stimulate the internal driving force and innovation vitality across the whole of society. Only by working unswervingly both to consolidate and develop the public sector and to encourage, support and guide development of the non-public sector, building a unified national market, improving basic market economy institutions such as property rights protection, market access, fair competition, and social credit, can China better play the role of market mechanisms, optimize resource allocation efficiency and maximize benefits, accelerate the construction of a new development pattern, and promote high-quality development.

Prioritizing the improvement of people's quality of life is essential. A higher quality of life encompasses stable employment, greater satisfaction with income, reliable social security, and improved basic public services. These elements serve as both the foundation and the driving force behind economic development, playing a crucial role in fostering a high-quality economic cycle.

To advance Chinese modernization, it is crucial for China to align reforms in both the economic and social sectors.

This includes improving the income distribution system, strengthening the social security framework, and ensuring that basic public services are balanced and accessible to all. By doing so, China can achieve

meaningful progress in the comprehensive development of individuals and promote the common prosperity of its citizens.

India's commitment to Tibetan cause continues

08 September 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

India's support has been instrumental in preserving Tibetan culture and identity.

The Government of India's decision to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetan exiles in 1959 stands as a monumental act of compassion and political foresight. This gesture not only provided a safe haven for those fleeing persecution but also laid the foundation for a unique cultural and spiritual bond between India and the Tibetan community.

A SANCTUARY FOR THE DALAI LAMA AND TIBETAN EXILES

When the Dalai Lama fled Tibet following the Chinese invasion, India welcomed him with open arms. This act of amnesty was not merely a political manoeuvre but a profound humanitarian gesture. It underscored India's commitment to upholding human rights and protecting those in dire need. The Dalai Lama's presence in India has since become a symbol of resilience and hope for Tibetans worldwide.

PRESERVATION OF TIBETAN CULTURE AND IDENTITY

India's support has been instrumental in preserving Tibetan culture and identity. The establishment of Tibetan settlements across India, particularly in Dharamshala, has allowed the Tibetan community to thrive. These settlements have become centres of cultural preservation, where traditional Tibetan arts, crafts, and religious practices continue to flourish. The Central Tibetan Administration, based in Dharamshala, operates as a government-in-exile, working tirelessly to keep the Tibetan cause alive on the global stage.

EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

India has also played a crucial role in the educational and economic empowerment of Tibetan exiles. Numerous schools and institutions have been established to provide quality education to Tibetan children, ensuring that they grow up with a strong sense of their heritage while being

well-equipped to navigate the modern world. Additionally, vocational training programs and economic initiatives have helped many Tibetans achieve self-sufficiency and contribute positively to Indian society.

A BEACON OF HOPE

India's unwavering support for the Tibetan cause has not gone unnoticed. It has inspired other nations to recognize the plight of the Tibetan people and advocate for their rights. The Dalai Lama's teachings of peace, compassion, and non-violence have resonated

globally, further highlighting the significance of India's role in his journey.

CONCLUSION

The Government of India's decision to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama and Tibetan exiles was a defining moment in modern history. It showcased India's commitment to humanitarian values and its willingness to stand up for justice and freedom. As the Tibetan community continues to thrive in India, this enduring partnership serves as a testament to the power of compassion and the enduring spirit of the Tibetan people.

How Chinese J-20 fighters in Xinjiang and Tibet are a concern for India

08 September 2024, [Firstpost](#), Air Marshal Anil Chopra

Through the deployment of fifth-generation stealth J-20 fighter aircraft, China wants to increase its airpower along the Line of Actual Control. India, though well off to handle the threat, must be prepared.

India-China relations have been at lows since the Galwan skirmish four years ago. There is an uneasy calm at present and an attempt to re-engage, but a range of divergences persist between the two Asian giants. China is aggressively building infrastructure in Tibet and Xinjiang along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The Chinese want to add air power to the conflict.

China's People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) recently deployed fifth-generation stealth fighters J-20 at Shigatse Air Base around 300 kilometres north of the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Rafale air base at Hasimara and just 150 km from the LAC in Sikkim.

J-20s have operated at Hotan Airbase in Xinjiang, 350 km north of Pangong Tso Lake. And just 120 km from India's claim line in Aksai Chin. It is important to understand the PLAAF resources and capabilities at these two operationally important airbases.

Shigatse (Xigaze) Air Base

Shigatse (Xigaze) is the second largest city in Tibet Autonomous Region. Shigatse Airbase, also called the Shigatse Peace Airport, is a dual-use airfield in Tibet, around 180 kilometres west of Lhasa. Construction began in 1968 and was completed in 1973. PLAAF started operating there in 1973, and civil operations began in 2010. The airport is at an elevation of 3,782 m / 12,408 ft above mean sea level (AMSL) and is one of the highest airports in the world. It has two concrete runways, 09/27 with 5,000 m (16,404 ft) length, and the second, 07/25 with 3,000 m (9,843 ft) length. It has the longest public runway in the world; the only other with the same length is Ulyanovsk Vostochny Airport in south-west Russia.

The airport sees over 2,000 movements a year and around 200,000 passengers. Significant cargo is also

transported by air. The second (shorter) runway was constructed in 2017, and Guizhou WZ-7 "Soaring Dragon" UAVs were seen operating from here.

In May 2024, six J-20 stealth fighters were seen operating from the airbase. Also, at least eight J-10 aircraft and one KJ-500 Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft were seen parked at the airbase. The runway at Shigatse is very large, and therefore it will be able to partially neutralise the disadvantage of weight carriage during high-altitude airfield operations.

The Chengdu J-20 'Mighty Dragon'

The Chengdu J-20 is the Chinese twinjet stealth fifth-generation fighter aircraft. The aircraft has three variants: the initial production model J-20A, the thrust-vectoring J-20B, and the twin-seat aircraft teaming capable J-20S. The aircraft made its first flight in January 2011, and the first J-20 combat unit was formed in February 2018, making China the second country in the world and the first in Asia to field an operational stealth aircraft. Nearly 250 have been built as of date. J-20 squadrons have been allotted to all the theatre commands.

The aircraft has the Type 1475 (KLJ-5) active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar. Six electro-optic sensors provide omnidirectional IR coverage, which is fused with the radar picture for better situational awareness.

The aircraft is powered by a Chinese WS-10Cs engine with thrust of 142-147 kN and has serrated afterburner nozzles for enhanced rear-aspect stealth. The finally intended powerplant is the Shenyang WS-15 with a thrust of 180 kN.

The main weapon bay is capable of housing both long-range air-to-air missiles (PL-12, PL-15, PL-21) and precision-guided munitions. The two smaller lateral weapon bays can carry short-range AAMs (PL-10).

The estimated production rate was 40 to 50 airframes per year in 2022 and 100 to 120 airframes per year in 2023. PLA Air Force (PLAAF) currently has around 240 aircraft. The J-20 fleet could reach 1,000 aircraft by the early 2030s.

J-20S will be a twin-seat variant. The second operator to coordinate attack and reconnaissance missions and manage unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) as "loyal wingmen" such as the AVIC Dark Sword and stealth Hongdu GJ-11 UCAV.

Significance of Deployment at Shigatse

Shigatse is rather close to LAC near Sikkim (150 km) and IAF's Hasimara air base (300 km). Hasimara air base is in the Siliguri corridor, known as the Chicken's Neck. It is a stretch of land, 20-22 kilometres at the narrowest section. This geopolitical and geoeconomic corridor connects the seven northeastern states to the rest of India. The airbase is very significant as it houses one of the only two squadrons of the top-end IAF aircraft, the Rafale. If this base was to be neutralised

even for short periods, it would have implications for India.

If an unfriendly regime takes charge in Bangladesh, the complexity of the narrow Siliguri corridor increases. But then India has lived with much more hostile East Pakistan. Today, India is a much more powerful country, but so is China.

J-20 vs Rafale

The Indian Rafale is a 4.5-generation aircraft with front-hemisphere stealth. It is much better than J-20 in terms of weapons, electronic warfare, and aero-engine reliability. The J-20 has yet to leave its shores, even for an airshow. It has no combat experience. It has yet to exercise with any foreign air force. Rafale has been combat-proven for 20 years in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali, Libya, and Syria. IAF regularly exercises them with the top air forces of the world, most recently in "Red Flag" (USA) and the ongoing exercise "Tarang Shakti" in India.

IAF Options Against Shigatse

Even though Hashimara is the home base for Rafale, the aircraft will be in hardened shelters. Also, all the aircraft don't remain at home bases and move to operational detachments at other bases. Like China may attempt to neutralise IAF bases, India would do the same against Shigatse using fighter and missile strikes. India has much more air base options for aircraft dispersal and deployment, whereas Shigatse is a sole base in the region. Indian air bases are at much lower altitude and will allow a higher weapon and fuel load and therefore reach targets without refuelling.

The IAF has a significant number of Su-30 MKI squadrons in the eastern air bases (Tezpur and Chabua) with very significant air strike capabilities, including the deadly BrahMos missiles, among others. Clearly, IAF can launch many more missions than PLAAF. IAF will also deploy significant air defence systems, including the S-400.

Hotan Air Base

The Hotan airfield in the Xinjiang autonomous region was built in 1957, around the time China began building the contested Aksai Chin Highway (G219) through Indian Ladakh. The airfield elevation is 4,672 feet (1,424 m) AMSL. It has two parallel concrete runways (11/29) with a wide parallel taxiway 3,200 m (10,499 ft) long. The civil airport has a capacity of around 1.5 million passengers annually.

Hotan is just 130 km north of India's claim line and 270 km north-east of Karakoram Pass. It is 380 km north-east of Leh. These distances are not large for airborne platforms.

The Hotan airbase plays a critical role in Chinese military operations in the Ladakh area. Both runways at Hotan are now active. The second runway is longer than the original and is about 3,700 meters long. A number of military buildings and aprons have also

come up along with the new runway. The new runway would enable more sortie rates.

China is constantly upgrading its military preparedness since the standoff with India began in eastern Ladakh in 2020. Hotan is one of the seven strategic dual-use airports that have been upgraded since 2017. The Chinese air force has built an underground command and control centre at Hotan Airbase. There are hardened shelters and secure ammunition and fuel storage areas. There are PLA Rocket Forces (PLARF) dugout positions. Besides Hotan, Chinese have also carried out extensive upgrades at their airports in Ngari Gunsa.

Kashgar is another airbase a little further north in Xinjiang province. Nearly 300 km north of the Indian claim line and 600 kilometres from Leh. Elevation is 4,529 ft (1,380 m) AMSL, and it has a 10,499 ft long runway. There is significant PLAAF presence here with sunshelters and hardened blast pens. Fighter aircraft can be seen in satellite pictures.

J-20s at Hotan

Hotan had seen between 70 and 100 aircraft during the Galwan crisis. These included cruise-missile carrying and nuclear-capable H-6K bombers, J-11, J-10, UAVs, AEW&C, and EW platforms. The then still operationally greenhorn J-20s were also briefly seen at Hotan in 2020, during Galwan perhaps making show of flag missions, in the hope of intimidating. In June 2022, PLAAF once again stationed around two dozen frontline fighters, including the J-20, J-11, and J-10 at Hotan.

The Y-20 strategic transport aircraft has also been observed at the airbase. These would facilitate faster and larger entry of troops and equipment. AEW&C KJ-500 deployments have also been seen. One can see the UAV apron and hangars, and CH-5 UAV have been observed. There are SatCom antennas and vehicles.

IAF Response to J-20s in Hotan

The Rafale base is at Ambala. Most IAF fighters can operate from Leh. The MiG-29s were deployed in Thoise. A sizable number of Su-30 MKI can cover the Ladakh region. Immediately after the Galwan skirmish, IAF fighters began making significant day and night flights in the region. IAF Mirage-2000 and MiG-29s have been upgraded. A few more are being acquired. Meanwhile, India is building a full-fledged airbase in Nyoma, just 35 kilometres from the LAC.

Summary

India has been significantly upgrading the IAF airfields facing China. Also, the road-rail network, bridges, and tunnels are coming up at high speed. India has a significant inventory of surface and aerial strike weapons with significant range.

India has nearly 28 airfields overlooking the LAC, and most are at much lower altitudes vis-à-vis China, which are much fewer in numbers and at altitudes above 10,000 feet. Nearly 118 ongoing projects of India's

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) involve construction of airfields, bridges, and roads near the LAC.

IAF has seen much more combat, and its aircrew are exposed and trained for better employment tactics and concepts of operation, and most importantly, skill sets, experience, and combat readiness status. IAF has fought a war at Himalayan heights in Kargil. IAF is engaged in logistic support operations at the highest battleground in Siachen and elsewhere in Ladakh and north-east throughout the year.

Many Indian analysts behave like sceptics, painting doomsday scenarios relative to China. Actually, India is fairly well off, and IAF will be able to launch many more missions. Of course India must quickly build its fighter squadron numbers, more so because Pakistan could take an advantage and create a two-front threat situation.

India's own fifth-generation fighter, the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), is still under initial development and will take another 10-15 years to be operationally deployed with the IAF. While India must accelerate the Light Combat Aircraft and AMCA programs, which are currently facing delays, there is an urgent need to acquire the 114 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) gap to bolster the 4.5-generation inventory.

India must increase its satellite- and aircraft-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capability. It must increase the number of AEW&C and FRA quickly. Atmanirbharta in aerospace has to be accelerated. Time to act is now, lest we get left too far behind.

17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje to return to India After Exile?

08 September 2024, [Tibet Rights Collective](#)

Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Karmapa and one of Tibet's most prominent religious figures, may soon return to India after living in exile since December 1999. The Tibetan spiritual leader's recent meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Zurich, Switzerland, on August 25, has renewed hopes among his followers that he may be allowed to re-enter India soon. This meeting, the first in seven years, took place against a backdrop of growing anticipation regarding the Karmapa's return.

A Historical Background of Exile

The Karmapa is the head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, one of the oldest lineages of reincarnations in Tibet. He fled Tibet at the age of 14 in December 1999, citing a lack of religious freedom under Chinese rule. Seeking refuge in India, the Karmapa primarily resided at the Gyuto Monastery in Sidhbari, near Dharamsala, where he was treated as an "honoured guest" by the Indian government. For

many years, the Karmapa became an important religious figure for Tibetan exiles and for Indian followers, particularly in the northeastern state of Sikkim.

In May 2017, the Karmapa left India on a three-month visa for Europe. During his extended stay overseas, he acquired Dominican citizenship, which complicated his return to India.

Efforts to Bring the Karmapa Back

Sikkim, a state with a significant Buddhist population, has long been lobbying for the Karmapa's return. The Rumtek Monastery, located in the capital Gangtok, is his seat-in-exile. Recently, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang reached out to the Indian government to discuss the possibility of bringing the 17th Karmapa back to India and, specifically, to Sikkim. Tamang met with Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijju, in Delhi to push forward the matter.

While the meeting between the Karmapa and the Dalai Lama raised hopes, the exact details of their discussions remain undisclosed.

Visa Complications and the Road Ahead

The Karmapa's acquisition of Dominican citizenship means that he no longer qualifies for the Residential Certificate (RC) that India issues to Tibetan refugees. This legal complication prevents him from returning to India without obtaining a visa, which he must apply for at an Indian consulate or mission abroad.

The path to his return is further complicated by the fact that his case involves both religious and political sensitivities. Nevertheless, the efforts by Sikkim's leadership, as well as his meeting with the Dalai Lama, offer hope to the Karmapa's many followers in India. As discussions continue, the possibility of the 17th Karmapa's return to India remains a topic of interest, particularly for the Tibetan Buddhist community in Sikkim and beyond. His return would not only be a significant religious event but also a step towards resolving the complex political and legal issues surrounding his exile.

Conclusion

The 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, remains an influential figure both in Tibet and among the Tibetan diaspora in India. His return to India after years of exile has yet to be confirmed, but recent developments have given his followers new hope. The situation is being closely monitored by both religious and political leaders, with the prospect of the Karmapa's return continuing to resonate across India's spiritual landscape.

17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje: Hopes of Returning to India After Exile

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Why Planes Avoid Flying Over the Tibetan Plateau

07 September 2024, [Pune Pulse](#)

Extreme altitude, unpredictable weather, and rugged terrain make the "Roof of the World" hazardous for commercial aviation.

The Tibetan Plateau, often called the "Roof of the World," poses formidable challenges for aircraft, leading airlines to avoid flying over this area whenever possible. Despite modern advancements in aviation, the unique conditions of this elevated region, combined with geopolitical complexities, make it one of the most dangerous zones for flying.

The Tibetan Plateau is renowned for its high elevation, averaging over 4,500 meters (14,800 feet). This altitude reduces air density, which is crucial for the proper functioning of jet engines. Thinner air affects engine performance, requiring aircraft to work harder and potentially reducing efficiency. In emergencies, planes need to descend quickly to lower altitudes where oxygen levels are higher. However, over the plateau, there is little space to drop to a safe altitude due to the surrounding mountain peaks.

Harsh Weather Conditions

The weather over the plateau is notoriously harsh and unpredictable. Severe winds, thunderstorms, and turbulence are common, making navigation risky. Sudden changes in weather can lead to dangerous flying conditions, while storms pose further threats, particularly in areas with limited emergency landing options.

Rugged Terrain

The mountainous terrain adds another layer of danger. The plateau is home to peaks that exceed 7,000 meters (22,965 feet), including Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world. If a plane encounters mechanical trouble, the rugged landscape offers few places for safe emergency landings. The region's geography leaves little room for error.

Limited Infrastructure

The Tibetan Plateau's sparse population means there is limited aviation infrastructure. Fewer airports, air traffic control facilities, and navigational aids make it difficult for pilots to receive timely information or assistance during emergencies. Navigating the region

without sufficient ground support increases the risk for aircraft.

Geopolitical Tensions

Geopolitics further complicate flight routes over the plateau. The area lies at the heart of territorial disputes involving China, India and neighboring countries. Airspace restrictions and regulatory issues make it challenging for airlines to plan routes, often requiring them to detour around the region.

Several incidents underscore the risks of flying over the Tibetan Plateau. For example, in 1992, China Airlines Flight 358 experienced severe turbulence over the region, injuring passengers and crew. In 2002, a helicopter crash in the area claimed 19 lives. While aviation technology has improved, and planes are now better equipped to handle high altitudes and weather challenges, the risks of flying over the plateau remain high.

The combination of extreme altitude, unpredictable weather, treacherous terrain and limited infrastructure makes the Tibetan Plateau a particularly dangerous region for commercial aviation. Airlines prioritize the safety of passengers and crew and avoiding this hazardous area is often the safest and most practical option.

