

TIBET DIGEST

DECEMBER 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.

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Summary- December Tibet Digest

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China's control over Tibet intensified in December with significant political, environmental, and cultural developments. The construction of the world's largest hydroelectric dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River raised environmental and geopolitical concerns, while protests against the Gangtuo Dam in Tibet were met with severe crackdowns, highlighting forced displacements and cultural losses. Human rights violations continued with the removal of Tibetan language from college entrance exams and military deployment at Larung Gar Buddhist Academy to enforce stricter regulations. Viral footage of abuse in a Tibetan boarding school underscored China's assimilationist education policies, and the passing of prominent figures like Jimmy Carter and Manmohan Singh brought reflections on their contributions to the Tibetan cause. Meanwhile, international advocacy persisted, with visits from Estonian delegations and celebrations of Tibetan resilience under the Dalai Lama's leadership.

CCP'S Tibet Policies

China's Largest Hydroelectric Dam and Downstream Concerns: China's construction of the world's largest hydroelectric dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet has sparked apprehension in India and Bangladesh about potential environmental and geopolitical impacts. The dam, expected to generate three times the power of the Three Gorges Dam, is part of China's 14th Five-Year Plan. Despite Chinese claims of responsible development and safeguards, India's concerns include potential manipulation of water flow during conflicts and the dam's location in an earthquake-prone area. Meanwhile, past agreements to share hydrological data with India have faltered due to strained bilateral ties. The \$137 billion project has also raised questions about its environmental and regional stability implications.

Protests and Crackdowns in Tibet over Dam Construction: China's approval of the Gangtuo Dam has led to rare protests by Tibetans, citing displacement, cultural loss, and lack of consultation. The construction threatens ancient monasteries and homes, with over 4,000 residents slated for relocation. Protests in early 2024 were met with harsh crackdowns, including arrests, beatings, and restricted communications. Satellite images and testimonies confirm the unrest, while Beijing denies allegations of coercion and touts the project's benefits. Critics argue the dam exemplifies China's exploitation of Tibetan land and culture under the guise of clean energy development, exacerbating tensions in the already sensitive region.

Retired Official Exposes Misuse of Quake Relief Funds in Kyegudo: A former Tibetan member of the Chinese Communist Party, Lobsang Dorjee, has alleged corruption and environmental damage in the aftermath of the 2010 Kyegudo earthquake in Qinghai Province. In a video statement, he accused local officials of misappropriating relief funds, failing to provide adequate housing, and using police to suppress dissent. Dorjee also criticized a \$1.1 billion power plant project for its severe environmental impact. His revelations contradict China's claims of effective post-quake recovery and highlight the systemic exclusion of Tibetans from reconstruction efforts.

Video Captures Abuse of Tibetan Student by Chinese Principal: A viral video shows Dang Qingfu, the principal of Tsokhyil Township Ethnic Boarding Primary School in Qinghai Province, physically abusing a Tibetan student. The footage, shared by the Tibet Action Institute, has drawn criticism for violating human, ethnic, and children's rights. Advocacy groups link such incidents to China's broader agenda of eradicating Tibetan language and culture in state-run boarding schools. Despite public outcry, Dang remains in his position, reflecting the challenges in holding Chinese officials accountable in Tibetan regions.

Concerns Over Removal of Tibetan Language in College Entrance Exams: Tibetan parents are alarmed by China's decision to remove the Tibetan language as a core subject in college entrance exams, relegating it to an elective. Critics view this as part of the government's assimilationist "Model 2" education policy, which prioritizes Mandarin instruction and undermines Tibetan cultural identity. The policy has faced backlash from Tibetans and activists, with some, like writer Thupten Lodoe, facing imprisonment for opposing it. This move is seen as a systematic effort to marginalize Tibetan language and culture.

Buddhism

China Deploys Troops at Larung Gar to Enforce Stringent Restrictions: China has deployed 400 additional troops and conducted helicopter surveillance at the Larung Five Sciences Buddhist Academy in Serthar County, Sichuan, to implement stricter regulations. These measures include capping residency at 15 years, mandatory registration for monks and nuns, and reducing the monastic population to 1,000. The academy, a global center for Tibetan Buddhist study, has faced repeated crackdowns, evictions, and destruction of facilities. The recent actions are seen as part of China's broader efforts to suppress religious freedom and control Tibetan Buddhism.

High-Level Visit Highlights Dalai Lama Succession Preparations: China's senior political adviser, Wang Huning, visited an exhibition on the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhas, indicating preparations for addressing the Dalai Lama's succession ahead of his 90th birthday. The exhibition emphasized China's control over the reincarnation process and promoted narratives of national unity and ethnic solidarity. This visit reflects Beijing's strategy to strengthen its influence over Tibetan Buddhism and counter potential unrest linked to the Dalai Lama's succession.

Tibetan Scholar Freed Amid Health Concerns and Suppression: Geshe Rachung Gendun, a prominent Tibetan Buddhist scholar, was released after serving three and a half years in prison for alleged financial connections to the Dalai Lama. His health significantly deteriorated during incarceration, and his mother passed away under restrictive conditions without seeing him. The case highlights China's continued repression of Tibetan religious figures, restrictions on monastic practices, and suppression of cultural and religious freedom in Tibet.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Nagchu's Efforts in Glacier Protection: Nagchu city in the Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region is crucial for Asia's water ecosystem, hosting glaciers that feed major rivers. The city has implemented measures to curb illegal activities, establish water quality monitoring systems, and promote ecological restoration. Advanced scientific methods are used to monitor glacier health, and tourism in sensitive glacier areas is restricted. While significant progress has been made, challenges like soil erosion and inadequate wetland protection persist. China has also passed laws to protect glacier resources and promote sustainable development.

Tibet Adopts Clean Energy for Centralized Heating: Tibet has transitioned from coal-based to clean energy-based centralized heating, with clean energy now constituting 99% of its total power generation. Pilot projects in regions above 5,000 meters use solar and geothermal energy to provide eco-friendly heating to over 200,000 residents. With continued investments in clean energy infrastructure, Tibet has become a model for renewable energy integration, significantly reducing carbon emissions while improving the quality of life for its population.

Protests Against the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project: Locals in Arunachal Pradesh's Siang Valley are protesting against the proposed 12.5 GW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, citing ecological and cultural concerns. Despite a Gauhati High Court order canceling dam projects on the Siang River, the government has deployed Central Armed Police Forces to conduct feasibility surveys. Protestors, led by indigenous communities, argue that dam construction threatens their homes and the river's ecosystem, pointing to historical opposition to such projects.

Concerns Over Mining Near Arunachal-China Border: Reports suggest that China's mining activities near the Arunachal Pradesh border are extracting critical rare earth minerals, raising environmental and geopolitical concerns. These activities, facilitated by large-scale infrastructure projects, could deplete natural resources and disrupt ecological balances. Experts warn that such mining, coupled with border tensions, could exacerbate regional instability and environmental degradation.

Tibet in Exile

Condolences for President Jimmy Carter: His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his condolences on the passing of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, honoring his lifelong efforts for peace, democracy, and human rights. The Dalai Lama particularly praised Carter's advocacy for Tibet and his initiatives to alleviate the Tibetan people's plight. Carter's commitment to humanitarian causes was recognized globally, particularly with his 2002 Nobel

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Eriko Yamatani: Sikyong Penpa Tsering congratulated Eriko Yamatani on her appointment as the chairperson of Japan's Parliamentary Tibet Support Group. He commended her dedication to the Tibetan cause and her advocacy against authoritarianism. Sikyong expressed optimism about the group's future under Yamatani's leadership and the upcoming World Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet in 2025, which will be pivotal in advancing global support for Tibet.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Hiroshi Yamada: Sikyong Penpa Tsering also congratulated Hiroshi Yamada on his appointment as General Secretary of the Japan Parliamentary Tibet Support Group. He praised Yamada's longstanding parliamentary efforts for Tibet and expressed confidence in his leadership, especially for the upcoming World Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet. Sikyong emphasized the importance of continued parliamentary support for Tibet.

Dalai Lama Unlikely to Visit Bodh Gaya: The Dalai Lama is unlikely to visit Bodh Gaya during the 2024-25 tourist season. This marks a break from his annual visits, which resumed in the 2022-23 season after a hiatus due to the pandemic. His absence will impact small businesses in Bodh Gaya, which typically benefit from increased tourism during his visits. Despite this, local stakeholders are focusing on other major events like the Thailand Chanting Ceremony and the ongoing pujas to maintain tourism activity.

Estonian Delegation Visits Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Delivers Letter from Estonian Speaker: A delegation from Estonia, led by Roy Strider, Coordinator of the Tibet Support Group in the Estonian Parliament, visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on 27 December 2024. The delegation delivered a letter from Estonian Speaker Lauri Hussar and presented gifts. Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel discussed the strong relationship between Tibet and Estonia and expressed gratitude for Estonia's support. Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang highlighted the ongoing Chinese efforts to Sinicize Tibetan children, stressing that supporting Tibet is a stand for justice and truth.

Dalai Lama's Visionary Leadership Keeps Tibetan Cause Alive: CTA President In an exclusive interview, Penpa Tsering, President of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), emphasized the global focus on Tibet's struggle under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He acknowledged the resilience of Tibetans, despite China's oppression, and criticized China's interference in the selection of the next Dalai Lama. Tsering also highlighted the significance of the Resolve Tibet Act, which affirms Tibet's unresolved status under international law. He expressed optimism about positive changes in China and continued global support for Tibet's cause.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Sends Condolences on the Passing of Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh: His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his condolences on the passing of former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In a letter to Singh's widow, Mrs. Gursharan Kaur, the Dalai Lama praised Singh's significant contributions to India's economic growth and development and his friendship with the Tibetan people. He fondly remembered Singh's good counsel and support, describing him as a true inspiration.

Official Resolution of Solidarity Regarding the Critical Situation Inside Tibet: The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile adopted a resolution expressing solidarity with Tibetans inside Tibet facing oppression by the Chinese government. It condemned China's repressive policies, including the forced closure of Tibetan schools and the sinicization of Tibetan culture. The resolution reaffirmed Tibet's historical sovereignty, opposed the Chinese government's policies, and called for the release of Tibetan political prisoners, including the Eleventh Panchen Lama. It also recognized the support from governments and individuals worldwide for Tibet's cause.

No Interest in Reviving Talks with Dalai Lama's Envoys from China: US Congressional Commission on China The Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) released its annual report, criticizing China's refusal to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives. The report highlighted the decade-long stalemate in

Sino-Tibetan talks, with no signs of China resuming negotiations. The CECC expressed concern over China's stance and noted that Tibet's representatives, including Lodi Gyari, had previously sought common ground with China, but the Chinese leadership showed no political will to move forward with discussions.

International Concerns Over Human Rights and Environmental Crisis: In Tibet International bodies and governments continue to raise concerns over the human rights and environmental situation in Tibet. The European Union issued a statement urging China to protect Tibetan religious and cultural heritage, while the United Nations Human Rights Council addressed violations such as forced child enrollment in state-run schools and environmental destruction caused by Chinese infrastructure projects. Reports also highlighted the severe climate effects of China's activities in Tibet, including the loss of glaciers and exacerbated global warming. The United States and Canadian governments have reaffirmed support for Tibetan self-determination and condemned China's policies in the region.

The Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) Annual Report Highlights Severe Human Rights Violations in Tibet: The CECC's annual report, released on December 20, details ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet. It underscores China's refusal to resume negotiations with the Dalai Lama's representatives since 2010, while highlighting severe restrictions on Tibetan religious practices, particularly Tibetan Buddhism. The report also criticizes foreign companies like Thermo Fisher Scientific for complicity in China's oppression, with their DNA sequencing technology being used in Tibet and Xinjiang. The CECC's database of political prisoners reveals that Tibetans are disproportionately targeted, with a significant number of political detainees being practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. The report also addresses the Chinese government's use of "Xizang" instead of "Tibet" in international discourse, a move aimed at controlling Tibet's narrative. Additionally, the report highlighted protests in Tibet against dam projects that threaten Tibetan communities and cultural sites, further showing the PRC's efforts to suppress Tibetan identity.

Press Statement from Tibetan Parliament on China's Sanctions Against Tibetan and Uyghur Advocacy Groups in Canada: The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile condemned China's recent sanctions on the Canada Tibet Committee, the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, and 20 human rights advocates. The Parliament expressed solidarity with these organizations and individuals, praising their courage in speaking out against China's human rights abuses. The statement called for China to cease all transnational repression and efforts to intimidate those advocating for human rights both in China and internationally.

Tibet Museum's 'Long Look Homeward' Draws 7,000 Visitors, Highlights Tibetan Freedom Struggle: The Tibet Museum's traveling exhibition "Long Look Homeward" concluded its successful run across Bengaluru, attracting around 7,000 visitors. The exhibition, which included educational talks, interactive displays, and cultural showcases, explored themes such as India-Tibet relations, the Dalai Lama's legacy, and the Tibetan freedom struggle. It was held at key venues, including the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education and Bangalore University, and sparked meaningful conversations among students, scholars, and the Tibetan community. The exhibition aimed to deepen understanding of Tibet's culture, history, and political challenges, leaving a lasting impact on those who attended.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Educates Students at Leadership Workshop on the Evolution of Tibetan Democracy: On December 24, 2024, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel addressed students at a leadership workshop organized by the CTA's Department of Education. He discussed the evolution of Tibetan democracy, tracing its origins to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision during his visits to India and China. The Speaker highlighted key milestones in Tibet's democratic journey, such as the establishment of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the adoption of the Tibetan Charter in 1991. He emphasized the importance of democracy within the Tibetan community in exile and discussed the responsibilities of Tibetans as part of a diasporic community. The event concluded with a Q&A session, where the Speaker encouraged students to be aware of their responsibilities in the Tibetan struggle.

Co-convenor MP Tapir Gao of All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet Speaks on His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Indian Parliament: On 16 December 2024, MP Tapir Gao of Arunachal Pradesh called for the Indian government to officially recognize the Dalai Lama's institution and award him the Bharat Ratna for his contributions to peace and non-violence. Gao also stressed the importance of preparing for the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, highlighting China's efforts to control the succession. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile expressed gratitude for his support.

China Sanctions Tibetan and Uyghur Advocacy Groups in Canada: On 23 December 2024, China imposed sanctions on the Canada Tibet Committee and the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, along with 20 individuals, freezing assets and barring entry to China. These sanctions were retaliatory actions following Canada's sanctions on Chinese officials over human rights violations. Both advocacy groups condemned the measures and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Tibetan and Uyghur rights.

Dalai Lama Addresses Health Concerns Amid Succession Plans: In response to growing concerns over his health, the Dalai Lama reassured followers that he expects to live for another two decades. However, he indicated that more information about his succession and reincarnation plans will likely be shared when he turns 90 in July 2025.

Department of Education Commences Leadership Workshop for School Prefects and Captains: On 23 December 2024, the CTA's Department of Education launched a leadership workshop for 43 student representatives from 16 Tibetan schools. The workshop aims to enhance leadership skills, cultivate compassion, and reinforce Tibetan cultural values. Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra addressed participants, emphasizing the responsibilities of student leaders and the importance of preserving Tibetan heritage.

US Commission Report Highlights Brutal Rights Abuses in Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong: The US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) released its 2024 Annual Report, detailing China's systematic human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. The report highlights arbitrary detentions, torture, and suppression of ethnic minorities, human rights lawyers, and advocates for religious freedom. It criticizes China's efforts to "sinicize" Tibetan religion, imposing restrictions on religious practices, and asserting control over the recognition of Tibetan Buddhist reincarnated teachers. It also notes large-scale protests in Tibet over a dam construction project and ongoing human rights violations, such as arrests for religious expressions and political dissent. China's official media dismissed the report, claiming that rights and freedoms in these regions are fully protected.

Tibetan Leaders Advocate For Challenges Faced Under Chinese Rule in Delhi: Tibetan leaders from the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile lobbied Indian parliamentarians in New Delhi from December 16-18, 2024, urging international support for Tibet. They focused on the repression of Tibetan culture, language, religion, and the ongoing detainment of political prisoners like Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama. The delegation also highlighted human rights violations, including torture, forced labor, and arbitrary detentions. The Tibetan leaders called for China to engage in dialogue with Tibetan representatives and to acknowledge Tibet's history as an occupied nation.

Parliamentarians Migyur Dorjee and Pema Tso Begin Official Periodical Visitation: Parliamentarians Migyur Dorjee and Pema Tso embarked on a visitation program to Tibetan settlements in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and the Tibetan sweater sellers in India. Their visit, from December 19, 2024, to January 4, 2025, included meetings with Tibetan settlers and supporters to discuss Tibet's cultural preservation and the ongoing oppression under Chinese rule. They emphasized the Middle Way Approach for resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict and the importance of preserving Tibetan identity. The parliamentarians also thanked India for its support of Tibet.

Dalai Lama Set for Extended Stay at Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlement: The Dalai Lama is scheduled to visit the Tibetan settlement at Bylakuppe, Karnataka, for an extended stay starting January 4, 2025. He will spend time at the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and is expected to remain at the settlement until the Tibetan Losar (New Year) festival in February 2025. This visit marks his

SFT France to continue protest as Musée Guimet refuses to rename exhibit to "Tibet": Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) France announced plans to intensify protests against Musée Guimet after the museum's director refused to rename the exhibit "Himalayan World" to "Tibet." SFT representatives urged the museum for a more accurate representation of Tibetan culture, but after the director's refusal, SFT vowed to continue their protests and educational campaigns to preserve Tibet's identity.

Dalai Lama's office, Tibetan NGOs, CTA among top targets of cyber-attacks by China: A report by the Tibetan Computer Emergency Readiness Team (TibCERT) revealed that the Chinese Communist Party has launched cyber-attacks against Tibetan organizations, including the Dalai Lama's office, Tibetan NGOs, and the Central Tibetan Administration. These attacks aimed to disrupt operations and steal sensitive data, with methods such as phishing and malware. TibCERT urged enhanced digital security within the Tibetan community to protect against these threats.

Japan's parliamentary support group for Tibet elects new leadership: The Japan Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet elected new leadership after significant membership losses in recent elections. Yamatani Eriko was appointed Chairperson, and Yamada Hiroshi became General Secretary. The new leadership, with a focus on strengthening the group, aims to continue raising awareness about Tibet's struggles and work closely with Japanese parliamentarians and the government.

Tibetan Youth Congress embarks on 15,000 km 'All India Motor Bike Rally' against China's "cultural genocide" in Tibet: The Tibetan Youth Congress launched a 15,000 km bike rally across India to expose China's "cultural genocide" in Tibet. The rally, which started in November, aims to raise international awareness about China's policies in Tibet that aim to erase Tibetan culture and identity. Participants are calling for global action to stop these practices and urging the Indian government to support Tibet's historical status and border security.

Massive New Tibetan Dictionary to Protect Language Amid Chinese Encroachment: A 223-volume Tibetan dictionary, presented to the Library of Congress, will play a crucial role in preserving the Tibetan language against China's assimilation policies. The dictionary, which took nine years to complete under the guidance of the Dalai Lama, is a significant cultural asset. It provides modern Tibetan vocabulary, covering over 300,000 words, and is available in both physical and digital formats. The project was a collaborative effort and aims to safeguard Tibetan culture, knowledge, and language for future generations.

US Congress Extends 'Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act' for Five More Years: The U.S. Congress has extended the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA) for five more years, reinforcing support for human rights and transparency in Tibet. This extension mandates annual evaluations of access to Tibet and imposes visa restrictions on Chinese officials who deny entry to Americans. RATA's renewal, which is part of the National Defense Authorization Act, aims to challenge China's restrictive policies and ensure international monitoring of Tibet's human rights conditions.

All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet Adopts 12-Point Resolution: The All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet adopted a resolution on Tibet after a meeting with over 25 Members of Parliament. The resolution emphasizes support for Tibet's sovereignty, calls for China to engage in dialogue with Tibetan representatives, and addresses human rights abuses. It also includes recommendations for climate change studies on the impact of Chinese activities in Tibet and calls for the release of Tibetan political prisoners, among other key issues.

ICT Hails Reauthorization of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act in NDAA: The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) praised the U.S. Congress for including important provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to support Tibet. These provisions reauthorize the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA) and require continued monitoring of China's influence on the Tibetan Plateau. The reauthorization is seen as a critical step in advocating for Tibetan rights and transparency amid ongoing Chinese restrictions on access to Tibet.

Tibet Advocacy Group in Switzerland Conducts Awareness Campaign on 35th Anniversary of Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize: The Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG) in Switzerland commemorated the 35th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize by hosting an awareness campaign in Zurich. The event featured interactive activities such as a quiz and coloring competition aimed at educating the younger generation on Tibet's struggles and the Dalai Lama's messages of peace and compassion. The campaign highlighted the importance of preserving Tibetan culture and the role of V-TAG in advocating for Tibet's global cause.

Sikyong Tsering Strengthens US-Tibet Ties in Washington Meetings: Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration held pivotal meetings in Washington, DC, to strengthen international support for Tibet. He met with US officials, including Deputy Secretary Richard Verma and Under Secretary Uzra Zeya, to discuss Tibetan rights and autonomy. The discussions reinforced the US-Tibet relationship, with Verma emphasizing his personal connection to Tibetan affairs, and Zeya reaffirming US commitment to supporting Tibet's cultural and political aspirations.

Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Concludes Official Visit to Nepal: A delegation from the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile concluded its official visit to Nepal, where they met with Tibetan communities and officials in several locations, including Kathmandu and Boudha. The delegation also visited Tibetan schools and monasteries. The visit, which aimed to strengthen ties with the Tibetan diaspora in Nepal, was supported by USAID through NDI and SARD.

Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra Graces Commemoration of 35th Anniversary of Nobel Peace Prize at Tibet House, Delhi: Tibet House, Delhi, marked the 35th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize with an event attended by dignitaries, scholars, and supporters. The Chief Guest, Education Minister Tharlam Dolma Changra, highlighted the importance of universal ethics, aligned with the Dalai Lama's teachings. The event featured discussions on holistic education and practical applications of ethical principles, alongside the launch of several academic publications and recognition of Tibetan-language scholarship. The day emphasized the Dalai Lama's legacy and the continued promotion of compassion and peace.

MPs from New Zealand and Fiji Visit Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile: A delegation of MPs from New Zealand and Fiji visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on 11 December 2024. They were warmly welcomed by Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang and discussed ongoing concerns about Tibet, including cultural erosion, human rights violations, and political suppression under Chinese control. The CTA emphasized the need for global recognition of Tibet's autonomy and the preservation of its culture, highlighting challenges such as language suppression, religious restrictions, and environmental degradation. They called for international pressure on China to address these issues.

Department of Religion and Culture Secretary Attends Long-life Prayer Ceremony for Kochhen Rinpoche: Dhondul Dorjee, Secretary of the Department of Religion and Culture, attended the long-life prayer ceremony for Kochhen Rinpoche at Ogyen Mindrolling Monastery in Dehradun on 12 December. The ceremony, led by Tibetans from Gonjo, included offerings and prayers. A gold medal was presented to Rinpoche in recognition of his religious contributions. The event was attended by various Tibetan leaders and community members, followed by cultural performances to mark the occasion.

Tibetan Youth Congress Urges Nepal to Reject China's Interference in Religious Affairs: The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) strongly opposed China's plan to send the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, to

Nepal, urging the country to reject China's interference in Tibetan religious affairs. TYC members condemned China's attempt to control Tibetan religious leadership, asserting that Tibetans in exile and within Tibet revere the Dalai Lama and the true Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was abducted by China. They urged Nepal to uphold its commitment to religious freedom and resist Chinese influence.

Tibetan Delegation Meets Dutch Officials to Discuss Tibet Crisis: A Tibetan delegation, led by MP Yeshe Dolma and Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende, visited the Netherlands on 9-10 December 2024 to highlight the human rights violations in Tibet. The MPs met with Dutch Foreign Ministry officials, who expressed support for the Tibetan cause. The delegation also met with Amnesty International to urge the organization to take action and called for an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet. The visit concluded with a protest at Dam Square to raise awareness about the struggles of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, and Southern Mongolians under Chinese rule.

A Delegation from India Foundation Visits Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile: A delegation from the India Foundation visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile to discuss Tibet's political situation. The Speaker highlighted the achievements of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in preserving Tibetan culture and language despite exile. The Deputy Speaker emphasized Tibet's historical status and criticized China's policies that restrict Tibetan freedoms, calling for a reassessment of India's foreign policy towards Tibet.

UN Forum: ICT Highlights Erasure of Tibetan Identity through the PRC's Educational Policies: At the UN Forum on Minority Issues, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) expressed concern over China's assimilation policies targeting Tibetan children. ICT highlighted how education in Tibet promotes Mandarin while erasing Tibetan culture and history, arguing that this undermines Tibetan identity and violates international laws on children's rights. The Forum also addressed the coercive nature of China's education system and its harmful impact on Tibetan heritage.

Senior Journalists Visit Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile: A delegation of senior journalists met with the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile to learn about Tibet's political and cultural situation. The Speaker discussed the CTA's success in preserving Tibetan identity and stressed the critical situation in Tibet, including political repression and environmental destruction. The Deputy Speaker called for greater international recognition of Tibet's historical independence and urged reconsideration of policies that support China's One-China stance.

Tibetan Leader Calls for Independent Tibet as Key to Sino-Indian Border Resolution: Dolma Gyari, acting Sikyong of the Tibetan government in exile, argued that resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute requires recognizing Tibet as an independent state. She emphasized that Tibet's role in the 1914 Shimla Agreement, recognizing Arunachal Pradesh as part of India, is crucial for a permanent peace. Gyari also expressed confidence in India's evolving stance on the Tibet issue, noting the growing recognition of Tibet's significance in India-China relations.

35th Dalai Lama Nobel Peace Prize Anniversary Marked with New Zealand, Fiji MP Guests: Tibetan communities worldwide commemorated the 35th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize award on December 10. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) organized the main event at the Tsuglakhang Temple in Dharamshala, India. The day also marked the 76th International Human Rights Day. Mrs. Dolma Gyari, Minister of the Department of Security, announced plans for a global Year of Compassion in 2025 to celebrate His Holiness's 90th birthday. The CTA reaffirmed its commitment to a peaceful resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict through the Middle Way Approach. The event included speeches from international MPs from New Zealand and Fiji, who expressed solidarity with the Tibetan cause.

Protest in Vienna Unites Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Christians Against CCP Oppression: On International Human Rights Day, a protest outside the Chinese Embassy in Vienna brought together Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Christians,

demanding an end to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) oppression. Demonstrators highlighted human rights abuses, including cultural genocide in Tibet, forced labor, and religious persecution. Tibetans and Uyghurs shared concerns over CCP actions like demolishing monasteries and detaining Uyghur Muslims, while Chinese Christians called for an end to state control over religious practices. Protesters urged the international community to intervene against China's human rights violations.

Buddhists Celebrate 35th Anniversary of Nobel Peace Prize Conferment on HH 14th Dalai Lama: In Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, Buddhists celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize conferment. The event, organized by local Buddhist groups, honored His Holiness's commitment to nonviolence, preserving Tibetan culture, and advocating for Tibet's freedom. The Dalai Lama's award in 1989 was a tribute to his peaceful efforts to resolve the Tibet conflict and promote human rights. Speakers, including Tarh Tarak from the TSGAP, reiterated support for the Tibetan cause and urged India to bestow the Bharat Ratna on the Dalai Lama.

Tibetans and Tibet Activists Call on Nepal to Reject China's Illegitimate Panchen Lama Visit: Tibet activists worldwide urged Nepal to reject the visit of Gyaltzen Norbu, China's appointed Panchen Lama, for the South China Sea Buddhism Roundtable Conference. Tibet Network organizations condemned the visit, stating it would legitimize China's interference in Tibetan Buddhism and undermine the rightful Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who has been missing since 1995. Activists called on Nepal's Prime Minister to refuse Gyaltzen Norbu's entry and to support the release of the real Panchen Lama. They warned that Nepal's participation in the Chinese-backed event would endorse Beijing's manipulation of Tibetan religious affairs.

ICT Testifies at European Parliament's Hearing on EU-China Human Rights Dialogue: Vincent Metten from the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) addressed the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights regarding the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue. He criticized the dialogue as ineffective, urging the EU to adopt more assertive measures to address China's worsening human rights situation, particularly in Tibet. Metten highlighted the detrimental effects of China's policies, including forced assimilation, coercive boarding schools, and hydropower projects, which threaten Tibetan culture and environment. He also called for a common European definition of transnational repression and stronger cooperation to protect Tibetans and others facing persecution.

Tibetan Government-in-Exile Condemns Chinese Atrocities on 35th Anniversary of Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize: On the 35th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile condemned China's ongoing atrocities in Tibet. The Kashag, the executive office of the Central Tibetan Administration, expressed concern over China's policies aimed at assimilating Tibetans, including the forced placement of children in boarding schools and the suppression of Tibetan Buddhism. The Kashag also condemned China's exploitation of Tibet's natural resources through projects like hydropower dams, reaffirming its commitment to peaceful resistance and urging continued international support for Tibetans' human rights.

Statement on International Human Rights Violations in Tibet and China's Systemic Breaches of International Standards: The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) of the Central Tibetan Administration marked the 76th anniversary of International Human Rights Day with a reflection on China's systemic violations of human rights in Tibet. The DIIR highlighted China's aggressive policies of Sinicization, including forced Mandarin-only education, suppression of Tibetan Buddhism, and criminalization of cultural expression. The statement also condemned China's infrastructure projects that harm the environment and displace Tibetans, urging continued international pressure on China to uphold human rights and fulfill its obligations under international law.

Students for Free Tibet Observe World Human Rights Day, Urge China to Release Tibetan Political Prisoners: On World Human Rights Day, Students for Free Tibet (SFT) launched their "Write for Rights" campaign in Dharamshala, urging China to release five Tibetan political prisoners. Young Tibetan activists in exile called on

the global public to send postcards and sign online petitions demanding the unconditional release of political prisoners, highlighting individuals who have been imprisoned for environmental, political, and cultural activism. Campaign leaders emphasized the importance of raising awareness despite uncertainty over China's response. The campaign also commemorates the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan Admin in Exile 'Not Concerned' by Trump's Election, Says US Support for Tibet is Bipartisan

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) expressed confidence in the continued bipartisan support for Tibet in the US, despite Donald Trump's re-election. CTA's foreign minister, Norzin Dolma, emphasized that the US has passed multiple bills in support of Tibetan autonomy, including the Resolve Tibet Act. Dolma highlighted the growing awareness of Tibet's issues globally and affirmed that US support for Tibet remains strong, with both Trump and Biden signing laws to back Tibet's cause, regardless of leadership changes in Washington.

Chairman of the Public Service Commission Karma Yeshe Successfully Concluded Week-long Outreach Tour:

Karma Yeshe, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, concluded a week-long outreach tour to engage Tibetan youth across India. His tour aimed to inspire students to actively contribute to the Tibetan cause, preserve Tibetan culture, and join the Central Tibetan Administration. Yeshe visited several Tibetan communities, holding workshops, talks, and discussions on the importance of Tibetan youth in shaping Tibet's future. The outreach initiative was funded by USAID and the National Democratic Institute, aiming to strengthen Tibetan unity and commitment to cultural preservation.

Indian Government to Recognise Bhoti (Tibetan) as One of the Official Languages of Ladakh: The Indian government has officially recognized Bhoti, the Tibetan language, as an official language of Ladakh. This decision follows discussions with Ladakhi leaders and aims to preserve and promote the language in the region. Bhoti is used across the Trans-Himalayan region, including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and other parts of India. However, the term "Bhoti" has sparked debates, with some arguing it undermines the historical significance of the Tibetan language. Despite this, the recognition of Bhoti is a step toward acknowledging the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Tibetan community in Ladakh.

22nd North American Tibetan Associations' Conference Kicks Off in Washington DC with Sikyong Penpa Tsering's Keynote Address:

Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressed the 22nd NATA Conference on December 8, 2024, in Washington DC. Over 50 members from 26 Tibetan Associations attended. He highlighted the importance of data collection for Tibetans worldwide and stressed that the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is solely His Holiness's decision. Sikyong also emphasized regional Tibetan Associations' role in data gathering and discussed the 90th birthday celebrations for His Holiness. He warned of China's efforts to promote its appointed Panchen Lama in Nepal and spoke about the need for strong support for Tibet's culture and values.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Commences Official Engagements in the United States:

Sikyong Penpa Tsering began his official visit to the U.S. on December 6, 2024. His engagements included a luncheon with key figures from the International Campaign for Tibet and discussions with Mary Beth of The Bridge Fund. The visit also included meetings with scholars and a brief interview with Voice of America. On December 8, the Office of Tibet in Washington DC hosted a reception welcoming him and the participants of the NATA Conference.