Diplomacy Beyond the Elections: How China Is Preparing for a Post-Biden America

07 September 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Seong-Hyon Lee

China is not just managing tensions but setting the stage to influence the next U.S. administration and push its long-term ambitions forward.

U.S. President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, recently made a high-profile visit to China, which he described as aimed at the "responsible management" of China-U.S. relations. Sullivan's meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping was the first by a U.S. national security adviser in eight years, highlighting its diplomatic significance. While it is tempting to label the visit a success, especially given its timing during the height of the U.S. presidential election race, its practical purpose went beyond managing tensions. It also served as a warning to China not to interfere with the U.S. election.

However, a pressing question remains: Why did China treat Sullivan with surprising cordiality, especially given that Biden himself will soon step down, granting Sullivan a face-to-face meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping?

Just before the national security adviser's visit, the United States imposed a massive new tranche of sanctions on 42 Chinese firms for supporting Russia's war efforts in Ukraine. Yet, this didn't deter Xi from meeting Sullivan.

Some interpret it as a "goodwill gesture" toward the outgoing Biden administration. However, Beijing's sudden softer tone, evidenced by Xi's amicable photo-op with Sullivan, warrants deeper analysis. Xi is well-versed in the art of photo-op diplomacy, using such moments to convey his emotions. For example, during his meeting with the late Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in 2014, Xi adopted a famously solemn expression, avoiding eye contact. When Abe attempted to speak, Xi pointedly turned away, facing the cameras instead.

According to official Chinese Foreign Ministry reports about the visit, Sullivan appeared to have offered a list of assurances that aligned with China's interests. Sullivan told Xi that "the United States does not seek a new Cold War, does not aim to change China's system, and does not support Taiwan independence."

In his meeting with Wang Yi, China's top diplomat, Sullivan provided a more comprehensive reiteration on Taiwan that raised eyebrows. He stated that the United States does not support "Taiwan independence," "two Chinas," or "one China, one Taiwan." This is known as the "Three Nos" policy regarding Taiwan.

While elements of this policy had been expressed separately or partially by various U.S. administrations, the last time all three elements were explicitly stated together in an official setting in China was, over 20 years ago, by President Bill Clinton in 1998. In response to Clinton's "Three Nos," concerned lawmakers in both the Senate and the House nearly unanimously passed resolutions reaffirming the U.S. commitment to Taiwan.

After Clinton's statement, subsequent administrations generally refrained from repeating the full "Three Nos" formulation, often focusing mainly on the non-support for Taiwan independence, until Sullivan did so on this occasion.

Moreover, Sullivan requested and was granted a meeting with General Zhang Youxia, marking the first time a U.S. national security adviser has met with a vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission (CMC) since 2016. Sullivan described this opportunity as "rare." Zhang, the second-highest military decision-maker in China, used the occasion to emphasize that Taiwan is "the core of China's core interests" and the "first unbreachable red line in China-U.S. relations." Based on these official statements, it is evident that China successfully secured key reiterations from the United States. that align with its interests, while also clearly articulating its own demands.

Notably, the Chinese account of the meeting was more detailed and explicit than the U.S. version. For example, in the English readout Wang outlined five key points in over 950 words, emphasizing that China's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political system, development path, and the legitimate rights of its

people must be respected. Wang further urged the United States to adopt a “correct perception” of China and to cease its economic, trade, and technological suppression.

In the broader context, the meeting appears to be a follow-up to the Biden-Xi summit held in San Francisco last November, during which both leaders committed to reducing tensions, albeit for different reasons. Washington aims to focus on the upcoming presidential election without disruption from China, while China seeks to buy time in the Sino-U.S. competition in order to revitalize its struggling economy.

Xi’s emphasis on seeking “peaceful coexistence” and maintaining “stability in China-U.S. relations” reflects a desire for a stable external environment to address these internal issues. This approach aligns with China’s current focus on economic recovery and its need to navigate domestic challenges without external pressures exacerbating the situation.

From the U.S. perspective, the goal is to prevent China from provoking geopolitical tensions in sensitive regions such as the South China Sea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. The United States also seeks to dissuade China from supporting Russia’s war against Ukraine or forming a trilateral alliance with North Korea and Russia. In contrast, China is keen to avoid further economic and technological pressure as it focuses on economic recovery in a stable external environment.

The fact that Xi agreed to meet with Sullivan supports the interpretation that Sullivan’s talks with senior officials, including Wang and Zhang, were productive. China often leaves the possibility of a meeting with Xi uncertain until the last moment, keeping visiting delegations in suspense. Xi’s decision to meet with Sullivan suggests that he was pleased with the progress made during their discussions.

China’s broader strategy seems to be the creation of a relational blueprint that secures its interests, particularly as the U.S. political landscape shifts. By positioning itself now, Beijing can potentially influence the next U.S. administration, using these agreements as a foundation for future China-U.S. relations that align with its long-term goals.

This reaffirmation of bilateral principles favorable to China could serve as leverage for Beijing in dealing with the next U.S. administration, particularly if Vice President Kamala Harris, who has limited foreign policy experience, succeeds Biden. Given Harris’ likely adherence to Biden’s foreign policy approach, Beijing may strategically use Sullivan’s visit to ensure that, if she assumes office, the agreements forged between Biden and Xi are maintained.

With less than six months remaining in Biden’s term, both nations are preparing for the transition. Washington appears focused on maintaining stability during the election season, while Beijing is balancing

its immediate need for economic stability with its long-term strategic ambitions. The disparity between China’s comprehensive readouts and the relatively brief summaries from the United States underscores the differences in their respective approaches.

Ultimately, China’s long-term strategy is clear: It is looking beyond the current administration to shape U.S. perceptions of China, convincing Washington that its rise does not pose a threat and creating a more favorable environment for advancing its ambitions.

Taiwan must tighten the lid on China’s misinformation campaigns

07 September 2024, East Asia Forum, Mark Manantan

In response to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te’s inauguration, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army conducted a joint military drill and simulation of an invasion of Taiwan, demonstrating Beijing’s firepower and displeasure at perceived threats to the One China principle. China also expanded its influence operations and AI-generated disinformation campaigns during Taiwan’s 2024 election. The overwhelming torrent of disinformation has overwhelmed traditional fact-checking methods in Taiwan, causing distrust in Taiwan’s electoral systems and amplifying narratives underscoring the binary choice of peace or war in the Taiwan Strait.

In the days leading up to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te’s inauguration on 20 May 2024, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) was relatively quiet. But the silence did not last long. On 23 May, the PLA’s Eastern Theatre Command embarked on Joint Sword-2024A — a joint-military drill involving the Army, Navy, Airforce and rocket force that surrounded Taiwan and showcased Beijing’s firepower.

The main purpose of the military exercise is retribution. It represents Beijing’s displeasure towards President Lai’s inauguration ceremony, which undermined China’s long-held ‘One China’ principle. Compared to his predecessor President Tsai Ing-wen, who adopted more ambiguous terms like ‘mainland’ or the ‘other side of the Strait’, Lai is far more assertive and has explicitly referred to China as China. In response, China’s Taiwan Affairs Office called President Lai a dangerous separatist, condemning his hardline tendencies that will only bring ‘war and destruction to the island’.

But Beijing’s wrath did not end there. Completing its repertoire of grey zone tactics, the PLA has released a dramatic video that simulates an all-out-invasion of Taiwan. Complete with special effects, the video not only amplifies the intended coercive effects of its joint military exercises, but also highlights the vital role of influence operations in Beijing’s efforts to achieve reunification.

If the developments surrounding Lai's inauguration are an indicator of the trajectory of cross-strait relations, it only points to the continued normalisation of Beijing's escalatory and coercive actions against the self-governed island. Influence operations will also become even more central to China's mission to legitimise its jurisdiction over Taiwan. By co-opting and penetrating the psyche of its domestic population, Beijing aims to ultimately undermine public trust in Taiwan towards its political institutions.

Fortunately, Taiwan has strong stamina when it comes to countering China-sponsored influence operations. After years of experiencing China's disinformation and misinformation campaigns, the island is home to a vibrant network of traditional media and civil society groups.

But the aftermath of Taiwan's January 2024 election offers fresh lessons that underscore the enormity and sophistication of China's evolving influence operations.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) took centre stage during Taiwan's election season. A smear campaign that used generative AI videos to target former president Tsai-Ing Wen circulated on TikTok and Instagram. According to Taiwan AI Labs, 3.5 per cent of the top 200 videos reshared on Facebook in 2023 were found to be automatically generated using text-to-speech and AI.

Conventional fact-checking techniques employed by Taiwanese media organisations and civil society groups could hardly keep up with all the AI-fabricated audio and video content. The mass production and proliferation of AI-generated audio, video and text have overwhelmed fact-checkers, while new malicious content propagates instantaneously.

Troll groups were also highly active and coordinated. Before the election, more than 14,000 troll accounts were actively propelling narratives like the binary choice of peace and war in the Taiwan Strait and the unreliability of US support for Taiwan. TikTok, and its Chinese version *Douyin*, were suspected of manipulating their algorithms to promote video and audio content that targeted specific candidates or political parties or highlighted controversial topics such as asymmetry in the Taiwan-US relationship.

Several high-profile influencers were also posting false information that sought to tamper with the integrity of the election process. Such malicious content has led to a high degree of distrust in Taiwan's electoral systems and procedures.

Given the prevalence of China's coercive tactics against Taiwan and the rapid explosion of generative AI and algorithmic bias, combined with the unpredictable headwinds in today's geopolitics, Taiwan needs to reboot its counter-influence operations toolkit.

Taiwan should encourage its leading tech companies to increase participation in global technical standards setting through formal and informal channels. It should also mobilise civil society groups to proactively participate in multi-stakeholder consultations on emerging technologies like generative AI. For instance, the International Telecommunications Union is currently exploring the development of standards and frameworks to detect deepfakes and other forms of malicious AI-generated media. Taiwanese start-ups and civil society groups can share best practices and lessons learned in fighting state-sponsored influence operations.

Because most of the Chinese-linked influence operations propagate faster on social media platforms before being amplified in mainstream media, Taiwan must explore more stringent options to regulate digital platforms to enhance transparency, especially during elections.

It would be strategic for Taiwan to reframe the prevailing narratives that it is a mere pawn of the US-China rivalry or that there is only a binary choice of having peace or war in the Taiwan Strait. In highlighting its role as a major economic and semiconductor powerhouse, Taiwan can strengthen its democratic identity and its right to engage and participate in international debates on pertinent issues like regulating AI, reducing carbon emissions and even fighting election-related influence operations.

By rebooting its narrative beyond the binaries, Taiwan may help reduce tensions across the Strait and sustain or even open new avenues for regional cooperation.

EXPLAINED: The (worrying) popularity of caterpillar fungus

07 September 2024, [RFA](#), Lobsang Gelek

The parasite is an important income source for rural Tibetans, but imposters are crowding the market.



Local residents search for caterpillar fungus, a traditional Tibetan medicine, on the Laji mountains of Guide county, west China's Qinghai province May 12, 2007

By now the army of scavengers has retreated from the high hillsides of the eastern Tibetan plateau, their bounty in hand. Harvest season for yartsa gunbu (དབྱར་རྩ་དྲུག་ལག), or caterpillar fungus, typically runs from May to July, when winter snows have receded and thousands of rural, ethnic Tibetans can prospect for what's also known as "soft gold."

It's hard to overstate the importance these few weeks hold for the people who climb the steep slopes. Collecting caterpillar fungus — which is used to treat a variety of ailments — can account for as much as 90% of a rural family's annual income.

But high demand has spurred overharvesting, making it harder to find the fungus in its natural environment. Climate change poses another challenge. Warmer temperatures on the high plateau are reducing the length of winter, a critical time for yartsa gunbu.

Now a new threat is emerging, sources inside China say: artificial varieties designed to fill the gaps between supply and demand, in the form of either cultivated fungi or fake products altogether. Although Chinese authorities have tried to regulate the sale of cultivated fungus, interviews with Tibetans and online videos that attract tens of thousands of viewers say imposters have infiltrated the market.

"It will definitely jeopardize the lives of thousands of Tibetan herders and farmers whose income depend on the wild yartsa," said Lobsang Yeshe, who has practiced traditional Tibetan medicine at Men-Tsee-Khang in Dharamshala, India, for the past 20 years.

What is caterpillar fungus and where does it come from?

Yartsa gunbu translates to "summer grass, winter bug." The *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* — its scientific name — releases spores that sink underground and infect the larvae of ghost moths, so called for the white color of males. The yartsa gunbu takes over, commandeering the caterpillar's nervous system, consuming its organs and finally, in spring, emerging from its head as a brown stoma at altitudes of greater than 13,000 feet (4,000 meters). Its methods have drawn comparisons to the fungus that stars in the HBO hit zombie series, "The Last of Us." Harvested intact, it's about the length of a little finger and shaped like a caterpillar with a stem attached.

Yartsa gunbu is found primarily in the Himalaya mountains and the Tibetan plateau. The Yushu Tibetan Autonomous prefecture in Qinghai province, east of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, is a particularly good place to look. Thousands of its residents set up makeshift camps from which they hike into the thin air. The annual harvest is reportedly around 300 million fungi that can cost \$7 a pop or more, leaving a multi-billion dollar market.

What is caterpillar fungus used for?

Yartsa gunbu has been used in Tibetan and Chinese traditional medicine to treat heart, liver and lung ailments. More recently, it acquired a reputation for improving sexual stamina in men and women. ("Himalayan Viagra" is another moniker.) Studies have shown possible benefits, though scientists say more clinical research is needed.

Users consume yartsa gunbu by brewing it with hot water similar to how tea or herbal infusions are prepared, or chewing it as it comes. Some put it in soups and other recipes. Lesser specimens are ground into powders.

Why are people growing a fungus ?

Pluckers like to pick the fungus before it releases spores, limiting its ability to reproduce and leading to its population decline. China has encouraged the development of cultivated yartsa gunbu, and one company has reportedly solved the puzzle, synthetically growing the *O. sinensis* fungus found in the wild.

But some individuals are trying to cultivate fungus varieties on their own. That, fungus traders say, has undercut prices and, because the buyers remain suspicious of its medicinal properties, consumer confidence, several sources told RFA.

In Guangzhou, a major market, "there is a hesitancy of customers in buying because of too much artificial fungus in the market," one trader said. A Tibetan living in Qinghai province said prices have dropped nearly 20% this year.

In New York, a retailer said he can still sell a single piece of wild fungus for \$14, but "there are a lot of fake and cultivated yartsa" undercutting the business, he said. "Nowadays, people are selling thousands of artificial yartsa online per day, as well as in shops, jeopardizing the original yartsa business," he said.

Studies have shown that cultivated fungus can replicate the chemical compounds of natural varieties, though there are differences.

What is China doing to protect the market?

Chinese authorities seem to be aware of the financial risks to some of their poorest populations.

In April, the Chinese government in Qinghai, tried to control the artificial plantation of yartsa gunbu. But a trader in Nagchu, Tibet Autonomous Region, an area that historically has been among the best for finding wild yartsa gunbu, said enforcement has been lax.

"Chinese authorities have come out with a lot of rules saying that the artificial fungus is banned," the trader said. "But the on-ground reality is that the Chinese authorities are not strictly monitoring or stopping the sale of artificial fungus. And this is making it tough for us to sell the real fungus."

Tibetan Villages Driven to Poverty by China's Forced Relocation Program

07 September 2024, [Japan Forward](#), Professor Pema Gyalpo

Beijing has been uprooting entire Tibetan villages, stripping them of economic self-sufficiency and eroding their culture under the guise of modernization.

China's government has been systematically uprooting hundreds of Tibetan villages and nomads from their ancestral lands. It has been forcibly relocating them to centralized settlements under the guise of "poverty alleviation" and environmental protection.

This mass relocation campaign has accelerated dramatically since 2016. It is eroding Tibetan culture, disrupting traditional livelihoods, and leaving many relocated families impoverished and dependent on government subsidies.

Mass Systematic Relocation

According to a recent report by Human Rights Watch, over 930,000 rural Tibetans have been relocated since 2000. A staggering 76% of these relocations occurred just since 2016. The Chinese government frames these relocations as voluntary poverty reduction efforts. However, evidence suggests they are often coercive and driven by Beijing's political agenda to assimilate Tibetans and tighten control over the region.

Many of these relocations involve moving entire villages hundreds of kilometers from their original homes. Authorities refer to the relocated Tibetans as "border guardians," essentially turning them into civilian sentries along China's contested frontiers with India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Satellite imagery shows that China has strategically placed new settlements near virtually every accessible Himalayan pass along these borders. While officially civilian in nature, these border villages provide infrastructure that could support rapid military deployments if needed.

More insidiously, they serve as a form of "demographic engineering," permanently altering the population of contested areas to strengthen China's territorial claims.

Loss of Economic Self-Sufficiency

But for the Tibetans themselves, these relocations often lead to economic hardships and cultural dislocation. Traditional nomadic herders are forced to sell their livestock and abandon their grasslands. Farmers are moved from their ancestral fields. In their new homes, many struggle to find work or make ends meet.

A local government document reviewed by The New York Times indicated some villagers may receive around 20,000 yuan (less than \$3,000 USD) per year for relocation. A few earn extra income from

border patrol work. But for many, the relocations mean a complete loss of economic self-sufficiency.

China's relocation policies appear not just to control Tibetan populations, but to fundamentally reshape Tibetan society and culture. Religious life is noticeably absent from the new settlements. There are no Buddhist monasteries or temples to be found. Instead, the villages are dominated by symbols of the Chinese state — national flags and portraits of President Xi Jinping adorn walls and light poles throughout.

This cultural erasure is no accident. The relocation program serves as propaganda, a display of Chinese strength and superiority in the region. It is social engineering aimed at assimilating Tibetans into mainstream Chinese society.

Erasing Tibetan Culture

The mass relocations are just one component of China's broader efforts to reshape Tibet. Increased surveillance, restrictions on religious practices, and Mandarin-language education policies all serve to undermine Tibetan identity and autonomy.

The forced relocations, however, are particularly devastating in their scope and impact on traditional ways of life. A Human Rights Watch report highlights how Chinese authorities use coercive tactics to overcome Tibetans' reluctance to relocate. Officials make repeated home visits, threaten with punishments, and warn that essential services will be cut off for those who refuse to move. Higher-level authorities pressure local officials to meet relocation quotas, framing the program as a non-negotiable policy for Beijing.

Even when relocations are framed as "voluntary," Tibetan families are often misled about the economic prospects of their new homes. Surveys by Chinese scholars found that many relocated Tibetans "cannot find suitable jobs to support their families" and report low satisfaction with their new circumstances.