Speaker Emerita Pelosi to Receive Light of Truth Award for Unwavering Support of Tibet:

Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi will receive the Light of Truth Award from the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) on December 9, 2024, for her long-standing advocacy for Tibet. Pelosi has supported Tibet since 1989, meeting the Dalai Lama and condemning China's human rights violations. She played a critical role in the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act in 2007 and has continued to support Tibetan rights in her political career.

Report: China's Rampant Dam-Building Spree Could Dislocate up to 1.2 Million in Tibet:

A report by the International Campaign for Tibet reveals that China's construction of hydropower dams in Tibet could displace

up to 1.2 million people, impacting local populations, religious sites, and the environment. The report calls for an end to large-scale dam construction in Tibet and suggests alternatives like solar and wind power. It also advocates for China to respect the rights of the Tibetan people in development projects and to engage in transboundary water management discussions.

Indologist who helped Jawaharlal Nehru train army in Tibetan during Sino-Indian War passes away: Suniti Kumar Pathak, a Rashtrapati Award-winning Indologist, passed away in Santiniketan. Pathak, chosen by Jawaharlal Nehru to train the Indian army in Tibetan during the 1962 Sino-Indian War, was a key figure in the establishment of India-Tibetan studies at Visva-Bharati University. Known for his expertise in Tibetan, Pali, Sanskrit, and other languages, he authored over 200 books and contributed extensively to Indo-Tibetan relations and Buddhism studies

Dalai Lama reflects on exile at long-life prayer ceremony: During a Long Life Prayer ceremony in Dharamshala, His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed gratitude to the Kinnaur people and reflected on the hardships and opportunities of exile. He emphasized how exile allowed him to engage with scriptures and share teachings beyond religious boundaries, promoting dignity, kindness, and compassion for all people, regardless of their background.

Dharamshala faces potential drinking water crisis due to lack of rain: Dharamshala is facing a potential drinking water crisis as there has been no rain for over two months, and snowfall in the Dhauladhar mountain ranges is also lower than usual. The city relies on Bhated and Gajj rivers for water supply, but reduced water levels in the Bhated river could lead to water shortages. Experts suggest building check dams to ensure a more stable water supply in the region.

Parliamentary Committee to review Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile's rules and regulations: A committee of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile members has been formed to review the rules and regulations for parliamentary procedures, particularly concerning the removal of dignitaries of the Central Tibetan Administration. The committee aims to improve existing regulations or propose new ones, with a report expected by March 2025. The review follows a decision made during the 8th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

Dr. Lobsang Monlam Testifies Before US Commission on China: Dr. Lobsang Monlam, founder of the Monlam Tibetan IT Research Center, testified at a U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China hearing in Washington D.C. He discussed the threat to Tibetan culture and language, highlighting policies like the closure of Tibetan schools and the prioritization of Mandarin in education. He emphasized the challenges faced by Tibetans in exile, especially youth, and the struggle to preserve Tibetan culture. Monlam also shared his center's contributions, including the Grand Tibetan Dictionary and the development of AI-based tools to support Tibetan language preservation.

Hollywood Star Whitaker Meets Dalai Lama: Academy Award-winning actor Forest Whitaker visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, India, accompanied by his daughter. Whitaker, known for his humanitarian work, expressed deep admiration for the Dalai Lama and wished him long life and health. Whitaker had met the Dalai Lama before and has been involved in peace-building initiatives through his Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative. His visit included meetings with the Tibetan political leader, Sikyong, and a tour of the Tibet Museum.

Kyabje Kundeling Rinpoche at World Interfaith Conference in the Vatican: Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche represented Tibetan Buddhism at the World Interfaith Conference in the Vatican, alongside leaders of major religious groups. The event, attended by Pope Francis, focused on promoting interfaith cooperation for world peace. Rinpoche highlighted His Holiness the Dalai Lama's commitments to religious harmony and discussed the spiritual power of different religions in addressing global suffering. He also presented a book by the Dalai Lama to the Pope as a memento.

Symposium on Enhancing Tibetan School Education in Dharamshala: A two-day symposium in Dharamshala focused on improving the Tibetan education system. Key issues discussed included declining student enrollment, challenges in addressing special needs education, and the need to align education with Tibetan cultural values. Kalon Trisur Ven Samdong Rinpoche emphasized the importance of contemplation and meditation in learning, while addressing teachers and students as co-learners. The symposium also highlighted the efforts of the Department of Education to improve Tibetan schools amidst demographic challenges.

Tibetans in France Protest Against Musée Guimet for the 11th Time: Tibetan activists in France staged their 11th protest outside the Musée Guimet on December 1, 2024, demanding the restoration of the Tibetan exhibition's original name. They condemned the renaming of the exhibit to "Himalayan World" as an attempt to erase Tibetan identity and cultural distinctiveness. Pema Doma, Executive Director of Students for a Free Tibet, joined the protest, emphasizing Tibet's rich history and the ongoing struggle to preserve Tibetan culture. SFT France reaffirmed their commitment to Tibet's recognition, demanding the museum reverse its decision.

Representative Tsering Yangkyi Inspects Sunday School for Tibetan Language and Culture in London: On December 1, 2024, Representative Tsering Yangkyi of the Office of Tibet in London visited the Sunday School for Tibetan Language and Culture. During her visit, she engaged with students and teachers, stressing the importance of preserving the Tibetan language and culture. She encouraged parents to enroll their children in Tibetan language schools, highlighting the critical role these institutions play in safeguarding Tibetan heritage, especially as His Holiness the Dalai Lama ages.

Tibetan Artists Festival Concludes with Vision of Forming Tibetan Arts Council: The Tibetan Artists Festival, organized by TibetWrites, concluded with a major announcement on December 1, 2024: the formation of the Tibetan Arts Council. This initiative aims to unite Tibetan artists globally and support their creative endeavors. Bob Ankersen, President of the Tibet Fund, announced the creation of an interim steering committee to guide the council's structure. The festival, which included artists from various countries, underscored the role of art in preserving Tibetan culture and advancing the Tibetan cause worldwide.

CM Pema Khandu Lauds Tibetans' Role in Preserving Indian Philosophy: Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu, praised the Tibetan community for their pivotal role in preserving ancient Indian knowledge and Buddhist traditions during a recent meeting with Tibetan Settlement Officers. Khandu expressed his support for Tibetan communities in settlements across the state, highlighting the significant contributions of the Tibetan diaspora to India's cultural and philosophical heritage. The meeting, facilitated by the India Tibet Coordination Office, also discussed strategies to further strengthen Tibetan advocacy in India.

Young Tibetans Gather for Europe V-TAG Strategy Meeting in Stockholm: Over 30 young Tibetans from six European regions met in Stockholm for a three-day strategy meeting focused on strengthening advocacy and leadership skills for the Tibetan cause.

Tibetan Government-in-Exile Flags 'Colonial-Style' Schools at UN Forum: Tibetan officials raised concerns at the UN Forum about China's campaign of cultural destruction in Tibet, including the forced enrollment of over 1 million Tibetan children in schools where Tibetan language is banned.

Protests, Detentions and Other News from the PRC

Human Rights Violations in Tibet: The Chinese government continues its suppression of Tibetan identity through forced displacements, school closures, and religious repression. Tibetan protests against construction projects like the Kamtok Dam and the demolition of monasteries have been met with brutal crackdowns, arrests, and killings. Notable incidents include the deaths of monk Losel under police torture and student Tsedon while in

detention. Activists such as Tashi Wangchuk and monks like Jampa Choephel face imprisonment for promoting Tibetan language and spiritual practices. Efforts to silence Tibetan culture and enforce loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party remain ongoing.

Death of Tibetan Village Head Amid Language Crackdown: Tibetan village head Gonpo Namgyal died after enduring severe torture in custody during a crackdown on the "Pure Mother Tongue" campaign, aimed at preserving the Tibetan language. Namgyal's death highlights the Chinese authorities' suppression of Tibetan cultural and linguistic initiatives under the pretense of "state security." Other campaign leaders, like Khenpo Tenpa Dhargye, remain in custody, raising concerns about systemic persecution of Tibetan cultural advocates.

Arrest of Former Senior Political Advisor in China: Wu Yingjie, a former senior member of China's CPPCC, has been arrested on charges of bribery. The investigation is part of the Chinese government's broader anti-corruption campaign, with Wu's case now under judicial review.

Five-Year Anniversary of the Xiamen Crackdown: Amnesty International urges global pressure on China to release human rights defenders Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi, imprisoned since 2019 for advocating civil society reforms. Despite enduring torture, secret trials, and severe sentences, both activists and their families continue to fight for justice. Their case underscores China's aggressive suppression of civil rights and dissent, as well as the urgent need for international intervention.

Tibetan Activist Detained for Speaking Out: Tsering Tso, a Tibetan rights activist, faced two weeks of detention in Qinghai for "spreading false information" via social media, highlighting systemic discrimination against Tibetans. Her activism focuses on equal rights and corruption in Tibet, including challenges in business licensing and religious pilgrimages. Despite repeated detentions, Tso remains defiant, exposing the misuse of power by Chinese authorities.

Testimony Highlights Brutality in China's Prison System: Xie Wenfei, a Chinese human rights defender, detailed harrowing abuse in detention, including beatings, denial of medical care, and psychological torment. Xie's testimony reveals the CCP's oppressive tactics against dissidents, challenging China's narrative of progress. His account underscores the global implications of normalizing such authoritarian practices, calling for accountability and action against human rights abuse.

Rights Group Urges China to Release Jailed Tibetan Activist: A leading human rights group, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), has called for the immediate release of Tibetan environmental activist Tsogon Tsering, who was sentenced to eight months in prison for exposing illegal sand mining in Sichuan's Tsaruma village. Tsering, 29, was arrested on October 27, 2024, after he posted a video showing illegal mining activities along the Tsaruma River. The group condemned China's actions, citing the broader repression Tibetans face for speaking out on issues of environmental and human rights. FORUM-ASIA also highlighted that similar activists, like Anya Sengdra, have faced harsh sentences for their advocacy. They called on China to stop arresting environmental defenders and adhere to international human rights principles.

Tibetan Environmental Activist Sentenced to 8 Months in Prison: Tsogon Tsering, a Tibetan environmental activist from Sichuan province, has been sentenced to eight months in prison for his rare public appeal against illegal sand and gravel extraction on the Tsaruma River. His video, posted in October 2024, accused a Chinese construction company of damaging the environment, including reducing water levels and causing soil erosion. Following his public criticism, Tsering was detained and later sentenced for "disturbing social order" and "provoking trouble." His family and local community are under heavy surveillance, and the authorities have hinted that the sentence could be extended after further investigation. This case highlights the risks Tibetans face when raising environmental and social issues, with past examples like Anya Sengdra's seven-year sentence

showing the heavy price activists pay for their advocacy.

CHINA'S TIBET POLICY

China claims its highly dangerous, world's biggest hydroelectric dam in Tibet will pose no serious threat to downstream India

28 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

After reporting its approval of a plan to build “a dam” close to India’s border in occupied Tibet’s Yarlung Tsangpo, and it was later revealed by various news reports to be for the world’s largest hydroelectric project – or, in fact, the planet’s biggest infrastructure project ever – China has on Dec 27 sought to allay concerns that it posed serious threats to downstream countries India and Bangladesh. But neither country is likely to feel assuaged by mere words-of-mouth assurances.

China’s foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning has said the project aimed to speed up developing clean energy, and respond to climate change and extreme hydrological disasters.

“China has always been responsible for the development of cross-border rivers. China’s hydropower development in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River aims to speed up developing clean energy, and respond to climate change and extreme hydrological disasters. The hydropower development there has been studied in an in-depth way for decades, and safeguard measures have been taken for the security of the project and ecological environment protection,” the *timesofindia.com* Dec 27 quoted Mao as saying.

“The project will not negatively affect the lower reaches. China will continue to maintain communication with countries at the lower reaches through existing channels, and step up cooperation on disaster prevention and relief for the benefit of the people by the river,” she has added.

China had previously agreed to share hydrological data with downstream India under a 2006 deal, but failed to do so after bilateral ties sored over cross-border issues.

The construction site is located at a significant gorge where the Yarlung Tsangpo forms a U-turn before flowing into India’s Arunachal Pradesh state as Siang and Brahmaputra rivers and eventually into Bangladesh. When completed it could generate three times the power of the Three Gorges Dam.

The project’s total investment is expected to exceed one trillion yuan (USD 137 billion), surpassing all other infrastructure projects globally, including China’s Three Gorges Dam, currently considered the world’s largest, as reported the *South China Morning Post* on Dec 26.

China’s current biggest hydroelectric dam project in Tibet is the USD 1.5 billion Zam Hydropower Station, which commenced operations in 2015.

The latest project was incorporated into China’s 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) and National Economic and

Social Development, along with Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, adopted by the CPC Plenum in 2020.

India's concerns stem from China's potential to control the river's water flow, including its possible release of huge volumes during conflicts, given the dam's unprecedented scale.

Apart from that, the dam's construction faces significant engineering challenges due to its location on a tectonic plate boundary prone to earthquakes.

The report said the Trans-border river data sharing was discussed during talks between India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, serving as Special Representatives for border questions, on Dec 18.

China suppressed a rebellion in Tibet due to the construction of a dam, reveals the BBC

27 December 2024, [Vijesti](#)

The planned construction of the dam sparked protests by hundreds of Tibetans at the beginning of the year, but they were arrested in a harsh crackdown on the rebellion, and some of them were beaten and seriously injured, the BBC learned from multiple sources and based on confirmed footage.

China has approved the construction of the world's largest hydroelectric dam, raising concerns about the displacement of communities in Tibet and environmental impacts downstream in India and Bangladesh.

The dam, which will be located in the lower reaches of the Jarlung Cangpo River, could produce three times more energy than the Three Gorges Dam, currently the largest hydroelectric plant in the world.

The planned construction of the dam sparked protests by hundreds of Tibetans at the beginning of the year, but they were arrested in a harsh crackdown on the rebellion, and some of them were beaten and seriously injured, the BBC learned from multiple sources and based on confirmed footage.

Such protests are extremely rare in Tibet, which China has tightly controlled since annexing the region in the 1950s.

That they are still happening is illustrated by China's controversial insistence on building dams in a long-sensitive area.

Claims of arrests and beatings began to emerge shortly after the events in February.

In the following days, the authorities further tightened the restrictions, making it difficult for anyone to verify this story, especially journalists who cannot freely travel to Tibet.

But the BBC spent months searching for Tibetan sources whose family and friends were detained and beaten.

The BBC's fact-finding team examined satellite images and verified leaked footage showing mass protests and monks begging the authorities for mercy.

Those sources live outside of China and are not affiliated with activist groups.

But they did not want to be named for security reasons.

In response to questions from the BBC, the Chinese embassy in the UK neither confirmed nor denied the protests or their subsequent crackdown.

"China is a country governed by the rule of law and strictly protects the rights of citizens to legally express their dissatisfaction and express their opinions or suggestions," they answered.

The protests, which were followed by their suppression, took place in the territory that is the home of the Tibetans in the province of Sichuan.

Chinese authorities have been planning for years to build the massive Gangtuo Dam and hydroelectric plant, also known as Kamtok in Tibetan, in the valley that includes Dege (Derge) and Jiangda (Jomda) counties.

Once built, the dam's lake will submerge an area that is culturally and religiously significant to Tibetans, and home to several houses and ancient monasteries containing sacred relics.

One of them, the 700-year-old Vangudi (Vonto) monastery, has concrete historical value because there are rare Buddhist murals on its walls.

Because of the Gangtuo dams, thousands of Tibetans will be displaced.

The BBC has had access to a public tender document for the relocation of 4.287 residents to make way for the dam.

The BBC contacted an official named in the tender documents as well as Huadian, the state-owned company that is said to be building the dam.

No one answered.

Plans to build the dam were first approved in 2012, according to the letter of the United Nations special rapporteurs to the Chinese government.

In a letter from July 2024, concerns are highlighted about the "irreparable consequences of the dam" for thousands of people and the environment.

From the outset, residents were not "consulted in any significant way" about the dam, according to the letter. For example, they received information that was not adequate and was not in Tibetan.

The government also promised them that the project would only start if 80 percent of them agreed to it, but "there is no evidence that that agreement was given," the letter said, adding that residents had tried to raise concerns about the dam multiple times.

The Chinese authorities, however, denied this in their response to the UN.

"The resettlement of the villages in question was carried out only after full consultation with local

residents," according to a September 2024 letter from the Office of the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations.

It added: "The local government and project developers financed the construction of new homes and provided subsidies for grazing, keeping and raising livestock. As for the cultural relics, they have been completely relocated."

But the BBC heard from two Tibetans that in February officials told them they would be evicted quickly, giving them very little information about resettlement and compensation options.

This triggered such deep anxiety that the villagers and Buddhist monks decided to stage protests, despite knowing that the rebellion would be severely suppressed.

"They didn't know what was going to happen to them"

The largest protest gathered people in front of the government building in Dege.

In a video obtained by the BBC and verified as authentic, protesters can be heard calling on the authorities to stop evicting people and allow them to stay.

Separately, a group of residents addressed visiting officials and pleaded with them to cancel plans to build the dam.

The BBC obtained footage that apparently shows this incident and verified that it took place in the village of Siba.

The video shows red-robed monks and villagers kneeling on a dusty road and giving thumbs up, a traditional Tibetan way of begging for mercy.

In the past, the Chinese government has been quick to suppress any resistance to the authorities, especially in Tibetan territory, where it is sensitive to anything that could potentially increase separatist sentiment.

This time was no different.

Authorities moved quickly to crack down on the uprising, arresting hundreds of people at the protests while simultaneously raiding homes across the valley, according to one of our sources.

One unverified but widely shared insert appears to show Chinese police pushing a group of monks on the road in what is believed to be an arrest operation.

Many were detained for weeks and some severely beaten, according to our Tibetan sources whose families and friends were targeted in this repression.

A source shared fresh details from the hearing.

He told the BBC that his childhood friend was detained and interrogated over a period of several days.

"He was asked questions and from the beginning the treatment was kind. They asked him: 'Who asked you to participate, who is behind this'.

"Then, when he couldn't give them the answers they wanted, he was beaten by six or seven different security guards over the course of a few days."

His friend ended up suffering only minor injuries and was soon released.

But others were not so lucky.

Another source told the BBC that more than 20 of his relatives and friends had been detained for taking part in the protests, including an elderly person who was over 70 years old.

"Some of them suffered injuries all over their bodies, even on their ribs and kidneys, from kicking and beating...and some of them got sick from their injuries," he said.

Similar claims of physical abuse and beatings during arrests have appeared in foreign Tibetan media reports.

The UN letter also cited reports of arrests and the use of force on hundreds of protesters, noting that "they were severely beaten by Chinese police, resulting in injuries requiring hospital treatment."

After the suppression of the rebellion, the Tibetans in this area faced even stricter restrictions, the BBC learns.

Communication with the outside world was further restricted and there was increased surveillance.

Those who could still be contacted were reluctant to speak for fear of retribution, according to the sources. The first source said that while some of the freed protesters were eventually allowed to travel within Tibetan territory, others were given a curfew.

This has created problems for those who have to go to the hospital for medical treatment and nomadic tribes who have to roam the pastures with their herds, he said.

Another source said that he last heard from relatives and friends at the end of February: "When I managed to reach them, they told me not to call again because they would be arrested." They were very scared, they kept hanging up on me.

"We used to talk through WeChat, but now it's no longer possible. I am completely blocked from contacting any of them," he said.

"The last person I spoke to was a younger cousin. She said: 'It's very dangerous, many of us were arrested, there is a lot of trouble, they hit many of us'... They didn't know what would happen to them next."

The BBC was unable to find any mention of the protests and crackdown in Chinese state media.

But shortly after the protests, Chinese Communist Party officials visited the area to "explain the need" for the dam construction and called for "measures to maintain stability," according to the report.

A few months later, a tender was awarded to build a "public security station" in Dege, according to documents posted online.

The letter from Chinese officials to the UN indicates that the villagers have already been resettled and the relics moved, but it is not clear how far the project has progressed.

The BBC has been monitoring the valley through satellite images for months.

For now, there are no signs of the construction of the dam or the demolition of the village and monastery.

The Chinese embassy told us that the authorities are still conducting geological investigations and specialized studies for the construction of the dam.

She added that the local authorities "actively and thoroughly understand the demands and aspirations" of the locals.

Construction or exploitation?

Controversy is nothing new in China when it comes to dams.

When the government built the world's largest dam in the 1990s - the Three Gorges on the Yangtze River - it sparked protests and criticism over the way it handled resettlement and compensation for thousands of villagers.

In recent years, as China has accelerated its transition from coal to clean energy sources, such moves have become particularly sensitive in Tibetan territories.

Beijing has eyed the steep valleys and mighty rivers there, in the rural west, to build mega-dams and hydroelectric plants that can keep powering China's energy-hungry metropolis.

President Xi Jinping personally led the initiative for this, a policy called "sidiandongsong" or "sending western electricity to the east".



Getty Images

Like Gangtuo, many of these dams are on the Jinsha (Dri Chu) River, which flows through Tibetan territories.

It forms the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and is part of what China calls the world's largest clean energy corridor.

Gangtuo is actually the last in a series of 13 dams planned for this valley, five of which are already operational or under construction.

The Chinese government and state media have presented these governments as a win-win that cuts pollution and generates clean energy, while improving the lives of rural Tibetans.

In a statement to the BBC, the Chinese embassy said the clean energy projects focus on "promoting high-quality economic development" and "enhancing feelings of progress and happiness among people of all ethnic groups".

But the Chinese government has long been accused of violating the rights of Tibetans.

Activists say the dams are the latest example of Beijing's exploitation of Tibetans and their land.

"What we are seeing is an accelerated destruction of Tibetan religious, cultural and linguistic heritage," said Tenzin Choekji, a researcher at the rights group Tibet Watch.

"These are 'high-quality development' and 'ecological civilization' that the Chinese government is implementing in Tibet."

One key issue is China's resettlement policy of evicting Tibetans from their homes to make way for construction, which has sparked protests by villagers and monks living near the Gangtuo Dam.

It is estimated that more than 2000 rural Tibetans have been resettled since 930.000, according to Human Rights Watch (HRV).

Beijing has always been claimed that these relocations are happening only with the consent of the Tibetans and that they receive housing, compensation and new job opportunities.

State media often that represent as an improvement their living conditions.



Getty Images

But rights groups present a different picture, with reports detailing evidence of coercion, complaints of inadequate compensation, cramped living conditions and job shortages.

They also point out that the resettlement breaks the deep, centuries-old connection that rural Tibet shares with its own land.

"These people will lose practically everything they have, their livelihood and community heritage," said Maya Wang, the interim China director of Human Rights Watch.

Government and environmental concerns over the submergence of Tibetan valleys famous for their biodiversity, and the possible dangers of building dams in an area rich in earthquake fault lines.

Some Chinese academics have discovered that the pressure from the accumulated water in the dam lakes can potentially increasing the risk of earthquakes, among them iu say Jinsha.

This could lead to catastrophic flooding and destruction, as seen in 2018, when rain-triggered

landslides occurred in a village located between two dam construction sites on the Jinsha.

The Chinese embassy told us that the implementation of any clean energy project "goes through scientific planning and rigorous demonstration, and will be subject to proper supervision."

In recent years, China has passed laws to protect the environment around the Yangtze River and the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau.

President Xi Jinping has personally emphasized the need to protect the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. About 424 million yuan has been spent on environmental conservation along the Jinsha, according to state media.

The report highlighted efforts to make dam projects earthquake-resistant.

A number of Tibetan rights groups, however, argue that any large-scale construction on Tibetan territory, including dams such as Gangtuo, must be stopped.

They have organized protests abroad and called for an international moratorium, arguing that companies participating in such projects would "allow the Chinese government to profit from the occupation and oppression of Tibetans."

"I really hope this dam building stops," one of the sources said.

"Our ancestors were here, our temples are here. We have been here for generations. It is very painful for us to move.

"What kind of life would we lead if we moved?"

Retired Party official exposes misuse of Quake-relief aid in Kyegudo

20 December 2024, [ICT](#)

In a startling revelation 14 years after the devastating 2010 Kyegudo (Jyekundo) or Yulshul (Yushu) earthquake that left around 3000 dead, a former Tibetan member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has accused local authorities in Yulshul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in present-day Qinghai Province of misappropriating earthquake relief funds and causing environmental damage. The allegations were made in an undated video statement by Lobsang Dorjee on Chinese social media who holding his identity card identified himself as a former government official and CCP member. The video statement was most probably posted around mid-December and first posted on the social media X on December 17, 2024 under the account name Sakar Tashi.

Dorjee's multiple accusations center around the aftermath of the devastating 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck Kyegudo on April 14, 2010. In his statement, Dorjee declares that the funds intended for emergency aid and reconstruction were diverted

for personal gain by local officials, leaving many residents without proper housing assistance. In the video statement, he also discusses the unresolved issues for nomadic workers following the closure of the Military Industrial Enterprise in his area, and wasteful use of reconstruction resources.

On the then suppression of Tibetan protestors and petitioners challenging the authorities abuse of power, Dorjee states that the public has the right to petition about their grievances. He emphasizes that while CCP regulations state that all party members should work for the benefit of the people, it is clear that Kyegudo local officials have abused their power for their own interests. He further asserts that Chinese authorities use police to intimidate protesters, view them like "terrorists", and that the abuse of power for personal gain severely impacts the lives of ordinary people.

The retired official also highlighted a controversial \$1.1 billion power plant project, which he states has significantly damaged the environment. "The environmental impact is severe, yet operations have not started," Dorjee stated in the video. Although not clearly specified, he also expresses his doubt over how the investment has been used, which could either mean who benefits from the power plant or how the funds meant for the plant have been used.

In mid-October this year, a 29-year-old Tibetan environmental defender, Tsongon Tsering, posted a video statement on Chinese social media, exposing illegal sand and gravel mining in his native Tsaruma hometown in Ngaba (Aba), Sichuan. After the exposé revealing the troubling situation of environmental neglect and the apparent governmental inaction in protecting a critical water source for Asia went viral, Tsering was arrested and sentenced to eight months detention which he is currently serving.

Reality far from propaganda

China had painted a picture of remarkable recovery in Kyegudo following the devastating earthquake urging Tibetans to be grateful to the CCP and the government. Then Chinese President Hu Jintao had vowed to help rebuilding when he visited the region on April 18, 2010 and was quoted by Chinese state media as asserting, "We must be more determined, act more swiftly, and adopt more scientific methods to overcome any difficulties". However, reality is far from what the Chinese government claims. The International Campaign for Tibet reported in the past that Tibetans have been largely excluded from the reconstruction planning process. Protests have occurred over land confiscation and government policies. Some viewed the rebuilding as an opportunity for authorities to advance controversial resettlement programs.

While Chinese state media projected rapid progress and full recovery, Lobsang Dorjee's recent video

statement reveal that reality is far from propaganda. A poignant quote in a May 2014 New York Times report four years after the earthquake still rings true a decade later. “The tragedy of the earthquake became an opportunity for the powerful and the greedy,” told Kunchen Norbu, then a 52 year-old-trader, to the New York Times.

Video captures abuse of Tibetan student by Chinese principal

19 December 2024, [RFA](#)

Incident at boarding school violates ethnic and children’s rights, expert says.

A disturbing video has emerged showing a teacher slapping, pushing down and pulling the ear of a Tibetan student in front of other students gathered on what appears to be a sports field.

The video, which contains no sound, was contained in a report released by the Tibet Action Institute, an advocacy group based in North America, on Dec. 16. The incident was filmed on or before Nov. 18, according to sources of the rights group.

The institute identifies the teacher as Dang Qingfu, the school principal at a boarding school for Tibetan students called Tsokhyil Township Ethnic Boarding Primary School in Tsolho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in China’s Qinghai province.

Dang is also the local Communist Party secretary, the institute said.

The video footage of the incident was shared with the school’s parents’ association and was also posted online, where it went viral. However, Tibetans were later barred from sharing the footage.

China has many such boarding schools for Tibetan students, where they are instructed only in Mandarin, not in their native Tibetan language.

Tibetan advocates see these as part of broader government efforts to eradicate the use of Tibetan language and enforce “patriotic education,” which mandates that love of China and of the ruling Communist Party be incorporated into work and study for all.

The school has claimed the principal is under investigation, but still remains in his position. The Tibet Action Institute called for Dang to be immediately removed from his position and face legal charges.

Gyal Lo, an educational sociologist at Tibet Action Institute told Radio Free Asia, that the incident was a serious violation of human rights, ethnic rights and children’s rights.

But he said that it’s difficult to hold Chinese officials accountable in Tibetan areas as local governments consistently implement policies that contradict their own constitution.

“I don’t think the Chinese government will consider this as racial discrimination against Tibetans, investigate and punish these kinds of school principals,” he said.

In recent months, reports of abuse faced by Tibetan children at these state-administered boarding schools have come to light in recent months.

In September, Radio Free Asia reported that five young Tibetan former monks who were forced to attend a local government-run boarding school in Sichuan’s Zungchu county attempted to take their own life saying they found it “unbearable” to stay in the school, where they said they were discriminated against, beaten and deprived of good food.

In October, RFA learned from sources that hundreds of young Tibetan Buddhist monks who had been forcibly transferred from a shuttered Buddhist monastery school to government-run boarding schools in Sichuan’s Ngaba county were being held in ‘prison-like conditions’ in the schools.

Alarms raised over removal of Tibetan language in college entrance exams

05 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Screen grab of a Tibetan raising concerns over the removal of the Tibetan language from Chinese college entrance exam

A Tibetan parents’ association has voiced serious concerns on WeChat about the removal of the Tibetan language from China’s college entrance examination framework, relegating it to an elective subject. The discussion was sparked by a warning from a teacher who cautioned parents about the potential exclusion of Tibetan language studies.

The issue gained traction after a video shared on WeChat was later circulated on X (formerly Twitter). In the video, an individual expressed fears about the gradual erosion of Tibetan language. Some local responses framed the change as an inevitable consequence of China’s educational reforms, but these comments were reportedly removed shortly after being posted.

The removal of Tibetan language instruction from the core curriculum aligns with the Chinese government's "Model 2" education policy, which prioritises Mandarin Chinese as the medium of instruction. Experts view this as part of a systematic effort to destroy the Tibetan language and culture.

In 2022, Chinese authorities began implementing this assimilationist policy in primary schools across Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province, within the Tibetan region of Amdo. The policy has faced widespread criticism from local Tibetans and activists. Among the prominent critics is Thupten Lodoe, a renowned Tibetan intellectual and writer, known by his pen name *Sabuchey*. He openly condemned the policy in a letter that led to his arrest and subsequent sentencing to four years and six months in prison.

BUDDHISM

China deploys troops to enforce stringent new restrictions at biggest centre for Tibetan Buddhist study

27 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has deployed hundreds of additional troops at the world's biggest centre for the study of Tibetan Buddhism located in Serthar (Chinese: Seda) County of Kardze (Ganzi) prefecture, Sichuan province, to enforce severe new restrictions in the coming new year, said the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) on its *Tibet.net* website Dec 27.

Some 400 Chinese troops from neighbouring Draggo (Luhuo) and other neighbouring counties arrived at the Larung Five Sciences Buddhist Academy on Dec 20. This was accompanied by a helicopter surveillance operation, signalling an intensification of monitoring activities at the academy, the report said.

The report cited sources as saying the stringent new regulations will limit residency at the academy to a maximum of 15 years, required all monks and nuns studying in it to be officially registered, and drastically reduce the number of monks and nuns across the province to as low as 1,000.

The academy alone had around 10,000 officially registered residents before China launched a severe and massive crackdown on it in 2001, which continued over the following years, especially during 2016-17, forcibly evicting monks and nuns and destroying buildings, including residences.

The report said Chinese students are already reportedly being asked to leave the academy.

The academy and its monastery, founded in 1980 by Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok at his mountain retreat with support from the 10th Panchen Lama, sprawls over a mountainside in Serthar county.

The CTA report called the latest development an escalation in China's broader campaign to restrict religious freedom in Tibet, where traditional Buddhist institutions have faced increasing pressure under state policies aimed at controlling religious practice and education.

China's ideology tsar views Buddhism reincarnation exhibition in signal to Dalai Lama

25 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

China's fourth senior official Wang Huning visits China Tibetology Research Centre, as officials vow national unity and ethnic solidarity

China's top political adviser has made a rare trip to view an exhibition about the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhas, a sign that Beijing is getting ready to face the Dalai Lama succession issue ahead of the exiled spiritual leader's 90th birthday next year, according to an analyst.

Wang Huning, China's fourth senior official and chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the country's top advisory body, led a group of its members to visit the semi-official China Tibetology Research Centre in Beijing on Monday.

The South China Morning Post has learned Wang is the most senior Chinese official to visit an exhibition on the reincarnation of the Living Buddha, which opened at the centre in 2014 and details the historical origins, evolution, norms and current state of the reincarnation system within Tibetan Buddhism.

The centre's Museum of Tibetan Culture said the exhibit "clarifies that the reincarnation of various dalai lamas and other significant living Buddhas have historically required approval from the central authorities, and illustrates that Tibet has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times".

The CPPCC members accompanying Wang vowed to maintain national unity and ethnic solidarity, with a focus on "cultivating a strong sense of identity among all ethnic groups concerning the great motherland, Chinese culture, the Communist Party and socialism with Chinese characteristics," said the People's Political Consultative Daily, the official paper of the CPPCC.

Wang's visit also comes only a few months before the 14th Dalai Lama – the exiled spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism – is expected to announce his succession plan.

Barry Sautman, an specialist on China's ethnic minorities at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said that since the CTRC was China's largest institution for Tibetan studies and Wang was a social scientist, the function of his trip could be to "become acquainted" with the centre's latest research.

"There is likely to be extensive preparation under way within Tibet-related central government institutions to deal with the issue of the Dalai Lama's succession," he said.

According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the Dalai Lama will reincarnate as a child whose identification requires searches and rituals, but there are concerns that his death may lead to social tensions in Tibet because of his poor relations with Beijing.

He indicated he would address the issue of his reincarnation after turning 90 years old, which is next July.

Reuters reported on Monday that the Dalai Lama, who underwent knee surgery in New York in June, recently reassured followers about his health.

"According to my dream, I may live 110 years," he said, speaking from his residence in Dharamsala in northern India.

The Dalai Lama has suggested the possibility of discontinuing his reincarnation to avoid intervention

by China's government, but "the [Beijing] government has indicated, however, that it will adhere to the traditional succession process that applies to all *tulkus* [reincarnated lamas]," Sautman said.

"Central government officials concerned with Tibet thus need to be thoroughly acquainted with the process," he said, referring to the purpose of Wang's trip.

Beijing has labelled the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, a "separatist" and alleges he incited unrest among Tibetans in the 1980s and during protests in 2008.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) took control of Tibet in 1950. The Dalai Lama fled to India following a failed uprising in 1959 and has lived in exile since then. On Monday, Wang viewed another exhibition that documents the CTRC's contributions and research over the past nearly four decades, including establishing a "Chinese-characteristic Tibetan studies system" that explores aspects of Tibet and Tibetan regions in four other provinces, including politics, economics, culture and religion.

In June, a researcher at the centre said that although the Dalai Lama was outside China, his reincarnation remained under Chinese jurisdiction, and that it was "natural" for China's government to apply traditional principles to maintain control over Tibetan Buddhism. Efforts should be made to "promote the theoretical framework of the Chinese national community and tell the story of ethnic unity and progress in Tibet well. Political Consultative Conference members are urged to investigate and provide input on deep-seated issues affecting stability in Tibet, contributing to the creation of a harmonious and prosperous socialist modern Tibet," the CPPCC paper said.

Wang, who also leads the central working group on Tibetan works, has been "quite active" in visiting areas with a large Tibetan population, Sautman said, including trips to Garze and Aba in Sichuan with President Xi Jinping and a Tibet Aid Programme conference in August.

Serving as a key political theorist for China's leadership, Wang repeatedly emphasises developing theoretical frameworks to counter Western narratives on ethnic minority issues.

In Yunnan province in December last year, he advocated for a stronger theoretical system to foster a sense of a shared spiritual home among China's diverse ethnicities.

In May, he emphasised the use of archaeological artefacts and historical materials in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region to deepen research on foundational issues concerning the Chinese national community.

Tibetan Buddhist scholar released from Chinese prison

22 December 2024, [ANI](#)

Prominent Tibetan Buddhist scholar, Geshe Rachung Gendun was released from Chinese custody after serving three and a half years in prison, reported Tibet.net.

However, his health severely deteriorated during his imprisonment. Gendun's release comes amid deep sorrow for his family, as his mother passed away on June 10 this year at the age of 85. Due to ongoing harassment by Chinese authorities, she was unable to receive proper medical treatment and tragically died without having the chance to see her son one last time.

Gendun, a monk at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County, was arrested on the night of April 1, 2021, under unclear circumstances, and his whereabouts remained unknown for months. His family was denied access to information and visitation.

It was later revealed in July 2022 that he had been sentenced to three and a half years in prison for allegedly sending money abroad as offerings to the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche, the abbot of Kirti Monastery in India.

This recent imprisonment is part of a broader history of confrontations between Gendun and Chinese authorities. In 1998, he was detained during protests against China's "Patriotic Education Campaign" at Kirti Monastery, which severely restricted religious practices and led to the forced removal of young monks. Before his arrest, Gendun was pursuing the prestigious Geshe degree, the highest academic achievement in Tibetan Buddhism. He had studied complex philosophical texts and participated in challenging debate tours at various monasteries. Geshe Rachung Gendun, born to the late Rachung Kuye and Norpo from Meruma's Third Division in Ngaba County, Tibet, grew up in the traditional province of Amdo. From a young age, he joined Kirti Monastery's Geden Lekshay Ling, where he received teachings from esteemed spiritual masters, including Geshe Jorge Aku Chozin, Aku Loye (Rako's Lobsang Sonam), and Geshe Lobsang Tashi, specialising in monastery rituals and practices. Gendun's release has raised concerns about the continued suppression of religious freedom and cultural identity in Tibet, as well as the impact of Chinese policies on Tibetan monks and scholars. (ANI)

STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

Nagchu champions glacier protection on plateau

23 December 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)



Xu Qiangqiang, an assistant researcher at the China Academy of Sciences' Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources, measures the size of the Dongkemadi Glacier using a laser radar in Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region, in October. (Palden Nyima/China Daily)

Nagchu city, in the northern part of the Xizang autonomous region, is the origin of many major rivers in Asia, including the Yangtze, the Nujiang and the Lancang rivers, making it a core area for building a water ecological security barrier in Xizang and a strategic guarantee base for water resources in China. With joint efforts made by the government and the public in Nagchu, Xizang's largest and the country's second-largest prefecture-level area, the city reflects a beautiful picture of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

The Yangtze River's main source is the Jangchu Diruk Glacier in the Amdo section of the Three-River-Source National Park. To protect the ecological environment of the river source area, a regular working mechanism has been established by the local government and residents. Currently, the construction work in the Northern Tanggula Mountains area of the park, where the glacier is located, is 90 percent complete.

Nagchu has effectively shouldered the political responsibility for the ecological protection of the river park. It has promoted the construction of the Northern Tanggula Mountain area, implemented ecological protection and restoration in the source areas of rivers, and comprehensively established protective measures for river sources, among many other duties

Hu Chunyu, deputy head of the Nagchu water conservancy bureau, said the primary measures Nagchu has taken to protect the river are the implementation of a strict water management system, controlling total water usage, and ensuring efficiency. Hu said the city has also cracked down on activities that encroach on river and lake areas, including sand mining, garbage dumping, and unauthorized construction, and has widely promoted ecological protection through educational campaigns to raise public awareness.

"Through governance, illegal activities that harm water ecology have been effectively curbed, leading to a significant improvement in the water quality of rivers and lakes," said Hu, adding the city has laid a good foundation for creating an ecological civilization, but it still faces some difficulties and shortcomings.

Ecological civilization is a concept promoted by China's central leadership for balanced and sustainable development that features harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature.

"The water quality management system in Nagchu is not yet perfect. Soil erosion is severe, and effective wetland protection and restoration measures are lacking," Hu said.

"This year, the measures we have taken mainly focus on strengthening supervision and law enforcement, establishing a sound water environment monitoring system and intensifying the overall monitoring and evaluation of the water environment," he added.

According to the Xizang Department of Natural Resources, the glacier resources in Nagchu cover approximately 6,800 square kilometers, almost 2 percent of its administrative area.

The general volume of water in the glaciers stands at about 8.8 billion cubic meters.

Painstaking efforts

As central and regional authorities attach increasingly greater importance to the glaciers, Nagchu may realize a more improved ecological aquatic environment.

Over the past few decades, Chinese researchers have been strictly monitoring the changes in the glaciers on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and they work together with the local government to resolve environmental issues such as glacier melting.

Since its establishment in 2005, researchers at the Tanggula Mountain Cryosphere and Environment Observation and Research Station of the Xizang Autonomous Region, part of the China Academy of Sciences' Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources, have been working hard in the icy environment, walking on glaciers and in snowfields at an altitude of over 5,500 meters.

They conduct long-term observations and make continuous recordings of the geological, hydrological, meteorological, and permafrost conditions in the source area of the Yangtze.

Xu Qiangqiang, an assistant researcher at the institute, said his team has regularly conducted comprehensive assessments and health checkups of the glaciers in the area using advanced observation and mapping techniques in Nagchu over the past few years.

Xu said Nagchu is implementing an integrated protection strategy, adhering to the systematic management of mountains, waters, forests, fields, lakes, grasslands, sands, and ice.

"The approach of prioritizing natural restoration and combining natural recovery with artificial restoration

in the system management has proved to be very effective. They are upholding ecological protection redlines, including large ice caps and small-scale glacier clusters, and designating them within the ecological protection red line," he said.

Xu also said for important snowcapped glaciers, they are implementing protection measures to curb human disturbances.

"Additionally, Nagchu is restricting tourism and mountaineering activities in certain glacier areas such as the Ganglung Changmar Glacier," he added. "Aside from necessary scientific research and resource surveys, all tourism activities are prohibited, and checkpoints have been set up on roads leading to the glaciers to advise tourists to turn back."

According to Xu, there are about 200,000 glaciers worldwide, with the largest located on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, which has roughly 100,000 glaciers.

Knowledge to share

"The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is known as the water tower of Asia, because the melting ice feeds the major rivers in South Asia and Southeast Asia. If these glaciers continue to shrink, the upstream regions will face water shortages," said Xu, adding this will have a significant impact on downstream areas, including water for hydroelectric power stations, residential use, and farm irrigation.

Xu noted that the methods used by the Chinese government to protect the nation's waters are worth sharing with the rest of the world, and he outlined four specific points.

First, China is a global leader in emissions reductions and green energy, and is committed to achieving carbon neutrality. Second, scientists and local agencies are collaborating to artificially increase snowfall to replenish glaciers and reduce losses. Third, China has been restoring grasslands for many years to improve the surrounding ecological environment of glaciers because grasslands reduce the impact of light-absorbing impurities as glaciers melt. Finally, the country is carefully managing the development of glacier tourism, recognizing the importance of water protection and implementing restrictions as needed.

In a move to protect glaciers in Xizang, the region's legislature adopted a law dedicated to the effort in late July.

The law, which took effect on Oct 1, provides specific guidelines for governments and relevant departments in glacier areas. It introduced a responsibility system and performance evaluation mechanism for glacier protection goals, and established punitive measures for violations.

"The regulation will effectively protect glacier resources, ensure the ecological safety of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and contribute to the preservation of the plateau's flora, fauna, and landscapes," said Zhao Guiying, deputy director of the Legislative Affairs

Commission of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Xizang.

Tibet Adopts Clean Energy For Centralised Heating

13 December 2024, [The Rising Nepal](#), Zhan Xun



Winter has arrived, and Tibet, China, has entered its coldest season of the year. In the past, due to Tibet's high altitude and cold weather, coal burning was commonly used to provide centralised heating for buildings. However, with advancements in technology, Tibet's clean energy power generation now accounts for 99 per cent of its total energy production, reducing the annual consumption of standard coal by approximately 4.73 million tons. This shift has significantly contributed to reducing carbon emissions. Tibet has now achieved nearly 100 per cent clean electricity supply, making it the province with the highest proportion of clean energy power generation in China.

This year, Tibet launched seven pilot projects for centralised heating using clean energy under a concessionary model. The Chinese government has invested \$521 million to construct and upgrade centralised heating facilities in Tibet, covering a total area of 6.22 million square meters. Once completed, these facilities will provide eco-friendly and cost-effective heating for 200,000 Tibetans. Moreover, pilot programmes for centralised heating have been initiated in areas over 5,000 meters above sea level. With further investments and technological advancements, more Tibetans are expected to benefit from convenient, comfortable, and affordable heating solutions.

The Chinese government has introduced a concessionary model in Tibet to support this initiative. This approach involves private capital in the construction of urban centralised heating systems based on clean energy. To ensure the scalability and efficiency of this initiative, the Tibet Autonomous Region government selected seven counties and districts, including Lhasa, Nyingchi, Nagqu, and Ngari, as pilot locations. The clean energy centralised heating system adopts a "heating + domestic hot water" model, addressing both household heating and hot water needs. In Coqên County, Ngari Prefecture, the pilot program is already in full swing, and the remaining six counties and districts are expected to

implement the system by January 2025, around the Chinese Lunar New Year.

A notable highlight is the implementation of centralised heating in regions above 5,000 meters, where the climate is especially harsh. For example, Shuanghu County and Nyima County in Nagqu Prefecture are such extreme high-altitude areas, where winter temperatures can drop as low as -40°C, and freezing conditions persist for up to nine months a year. Pumajiangtang Township, the highest-altitude township in China, located in Langkazi County of Shannan City and bordering Bhutan, has also begun a centralised heating pilot project this year. Covering an area of 13,914.38 square meters, the project is set to be completed by the end of this month. Heating equipment has already been installed for 723 households in 14 villages, providing residents with a warm and comfortable living environment. Meanwhile, 830 households in 11 other villages will benefit from an advanced heating system based on "solar photovoltaic + energy storage + heat pump air heaters."

These social developments and advancements in Tibet are underpinned by the rapid growth of clean energy, driven by the upgrading of the Tibetan power grid in recent years. As of September 2024, the Chinese government has invested nearly \$12.2 billion in upgrading Tibet's power grid. Tibet's total installed clean electricity capacity has reached 7.176 million kilowatts, nearly doubling in the past 12 years. A new comprehensive energy system has been established, dominated by hydropower and complemented by geothermal, wind, and solar energy.

Currently, Tibet's electricity supply serves over 3.5 million people, with power supply reliability reaching 99.48 per cent. Voltage compliance rates in rural areas stand at 97.50 per cent, and rural power supply reliability has reached 99.52 per cent. Even during the busiest harvest periods, electricity supply in rural areas is guaranteed.

Furthermore, after meeting its own electricity demand, Tibet has gradually established channels for transmitting surplus power during the abundant water season. Tibet not only possesses the world's most advanced ultra-high-altitude, ultra-high-voltage DC transmission technology but also excels in large-scale renewable energy grid integration, thanks to the collective efforts of Chinese engineers and scientists. Feng Jianguo, Chief Engineer of the Housing and Urban-Rural Development Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region, stated that they would summarise experiences from the pilot projects to develop replicable and scalable project implementation models. Coupled with supportive policies in subsidies, taxes, pricing, land use, and financing, Tibet's centralised heating system is expected to achieve full coverage in the near future.

Himalayas: Arunachal government deploys central forces to counter dam protestors in Siang Valley

10 December 2024, [Down to Earth](#), Anupam Chakravartty



The Siang, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, near Yingkiang town in Upper Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh. Photo: Anupam Chakravartty

The Arunachal Pradesh government has deployed a team of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) close to the proposed site of the 12.5 GW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), touted to be India's largest dam, according to an official document. The move, to conduct a survey for a pre-feasibility report (PFR) on SUMP, has angered locals opposed to the dam.

Several women from villages close to the proposed site on the Siang river, the transboundary main channel of the Brahmaputra, continue to guard the site, opposing the dam and any survey over the river. According to a letter issued to the Circle Officer, Redo-Perging subdivision on December 6 by Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Siang district, PN Thungon, a team of CAPF is expected to be stationed in Riew village, in the purview of conduct of a PFR regarding the SUMP.

"Therefore, you are requested to initiate necessary action for repair and maintenance of Government Primary School, on self-help basis," the DC stated in the letter. A source in Boleng confirmed the development but added that the CAPF is yet to be deployed.

Residents from Pareng and several other villages have been guarding a portion of the Siang, shouting slogans of 'No Survey, No Dam'.

Bhanu Tatak, legal advisor of the Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum (SIFF), told *Down To Earth* that the deployment of the CAPF goes against a Gauhati High Court order that cancelled proposed dams on the Siang.

"The people of the Siang valley have been against dams on the river for over four decades. Our people have been peacefully protesting against the surveys by any government agency or a dam developer. People do have the right to protest against this decision in order to protect their homes and hearths," Tatak, whose organisation represents the interests of farmers from Arunachal's Adi community, added.

In 2022, the Gauhati High Court cancelled all 44 dams proposed on the Siang river. The petition had alleged that Arunachal Pradesh government took upfront payments by means of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for over 230 dams across the Himalayan state and a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) enquiry against the MoA. In July 2022, even the Arunachal Government told the high court that all 44 dams had been cancelled by the state.

In 2017, however, central thinktank NITI Aayog floated a new plan for a 1 GW dam on the Siang, which went through several changes. Recently, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister, Pema Khandu highlighted that a projected power generation capacity surpassing 13,500 megawatts with 26 per cent equity share, will receive 12 per cent free power. "The damming of the Siang river, known as Yarlung Tsangpo in its upper reaches by our neighbouring country [China] poses significant threats, including flash floods and water scarcity. These risks could have devastating consequences for downstream areas in the Siang region and beyond," he later stated in a social media post.

Although Khandu has maintained that there is unanimous support for the dam among the people in the Siang valley, SIFF and several students' organisations have accused the Arunachal government as well as the dam developers for not conducting any consultation.

Tibetan area in Sichuan hit by second forest fire in last 20 days

09 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Forest fire is raging in a historically Tibetan area of Sichuan province again, making it the second such reported incident in the last 20 days and after a catastrophic one which continued for days in the middle of March last year, all at different places.

The latest fire started at around 3:20 pm Dec 9 in Chengxiang Village of Hekou (Tibetan: Chukha) Township, located in Yajiang (Nyangchu) County of the Garze (Kardze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, reported China's official *Xinhuanews* agency Dec 9, citing the headquarters of forest and grassland fire prevention and control of Yajiang.

The report said no casualties had been reported. Rescuers were stated to have rushed to the site for rescue operations.

Earlier, *Xinhua* reported Nov 18 that a fire broke out at around 6 pm Nov 17 in Angui Village, located in Yajiang County.

The report said the fire site had an average slope of 60 degrees and an altitude of 3,500 metres and that rescue and containment operations were ongoing.

Last year, a forest fire erupted in Petse (Baizi) Village in the same county in March and rapidly spread to other areas due to sudden increases in wind speed. While no casualties or damage to infrastructure were reported, a *Xinhua* report said Mar 17 that in the nearby Jiaonibao Village, 21 houses were burned.

A total of 5,908 villagers belonging to 1,360 families in two Towns and one Township were reported to have been evacuated as a safety measure.

The disaster was stated to have struck a severe blow on the livelihood of the local Tibetan people: destruction of the forests' prized matsutake mushrooms.

TIBET IN EXILE

Condolences for President Jimmy Carter

30 December 2024, [CTA](#)

On learning that President Jimmy Carter had passed away, His Holiness the Dalai Lama wrote to Chip Carter, the President's son, at the Carter Center, today, to offer his condolences.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and President Jimmy Carter together in 2002.

“President Carter lived a truly meaningful life, he wrote, with decades of untiring efforts to help the poor and downtrodden, to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts and to advance democracy and human rights throughout the world. To have remained active over the course of such a long life set an example to us all of how to live our lives in the service of others. The Nobel Committee recognised his contribution to the welfare of humanity when it bestowed the Nobel Peace Prize on him in 2002.

“In addition, the Tibetan people and I remain ever grateful to President Carter for his deep interest in and concern for the situation in Tibet and for undertaking initiatives to help alleviate the plight our people.”

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Eriko Yamatani on Becoming Chairperson of Japan's Parliamentary Tibet Support Group

30 December 2024, [CTA](#)



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On 26 December 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the

Tibetan people, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Honourable Eriko Yamatani on her appointment as the chairperson of the Japan Parliamentarians Support Group for Tibet.

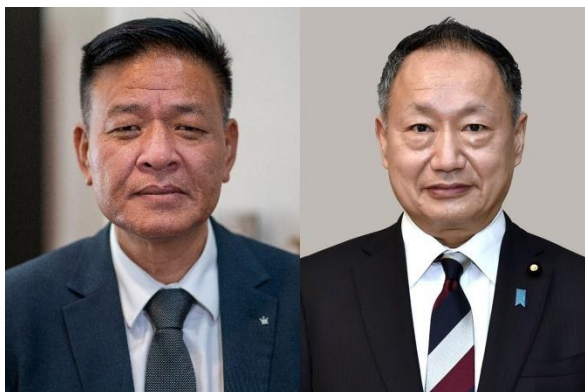
Sikyong wrote, "Your leadership and powerful advocacy for the Tibetan cause, as witnessed through our representative at the Office of Tibet in Japan, have been deeply encouraging. As a longtime member of the Support Group, your unwavering courage in speaking truth to power and standing firm against authoritarian forces has been exemplary. Your bold stance against repression and commitment to defending fundamental freedoms inspire hope and set an example for global leaders."

He further commended the pivotal role of the Japan Parliamentarians Support Group for Tibet in strengthening support and awareness for the Tibetan cause in Japan, expressing optimism about its continued progress under Yamatani's leadership. Sikyong also highlighted the forthcoming World Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet, set to take place in June 2025, noting the vital role Yamatani's leadership will play in ensuring its success.

Concluding his congratulatory message, Sikyong reaffirmed his intent to work closely with Yamatani and the Parliamentarians Support Group to advance shared commitments to justice, freedom, and human rights.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Hiroshi Yamada on Appointment as General Secretary of Japan's Parliamentary Tibet Support Group

30 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Hiroshi Yamada on Appointment as General Secretary of Japan's Parliamentary Tibet Support Group.

On 26 December 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Hiroshi Yamada on his appointment as the General Secretary of the Japan Parliamentarians Support Group for Tibet.

Sikyong expressed his gratitude for Yamada's longstanding parliamentary interventions and advocacy for Tibet, noting, "Your consistent support through parliamentary initiatives and your dedication to the Tibetan cause have been deeply valued and inspiring. Your appointment as General Secretary brings great optimism to our struggle, especially during these critical times when robust parliamentary backing for Tibet is of utmost importance."

Highlighting the significance of Yamada's leadership, Sikyong underscored the importance of the upcoming World Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet, scheduled to take place in June 2025 in Japan. He expressed confidence in Yamada's role in ensuring the success of this vital platform to strengthen global advocacy for Tibet.

In his congratulatory message, Sikyong also reaffirmed his trust in the Japan Parliamentarians Support Group for Tibet, under Yamada's guidance, to remain a steadfast voice for Tibet in Japan and beyond.

Dalai Lama unlikely to visit Bodh Gaya this tourist season

28 December 2024, [Times of India](#)

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama is unlikely to visit Bodh Gaya during the ongoing 2024-25 tourist season. Sources said the Dalai Lama would leave Dharamsala on Jan 3 and arrive in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, on Jan 5 for an extended stay.

The Dalai Lama's annual Bodh Gaya visit began in the 2018-19 tourist season and continued in 2022-23 and 2023-24. However, his visits were halted during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 seasons due to Covid pandemic. "Usually, the visit of the Dalai Lama leads to an increase in the footfall of devotees and tourists, especially from European countries, Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Himalayan regions, besides Indian states like Sikkim, Meghalaya and West Bengal. As it is almost clear that the Dalai Lama will not be coming, the most affected will be small businesses like footpath vendors, roadside tea stalls and eateries. These businesses enjoy a good season whenever the Dalai Lama visits," Bodh Gaya Citizen Forum president Suresh Singh said.

Hotel Association, Bodh Gaya president Jai Singh said, "Hotels and guesthouses usually receive advance bookings during the Dalai Lama's visit. However, this season, rooms are easily available as hoteliers have not received enough inquiries about bookings."

"In such a situation, stakeholders in Bodh Gaya tourism are now relying on the ongoing annual puja performances and the annual Bodh Mahotsav to conclude the 2024-25 tourist season on a positive note," he added.

Tourist Guide Association of Bihar president Rakesh Kumar said, "The annual puja schedule issued by the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee includes 41 events during the 2024-25 season, compared to 25 events in 2022-23 and 27 in 2023-24. This year's schedule will conclude with the five-day 1st Thailand Chanting Ceremony from March 17 to 21, which is expected to attract a good number of Thai devotees." He added, "The 10-day Tipitaka Chanting from Dec 2 to Dec 12 witnessed participation from over 8,000 devotees hailing from India, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Korea and several European and Asian countries."

Apart from the annual events, stakeholders in Bodh Gaya found some relief with the conclusion of the fortnight-long Pitripaksh Mela, which saw nearly 22 lakh devotees visiting Gaya to perform 'pindadaan' rituals. A considerable number of these devotees also visited Bodh Gaya for darshan at the Mahabodhi Mahavihara.

Gaya: The official website of the Dalai Lama has provided a nearly clear indication that the spiritual leader will not visit Bodh Gaya during the ongoing 2024-25 tourist season. According to the website, the Dalai Lama is scheduled to leave Dharamsala on Jan 3 and arrive in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, on Jan 5 for an extended stay. The website contains no mention of the spiritual leader's Bodh Gaya visit this season.

The Dalai Lama's annual Bodh Gaya visit began in the 2018-19 tourist season and continued in 2022-23 and 2023-24. However, his visits were halted during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 seasons due to Covid pandemic. "Usually, the visit of the Dalai Lama leads to an increase in the footfall of devotees and tourists, especially from European countries, Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Himalayan regions, besides Indian states like Sikkim, Meghalaya and West Bengal. As it is almost clear that the Dalai Lama will not be coming, the most affected will be small businesses like footpath vendors, roadside tea stalls and eateries. These businesses enjoy a good season whenever the Dalai Lama visits," Bodh Gaya Citizen Forum president Suresh Singh said.

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Estonian Delegation Visits Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Delivers Letter from Estonian Speaker

28 December 2024, [CTA](#)

A delegation of Tibet supporters from Estonia, led by Roy Strider, Coordinator of the Tibet Support Group in the Estonian Parliament, visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on 27 December 2024. They met with Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, and toured the parliament hall.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel was presented with a letter (Christmas card) from Speaker Lauri Hussar of the Estonian Parliament by Strider, along with gifts from MP Juku-Kalle Raid, Chair of the Tibet Support Group in the Estonian Parliament, and from the Parliament of Estonia.

Presenting the letter from the Estonian Speaker, Roy Strider remarked that it was a huge step in their support for the just cause of Tibet. A similar letter from the Estonian Speaker was presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama earlier today during their audience with him, and a similar letter will be presented to Sikyong Penpa Tsering later as well.

During their meeting, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel reflected on his first encounter with Roy Strider, his visit to Estonia, and the ongoing journey in advocating for Tibet. He emphasized the strong and unique relationship between Tibet and Estonia.

Speaking about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message of love, compassion, and kindness, the Speaker highlighted Kashag's initiative to celebrate His Holiness's 90th birthday next year as the "Year of Compassion." He also suggested the possibility of a related initiative or commemoration from the Estonian Parliament or the public to mark this special occasion.

The Speaker then provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, emphasising how, with the blessing and guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the support of India, the USA, Estonia, and other allies, the Central Tibetan Administration has successfully preserved and promoted Tibet's unique cultural heritage, language, and religion. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the supporters of Tibet in Estonia for their invaluable contributions and appealed for their continued support in the future.

Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, in her address, emphasised that supporting Tibet is a stand for justice and truth. She underscored that their presence at the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration sends a clear message that Tibet is not isolated, as China seeks to portray. She also reaffirmed that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration are not separatists, contrary to China's claims.

Speaking about the critical situation inside Tibet, the Deputy Speaker highlighted the Chinese government's practice of forcing Tibetan children into colonial-style boarding schools. This policy deprives them of their birthright to learn their language, culture, and religion, while subjecting them to indoctrination with communist ideology. She emphasised that this systematic effort to Sinicize Tibetan children is causing both psychological and physical harm.

The Deputy Speaker also expressed gratitude to the visiting guests from Estonia for their ongoing support of Tibet and for their visit to the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Dalai Lama's visionary leadership keeps Tibetan cause alive: CTA President

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

The President of the exile Tibetan government, known officially as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Penpa Tsering, in an exclusive interview with [ABC News](#), highlighted the enduring global focus on Tibet's struggle under the visionary leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

President Tsering attributed the resilience of the Tibetan cause to the Dalai Lama's visionary guidance, emphasising its significance despite decades of Chinese oppression. "We have never lost hope because of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visionary leadership even if we are only about 130,000 or 140,000 Tibetans in exile. We have still kept the issue of Tibetans alive. That shows the enduring spirit of the Tibetan people," he said, addressing Tibetans in Tibet with a message of solidarity and resilience.

Speaking on China's efforts to control the selection of the next Dalai Lama, Tsering reiterated the CTA's firm stance against Beijing's interference in Tibetan

spiritual matters. He warned that China's actions undermine the deeply rooted Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He further criticised the move, stating, "The reincarnation is very unique to Tibetan Buddhism. Lamas reincarnate to carry forward the unfulfilled responsibilities that they left behind in their previous life and it is the Lama that is going to be reborn. The Chinese government which does not believe in any religion wants to be responsible for the recognition of reincarnate Lamas. They are not bothered about the living 14th Dalai Lama but they are more concerned about controlling the yet to come 15th Dalai Lama."

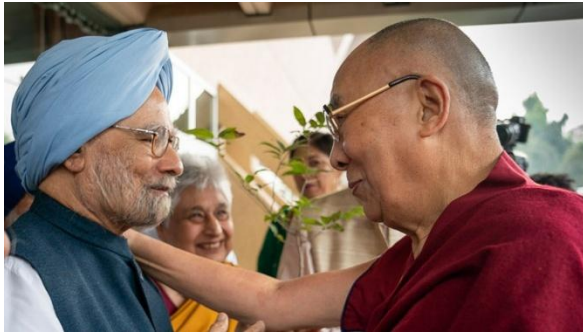
Reflecting on the 2008 uprising in Tibet, where monks and laypeople demanded the Dalai Lama's return, President Tsering highlighted the enduring resistance. "The Tibetan resistance movement has persisted for decades. The 2008 protests saw participation from across Tibet, showcasing unity and resolve. Since then, 157 Tibetans have self-immolated, hoping to draw attention to their plight. Despite the lack of significant international intervention, we continue to inform the world about ongoing political, military, and economic developments inside Tibet. We remain optimistic about positive changes in China in the near future."

When asked about the *Resolve Tibet Act* signed into law by U.S. President Joe Biden on July 12, Tsering emphasised its significance and global implications. The act, which prompted sharp criticism from Beijing, reaffirms Tibet's unresolved status under international law. "The Chinese government claims sovereignty over Tibet, while we advocate for the Middle Way Approach, a non-violent, mutually beneficial solution. The Tibetan Resolve Act underscores that Tibet remains an unresolved issue under international law. It addresses four main issues, challenging China's narrative that there is no Tibet problem," he explained.

Discussing the ongoing stalemate in negotiations with China, President Tsering acknowledged limited progress. "While we maintain some contact, it has not yielded significant outcomes. With the recent change in government, we aim to engage the new administration and strengthen collaboration with like-minded nations. The passing of this act by Congress reflects growing international support for Tibet's cause," he explained.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Sends Condolences on the Passing of Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

27 December 2024, [CTA](#)



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi, India on November 10, 2018. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

On receiving news that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had died, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written to his widow Mrs Gursharan Kaur to express his sadness.