Entire Villages Relocated

The scale of these relocations is staggering. Beyond the 140,000 rural Tibetans moved through "whole-village relocation," another 567,000 may have been relocated through "individual household" programs since 2016. In total, Human Rights Watch estimates that various relocation and "sedentarization" programs have affected most of Tibet's 4.55 million rural inhabitants.

China's approach to ethnic minorities, particularly in Tibet, reveals a deeply manipulative strategy aimed at erasing distinct cultural identities. Under the guise of poverty alleviation and modernization, the Chinese government systematically undermines minority cultures. This is achieved through forced relocations, language policies favoring Mandarin, and strict controls on religious practices.

Destroying Diversity

These tactics are not merely about economic development or national security. They reflect a concerted effort to homogenize diverse populations into a singular state-approved Chinese identity. By uprooting communities from their ancestral lands, severing ties to traditional livelihoods, and flooding minority areas with Han Chinese settlers, Beijing seeks to dilute and eventually erase unique ethnic identities. The government's heavy-handed approach demonstrates a fundamental disregard for the value of cultural diversity. It undermines the rights of minority populations to maintain distinct ways of life. This cultural erasure, masked as progress, is a form of soft ethnic cleansing that threatens to permanently alter the rich tapestry of ethnicities within China's borders. International law prohibits forced evictions, making China's coercive relocation program a clear violation of human rights. The mass displacement of Tibetan communities threatens to irreparably damage Tibetan culture and identity. That way, Tibetan identity is in the hands of the Chinese party-state and is eradicated under different policy directives.

Beijing's Expansionist Nightmare Continues

The evidence paints a clear picture of a systematic campaign to reshape Tibet's demographics, consolidate state control, and erode Tibetan cultural identity.

Far from alleviating poverty, these forced relocations are creating a class of displaced impoverished Tibetans. They have been made dependent on state subsidies and cut off from their traditional livelihoods and cultural roots.

As China continues to tighten its grip on Tibet, the international community must speak out against these forced relocations and other policies that threaten Tibetan culture and autonomy. Without intervention, China's campaign of demographic engineering and cultural erasure in Tibet will only accelerate. It will potentially destroy one of the world's most unique and vibrant cultures.

"The unique Chinese style of imperialism and colonialism" as Beijing might like to call it if it succeeds, sees Tibet as its first prey and victim. However, the big, ambitious Chinese dream of expansion doesn't stop there. You can see what is happening in Southern Mongolia and Eastern Turkistan (aka the Uyghur Autonomous Region). Every neighboring people and nation of Communist China could face the same destiny unless the world is consciously watchful.

World merrily forgets Uyghur cause as China mobilises mega-propaganda machine

06 September 2024, [Firstpost](#), Mahesh Ranjan Debata

While China has become largely successful in influencing international opinion to favour its narrative on Xinjiang, the world community has failed miserably to set Beijing right for its follies

A report titled "The Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China", which was published under the auspices of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), completed two years on August 31, 2024. The OHCHR had spent a lot of time (almost five years since late 2017), money, and energy on fact-finding investigations and rigorous deliberations over the reports, documents, and pieces of evidence provided by various governments, civil society organisations, individual researchers, think tanks, media, etc, to publish this report.

The organisation analysed thoroughly the testimonies of some Uyghurs who were released or had escaped from the detention centres in Xinjiang after having harrowing experiences for years. While highlighting "serious human rights violations" in Xinjiang in the garb of the Chinese Central government's so-called "counter-terrorism and counter-extremism" strategies, the 48-page report rapped China left and right in addition to prescribing a long list of recommendations for China to adhere to.

The horrors of hundreds of detention camps inside Xinjiang, which Chinese authorities romanticise as re-education camps, came to light in 2016. China has reportedly incarcerated over a million Uyghurs in these camps. Several governments, human rights organisations, Uyghur diaspora organisations, academics, think tanks, freelancers, and activists have prepared and published many online and offline reports on this issue.

One of the eye-opening reports on the situation in Xinjiang is by the Human Rights Watch, which describes the Chinese excesses against Uyghurs as "crimes against humanity". Similarly, the US government passed the "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act" in 2020, which "imposes sanctions on foreign individuals and entities" responsible for human rights violations in Xinjiang.

However, Beijing has categorically denied and outrightly rejected the reports described above. It does not pay any heed to the global community's concern for Uyghurs imprisoned in Xinjiang. It has yet to follow nor implement the OHCHR recommendations. Instead, China has reactivated its propaganda machine to disseminate the message worldwide that the situation in Xinjiang is stable and peaceful, and the Uyghurs are leading a prosperous

life. Accordingly, it has strategised methodically and honed its diplomatic efficacy to counter the international community's concerns about the Uyghurs.

The Chinese government has circulated several counter reports, White Papers, etc, to mobilise international opinions against the Uyghurs and those who extended them continuous moral and material support. As part of its propaganda drive, the State Council Information Office of China has published (between 2019 and 2021) six White Papers on overall human rights developments in the country and eight White Papers on the situation in Xinjiang. As the latest countermeasure, the Standing Committee of the 14th Xinjiang Regional People's Congress passed a resolution last month (August 2024) opposing a series of American sanctions related to Xinjiang since 2022 under the ambit of the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act.

Besides, China has exhibited its sheer power of money and diplomacy to silence critics all across the globe. The Chinese government has built a strong rapport with the leadership in Islamic nations so that they do not show solidarity with their brethren in Xinjiang. Chinese government strategy includes visits by foreign dignitaries (politicians, diplomats, media people, scholars, activists, etc) from like-minded friendly countries for state-sponsored guided tours in Xinjiang. The Chinese authorities also facilitate visits by YouTubers from different parts of the globe to showcase the marvels China has done in Xinjiang without showing anything about the Uyghurs' woes. China ensures that these dignitaries give positive feedback about Xinjiang and share their experiences in all news media while parroting the Chinese lines.

Early this year, several political leaders from Arab countries and journalists from Pakistan visited various cities in Xinjiang and enjoyed seven-star Chinese hospitality. In lieu of this Chinese largesse, the visiting dignitaries eulogised Chinese policies towards the Uyghurs. Earlier, this author had highlighted in a couple of publications how the Uzbek Premier and Turkish Foreign Minister had yielded to Chinese pressure during their visits to Xinjiang and subsequently subscribed to the Chinese narrative on Uyghurs. Last year (2023), as many as 30 Islamic scholars from over a dozen countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa not only visited Xinjiang but also heaped full praise on the Chinese policies towards Muslims in the country in general and Uyghurs in particular.

At present, the condition of Uyghurs in Xinjiang beggars description. Nobody has any clue about what is happening inside the detention camps and with the Uyghurs. The Chinese government has made all-out efforts to muzzle international media, including social media, and to thwart academics and activists who oppose the Chinese move against Uyghurs and

support the human rights and freedom of the Uyghurs. Because of the surveillance in the region, it is difficult for anyone to pass on news from Xinjiang to the outside world.

It is a worldwide fact that everything in Xinjiang is on the Chinese government's radar. The state security apparatus persecutes anyone who holds an anti-government or anti-China stand. In recent years, the Chinese strategy has been to disclose only information about Xinjiang, which does not harm its position in the region. It means China has effectively made the world believe what it says about Xinjiang and the Uyghurs.

Keeping in view the endeavours made by the international community to persuade or pressurise China for the grave mistake it has committed in Xinjiang, it is imperative to deduce that while China has become largely successful in influencing international opinion to favour its narrative on Xinjiang, the world community has failed miserably to set China right for its follies.

Beijing has been daring enough to ignore the OHCHR findings and the sanctions by the Western countries, especially the US, and thereby keep on continuing its campaign against Uyghurs. The US Department of State has expressed disappointment over the Chinese not complying with the global body's report. It is high time the world understood the gravity of the problem and clamped down stricter measures to cut the arrogant and aggressive China to size. All conscientious nations and their leaders should make a combined endeavour to compel the Chinese government to stop excesses against the minorities in the country, especially Uyghurs, and to provide them with fundamental freedom.

Why a China-US thaw may not be in India's economic interests

05 September 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Anushka Saxena

India now finds itself in a unique position, with the ability to leverage its relationship with the US to seek concessions.

For anyone observing the simmering tensions in United States-China relations, the recent meeting between US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi would have gone exactly as expected.

The readouts published by both sides suggest that the meeting was merely a reiteration of the red lines each side must not cross. To an international audience closely following the development, these readouts confirm that US-China competition is here to stay, with little chance of a thaw. But, as the White House readout suggests, the two sides can still attempt to "manage the relationship responsibly."

An emerging feature of this competition has been the steady elevation of India's position in the US strategy to counter China. In fact, just before his visit to Beijing, Sullivan also hosted Indian defence minister Rajnath Singh in the US for a series of discussions on strengthening India-US ties, especially in the fields of defence and critical technologies.

Their mutual competition with China has hence opened doors for collaboration in economic, military, and technological domains. In this regard, a thaw in US-China relations may not be in India's economic interests.

As the two largest economic powers of the world, the US and China are expected to manage differences in a manner that does not destabilise the security of global value chains.

However, as evident from the discussions at the Wang-Sullivan meeting, the two sides continue to compete in the trade and critical technologies domains. As Sullivan reiterated, the US has adopted a firm stance on limiting the export of American critical technological talent, investments, and materials to China, while China has responded by calling such restrictions unfair.

China is also making grand investments in indigenous technological capabilities and has no intention to give up its export dominance in vital domains such as solar photovoltaic cells, strategic electronic components, and New Electric Vehicles (NEVs), all of which are facing heavy import tariffs in Western markets due to the Chinese State's market- and price-distorting subsidies.

Countries around the world are hence attempting to build cadence with the US' secondary sanction and tariff regimes, balancing such attempts with the low cost advantages imports from China offer. And even US allies are not exempt—the Netherlands-based firm ASML, for example, had to agree not to renew licences to service equipment or provide spare parts to China for semiconductor production, despite the fact that China accounted for nearly half of the firm's revenues in Q2 of 2024.

The growing sentiment in the West to de-risk certain value chains from China has created opportunities for countries like India, which has the potential to compete with China in production costs, standards, and backward supply chain linkages. In this strategy, commonly referred to as 'China+1', India has frequently emerged as an alternative destination and has sought to position itself as the US' new hub for production and investment.

But this effort has its challenges. Strict regulatory restrictions, a lack of openness to business, and robust tariff and non-tariff barriers have led India to lose out in certain sectors to Vietnam, Thailand, and Mexico. Nonetheless, there is optimism about India's potential to emerge as a viable 'China+1' alternative, especially

as a recent report by Rhodium Group ranks India fifth among the top 10 countries with the highest diversification attractiveness.

India's Choices

India now finds itself in a unique position, with the ability to leverage its relationship with the US to seek concessions. Recently, the US, Canada, and the EU imposed import tariffs of 30 -100 per cent on imports of electric vehicles made in China. This includes EVs manufactured by the Texas-headquartered Tesla, shipped from its factory in Shanghai (the EU, however, has granted a 9 per cent concession on tariffs to Tesla in August).

This highlights the discontent surrounding the supply glut created by Chinese overcapacity, which has even led Western firms to face the wrath of their governments for producing in or supplying to China, significantly undercutting their cost and revenue advantages.

In this regard, India has a significant opportunity to take a nuanced and clear-eyed approach to four crucial factors: inviting private sector investment from US firms, opening up to imports of critical components, implementing regulatory changes to create an uncomplicated business environment, and conducting economic diplomacy with the US.

The goal of these efforts should be for India to emerge as a whitelisted destination of imports for US and other Western markets, even if Chinese components are involved in its production processes.

To achieve this, India must not only clear restrictions on imports from China to develop robust supply linkages in the assembly process but also negotiate with the US to ease potential rules of origin-related restrictions on imports from India based on mutual interests and friendly relations.

Though not exactly similar in nature, there exists some precedent to the extension of such goodwill. In June 2023, for example, following continued bilateral exchanges to strengthen the India-US trade relationship, India agreed to roll back its retaliatory import tariffs against the US and terminate six WTO disputes with it.

If India can successfully make the case that Tesla can similarly produce in and export from India without facing import tariffs from the US, not only will India witness some progress in its China+1 ambitions, but also create room for Western economies to seek the right alternative without hampering business sentiment.

Till such a time as India can find its own alternatives for imports of strategic components, however, it must rely on cost effective methods of procurement, even if they involve China.

Tourist boom threatens to swamp Indian mountain town where Dalai Lama took refuge

05 September 2024, [The Guardian](#), Prasannata Patwa

McLeod Ganj is a magnet for domestic holidaymakers fleeing scorching temperatures. But their cars choke the streets and new hotels stretch scarce water supplies

UVs and saloon cars pass slowly along McLeod Ganj's narrow one-way Jogiwara Road, blaring horns at pedestrians and scooter riders and playing loud music. The powerful vehicles soon get stuck in the traffic near Kalachakra temple, the place of worship of the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.

"You can be stuck in this traffic easily for two hours," says a frustrated local taxi driver, not keen to share his name.

McLeod Ganj, a Himalayan town famed for its temples, meditation courses and ashrams, is witnessing an influx of domestic tourists seeking refuge from rising temperatures in dry and tropical states across India. Many come to enjoy cricket matches with the view of the mighty Dhauladhar mountain range overlooking the stadium, which has become a magnet for India's sports fans.

Once monks in burgundy red robes dominated the colour palette of McLeod Ganj's main market. The town was where thousands of Tibetans fled after the 1959 uprising against the Chinese in Tibet sent the Dalai Lama into exile here.

It became a refuge not just for Tibetans but for foreign hippy travellers and others seeking a quiet and contemplative environment. But now vehicles and clusters of Indian tourists crowd these lanes, filming videos and clicking selfies. More than 150 new hotels have been built or opened in the past four years.

McLeod Ganj's Tibetan community has been migrating out of the hill station in search of better work opportunities for several years. But now the impact of the climate crisis and overtourism is pushing others to contemplate leaving. The population has dramatically shrunk, say local people.

"This is not the quiet and peaceful McLeod Ganj any more. The only reason we are staying here is because we want to stay close to our spiritual leader Dalai Lama," says Kunsang, owner of Cafe Hope.

The tourist season of May to July has disappeared, with visitors now coming all year round, he says. "Now people come here to party for some days and leave, rather than staying here for some length of time."

The Dalai Lama, who turned 89 last month, has been crucial in building a new home for Tibetans in India and is a symbol of hope for the scattered diaspora, says Dr Latika Gupta at the faculty of education in the University of Delhi.

Surrounded by snow-capped mountains and cedarwood forests, the city of Dharamshala is 1,457 metres above sea level, keeping the temperature cool. The weather conditions being similar to Tibet made Dharamshala a perfect new home for the Dalai Lama, and the Tibetan refugees who followed him into exile. But this year's heatwaves across India have pushed up temperatures in Dharamshala, and its suburbs of McLeod Ganj and Dharamkot, regularly hitting 40C, previously a rare occurrence for the region.

"You should keep onion skin in your pocket to defend against this heat," says Dorjee, a Tibetan man in his late 80s, playing chess in the square.

India's capital, New Delhi, touched 49.1C on 29 May. Temperatures in states near Dharamshala such as Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab also reached close to 50C in the May heatwave, according to India Meteorological Department.

It sent middle-class and better-off Indian families to the hills and many to McLeod Ganj, a worldwide attraction since the Dalai Lama and his followers arrived in the 60s, attracting visitors including the Beatles.

"This place used to be filled with foreigners. Their visiting purpose was to study about Tibet and its culture, Buddhism, or participate in yoga or meditation retreats. This would make them stay here for many months," says Jempa, a Tibetan man in his early 80s, who as a boy followed the Dalai Lama to India with his parents.

"I used to have international travellers who would stay for six months, a year or two years. Now that time is gone," says Neeraj Rajput, manager of Misty Woods, a hotel in McLeod Ganj.

Local bed and breakfasts, hotels and eateries are also facing competition from the rapid increase in luxury hotel chains and homestays, according to more than half a dozen local business owners.

"Since the cricket stadium has opened up, a lot more three- and five-star properties have been built in areas that we didn't even know existed. The entire Dharamshala is probably covered now," adds Rajput, who has been managing Misty Woods for close to a decade.

The former visitors here, those from abroad, would not bring cars but use local taxis to get about. But domestic tourists bring their air-conditioned cars, leading to traffic jams, and less income for taxi drivers.

"There is not much difference in my earnings during tourist season or off season. In peak season, I am usually able to complete only a couple of rides and also get stuck in traffic for hours," says another taxi driver, also requesting anonymity. "In off season, even though there are less people, I am able to make more trips, most likely with less traffic."

As the debate around Tibet's freedom has faded from the global stage, many new visitors, especially from

younger generations, are unaware of the links to the Dalai Lama and Tibet's history, seeing instead an exotic place with monasteries, prayer flags and waterfalls.

The climate crisis is having its impact here. Triund, which is one of McLeod Ganj's main water sources, dried up during summer this year, according to those who frequent the popular trekking route.

"It was completely dry up there. We didn't even have water to wash our hands," says Amandeep Kaur, a college professor, who took a dozen of her students on a trekking trip in June.

The monsoon season is proving more extreme too, with landslides and cloudbursts common in Himachal Pradesh state. A red alert was issued for Dharamshala's Kangra valley on 1 August, after cloudbursts across the state, including in the capital city, Simla, left 50 people missing and five dead.

Dorjee is among those local people who blame construction work associated with tourism for exacerbating the situation. "If you keep drilling holes in the mountains, what do you think is going to happen?" he says. "I am not an engineer or an architect but my mother used to earn wages by building roads in these mountains. I have helped in building [the Dalai Lama's] temple here. Things should be built on the mountain instead of breaking it," he says.

Chinese Premier Visit To Pakistan: A Milestone For Strengthening Bilateral Ties – OpEd

05 September 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Asad Ali

Chinese Premier Li Qiang is scheduled to visit Pakistan next, marking a significant moment in the history of Sino-Pak relations, as this will be the first visit by a Chinese Premier to Pakistan in 11 years. This visit, planned ahead of SCO summit on October 15-16, offers both countries an opportunity to enhance their longstanding partnership, explore new avenues for cooperation, and navigate the evolving geopolitical landscape.

Premier Li Qiang's visit, coming at a time when both nations are facing economic challenges and shifting global dynamics, is expected to be more than just a routine diplomatic engagement. It symbolizes the renewal of commitment to deepening cooperation in a wide range of areas, including trade, investment, infrastructure, and regional security.