“I will remember him in my prayers,” he wrote, “and offer my condolences to you and your family at this sad time.

“Whenever we met over the years I deeply appreciated his concern and good counsel. I felt he was like an elder brother to me.

“Your husband was motivated by a strong wish to help others. He made a significant contribution to India’s development and prosperity, especially its economic growth, improving the lot of the Indian people. He was also a good friend to the Tibetan people.

His Holiness ended his letter: “We can rejoice that for 92 years he lived a truly meaningful life—an inspiration to us all.”

Official Resolution of Solidarity Regarding the Critical Situation Inside Tibet

27 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Preamble

The Snowland of Tibet, renowned as the “Roof of the World,” was an independent country for millennia with a rich and profound history. It emerged as a formidable sovereign power in Central Asia, expanding its spiritual and political influence under the governance of the Three Great Dharma Kings and successive Tsenpo rulers. Subsequently governed spiritually and temporally by the Sakya, Phagdru, Rinjung, Depa Tsangpa, and Gaden Phodrang, Tibet was an independent country characterised by its distinctive religion, politics, economy, language, culture and customs.

Around 1949, the Communist government of the People’s Republic of China began its military invasion of Tibet, culminating in the complete occupation of the entire region by 1959 and compelling His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual and temporal leader, along with prominent religious figures from various Tibetan Buddhist traditions and approximately 80,000 Tibetans, to seek refuge in India. The Chinese Communist government’s brutal occupation resulted in the deaths of over 1.2 million Tibetans, the pillaging and destruction of more than 6,000 monasteries, and widespread environmental devastation through aggressive mineral extraction, deforestation, and the damming and diversion of vital waterways across Tibet. Tibetans have been systematically stripped of their fundamental human rights, including freedoms of religion, movement, expression, press, and language. In blatant violation of international human rights law and the moral conscience of humanity, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, detentions, and imprisonments are routinely carried out as the Chinese Communist government continue to enforce repressive policies designed to eradicate Tibetan identity, culture, and language. Tibetans in Tibet continue to endure great suffering akin to a living hell. Over a million Tibetan children have been forcibly enrolled in state-run colonial boarding schools as part of a broader effort to sinicize Tibetan identity, religion, and culture. In May of this year, the Chinese government forcibly removed hundreds of young monks from Kirti Monastery and Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery, compelling them to attend government-run schools while subjecting their families and communities to intimidation. These measures reflect the ongoing policy of the Chinese government to dismantle Tibet’s traditional monastic education system, rendering these generational institutions analogous to a stagnant pond severed from its upstream source.

On July 12 this year, the Ragya Gangjong Norbu Lobling School in Golog, Tibet, was forcefully shut down. The school was established in 1994 after obtaining approval from various departments of the Chinese government. The school had successfully graduated over 2,500 students for over three decades, with hundreds still pursuing their studies. The forced closure of this private school dedicated to fostering educated Tibetan individuals has not only caused deep distress to its teachers, students, and staff but also has caused profound sorrow among Tibetans in and outside Tibet as well as among individuals globally who admire and cherish the Tibetan culture.

Although assessing the actual situation in Tibet remains difficult due to the stringent restrictions imposed by the Chinese government, media reports from 2023 revealed the detention of over thirty six Tibetans, the enforced disappearance of six

individuals, the deaths of three, and the sentencing of seven Tibetans within that year alone. The introduction of a new regulation, the “Administrative Measures for Religious Activity Venues,” has further solidified the Chinese government’s control over religious practices, intensifying the repression of the Tibetan people’s religious freedom, human rights, and freedom of expression. Moreover, the Chinese government is actively pursuing policies of forced sinicization and cultural assimilation while intensifying repression under the pretext of social stability and security. Tibetans who voice their opinion on online platforms are subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, and imprisonment, often without legal representation or protection. They are further subjected to beatings and torture, leading to the deaths of many. The Chinese government’s implementation of repressive policies aimed at eradicating Tibetan religion, culture, and identity have raised serious concerns within the international community.

From June 13 to 15, 2024, a European Union (EU) delegation visited Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and the Kongpo Nyingtri area. They toured various sites, including monasteries, residential schools, resettled households, and a prison. This visit was followed by the 39th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue on June 16. The EU issued a statement on June 17 urging the Chinese government to protect the religion, cultural heritage, and identity of the Tibetan people. The statement encouraged more visits from the international community and civil society organizations to Tibet. It also called for the immediate release of Go Sherab Gyatso, Tashi Dorje, and all other political prisoners while demanding an end to the ongoing repression of human rights in the region.

On July 4, 2024, a statement concerning the human rights situation in Tibet by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights was submitted to the 56th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, convened in Geneva, Switzerland. The statement highlighted that multiple UN human rights bodies over the last two years had raised concern over the escalating human rights violations in Tibet, which included the forced enrolment of nearly a million Tibetan children in state-run colonial boarding schools and their separation from their families. It also underscored the dislocation of a large number of Tibetans under the coercive “labour transfer” policy and persecution of Tibetan environmental and human rights advocates, resulting in enforced disappearances and deaths due to torture in custody. The statement emphasised that Tibetans in Tibet are unable to engage freely with the UN mechanism, in particular, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), due to a pervasive climate of fear perpetuated by decades of oppression. With a peaceful resolution to this dire situation possible through dialogue, the statement urged the Chinese

government to take advantage of this opportunity. It further called upon the international community to press China, emphasising that, as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, China should fully respect the rights of the Tibetan people and address the root causes of the Sino- Tibet conflict.

Similarly, in the Australian Parliament, MP Lidia Thorpe raised concerns about colonial-style boarding schools in Tibet. On August 19, 2024, MP Deborah O’Neill addressed the Sino-Tibet conflict in the Australian parliament, expressing profound concern over the suffering endured by Tibetans. The parliamentarian condemned the Chinese government for unjustly and unlawfully ruling Tibetan regions through force, systematically oppressing the Tibetan people and denying them their fundamental freedoms and rights. The parliamentarian emphasized that every individual has the right to practice their religion, which must be respected. She then highlighted how the Chinese government’s assimilationist policies in Tibet systematically erode Tibet’s rich cultural heritage, depriving younger Tibetan generations of the opportunity to learn and cherish their tradition, a situation, she added, that must be confronted.

During its annual meeting on August 5, 2024, the American Bar Association (ABA) passed a resolution calling for the protection of human rights and the well-being of the Tibetan people in Tibet. Two days later, on August 7, the ABA urged the United States and UN member states to investigate the ongoing human rights violations in Tibet and to take action to safeguard the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people.

On September 6, 2024, a joint letter signed by 13 independent UN experts was published, addressing the Chinese government’s crackdown on Tibetan protests against the construction of the Kamthok hydropower plant in Kham Derge, Tibet. Initially sent to China on July 8, 2024, the letter criticized the Chinese government for failing to engage in meaningful consultations and obtaining informed consent from the Tibetans affected by the dam project. It also condemned the use of force and the arbitrary arrests of hundreds of Tibetans who peacefully voiced their concerns. Moreover, the letter highlighted that the local Tibetans were prevented from reaching out to the outside world, thus violating their fundamental rights. The experts expressed concern over the irreversible environmental consequences of the dam’s construction, stressing its potential impact on the climate of the Tibetan plateau and China. They called for a comprehensive independent assessment of the project’s environmental and human rights ramifications. In urging a halt to such unlawful projects, the experts also requested a detailed report on the situation,

including the human rights implications associated with the construction.

The Friends of Tibet (Hyderabad) convened a meeting centred on the themes “River of Tibet” and “Water Wars in Asia” on July 15, 2024. The meeting discussed how China is intimidating the Southeast Asian region by constructing dams on Tibetan rivers. The meeting emphasized that the Chinese government’s unchecked damming and infrastructure projects in Tibet, referred to as the “Third Pole” and the source of the world’s major rivers, have doubled the glacial melting, contributing to global warming and posing a direct threat to the lives and livelihoods people in neighbouring India and other South Asian countries. Similarly, on August 18, 2024, Chinese climate experts published a research paper indicating that the changing climate of the Tibetan plateau, known as the Water Tower of Asia, contributes to rising temperatures in Tibet. This warming trend could not only disrupt global and Asian monsoon cycles but also exacerbate climate change-related disasters in China. China’s extensive mining and river damming projects in Tibet have triggered several earthquakes in recent years. Heavy rainfall on June 20, 2024, caused severe flooding in Ngaba Trochu County, damaging homes and roads in Dokha Town and Khalung Village. Vehicles and personal belongings were swept away, resulting in significant property damage. On August 3, a landslide and flood in Rikyil Village, Gudrag Town (Dartsedo), led to casualties and widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure. In early September 2024, intense rainfall in Tsolho claimed the lives of six Tibetans in Serchen County’s Trelnag Township, while landslides in Honaguk village in Minhe County (Tsoshar Prefecture) killed three people. In Malho Tsekhog County, around 400 livestock perished, with extensive damage to roads, bridges, and homes. With mudslides submerging grasslands, many local areas have suffered significant losses of both people and property. Similarly, other areas in Tsoshar, such as Kadho, Tsurghor, Tsawa, and Tsawug, experienced heavy rains, landslides, and floods, leading to similar devastation. China’s aggressive exploitation of Tibet’s natural resources has severely disrupted the region’s ecological balance, resulting in a rising frequency of natural disasters, including heavy rains, storms, floods, earthquakes, and landslides.

The persistent enforcement of repressive policies aimed at eradicating Tibetan identity, culture, and the environment by the Chinese communist government since its invasion of Tibet has led to the March 10 uprising in 1959, a series of peaceful protests throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and the widespread pan-Tibet uprising in 2008. Since 2009, there have been 157 verified cases of Tibetans who have self-immolated in protest.

The Chinese government is not only making misleading assertions about the freedom and happiness that supposedly exist in Tibet but is also propagating disinformation about Tibet’s historical status. On July 12, 2024, the President of the United States signed into law the “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act,” which received overwhelming bipartisan support in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. This landmark legislation establishes a clear U.S. policy that refutes the Chinese government’s claims that Tibet has historically been an integral part of China. The law affirms the Tibetan people’s right to self-determination, among other critical provisions. In a parallel development, on June 10, 2024, the Canadian Parliament passed a unanimous motion acknowledging the right of Tibetans, as a people and nation, to self-determination and as such, free to practice their religion and culture. The motion also highlights and acknowledges the systematic policy of cultural assimilation being implemented by the Chinese government against the Tibetan people.

To summarize, the Chinese government’s persistent enforcement of repressive policies has perpetuated the critical political situation in Tibet, leading to the deterioration of the well-being of both the people and the environment. Reflecting this reality, it is imperative that the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile once again adopt a resolution of solidarity, as it has consistently done in its past successive sessions, at the 8th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

Resolution

1. Reaffirms and expresses our utmost respect to the unwavering courage and resolve of the Tibetans in Tibet who have made supreme sacrifices for the cause of Tibet, its people and dharma while under the oppression of the Chinese government. We earnestly pray that under the blessed care of Avalokiteshwara, the Buddha of compassion, they may be reborn in the Land of Snow and achieve outstanding accomplishments for Tibet’s religion, polity, and We also express our profound condolences to their families and relatives.
2. The Chinese government must immediately halt its repressive policies that violate fundamental human rights and ensure that Tibetans in Tibet are guaranteed their rights and freedoms.
3. We firmly oppose the Chinese government’s sinicization policy involving the establishment of an increasing number of colonial style boarding schools that separate Tibetan children from their families, communities, and cultural We also condemn the forced closure of the Golok Ragya

Gangjong Norbu School under unjust hardline policies. Tibetans in Tibet must be granted the freedom to practice their religion, culture, and language as per their aspirations.

4. We demand the immediate release of the Eleventh Panchen Lama, Jetsun Tenzin Yeshi Trinley Palsangpo, popularly known as Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, as well as all Tibetan political prisoners suffering under the oppression of the Chinese. We call for accountability regarding their well-being and insist that their fundamental rights be guaranteed.
5. Historically, Tibet was never part of China, and was a sovereign independent. We stand ready to engage in dialogue to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict based on the mutually beneficial Middle Way Policy. If the Chinese side does not make genuine attempts toward a resolution, the Chinese government will be solely responsible for any critical situation that may arise in the future.
6. We express our deepest gratitude to the government and people of India for their boundless kindness and steadfast support to Tibetans in. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to governments, parliaments, especially the U.S. government and Congress, as well as to the non- governmental organisations, dignitaries, and individuals who continue to stand in solidarity with the just cause of Tibet during this critical time.
7. We express our solidarity with Tibetans inside Tibet who have endured and continue to endure immense suffering under the Chinese government's repressive policies since the Chinese Communist government's occupation of Tibet. We also admire and praise the determination, courage, and invaluable contributions of all brave Tibetans in Tibet, both living and martyred. Tibetans living in free countries must seize every opportunity to strengthen advocacy for Tibet and lobby for support in respective governments while collectively working for the just cause of Tibet and the preservation of its religion, culture, and language. And so be it adopted accordingly with the unanimous approval of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on September 19, 2024.

**The above resolution was passed unanimously by the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile at its 8th session on September 19, 2024.*

No interest in reviving talks with Dalai Lama's envoys from China: US Congressional Commission on China

27 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) has highlighted the People's Republic of China's (PRC) persistent unwillingness to engage with representatives of the Dalai Lama,

The CECC's annual report, released on December 20, criticised the PRC's lack of interest to resume meaningful dialogue. "The Commission did not observe any interest from People's Republic of China (PRC) officials in resuming formal negotiations with the Dalai Lama's representatives, the last round of which, the ninth, was held in January 2010," the report stated.

The CECC's findings underline a decade-long impasse in Sino-Tibetan relations. Between 1982 and 2010, Tibetan and Chinese representatives engaged in nine rounds of dialogue aimed at resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict. The final round of official talks took place in January 2010 in China. Although the Chinese officials made baseless allegations against the Dalai Lama, Lodi Gyari, the lead Tibetan negotiator, later said, "We do not see any reason why we cannot find a common ground ... if the Chinese leadership has the sincerity and the political will to move forward."

The Tibetan government-in-exile, officially known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), continues to advocate for peaceful dialogue. In a May 5, 2023, interview with BBC Hard Talk, CTA President Penpa Tsering revealed the existence of backchannel communications between Tibetan and Chinese counterparts.

President Tsering emphasised the importance of dialogue, stating, "If the Sino-Tibetan conflict needs to be resolved peacefully, then there is no way other than talking with the Chinese leadership." However, he clarified that these backchannel discussions have yet to progress to formal negotiations, with current efforts focused on building contact and trust.

Former CTA President Dr. Lobsang Sangay echoed this sentiment in a 2014 interview with *Reuters*, confirming that informal channels of dialogue remained open despite the lack of formal talks. However, repeated attempts by the Tibetan leadership to resume official negotiations have been rebuffed by the Chinese government.

In November 2021, China indicated it was open to discussions with the Dalai Lama but limited the scope to his "personal future," explicitly excluding issues related to Tibet.

The Dalai Lama has long championed the Middle Way Approach, a strategy seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the PRC's constitution. In a 2008 appeal to the Chinese people, His Holiness reiterated his commitment to this approach,

referencing assurances from former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1979 that “except for the independence of Tibet, all other questions can be negotiated.”

Despite six rounds of renewed dialogue between 2002 and 2008, the Dalai Lama acknowledged the lack of tangible results on fundamental issues. However, he reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to dialogue, expressing hope for a mutually beneficial resolution that respects Tibet’s unique cultural and regional identity.

**Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel
Congratulates Taiwanese Labor Minister Hung Sun-Han**

26 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, with profound gratitude and admiration extended his heartfelt congratulations to Minister Hung Sun-Han on his appointment as the Minister of Labor of Taiwan. He extended gratitude to him for being a steadfast supporter of Tibet for the past many years as a member of the Taiwan Parliamentary Group for Tibet.

The Speaker wrote, “We are confident that, with your wisdom, integrity, and determination, you will work for the benefit and welfare of your people. We are grateful for the work you have done for the Tibetan cause and for being a true friend of Tibet over the years. Additionally, we appreciate your participation in the 8th WPCT in Washington, D.C., and your recent visit to Dharamsala, where we had the privilege of discussing the misinformation spread by the Chinese government for political gain, as well as the need for stronger ties between the Taiwanese and Tibetan parliaments.”

“I am certain that you will continue to strengthen Tibet’s voice both in Taiwan and globally, making a significant impact on the advancement of Tibet’s cause. We also send our best wishes and prosperity for your future endeavours as the Minister of Labor,” he continued.

The Speaker concluded, “Once again, I express my deepest thanks to you and the members of the Taiwan Parliamentary group for Tibet for your unwavering support and for standing with the truth of Tibet. I look forward to working closely with you to fulfil our shared interests.”

-Report filed by Tibetan parliamentary Secretariat



(Archive Image) From Left to Right: Secretary General Sonam Dorjee, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Taiwanese Labor Minister Hung Sun-Han, and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang.

The Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) Tibet Museum’s ‘Long Look Homeward’ Draws

26 December 2024, [ICT](#)

The Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) released its annual report on December 20, highlighting severe human rights violations in Tibet. The report indicates a lack of interest from Chinese officials in resuming negotiations with the Dalai Lama, with the last discussions occurring in January 2010. It details ongoing restrictions on Tibetan religious practices, particularly Tibetan Buddhism, including bans on worship during significant events and limited access to monasteries.

Focusing on ongoing human rights abuses by the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the CECC focused on the complicity of US and foreign corporations with CCP oppression. Pinpointing the actions of Thermo Fisher Scientific, whose DNA sequencers had been used by police in Tibet and Xinjiang to compile DNA databases of Tibetans and Uyghurs, the commission expressed apprehension that the technology could be misused for organ transplantation practices considering the existing accusations of forced organ harvesting in the PRC.

The CECC maintains a comprehensive database of political prisoners in China, providing valuable insights into the state of human rights and religious freedom. Of the 2,764 records of prisoners known or believed to be detained, 1,686 contained information about their religious affiliation. Notably, Tibetan Buddhism represents the largest religious group among these prisoners. 678 prisoners are affiliated with Tibetan Buddhism, making it the most represented religious group in the database. The database also reveals significant information about the ethnic background of detainees. Out of 1,693 active detentions with

available ethnic information, 790 are ethnically Tibetan. This data underscores the disproportionate targeting of Tibetans and practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism by Chinese authorities. The high number of Tibetan detainees, both in terms of religious affiliation and ethnicity, highlights the ongoing suppression of Tibetan culture, religion, and identity within China occupied Tibet.

The CECC also notes PRC officials and state, and Party controlled media continued use of the Mandarin Chinese – derived term “Xizang” instead of Tibet in English-language communications during 2024. The adoption of “Xizang” in English-language communications represents a strategic move by the PRC to influence the narrative surrounding Tibet on the global stage. By promoting this Chinese-derived term, the Chinese government aims to normalize its perspective on Tibet’s status and history in international discourse.

In the findings on Tibet (p. 241-255), the Commission highlighted violations of Tibetan language and cultural rights, restrictions on freedom of expression, continuing limitations on access to Tibetan areas, and constraints on religious freedom for Tibetans. The CECC specifically drew attention to the large-scale protests that erupted in February 2024 in Derge County against a planned hydroelectric dam on the Driчу (Jinsha) River, which threatens to flood villages and monasteries, including Wontoe Monastery, known for its well-preserved 13th-century murals. The commission noted that the planned displacement of Derge-area communities exemplifies a broader trend in Tibet, where Party and government officials impose resettlement plans without meaningful community engagement or participation in decision-making. Additionally, the report indicated that the Derge dam was not the only hydropower project endangering Tibetan communities; authorities in Dragkar (Xinghai) County began the forced relocation of monks from Atshog Monastery due to another dam construction. CECC’s report further detailed the PRC’s ongoing efforts to restrict religious practices among Tibetans, particularly practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism as part of China’s broader “sinicization” campaign. Authorities issued prohibitions on various forms of worship and limited access to religious institutions, while also maintaining a system of residential boarding schools that threaten the intergenerational transmission of Tibetan culture and language. Overall, the CECC emphasized that these actions reflect a systematic approach by PRC officials to control and suppress Tibetan identity and rights within the region.

Press Statement from Tibetan Parliament on China’s Sanctions Against Tibetan and Uyghur Advocacy Groups in Canada

25 December 2024, [CTA](#)

PRESS STATEMENT

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has recently imposed sanctions on the Canada Tibet Committee, the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, and 20 human rights advocates.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile stands in solidarity with the members of the Canada Tibet Committee and the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, applauding their courage in speaking out against the atrocities and severe human rights violations committed by China.

We strongly condemn China’s decision to sanction these organisations and individuals. We call on China to immediately cease all forms of transnational repression designed to intimidate and silence those who courageously speak out for human rights at home and abroad.

[Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile](#)

7,000 Visitors, Highlights Tibetan Freedom Struggle

25 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Tibet Museum’s ‘Long Look Homeward’ Draws 7,000 Visitors, Highlights Tibetan Freedom Struggle

The Tibet Museum’s traveling exhibition, “Long Look Homeward”, concluded its highly successful run across various venues in Bengaluru, captivating thousands of visitors and sparking meaningful conversations about Tibet’s history, culture, and its enduring connection with India. Through a series of interactive displays, educational talks, and cultural showcases, the exhibition explored key themes such as India-Tibet relations, the life and legacy of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, and the Tibetan struggle for freedom. Launched in collaboration with local academic institutions, the exhibition traversed four key venues, reaching approximately 7,000 individuals, including students, faculty members, Tibetan community members, and visitors from all walks of life. Each event

was designed to deepen understanding of Tibet's rich cultural heritage and its ongoing journey in the modern world.

The traveling exhibition began with a launch event at the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education's (DLIHE) academic centre during the institute's Tibet Week, where the exhibition attracted an eager audience of students, staff, and Tibetan scholars. A focal point of this event was a series of thought-provoking panels and documentaries on India-Tibet relations, the biography of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, and the Tibetan quest for freedom and justice. The exhibition offered an opportunity for students in the History Department and beyond to engage with Tibet's unique history in an academic setting, while also sparking conversation among Tibetan research scholars who attended in large numbers. The event's success was measured by the enthusiastic participation of 150 students, 30 staff members, and 25 Tibetan research scholars who engaged deeply with the exhibition's content.

The exhibition's next stop was Bangalore University, where it expanded its reach with a cultural collaboration between the Tibet Museum and the university's History Department. Inaugurated by dignitaries Dr. Jayakara S.M. and Chief Representative Officer Jigme Tsultrim, the event showcased a rich blend of traditional Tibetan cultural displays alongside thought-provoking talks. One highlight of this event was an interactive session led by Tibet Museum's Director Tenzin Topdhen, who delved into Tibet's numismatic heritage and how it reflects Tibetan independence. This event not only engaged students but also attracted the attention of the local Tibetan community, with 500 students, 50 staff members, and 50 community members attending the exhibition, ensuring a diverse and engaged audience.

Following the university's exhibition, DLIHE hosted a closing event, marking the end of Tibet Week. The event saw the participation of the Indo-Tibet Friendship Society (ITFS), with President of ITFS Gopi officiating the ceremony. As one of the major diplomatic organisations representing the Tibetan cause in India, the ITFS's involvement lent the exhibition added significance, offering visitors a chance to engage with the political aspects of the Tibetan struggle. Around 150 visitors, including ITFS members, Men-Tsee-Khang representatives, and members of the Tibetan diaspora, attended the event, further solidifying the exhibition's role as an important cultural and political dialogue platform.

Another significant exhibition was held at the Bangalore Tibetan Youth Hostel, coinciding with the global observance of Nobel Peace Prize Day. The exhibition here offered an intimate and culturally immersive experience, focusing on Tibetan traditions and values. It attracted around 450 visitors, including

youth hostel students, members of the ITFS, and the Tibetan diaspora. The event provided a space for Tibetan youth to reflect on their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and unity among younger generations.

The final leg of the exhibition was hosted at Dayananda Sagar University (DSU), where the interactive displays and animations captivated an even larger audience. The exhibition's two-day run at DSU reached over 5,000 students and faculty members, who explored themes of Tibet's political history, the process of identifying the reincarnation of the Dalai Lamas, and the long-standing relationship between India and Tibet. Through engaging multimedia, students were able to learn about the spiritual and political complexities of Tibetan identity, further expanding their knowledge of this rich and complex culture.

As the exhibition wrapped up its run in Bengaluru, it had successfully engaged a wide and varied audience across academic institutions, cultural hubs, and the Tibetan community, leaving a lasting impact on all who participated. The exhibition not only provided a deeper understanding of Tibet's history and the life of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama but also ignited critical discussions about Tibet's current political and cultural challenges. The event served as a powerful reminder of the enduring relevance of Tibet's heritage and its ongoing significance in contemporary global dialogues.

Through "*Long Look Homeward*", the Tibet Museum has not only brought Tibet's past to life but has also ensured that its future remains an active part of the global conversation on culture, identity, and politics.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Educates Students at Leadership Workshop on the Evolution of Tibetan Democracy

25 December 2024, [CTA](#)

On December 24, 2024, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel addressed the leadership workshop for school prefects and captains, organised by the Department of Education of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The workshop, which is scheduled to run from 23 December to 28 December, is being held at the Administrative Training Centre in Dharamshala.

In his speech, the Speaker discussed the evolution of Tibetan democracy, highlighting it as an aspiration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who entrusted the Tibetan people with the vision of a democratic system. Speaker Tenphel recounted the observations made by His Holiness during his visits to India in 1956 and China in 1954. During these visits, His Holiness noted the functioning of the Indian Parliament and the Chinese

Communist Party's congress. The democratic framework of India, in particular, left a profound impact on His Holiness, shaping his vision for a democratic society that would be grounded in justice and fairness.



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Educates Students at Leadership Workshop on the Evolution of Tibetan Democracy

The Speaker went on to trace the development of Tibetan democracy, starting with the establishment of the Reform Committee and other key bodies by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tibet – important steps toward democratization. However, the advancement of Tibetan democracy was tragically interrupted by the unlawful occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China.

Further elaborating on the history, the Speaker recalled the solemn oath taken by representatives from the three traditional provinces of Tibet and the four religious schools of Buddhism at the sacred site of Bodh Gaya in 1960. This oath, which pledged unwavering loyalty to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, marked the formal beginning of Tibet's democratic journey in exile.

His Holiness, in his wisdom, instructed the Tibetans to elect three representatives from each of the traditional provinces and one from each of the four Buddhist schools. On 2 September 1960, these representatives took their oaths, officially becoming the first members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, formerly known as the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies. Since that historic day, 2 September has been celebrated as Tibetan Democracy Day, a symbol of the ongoing commitment to democratic principles within the Tibetan community.

Explaining the structure of Tibetan democracy, including the unicameral system of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel emphasised the added responsibilities of Tibetans as a diasporic community. He also discussed the roles and functions of the three pillars and autonomous bodies of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel elaborated on the evolution of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, highlighting changes in its composition, duration, functioning, programs,

and bi-annual sessions. He also covered key milestones, such as the adoption of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile in 1991. The current composition of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile includes 45 members: 10 representatives from each of Tibet's three traditional provinces – U-Tsang, Dhotoe, and Dhomey; two from each of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the pre-Buddhist Bon religion; two representing Tibetan communities in North America and Europe; and one from Australasia and Asia (excluding India, Nepal, and Bhutan).

Reaching a significant milestone in the democratization process, the first-ever Kalon Tripa was directly elected by the Tibetan people in 2001. This was followed by a landmark moment in Tibet's history in 2011, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama formally transferred his political authority to the elected leaders, ensuring a future of full democratization for the Tibetan people.

Finally followed by a Q&A session, the Speaker concluded his address by advising the students who are the future of the Tibetan struggle to be aware of their responsibilities as Tibetans.

Co-convenor MP Tapir Gao of All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet Speaks on His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Indian Parliament

24 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Co-convenor MP Tapir Gao of All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet speaking in the Indian Parliament

On 16 December 2024, during the Zero Hour in the Indian Parliament, Shri Tapir Gao, Member of Lok Sabha from Arunachal Pradesh and Co-Convenor of the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT), delivered a significant address on His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In his address, Shri Gao urged the Indian government to officially recognise the institution of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to honour His Holiness with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in recognition of his global contribution to peace, non-violence, and religious harmony.

Shri Gao also highlighted the critical importance of India preparing for the eventual reincarnation and succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, particularly

in light of China's efforts to unilaterally appoint its own 15th Dalai Lama.

These remarks were made in the context of rising concerns over China's interference in Tibetan religious matters and the potential consequences for both the Tibetan community and India. This address marks another important moment in the ongoing efforts of Indian parliamentarians to advocate for Tibet and strengthen India's commitment to the Tibetan cause. Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, on behalf of all Tibetan people, extended his deepest gratitude to Shri Tapir Gao, for taking Zero Hour in the Indian Parliament to deliver a speech about Tibet at the All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet's meeting on 17 December 2024 in Delhi.

Sharing a clip of his speech on his social media handle, Shri Tapir Gao wrote, "During Zero Hour today in Parliament, I urged the Government to recognize The Dalai Lama Institution, as the Chinese government's decision in 1959 to appoint the XVth Dalai Lama poses a grave threat not only to Buddhism but also to the Tibetan people and the future of Tibet. India and the world must act decisively to recognise the rightful successor, safeguarding both religious and cultural integrity, and ensuring global support for the cause. I also called for conferring the highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna, upon His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, in recognition of his unwavering dedication to peace, compassion, humanity, and universal brotherhood. This long-pending demand reflects the collective sentiment of the people, as His Holiness remains a true Messiah of Peace and a beacon of hope for the world."

China sanctions Tibetan and Uyghur advocacy groups in Canada

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

China has imposed sanctions on two Canadian organisations and 20 individuals connected to Tibet and East Turkestan (CH: Xinjiang) advocacy efforts. The Chinese foreign ministry announced the measures on Sunday, stating they took effect on Saturday.

The sanctions target the Canada Tibet Committee (CTC) and the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project (URAP). The ministry stated it is freezing "movable property, immovable property, and other types of property within the territory of China" belonging to the organisations



Sherap Therchin, the Executive Director of the Canada Tibet Committee (Photo/Screengrab)

and individuals. Those sanctioned are also barred from entering China, including Hong Kong and Macao. Among those named are Sherap Therchin, executive director of the Canada Tibet Committee, and Samphe Lhalungpa, chair of the organization. Former Canadian diplomat Charles Burton and Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, both policy advisers at the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, are also on the list.

Speaking to *The Globe and Mail*, Therchin said, "This just makes it more formal. Members knew from the day they joined the organisation that they would no longer be permitted to visit or own assets there." He added, "Tibetans who speak out over issues such as mass relocation, environmental degradation, or the phasing out of the Tibetan language in primary education are met with repression. Having banned content on one's phone or merely contacting Tibetans in exile can result in detention."

The Canada Tibet Committee (CTC), in response to sanctions imposed by China, stated, "For 38 years, the CTC has advocated for Tibet within democratic, non-violent, and human rights frameworks aligned with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way. These sanctions formalise the PRC's long-standing practice of denying diaspora Tibetans access to their homeland, but public participation in a democratic society is not a crime in Canada. We call on the Canadian government to protect those sanctioned and stand with our Uyghur and Canadian allies. This move strengthens our resolve to continue advocating for justice and an end to repression in Tibet."

The World Uyghur Congress issued a statement in response to the sanctions, saying, "These sanctions targeting two organisations actively advocating for Uyghur and Tibetan rights in Canada are clearly retaliatory. They aim to intimidate human rights defenders from these persecuted communities into silence." The statement added, "The WUC strongly condemns all acts of transnational repression by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which seeks to silence human rights advocates. The WUC stands in full solidarity with the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project and the Canada Tibet Committee."

China's measures come after Canada imposed sanctions earlier this month on eight former and current Chinese officials over human rights violations in East Turkistan (Xinjiang) and Tibet. Among those targeted by Canada were Chen Quanguo, former Communist Party chief of Xinjiang, and Wu Yingjie, former party head of Tibet.

China has denied allegations of human rights abuses in Tibet and East Turkestan (CH:Xinjiang), stating its policies aim to maintain stability and promote economic development. It has also called on Western nations to refrain from interfering in its domestic affairs.

Relations between Canada and China have been strained since 2018, when Canada detained Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou at the request of the United States, and China detained two Canadian citizens on espionage charges. All three were later released, but tensions remain unresolved.

Dalai Lama Addresses Health Concerns Amid Succession Plans

23 December 2024, [StratNews Global](#)

The Dalai Lama's prediction of living for another two decades reassures followers, but greater clarity on his succession, including reincarnation details, may come when he turns 90 on July 6, 2025.

Department of Education Commences Leadership Workshop for School Prefects and Captains

23 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra addressing the gathering. Photo / Tenzin Phende / CTA

As Tibetan schools in India conclude their academic year for the winter break, the Department of Education (CTA) launched its leadership workshop for school prefects and captains earlier this morning at the CTA's Administrative Training Centre in Dharamshala with a brief inaugural ceremony. Education Kalon (Minister) Tharlam Dolma Changra, as the chief guest, graced the opening ceremony, offering

profound insights into the experiences of educating Tibetan students and administering Tibetan schools.

A total of 43 student representatives from 16 different Tibetan schools, including two Nepal-based Tibetan schools, participated in the workshop. In addition, 16 teachers from these schools accompanied the students as counsellors and guardians throughout this six-day workshop.

The event began with introductory remarks by Additional Secretary Tenzin Dorjee from the Education Department's Academic Section. He provided an overview of the leadership workshop, emphasising that it aims to enhance the leadership skills of the participants while imparting other essential abilities in line with the objectives of the Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile. He highlighted that the workshop also seeks to cultivate human qualities such as compassion and universal responsibility in the student leaders, while underscoring the importance of preserving Tibetan cultural and linguistic heritage, which is systematically undermined within state-run schools in Tibet.

In her keynote address, Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra recalled the immense sacrifices and contributions made by the elder generations, under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in establishing a robust Tibetan exile community. "Always be grateful for the abundant opportunities and resources provided by our Tibetan schools, which are often unavailable even in prestigious local and private schools. You must uphold the responsibilities as Tibetans that come with these opportunities," she said. The Kalon further encouraged participants to share what they learn in this workshop with their fellow students.

As a former school principal, Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra specifically addressed the responsibilities of school prefects and captains. She emphasised that they must act as a bridge between teachers and students, helping to address issues such as inadequacies and disparity in treatment among students. She also disapproved of bullying in the school environment and advised everyone to adhere to school disciplines and maintain self-discipline. Additionally, the Kalon stressed the importance of good health for academic success.

In addition to these points, the Education Kalon expressed concern over the increasing number of children with special needs in Tibetan schools and implored school administrations and students to extend special services to support them.

The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks from Under Secretary Dorjee Wangdue from the department's academic section.

Over the course of this leadership workshop, consultants and facilitators will explore various topics, including the importance of Tibetan language and culture, the evolution of Tibetan democracy in exile,

SEE Learning, leadership and learning, conflict resolution, communication skills for leaders, the Education Department's scholarship programme, cyber safety and security, gender equality in schools, and career mapping. The programme will also include educational visits to the Dalai Lama Library and Archives and various CTA departments.

US Commission report highlights brutal right abuses in Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, etc

23 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The bipartisan, bicameral US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) has issued its 2024 Annual Report on Dec 20, providing "a detailed account of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) systematic abuses of human rights—most brutally implemented in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Tibet, and Hong Kong", documenting "the widespread use of arbitrary detention and torture targeting ethnic minorities, human rights lawyers, and advocates for free speech, religious freedom, and an independent civil society."

Representative Christopher Smith (R-NJ) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chair and Co-chair of the commission, have said the report reflects the view of CECC Commissioners that the PRC's complicity in atrocity crimes and forced labor, and its efforts to use technology to coerce and control the Chinese people and undermine democratic freedoms globally, pose a distinct challenge to the United States' interest in maintaining universally recognized human rights norms and supply chains free of forced or prison labor. In the section on Tibet, the report said the PRC continued to restrict, and seek to control, the religious practices of Tibetans, the majority of whom practice Tibetan Buddhism.

It said that as part of the broader policy of "sinicizing" religion, PRC authorities in Tibetan areas issued prohibitions on forms of religious worship, including during important religious events or around the times of politically sensitive anniversaries, limited access to religious institutions and places of worship, including Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and temples, and otherwise unduly restricted Tibetans' freedom of religion and belief.

It also noted that the PRC continued to assert control over the process of selection and recognition of Tibetan Buddhist reincarnated teachers, including the Dalai Lama.

The commission said it did not observe any interest from PRC officials in resuming formal negotiations with the Dalai Lama's representatives, the last round of which, the ninth, was held in Jan 2010.

Regarding its key findings, the report said the PRC authorities maintained a system of residential

boarding schools in Tibetan areas that observers fear could constitute a serious threat to Tibetan society and the intergenerational transmission of culture and language.

It said large-scale protests broke out in Feb 2024 in Derge (Dege) county, Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, due to official plans for construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Drichu (Jinsha) River that will submerge at least two villages and six monasteries, one of which, Wontoe Monastery, contains well-preserved 13th-century murals. Security personnel detained approximately 1,000 Tibetans in connection with the protests; many were later released, but local authorities escalated surveillance and monitoring of local communities in the following months.

It also said that in contravention of international human rights standards, officials punished residents of Tibetan areas for exercising protected rights, including the expression of religious belief, expressing criticism of PRC policies, and sharing information online. Notable cases this past year were reported to include those of writer Pema, a monk and teacher at Kirti Monastery, who in a lone protest held a portrait of the Dalai Lama and called for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet and religious freedom for Tibetans; Semkyi Drolma, detained for her participation in discussion groups about Buddhism on the social media platform WeChat, and later sentenced to one year and six months in prison for "leaking state secrets"; and Tenzin Sangpo, a senior monk at Derge's Wontoe Monastery detained in Feb 2024 as part of the anti-dam protests.

China's official media accused the commission of making groundless accusations against Beijing's internal affairs for political purposes.

"The rights and freedoms of the Chinese people, including all those living in Xinjiang, Xizang and Hong Kong, are fully protected," said a commentary by one Li Yaing on China's official *chinadaily.com.cn* Dec 23, using the Sinicized name for Tibet.

It claimed that the three regions had enjoyed good development momentum since the strict enforcement of the rule of law brought an end to the chaos orchestrated by the US, referring to protests for democracy, human rights, and independence which had majorly hit them at various times over the past 15 years or so.

Tibetan Leaders Advocate For Challenges Faced Under Chinese Rule in Delhi

22 December 2024, [Rtv](#)

The members of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile have been actively advocating for Tibet in New Delhi,

highlighting the severe challenges faced by the Tibetan people under the Chinese Communist regime.



Photo: Central Tibetan Administration

The Tibetan parliamentarians, who met Indian parliamentarians from December 16 to 18, focused their efforts on raising awareness about the ongoing struggles in Tibet and sought support for their cause. Tibetans continue to face harsh repression under Chinese rule, including the suppression of their culture, language, and religion.

The Chinese Communist Party has implemented policies aimed at eradicating Tibetan identity, including restrictions on religious practices and the forced assimilation of Tibetan culture.

The situation is exacerbated by the detainment of Tibetan political prisoners, with notable cases such as the continued imprisonment of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, who disappeared into Chinese custody at the age of six.

In addition to cultural and religious repression, Tibetans have been subjected to severe human rights violations, with reports of torture, forced labour, and arbitrary detentions. The Chinese government's efforts to silence dissent have led to widespread fear among Tibetans, both inside Tibet and in exile. There are also growing concerns about the environmental impact of China's exploitation of Tibet's resources, which is contributing to global climate change, particularly through the diversion of water from Tibet's rivers and the destruction of its ecosystems.

The Tibetan parliamentarians have urged Indian leaders and the international community to support Tibet's struggle for autonomy and justice. They have called for China to engage in meaningful dialogue with Tibetan representatives, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, under the Middle Way Policy, and to release all Tibetan political prisoners. They also seek international recognition of Tibet as an occupied nation with a distinct and sovereign history. (Source: ANI)

Parliamentarians Migyur Dorjee and Pema Tso Commence Official Periodical Visitation

22 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Parliamentarians Migyur Dorjee and Pema Tso Commence Official Periodical Visitation

As per the program of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, a parliamentary delegation consisting of parliamentarians Migyur Dorjee and Pema Tso began their periodical visitation program to Norgyeling Tibetan settlement of Bhandara in Maharashtra, Phendeling Tibetan settlement of Mainpat in Chhattisgarh, and Tibetan sweater sellers in the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. They are scheduled to visit aforementioned settlements and places from 19 December 2024 to 4 January 2025.

On 19 December, two parliament members arrived at Nagpur airport from Delhi. Yeshe, the accountant from Bhandara Settlement Office, and driver Rinchen were there to welcome them at the airport.

Organized by Samten Yeshe, an executive member and cyclist for the Bharat Tibet Sahyog Movement (BTSM), a gathering was held at 4:40 PM that day at the Women's College in Nagpur. The meeting was attended by over 50 people, including BTSM National Advisor Ashok Mendhe, BTSM Maharashtra State President Prof. Vijay Kewalramani, Samta Sainik Dal's National Director Sunil Sariputta, along with other senior leaders, members, and the college principal and teachers.

During this event, the two parliament members expressed gratitude to the Indian government and people for their continued support and solidarity with Tibetans. They explained how Tibetans, under His Holiness the Dalai Lama's leadership, have preserved and promoted Buddhism, India's ancient wisdom tradition, for many centuries. However, since China's occupation of Tibet in 1959, they described the critical situation where the Chinese Communist government has been implementing policies to eliminate Tibetan religion, culture, language, and identity.

Many Indian Tibet supporters participated in the meeting and emphasised the brotherly relationship between India and Tibet, stating that as an elder brother, India must support its younger brother Tibet during these difficult times under Chinese oppression. They declared they would continue supporting the Tibetan cause until Tibet gains freedom and His Holiness and Tibetans can return to their homeland. On 20th December, at the Nagpur Tibetan sweater market, they addressed the Tibetan sweater sellers about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's deeds, the work of the Central Tibetan Administration, including the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, and explained how the Middle Way Approach is the best policy combining wisdom and method to resolve the Sino-Tibetan conflict. They also emphasised the importance of preserving the Tibetan language, culture, and moral values for Tibetans living in free countries, especially given China's severe restrictions on Tibetan language use in Tibet. After a Q&A session, they departed for Chandrapur, arriving there around 3:30 PM.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Dalai Lama set for extended stay at Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement

22 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, is to visit the Tibetan settlement at Bylakuppe in Mysuru district of Karnataka state for an extended stay. He will leave Dharamshala on Jan 2 and arrive at the settlement on Jan 4.

He will arrive at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and spend significant time there, reported *starofmysore.com* Dec 21, citing the monastery's secretary Kelkhang Rinpoche.

Bylakuppe has the second-largest Tibetan Settlement in India, after Dharamshala. The Dalai Lama last visited it in Dec 2017, where he stayed for five days, the report noted.

No official engagements have been finalised beyond Jan 4. His Holiness will likely remain at Bylakuppe until the Tibetan Losar (New Year) festival in the last week of Feb 2025, the report added.

SFT France to continue protest as Musée Guimet refuses to rename exhibit to "Tibet"

21 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Activist group Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) in France announced plans on Thursday to intensify protests against Musée Guimet after the museum's director, Yannick Lintz, refused to rename its exhibit "Himalayan World" to "Tibet." The exhibit, which prominently features Tibetan cultural artefacts, has drawn criticism

from activists accusing the museum of deliberately erasing Tibet's identity and heritage.

Representatives of SFT France, including Rigzin Genkhang, the Dalai Lama's representative in Brussels, and Pema Rinchen, President of the Tibetan Community of France, met with Lintz to press for the recognition of Tibet's identity. They demanded the accurate representation of Tibetan heritage in the museum's exhibit labels and catalogs, highlighting the ongoing suppression of Tibetan culture under Chinese occupation. However, Lintz refused to make changes, asserting that her decisions were not influenced by any "foreign power."



Facade of Guimet Museum (Photo/AFP)

Undeterred by the museum's stance, SFT France pledged to continue its campaign until the exhibit properly acknowledges Tibet. "The fight for the defence of Tibetan culture, and ultimately the freedom of the Tibetan people, involves preserving the memory of Tibet. It is clear that the Chinese dictatorship, as well as its supporters in France, have no place in this vital struggle. We wish to express our deep gratitude to all those who support us and actively participate in our actions. The fight continues, together!" the group wrote on their social media handle.

Yangchen, President of SFT France, emphasised the impact of their collective mobilisation. "

"I believe that this meeting happened because of the pressure and our collective mobilisation, and it is the result of our efforts. In the face of statements that we find to be demagogic, we will continue our struggle until our demands are met. We will step up our mobilisation and consider new actions, especially in light of the Guimet Museum's ties to the Beijing regime, as revealed by Radio France's investigation, among others," she stated.

The group has been staging weekly sit-ins, conducting social media campaigns, and distributing educational materials on Tibetan history and identity. Thursday marked their 12th protest outside Musée Guimet, which comes on the heels of their [success](#) in Paris, where [public pressure](#) led Musée du quai Branly to

change its terminology from “Xizang” to “Tibet” for Tibetan artifacts.

Musée Guimet’s misrepresentation of Tibetan identity is not new. Tibetan writer Tsering Yangzom Lama, in an interview with *Tibet Express*, shared her experience of being misrepresented as “Chinese” after being shortlisted for the Guimet Prize. She promptly raised the issue with her publisher, insisting on a correction. Yangzom also noted that fellow Tibetan writer Tsering Dhondup faced a similar issue.

Dalai Lama’s office, Tibetan NGOs, CTA among top targets of cyber-attacks by China: Report

21 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhondup

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has launched a number of coordinated cyber espionage campaigns against the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan NGOs, media outlets, and the Central Tibetan Administration over the past 20 years, according to a [report](#) published on December 10 by the Tibetan Computer Emergency Readiness Team (TibCERT).

The report outlines that these cyberattacks have primarily targeted Tibetan NGOs, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), media organisations, and the Private Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (OHHDL). The methods used in these attacks include deceptive emails that appear to come from Tibetan organisations or human rights groups, as well as Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks and watering hole tactics. These efforts aim to disrupt operations, steal sensitive data, and interfere with the flow of information within the Tibetan community.

Attribution of these attacks remains challenging. While technical evidence, including malware and attack patterns, suggests a shared origin for many of the campaigns, political attribution is more complex. Past cyberattacks have been linked to state-sponsored groups, such as the Chinese People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) Unit 61398, which was named in the 2013 Mandiant APT1 report. These attacks are widely believed to align with the political goals of the Chinese government, focused on surveillance, censorship, and suppression of the Tibetan diaspora.

TibCERT’s report documents 63 public cases of cyberattacks, targeting organisations such as the Tibetan Women’s Association and Students for a Free Tibet as frequent targets. Tibetan activists, the CTA, and media groups also face consistent cyber threats. The attacks began in 1999, when the Tibetan community first established its online presence. Key events include the 2009 GhostNet operation, which affected government offices in 103 countries, including the Private Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and a series of attacks between 2018 and 2019 that exploited vulnerabilities in mobile devices,

compromising both iOS and Android devices of key Tibetan figures.

The report identifies email attachments as the main method or pathway that attackers use to infiltrate a system or network which is responsible for 60% of incidents. Attackers have also used phishing campaigns and mobile malware to infiltrate systems and steal data.

In response to these threats, TibCERT has recommended several measures to strengthen digital security within the Tibetan community. These include implementing comprehensive digital security policies, raising awareness through training, and encouraging behavioural changes to enhance cyber resilience. Despite these recommendations, the report concludes that the threat of cyber espionage remains a significant concern, with the CCP continuing to intensify its cyber operations against the Tibetan community.

Japan’s parliamentary support group for Tibet elects new leadership

20 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



New Committee Members of Japan Parliamentary Group for Tibet with outgoing Committee Members, along with Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, the Representative of the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Japan (extreme right top row)(Photo/tibet.net)

The Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet, which is the largest support parliamentary support group for Tibet, unanimously elected new leadership on Thursday. Member of Parliament Yamatani Eriko has been appointed as the new Chairperson, with Yamada Hiroshi taking on the role of General Secretary.

This leadership transition comes after the group experienced significant membership losses during the October elections. Nearly 30% of its members, including former Chairperson Shimomura Hakuban and former General Secretary Ishikawa Akimasa, lost their parliamentary seats after losing their seats in the election. Both outgoing leaders were members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, the Representative of the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Japan, told *Phayul* that the elections to form a new

committee were essential given the group's significant losses. "The new leadership, along with recently joined members of parliament, has pledged to rebuild the group's strength and intensify efforts for the Tibetan cause," he said.

Dr. Arya further told Phayul that the outgoing Chairperson Shimomura expressed confidence in his successor, Yamatani Eriko. "The newly appointed Chairperson has been a staunch supporter of Tibet. She visited Dharamshala in 2011 to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama and has actively participated in the group's meetings over the years," Dr. Arya said. He also noted Secretary General Yamada Hiroshi's commitment to human rights and democracy.

He highlighted the pivotal role the Japan Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet plays in raising awareness about the Tibetan issue. "Our office shares a strong relationship with the group, as it works closely with Japanese parliamentarians and the government to inform the public about Tibet's causes and struggles," he added.

Expressing his gratitude, Dr. Arya thanked the outgoing leadership for their contributions and welcomed the newly elected Chairperson and General Secretary with traditional Tibetan white scarves. "I appraised the committee members of several pending issues and future projects while expressing my appreciation for their continued commitment to the Tibetan cause," he said.

Tibetan Youth Congress embarks on 15,000 km 'All India Motor Bike Rally' against China's "cultural genocide" in Tibet

20 December 2024, [ANI](#)

The Tibetan Youth Congress are carrying out a bike rally from the Bum-la Pass at the Indo-Tibet border in Arunachal Pradesh against the "cultural genocide" being carried out by China in Tibet. This rally started on November 22, and will span 15,000 kilometres across more than 20 states in India.



Participants at All India Motor Bike Rally by Tibetan Youth Congress (Photo/ANI)

Today, on the 30th day of this rally, Gonpo Dhondup, President Tibetan Youth

Congress, Dharamshala highlighted the main objectives of this rally which is to "expose the atrocities committed by the Chinese Communist Regime in Tibet and to oppose its illegitimate rule, which has persisted for over six decades." "We aim to draw urgent international attention to the ongoing cultural genocide in Tibet, where China is implementing hard-line policies designed to systematically eradicate Tibetan culture and identity. These policies include the forced enrolment of Tibetan children into colonial-style boarding schools, restricting access to educational activities related to Tibetan culture, and imprisoning teachers and individuals who strive to preserve the Tibetan language," he added.

Further, the Dhondup urged the the Indian government along with the international community to raise their voices in demanding that China put an end to this cultural genocide in Tibet. "The forced closure of Tibetan schools and monastic institutions poses a significant threat to the preservation of Tibetan culture, language, and spiritual heritage. This blatant violation of rights and freedoms serves as a stark reminder of the Chinese government's relentless efforts to suppress Tibetan identity. Therefore, we call upon the Indian government, along with the international community and non-governmental organizations, to raise their voices in demanding that China put an end to this cultural genocide in Tibet," he said. "For thousands of years, Tibet existed as an independent country, maintaining harmonious relationships with its neighbours through cultural and civilizational exchanges. However, following the unfortunate occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China in 1959, the historically peaceful Indo-Tibet border was shattered. Driven by its expansionist policies, the Chinese Communist Regime has instigated infiltration into Indian territory, posing a direct threat to India's border security and sovereignty. We call on the Indian government to adopt a resolution that supports the historical independent status of Tibet and recognizes the historical Indo-Tibet border," he added. Notably, through this bike rally, we will be visiting Tibetan winter markets across India to promote awareness about the ongoing cultural genocide perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Regime in Tibet, as well as to emphasize the importance of unity against China.

Tibetan Youth Congress President also called upon the international community to exert pressure on China to cease its unlawful and ongoing actions aimed at erasing Tibetan culture and to respect the rights of the Tibetan people to preserve the cultural heritage.

He also thanked the Indian government for their solidarity and advocated for the Indian government to adopt a resolution supporting the historical independent status of Tibet to ensure long-term security for India.

Massive new Tibetan dictionary will help protect against Chinese encroachment

20 December 2024, [The Christian Century](#), Chakmo Tso



US Rep. Jim McGovern (right) looks on as Geshe Lobsang Monlam (second from right), and Sikyong Penpa Tsering (left) attend a ceremony for the presentation of the Tibetan Grand Monlam Dictionary to the Library of Congress on December 12. (Palden Gyal/Radio Free Asia)

A new 223-volume Tibetan dictionary containing definitions of over 300,000 words presented to the Library of Congress last week will play a key role in preserving the Tibetan language amid China's assimilation policies in the region, US lawmakers and advocates said.

The Monlam Grand Tibetan Dictionary project, which began in 2012 under the advice and guidance of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's spiritual leader, took 150 people working over nine years to complete. It is one of the largest dictionaries in the world.

The project was overseen by the Monlam Tibetan IT Research Centre in Dharamsala, India. The education software development firm founded in 2012 is funded by the Dalai Lama Trust, the Tibet Fund and the United States Agency for International Development.

The dictionary is written entirely in the Tibetan script. All 223 volumes in hardback format were presented to the Library of Congress in Washington DC, on December 12 as a "gift to the US government and the American people."

A free digital version of the dictionary is available on various iOS and Android apps.

US Congressman Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat who was at the ceremony, called it "an incredible resource that will help preserve the Tibetan language for future generations" while highlighting China's attempts to phase out Tibetan, such as forcing Tibetan children to attend Mandarin-only boarding schools.

Geshe Lobsang Monlam, founder and chief executive officer of Monlam Tibetan IT Research Centre, said the project was a "true community effort."

It "involved the participation of many editors, scholars and heads of different Tibetan Buddhist religious traditions, which is why I take great pride in saying that this dictionary is truly representative of Tibetan culture," Monlam said at the event.

"It will benefit not just the Tibetan people in our preservation of our language but also others, including in the US and China, in imparting our ancient knowledge and culture," he said.

The dictionary was given to the Library of Congress because "Tibetans have shared a long friendship and shared values with the American people," he said. "We have also enjoyed the support of the US government in the preservation of our culture, language, and religious traditions."

"This dictionary serves as proof of the fruits of that relationship and support," he said.

Other speakers and guests at the event included Tibetan government-in-exile leader Sikyong Penpa Tsering, International Campaign for Tibet President Tencho Gyatso, and representative Namgyal Choedup of the Office of Tibet in North America.

The dictionary project began as an effort to bridge the gap between the modern and ancient by developing the vocabulary and terminologies necessary in the Tibetan language to keep pace with the changing world and technological advancements, Monlam said. The dictionary preserves the unique lexicographical system in Tibetan while incorporating the standard principles and the practices of modern dictionaries from other countries, said Monlam, a Buddhist monk, scholar, and IT innovator.

The Monlam Tibetan IT Research Centre has been on the cutting edge of preserving the language. In 2023, it created software that uses AI to translate written and spoken Tibetan into English, Chinese, and other languages faster and more accurately than any existing translation software. Work on the dictionary is expected to continue for the next decade as the team continues to update it.

The Library of Congress's Tibetan Collection, established in 1901, is one of the largest in the West, including the entire corpus of Tibetan literature from the 8th century to the present. These include Buddhist and Bon-po philosophical texts and their commentaries, historical biographies, musical notations, the collected works of over 200 major Tibetan authors, bibliographies, and texts on linguistics, modern science, the social sciences, and modern literature.

The library's Tibetan Collection currently holds 17,000 treatises, 3,600 rare volumes, 57 different periodicals and over 15,000 photographic prints. —RFA Tibetan

US Congress extends 'Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act' for five more years

19 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

The United States Congress has extended the 'Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act' (RATA) for an additional five years, ensuring its commitment to human rights and transparency in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other occupied Tibetan areas by China. The renewal, incorporated into the National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA), will become law upon President Joe Biden's signature.

Originally signed into law in 2018, RATA mandates that the U.S. State Department to annually evaluate access to Tibet and imposes visa restrictions on Chinese officials responsible for denying Americans entry to the region. This landmark legislation marked a crucial step in challenging China's draconian policies in Tibet, where foreign visitors and media face stringent restrictions.

The key provisions of the renewed act include strengthening measures for rebuffing China's restrictions on American government officials, journalists, independent observers, Tibetan Americans, and tourists seeking entry to Tibet. The second provision mandates annual Department of Defense reports to include assessments of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) influence on the Tibetan Plateau, focusing on military and security developments. The final provision requires an analysis of the implications of the closure of the U.S. consulate in Chengdu, which previously monitored developments in Tibet whose responsibility has since shifted to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, further from Tibet.

Several Members of Congress, including Senators Marco Rubio, Jim Risch, and Jeff Merkley, along with Representatives Michael McCaul and Jim McGovern, played pivotal roles in championing these provisions. Tenchoe Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), praised Congress for its steadfast support. "Congress took a strong stand by including these provisions in the 2024 NDAA legislation in support of Tibet and self-determination across Asia," she stated.

"RATA is vital to continuing to bring light to the truth of how Tibet is treated by the Chinese government and ensuring that Chinese officials who try to cut Tibet off from the world are not allowed access to the United States. We hope that the President will swiftly sign the bill," she added.

All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet Adopts 12-Point Resolution on Tibet

19 December 2024, [CTA](#)



All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet Adopts 12 Point Resolution on Tibet.

The All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT) and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE) convened a meeting on 17 December 2024 to discuss key issues concerning Tibet.

Over 25 Members of Parliament from various political parties and both Houses of Parliament were present at the meeting including MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, Convener of the APIPFT, MP Tapir Gao, Co-convener of the APIPFT, MP Sujeet Kumar, MP Indra Hang Subba (SKM), MP Krishna Prasad Tenneti (TDP), MP Alfred Kanngam Arthur (INC), MP Dr Kadiyam Kavya (INC), MP Saleng A Sangma (INC), MP Mahesh Kashyap (BJP), MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi (BJP), MP Adv. Gowaal Padavi (INC), MP Dr A. Bimol Akoijam (INC), MP Sudhakar Singh (Rashtriya Janta Dal); MP June Maliah (All India Trinamool Congress), MP Harish Chandra Meena (INC), MP Amarsing Tisso (BJP), MP Kriti Devi D. Burman (BJP), MP Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo (BJP), MP Manoj Tigga (BJP); MP Kamknya Prasad Tasa (BJP), MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam (INC), MP Praniti Shinde (INC), MP Prabha Mallikarjun (INC), MP Bhoj Raj Nag (BJP), MP Rudra Narayan Pany (BJP), and others.

The event began with a welcome address by Shri Tapir Gao, Member of Parliament and Co-convener of the APIPFT. This was followed by a briefing on the latest developments in Tibet by Dolma Tsering Tekhang, Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Additional addresses were delivered by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Shri Sujeet Kumar, Rajya Sabha member and former Convener of APIPFT, and Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, Lok Sabha member and Convener of the APIPFT.

Several other Members of Parliament also spoke during the event, highlighting various aspects of the Tibet issue. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a resolution on Tibet by the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet.

Shri Tapir Gao, the Co-convener of the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet, in his address welcomed reiterated his statement in the Indian Parliament during the Zero Hour urging the Indian

government to recognise the institution of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to confer him the Bharat Ratna. He also emphasised the importance of India preparing for the reincarnation and succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, especially in light of China's attempts to appoint its own 15th Dalai Lama, as stated today in the Indian Parliament.

Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang briefed on the latest developments in Tibet, highlighting the Chinese government's coercion of Tibetan children into colonial boarding schools in Tibet, aimed at depriving them of their birthright to learn their language, culture, and religion. She also addressed the self-immolation protests by Tibetans in response to China's human rights abuses, as well as the strategic policies implemented in China's ongoing Sinicization efforts in Tibet, among other issues.

Shri Sujeet Kumar, Rajya Sabha member and former Convener of the APIPT, in his address, recalled his past association with the BJD, which was founded by Shri Biju Patnaik. He highlighted that Shri Patnaik, a staunch supporter of Tibet, was one of India's foremost Chief Ministers, known for providing land for Tibetan settlement in the state of Odisha. Shri Sujeet Kumar expressed pride in his long-standing connection with Tibet and emphasised that India has never shared a border with China, but with Tibet, a fact supported by the historical name of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). He concluded assuring his steadfast support to the cause of Tibet.

In a heartfelt speech at the All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT), Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel highlighted the Forum's crucial role in uniting Indian political leaders in support of Tibet and its cause. He expressed deep gratitude for India's ongoing solidarity with Tibet, especially recognising the efforts of leaders like Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab and Shri Tapir Gao, who advocated for Tibet in the Indian Parliament. The speaker underscored Tibet's vital geopolitical and cultural ties with India, emphasising Tibet's historical role as a buffer state and its environmental significance.

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, the Convener of the APIPFT, emphasised the strong friendship between India and Tibet, underscoring Tibet's rich culture, religion, and language, which are under threat of destruction due to Chinese occupation. The Convener also reiterated the historical fact that India shares a border with Tibet, not China, asserting that the Line of Actual Control rightfully represents the Indo-Tibet Border.

During the meeting, several key agendas were discussed. One of the main topics was how to enhance outreach to various political parties on Tibet-related issues, including efforts to encourage members of the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT) to raise Tibet's concerns in the Indian Parliament. Another important item was the planning

of programs for the 90th birthday year (Compassion Year) of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, with the intention of organising events in collaboration with the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE) to promote the values of compassion.

The event concluded with vote of thanks by Tashi Dekyi, Coordinator, India Tibet Coordination Office, New Delhi.

The following 12 points were adopted at the meeting.

1. **Enhance reach out** to different political parties.
2. **Raise Tibet issues** in the Indian Parliament by the members of All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT).
3. **Programs to be organised during the 90th birthday** of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (Compassion Year), in collaboration with the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE).
4. **Recognise Tibet** as an occupied nation with its own independent and sovereign past, backed by historical evidence.
5. **Urge the People's Republic of China to engage in substantive dialogue** with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, or democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community without preconditions, aiming to resolve the Tibet-China conflict through the Middle Way Policy and seek genuine autonomy within the PRC's constitution.
6. **Climate Change Research:** Call upon the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to initiate scientific studies on the PRC's exploitation of Tibet's natural resources and its adverse effects on global climate change.
7. **Human Rights Monitoring:** Pressure China to grant independent human rights organisations access to monitor and report on the human rights situation in Tibet. Additionally, extend standing invitations to UN Special Rapporteurs, especially those focusing on freedoms of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, and human rights defenders, to facilitate their visits to Tibet as soon as possible.
8. **Release of Tibetan Political Prisoners:** Urge the PRC government to unconditionally release all Tibetan political prisoners, including Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, whose whereabouts and well-being have been unknown since May 17, 1995.
9. **Halt Oppressive Policies:** Call on the PRC to cease its oppressive policies aimed at

eradicating Tibetan culture, language, and religion.

10. **Legislative Framework Against Authoritarianism and Disinformation:** Establish a national legislative framework to combat China's networked authoritarianism and disinformation campaigns, which erode public trust in democratic institutions, increase political polarisation, and threaten regional and global stability.
11. **To urge the legislators** to express their concern and raise their voice over the human rights violations in Tibet at all the available platforms.
12. **Any other matter** with the permission of Chair.

ICT hails reauthorization of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act in National Defense Authorization Act

18 December 2024, [ICT](#)

Three important provisions defending the rights of Tibetans were approved by Congress today with the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The success of these provisions despite the obstacles posed by a divided Congress is a testament to America's ongoing support of the Tibetan people during their continued oppression by the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Trio of provisions

The first provision reauthorizes the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA), which provides a mechanism for the United States to rebuff China's restrictions on American government officials, journalists, independent observers, Tibetan Americans, and tourists seeking access to Tibet. The bill was originally passed in 2018 and has been renewed for another five years.

"Congress took a strong stand by including these provisions in the 2024 NDAA legislation in support of Tibet and self-determination across Asia," said **Tencho Gyatso, President of ICT**.

"RATA is vital to continuing to bring light to the truth of how Tibet is treated by the Chinese government and ensuring that Chinese officials who try to cut Tibet off from the world are not allowed access to the United States. We hope that the President will swiftly sign the bill," she continued.