One of the most anticipated outcomes of this visit will be a renewed focus on economic cooperation, particularly within the framework of CPEC. Since its inception, CPEC has been the cornerstone of Pakistan's economic ties with China, leading to billions of dollars in Chinese investment in energy, infrastructure, and industrial projects. However, CPEC has faced challenges, including delays in project

implementation, security concerns, and economic difficulties in Pakistan.

Pakistan and China share common concerns about regional security, particularly in the context of Afghanistan and the broader South Asian region. Premier Li Qiang's visit is likely to see discussions on enhancing security cooperation to address challenges such as terrorism, cross-border insurgencies, and the evolving situation in Afghanistan.

China has played an active role in promoting regional stability, especially after US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Both China and Pakistan have a shared interest in preventing Afghanistan from becoming a hub of terrorism and instability. Their cooperation in security matters, particularly in intelligence sharing and counterterrorism efforts, is expected to be high on the agenda during Li Qiang's visit.

Moreover, as both nations are members of SCO, this visit presents an opportunity for Pakistan and China to coordinate their positions ahead of the SCO summit. The SCO, which focuses on regional security, economic cooperation, and counterterrorism, is an important platform for both countries to align their strategies on issues of mutual concern, particularly in the context of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

While CPEC remains a focal point of China-Pakistan relations, there is a growing recognition on both sides that the relationship must expand beyond this corridor. Premier Li Qiang's visit offers a chance to explore new avenues of collaboration in emerging sectors such as digital economy, science and technology, and green energy.

China has made significant strides in technology and innovation, and Pakistan is eager to benefit from Chinese expertise in areas such as artificial intelligence, telecommunications, and e-commerce. Li Qiang's visit could lead to agreements that promote greater collaboration in these sectors, thus opening new opportunities for Pakistani entrepreneurs and tech professionals.

In addition, Pakistan, like many other countries, is facing the pressing challenge of climate change. China's leadership in renewable energy, particularly in solar and wind power, offers a valuable opportunity for Pakistan to enhance its green energy capacity. Cooperation in this area would not only contribute to Pakistan's energy security but also align with global efforts to combat climate change.

Premier Li Qiang's visit also comes at a time of significant geopolitical shifts in the region. The growing strategic competition between China and the United States, as well as India's increasing alignment with the West, adds complexity to China-Pakistan relations. While both countries have historically maintained a strong partnership, they now face new challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing world order.

For Pakistan, deepening ties with China remains crucial, particularly as it seeks to navigate its relationship with other major powers. China's support has been vital for Pakistan in forums such as the United Nations, where it has backed Pakistan on key issues such as Kashmir. At the same time, Pakistan must balance its relations with China, the United States, and other regional powers, particularly India.

Li Qiang's visit will reaffirm China's continued support for Pakistan on the international stage, particularly in multilateral organizations like the United Nations and SCO. It also underscores the importance of the Pakistan-China partnership in maintaining regional peace and stability, especially as the two countries seek to counterbalance the influence of other major powers in South Asia.

Premier Li Qiang's visit to Pakistan in October 2024 marks a critical juncture in the history of Sino-Pak relations. This visit offers a unique opportunity for both countries to reinvigorate their strategic partnership, strengthen economic ties, and enhance cooperation in emerging sectors such as technology and green energy. Moreover, it provides a platform for Pakistan and China to align their positions on regional security ahead of the SCO summit.

As the two countries look towards the future, the visit highlights the enduring strength of the China-Pakistan relationship, which has weathered challenges and continues to evolve in response to changing global dynamics. By expanding cooperation beyond traditional sectors and addressing shared challenges, Premier Li Qiang's visit will further cement the bond between the two nations, ensuring that this "iron brotherhood" remains a cornerstone of regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

How China's Boarding Schools in Xinjiang (East Turkistan) Are Erasing a People's Identity: A Uyghur View

05 September 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Abdulhakim Idris

The Chinese regime is perpetrating the cultural genocide of a generation by weaponizing education. The state of the matter after ten years of persecution. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the active Uyghur genocide, consisting of President Xi Jinping's "People's War on Terror," and there is no sign of it stopping in the near future. The Chinese government has detained over one million Uyghurs (a quite conservative evaluation) in re-education camps, but the horrors extend beyond the camps, to the children left behind. These children are being forcibly assimilated into Han Chinese culture through a vast network of state-run boarding schools. This essay delves into how these institutions serve as tools of

cultural genocide, stripping Uyghur children of their language, religion, and identity.

The plight of the Uyghur and Kazakh people is not a sudden eruption but a consequence of a long history of oppression and marginalization. Uyghurs, predominantly Muslim Turkic people, have historically faced systematic assimilation and genocide in their homeland, East Turkistan, which the Chinese regime calls Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Their struggle for cultural and religious autonomy has been met with relentless suppression by the racist, nationalistic Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In 2014, this simmering tension took a drastic turn. Under the guise of combating "religious extremism," the People's Republic of China (PRC) initiated an intensified crackdown in East Turkistan. The region, rich in cultural diversity, was subjected to an increasingly pervasive and intrusive surveillance system. This campaign, ostensibly targeting terrorism, was in reality a thinly veiled attempt to control and assimilate the Uyghur population.

The Uyghur region is not only a cultural and religious battleground but also a territory of significant economic interest. It is rich in natural resources, including oil, gas, and minerals, making it a strategic asset for the PRC's "Belt and Road Initiative." Beijing has heavily invested in infrastructure projects in the region, but these developments have disproportionately benefited the Han Chinese population while further marginalizing the Uyghurs. A policy of assimilation

The economic exploitation extends to forced labor. Many Uyghurs who are not detained in camps are subjected to forced labor in factories across the PRC. These factories are often linked to global supply chains, implicating international corporations in the human rights abuses occurring in East Turkistan. The Chinese government justifies this as part of its "poverty alleviation" program, but in reality, it is a form of modern-day slavery designed to further control and assimilate the Uyghur population.

In this calculated strategy of cultural genocide, the Chinese state has weaponized education. The Chinese government's assimilation process starts with detaining parents under arbitrary claims, placing them in detention camps and leaving children defenseless and vulnerable. Children whose parents are detained, in prison, or undergoing re-education or "training," are classified into a special needs category, making them eligible for state care, which typically means placement in orphanages or boarding schools.

At the epicenter of the PRC's brutal repression of Uyghurs lies a particularly insidious tactic: the systematic separation of Uyghur children from their families. This abhorrent practice serves as a cornerstone of China's campaign to erase Uyghur

cultural identity and enforce a homogeneous Han Chinese ideology.

Since 2017, the CCP has intensified its crackdown on the Uyghurs. Under the guise of combating extremism, the Chinese government has implemented a series of draconian measures aimed at eradicating Uyghur culture. These measures include mass detentions, forced labor, and sterilizations. The United States and several other countries have labeled these actions as genocide, while the United Nations has indicated they can amount to crimes against humanity.

As the Chinese government detains Uyghur adults, their children are sent to state-run boarding schools. These institutions are designed to sever the children from their cultural roots and indoctrinate them into Han Chinese culture. According to reports, more than half a million Uyghur children have been placed in these schools, where they are taught to speak Mandarin exclusively and are subjected to a curriculum that glorifies the Chinese state while denigrating their native culture.

The Kuchar brothers

Aysu and Lütfullah Kuchar, two Uyghur children, were forced to spend nearly twenty months in a state boarding school. They were forcibly separated from their family and subjected to physical and emotional abuse. Their heads were shaved, and they were frequently beaten and locked in dark rooms as punishment. By the time they returned home, they had forgotten how to speak Uyghur, their mother tongue. “That was the heaviest moment in my life. Standing in front of my two Chinese-speaking children, I felt as if they had killed me,” their father lamented. By the time they were able to return to their parents to Türkiye in December 2019, they had become malnourished and traumatized.

Another victim, Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur woman who survived the concentration camps, tearfully recounted the torture she endured. Her children were taken from her and placed in a boarding school. When she was finally allowed to reconnect with them, she found that one of her children had died due to an operation performed without her consent.

NPR, or National Public Radio in the US, published the Kuchars’ story and was able to identify the school Lütfullah was sent to. It had been previously called the Urumqi Folk Art School and is located in the densely populated, predominantly Uyghur neighborhood of Sandunbei in the region’s capital, Urumqi. The school is among at least 1,300 boarding schools set up across the Uyghur region, according to the Ministry for Education documents. XUAR local governments have been scrubbing their websites of all references to the boarding schools, but an official education report from 2017—the year before the Kuchar children were sent

to the school—says nearly half a million children had already been enrolled by the start of that year.

In these boarding schools, the use of the Uyghur language is strictly prohibited. Classroom instruction is conducted almost exclusively in Mandarin, and teachers can be punished for using Uyghur outside specific language classes. This policy aims to erode the children’s fluency in their native language, thereby severing their connection to their cultural and religious identities.

Reports have documented numerous instances of physical and emotional abuse in these schools. Children are often beaten, locked in dark rooms, and forced to hold stress positions for extended periods. These punitive measures are designed to break the children’s spirit and make them more pliable to assimilation efforts.

The systematic separation of Uyghur children from their families and their forced assimilation into Han Chinese culture constitutes a form of cultural genocide. By eradicating the Uyghur language, religion, and customs, the CCP aims to eliminate any sense of Uyghur identity. This policy not only affects the current generation but also ensures that future generations will grow up devoid of their cultural heritage.

The psychological toll on these children is immense. Separated from their families and subjected to constant abuse and indoctrination, many of these children suffer from severe trauma. They grow up feeling alienated from their cultural roots and are often unable to communicate with their parents and grandparents, who remain fluent in Uyghur.

The boarding schools in East Turkistan are not merely educational institutions; they are tools of cultural genocide. By forcibly assimilating Uyghur children into Han Chinese culture, the Chinese government aims to erase the Uyghur identity from the face of the earth. The stories of Aysu, Lütfullah, and Mihrigul are harrowing reminders of the human cost of this genocidal campaign. As the world watches, it is imperative to continue documenting these atrocities and advocating for the rights of the Uyghur people.

A systematic campaign

According to expert Adrian Zenz and BBC, children of detained parents in boarding schools were penalized for failing to speak Mandarin Chinese and prevented from practicing their religion. In a paper published in the “Journal of Political Risk,” Zenz calls the effort a “systematic campaign of social re-engineering and cultural genocide.” Human Rights Watch said that the children detained at child welfare facilities and boarding schools were held without parental consent or access. “The New York Times” reported that approximately 497,800 elementary and junior high school students were enrolled in these boarding schools. These sources also reported that students are

only allowed to see family members once every two weeks and that they are forbidden from speaking the Uyghur language.

Furthermore, UN experts expressed grave concern over allegations of a significant expansion of the state-run boarding school system, which fails to provide education in the children's mother tongue and forcibly separates Uyghur and other minority Muslim children from their families and communities, leading to their forced assimilation. "We are deeply concerned that boarding schools in Xinjiang are teaching almost exclusively in the official language with little or no use of Uyghur as medium of instruction and that the separation of mainly Uyghur and other minority children from their families could lead to their forced assimilation into the majority Mandarin language and the adoption of Han cultural practices," the UN experts said. They stressed the discriminatory nature of the policy and the violation of minorities' right to an education without discrimination, to family life, and to cultural rights.

The experts received information about large-scale removal of children, mainly Uyghur, from their families, including very young children whose parents are in exile or "interned"/detained. These children are treated as "orphans" by State authorities and placed in full-time boarding schools, pre-schools, or orphanages where the language used is almost exclusively Mandarin, the standard official Chinese language, or "Putonghua."

"Uyghur and other minority children in highly regulated and controlled boarding institutions may have little interaction with their parents, extended family or communities for much of their youth," the experts said. "This will inevitably lead to a loss of connection with their families and communities and undermine their ties to their cultural, religious and linguistic identities," they added.

Molding minors

The UN experts were also informed of the exponential increase in the number of boarding schools for Uyghur, Kazakh, and other Turkic Muslim children in recent years, and the closure of local schools where education through the medium of Uyghur and other ethnic groups languages could be provided. "The massive scale of the allegations raises extremely serious concerns of violations of basic human rights," they said. Experts note this is part of Chinese authorities' efforts to mold minority children into speaking and acting like the country's dominant Han ethnic group.

"This ideological impulse of trying to assimilate non-Han people corresponded with this punitive approach of putting adults in camps, and therefore lots of young children ended up in boarding kindergartens and boarding schools or orphanages," says James Millward, a professor at Georgetown University who

studies Chinese and Central Asian history. "It really is an effort to try to make everyone Chinese and see themselves as Chinese and have a single cultural background."

China rejects the widespread accusations of wrongful discrimination against Uyghurs and other minorities in the region—but Uyghurs, rights advocates, and reporters have documented numerous accounts of systematic abuse.

China claims it is expanding the number of boarding schools allegedly to improve educational access, especially in remote rural communities. But Uyghur families say such schools are also institutions where children with both parents detained or imprisoned are sent, against family wishes. "My relatives would rather take care of the children themselves, but they are forced to send the kids to boarding schools," says Mukerrem Mahmud, a Uyghur student in Türkiye.

Nepal between India and China

05 September 2024, [Modern Diplomacy](#), Sounak Ghosh and Dr. Karamala Areesh Kumar

Nepal is a miniature state nestled in a strategic position between China and India, two of the emerging powers of the contemporary world.

Nepal is a miniature state nestled in a strategic position between China and India, two of the emerging powers of the contemporary world. Due to its geographical location, Nepal is an important buffer state and gives China and India equal opportunity to influence the region. In terms of national strength, Nepal's relations with China and India are asymmetrical. The primary interest of China's intervention is to prevent Tibetans from using Nepal's territory as a base for its movement for autonomy. The Chinese government has made significant attempts to build its economic presence in Nepal since 1950, and simultaneously bilateral relations strengthened between both countries.

Along with its geographical location, vast river systems, sustained by glaciers and monsoon rains, make Nepal an ideal location for hydroelectric power generation. The country is among the richest in the world in terms of water resources per square kilometre, with an estimated 83,000 MW of hydro potential. As an aspiring power, China considers Nepal's water resources as an alternative to meet its energy demand and needs in the southwest region. Under the bilateral cooperation, China expressed its interest in initiating a joint hydropower project, which can help both states.

Given the current circumstances, Nepal has chosen to maintain a non-alignment approach while hedging with both India and China. To address geopolitical

obstacles, Nepal hopes to use Beijing's economic and infrastructure development initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India, on the other hand, sees China's increasing influence in Nepal as posing a serious threat to its interests. The gap and lack of trust between India and Nepal increased China's presence in Nepal. From 1975 onwards, Sino-Nepalese relations have been tight and have grown significantly. China's investments in Nepal have increased dramatically over the decades. In terms of total investments made in Nepal, China surpassed India for the first time. Between 2014 and 2021, Nepal's exports to China amounted to \$196 million, while its purchases from China reached \$12.4 billion. In comparison, Nepal brought in \$49.9 billion from India and exported \$5.37 billion to that country (OEC 2021). China overtook India for the first time in 2015–16, accounting for 42% of all foreign direct investment (FDI). With China securing project contracts worth \$10.74 billion in Nepal during the following five years, till 2022, Chinese companies emerged as the main players in Nepali projects.

2016 saw the signing of the Trade and Transit Agreement (TTA) and Nepal's inclusion as one of the original members of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), among other major accords during Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's visit to Beijing. Positive changes in infrastructure, economy, and military cooperation were evident during this time in Nepal-China relations (Mainali 2022). From 2017 forward, Nepal has made an effort to improve ties with China by welcoming more Chinese business and investment. This move away from India's long-standing dominance in Nepali foreign policy was welcomed by the leftist parties, especially the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML).

China accounted for 14.5% of foreign direct investment in Nepal in 2021, while India accounted for 33.3% (Nepal Central Bank Report 2022). Over the previous 27 years, Chinese exports to Nepal have increased at an annual rate of 13.9%, from \$53.4 million in 1995 to \$1.78 billion in 2022. China became a significant player in Nepali infrastructure projects in 2022, and Nepal's imports from China reached \$1.78 billion. China's growing sway aside, India continued to be the primary recipient of foreign direct investment and kept a careful eye on the shifting dynamics. During fiscal year 2022-2023, India purchased items worth USD 839.62 million from Nepal, while its total exports to Nepal came to USD 8015.99 million. To traverse challenging geopolitical environments and take advantage of chances for economic and infrastructural growth, Nepal has balanced its relations with both China and India.

If Nepal changes its allegiance and accrues debt to China, it could affect India's dominance in the region.

If Nepal's financial problems lead it to ask for more aid, that might affect India's commercial relations. If tensions along the border rise due to Nepalese instability, India might have security worries. Additionally, it could lead to a wave of refugees into India, straining its already limited resources. Concerns have been raised about China's financial support to Nepal. It's called "debt-trap" diplomacy by critics. Beijing disputes this, but the concern endures. Nepal needs to exercise caution and look for grants and soft loans rather than commercial loans that can trap the country in debt. The major concern lies in the attempted Chinese debt trap, following a similar pattern seen in Sri Lanka. India advises Nepal to be cautious and prioritise sustainable financing options. Nepal drifting from India could have strategic consequences. India's immediate neighbours hold immense importance for regional stability. A weakened alliance with Nepal may impact India's security interests, trade routes, and influence in the Himalayan region.

Despite India's worries about Nepal's growing commitment to China, it is important to recognize that Nepal's relationship with China presents a unique combination of opportunities and problems. Although India may view Nepal's stronger connections with China as a challenge to its hegemony in the region, Nepal's efforts to build its infrastructure and economy with China could benefit both parties and promote stability in the area. Concern still lies in how Nepal will tackle the wrath of China which they can't foresee, and how it affects India's relation with Nepal.

Rural bookstore shares story of Tibetan culture

04 September 2024, [Asia News Network](#)

Architect Zhao Yang, who designed the renovation plan, believes the bookstore should be an outgrowth of the vast land on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, helping people connect with the soil and experience its authenticity.

About seven years ago, 33-year-old Tsering Dondrub, a business owner in Shangri-La county, Diqing Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Southwest China's Yunnan province, purchased three traditional Tibetan houses in Wugong village, Xiaozhongdian town of the county, a half-hour drive from downtown area.

The three freestanding houses built nearly half a century ago had been unused for five years and would maintain this status for another three years until a bookstore brand moved in for its new branch.

Shangri-La was a key staging post in the Yunnan-Xizang branch of the Ancient Tea-Horse Caravan Route, a trade route that started in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and prospered in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-

1911) connecting Pu'er in Yunnan with Lhasa in today's Xizang autonomous region.