The second provision provides for continued monitoring of the Tibetan Plateau in Department of Defense Annual reports. It adds an assessment provision on the influence of the PRC on the Tibetan Plateau through the Department of Defense annual reporting on Military and Security Developments.

The third requires reporting on the impact of the closure of the American consulate in Chengdu. The Chengdu consulate was tasked with monitoring developments in Tibet, and Beijing's closure of the consulate shifted this work to the embassy in Beijing, which is far removed from Tibet.

ICT thanks the Members of Congress and staff who worked hard on these provisions, including Senators Marco Rubio, Jim Risch, and Jeff Merkley, along with Representatives Michael McCaul and Jim McGovern.

Tibet advocacy group in Switzerland conduct awareness campaign on 35th anniversary of Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize

17 December 2024, [ANI](#)



Tibet advocacy group in Switzerland conduct awareness campaign on 35th anniversary of Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize

In commemoration of the 35th anniversary of Dalai Lama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG) in Switzerland organised a meaningful Tibet awareness campaign in Zurich. As per a press release by the Central Tibetan Administration, the event aimed to raise global awareness about Tibet's ongoing struggles and highlight Dalai Lama's enduring message of peace, compassion, and nonviolence. The campaign sought to engage and educate the younger generation of Tibetans, fostering a deeper understanding of the critical issues facing Tibet today. V-TAG members organised a variety of interactive activities, including a quiz and a colouring competition, to promote creativity while sparking critical conversations about Tibet's current political and cultural challenges. These activities allowed participants to reflect on the importance of preserving Tibetan identity and culture amidst the ongoing repression. In addition, books and images reflecting the teachings of the Dalai Lama were distributed throughout the event. Beyond raising awareness, the event

highlighted the vital role of V-TAG in amplifying Tibet's cause on the global stage. As a grassroots organisation, V-TAG has been instrumental in rallying international support for Tibet, advocating for human rights, freedom, and the preservation of Tibet's cultural heritage.

According to the press release, the day served not only as a reflection on the Dalai Lama's Nobel laureateship but also as an opportunity to engage with the Tibetan diaspora, empowering them with the knowledge and tools to advocate for Tibet's future. The Tibet-China issue revolves around the status of Tibet, its political autonomy, and its cultural and religious rights. Tibet was historically an independent region, with occasional interactions with China, but it was incorporated into the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1951. Since then, Tibetans have sought greater autonomy, citing concerns over the erosion of their culture, religion, and political freedoms under Chinese rule. Central to the issue is the role of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, who fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising. China views Tibet as an integral part of its territory, while many Tibetans, both in Tibet and in exile, advocate for "genuine autonomy" or even full independence. Human rights abuses, religious repression, and the influx of Han Chinese settlers into Tibet further fuel the conflict. Despite international concerns and support for Tibet's cultural preservation, China's economic and political influence has made the issue difficult to resolve. The Dalai Lama continues to call for peaceful dialogue, though the situation remains a deeply contentious and unresolved dispute.

Sikyong Tsering Strengthens US-Tibet Ties in Washington Meetings

16 December 20224, [DevDiscourse](#)

Sikyong Penpa Tsering embarked on key meetings in Washington, DC, bolstering support for Tibet. Focused on international relations, he met with US officials, including Deputy Secretary Verma and Under Secretary Zeya, to advocate for Tibetan rights and autonomy amidst ongoing struggles with China over cultural and political issues.

In an effort to fortify international support for the Tibetan cause, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration held pivotal meetings in Washington, DC. Among his significant engagements was a discussion with Richard R. Verma, the US Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources, as announced by the CTA.

Verma, who has a longstanding involvement with Tibetan affairs from his tenure as US Ambassador to

India, expressed personal concern for the Dalai Lama's health, following his knee surgery. Their dialogue highlighted the enduring bonds between the US and Tibetan communities, with Verma reaffirming his dedication to Tibetan issues. This was succeeded by an hour-long meeting with Uzra Zeya, the US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. Expressing appreciation for Zeya's steadfast support, Sikyong underscored the importance of continued US backing. The meeting included Representative Namgyal Choedup, Alison Bartel, a Senior Advisor, and officials from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. The final series of discussions was with Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff, tackling pressing human rights concerns in Tibet and Tibet's quest for autonomy amidst ongoing conflict with China.



Political leader of Central Tibetan Administration, Sikyong Penpa Tsering meets US officials (Image Credit: Central Tibetan Administration). Image Credit: ANI

The series of strategic meetings by Sikyong in Washington amplifies the Central Tibetan Administration's diplomatic pursuits for global recognition of Tibet's cultural and political challenges. Central to these efforts is the complex Tibet-China conflict, intertwined with issues of sovereignty, rights, and national identity, drawing international attention and debate without resolution.

Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Concludes Official Visit to Nepal

15 December 2024, [CTA](#)

As per the program of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, a parliamentary delegation comprising parliamentarians Lupon Thupten Gyaltzen and Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar successfully concluded their official periodical visit to Nepal from 30 November to 13 December 2024.

During their visit, the delegation met with Tibetans residing in various locations, including Kathmandu, Boudha, Jorpati, Phakshing, Jwalakhel Samdupling, and Phunling. They held discussions with Representative Tsepri Lopan Tulku Ngawang Chokdup and Tibetan Settlement Officers from Gyalsa Phakshing, Jwalakhel, Boudha, Jorpati, and Sha-Wa-Ra. Additionally, they participated in a closed-door meeting with local dignitaries.



Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Concludes Official Visit to Nepal

The delegation also conducted inspection visits to schools and offices under the jurisdiction of the Tibetan settlements and paid their respects to monasteries and lamas in the region. Their periodical visit to Nepal was successfully concluded on 13 December 2024.

This program was made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID via NDI and SARD.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra Graces Commemoration of 35th Anniversary of Conferment of Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness at Tibet House, Delhi

13 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Tibet House, Delhi, recently marked the 35th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama with an inspiring event that brought together dignitaries, scholars, and supporters to reflect on the theme of *Universal Ethics*. The occasion was graced by the presence of Education Minister (Kalon) Tharlam Dolma Changra of the Central Tibetan Administration, who was invited as the Chief Guest. The event also featured notable Guests of Honor, including Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General of the International Buddhist Confederation, and Prof. Amar Jiva Lochan, Dean of Foreign Students at Delhi University.

The event began with a heartfelt tribute in the form of the *Nobel Peace Prize Song*, performed by the talented

students of TCV Samyeling Day School, dedicated to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This performance set a reverent tone for the gathering and underscored the significance of the occasion.

In her keynote address, Hon. Tharlam Dolma Changra expressed her deep gratitude to Ven. Geshe Dorji Damdul, Director of Tibet House, for organising the panel discussion on Universal Ethics, describing it as a fitting homage to His Holiness' remarkable legacy. She emphasised the importance of the "three Hs"—Heart, Head, and Hand—as fundamental elements for holistic education. These principles, she noted, are essential for nurturing the human values that are central to His Holiness' teachings.

She also highlighted the contributions of Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, former Prime Minister (Kalon Tripa) of the Central Tibetan Administration, who, in 2005, introduced the Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile. This visionary policy prioritises the cultivation of inner human values, reflecting the wisdom of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

A key focus of her speech was the Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning program, which equips both teachers and students with the tools needed to cultivate compassion, resilience, and ethical awareness. While acknowledging the importance of theoretical discussions on SEE Learning, she emphasised that true impact arises through its practical application in daily life.

In closing, the Chief Guest urged all attendees to make the commemoration of the Nobel Peace Prize Day meaningful by committing to embody the values promoted by His Holiness. She called on everyone to become messengers and torchbearers of His Holiness's vision, fostering a sense of collective responsibility for building a more peaceful, compassionate world.

Following the keynote address, certificates were presented to graduates of the Nalanda Diploma Course (4th Batch), the Certificate Course (2nd Batch), and the Tibetan Language Course (27th Batch). This moment of recognition underscored Tibet House's commitment to education and intellectual growth within the Tibetan community.

Additionally, the Publication Department of Tibet House announced the launch of three significant publications:

1. *Tracing the Footprints of Je Tsongkhapa*, an illustrated biography by Tibetan scholar Chukyi Gedun Palsang.
2. *Research Paper Collections of the Conference on Theravada and Mahayana*, a collection of academic papers presented by eminent scholars from the Pali and Sanskrit traditions.
3. *A Special Edition of the News Bulletin* detailing Tibet House's activities from April 2022 to December 2024.

The department also unveiled the winners of the Tibetan-language research paper competition, to be featured in the 12th edition of *Zamatog Journal*. Furthermore, Tibet House announced the completion of paper submissions by three scholars as part of its prestigious academic initiatives, including the *Thonmi Sambhota Scholarship* and the *Sambhota Book Series*.

The *Thonmi Sambhota Scholarship* has been instrumental in fostering academic excellence, with Pema Dorjee being the first recipient for his pioneering research on 'The Stupa and Its Technology: A Tibeto-Buddhist Perspective.' To date, 22 volumes have been published under this initiative, garnering strong support from the academic community. Between 2021 and 2023, three new scholarships were awarded, and the scholars are now preparing their final papers, which will soon be published as part of the *Sambhota Series*.

The highlight of the event was a profoundly insightful panel discussion on *Universal Ethics* chaired by Ven. Prof. Kaveri Gill of Shiv Nadar University. The panellists included Dr Nivedita Chalill, founder of ARTH: Counselling and Arts-Based Therapy, who shared her reflections on the practical application of Buddhist psychology; Dr Bharati Puri, Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Delhi, who explored the intersection of ecology and ethics; and Dr Nilza Wangmo, Visiting Faculty at the IGNC, Ministry of Culture, who offered perspectives on universal ethics as inspired by the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The panel discussion was a resounding success, offering a vibrant platform to explore various dimensions of universal ethics, including its relevance to secularism, psychology, and environmental ethics. The speakers shared valuable insights resonating with the attendees, sparking thought-provoking conversations on integrating ethical principles into contemporary global issues.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Tenzin Kunkyap, Secretary of Tibet House, who expressed gratitude to all attendees, dignitaries, and speakers for their contributions. The day left a lasting impact, reinforcing the timeless vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama while providing practical guidance on how to live according to the universal values he espouses.

MPs from New Zealand and Fiji Visit Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

13 December 2024, [CTA](#)



MPs from New Zealand and Fiji Visit Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

MP Joseph Mooney, Member for Southland (National Party, New Zealand); MP Ingrid Leary, Member for Taieri (Labour Party, New Zealand); MP Helen White, Member for Mt Albert (Labour Party, New Zealand); and MP Rinesh Sharma, Member of the Fijian Parliament, visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on 11 December 2024.

The parliamentary delegation was warmly welcomed by Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, who greeted them with traditional Tibetan ceremonial scarves. The delegation was then given a tour of the parliament hall.

Following the tour, the MPs held a meeting with Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, MP Tsering Yangchen, and MP Tenzin Jigdal in the Standing Committee's hall.

During their meeting, important recent developments including the situation in Tibet which continues to raise concerns, as the region grapples with cultural erosion, human rights violations, and political suppression were discussed. Tibet, historically recognised as an independent region, remains a focal point in the ongoing conflict between its quest for autonomy and China's claims of sovereignty.

"The Indo-Tibetan Border serves as a reminder of its historical independence. However, since the 1950s, China has exercised control over the region, implementing policies that have significantly impacted Tibet's traditional way of life," noted the Deputy Speaker.

As the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has been at the forefront of efforts to preserve Tibetan culture, language, and religion. The CTA advocates for global recognition of Tibet's autonomy and the protection of its heritage.

Discussing current challenges under Chinese rule, they discussed how Tibetans face increasing restrictions on

their cultural practices, including the suppression of the Tibetan language and Buddhist traditions. Educational institutions in Tibet have reportedly been used to promote Chinese propaganda, further marginalising Tibetan identity. Environmental degradation in the ecologically vital Tibetan Plateau, known as the “Third Pole,” has further compounded the challenges for local communities.

The international community has expressed growing solidarity with Tibet. Advocacy groups continue to promote Tibetan art, language, and religion to preserve its heritage.

Emphasising the need for multi-lateral pressure on China to address human rights violations and environmental concerns, they discussed efforts to amplify Tibet’s voice include campaigns on global platforms, drawing attention to the plight of Tibetans and the ecological importance of the region.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Department of Religion and Culture Secretary Attends Long-life Prayer Ceremony Offered to Kochhen Rinpoche

13 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Secretary Dhondul Dorjee of the Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration, attended the offering of long-life prayers to Kochhen Rinpoche at Ogyen Mindrolling Monastery in Clement Town, Dehradun on 12 December 2024.

The long-life prayers were offered by the members of exile Tibetans from Gonjo, a region in Dokham.

At 8:00 a.m., the reverent lamas and distinguished guests, accompanied by a procession of monks, escorted Kochhen Rinpoche from his residence to the courtyard in front of the temple. As Rinpoche was seated on the throne, the ceremony began with prayers.

Thereafter, Gonjo Long-life Offering Committee offered Rinpoche with mandala and three sacred jewels: the representations of Buddha’s body, speech, and mind, followed by offerings from reverent lamas, *Khenpos*, and representatives of monasteries and Tibetan civil societies.

Upon the completion of the long-life prayer ceremony, a gold medal was bestowed in recognition of Rinpoche’s sacred religious contributions and his unwavering benevolence towards all sentient beings. Later in the evening, cultural performances were performed as a mark of celebration.

The offering was also attended by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Kalon Dolma Gyari, and Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltsen, Ven Tenpa Yarphel, Khenpo Kada Ngedup Sonam, and Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende. Dehradun Tibetan Settlement Officer Dhondup Gyalpo, former

Tibetan Parliamentarian Gyari Bhutruk, and representatives of various monasteries and Tibetan NGOs.

-Report filed by Department of Religion and Culture, CTA



Department of Religion and Culture Secretary Attends Long-life Prayer Ceremony Offered to Kochhen Rinpoche

Tibetan Youth Congress urges Nepal to reject China’s interference in the Tibetans’ Religious affairs

13 December 2024, [Organiser](#)

Tibetan activists from the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) in Dharamshala have strongly opposed China’s plan to send the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, to Nepal. They urged Nepal to reject China’s interference in Tibetan religious affairs and uphold its commitment to religious freedom

Tibetan activists from Tibetan Youth Congress at McLeodganj in Dharamshala opposed China’s decision to send Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, to Nepal. The activists demanded Nepal to denounce Chinese interference in Tibet’s religious affairs and freedom.

Tenzin Choekey and Tashi Thargyal, TYC Vice President, said, “The Tibetan Youth Congress is deeply alarmed by recent news of China’s plans to send Gyaltzen Norbu (Chinese: Gyaincain Norbu), the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, to Nepal. This move is a blatant attempt by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to interfere in Tibetan religious and cultural affairs and further its strategy to assert political control over Tibet by co-opting our religious identity.” The activist said that Tibetans rejected this move by China and saw it as meddling in their affairs.

“Tibetans both in Tibet and in exile, unequivocally reject China’s brazen interference in our religious traditions. The Chinese government’s installation of Gyaltzen Norbu is a deliberate effort to replace our religious leadership with figures loyal to CCP. This action is part of China’s broader agenda to undermine Tibetan unity and erode our distinct Tibetan culture and spiritual heritage,” he said.

“We continue to revere his holiness the 14th Dalai Lama as our true spiritual leader and honour his recognition of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was abducted by the Chinese authorities on May 17, 1995, at the age of six. His whereabouts and well-being remain unknown and we call for his immediate release,” he added.

The activists urged Nepal to not let China-appointed Lama to enter Nepal, as doing otherwise would mean an insult to the rich Buddhist history of Tibet.

“We urge Nepal, as a sovereign nation with a rich Buddhist heritage, to resist China’s attempts to use its territory for furthering these repressive policies. If Gyaltzen Norbu is allowed to enter Nepal, the government of Nepal will undermine the country’s rich Buddhist history and threaten to global integrity and international standing of its Buddhist institutions. Any such visit will be viewed as a dangerous signal that government of Nepal is willing to tolerate Chinese interference in religious affairs of geopolitical gain. Nepal must reject any form of Chinese government interference and reaffirm its commitment to religious freedom and human rights,” the activist said.

Tibetan delegation meets Dutch officials to discuss Tibet crisis

12 December 2024, [ANI](#)

A delegation from the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, led by MP Yeshi Dolma and Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende, concluded a highly successful advocacy mission in the Netherlands on 10 December 2024, marking International Human Rights Day. During the visit, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile MPs met with key officials from the Dutch Foreign Ministry, including Kim Peters, Senior Policy Officer for the China desk, and Mariska Meijerhof, Human Rights Policy Officer.

The hour-long meeting provided an opportunity to brief Dutch officials on the escalating human rights violations in Tibet, touching on critical issues such as China's ongoing repression in Tibet, the status of the Panchen Lama, and the future of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation.

The Dutch officials expressed strong interest and pledged their support for the Tibetan cause. They assured the MPs that Tibet-related issues would be included in future foreign policy discussions, emphasizing the importance of addressing the human rights abuses taking place in Tibet. The Tibetan MP's visit aimed to draw international attention to Tibet's ongoing human rights crisis and call for stronger global action. The MPs arrived in Amsterdam on December 9, where local Tibetan community leaders, including Representative Rigzin Choedon of the Office of Tibet Brussels and former

Director of the International Tibet Campaign Europe, Tsering Jampa warmly welcomed them.



On 10 December, the Tibetan delegation visited the Amnesty International office in Amsterdam to brief staff on the worsening human rights situation in Tibet. During the meeting, the MPs highlighted the crucial role of international organizations like Amnesty in defending human rights globally. They warned that without decisive action, such organizations risk being undermined by powerful states, including China, who may use them for political purposes. MP Yeshi Dolma and Geshe Lobsang Phende also called for an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet, urging that it take place regardless of China's approval. The meeting was constructive, with Amnesty International representatives promising to raise Tibet-related issues in future discussions. During the visit, a joint protest was held at Dam Square in Amsterdam to mark International Human Rights Day. Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, and Southern Mongolians, all of whom suffer under Chinese Communist rule, gathered to raise awareness of their shared struggles. The protest was marked by passionate speeches from the Tibetan MPs, the President of the Tibetan Association in the Netherlands, and Tsering Jampa. Representatives from the Uyghur, Hong Kong, and Southern Mongolian communities also delivered speeches, condemning Chinese oppression and calling for global solidarity in the face of human rights abuses. The protest culminated in powerful chants and demonstrations against the Chinese Communist Party, demanding an end to the systematic violations of human rights.

The successful advocacy mission in the Netherlands is a significant step in raising global awareness about the human rights violations occurring in Tibet. Through their meetings with key officials and participation in the protest, the MPs reinforced the importance of continued international pressure on China to address its actions in Tibet.

A Delegation from India Foundation Visits Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

12 December 2024, [CTA](#)



A Delegation From India Foundation Visits Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

A delegation from New Delhi-based independent research centre India Foundation visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and met with Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang on 9 December 2024.

The delegation consists of Shri Suresh Prabhu, Lt. General Arun Kumar Sahni, Shri Shaurya Doval, Shri Ashok Malik, Prof. Sunaina Singh, Capt Alok Bansal, Rami Desai, Ngawang Gamtso Hardy, and Chitra Shekhawat.

During the meeting, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE) underscored the remarkable achievements of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) over the past 65 years, particularly in preserving Tibetan language, culture, and religion despite enduring exile.

The Speaker also praised His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision for a democratic Tibet, which led to the formation of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in 1960 and the election of the first Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) in 2001. In 2011, His Holiness devolved political power to the elected leadership, establishing a fully functional democratic system.

The Speaker drew attention to the dire situation in Tibet, where Tibetans face political repression, environmental degradation, and systemic discrimination. He urged the Indian leaders to combat Chinese misinformation and report the truth about Tibet and its people.

The Deputy Speaker, in her address, welcomed the visiting guests and emphasised the CTA's role as the legitimate representative of Tibetans. She provided historical context, noting Tibet's once independent status and its diplomatic relations with neighbouring nations. She highlighted China's occupation of Tibet as the starting point of its aggression toward India and argued that resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict is crucial to resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute.

The Deputy Speaker also spoke out against Chinese policies that restrict Tibetan freedoms, including the indoctrination of Tibetan children in Chinese-run boarding schools, and criticised the destruction of Tibetan language and religion. She called on nations that support China's One-China policy to reconsider their stance, pointing out that such support ignores historical realities.

In conclusion, the Deputy Speaker stressed the pivotal role India, along with the CTA, can play in resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict and urged a reassessment of India's foreign policy toward Tibet.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

UN Forum: ICT highlights erasure of Tibetan identity through the PRC's educational policies

12 December 2024, [ICT](#)



Mélanie Blondelle speaking at the Forum on 28 November. (Photo: UN Web TV screenshot)

In a statement delivered yesterday at the 17th UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva, the International Campaign for Tibet expressed its deep concern over the Chinese government's systematic erasure of the Tibetan people's identity through its education policies.

The two-day Forum, held on November 28-29, 2024, focused this year on the topic of "Minority representation and self-representation in public spaces and discourses." "Denying minorities a voice is the first step towards denying their wider rights," stressed UN High Commissioner Volker Türk in his opening remarks, adding that it "creates space for ugly, false representations of minorities that perpetuates stereotypes, fuels prejudice and incite hostility." This is exactly what China is doing with its so-called "minorities" such as Tibetans and Uyghurs. By portraying Tibetans as backward and in need being modernized, China perpetuates harmful stereotypes that undermine Tibetan identity while fueling resentment among Tibetans, who see these narratives as demeaning and dismissive of their rich cultural heritage.

Speaking at the forum under the item on "minority representation in education", ICT's Policy and Advocacy Officer Mélanie Blondelle detailed how

schools in Tibet have increasingly been used as tool to assimilate Tibetan children – meaning molding them into the dominant Han Chinese culture. She highlighted how Tibetan children in state-run schools are primarily taught in Mandarin, with a curriculum that is culturally irrelevant and deeply misrepresentative of Tibetan history and heritage. This is exacerbated by the coercive boarding school system and the closure of private-run Tibetan schools (recently illustrated by the closure of the Taktsang Lhamo monastic school).

“Education should value cultural diversity, not destroy it. Tibetan children deserve to grow up knowing who they are, where they come from, and to take pride in their heritage,” Blondelle concluded, urging China to respect its international obligations with regards to the rights of Tibetan children.

Created 17 years ago, the UN Forum on Minority Issues serves as a platform to foster dialogue and cooperation on matters concerning minority groups. This year’s session saw its highest attendance since its establishment, with over 690 representatives from minority communities, governments, NGOs, and UN bodies and agencies registered. While ICT rejects the term “minority” for the Tibetan people, the organisation uses the forum to advocate for the rights of the Tibetans.

Tibet was also in the spotlight in Geneva during an awarding ceremony of the International Contest for Minority Artists on November 26, where Tibetan artist Laowu Kuang was rewarded for his work deeply entrenched in the themes of memory, freedom and human rights. In his acceptance speech, he perfectly illustrated the lack of Tibetan language education in Tibet, explaining he was delivering his speech in Chinese as he could only receive Chinese education since he was a child, and that in his native village in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) almost no Tibetan from his generation could speak in their mother tongue.

Read ICT’s full statement below or watch on UN Web TV (from 01:14:47).

ICT statement

17th UN Forum on Minority Issues
28-29 November 2024 – Geneva

Item 2: Minority representation in education

Statement by the International Campaign for Tibet
Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Campaign for Tibet would like to draw the Forum’s attention to the systematic erasure of the Tibetan people’s identity within China’s education system.

In recent years, education has been increasingly weaponized by the Chinese government as a tool for its assimilationist agenda in Tibet. In this context, Tibetan children in state-run schools are primarily taught in Mandarin, with a curriculum that lacks

cultural relevance to them. They are presented with a distorted view of their culture and history, in which their way of life is denigrated as backward, their revered spiritual leader the Dalai Lama vilified, and their history manipulated to align with the ideology and interests of the Chinese Communist Party.^[1] This is not education, but indoctrination aimed at severing young Tibetans from their very roots.

This is compounded by a coercive boarding school system that separates Tibetan children as young as 4 from their families and communities, alienating them further from their culture and traditions and leading to deep psychological trauma and loss of identity.

At the same time, private-run schools that still allowed parents to educate their children in their native language and culture have been increasingly forced to shut down. Monastic schools, once bastions of education and transmission of Buddhist heritage, have been particularly targeted.^[2]

These policies constitute a grave violation of Tibetan children’s rights, as highlighted by multiple UN human rights treaty bodies and Special procedures. They also pose an existential threat to Tibet’s ancient and rich culture – a culture of compassion and harmony that is more relevant than ever in these troubled times.

Education should value cultural diversity, not destroy it. Tibetan children deserve to grow up in an environment that allows them to know who they are, and where they come from and to be proud of their heritage.

We therefore urge the Chinese government to respect the rights of Tibetan children guaranteed by international law, such as the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which China has ratified.

Thank you.

Senior Journalists Visit Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

11 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Senior Journalists Visit Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

A delegation of senior journalists, coordinated by the India Tibet Coordination (ITCO), visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and met with Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang at 2 PM on 9 December 2024.

The delegation consisted of the following senior journalists: Narendra Nath Mishra, Political Editor at Navbharat Times; Pradeep Thakur, Editor of Governance at The Times of India; Keshav Padmanabhan, Principal Correspondent at The Print; Chin Wei Lee, Correspondent at Central News Agency, Taiwan; and Saman Husain, Correspondent at The Indian Express.

Welcoming the delegation, the Speaker emphasised that, over the past 65 years of exile, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has successfully preserved the unique Tibetan language, culture, and religion, while also focusing on the welfare of the Tibetan diaspora. He further highlighted the long-held vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to establish a democratic system for Tibetans, which culminated in the founding of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the swearing-in of the first 13 Tibetan representatives on 2 September 1960.

Following His Holiness the Dalai Lama's guidance, Tibetans elected their first Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) in 2001, and in 2011, His Holiness devolved political authority to the elected leadership of the CTA, leading to the establishment of a fully functioning democratic system.

The Speaker also discussed the critical situation in Tibet, highlighting issues such as political repression, environmental degradation, and discrimination against Tibetans. He called attention to China's propaganda and misinformation campaigns and urged the visiting journalists to report the truth about Tibet and its people.

In her address, the Deputy Speaker welcomed the senior journalists and noted the significance of their visit to the CTA's seat. She expressed gratitude for their visit to the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and underscored that the Central Tibetan Administration is the legitimate representative of Tibetans.

The Deputy Speaker shared historical insights, emphasising that Tibet was once an independent nation with a distinct identity and diplomatic ties with neighbouring countries. She argued that China's aggression toward India began with its occupation of Tibet, and that the resolution of the Sino-Tibetan conflict is key to resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute.

On the restrictions imposed on Tibetans by the Chinese government, the Deputy Speaker spoke about the systematic indoctrination of Tibetan children in Chinese-run boarding schools, where they are subjected to fear and Communist ideology. She also addressed the destruction of Tibetan language and

religion, with policies aimed at eradicating Tibetan identity.

The Deputy Speaker further criticised countries that support China's One-China policy for business interests, without regard to the historical facts, and called on these nations to reconsider their stance against China's dictates.

Concluding her remarks, the Deputy Speaker emphasised the important role that India, with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration in India, can play in resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict by reassessing its foreign policy toward Tibet.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Tibetan leader calls for independent Tibet as key to Sino-Indian border resolution

11 December 2024, [Times of India](#)

No Sino-Indian talks on peaceful resolution of the border issues will achieve its intended goal unless the two sides first decides to resolve the 'Akhand Tibet' matter, restoring freedom of life and liberty to millions of Tibetans, said Dolma Gyari, the acting Sikyong (president) of Tibetan govt in exile here on Tuesday. Gyari, who is also the minister for department of security (defence minister) of the central Tibetan administration, says for a permanent peace with China, the only option is recognition of a unified Tibet as an independent state.

"In the 1914 Shimla accord, it was Tibet which had signed the pact with India where it acknowledged Arunachal as part of India. For a permanent resolution of the border conflict, China must recognize Tibet as an independent state," she said.

The Tibetan acting president's comments came during an exclusive interaction with a media delegation where she emphasised that the Tibet issue was central to all dialogues between India and China on the disputed borders.

On Tuesday, she also hosted a delegation of MPs from New Zealand and Fiji, celebrating the 35th anniversary of conferment of Nobel Peace prize to HH Dalai Lama. Former union minister Suresh Prabhu was a special guest on the occasion where the foreign delegation expressed solidarity with the Tibetan cause and also criticized human rights violations by China in the occupied territory. "The Central Tibetan Administration believes that Arunachal Pradesh and any other territories disputed by China are inseparable and integral parts of India," said Gyari.

Expressing her confidence of resolution of Tibet issue under PM Modi, the minister observed that "India is going in the right direction. Today's South Block (MEA) understands better than what they did 10 years ago."

Dharamshala is also preparing for the celebrations next year of Dalai Lama's 90th birthday as the 'global year of compassion'.

35th Dalai Lama Nobel Peace Prize anniversary marked with New Zealand, Fiji MP guests

11 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

–Tibetan communities across the free world commemorated the 35th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Dec 10, joined by supporters from their host and visitor communities, with the main event being organized by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) at the Tsuglakhang, the main Buddhist temple in Dharamshala, India.

The day was also celebrated as the 76th international Human Rights Day, marking the UN General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The statement of the Kashag (cabinet), delivered by the Department of Security Kalon (minister) Mrs Dolma Gyari, highlighted the CTA's plan for a year-long (Jul 6, 2025 to Jul 6, 2026) celebrations next year of a global Year of Compassion to mark the 90th Birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She said the focus will especially be on His Holiness's four principal commitments towards the promotion of human values and religious harmony.

The statement reaffirmed the CTA's commitment to finding a peaceful resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict through the Middle Way Approach, "which seeks genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the traditional Tibetan areas to handle all its own religious, cultural, linguistic, education, health, and environmental affairs, as guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution and under the Law on Regional National Autonomy."

Like the Kashag's statement, the statement of the Tibetan Parliament in exile, delivered earlier by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, highlighted His Holiness's enormous contributions towards the preservation of Tibetan culture, carrying forward the Tibetan national struggle and finding a solution for the issue, and the promotion of global peace and inter-religious harmony.

The gathering was also addressed by members of parliamentary delegations from New Zealand (Joseph Mooney, Ingrid Leary, and Helen White) and Fiji (Rinesh Sharma) who were especially invited for the occasion, as was Mr Suresh Prabhu, Chairman of the India Foundation, Delhi, and former Government of India minister.

The delegation member also addressed a press conference at which they expressed solidarity with the Tibetan struggle for freedom and human rights. Ingrid

Leary said that while the New Zealand delegation members were from different political parties, they were united in their support for human rights and their respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Rinesh Sharma, opposition member in the Fijian parliament, said he would raise a discussion of the urgent situation in Tibet in parliament.

Those were not official delegations but a demonstration of individual commitments to human rights and an understanding of the Tibetan cause, it was explained.

The 28th Himalayan Festival was held over two days at a separate location, featuring performances by diverse ethnic and cultural groups from Himachal Pradesh and neighbouring states.

The day was also marked by the Buddhists living in Itanagar and surrounding areas in India's northeastern Tibet-border state of Arunachal Pradesh, organized by the Tawang Monastery and Itanagar Buddhist Culture Society.

Tarh Tarak, chairman of the Tibet support Group (TSGAP) in the state and vice-president of the state BJP unit, spoke as the chief guest to pay homage to His Holiness, reported [arunachalobserver.org](#) Dec 11. He has referred to the state's ethnic affinity with Tibet.

A number of other prominent public figures also addressed the gathering, including the state BJP general secretary Nalong Mize, the report said.

Protest in Vienna Unites Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Christians Against CCP Oppression

11 December 2024, [Devdiscourse](#)

On International Human Rights Day, a protest outside the Chinese Embassy in Vienna united Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Christians demanding an end to Chinese Communist Party oppression. Demonstrators called for global action against the ongoing human rights abuses and systemic oppression of marginalized communities in China by the CCP.