It continues to be an important point along the north-south National Highway 214, which starts from Qinghai province, runs through Xizang and Yunnan's Shangri-La, Lijiang and Dali, and ends in Pu'er. There are 26 ethnic groups in Shangri-La and about 33 percent of the population are of the Tibetan ethnic group.

Wugong sits just beside the highway. Villagers used to live by growing highland barley and raising yaks and sheep. About 20 years ago, there were 67 people and 10 households, which has expanded to 139 people and 31 households.

Born into a family of blacksmiths, Tsering Dondrub and his father kept refining their skills in making machetes and tableware in their spare time.

With the national highway, a high-speed railway and an airport, Shangri-La, the mysterious region described in the novel *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton published in 1933, has become easier to access in recent years.

Tourism has boomed, bringing visitors from home and abroad to the outlying village, who have showed a strong interest in traditional Tibetan culture.

Having been often invited to craft Tibetan knives and containers by tourists, Tsering Dondrub and his father opened a workshop beside the highway, which soon became lucrative.

Since 2009, under the trademark *Kasa Dao* (*Kasa Knife*), Tsering Dondrub has been running the business of making and selling traditional Tibetan products both online and in shops. By 2021, with integrated businesses, including rural tourism, iron products and ethnic cultural products, he has seen revenues exceed 7 million yuan (\$985,125).

He bought the three old houses seven years ago, not far from a reservoir, with plans to renovate them into hostels. However, by 2020, Tsering Dondrub had still not found a partner who was willing to renovate the three houses, which otherwise would be torn down.

In May 2020, Chinese bookstore brand *Librairie Avant-Garde*, headquartered in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, opened its new branch in a village in Shaxi ancient town of Dali Bai autonomous prefecture, Yunnan. Its founder Qian Xiaohua and rotating chairman Zhang Ruifeng soon started looking for other opportunities in the province.

They came to Shangri-La at the invitation of the local government because, since 2014, their bookstores renovated from derelict old houses in rural areas have successfully brought vitality back to those hollowed-out villages, setting good examples for rural vitalization in China.

They were taken to the commercial areas in Dukezong ancient town and other places, but Qian always

prefers a venue with a good view that has not yet been touched by commerce.

"We always want to create a place to realize our idealism about bookstores, rather than simply for business," Zhang says.

When Tsering Dondrub first showed them the three ramshackle Tibetan houses, they were quite impressed, but there were dozens of such houses nearby. A year later, when they viewed the houses again, Qian decided to rent them. Otherwise, they were very likely to be torn down like other deserted houses.

They invited architect Zhao Yang to design the renovation plan.

Zhao, a graduate of Tsinghua University and Harvard University, is now based in Dali. For years, he has been trying to put his architectural idealism into practice — to talk to nature with an open mind.

"A good house is like a tree. If a tree grows well, it's because it grows in the right place — it can adapt to the local water, soil and sunlight conditions," he was quoted in a previous interview. "What I have learned from building houses in rural areas is that there are no definite rules about design, which changes according to local conditions."

Before the bookstore, Zhao already completed two works in the places lived in by Tibetans. One is the Nyangchu River tourist center, which was completed in 2009 and is located in Nyingchi county in Xizang along National Highway 318.

Another is the Sunyata Hotel in Yunnan's Dechen county, which opened at the end of 2018 and sits across the holy Tibetan Meili Snow Mountain. Its predecessor was the renowned Migratory Bird Inn.

In 2022, when Zhao first saw the three rundown Tibetan houses standing in the field, he says he felt this place fits the bookstore's brand ethos.

Typical of traditional Tibetan houses in Shangri-La, the three houses represented the architectural system established by people who had lived there for hundreds of years.

"Their architectural form, the slope of the roof, the way it handles rainfall, and the choice of materials all blend harmoniously with the surrounding environment," Zhao says. "So, we need first to understand and appreciate them before considering whether we can add something new."

Zhao and his team carefully entered the houses, closely observed them and found people like Tsering Dondrub to tell stories about the village.

Zhao was surprised to find that the wooden structure of the three houses is different from those of the houses of the Han people in their building logic.

In the wooden structure of a Han house, the pillars on the first and second floors are often a single piece of wood. However, the pillars on the first floor of a Tibetan house were shorter, more slender and simpler

than those on the second floor. The first floor was inhabited by livestock and the second floor by people. "That is fascinating for an architect like me, who grew up with a modern architectural education. I see it as a precious anthropological legacy that we should carefully preserve," he says.

What also fascinates Zhao is the textured surface of the pillars on the first floor that reveals how they were made — possibly with just an axe — and a painting featuring the eight auspicious symbols every Tibetan household has, along with other anthropological information, which he managed to keep.

With an altitude of more than 3,400 meters, Shangri-La sees its temperature drop to about — 20 C in winter and people would open small windows on the thick rammed-earth walls for insulation and security, making the rooms so dark that during the days, people needed artificial lighting indoors.

In summer, Shangri-La enjoys abundant sunshine, but rich rainfall causes problems for people living under roofs made of wooden tiles, which they regularly need to replace.

Zhao found that the wooden structures were well-preserved, but the roofs had fallen into disrepair.

Considering that a modern bookstore needs proper lighting, Zhao supplanted them with roofs made of translucent polycarbonate panels and galvanized steel roof trusses, inspired by the sunrooms widely used in Shangri-La.

The three houses were renovated for different purposes — books, coffee and creative cultural products.

"We tried our best to preserve all the wooden structures in the original space," Zhao says.

"We made the smallest changes to the inner structure, so the second floor of the cafe is like a museum of the traditional residences in Shangri-La. We lifted the roof to let light in and brighten the residence."

Another fascinating point is that each house had a granary. Builders left a square opening on the rammed-earth facade and covered it with wooden slats for ventilation.

"Since we don't need granaries in a bookstore, we removed them. We transformed the openings into doors and built concrete walkways that connect the three houses and with the land, which is an important part of my design," Zhao says.

Zhao believes that the bookstore should be an outgrowth of the vast land on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, helping people connect with the soil and experience its authenticity. He created the walkways to encourage people to go out and stroll through the fields, mountains, rivers and clouds.

The building process was by no means easy.

The construction team coming from outside knew that they needed to delegate part of the work to the villagers according to local customs. After the harvest

in September, villagers were free so the team hired them to tear down broken walls to increase their incomes while building good relations with them.

However, the villagers lacked the required skills, so the construction team had to carefully instruct them.

Another problem was rebuilding the rammed-earth walls to enclose the yards. Having no idea what to do, the team members turned to the villagers. To their surprise, though this type of wall had almost been abandoned in Shangri-La, elderly villagers still retained memories of building houses with their fathers.

"I was so frustrated that I thought we should abandon the plan of building rammed-earth walls. However, with the help of the local people, we continued. Nothing is more 'site-specified' than this. Looking back, it is such a gift from the land to our project," writes the on-site architect Liao Fuhong in his construction notes.

Offering a view of the Haba Snow Mountain across the Jinsha River, the upper stream of the Yangtze River, the bookstore houses 15,000 books on humanities and social sciences and 100 types of creative cultural products with local elements. Readers can also find books about local cultures, geography, languages and history.

"It's great that there are so many books about Tibetans and Shangri-La at the bookstore. These books can connect different cultures," Tsering Dondrub says.

In the house for creative cultural products, people can find refrigerator magnets inspired by natural and cultural landmarks, such as the Ganden Sumtseling Monastery, an important Tibetan Buddhism site in Yunnan, the Haba Snow Mountain, prayer wheels, bookmarks inspired by Tibetan scripts and brooches inspired by Tibetan Opera masks.

At the cafe, visitors can have a highland barley-flavored latte or yak butter latte.

"The bookstore showcases how distinctive the old houses in Shangri-La are innovatively revitalized and imbued with new content and new appearances with more possibilities for the future," Zhang says.

The Shangri-La branch is the sixth rural bookstore of Librairie Avant-Garde since its first one in Bishan, Anhui province, in 2014.

"We have rural bookstores in the Bai, She and Yi ethnic areas — and now the Tibetan ethnic area," he says.

In *Lost Horizon*, Hilton describes a library in Shangri-La that has a large collection of books, ancient and modern, domestic and foreign.

"Zhongdian was renamed Shangri-La (based on the introductions in Hilton's work) in 2001, so it must have an idealistic bookstore," Zhang says.

However, building a bookstore in such a remote place is not only symbolic. In the short term, the bookstore, like its many precursors, can boost tourism, the economy and culture.

“Every place has its unique history. What we can do is feature the local forte through our platform so that tourists can see traditional local architecture or learn about the local culture, history and geography through the books we present,” Zhang says.

Since its opening, the revenue reached 270,000 yuan in the first month, which “is better than expected”, Zhang says, adding that “maybe it’s because summer is the peak season for Shangri-La tourism”.

In other seasons, especially winter, “business might be sluggish because the altitude naturally prevents many people from visiting, but we will keep going”, he says. In the long run, the bookstore will exert a seminal influence on the residents with books and various cultural events, he says.

“We cannot turn people into book lovers within six months. But over five years, or one or two decades, the residents will see so many people reading and caring about their history and culture, which will not only help increase their incomes but also encourage them to cherish, protect and pass on their culture and be proud of it,” Zhang says.

In September, Librairie Avant-Garde will open a Lisu ethnic bookstore in the Grand Canyon of the Nujiang River, on the Gaoligong Mountain bordering Myanmar, duplicating its previous experiences.

Chinese poet Yu Jian, 70, a guest attending the bookstore’s opening ceremony, said that he was surprised to see a bookstore in such a “remote” place. “The bookstore is great but I am wondering how they will survive because there aren’t many readers of Mandarin books since most Tibetan people don’t understand Mandarin,” Yu says.

“However, the bookstore transcends traditional models. It’s not about making money. It’s more like a ‘temple’ inspiring people’s respect for books and bookstores.”

Celebrating Tibet, Challenging China’s Narrative, Understanding India’s Concerns

04 September 2024, [StratNews Global](#), Resham

A three-day event titled “Spirit of Tibet: Celebrating Culture and Compassion” at the India International Centre in Delhi, was an opportunity to mix Tibet’s rich cultural heritage and historical significance with some issues of strategic salience.

There were Tibetan cultural performances and discussions on politics and spirituality. These were showcased in the context of Tibet’s historical journey, with exhibits and artefacts, followed by screening of documentaries and films. Those of a different bent can sample Tibetan medicines or explore Tibetan astrology.

Inaugural Session: “Relevance of Tibet to India”

But a discussion featuring Penpa Tsering, head of the Central Tibetan Administration, former diplomat Dilip Sinha whose recent book *Imperial Games in Tibet* is garnering appreciation and acclaim, also celebrated Tibetologist Claude Arpi and Lt Gen Viinod Bhatia, ex-DG Military Operations, drew a packed house.

With the focus on the Relevance of Tibet to India, Penpa Tsering confirmed an ongoing collaboration with the US to challenge China’s spurious claims to Tibet. “We intend to convince more countries to challenge Beijing’s narrative,” said Tsering.

Ambassador Sinha highlighted the strategic shift along the India-Tibet border, saying, “There was a time when the India-Tibet border was considered the most secure, but now that it is the India-China border, it has become a security nightmare for us.”

The “Six Wars” China May Fight

Gen Bhatia underscored an important point: while younger generations may have forgotten the 1962 India-China border war, the Galwan clash has revived memories of that tragic conflict, shaping a view of China which is watchful and wary

He referenced a theory predicting that China could engage in six major conflicts over the next several decades to restore what it perceives as its historical glory. These potential conflicts reflect China’s aggressive approach to territorial expansion:

- **Unification of Taiwan (2020–2025):** China considers Taiwan’s unification non-negotiable and reserves the right to use war to realise its aims
- **Recovery of South China Sea Islands (2025–2030):** After a possible victory in Taiwan, China may shift focus to asserting control over the disputed South China Sea islands, even though those claims are not tenable under the UN Laws of the Seas.
- **Reconquest of Southern Tibet (2035–2040):** Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls Southern Tibet, remains a contested area. The long-standing McMahon Line border dispute between India and China makes this region a focal point for China’s aggression.
- **Conquering Diaoyu and Ryukyu Islands (2040–2045):** China aims to reclaim these Japanese-controlled islands, citing historical ties. The islands are currently under Japanese control.
- **Invasion of Mongolia (2045–2050):** China views “Outer Mongolia” as part of its historical territory and may seek to assert control over it, following similar patterns seen in its territorial disputes elsewhere.
- **Reclaiming Land from Russia (2055–2060):** China may eventually focus on regaining land lost to Russia, seeking to

Siberia it believes was historically part of China.

China's Long-Term Strategic Approach

Bhatia summarised China's expansionist strategy with the formula: "claim, occupy, legitimise, impose, exploit, and integrate." He stressed that China operates with a long-term vision, aiming to solidify and legitimise its territorial claims over time. In contrast, he suggested, India sometimes overlooks the deeper historical context.

He also explored the evolution of terminology around the India-China border, noting how the Indo-Tibet border was gradually rebranded into what is now called the Line of Actual Control (LAC). He emphasised that this rebranding, particularly the shift from the 1970s onwards, reflects China's strategic influence on regional perceptions.

The "Line of Perceptions" and the Complexity of the LAC

Bhatia offered an interpretation of the LAC, describing it as more than just a physical border. He described it as a "Line of Perceptions," comprising four distinct lines:

- **India's Perception of the LAC:** How India defines the boundary.
- **China's Perception of the LAC:** How China views the boundary.
- **India's Perception Based on China's View:** India's understanding of the boundary, influenced by China's positioning and claims.
- **Combined Perception:** A mix of both Indian and Chinese interpretations of the LAC.

"The LAC, if I may put it as Line of Perceptions. It is not one line, it is not two lines, it is not three lines but four lines," he explained, underscoring the complex nature of this dispute.

How Deng Xiaoping's 'one country, two systems' dates back to 1957 in Tibet

04 September 2024, [SCMP](#), Chow Chung-yan

With hindsight, the one country, two systems framework bears a certain resemblance to a Qianlong policy Deng and others studied in 1957

Some 25 years before Deng Xiaoping first proposed "one country, two systems" as a creative political solution to facilitate Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau's return to China, Mao Zedong tasked him with finding an answer to the Tibet issue.

It was 1957, six years after Beijing and Lhasa signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement that confirmed Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China and its autonomous status.

Tensions started to flare between the two sides shortly afterwards. The central leadership blamed this partly

on some Communist officials' radical move to change Tibet's social and political systems.

Mao sent Deng, one of his most capable lieutenants, to take charge of the situation and find a long-term solution. Between February and March 1957, Deng held rounds of meetings with other senior officials. Xi Zhongxun, father of the future president, Xi Jinping, was among the attendees.

Deng and his colleagues studied ancient documents for inspiration. The most important one was the Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance for the More Effective Governance of Tibet, an imperial decree issued by the Qianlong emperor of the Qing dynasty in 1793.

For centuries, Tibet was China's Gordian knot. Its extreme climate, high altitude and unique sociopolitical conditions made administration arduous. Yet, it is critical to China's stability and security.

Various emperors tried to adopt the so-called patron-priest approach, providing material and military support to Lhasa in exchange for its loyalty and religious influence. However, at the turn of the 18th century, continuous internal strife in the region and the threat of Nepalese invasions forced Beijing's hand. The Qianlong emperor ordered a reorganisation of the Tibetan administration and codified it into the imperial decree. It formalised the selection of top lamas like the Dalai and the Panchen through a lottery in a golden urn under the supervision of Qing officials. This was a symbolic gesture to position Beijing as the final arbiter of power succession in Tibet.

The ordinance also elevated ambans – equivalent to the central government's liaison office directors today – to the same level of political authority as the Dalai Lama. Beijing would control Tibet's foreign and military affairs but otherwise allow the region to maintain its unique social, religious and political systems. It required Tibet to reform its systems gradually without stipulating deadlines. Tibet was not absorbed into China as another province, but it was also not a simple tributary state like Vietnam.

The Seventeen-Point Agreement Mao offered the 14th Dalai Lama is essentially a modern version of the Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance. Even at the height of the Communist Party's triumph, Mao and Deng were mindful of the vast differences between Tibet and inner China. While they were adamant that Tibet must be part of China, they were also willing to be flexible and patient with its peculiar systems.

On September 4, 1956, Beijing decided to pause socialist reforms in Tibet for "six years". However, similar programmes continued in other Tibetan-populated regions in Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai. Deng argued that conditions on the ground were not ripe for introducing radical changes. Even though the priest-god political system and the social reality of

serfdom in Tibet were an affront to the Communists' atheist doctrines, Mao and Deng were willing to wait. The meeting minutes of the secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party at the time showed that the leaders had even discussed letting Tibet keep its systems unchanged for "50 years".

At the Politburo meeting on May 14, 1957, vice-chairman Liu Shaoqi signalled that Beijing was ready to take a "long-term" view of Tibet's reforms but also warned that it would not be afraid to resort to force if war was forced on China. Considering that China was then at the zenith of its revolutionary fever – the Great Leap Forward would be launched a year later – the restraint shown by the leadership over Tibet was remarkable.

Yet, the Tibetan elite rejected the olive branch and decided that time was not on their side. Tensions escalated and culminated in an armed revolt in Lhasa in 1959. Suspecting involvement from the United States, Chinese leaders quickly set aside their waiting strategy and responded with swift military action, resulting in the exile of the 14th Dalai Lama till this day.

No documents show how that experience might have influenced Deng when he entered negotiations with the British 25 years later for the peaceful return of Hong Kong. But with hindsight, the one country, two systems framework bears a certain resemblance to the Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance.

Both underscore a political tradition running from imperial to modern China. Chinese rulers place great importance on national unity and security, from which they derive their governing mandate and legitimacy. The ambition to acquire more territory or wealth is rare and often frowned upon. A good sovereign power is the ultimate guarantor of law and order, upholding national unity and promoting Chinese culture.

As long as the bottom line is not challenged, the Chinese leadership can be extremely pragmatic and flexible. Throughout China's long history, major wars triggered by religious or ideological differences have been rare – unlike in the West.

China never launched any crusade or witnessed anything like the brutal religious struggles in Europe during the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries.

A rare exception was the 10 years of anarchy during the Cultural Revolution that marred Mao's legacy and almost wrecked Deng's career. When Deng returned to politics at the end of the turmoil, he was more determined than ever to stick to pragmatism, setting aside ideological debates in favour of achieving results.

It was against such a background that the idea of "one country, two systems" was hatched. Today, China is trying to reconnect with its historical past more than ever. In Xi's speeches, he cites ancient political

philosophers like Xunzi, Guan Zhong or Han Fei extensively.