On International Human Rights Day, a significant protest unfolded outside the Chinese Embassy in Vienna as Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Chinese Christians united against ongoing oppression by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The event, spearheaded by the Tibetan Community Organisation in Vienna, spotlighted widespread human rights abuses by the Chinese authorities

Leading the demonstration, Tibetan diaspora members waved flags and held banners condemning the CCP's persistent violations in Tibet. They voiced concerns over issues such as the demolition of monasteries, enforced relocation of Tibetan children, and what many called cultural genocide. The protesters urged global recognition of these atrocities

and pressed for international intervention to halt Chinese repressive policies.

Uyghur activists stood alongside their Tibetan peers, highlighting the severe persecution faced by Uyghurs, including mass detentions, forced labor, and the destruction of religious sites. Joined by Chinese Christians, who protested against the state's control over religious practices, they collectively demanded an end to CCP tyranny and urged the world to hold China accountable.

Buddhists celebrate 35th anniversary of Nobel Peace prize conferment on HH 14th Dalai Lama

11 December 2024, [Arunachal Observer](#)

The Buddhists living in Itanagar and surrounding area celebrated 35th anniversary of conferment of Nobel Peace prize to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama at Thupten Gatsel Ling Gonpa here on Tuesday, which was organized by Gaden Namgyal Lhatse Welfare & Charitable Society, Tawang Monastery and Itanagar Buddhist Culture Society (IBCS).

The 14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) was awarded Nobel Peace Prize on 10.12.1989 in recognition of his efforts to peacefully resolve Tibet conflict and preserve the cultural heritage of his people. The Nobel committee also cited his advocacy for tolerance and mutual respect.

In his acceptance speech at Oslo, the Dalai Lama had criticized China for using force against student protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989. He also had emphasized the importance of non-violence and his desire to dialogue with China to resolve the situation. The Nobel committee chairman had said that the award was also a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, who had championed nonviolence as the right way to achieve a peaceful society.

It may be recalled here that the 14th Dalai Lama had flee from Potala Palace on 17.03.1959 after China laid a siege in Lhasa followed by repression of Tibetans. The spiritual leader with his entourage had crossed McMahon Line on 31.03.59 and stepped into India at border post in Chuthangmu near Tawang where Assam Rifles personnel had received his holiness. He was taken to Tawang Monastery before proceeding to Himachal Pradesh to set up his Tibetan Govt in Exile headquarters in Dharamshala.

The Dalai Lama has remained in exile since then. The tragedy and defiance of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising is marked with events around the world on every March 10. While Tibet Support Groups were formed across the world, including in Arunachal Pradesh with Tarh Tarak as chairman and Core Group for Tibetan Cause headed by R K Khriemey as national convener, to make all out efforts for Tibetans across the world to return home safely to lead a dignified life .

Tarak, also state BJP vice president, speaking as chief guest, lauded the organizers and paid homage to HH for his kindness, faith and sense of gratification to be revered across the world for which he was conferred with Nobel Peace Prize.

Highlighting TSGAP activities, he assured continued support to freedom struggle and welfare of Tibetan community living in the state.

Advocating freedom of Tibet from the clutch of China, he said that Abotani group of Tibet had migrated about 500 to 1000 years ago and settled down in this state.

He said that HH has been consistently advocating non-violence, preservation of Tibetan art, culture and tradition which inspired millions of peoples globally. Justifying demand for freedom of Tibet, he urged the GoI to confer Indian highest civilian award 'Bharat Ratna' on HH.

Highlighting biography of HH, Ven Lobsang Tengyal said that he devoted his life for the welfare of the humanity, Tibetans in particular, for a peaceful resolution to their decades-old struggle for freedom.

Dr. Leiky Wangchuk, DOKAA assistant director Deden Norbu also addressed the gathering, including state BJP general secretary Nalong Mize, TSGAP team Anok Wangsa (advisor), Hinium Tachu (VP), Nima Sange (secretary general), TMWC president Pema Darjee, IBCS secretary Pema Phuntso, Gompa in-charge Rinchin Norbu, followed by a traditional colourful cultural programme, according to TSGAP sources.

Arunachal Pradesh boasts of Tawang Monastery, a magnificent example of Mahayana Buddhism and largest monastery in India, which was founded in 17th century by Merak Lama Lodre Gyatso in accordance with the wishes of 5th Dalai Lama. Coincidentally, Chief Minister Pema Khandu, a Buddhist, belongs to Tawang district. And Golden Pagoda, also known as Kongmu Kham (in Tai-Khamti of Namsai language), is a Burmese-style Buddhist temple, built by present Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, spread in 20 hectare area, was opened to public in 2010. Situated inside Pariyati Sasana Buddha Vihara, the World Tripitaka Foundation is currently developing it as first international Tripiṭaka center in India.

Tibetans and Tibet Activists Call On Nepal to Reject China's Illegitimate Panchen Lama Visit

11 December 2024, [International Tibet Network](#)

Tibet activists worldwide have expressed alarm at reports[1] that Gyaltzen Norbu (CH: Gyaincain Norbu), Beijing's illegitimate Panchen Lama, is due to attend the 9th South China Sea Buddhism Roundtable Conference in Nepal. 139 global Tibet Network [2] member organisations have called on Nepal's Prime

Minister to repeal any agreement that he can visit stating that “allowing Gyaltzen Norbu to visit Nepal when he lacks recognition or standing among Tibetan Buddhists... would violate the wishes of Buddhists around the world.”

By allowing this visit, the Nepalese government will be complying with China’s efforts to not only legitimise Gyaltzen Norbu as a Tibetan Buddhist leader but also support China’s soft power strategy to co-opt the religious and cultural identity of the Tibetan people to solidify political control over Tibet.

The Chinese government appointed Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, was named by Beijing in 1995, in complete contradiction to the centuries-old tradition in which the Dalai Lama identifies the Panchen Lama. The official 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima—the recognised reincarnation by the 14th Dalai Lama—has been missing since 1995 [3], when he was just six years old and was forcibly taken by Chinese authorities.

Chinese government officials have repeatedly made it clear that Beijing deploys Buddhism as a tool to achieve its political objectives of supremacy in geopolitical, military, and territorial issues as well as the legitimacy of its occupation of Tibet. [4]

China’s public relations strategy to elevate Gyaltzen Norbu’s status within the Buddhist hierarchy, portraying him as “the highest ranking figure in Tibetan Buddhism” and the “leader of Tibetan Buddhism is central to its longer-term efforts to control over key lineages, including that of the Dalai Lama, and Tibetan Buddhism more widely.

UN human rights experts and expert bodies have raised multiple concerns with China [5] about the disappearance of the official 11th Panchen Lama and Beijing’s reincarnation rules, citing that interference “undermines, in a discriminatory way, the religious traditions and practices of the Tibetan Buddhist’ community.

The coalition called on Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli to immediately repeal any agreement that Gyaltzen Norbu can enter Nepal, ensure that any future visits by Beijing-appointed Tibetan religious figures are refused, and for the Nepalese government to oppose China’s interference in Tibetan Buddhist religious affairs. The global activists further urged Sharma Oli to call for the immediate release of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and his family.

Pema Doma, Students for a Free Tibet: “This visit represents a serious escalation in China’s decades-long effort to co-opt Tibetan Buddhism to legitimize its rule in Tibet. Tibetans in and outside of Tibet categorically reject China’s interference in their sacred spiritual life just as they reject the Fake Panchen Lama and Chinese rule in their land. The international community must stand with Tibetans in calling for the freedom of the

real Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, who has been missing since he was recognized by the Dalai Lama nearly 30 years ago.”

Tenzin Yangzom, International Tibet Network: “China’s interference in Tibetan Buddhism cannot be tolerated and allowing Gyaltzen Norbu, China’s illegitimate Panchen Lama to visit Nepal while the official 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, remains ‘missing’ for nearly 30 years will be seen as a complete violation of the rights of the Tibetan people and the Tibetan Buddhist community at large. Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli must consider the far-reaching, global implications of allowing this visit – implications that do nothing more than support China’s ruthless attack on religious freedom – and refuse him entry to Nepal.

Tenzyn Zöchbauer, Tibet Initiative Deutschland: “Allowing the Chinese fake Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, to participate in the 9th South China Sea Buddhism Roundtable Conference in Nepal would be a profound misstep. While the legitimate 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and his family remain missing without any confirmation of their well-being, it is unconscionable to legitimize the Chinese Communist Party’s violent suppression of traditional Buddhist practices by allowing such participation. The conference risks endorsing China’s severe violations of religious freedom and its manipulation of the Buddhist leadership. Such an endorsement would be a grave mistake, lending credibility to the CCP’s propaganda machine.”

John Jones, Free Tibet: “As the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, and the home of thousands of refugee Tibetan Buddhists, it matters deeply how Nepal responds to Gyaltzen Norbu’s planned visit. If it wishes to honour this responsibility, it should not be taking direction on Buddhism from the avowedly atheist Chinese Communist Party, whose own officials have been clear that they regard the appointment of Tibetan Buddhist lamas as strategic leverage to tighten their control over Tibet. The Government of Nepal should disinvite Gyaltzen Norbu and call for the release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Defying Beijing may be awkward, but insulting the 500 million Buddhists around the world would be damning.”

ICT testifies at European Parliament’s hearing on EU-China human rights dialogue

10 December 2024, [ICT](#)

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) briefed Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on the dire human rights situation in Tibet during a meeting

of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights last week.

The meeting, which took place on 4 December, focused on the state of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue – whose latest round took place on 16 June and was preceded by a side-visit to the Tibet Autonomous Region.



From right to left Sarah Brooks (Amnesty International), Vincent Metten (ICT), Paola Pampaloni Deputy managing Director ASIA and Pacific at the EEAS, and MEP Satouri Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights.

Ineffective dialogue

“Despite the European External Action Service (EEAS)’s efforts, it is clear that the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue process has not provided meaningful results,” EU Policy Director Vincent Metten stressed in his testimony, arguing China’s human rights abuses have on the contrary intensified in recent years.

He called on the EU to consider reviewing the dialogue and exploring more assertive ways to press China on its human rights record. “The EU should prioritize real, measurable improvements in human rights rather than continuing ineffective dialogues that produce little to no tangible outcomes. The stakes for Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hongkongers, and all Chinese dissidents are too high for complacency,” he said.

Worsening human rights situation in Tibet

Metten stressed that this review of the dialogue – which has been repeatedly called for by civil society organizations, including ICT in recent years – is especially urgent given the scale and severity of China’s human rights abuses.

In Tibet, the Chinese government’s assimilationist policies indeed not only violate the fundamental rights of Tibetans, but it also threatens Tibet’s ancient culture and their survival as a distinct people Metten said, citing the coercive boarding schools system that alienates Tibetan children from their language and traditions; the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads and rural population; and China’s interferences in the succession of the Dalai Lama.

Metten also pointed to China’s hydropower dam spree in Tibet, which poses a significant risk not only to the Tibetan civilization and environment but also negatively impact 1,8 million people downstream. Advanced copies of ICT’s new report “Chinese Hydropower: Daming Tibetan culture, community and

environment”, published on 5 December, were distributed to MEPs.

Replying to a question on China’s transnational repression, Metten finally emphasized the need of a common European definition and stronger cooperation to protect Uyghurs, Tibetans and other victims.

Following is the full text of Vincent Metten’s statement.

European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights

4 December 2024

Statement by the International Campaign for Tibet

Dear Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for inviting our organization to speak today. A – A Critical Evaluation of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue

We commend the efforts made by the EEAS to consult civil society organisations ahead of the dialogue, and their persistence to engage with their Chinese counterparts on human rights issues. ICT acknowledges the EU’s determination to secure an official visit to Tibet in the margins of the dialogue and appreciates the fact that the EU expressed its concerns to China about the repressive policies imposed on the Tibetan people and the need to preserve and respect their fundamental rights, including their rights to select their own religious leaders.

However, after 39 rounds of dialogue and despite the EEAS efforts, it is clear that this process has not provided meaningful results and that there are significant concerns that need to be addressed urgently.

First, it is crucial to acknowledge that the EU’s human rights dialogue with China has consistently failed to bring about any substantial change. In recent years, ICT and other organizations have expressed their growing frustration at the lack of concrete outcomes. While the EU continues to use the dialogue to raise its concerns about China’s human rights record, – including its ongoing repression in East Turkestan, Hong Kong, Southern Mongolia and Tibet – the Chinese government has indeed remained largely unresponsive and has even intensified its repression further. Beijing does not acknowledge its human rights violations, refuses to allow independent monitoring, and continues to implement repressive policies without consequence. The absence of real political or legislative commitment from China to address these abuses raises serious questions about the utility of the dialogue.

Furthermore, the EU’s current approach does not match the severity of the human rights situation in China and Tibet – I will come back to this a bit later. The EU has already suspended human rights dialogues with highly repressive countries such as Russia, Syria,

Belarus, and Myanmar, because of their human rights abuses and violations of international law. China, with its documented repressive policies, could be added to this list.

As civil society groups have repeatedly suggested, it may be time for the EU and its new leadership:

- To reconsider the dialogue's effectiveness and consider setting clear, measurable benchmark for success in this dialogue;
- To explore alternatives forms of dialogue with Chinese civil society organizations;
- To deploy more assertive and public diplomatic measures;
- To improve the mainstreaming of human rights into other EU-China policies, in particular in the field of trade and investments;
- To continue to press China to give unfettered access to East Turkestan and to Tibet to foreign diplomats, independent experts and Members of the European Parliament;
- And finally, to sanction Chinese officials who are responsible of serious human rights abuses including in Tibet, east Turkestan, Hong Kong and mainland China under the EU Global Human rights sanctions regime.

B – Human Rights in Tibet: A Threat to Tibetan Culture and Identity

As it stands now, the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue falls short of addressing the gravity of the human rights situation in China. Today, the Tibetan people, the Tibetan culture and the very existence of the name “Tibet” are indeed seriously threatened by the assimilationist policies strategically implemented by the People’s Republic of China (PRC), in particular under the leadership of Xi Jinping. Without a significant course change, the continuity of this ancient culture, the integrity of the Tibetan Plateau’s environment, and the very survival of Tibetans as a distinct people is no longer guaranteed. Let me give you some examples.

Residential boarding schools

Firstly, up to one million Tibetan children are being systematically alienated from their language and culture in compulsory boarding schools. These educational policies, denounced by many UN human rights experts and bodies as well as by the European Parliament in an urgency resolution in December 2023, separate children from their families, forcing them to enroll in schools that teach dominantly in Mandarin. This program stands to undermine the transmission of Tibetan language and culture and severe Tibetan youth from their roots and identity.

Mass relocation programs

Secondly, according to Chinese government media sources, at least 1.8 million nomads have been settled

into sedentary houses under various Chinese government policies. In areas of relocation, displaced Tibetans have not received compensation or assurances of income or employment for the future.

The Chinese government continues to pursue blind and commercial infrastructure projects in Tibet that are designed and implemented without regard for environmental impacts or local community concerns. These projects, which include rail roads, highways, and power grids, combined with resource extraction projects such as hydropower dams and mining create economic and environmental costs that disproportionately impact Tibetans and the Tibetan plateau.

Our organisation is about to release a report on “Chinese Hydropower: Daming Tibetan culture, community and environment” – some advanced copies are available in the room, please note the report is under embargo until tomorrow 2pm.

Government interferences in freedom of religion

Last but not least, the Chinese government interferes massively in the free exercise of religion and persecutes Tibetans who peacefully oppose this policy. Torture is routinely inflicted to silence, permanently injure, and even cause death when Tibetans are arbitrarily detained for peacefully expressing their opinion or practicing their religion.

Contrary to Tibetan religious norms and in contravention of international human rights standards protecting freedom of religion or belief, Beijing has made clear its intention to control the succession of the Dalai Lama who will turn 90 next year – as it did for the Panchen Lama – and has adopted a number of laws and regulations to legitimize its interferences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the EU’s commitment to engaging with China on human rights is commendable, it is high time for a reassessment of the methods and effectiveness of the EU-China human rights dialogue. The situation in Tibet, along with the broader human rights crisis in China, demands stronger action. The EU should prioritize real, measurable improvements in human rights rather than continuing ineffective dialogues that produce little to no tangible outcomes. The stakes for Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hongkongers, and all Chinese dissidents are too high for complacency. Thank you for your attention.

Tibetan Government-in-Exile condemns Chinese atrocities on 35th anniversary of Dalai Lama's conferment of Nobel Peace prize

10 December 2024, [ANI](#)

On the 35th anniversary of the [Dalai Lama's](#) conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize, the [Tibetan Government-in-Exile](#), through the Kashag, the highest

executive office of the Central Tibetan Administration, strongly condemned the Chinese government's ongoing atrocities in Tibet. The Kashag emphasised the vital role of the Dalai Lama in safeguarding Tibetan culture, religion, and identity, asserting that the Chinese government's policies were systematically eroding these fundamental aspects of Tibetan life.

The Kashag highlighted the alarming consequences of China's policies, which aimed to forcibly assimilate Tibetans into the broader Han Chinese culture. According to the Kashag, by imposing Chinese as the primary language of instruction and forcibly placing Tibetan children into colonial-style boarding schools, the Chinese government seeks to sever Tibetans from their linguistic, cultural, and spiritual roots. These schools replace traditional Tibetan education with communist ideology, military training, and a heavy emphasis on loyalty to the Chinese state, thus undermining Tibet's rich cultural heritage. In addition to the cultural assault, China's control over Tibetan monastic institutions is an increasingly grave concern. The Kashag stated that the Chinese government had imposed politically motivated regulations on Tibetan Buddhism, including the regulation of the reincarnation of lamas, furthering its policy of Sinicization. This relentless interference is undermining the spiritual and cultural foundations of Tibetan Buddhism, threatening the preservation of one of the world's great spiritual traditions. The Kashag also expressed deep concern over China's exploitation of Tibet's natural resources, particularly through the construction of hydropower dams and large-scale infrastructure projects. The Kashag reaffirmed its commitment to non-violence and peaceful resistance in the face of ongoing repression in Tibet. It drew attention to the international community's growing concern over human rights abuses in Tibet, as reflected in statements from the European Union, the United Nations, and the G-7 nations. The Kashag urged continued global support for the Tibetan cause and called for greater international pressure on China to respect Tibetans' fundamental human rights and preserve Tibet's unique cultural and environmental heritage.

Statement on International Human Rights Violations in Tibet and China's Systemic Breaches of International Standards

10 December 2024, [CTA](#)

On this 76th anniversary of International Human Rights Day, the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration, solemnly reflects on the persistent and systematic violations of fundamental human

rights confronting the Tibetan people under the occupation of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Despite decades of sustained international advocacy, diplomatic pressure, and repeated scrutiny through various United Nations human rights mechanisms, the situation for Tibetans continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. The PRC government's repressive policies in Tibet have systematically undermined the cultural, religious, linguistic, and civil rights of Tibetans, transforming the peaceful country into a landscape of pervasive political oppression, cultural erasure, and severe restrictions on basic freedoms of expression, assembly, and religious practice.

In its 2024 Freedom in the World report, Freedom House has designated Tibet with a global freedom score of zero after 65 years of Chinese occupation, marking Tibet's worst rating in at least eight years.

In recent years, the PRC government has strengthened the aggressive policies of Sinicization, and ideological control particularly aimed at Tibetan children and educational institutions. These measures include enrolling over a million Tibetan school-going children into state-run colonial-style boarding schools depriving them of the space and opportunity to learn the Tibetan language. These actions systematically eliminate Tibetan linguistic heritage, with schools banning Tibetan language use, closing private language classes, and interrogating and deposing teachers who advocate for cultural preservation. whose classroom instruction is exclusively Mandarin and communist ideology is forcibly taught.

For instance, this year in Tibet's Nyagchu County, schools have mandated Mandarin-only communication. Prominent Tibetan private schools, such as the Gangjong Sherig Norling school in Golog in Tibet's Amdo Province were systematically shut down, despite providing decades of cultural education. The psychological impact has been devastating, with multiple reported incidents of teenage students and monks attempting suicide due to the trauma of cultural separation and loss of traditional educational opportunities. The systematic blocking of Tibetan-language online platforms and the repeated arrest of language activist Tashi Wangchuk represent a calculated attempt to suppress cultural dissent and linguistic expression.

China's systematic suppression of Tibetan Buddhism has intensified, with authorities implementing a multifaceted approach to restrict religious practices and cultural expression. Tibetan Buddhism continues to be subjected to intense state control, with monasteries facing severe restrictions on enrollment, mandatory political education, and direct pressure to denounce influential religious leaders like His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Monks are routinely targeted, with some sentenced to prison for leading simple prayers

or maintaining religious symbols. Young monks have become particularly vulnerable, being forced out of traditional religious education and prohibited from wearing religious attire, according to reports emerging from Tibet. These actions constitute a profound intrusion and violations into the spiritual and cultural lives of Tibetan communities. Given the interference, these actions constitute a profound breach of international religious freedom standards, violating fundamental protections outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Freedom of expression has been almost entirely criminalized in Tibetan regions. Tibetans face severe consequences for the most mundane expressions of cultural identity, including social media posts, sharing images of religious leaders, or singing songs with perceived political undertones. The surveillance apparatus is extensive, involving digital monitoring, increased police presence, and even co-opting food delivery workers as auxiliary police. Tibetans have been arrested for seemingly innocuous acts like leaving a Tibetan flag on a rooftop or communicating with people outside the region.

Tibetan activists, intellectuals, artists, and religious figures continue to be the primary targets of the Chinese authorities, facing harsh interrogations, physical beatings, denial of necessities, extended periods of detention, and severe restrictions on their personal freedoms. Multiple case studies illustrate the severity of these violations, such as the tragic death of Losel, a 38-year-old monk from Sera Monastery, who was arrested in May 2024, subjected to prolonged physical beatings, systematically denied medical care, and ultimately died in detention. Similarly, police interrogations of Tibetan dam project protesters involved severe beating of detainees, with individuals being slapped, denied food, and requiring hospitalization. Political prisoners like Thupten Lodoe, a language advocate, are sentenced to years in prison for writing articles “endangering national security.” The case of Golog Palden, a Tibetan singer imprisoned for three years for performing a “politically sensitive song”, further underscores the Chinese Communist regime’s suppression of cultural expression. These actions directly contravene the UN Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and China’s own legal framework, which ostensibly protects individual rights.

Chinese authorities have consistently prioritized infrastructure and economic development over the fundamental rights and cultural practices of Tibetan people, as evidenced by large-scale displacement projects, environmental degradation, and violent suppression of local resistance. In Derge County, part of Karze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan

Province, hundreds of Tibetans protested the Gangtuo Dam project in front of the county government office building on 14 February 2024. Over 1,000 Tibetans, including monks, were arrested and local monasteries were completely locked down by the police. Also, the 19th-century Atsok Gon Dechen Choeckhorling Monastery was demolished to make way for a hydropower dam, forcing 160 monks into makeshift tin huts. The pattern of oppression extends to environmental activism, as demonstrated by the detention of Tsogon Tsering, an activist who exposed illegal sand and gravel mining causing significant environmental damage to the Kyungchu River, and the arrest of four Tibetans in Markham County who dared to protest the seizure of their pastureland. These incidents are effectively transforming traditional Tibetan landscapes and communities through systematic displacement, economic marginalization, and brutal suppression of dissent.

The DIIR extends its deepest gratitude to the international community for their unwavering support in highlighting human rights violations in Tibet and calling out the PRC government to fulfil its international and domestic human rights obligations. In 2024, the international community demonstrated unprecedented solidarity in addressing human rights violations in Tibet, with 21 UN member states raising critical concerns during China’s 4th Universal Periodic Review and 13 UN experts expressing extreme concern on China’s crackdown against Tibetans’ opposition to the construction of Kamtok hydropower station in Tibet’s Derge County. Landmark legislative actions by the United States, Canada, Australia, and France highlighted systematic abuses perpetrated by the PRC government, including forced child separation through colonial-style boarding schools, forcible mass DNA collection, comprehensive cultural suppression, and religious persecution. This year, a coalition of 15 countries presented a joint UN General Assembly statement demanding urgent intervention to protect Tibetan linguistic, religious, and cultural heritage. These statements including those from the European Union and the G7 leaders reflect a growing international consensus that the survival of Tibetan identity is under critical threat, requiring a coordinated and decisive global response to resolve the Sino-Tibet Conflict in the long run and improve dismal Human Rights situation inside Tibet.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has a legal and moral obligation to uphold international human rights standards. The international community must continue to demand immediate accountability, calling for an end to these systematic violations of Tibetans’ rights and their calculated strategy of cultural erasure that systematically undermines the fundamental human rights of Tibetan people. The resilience of Tibetan

people in confronting these challenges stands in powerful contrast to the harsh methods employed by Chinese authorities, highlighting the profound human spirit of resilience and resistance against systemic injustice.

Students for Free Tibet observe World Human Rights Day, urge China to release Tibetan political prisoners
10 December 2024, [ANI](#)

Students For Free Tibet (SFT) have launched "Write for Rights" campaign: a powerful initiative to demand justice for Tibetan Political Prisoners while commemorating International Human Rights Day in Dharamshala on Tuesday.

The young Tibetan activists living in-exile gathered to observe the human rights day with an appeal to China to respect the human rights. Tibetan activists have urged general public to stand for the cause of Tibet and sign an online petition or post cards for the release of five Tibetan political prisoners.



They will send these post cards and online petitions to the Chinese Embassy. Every letter, email, petitions, voice in this campaign is call for justice and hope for those unjust imprisoned. Tenzin Lekdhen, Campaign Director, SFT said, that they are commemorating the Nobel Peace Prize to Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama and the World Human Rights Day. He said that they are demanding the release of five political prisoners. He said that they will send postcards to Chinese authorities, asking them to release these political prisoners unconditionally.

"Today is World Human Rights Day. It's a day that we also commemorate the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and also the World Human Rights Day, where we try to highlight all the human rights atrocities that have been committed, all the genocide that have been committed by the regimes. So, today we are highlighting some of the Tibetan political prisoners that are currently in Tibet. So, today we are highlighting five of them," Tenzin said.

"We have range of them from environmentalists who have been detained and been jailed for 15 years for just trying to protect the rights of Tibetan environment. And also we have political

prisoners who are writers who have spoken up, there are singers here. So, we have a range of political prisoners who we are trying to highlight, and not just highlight, but we have here an online petition here, and also here we have offline postcards that we are going to send to the Chinese embassies and the authorities and asking them and to release these political prisoners unconditionally," he added. When asked whether China will listen to their voice, he responded, "They may or may not, but it's important that we do highlight these political prisoners or else their voice won't be heard. That's important for now."

Tenzin Passang, National Director, SFT - India, said that the people in Tibet have no basic fundamental human rights. She said that they have launched 'Write for Rights' campaign, where we urge the people to write postcards, emails, petitions, Twitter posts to call for the release of political prisoners.

She said, "Today as we commemorate the World Human Rights Day, and it is also the day that His Holiness got his well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize, and we celebrate this day, Day of Freedom, Day of Justice, Day of Rights and Peace, but we should also, we also know that our brothers and sisters back in Tibet have no basic fundamental human rights. They were deprived of that, and then that's why we are here highlighting and advocating for some of the political prisoners."

"We are highlighting five political prisoners here today. Some of them have raised their voice or fight for the environmental justice, or some for the language, some for identity and cultures. And that's why we are here with this campaign where we call it Write for Rights campaign, where we urge the general public to write postcards or emails or petitions, Twitter posts and social media like write everything to advocate for the political prisoners in Tibet and also write for your governors in your own countries or like Chinese authorities, Chinese embassies and write, ask them, demand them to release the political prisoners and give them their own, their justice that they deserve," she added. (ANI)

Tibetan admin in exile 'not concerned' by Trump's election. 'US support for Tibet is bipartisan'

10 December 2024, [The Print](#), Keshav Padmanabhan

Central Tibetan Administration foreign minister emphasises that US Congress has passed several bills to endorse Tibetan autonomy, one of which was signed into law by Trump in 1st term.

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)—the administration in exile based in India—believes that the strong bipartisan support it enjoys in the US will

not change under the incoming administration of Donald Trump.

Its minister of the Department of Information and International Relations, Norzin Dolma said Wednesday that they were not concerned about the “strength and consistency” of support from Washington D.C., regardless of the change in leadership.

“Support for Tibet is bipartisan and bicameral. The support has even been legislated upon by the US Congress. It is incumbent on the US to act on the Resolve Tibet Act,” said Dolma in an interaction with media personnel here.

The minister added: “The changing global order would only expand awareness about the Tibetan cause. The growing awareness would help in achieving the ‘Middle Way’ policy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which looks after the interests of both Tibet and China.”

The CTA was set up in April 1959 after the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa for India following China’s suppression of the Tibetan uprising a month earlier. It looks after the administration and welfare of roughly 150,000 Tibetans living in exile across 130 countries. A large number of Tibetans, close to 80,000, live in India.

The Dalai Lama formulated the ‘Middle Way’ policy, which seeks meaningful autonomy for Tibet within China, including in areas of religion, culture, education and the environment. One of Tibet’s largest supporters has been the US, where a number of acts have been passed and signed into law with regards to its “conflict” with China.

The latest was the Resolve Tibet Act, signed into law by US President Joe Biden most recently on 12 July, 2024.

“I share the Congress’s bipartisan commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage. My administration will continue to call on the People’s Republic of China 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,” Biden said in a statement after signing the bill into law.

US support for Tibet

The US recognises Tibet as a part of China, but under the new law, the Department of State will be allowed to fund Tibetan non-governmental organisations to counter misinformation regarding the history and culture of the Tibetan people.

In June this year, a bipartisan delegation of US lawmakers, including former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Michael McCaul, visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala just before the bill was signed into law. China slammed US lawmakers over the Resolve Tibet Act, saying that it firmly opposed the anti-China

“separatist activities” by the “Dalai group”. It also strongly protested the June meetings.

Beijing has reacted aggressively to previous meetings between US officials and the Dalai Lama, going so far as to threaten Washington with repercussions before a meeting between the spiritual leader and then president Barack Obama in 2010. Obama met with the Dalai Lama multiple times during his two terms in office.

Trump, in his first term, was the first US president not to have met with the Dalai Lama in over three decades. Biden, too, had promised a meeting with the Nobel Peace Prize winner during his run for office in 2020, but did not manage it in his four years in the White House.

Earlier this year, the Dalai Lama travelled to the US for a medical procedure, but there was no scheduled meeting with Biden.

“His Holiness needed time to rest, recover and recuperate following his medical procedure in the US. It was not conducive for a meeting between President Biden and His Holiness during this period,” Dolma explained during the interaction with the media.

The CTA minister added: “Both Trump and Biden as presidents have signed into law acts in support of Tibet. They have shown strong commitment to the cause of Tibet.”

In December 2020, Trump signed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA), which said only the Dalai Lama and his followers could decide on the issue of succession of the religious leader, and not the Chinese government.

Furthermore, the law stated that until a US consulate was opened in Lhasa, Tibet, no further Chinese consulates would be given authorisation to open in America.

Chairman of the Public Service Commission Karma Yeshe Successfully Concluded Week-long Outreach Tour

09 December 2024, [CTA](#)

The Chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC), Karma Yeshe, successfully concluded his week-long outreach tour to engage with Tibetan college students, which took place from 1- 8 December. The tour aimed to inspire Tibetan youth to contribute to the Tibetan cause actively, preserve Tibetan culture, and engage more deeply with the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

On 2 December, Chairman Karma Yeshe addressed Tibetan students at the TCV Youth Hostel in Bengaluru. In his talk, he emphasised the importance of civil service, the role of Tibetan youth in shaping the future of Tibet, and the need to preserve the Tibetan language and culture. He encouraged the students to

promote the Tibetan cause among their peers and to act as ambassadors for Tibet within their college communities.

The following day, Chairman Karma Yeshe participated in a Youth Leadership Workshop organized by the Tibetan Youth Congress at the Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement. During his presentation, he discussed the Central Tibetan Administration, the evolution of Tibetan democracy, and the vital role of Tibetan youth in shaping Tibet's future. The workshop included group exercises, where participants presented their reflections to the larger group. Karma Yeshe concluded the session by urging everyone to take greater responsibility for advancing the Tibetan cause.

On 4 December, the Chairman visited all the monasteries in Bylakuppe, strengthening his connection with the Tibetan religious and cultural community.