For people from the English-speaking world, it is tempting to view other countries purely from a Western-centric perspective. We tend to forget that many modern concepts, such as narrowly defined territorial sovereignty, statehood or self-determination, came into existence only after the Treaty of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648.

There is a tendency to force everything into the Procrustean bed of the Western narrative, while ignoring the political traditions, priorities and philosophies of other civilisations. This Western-centric perspective, combined with crusading zeal, is often the root cause of conflict in today's increasingly multipolar world.

The Significance of China's Reforms for Pakistan

04 September 2024, [Modern Diplomacy](#), Sahibzada M. Usman

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China recently convened its third plenary session, marking a pivotal moment in China's journey toward comprehensive reform and modernization.

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) recently convened its third plenary session in Beijing, marking a pivotal moment in China's journey toward comprehensive reform and modernization. This meeting outlined a clear path for China to establish a high-quality socialist market economy by 2025 and laid the groundwork for becoming a great socialist country by mid-century. The ambitious goals set during this session underscore China's commitment to deepening reforms and enhancing governance capacity, all while maintaining its distinctive Chinese style of socialism.

During the session, more than 360 reform measures were introduced, which will be implemented in a phased manner until 2029. These measures are designed to advance comprehensive economic reforms, establish democratic governance, promote a vibrant socialist culture, and improve the economic conditions of the Chinese people. The scope of these reforms is global, emphasizing the need to create a seamless connection between the real and digital economies. The meeting highlighted the importance of the service sector, infrastructure development, and the security and sustainability of industrial and supply chains. These initiatives are seen as vital for China to refine its socialist system and achieve general modernization.

One of the key areas of focus during the session was green growth. The CPC emphasized the need for

carbon reduction, pollution control, and improved environmental management systems to achieve a zero-carbon footprint by 2060. This commitment to environmental sustainability is part of a broader effort to ensure that China's modernization is both inclusive and environmentally responsible. By reducing carbon emissions and promoting green growth, China aims to position itself as a global leader in the transition to a green economy.

On the foreign policy front, the session reiterated China's commitment to peaceful development and its dedication to promoting international cooperation through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The declaration from the meeting emphasized China's role in advancing global development, security, and civilization. It called for an equitable and orderly multipolar world and a form of economic globalization that benefits all nations. China's modernization, as outlined in this session, is not just about national development but also about contributing to global stability and prosperity.

Chinese modernization is crucial for nation-building and development. With a population of over 1.4 billion—larger than the total population of developed countries—China's approach to modernization is designed to promote common prosperity. This means meeting the rising expectations of the Chinese people for a better life, while also ensuring equity, justice, and social development. The goal is to balance material and cultural development with harmony between humanity and nature, responding to climate change, and ensuring sustainable development.

China's commitment to peaceful, high-quality economic and cultural development, coupled with its focus on creating a secure environment and improving governance, offers valuable lessons for other developing nations. China's approach to modernization provides an alternative model for countries in the Global South, offering insights into achieving sustainable development, shared security, and shared prosperity. The strong political leadership, governance experience, and social cohesion that underpin China's success can be leveraged by other nations in their own modernization efforts.

The outcomes of the CPC's third plenary session have significant implications for Pakistan-China relations. As China's all-weather strategic cooperative partner and a key player in South Asia, Pakistan stands to benefit immensely from China's modernization initiatives. The Belt and Road Initiative, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has already transformed Pakistan's energy and infrastructure sectors. As the second phase of CPEC begins, bilateral cooperation is expected to expand into areas like agricultural modernization, industrial development, mining, and information technology. This cooperation

will further accelerate Pakistan's socio-economic development.

Moreover, the Global Development Initiative, highlighted during the CPC session, promises to enhance Chinese cooperation in Pakistan's poverty alleviation efforts, capacity building, and green economy. Both China and Pakistan share a commitment to achieving the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The Global Security Initiative, another focus of the meeting, underscores the need for common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. This initiative is particularly relevant to Pakistan, as it seeks to maintain political stability and combat terrorism. China's continued support in these areas will be crucial for Pakistan's long-term stability and security.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of advancing cooperation in technology and space research, extending the scope of Pakistan-China relations from land, sea, and air to the frontier of space. The Global Civilization Initiative, which promotes cultural exchange and mutual respect, will also strengthen ties between the two countries. More Pakistani students are expected to study in China, gaining advanced knowledge in agriculture, IT, and AI, further enriching the bilateral relationship.

Conclusively, the third session of the CPC's 20th Central Committee has laid the foundation for a new era of reform and modernization in China. The comprehensive reforms and initiatives introduced during this meeting will not only shape China's future but also have far-reaching implications for its partners, particularly Pakistan. The deep historical ties, strategic partnership, and unbreakable brotherhood between China and Pakistan will grow even stronger, yielding more fruitful results in the years to come. The task now is to translate these ambitious plans into action and ensure that the benefits of modernization are realized for both nations.

US Supports Strengthening India-Tibet Relations

04 September 2024, [Sri Lanka Guardian](#), Ashok K Mehta

The recent visit of a bipartisan delegation of U.S. lawmakers to New Delhi and Dharamshala marks a significant moment in U.S. diplomacy in the region.

A Tibet festival began on 3 September at the India International Centre, New Delhi, to celebrate its rich Buddhist heritage, culture, and identity. The Sikyong (head) of the Central Tibetan Administration, Penpa Tshering, will preside over various activities to highlight Tibet's geo-strategic, spiritual, and cultural importance for India.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at 89, is receiving medical treatment in a New York hospital but is reported to be in good health. U.S. Special Coordinator on Tibet, Uzra Jeya, met him, which elicited an “immediate (solemn) protest from China.” Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning stated, “We don’t allow the Dalai Lama to engage in political activities in the U.S.” Backchannel talks between the Dalai Lama’s envoy and China have been ongoing for an undisclosed period, though Beijing does not confirm them. These talks are driven by the U.S. House Resolution Resolve Tibet Act of July 2024, which calls for the restoration of Tibet’s full autonomy. India needs to add its voice for Tibet’s autonomy, both internally and externally, as part of a broader coalition. India’s recognition of full Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was based on Beijing granting and implementing Tibet’s autonomy. Instead, China has quashed Tibet’s autonomy and trade treaties, opening the door for India to adopt a more nuanced position.



Dalai Lama, wearing a traditional hat from Himachal Pradesh, watching the Indian Republic Day Celebrations on TV at his residence in Dharamasala, HP, India on January 26, 2023. [Photo: Tenzin Jamphel]

Two issues require the Government of India’s prompt attention: the Dalai Lama’s succession and the border issue, including the restoration of peace and tranquillity and full disengagement in East Ladakh. The visit of a bipartisan U.S. delegation of lawmakers to Dharamasala and Delhi, received by both the Dalai Lama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was significant. China critic Nancy Pelosi made comments about President Xi Jinping that drew Chinese ire. On the ground, the sinicization process of Xijang (Tibet) began in the mid-1960s. The method of injecting 7.5 million Han Chinese into Tibet, along with neutralizing Tibetan Buddhism by deploying Chinese monks in Tibetan monasteries, was designed to change the heart and soul of Tibet. Militarization and infrastructure construction soon followed, adversely impacting the environment. USD 5.8 billion was spent on the Sichuan-Tibet railway system, which is being extended to borders with India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

A new border law has led to the construction of 628 well-off border villages close to or encroaching into neighboring countries. In 1965, convenience police stations were established as a key security measure: Big Brother is Watching. By 2011, Tibet Autonomous Region advertised for 2,500 police stations, with 458 designated for Lhasa alone. By 2016, this grid-style social management of Tibet had recruited thousands of Han Chinese and some Tibetan policemen.

A Chinese Communist Party (CCP) political secretary has always maintained close surveillance over Tibet, which is governed by the CCP from Beijing. Internal policing has fostered a sense of ‘otherness’ through the surveillance drive. Reports indicate attempts to recruit Tibetans into the PLA, including some forcible intake.

The day may come when some Nepalese might choose to join the PLA outside of the South West Theatre Command in Tibet. This could result from the ill-conceived Agniveer policy. The Chinese Renaming Campaign has led to what the Forum for Non-Violent Alternatives (FNVA) calls ‘Thread of Beads: an analysis of renaming 62 locations in India’s Arunachal Pradesh since 2017.’ China claims that 90 percent of Zangnan (Arunachal Pradesh) is illegally occupied by India. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has suggested renaming 62 locations in Tibet. This is unlikely to provoke a strong reaction from the Chinese. The Chinese renaming drive occurred in four phases: 2017, 2021, 2023, and 2024.

This campaign has been supplemented by encroachments into Nepal and Bhutan, with the construction of Xiakong villages (well-off) in contested areas to bolster their claims. While Nepal and Bhutan are pretending this is not happening, India is building approximately 600 vibrant villages, with funds already released. Numerous encroachments have also occurred in India. The strategic importance of Tibet for India cannot be overstated.

The root of the border problem and the Tibet issue lies in India’s failure to understand its significance in time and act. In the Eastern Command, Lt Gen Sir Francis Tucker foresaw in 1946 that India must prevent China from occupying Tibet and be prepared to occupy it. This did not happen, for which we are now paying the price. The priority now is to coordinate with the Dalai Lama to address his succession. The Dalai Lama has been silent on this issue recently but has spoken and written about it in the past.

The Chinese are likely to appoint their own Dalai Lama, as they did with the Panchen Lama (second to Dalai Lama), Gyaltzen Norbu. This must be preempted. The CTA is preparing a new map of Tibet with the help of cartographic experts from Princeton University in the U.S.

The issue of the map and India announcing the contours of its Tibet policy, including the border and

full disengagement of the PLA from its intrusions in East Ladakh, must be coordinated with the CTA. A succession policy should also be outlined. With Tibetans migrating to the U.S. and soon becoming the majority of Tibetans residing there, the Tibet issue may diminish, leaving Delhi with reduced leverage against Beijing.

Top French museums have succumbed to China's soft power on Tibet etc?

04 September 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Some top museums in France have succumbed to China by going along with the latter's propaganda distortion of history and silencing of the cultures of minority groups, including those concerning Tibet, reported *decotidien.com*, citing a collective of experts. The development has sparked a heated debate about the implications of such actions on historical accuracy and cultural preservation, the report said.

In particular, the Musee du quai Branly and the Musee Guimet, two renowned institutions in France, have come under scrutiny for having complied with Chinese demands to rewrite history and erase the identities of non-Han peoples who have been assimilated or annexed by the PRC. This disturbing trend has raised concerns about the preservation of diverse cultural narratives and the autonomy of historical representation in museum settings, the report said.

Citing one "glaring example", the report said that "this erasure" of culture can be seen in the Musee du quai Branly, where the term "Tibet" has been replaced with the Chinese designation "autonomous region of Xizang" in the catalogue of Tibetan artifacts.

This alteration reflects the enforcement of a law passed in 2023 by the PRC, which aims to eliminate any mention of Tibet as a distinct entity with its own history and heritage. By succumbing to Chinese pressure, the museum has effectively whitewashed the Tibetan identity and obscured the painful realities of occupation and colonization that have defined its past, the report said.

Likewise, the report continued, the Musee Guimet has opted to use the term "Himalayan world" instead of "Tibet" in its exhibition spaces dedicated to the region.

"This subtle yet significant change echoes the broader narrative dictated by Beijing, which seeks to downplay the unique cultural heritage of Tibetans and subsume it within a homogeneous Chinese identity," the report said.

The report sees these as a general trend in France in which certain French institutions, including universities hosting Confucius Institutes, have become unwitting conduits for Chinese propaganda and censorship. These institutes, funded by the Chinese

government, promote a sanitized version of Chinese history and culture that aligns with the narrative endorsed by Beijing. By collaborating with these entities, museums risk perpetuating a distorted view of history that prioritizes the interests of the PRC over academic integrity and cultural diversity, the report said.

Museums are forced to navigate between appeasing Chinese authorities and preserving the integrity of their collections in a situation where China exerts increasing influence on the global stage, leading to institutions prioritizing the maintaining of diplomatic relations and securing access to Chinese resources over upholding ethical standards and historical accuracy.

The report calls on museums to uphold their role as custodians of knowledge and champions of cultural heritage by resisting external pressures to distort historical narratives and erase marginalized voices. This is imperative for French museums to reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom and cultural diversity.

The report also called on stakeholders in the cultural sector to engage in meaningful dialogue and advocacy to ensure that museums remain spaces of education, reflection, and empowerment for all communities.

The report said the recent controversies, to which a collective of researchers had brought attention concerning French museums' compliance with Chinese demands, highlight the urgent need to safeguard the integrity of historical representation and cultural preservation.

By confronting external pressures and asserting their autonomy, museums can reaffirm their dedication to truth, diversity, and inclusivity in the face of mounting challenges. It is crucial for all stakeholders to stand united in defence of intellectual freedom and cultural integrity, ensuring that museums continue to serve as beacons of knowledge and understanding in an increasingly complex world, the report said.

'China distorting Tibetan history, destroying architectural buildings'

03 September 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Dar Ovais

"As part of this policy to eradicate anything Tibetan, the Chinese authorities are distorting Tibetan history, erasing national identity, and forcibly changing the way of life, and destroying architectural buildings, designs and artwork with Tibetan characteristics," said Penpa Tsering.

Sikyong (president) of Tibetan government-in-exile Penpa Tsering on Monday alleged that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is implementing hardline policies aimed at eradicating the distinct Tibetan identity in Tibet.

As the exiled Tibetans and Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamshala celebrated the sixty-fourth anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day on Monday, Tsering while reading the statement of Kashag (cabinet) said that the PRC government is forcefully implementing an assimilationist policy called “forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation” through a three-pronged process termed as “to facilitate ethnic exchanges, communication and integration”, aimed at eradicating the Tibetan people’s identity through indoctrination programmes and Sinicisation campaigns in the religious, political and social programmes.

An Estonian parliamentary delegation led by MP Juku-Kalle Raid, the Chair of Tibet Support Group in Estonian Parliament, attended the commemoration ceremony at Tsuglagkhang temple in McLeodGanj.

“As part of this policy to eradicate anything Tibetan, the Chinese authorities are distorting Tibetan history, erasing national identity, and forcibly changing the way of life, and destroying architectural buildings, designs and artwork with Tibetan characteristics,” said Penpa Tsering

Sikyong said, “Over a million Tibetan children are forced into state-run colonial boarding schools to learn Chinese language and ideology without access to their families. Books related to Tibetan nationality, religion, and histories are being forcibly removed from the libraries of these schools. And pictures and statues of historical figures such as Thonmi Sambhota, who created the Tibetan script and other ancient and modern scholars in the school campuses, are being wiped out. Such alarming reports continue to emerge from Tibet.”

The Tibetan parliament-in-exile, in its statement, said, “Regarding our fellow Tibetans living under Chinese occupation, it is evident that they are completely deprived of any democratic political system. Instead, the brutality of the Communist Party of China’s hardline policies, under which they continue to suffer as if in a living hell, becomes increasingly evident with each passing day. With the goal of eradicating the Tibetan race and language, the Chinese government has forcibly relocated over one million young Tibetan children to separate boarding schools, where they are subjected to policies designed to Sinicize them.”

“Additionally, for many years, China has pursued a policy of Sinicizing Tibetan religion and culture by destroying existing centers dedicated to their practice and preservation. On July 12, 2024, the Chinese government issued a coercive order to immediately shut down the Golog Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling, an academy established in 1994 with all necessary permissions from various Chinese authorities,” the Tibetan parliament-in-exile said, adding that this abrupt shutdown has deeply saddened the Tibetan people both in Tibet and in

exile, as well as those worldwide who value Tibetan culture.

Bursts of Sympathy, Teetering Commitment: U.S. Policy on Tibet

03 September 2024, [ORF](#), Sujan R. Chinoy

Introduction

Two recent events involving the United States (US) have refocused the spotlight on the issue of Tibetan sovereignty. Even as China urged US President Joe Biden not to sign the ‘Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act’,^[1] a bipartisan US Congressional delegation led by former Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Dharamshala in June 2024 to meet the Dalai Lama and express solidarity with the Tibetan people.^{[a],[2]} In July, President Biden signed the Act into law.^[3]

It would be instructive to examine how this Act differs from earlier legislation in the US on Tibet and its impact on the future of the Tibetan people.

Previous US Legislation

The US first appointed a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in 1997.^[4] The Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 laid the foundation for renewed activism through further legislative measures to preserve the heritage of the Tibetan people.^[5] The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018^[6] and the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020^[7] put further pressure on China, with the latter categorically rejecting any interference by China in the selection of the Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 focused on the protection of Tibet’s distinct historical, religious, cultural, and linguistic identity and sought accountability for human rights violations. Unsurprisingly, the task assigned to the Secretary of State to establish a branch office in Lhasa of the US Consulate General in Chengdu to monitor political, economic, and cultural developments in Tibet remained unrealised, even as the emphasis on Voice of America and Radio Free Asia Tibetan language broadcasts continued.^[8] The US also failed to establish contact with the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, who was taken from his home in 1995 and has since been replaced by a China-appointed lama, Gyaltzen Norbu.^[9] The 2002 Act also upheld the UN General Assembly resolutions of 1959, 1961, and 1965, calling on the People’s Republic of China to cease practices that deny the Tibetan people their right to self-determination.

Many of the earlier positions of 2002 were incorporated into the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 which, under then President Donald Trump, emphasised the need to protect Tibet’s unique identity and human rights and called for the establishment of a consulate in Lhasa. The 2020 Act,

perhaps reflecting a certain *modus vivendi*, did not refer to the right to self-determination for the Tibetan people. However, the Act opposed any effort by China to interfere in the matter of reincarnation and succession, including the manifestation of the Dalai Lama in the future.^[b] The applicability of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act to Chinese officials who violate human rights in Tibet and the protection of the environment and water resources of the Tibetan Plateau were other notable features of the law.

New Elements in the New Law: Tibet and Self-Determination

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act directly refers to a “dispute” between Tibet and China, implying that they are two distinct geographical and political entities. This is different from the relatively restrained language used in the 2002, 2018, and 2020 Acts. Additionally, the latest legislation focuses on exerting pressure on China to have a meaningful dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama without the usual preconditions imposed by China, such as acceptance by the Dalai Lama that Tibet has always been a part of China. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama has been ready to reconcile to the fact that Tibet is (today) part of China. He has also declared that he is not seeking independence for Tibet and that he is committed to arriving at a negotiated settlement.^[10] The Dalai Lama has not accepted the additional Chinese demand that he declare Tibet as always having been a part of China.^[11]

Clause 5 of Section 2 [Findings of US Congress] of the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act states that the “US government has never taken the position that Tibet was a part of China since ancient times.”^[12] However, this reaffirmation does nothing to question the US position, shared by the global community, that Tibet is today part of China. The protection of human rights in Tibet and its right to self-determination have been revived in the new Act. It also introduces policy measures to counter efforts by the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to spread disinformation about Tibet. The Act, like its predecessors, covers not just the Tibet Autonomous Region but also the areas of Greater Tibet, which have long since been carved and merged with neighbouring Chinese provinces such as Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan.

The Evolution of US Policy

The US displayed scant interest in Tibet’s independence or autonomy in the years leading to the formation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 and its military takeover of Tibet in 1950.^[13] Indeed, in 1908, William Woodville Rockhill, a US diplomat who served in the US embassy in China, described the Dalai Lama as a “vassal prince”.^[14] With its Tibet policy outsourced to Great Britain, the US was inclined to

reflect British positions in the early 1940s. However, the US, unlike Britain, could not distinguish between the implications of the term “sovereignty” as against “suzerainty”.

Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was crafted by the British in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to ascribe conditional legitimacy to its nebulous claims over the Outer Tibet provinces of western Kham and Ü-Tsang and to encourage China to not limit itself to the Inner Tibet provinces of Amdo and eastern Kham. This was part of the Great Game, which aimed to prevent Imperial Russia from making inroads into High Tartary.^[15] The British were loath to stretch themselves and contented themselves with the fig leaf of Chinese claims. At the same time, in the context of the Simla Convention of 1914 between Great Britain, China, and Tibet, the British, while recognising Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, recognised the autonomy of Outer Tibet. Article 2 of the Convention also committed Great Britain and China to abstain from interference in the administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which was to remain with the Tibetan government at Lhasa.^[16]

For a brief period during the Second World War, US President Franklin Roosevelt also directly reached out to the Dalai Lama’s administration in Lhasa to gain access to Tibet’s territory to aid the war effort,^[17] although this was episodic. In the 1940s, the Communists gained ground in the civil war and became increasingly determined to consolidate territory across Tibet. Chinese officials and soldiers had left Tibet after the collapse of the Qing dynasty; between 1912 and 1950, China had no presence in Outer Tibet, though the Kuomintang government had attempted to re-establish presence following the death of the 13th Dalai Lama by dispatching a “condolence mission” to Lhasa, headed by General Huang Musong.

As China’s ally during the Second World War, the US supported Chiang Kai-shek’s position.^{[c],[d]} This support led to cautious US policy towards Tibet leading up to 1949. The Chinese Nationalist government had claimed “suzerainty” over Tibet, whereas the Chinese constitution identified Tibet as an integral part of the Republic of China.^[18]

It is no surprise then that the US was circumspect in dealing with the Tibetan government in Lhasa.^[e] This was when the Dalai Lama, the Regent, and the Kashag had written to the president of the US expressing a desire to establish good relations between the two governments. There was a proposal to send a Tibetan Trade Mission to India, China, the United Kingdom (UK), and the US later in 1947;^[19] the mission, led by the Tsepon Shakabpa, a Tibetan nobleman, eventually travelled in 1948,^[20] on passports issued by the Tibetan government in Lhasa.^[21] Tsepon Shakabpa’s

Tibetan passport bears the immigration stamps of India, US, UK, France, Italy, Switzerland, Iraq, Pakistan, and Hong Kong but not China, though the trade mission did visit Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou as part of its itinerary.^[22] This may indicate the Republic of China's unwillingness to countenance any suggestion of independence although Tibet enjoyed independent status at the time.

The policy circumspection of the US is also evident in a 1 August 1947 letter to the Secretary of State, in which the US envoy in Delhi took the position that "in view of the Department [of State]'s desire to avoid any action which may reflect on the Chinese claim to sovereignty over Tibet, the Embassy has addressed its reply to the letter from the "Foreign Office" [of the Tibetan Government] to the "Foreign Bureau".^[23] The distinction made by the US was perhaps that "Foreign Office" was the equivalent of the foreign ministry of a sovereign state, whereas the "Foreign Bureau" in China denoted the provincial foreign affairs bureau of the central government. The wording indicated the US's unwillingness to dilute its recognition of China's claimed sovereignty over Tibet; additionally, the US did not hesitate to reject any suggestion by the Tibetan government's "Foreign Office" that it represented the equivalent of an independent state's foreign ministry. As outlined by then Assistant Secretary of State James Graham Parsons to the Secretary of State in a memo dated 14 October 1959, US policy towards Tibet began to evolve in the 1950s, following the takeover by the Communists.^[24] Amid growing tensions, including in the Taiwan Strait, the US adopted the approach that the Tibetans had the same "inherent right" to self-determination as any other people. It further acknowledged that, if developments warranted, the recognition of Tibet as an independent state should be considered. However, the US did not move to formulate a definitive legal position on Tibet at the time. According to Parsons, the US considered it adequate "for present purposes" to state that it recognised "the de facto autonomy that Tibet has exercised since the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, and particularly since the Simla Conference (of 1914)."^[25] Reflecting on US policy since 1950, Parsons stated that the US acknowledged that "arguments against recognition of Tibetan independence under the conditions prevailing in 1959 were stronger than those in favour."^[26] Evidently, Chiang Kai-shek, by then restricted to running the Republic of China from Taiwan, continued to influence and moderate the US's position.

Then Acting Secretary of State C. Douglas Dillon's Memorandum No. 381 of 16 June 1959 to President Eisenhower mentioned the Dalai Lama's letter of appeal to the US President and the Secretary of State, in which he insisted that Tibet "be granted full independence as a prerequisite for Communist China's

entry into the United Nations."^[27] This came immediately after the Dalai Lama had fled to India in March 1959 and when he was seeking full independence for Tibet on the plea that earlier efforts to secure genuine autonomy within the People's Republic of China had failed. On crossing into India, he had repudiated the 17-Point Agreement.^[28] The US had assessed that then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was "strongly opposed to any independence for Tibet, favouring rather the Dalai Lama's publicly committing himself to working for the reestablishment of Tibetan autonomy."^[29] Today, it is a matter of conjecture how much of the lack of enthusiasm for Tibet's independence, including in the US, had its roots in India's policy at the time.^[f]

Memorandum No. 383 dated 5 August 1959 from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) and the Acting Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs (Walter Walmsley) to Secretary of State Christian Herter on Developments with Respect to United Nations Action on Tibetan Issue highlights interesting details.^[30] After his flight to India in March 1959, the Dalai Lama had reached out to the US government to seek support for his intention to take the Tibet issue to the UN General Assembly and possibly make a public appeal for UN action. The Dalai Lama "had also asked the US government whether [it] would be willing to propose to some other government, preferably in Asia, that it extend recognition to his government-in-exile."^[31]

The US embassy in Delhi was clear in its assessment that, "while the GOI would consider that raising the Tibetan issue in the United Nations would serve no useful purpose, it would concede that the Dalai Lama has the right to appeal and to be heard if the United Nations wishes."^[32] The Embassy's assessment was that "an appeal by the Dalai Lama and his appearance at the United Nations would probably not jeopardize his return to India so long as he avoided insisting on the concept of Tibetan independence."^[33] Additionally, the US was keen on his return to India.

Chiang Kai-shek's Government of the Republic of China (GRC) was at that time not only a UN Member State but also a permanent member of the UN Security Council. In the US embassy's assessment, the Republic of China "would not itself raise the Tibetan issue at the General Assembly but would strongly support any other country which might bring up the problem...The GRC delegation would participate in any UN debate that might take place, castigating Chinese Communist actions in Tibet and reiterating President Chiang's statement of March 26, 1959 promising the Tibetan people the right of self-determination following the overthrow" of the communist regime in Beijing.^[34]

On 20 February 1960, then Secretary of State Herter stated, "It is the belief of the U.S. Government that this

principle [of self-determination] should apply to the people of Tibet and that they should have their voice in their own political destiny.”^[35] According to Guangqiu Xu, “on January 17, 1962, in a letter to the Dalai Lama, Secretary of State Dean Rusk repeated the U.S. position that the principle of self-determination should apply to the people of Tibet.”^[36] Guangqiu Xu further stated that “successive U.S. administrations of that period strongly condemned Chinese human rights practices and supported all three U.N. General Assembly resolutions [of 1959, 1961, and 1965] that urged China to withdraw from Tibet.”^[37]

It is clear that the US played safe and paid no heed to Tibet’s pleas to the United Nations for assistance. Both the US and the UK wanted India to take the lead, which did not materialise. It was El Salvador that moved a resolution in the UN General Assembly when the Chinese PLA rolled into Tibet in 1950,^[38] but the debate proved inconclusive and was postponed due to the uncertainty among the big powers. The question of Tibet was raised again in a resolution in the UN General Assembly in 1959, when the unrest in Tibet led to the Dalai Lama’s flight to India. Yet again, smaller powers—Ireland and Malaya—pushed for a resolution on the “Question of Tibet”.^[39]

Between 1959 and 1964, three reports of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) gave a boost to the Tibet issue, with *prima facie* evidence of violation of human rights and attempts by China to destroy the Tibetan nation and the Buddhist religion.

The history of US support^[6] to the Khampa guerrilla outfit Chushi Gangdruk (four rivers, six ranges that define the Kham region) that was fighting the Chinese PLA is well-documented.^[40] The low-intensity covert operations carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the 1950s involved training the Tibetan resistance units in Colorado as well as the “Mustang Army” of rebels operating from Nepal’s border region with Tibet. US assistance had begun to ebb around the time that the PRC established the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1965 and conclusively ended in the aftermath of the Sino-US rapprochement in 1971. After that, Tibet was relegated in US foreign policy, with all remaining support for the Tibetan guerrillas coming to a halt.^[41] Even the latest Tibet-China Dispute Act acknowledges that it “does not change longstanding bipartisan United States policy to recognize the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China as part of the People’s Republic of China.”^[42]

In the wake of the Sino-US rapprochement, then President Richard Nixon and his successors eased up on the issue of Tibet; it is well known that President Jimmy Carter was reluctant to meet the Dalai Lama.^[43] The finality of this expedient position was clear from Secretary of State James Baker’s statement of 5 February 1992, during a Senate Foreign Relations

Committee hearing, that “U.S. policy accepts the Chinese position that Tibet is part of China.”^[44] That position has endured till the present day.

US policy remains key to the future of Tibet. However, the history of US policy on Tibet suggests inconsistencies in commitment, interspersed with occasional bursts of sympathy and activism. Cautious references to self-determination in the 1950s and a focus on human rights violations in the 1960s segued into the appeasement of Beijing for larger trade, economic, and strategic interests against common concerns vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

Post-Tiananmen

The unrest in Tibet during 1987-1989 coincided with the Tiananmen protests and the military crackdown of June 1989. When Bill Clinton assumed office as US president in 1992, his country’s focus was on human rights violations, trade friction, proliferation concerns, and tensions across the Taiwan Strait. Clinton received the Dalai Lama four times, in 1993, 1997, 1998,^[45] and 2000.^{[h],[46]} Then Vice President Al Gore and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright were present at the 1997 and 1998 meetings; similarly, at the 1993 meeting, Gore and Secretary of State Warren Christopher were present, along with Speaker Thomas Foley. This also set the stage for future meetings of the Dalai Lama with US Presidents George W. Bush in 2001 and 2003,^[47] and Barack Obama in 2010.^[48]

The unipolar decade presided over by Clinton gave the US a chance to push harder for a fair deal for Tibet, but this period also coincided with the Clinton administration gradually de-linking human rights issues from the question of granting China Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status. This clearly suggested that human rights violations in Tibet were being relegated to the back-burner.

Before creating the Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in 1997, a Bill to establish the position of United States Special Envoy for Tibet had been introduced in the 103rd Congress. A provision to create the position was also introduced as part of the foreign relations authorisations bills in the 104th and 105th Congress sessions.^[49] The proposed legislation had called for the Special Envoy to be accorded the rank of ambassador to ensure that an important issue in bilateral relations with China maintained centrality in senior-level policy discourse.^[50] The Clinton administration finally settled for a compromise when Secretary of State Albright designated the Director of Policy Planning in the Department of State, Gregory Craig, as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues.^[51]

China-Dalai Lama Talks and the US

US support for direct talks between the Dalai Lama’s representatives and the Chinese government has long been a key feature of US policy. Direct talks had shown some promise under Deng Xiaoping.^[i] Thereafter, fact-finding missions were mounted by the Dalai Lama’s

representatives, without any outcome. The Dalai Lama's address to the European Parliament in 1988 brought his "Strasbourg Proposal" for a negotiated settlement into salience but the Chinese backed off soon thereafter. Between 2002 and 2010, nine rounds of talks were held between the Tibetans and the Chinese, all in China except for one round in Berne in Switzerland in 2005.^[52] The talks were inconclusive. In his statement at the 50th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, the Dalai Lama stated, "The Chinese insistence that we accept Tibet as having been a part of China since ancient times is not only inaccurate, but also unreasonable. We cannot change the past no matter whether it was good or bad. Distorting history for political purposes is incorrect." He added, "We Tibetans are looking for a legitimate and meaningful autonomy, an arrangement that would enable Tibetans to live within the framework of the People's Republic of China."^[53] There has been no direct dialogue since 2010, although the Dalai Lama's representatives have acknowledged the existence of informal channels of communication.^[54]

President Clinton had pressed Chinese President Jiang Zemin in 1997-1998 to open a dialogue with the Dalai Lama. President Bush also urged the Chinese government to engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, stating that the Dalai Lama's call for "genuine autonomy was sincere",^[55] and to respect the unique cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage of the Tibetan people. Bush expressed his support in his meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2003 and also raised the Tibet issue with Chinese President Jiang Zemin during his two visits to China in 2001, besides raising it with visiting Vice President Hu Jintao in 2002 and Premier Wen Jiabao in 2003.^[56]

In 2011, Obama met the Dalai Lama in the White House. According to the White House statement issued on the occasion, "The President commended the Dalai Lama's commitment to nonviolence and dialogue with China and his pursuit of the 'Middle Way' approach." The statement also mentioned that President Obama "stressed that he encourages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans."^[57]

Conclusion

The renewed reference in the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act to the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination in the current context could prove to be more sensitive than it first appears. Notably, no country in the world has recognised Tibet as an independent state.

The US has not taken concrete steps to promote self-determination for Tibet in multilateral forums. While being a permanent member of the UN Security Council accords the US a position to trigger discussions on the

issues covered by the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, it has refrained from doing so. Moreover, even as the US has held consultations with its allies on the situation in the Taiwan Strait, it does not appear to have given the same priority to the Tibet issue. A key mandate of the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues is to engage Tibetans. Naturally, such a remit involves the sizeable number of Tibetan refugees in India, which could create friction between India and China. Additionally, India has long rejected UN resolutions that call for self-determination;^[i] its position on self-determination for the Tibetan people is unlikely to be different.

Today, China treats US legislation and sanctions with growing disdain.^[58] China has absorbed Tibet and consolidated its integration through demographic changes as well as cultural and educational resets, backed by indoctrination, surveillance, and punitive measures. Enhanced rail, road, and air connectivity has further consolidated Beijing's hold on Tibet. The Dalai Lama has stated that he does not seek independence for Tibet, only genuine autonomy.^[59] Though there is sympathy for the Tibetan people, few concrete steps have been taken that can result in meaningful change. There is scant international appetite or scope for Tibet realising self-determination, the US legislation notwithstanding. With the forthcoming US elections, it would be instructive to recall that, after Sarah Sewall's term as Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and concurrent term as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues ended on 20 January 2017,^[60] the Trump administration had kept the post vacant for three years and seven months, until Assistant Secretary Robert A. Destro of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor was appointed in October 2020.^[61] Given the flux in the US political landscape, there is little guarantee that the current US line will be maintained, especially if Trump returns to office.

China's Preference as the next US President: Kamala Harris?

03 September 2024, [ORF](#), Atul Kumar

At a time when China urgently needs a stable economic environment, Trump's return to power would be akin to a bull in a china shop

In her 41-minute acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention on 22 August 2024, Vice President Kamala Harris mentioned China only once, in a passing comment, and entirely avoided topics like Taiwan, Tibet, the South China Sea, and the Uyghurs. This omission was deliberate. Harris's future political agenda focuses primarily on the economy, a

theme she emphasised three times during her speech. Her predominant focus on domestic issues aligns with China's preference for the next United States (US) President.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his associates in Beijing prefer Harris over the temperamental and unpredictable Republican nominee, former President Donald Trump. Harris's inward focus and tendency to prioritise social values may present China with a rare post-COVID-19 opportunity to recalibrate its US policies and revive cooperative engagement with the US, which is crucial for China's continued economic growth. This article examines Chinese concerns regarding Trump and explores their reasons for favouring Harris in the current political landscape.

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China's apprehension of Trump

The Trump administration from 2017 to 2021 likely marked one of the most challenging periods in US-China relations since their rapprochement in 1971. Characterised by uncertainty, unpredictability, and hostility towards China, Trump rapidly strove to dismantle the foundations of the US-China economic relationship. Even before assuming office, he sparked tensions by directly interacting with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and rejecting adherence to the 'One China Policy'. His subsequent decisions led bilateral relations into uncharted territory.

Trump halted negotiations for a Bilateral Investment Treaty, forcefully condemned Chinese actions in the South China Sea and against Japan, imposed substantial tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminium imports, and resolutely pursued policies against China's large trade imbalance with the US. He also targeted China's non-tariff barriers against American exports, and the pressure on US companies to transfer technologies to their Chinese partners in joint ventures.

Moreover, Trump renamed the US Pacific Command to the Indo-Pacific Command, heightening China's apprehension and refocusing American strategic priorities on China. Additionally, he condemned China's economic espionage, repeatedly emphasised its central role in the spread of COVID-19, at times referring to it as the 'China Virus' and frequently sanctioned Chinese companies, particularly by restricting Huawei's access to semiconductor chips and promoting technological decoupling. The Trump administration and its officials viewed China as an adversary, dismissing any illusions of cooperative engagement.

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This approach nearly derailed China's economic and diplomatic trajectory. Therefore, even after Trump left office, China imposed sanctions on former senior officials, including Mike Pompeo, Alex Azar, Kelly Craft, and 25 others, for their roles in severely damaging China-US relations. China continues to feel the impact of the Trump administration's actions.

China and the Democratic Party since 2021

Since 2021, the Biden administration has maintained a firm stance on China, continuing several of Trump's policy measures. It has kept pressure on Chinese officials regarding trade imbalances, economic espionage, technological decoupling, and regional security. Additionally, the Biden administration has elevated the importance of issues like Tibet, Taiwan, and other contentious matters, while providing stronger support and attention to US allies in their stance against China. However, the current US economic policy is less hostile, offering a significant respite for President Xi. This has allowed him to focus more on consolidating his domestic political power and shifting the blame for economic challenges, such as rising unemployment and slowing manufacturing, onto his junior politicians and finance officials. This reprieve is further reinforced by Biden's recent efforts to engage with China through high-level visits and backchannel diplomacy. Herein lies China's opportunity and inclination.

Kamala Harris's emphasis on issues such as the cost of living, housing, reproductive rights, border control, and a focus on the economy is more favourable for China. China anticipates that officials currently causing friction, like Anthony Blinken and Jake Sullivan, might not continue in a Harris administration, hoping instead for milder representatives who prioritise US-China economic relations. Harris's running mate's positive history with China further enhances Xi's hope for renewed cooperative engagement.

China cannot predict the trajectory of US policies under Trump and is concerned that his future team could include notably anti-China policymakers like Matt Gallagher and Robert Lighthizer.

In contrast, Trump, in any capacity, poses a significant threat to China's regional and international political and economic ambitions. China cannot predict the trajectory of US policies under Trump and is concerned that his future team could include notably anti-China policymakers like Matt Gallagher and Robert Lighthizer. These officials would increase China's difficulty at a time of economic crisis. Already, Trump has threatened to impose a 60 per cent tariff on Chinese goods if he comes to power.

The Democratic Party's utility

In the upcoming US elections, a Democratic victory would keep the administration's focus on the crises in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip. Democratic politicians are deeply involved in the Russia-Ukraine war and are grappling with the unpredictable and opportunistic Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu's strategy of perpetuating conflict with Hamas to maintain his hold on power puts Democrats in a difficult position, particularly with their domestic left-liberal base, which remains hostile to any perceived American support for Israel. Even during Harris's acceptance speech, a significant pro-Palestinian group protested against her balanced approach.

With the majority of Democrats preoccupied with these two critical crises, they would have little capacity to concentrate on China and East Asia. The current US-China quiet diplomacy is influenced by these complexities, as the US shows little willingness to confront a crisis in East Asia. However, Trump has already announced his intention to withdraw from the Russia-Ukraine war and avoid entanglement in the Israel-Palestine conflict, which makes China apprehensive.

The current US-China quiet diplomacy is influenced by these complexities, as the US shows little willingness to confront a crisis in East Asia.

The second issue concerns China's approach to international organisations and multilateral institutions. Over the past few decades, China has invested significant effort in engaging with various UN agencies, seeking to gain influence and leadership positions. China views these agencies as vital to becoming an international superpower. As a result, it has increased its influence wherever possible and, where it has faced resistance, established alternative multilateral organisations, such as new financial institutions to compete with the Bretton Woods system.

A potential Trump presidency threatens to undermine much of China's progress in these multilateral efforts. Trump's disdain for the UN-led political structure, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and its various agreements and financial frameworks jeopardises China's efforts over the past decades. At a time when China urgently needs a stable economic environment, Trump's return to power would be akin to a bull in a china shop.

For China's national rejuvenation and financial dominance, Beijing prefers a controlled and gradual decline of the US. A disorderly decline, potentially caused by Trump's isolationist policies, would harm the Chinese economy. Additionally, US isolation could destabilise the international security environment, which China has leveraged for trade and economic gains. A chaotic world poses risks to China's business

interests, and its struggling economy cannot afford such instability.

An isolationist US military stance could drive East Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea, to develop nuclear capabilities, which would pose long-term security threats to China.

Additionally, there are potential risks for China regarding regional security. Trump is harsh on adversaries but brutal with allies, particularly those who underspend on defence and intend to free ride on US military presence. An isolationist US military stance could drive East Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea, to develop nuclear capabilities, which would pose long-term security threats to China. A potential coalition among these nations to deter China would be far more challenging to manage.

Therefore, Harris's victory is necessary for China to recalibrate its policies with the US administration and re-embark on economic growth and dominance. As expected, China prefers the Democrats in the coming elections and remains apprehensive of Trump's return.

India's special China problem

03 September 2024, [The Pioneer](#)

S Jaishankar has highlighted India's 'Special China problem,' one that is deeply rooted in the unresolved border disputes

India-China relations have long been fraught with challenges, but recent remarks by India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar have brought the depth of these issues into sharper focus. Jaishankar has said that India has a "special China problem," which he emphasized is distinct from the more general concerns that the rest of the world, including Europe and the United States, has with China. Jaishankar's comments come at a time when countries globally are grappling with what he termed the "general China problem." This problem, characterised by economic and national security debates, is not unique to India. Across Europe and the United States, policymakers are increasingly preoccupied with China's growing influence and the challenges it poses. From trade imbalances to concerns about Chinese technology in critical infrastructure, these issues have sparked widespread scrutiny of China's global role. However, India's situation is further complicated by its unique geopolitical and economic circumstances. India shares a long and contested border with China, which has been the site of several military standoffs over the years, the most recent and severe of which began in May 2020 in eastern Ladakh.

India's "special China problem" goes beyond the broader concerns of the international community. It is rooted in the unresolved border dispute between the two nations, which has led to a prolonged military

standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The ongoing border tensions have necessitated the deployment of approximately 50,000-60,000 troops by both sides, creating a volatile situation that has yet to see a lasting resolution. Diplomatic efforts to resolve these issues continue, with the 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) taking place on August 29 in Beijing. However what is interesting is that despite tensions and border skirmishes India China trade has flourished and many importer in India make regular rounds to source stuff from China to sell in the Indian market. But Jaishankar's remark could mean a shift in the official policy vis a vis China. If Govt changes its policy, Chinese goods and investments may have to face more barriers dissuading the Chinese investors. Jaishankar also highlighted the economic dimensions of India's relationship with China, pointing out that the trade deficit and the nature of Chinese investments are areas of significant concern. Indeed security is non negotiable and must be implemented in letter and spirit. But at the same time the commerce should not be thought of as an impediment. If one thing that can improve the relations between two countries, it is trade. However, India could restrict Chinese investment in security-sensitive areas such as telecommunications and digital cyber space.

Tibet, the Dalai Lama and the Power Struggle with China

02 September 2024, [Daily Watch](#)

The 14th Dalai Lama is 89 years old. The question of who will succeed him has sparked a power struggle between India and China.

Beijing wants to be solely in charge of choosing the next Tibetan spiritual leader. In its eyes, Tibet belongs to China.

The [Dalai Lama](#) has been living in exile in India since 1959. The older he gets, the more important the question of his succession becomes — not only for the future of Tibet, but also for global geopolitics. India, the United States and the European Union support Tibet, which has demanded autonomy since its annexation by China in 1950. China, meanwhile, does not recognize the Dalai Lama's government in exile.

Beijing is now determined to take sole responsibility for appointing the next Dalai Lama, raising fears that the debate could have serious political consequences.

Tensions between China and India have been exacerbated by a conflict over a disputed border, which has been smoldering since 1962.

When Mao Tse-tung's People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet, India lost the Buddhist neighbor that lay between it and Communist China. With the Tibetan

people forced to assimilate, India granted asylum to the 14th Dalai Lama and numerous other refugees, much to Mao Tse-tung's displeasure. Since then, conflict has simmered, especially in the disputed Himalayan border region.

By taking power in Tibet, China was also able to secure valuable mineral resources such as chromium, copper, borax, uranium and lithium. It also gained control over the sources of Asia's largest rivers -- something India sees as a threat to its supplies of fresh water.

Tibetans themselves are caught in a standoff between the two most populous nations in the world, which are also major economic powers. It is not easy for them to make their voices heard, despite the best efforts of their spiritual leader.

China's Crackdown on Tibetan Voices of Freedom: The Silencing of a Culture on Social Media

02 September 2024, [The Earth News](#)

The situation in Tibet is complicated and has been a source of concern for many years. The People's Republic of China has been accused of suppressing Tibetan voices calling for more autonomy and human rights in the region. The Chinese government's actions in Tibet have been criticized for infringing fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, assembly, and religion. Many Tibetans have been detained, imprisoned, or forced to flee their homes in search of safety.

China has increased its crackdown on the use of the Tibetan language, particularly on social media platforms such as Douyin, China's version of TikTok, in a concerted effort to undermine Tibetan cultural identity and pro-freedom voices. This move is part of a broader strategy to assimilate Tibetans into the dominant Han Chinese culture, eroding their unique linguistic and cultural heritage.

The Tibetan language prohibition on platforms such as Douyin is more than just censorship; it is a purposeful attempt to reduce Tibetan culture's visibility and influence in the digital age. By prohibiting the use of Tibetan in internet areas, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) attempts to muzzle criticism and squelch any expression of Tibetan identity that threatens its narrative. For many Tibetans, social media had become an essential instrument for keeping cultural links, sharing traditions, and expressing their desire for freedom. The crackdown has made these practices more dangerous.

China's crackdown on Tibetan voices advocating for freedom has escalated, with authorities employing extensive repressive tactics to suppress dissent. Tibetan activists, religious leaders, and ordinary citizens are under constant monitoring, with advanced technologies used to track and control their

movements, communications, and activities. The Chinese government's intensified crackdown aims to erase Tibetan cultural identity and suppress any aspirations for independence. Harsh penalties are imposed on those expressing pro-Tibetan sentiments, reflecting a broader effort to control and assimilate the region. This suppression showcasing the ongoing struggle for Tibetans to preserve their cultural and national identity.

This tyranny goes beyond mere linguistic limits. Tibetan activists, writers, and even regular residents who utilize their own language online or espouse Tibetan liberation face harsh consequences such as surveillance, harassment, and jail. The CCP's measures are part of a larger attempt to silence Tibetan voices and remove Tibet's unique cultural identity from public consciousness.

The world community cannot turn a blind eye to this digital persecution. Global human rights organizations, governments, and technology businesses must put pressure on China to respect Tibetans' linguistic and cultural rights. The censoring of Tibetan voices on social media is a grave injustice that highlights Tibet's ongoing struggle for cultural survival and freedom—a struggle that requires immediate international attention and support.

How China's internet police went from targeting bloggers to their followers

02 September 2024, [The Guardian](#), Amy Hawkins

In recent months, followers of influential liberal bloggers have been interviewed by police as China widens its net of online surveillance.

Late last year, Duan*, a university student in China, used a virtual private network to jump over China's great firewall of internet censorship and download social media platform Discord.

Overnight he entered a community in which thousands of members with diverse views debated political ideas and staged mock elections. People could join the chat to discuss ideas such as democracy, anarchism and communism. "After all, it's hard for us to do politics in reality, so we have to do it in a group chat," Yang Minghao, a popular vlogger, said in a video on YouTube.

Duan's interest in the community was piqued while watching one of Yang's videos online. Yang, who vlogs under the nickname MHYYYY, was talking about the chat on Discord, which like YouTube is blocked in China, and said that he "would like to see where this group will go, as far as possible without intervention". The answer to Yang's question came after less than a year. In July, Duan and several other members of the

Discord group, in cities thousands of miles apart, were called in for questioning by the police.

Duan says that he was detained for 24 hours and interrogated about his relationship to Yang, his use of a VPN and comments that he'd made on Discord. He was released without charge after 24 hours, but he – and other followers of Yang – remain concerned about the welfare of the vlogger, who hasn't posted online since late July.

The incident is just one sign of the growing severity of China's censorship regime, under which even private followers of unfavourable accounts can get into trouble.

"I don't think I've seen followers of influencers being questioned to this extent in the past," said Maya Wang, the associate China director at Human Rights Watch.

China's ministry of public security and the local public security bureau handling Duan's case could not be reached for comment, but both he and his fellow online idealists fell foul of one of the foundational principles of China's internet: don't form a community, especially not one related to politics, even in private.

Being punished for comments made online is common in China, where the internet is tightly regulated. As well as a digital firewall that blocks the majority of internet users from accessing foreign websites like Google, Facebook and WhatsApp, people who publish content on topics deemed sensitive or critical of the government often find themselves banned from websites, or worse.

Last year, a man called Ning Bin was sentenced to more than two years in prison for posting "inappropriate remarks" and "false information" on X and Pincong, a Chinese-language forum.

Even ardent nationalists are not immune. In recent weeks, the influential, pro-government commentator, Hu Xijin, appears to have been banned from social media after making comments about China's political trajectory that didn't align with Beijing's view.

Duan said that the call from the police was not entirely unexpected. Still, he says, the intensity of the interrogation caught him by surprise. "Just complaining in a group chat on overseas software is not allowed".

The net of online surveillance widens

In February, Li Ying, who runs a popular Chinese-language X account, posted an "urgent notice" saying that his followers in China were being called in to "drink tea" with the police, a euphemism for interrogations. He urged people to unfollow him and take care to make sure that their X accounts didn't reveal their personal information.

Li, who is based in Italy, runs an account called "Teacher Li is not your teacher", which posts a stream of unfiltered news about protests and repression in

China, the likes of which would never be published in China's domestic media.

"The police began to call all users who had registered with Chinese mobile phone numbers and asked them to unfollow me," Li said. People living overseas had their relatives in China contacted by the police, Li said. They were put pressure on to persuade the person overseas to unfollow Li's account.

Two other popular Chinese bloggers, including Wang Zhi'an, a Chinese journalist based in Japan, also said that their followers were questioned by police this year.

"Part of this has to do with deepening repression – police have gone from harassing activists and people 'out there' active in physical spaces to harassing those online because much of activism and dissent is now more deeply hidden," says Wang.

In December, Li Tong, an official at the ministry of public security's cybersecurity bureau said that the government had designated 2024 as "the year of a special campaign to combat and rectify online rumours". Local authorities have taken on this mantle with gusto: in July, Guangdong province said that it had dealt with more than 1,000 cases of "online rumours" and "online trolls" this year.

William Farris, a lawyer who studies state prosecutions of speech in China, said that internet cleaning campaigns are "an annual, or semi-annual, tradition". Similar campaigns have been announced every year dating back to at least 2013. He noted that in several judgements against people who had been punished for their online activity, the authorities also paid attention to who the people followed. In 2019, a man called Jiang Kun was sentenced to eight months in jail for posts on X, with the court noting that "he followed certain anti-Chinese forces" on the platform.

Still, Wang said that the ongoing cat and mouse game between the authorities and those who think differently from them indicated "an emerging set of shared values that cut across China's borders. Despite the fact that the authorities have always sought to stamp out these 'universal values', they have nonetheless persisted among significant portions of people in and from China."

The Discord crackdown has been widely discussed online, in forums blocked by China's firewall. On Reddit, one user wrote: "I sincerely hope that all those who have lost contact can return to life safely. We will meet again, in a place where there is no darkness!"

** Names have been changed.*

High time the Chinese leadership resolved the longstanding Sino-Tibet conflict: Tenzin Lekshay

01 September 2024, [The Telegraph](#)

'Under the benevolent leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetans at large, particularly the Central Tibetan Administration, are consistently pursuing the Middle Way Policy to resolve the longstanding Sino-Tibet conflict through meaningful dialogue, whereby both Tibetans and the Chinese will be mutually benefitted'

Q What is the idea of home for the exiled Tibetan community?

Tibetans in exile are living in different homes away from home. Though many Tibetans in exile have not seen or lived in Tibet, we still believe that Tibet is our home where our heart belongs.

Q Usually, a duality complicates the emigrant experience of home. There is the original home and the home — in this case, India — that the new generation is born into. How do young Tibetans confront this dichotomy?

Like any other refugee community, we faced many challenges. Due to the visionary leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the older generations, and with the continued support of and assistance from the Indian government and the people, we have been able to build a home away from home where we remain as the voice for the voiceless Tibetans in Tibet.

Q Do Tibet's spiritual/textual traditions assist in easing the anxiety of rootlessness?

Certainly. Tibetan Buddhist culture helps us cope with statelessness as it teaches the nature of interdependency and impermanence. It also instils hope not just within yourself but in your counterpart as well through compassion and positive changes.

Q Being homeless can also be a liberating experience since it widens horizons and dissolves borders. His Holiness, for instance, is a truly global citizen. How does the exiled Tibetan community view the tension and the ties between the Home and the World?

We can call it a blessing in disguise as it allows us to explore and understand the world and contribute to world peace. However, Tibetans inside Tibet are living a life in hell under the Chinese communist regime. Tibetan culture has been assimilated and Tibet economically marginalised and ecologically destroyed. Yet, the Sino-Tibet conflict remains unresolved. It is high time the Chinese leadership resolves this longstanding conflict through dialogue.

Q His Holiness has often spoken of changing the way of seeing or of looking at a problem from multiple dimensions to resolve conflict. Is multiplicity then the key to world peace?

Under the benevolent leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetans at large, particularly the Central Tibetan Administration, are consistently pursuing the

Middle Way Policy to resolve the longstanding Sino-Tibet conflict through meaningful dialogue, whereby both Tibetans and the Chinese will be mutually benefitted. The whole concept of the Middle Way Policy is based on trust, friendship and reconciliation for the sake of the entire humanity.

Q Not just politics, religion too seems to be narrowing given its insistence on homogeneity — Hindutva in India, militant Islam in Africa and Asia or aggressive Buddhism in Sri Lanka are examples. Why is this happening?

It is crucial to recognise that diversity is a reality and consider the different histories, cultures, geographies, livelihoods and faiths, among other factors. Therefore, insisting on homogeneity contradicts the essence of being human. China's efforts to homogenise all nationalities in China are destined to fail.

Q Another major crisis for all our homes is climate change. Why is the global leadership not doing enough? How can Buddhism help?

Climate change is the real thing that everybody is facing. It is a universal challenge. Global leadership may amplify the need for sustainable development and ecology, but very little is being done on the ground. Look at China, the frontrunner for the global environmental leadership. Every year, about two million people die of air pollution. Eighty one per cent of China's coastal regions are heavily polluted with plastic debris. The craze for natural resources (minerals and water) drives China to heavily exploit Tibet. In 1987, in his Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama had proposed "restoration of and protection of Tibet's natural environment and abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste".

Q Pico Iyer, the author who has worked with His Holiness, wrote in The Open Road that the Dalai Lama believes in incremental, invisible change. So should change, whether at home or elsewhere, be incremental or revolutionary?

Change is a permanent thing. For a good change to happen, it is important to have the conviction that problems and changes are bound to happen. But what determines change is action. As Shantideva said, "If there is a remedy, then what is the use of frustration? If there is no remedy, then what is the use of frustration?" As for the Tibetan people, we hope that the Sino-Tibet conflict will be resolved. We remain resilient in our freedom movement with that conviction.