On 5 December, Karma Yeshe met with Tibetan college students in Mysore. He reiterated his message about the importance of unity within the Tibetan community and quoted the lyrics of a Tibetan song to emphasise the need for collective effort. The program concluded with an interactive Q&A session and a vote of thanks from the student leader.

On 6 December, Chairman Karma Yeshe visited the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Studies and Mentseekhang Sowa Rigpa Medical College in Bengaluru, where he spoke to students about their role in promoting the Tibetan cause. He encouraged them to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills to become ambassadors for Tibet, emphasising the importance of education, health, and activism for the community's future. The talk was followed by another Q&A session, where students could engage directly with the Chairman.

The final tour took place on 7 December at the TCV Tibetan Youth Hostel in Rohini, New Delhi. In this session, Karma Yeshe again emphasised the importance of working for the CTA and the Tibetan community's well-being. He also stressed the need for maintaining good health and dedicating time to promoting Tibetan history and culture. The meeting concluded with marking the successful conclusion of the outreach program.

The outreach program wrapped up on 8 December, with Chairman Karma Yeshe returning to Dharamsala. He was accompanied throughout the tour by Deputy Secretary Karma Thinley.

This outreach initiative was made possible by funding from USAID and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

Indian government to recognise Bhoti (Tibetan) as one of the official language of Ladakh

09 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The government of India has agreed to officially recognise "Bhoti" and Urdu as official languages of the Union Territory of Ladakh. This decision followed discussions between Ladakhi leaders and Indian government representatives at the Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi on December 3, according to the *Kashmir Observer*.

Bhoti, which experts say is essentially the Tibetan language (Bodyig), is used across the Trans-Himalayan region. Dialectic variants such as Ladakhi, Spiti, and Lahaul are spoken in regions in the Himalaya belt including Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of West Bengal.

The use of the term "Bhoti" for the Tibetan language has sparked debates in Ladakh in the past. Dr. Thupten Rigzin, a Ladakhi scholar on Bhoti Language Day in April told *Radio Free Asia*, "In older days, we used to say we were learning Bodyig, (Tibetan) not Bhoti. Some people seem unaware of the history, and some deliberately create confusion. The Tibetan race forms the foundation of all Himalayan regions. It's vital for Ladakhis to understand Bhoti's origins and historical importance."

Groups like the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust in Kargil have questioned the historical basis for the labelling. In a statement, the group asserted, "The so-called 'Bhoti' script is essentially the Tibetan script. The term has no historical or socio-cultural relevance to the languages spoken in Ladakh."

The Tibetan script, Bodyig, was developed in the 7th century when the 33rd Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo sent Thumi Sambhota and other scholars to India. After studying Indian scripts, including Devanagari, Thumi Sambhota created the Tibetan script and grammar. This script facilitated the translation of Buddhist texts in Sanskrit and Pali from India into Tibetan, supporting the spread of Buddhism in Tibet first and later in to regions like Ladakh and the Trans-Himalayan areas.

Some observers including Tibetans have noted that using the term "Bhoti" instead of Bodyig undermines the recognition of Tibetan language and that such labelling of the Tibetan language are done for political and other benefits.

Austria: Tibetan youth in Europe empowered to lead advocacy efforts at Vienna workshop

09 December 2024, [ANI](#)

A three-day Tibetan Youth Leadership and Capacity Building Workshop, held in Vienna from December 6-8, 2024, focused on empowering young Tibetans in Europe to advocate for Tibet's rights and raise

awareness about critical issues affecting their homeland.

According to a press release by the Central Tibetan Administration, the workshop, attended by 23 Tibetan youth from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, aimed to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to advance Tibet advocacy in their communities and beyond.

The event was inaugurated by Representative Thinley Chukki from the Tibet Bureau in Geneva and Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay, the official spokesperson for the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

In her opening remarks, representative Chukki introduced the workshop's objectives, emphasising the importance of youth leadership in the global Tibetan movement. She expressed hope that the training would strengthen the capacity of young Tibetans to effectively advocate for their culture, identity, and rights. Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay, in his keynote speech, highlighted the importance of a dual approach to advocacy. "While engaging policymakers is crucial, mobilising grassroots movements is equally vital. You must advocate not only to those in power but also to your peers, classmates, friends, and neighbours to inspire collective action," said Lekshay.

He underscored that advocacy should be both top-down and bottom-up, with campaigns involving a diverse range of stakeholders, from local communities to high-level officials. The workshop provided participants with in-depth knowledge on several key issues facing Tibet. Presentations covered the Chinese government's policies in Tibet, the growing transnational aggression of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the alarming spread of state-run residential schools in Tibet.

These schools are part of a broader effort by the Chinese government to assimilate Tibetan children, undermining their cultural and linguistic identity. Experts discussed how this system mirrors colonial tactics, aiming to erase Tibet's unique heritage. On the first day, attendees were introduced to Tibet advocacy strategies, including the growing role of social media in shaping public opinion and advancing campaigns. The focus was on leveraging digital platforms to advocate for Tibet on a global scale, providing a modern tool to complement traditional grassroots advocacy. On the second day, former Tibetan political prisoner Phuntsog Nyidron shared her harrowing personal experience of imprisonment and torture under Chinese authorities. Nyidron's testimony was a poignant reminder of the ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet and a powerful call for action to stop the persecution of Tibetans. Her story served as a

compelling example of the real-life consequences of Tibet's political struggles.

The workshop also featured a special address from Kelsang Gyaltzen, the special envoy of the Dalai Lama, who spoke about the importance of understanding the political and social situation in China and its impact on Tibet. He emphasised that Tibet's struggle is not just about Tibetans but about global human rights issues, urging participants to view their advocacy efforts as part of a broader movement for justice and freedom.

22nd North American Tibetan Associations' Conference Kicks Off in Washington DC with Sikyong Penpa Tsering's Keynote Address

09 December 2024, [CTA](#)

The first day of the 22nd North American Tibetan Associations (NATA) Conference was held at the NED Conference Hall on 8 December 2024 in the gracious presence of Sikyong Penpa Tsering. With more than 50 participants from 26 different Tibetan Associations in the United States, the proceedings began with Sikyong Penpa Tsering offering a ceremonial white scarf to the portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This was followed by members of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Tenzing Jigme and Thondup Tsering, along with Representative Namgyal Choedup.

In his opening address, Representative Namgyal Choedup highlighted the significance of the conference, particularly in light of the profound changes in the U.S. political landscape. With the momentous occasion of His Holiness's 90th birthday approaching, he underscored the pivotal role of NATA participants in collaboratively designing and implementing programs and projects for the Goton celebration.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, in his remarks, expressed gratitude to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for generously providing the venue for the conference. He commended NED for its longstanding support and friendship toward Tibet and the Tibetan cause.

Sikyong also touched upon the upcoming event organised by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) to honour Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi for her unwavering support for Tibet. He recalled an instance when Pelosi, deeply revering His Holiness the Dalai Lama, remarked how fortunate everyone in the hall was to breathe the same air as His Holiness. This, Sikyong stated, is a testament to the profound respect and admiration His Holiness commands among global leaders and dignitaries. He emphasised how Members of the Tibetan Parliament and Sikyong himself are treated with the same respect and recognition as

representatives of sovereign nations, a testament to the grace and stature of His Holiness.

Sikyong stressed the importance of adhering to the guidance and teachings of His Holiness, reiterating the need to honour his vision and values in all endeavours. Sikyong emphasised the critical importance of accurate numbers and data, particularly when engaging with foreign dignitaries. He noted that one of the most common questions posed by such officials is, "How many Tibetans reside inside Tibet and in the diaspora?" Sikyong referenced a recent meeting with the heads of the Departments of Home, Health, Finance, and Tibet Fund regarding household listings, highlighting how collaborative efforts across these departments can produce reliable data, especially concerning Tibetans in India.

For Tibetans residing abroad, Sikyong underscored the crucial role of regional Tibetan Associations, whose familiarity with their communities positions them uniquely to assist in data collection for household listings. He stressed that in the modern world, evidence and documentation are indispensable, and he appealed to representatives of Tibetan Associations in the United States to voluntarily issue formal statements on two significant matters: first, that the issue of the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama lies solely in his hands; and second, that the Gaden Phodrang institution must remain intact.

In addition, Sikyong addressed reports regarding the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama's potential visit to Nepal in mid-December. Sikyong highlighted China's persistent efforts to legitimise their appointed Panchen Lama among Tibetans by sending him to Tibet for extended periods, aiming to cultivate reverence for him within the Tibetan community. He further emphasised that similar, if not more aggressive, measures could be anticipated in the case of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's succession in the near future. Regarding the 90th birthday celebration (Goton), Sikyong elaborated on the Goton Committee, which is chaired by the Secretary of Kashag and includes representatives from each department of the Central Tibetan Administration. For the United States, he highlighted that the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has already planned several programs. With Tibetan Associations across various regions preparing their own initiatives, Sikyong suggested that it would be beneficial for all associations and organisations to submit their program details to the CTA in Dharamsala. This would enable the creation of a comprehensive calendar of events for Goton (90th birthday celebration).

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Commences Official Engagements in the United States

08 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration commenced an official visit to the United States on 6 December 2024. Upon his arrival at Dulles Airport, he was received by Representative Namgyal Choedup and Tsultrim Gyatso, Chinese Liaison Officer at the Office of Tibet, Washington, D.C. Despite the cold weather and the long journey, Sikyong immediately immersed himself in a series of engagements.

Sikyong's demanding itinerary began with a luncheon hosted by the Office of Tibet in Washington, D.C. Among the notable attendees were Tencho Gyatso, the President of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), and Bhuchung K. Tsering of ICT's Research and Monitoring Unit. Although the luncheon maintained a casual atmosphere, the participants engaged in substantive strategic discussions, evaluating the current status of Tibetans and exploring potential developments under the Trump Administration.

Later, Sikyong met with Mary Beth of The Bridge Fund (TBF), a non-profit organisation dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture, language, and environment through community driven programs. For over 28 years, TBF has successfully implemented initiatives in Tibetan regions, fostering collaboration with local communities, including within the Tibetan Autonomous Region. As TBF approaches its closure, Mary Beth provided Sikyong with a comprehensive briefing on the organisation's achievements and projects in Tibet.

The day continued with a meeting between Sikyong and representatives from Baron, a prominent scholars, including Tashi and Suzette. Suzette, whose primary focus is the religious aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, expressed her desire to visit and explore Tibetan monasteries and nunneries within the Tibetan diaspora in India. She noted the growing interest in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly among individuals from China, and emphasised the significant role religion plays in fostering cross cultural connections. Sikyong offered his insights and recommendations to enhance her ideas. This engaging discussion was followed by a brief interview conducted by Namgyal Shastri from Voice of America (VOA).

On the second day of Sikyong's visit to the United States, the Office of Tibet in Washington, D.C., hosted a warm welcome reception in honour of Sikyong and the participants of the 22nd North American Tibetan Associations (NATA) Conference. The conference, scheduled to take place on 8 December at the NED Conference Hall, will bring together over 50 members, including the Presidents and Secretaries of 26 Tibetan

Associations out of a total 36 Tibetan Associations across the United States.

Speaker Emerita Pelosi to receive Light of Truth Award for unwavering support of Tibet

08 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



US Speaker Emerita speaking at the Tsuklakhang courtyard in Dharamshala in June 2024 in support of the Tibetan people (Photo/Mint)

Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi will be honoured with the prestigious *Light of Truth Award* by the Boards of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) for her unwavering commitment to the Tibetan people, their rights, and their struggle for freedom. The award will be presented to Speaker Pelosi on December 9 in the Speaker Nancy Pelosi Caucus Room (Cannon House Office Building).

Throughout her distinguished political career, Speaker Pelosi has been a tireless advocate for Tibet, demonstrating exceptional leadership in supporting Tibet. Pelosi's connection to Tibet dates back to 1989 when she became one of the first American politicians to meet with the Dalai Lama after he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This moment marked the beginning of a profound, decades-long friendship between Pelosi and the Tibetan spiritual leader, and she has since visited Dharamshala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, three times to meet with the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders.

One of Pelosi's earliest significant actions in support of Tibet came in 1991 when, as a member of Congress, she unfurled a pro-democracy banner in Tiananmen Square in Beijing to commemorate the victims of the 1989 massacre. This act of defiance served as a clear message to the Chinese government that the United States would not remain silent on human rights abuses, including those committed against Tibetans. Over the years, Pelosi has consistently condemned China's human rights violations, from the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in East Turkestan (Xinjiang) to the suppression of freedoms in Hong Kong and Tibet.

In 2008, during the widespread protests in Tibet and the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics, Pelosi made a bold stand by leading a congressional delegation to

Dharamshala. There, she met with the Dalai Lama, expressing her unwavering solidarity with the Tibetan people. Her visit was widely regarded as a powerful statement against China's repressive policies and sent a clear message that the international community was watching closely.

In 2007, Pelosi played a crucial role in the passage of the *Tibetan Policy Act*, which supports the preservation of Tibet's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage. The Act reinforced U.S. policy on Tibet and set clear goals to promote Tibet's autonomy and human rights. Pelosi's leadership continued in 2015 when she visited Tibet, despite heavy monitoring by Chinese authorities. Even under such restrictions, she managed to meet with local Tibetans and listen to their stories of resilience and resistance.

During her advocacy for the *Tibetan Policy and Support Act* in 2020, Pelosi famously stated, "If we don't speak out for human rights in China because of commercial interests, then we lose all moral authority to speak out for human rights in any other place in the world."

Richard Gere, Chairman of the ICT Board, expressed his admiration for Speaker Pelosi, stating, "It is my great pleasure as Chairman of the Board of the International Campaign for Tibet that we will be honouring our old friend Nancy Pelosi. Having worked closely with her for many decades, it is clear to me that she has a genuine reverence for His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as a deep and vast commitment to the just cause of Tibet and the Tibetan people. She is fearless."

Tencho Gyatso, President of the ICT, also lauded Pelosi's tireless efforts, stating, "We are so very lucky to have such steadfast partners in our work on behalf of the Tibetan people. Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi has been a tenacious voice for the movement since joining Congress. This is a well-deserved recognition of her many years of partnership with the people of Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She has never failed to put her seat at the table to work for good. For all her work, we thank her."

The *Light of Truth Award*, established in 1995, is presented to individuals and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to the public understanding of Tibet and the plight of the Tibetan people. Previous recipients include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Hugh Richardson, Congressman Benjamin Gilman, and other courageous individuals and groups that have supported the Tibetan cause.

REPORT: China's rampant dam-building spree could dislocate up to 1.2 million in Tibet

07 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has built or plans to build hundreds of hydropower dams in Tibet and data on a sample of 193 of them betray a formula for irreparable damage to the Tibetan civilization, the environment, downstream nations, and the climate, said Washington-based Tibet advocacy group International Campaign for Tibet (ICT, [savetibet.org](#)) in a new report Dec 5.

Tibet's glacial peaks are the headwaters of the region's eight major rivers with transnational flows. The report's rigorous research and advanced GIS mapping details the Chinese Communist Party's rampant construction of 100s of hydropower dams. Its first-of-kind interactive map allows users to see the impact each dam will have on local populations, religious sites, and surrounding land covers, the group said.

The report also presents alternatives for developing truly sustainable, renewable energy, the group added. "The scale and scope of the PRC's hydropower dam spree is both unbelievable and unconscionable," ICT President Tencho Gyatso has said.

"Beijing's disrespect for the Tibetan people's rights, its neighbours' fate, and the urgent moral and scientific demand to combat climate change could not be clearer. China must be stopped in its tracks and called to use its money, manpower, and innovation to advance solutions—not its political manoeuvring."

One of the report's key findings is that if completed, 1.2 million residents near the 193 dam project sites could be dislocated from their homes, communities, and livelihoods. Religious and sacred sites serving communities will also be destroyed.

This is because almost 80% of the dams studied in the report are large or mega dams (with over 100MW capacity).

However, 60% of these dams are either in proposal or preparation stages, presenting opportunities to change course, the report said.

The group calls on China to cease all planning, proposing, and construction, including projects underway, of large-scale hydropower dams in Tibet.

It calls on China to protect the right of the Tibetan people to participate in all development projects as per the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent. This would include an end to the forced dislocation of Tibetan communities.

The report calls on China to instead invest in properly sited and inclusively developed solar and wind power, as they do not carry the demonstrable environmental, climate, and social costs of hydropower. These projects should prioritize co-management, co-

benefits, and maintenance of traditional ways of life, and in particular, they should correspond to the needs of the local Tibetan population, it added.

The report also calls on China to engage in multi-lateral transboundary water policy forums to establish a mutually beneficial management architecture and data sharing norms.

"Hydrological data and dam project plans should not be used as bargaining tools leveraged against downstream states."

Lower TCV school fails to attract Tibetan students living abroad, to shut down in December

06 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhondup



Lower TCV School, one of the pioneering institutions in the Tibetan exile education system, boasting 40 years of operation will close its doors in December following an unsuccessful attempt to convert it into a dedicated chartered school for Tibetan children living abroad. The decision was confirmed by Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) Head Office, citing low enrollment and operational challenges.

Earlier this year, TCV initiated the transition of Lower TCV School into a residential chartered school specifically for Tibetan children raised overseas. The project, launched in August 2024, aimed to provide these children with an immersive experience in Tibetan language, culture, and identity. However, despite significant investments of time, resources and energy, the initiative attracted only six students.

In a social media post, TCV expressed its determination to address the growing challenge of Tibetan children abroad missing out on cultural education, "With high hope and anticipation, Lower TCV School was prepared, ready, and opened...but sadly only 6 Tibetan children have enrolled... Although lots of time, money, and energy were put into this program, TCV has still not lost its hope in this pursuit, despite all odds."

Speaking with Phayul, TCV General Secretary Choeying Dhondup said that Lower TCV School will close after the winter vacation on December 18, 2024. 54 students from India currently enrolled in the school will be transferred to other TCV schools of their choice.

The six foreign students will integrate with students at Upper TCV School starting March 2025 but will reside in a separate hostel with enhanced facilities, including internet access. To encourage more participation, the annual parental contribution for overseas students has been reduced to \$100 USD.

Choeying Dhondup elaborated on the decision, "There are only 64 students in Lower TCV School, supported by 24 staff members. The operational expenditure is high, and the infrastructure is deteriorating. Therefore, it was decided to transfer the children to other schools." He also hinted at potential future plans for the Lower TCV School campus, stating that the administration is considering "greater use" of the site, though no specific details were disclosed.

The closure of Lower TCV school reflects broader challenges faced by Tibetan schools in exile. Declining birth rates, ongoing migration to Western countries, and reduced numbers of Tibetan children arriving from Tibet have contributed to diminishing enrollment. Similar struggles have led to the recent closures of other Tibetan institutions, including STS Poanta Sahib and STS Dalhousie.

CTA President Penpa Tsering, during an earlier interview with *Phayul*, highlighted the need for systemic integration of Tibetan schools to ensure their long-term sustainability. He proposed consolidating schools to streamline administration, reduce costs, and enhance facilities.

"In terms of integration of schools, there are lots of questions on how we have to do it," Tsering said, emphasizing the complexity of balancing efficiency with the impact on staff and local communities. "One idea is to integrate schools zone-wise, starting with the Northeast, where most schools are under Sambhota. In Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, many schools are TCV. We must resolve this issue collectively to sustain these institutions over the long run."

Indologist who helped Jawaharlal Nehru to train army in Tibetan at Ladakh during Sino-Indian War, no more

06 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Rashtrapati Award winner Suniti Kumar Pathak was a key figure in establishment of India-Tibetan studies at Visva-Bharati.

-by *Snehamoy Chakraborty*

Suniti Kumar Pathak, a scholar chosen by Jawaharlal Nehru to train the army in Tibetan at Ladakh during the Sino-Indian War, passed away at his Abanpally residence in Santiniketan.

Rashtrapati Award winner and Indologist Pathak was a key figure in the establishment of India-Tibetan studies at Visva-Bharati.

Manabendra Mukhopadhyay, the head of the Bengali department at Visva-Bharati and a researcher on Pathak's work, said Pathak was one of the foremost scholars on Indo-Tibetan relations, Buddhism and Indology.

"Pandit Nehru had taken Pathak to help the Indian army with translation and training in Tibetan, for strategic reasons during the 1962 war. Later, he sought Nehru's permission to come back to Visva-Bharati and further pursue a life in academics," said Mukhopadhyay.

"He was an authority on Tibetan, Pali, Sanskrit, Mongolian, Chinese and Prakrit," he said, adding that Pathak had extensively travelled on foot in some of the remotest parts of the Himalayas, collecting field notes for his research and the 200-odd books he authored. [Click here](#) to read more.

Dalai Lama reflects on hardships and opportunities of exile at long-life prayer ceremony

06 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



His Holiness the Dalai Lama, wearing a hat from Kinnaur, addressing the congregation during the Long Life Prayer Offering in Dharamshala on Dec. 6, 2024 (Photo/Tenzin Choejor)

The people of Kinnaur, led by Khunu Gyabung Tulku Rinpoche, the chief organiser of the offering, gathered on Friday at Thekchen Choeling Tsuglakhang temple in Dharamshala to offer a Long Life Prayer (Tenshug) to the revered Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, wishing him a long and healthy life.

In his address, the Dalai Lama expressed heartfelt gratitude to the nunneries, monasteries, and the general public of Kinnaur for their ongoing devotion. He reflected on the significance of the Tibetan exile experience, stating, "Living in exile has offered us a unique opportunity. If we had remained in Tibet and followed our traditional ways, I personally would not have had the chance to engage with the scriptures as deeply as I have. Exile has allowed me to step away from the formal ceremonies and customs, enabling me to engage in a more meaningful way with the teachings. This exile has been beneficial for us in many ways. So, whether in Tibet or in exile, the devotion and

faith of the Tibetan people have remained unwavering, and I continue to do my best, dedicating myself to my work with sincerity.”

His Holiness further elaborated on the paradox of exile, acknowledging both its hardships and the opportunities it has created, “While we are separated from our homeland, exile has also presented us with a chance to connect with people from all over the world. This has allowed me to share my teachings with not just Tibetans and the Himalayan people but with individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds. What I teach is not limited to Buddhism alone. At its core, I believe it is important for all human beings to live with dignity, honesty, and kindness, cultivating a warm heart and good intentions to help others. This is the foundation of my teachings, and it is the reason why people, both believers and non-believers alike, appreciate them.”

The Dalai Lama emphasised that the essence of his message extends beyond religious doctrines, “In exile, I have had the privilege of meeting a wide variety of people. I teach them how to cultivate a peaceful mind, humility, love and compassion. By fostering harmony among all people, regardless of their beliefs, one can make one’s life meaningful. This is the message I hope to share with the world, and I believe it can benefit people everywhere, regardless of their faith or background.”

Today’s Long Life Prayer ceremony featured the visualisation of White Tara, the embodiment of the fulfilling wheel. The event concluded with an outpouring of devotion from the people of Kinnaur, who expressed their deep respect and admiration for His Holiness, as well as their ongoing prayers for his health and longevity.

Dharamshala facing potential drinking water crisis due to lack of rain

06 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

It has not rained for the past more than two months while there is lesser snow in the Dhauladhar mountain ranges, potentially affecting the drinking water supply in the Dharamshala region, reported the *tribuneindia.com* Dec 5, citing sources in the state’s water supply department. The development has raised focus on suggestion that check dams be built for ensuring a more stable water supply system. The report cited sources in the Jal Shakti Department as saying that if it does not rain in the next one week or so, the residents of Dharamshala might have to face cut in drinking water supply.

The sources have also said that the problem is likely to become acute in the coming months due to lesser snow in Dhauladhar mountain ranges.

Drinking water for Dharamshala city is stated to be sourced from Bhated and Gajj rivers flowing from Dhauladhar mountain ranges. And the water discharge in Bhated river has reduced to about half while, thankfully, Gajj river still has enough water to sustain supply to Dharamshala city, the report cited the sources as saying.

The city’s daily water supply stands at nine million litres per day, with the majority of the drinking water schemes being gravity based and sourced from the two rivers.

The report cited local resident as saying they had not experienced such a long dry spell in their lifetime in the region.

Most of the water supply systems in the hill areas of Himachal Pradesh are sourced from surface water sources such as rivers and stream. Due to the changing rain patterns, experts have been suggesting that the Jal Shakti Department should rely on small check dams on rivers and streams as source for drinking water schemes.

The old designs of directly sourcing water from natural rivers and streams was facing challenges due to lesser snow in higher reaches of mountains and changing rain patterns, the report said.

Parliamentary Committee to Review the Rules and Regulation of Parliamentary Procedure and Conduct of the Business of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

06 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Parliamentary Committee to Review the Rules and Regulation of Parliamentary Procedure and Conduct of the Business of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

A committee comprising parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende, Youdon Aukatsang, and Lobsang Thupten convened earlier today to review the *Rules and Regulations for Parliamentary Procedures and Conduct of Business of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile*, specifically focusing on the provisions related to the removal of dignitaries of the Central Tibetan Administration. The committee

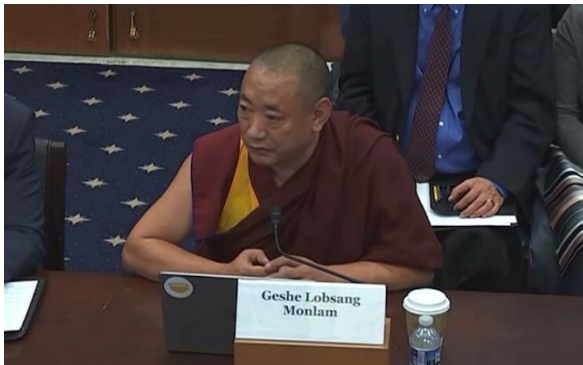
unanimously elected Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende as chair and Youdon Aukatsang as secretary. This committee was formed following the decision of the 8th session of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. After the first reading of the bill amendment during the 8th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, and based on a general consensus of opinions, it was agreed that a comprehensive review should be undertaken. This review aims to improve the existing regulation or, if deemed necessary, to create a new regulation with corresponding provisions, based on the feedback from that session and previous draft proposals.

Before commencing their work, committee members held a preliminary meeting with Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang to receive necessary guidance.

The committee is expected to submit its report, along with a draft proposing amendments to the relevant rules and regulations, to the Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat by 11 March 2025.

Dr. Lobsang Monlam testify before US Commission on China in Washington D.C.

06 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Screen grab of Dr. Lobsang Monlam testifying at the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Dr. Lobsang Monlam, the founder and CEO of the Monlam Tibetan IT Research Center, testified on Thursday at a hearing of the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) in Washington, D.C. The hearing, titled “The Preservation of Memory: Combating the CCP’s Historical Revisionism and Erasure of Culture,” was chaired by Representative Christopher Smith and co-chaired by Senator Jeff Merkley.

In his testimony, Dr. Monlam addressed the grave challenges facing the Tibetan language and culture, both within Tibet and among the global Tibetan diaspora. He pointed to recent developments, such as the closure of Tibetan-centric schools like Ragya Ganjong Sherig Norbulung and the relocation of students to state-run institutions, as evidence of the

Chinese government’s ongoing policies of cultural assimilation.

“In Tibet, the policy of cultural assimilation of Tibetans by the Chinese government is systematically undermining Tibetan language and cultural identity,” he stated. “One of the most concerning aspects of this is the imposition of Mandarin as the primary language of instruction in schools—even in those that claim to offer bilingual education. Additionally, an estimated 80% of Tibetan children are sent to state-run boarding schools where Mandarin is prioritised, further disconnecting them from their cultural heritage.”

Dr. Monlam also shed light on the difficulties faced by Tibetans in exile, particularly younger generations born outside of traditional Tibetan communities. “Many young Tibetans, born and raised outside of the communities in exile established for Tibetans, lack regular exposure to their native language, hindering their ability to learn and appreciate it. Limited post-education opportunities as well as opportunities for higher education in Tibetan further compel them to rely on other languages, increasing the distance from their cultural roots,” he explained.

He emphasised the diminishing Tibetan population, both within Tibet and abroad, has further compounded these challenges. While community-led efforts, such as Tibetan language schools, monasteries, and cultural institutions, are working to preserve the language, these initiatives often struggle due to limited funding and resources.

Dr. Monlam further highlighted the ongoing suppression of Tibetan culture within Tibet, which he described as a key factor contributing to the erosion of traditions and cultural disintegration. He also acknowledged the resilience of the Tibetan exile community, which has made notable efforts to safeguard Tibetan culture and language through educational institutions, the Central Tibetan Administration’s policies, and various grassroots initiatives.

Despite these efforts, Dr. Monlam called for more modern, strategic, and comprehensive tools to support Tibetan education, cultural preservation, and global engagement. He highlighted the work of the Monlam Tibetan IT Research Center, which has been instrumental in developing technology to preserve the Tibetan language. The organization has compiled the Grand Tibetan Dictionary, the most extensive Tibetan lexicon to date, and developed 42 software applications, including advanced tools for optical character recognition (OCR), machine translation, and AI-driven language models.

“These ground-breaking technologies have achieved remarkable success, garnering over millions of usages and effectively bridging linguistic and technological barriers within Tibet and the global diaspora,” Dr. Monlam said. “Looking ahead, the Monlam

organization has an ambitious vision for the future. We are actively developing a foundational Tibetan/Culture-focused Large Language Model (LLM). As part of our commitment to education and ethical AI development, we are exploring the creation of an AI model based on His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama. This model could be used to develop educational resources, promote conflict resolution, and foster ethical decision-making in AI systems.”

Hollywood star Whitaker, well known for his charity work, visits Dalai Lama

05 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Hollywood actor, producer, and director Forest Steven Whitaker whose accolades include an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, a British Academy Film Award, and two Screen Actors Guild Awards, has on Dec 4 met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his exile residence in Dharamshala, India. He has also called on the exile Tibetans’ democratically elected political leader, the Sikyong, just ahead of the latter’s trip to the USA.

“It is a great opportunity to get a chance to see him again,” the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* Dec 4 quoted Whitaker, 63, as saying, after meeting with the Dalai Lama.

“I’ve been given a lot of blessings by the Tibetan people and, of course, by His Holiness today,” the report quoted Whitaker as saying, accompanied by his daughter Sonnet Noel Whitaker, 28.

“I have met him before but I was overcome with feelings when I saw him today. I just wished him better health and a long life and love. I think he is a symbol of peace.”

Whitaker had previously met with the Dalai Lama in Jul 2017 during an event hosted by Starkey Hearing Technologies in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. At that time, Whitaker moderated a panel discussion on “A Call for Compassion and Conscious Kindness,” in which the Dalai Lama was a participant, along with Starkey owner Bill Austin and Starkey’s chief philanthropy officer, Tani Austin, the report noted.

While in Dharamshala, Whitaker has also met with Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the executive head of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), on Dec 3. He also visited the Tibet Museum and Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, located within the CTA complex, Dec 4. Whitaker has spent much of his time over the past decade dedicated to humanitarian work. In 2011, he was appointed the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation. UNESCO also appointed him, in 2014, its Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation.

In 2012, he founded the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI), which implements

peace-building programmes in conflict affected communities throughout the world, with focus on training youths in conflict resolution and developing businesses in areas of conflict. WPDI’s programmes are currently operating throughout Africa, Mexico, and the United States.

He has won numerous doctorate and other awards as well in diverse other fields of his works.

Kyabje Kundeling Rinpoche Represents Tibetan Buddhism at World Interfaith Conference in the Vatican

05 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche addressing the gathering during World Interfaith Conference in the Vatican.

In the gracious presence of Pope Francis, the World Interfaith Conference organised by the Sree Narayana Gurukulam Trust, in collaboration with the Italy-based Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, was convened on 29 and 30 November 2024 in the Vatican. As a representative of the Tibetan Buddhists, Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche attended the conference alongside reverent spiritual leaders and priests from the world’s major religious groups, public figures, and scholars.

During the meeting, Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church and sovereign of the Vatican City State, commended the organisers for this event and said, “The lack of respect for the noble teachings of religions is one of the causes of the troubled situation in which the world finds itself today.” The Pope further stressed that good moral teachings should be practised to make a positive contribution to the world through harmonious cooperation among different religious traditions.

In his address, Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche introduced the noble commitments of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and underscored the need to promote religious harmony during the World Interfaith Conference. Rinpoche further spoke about harnessing the spiritual power of different religions to

address the multiple sufferings currently afflicting the world, working together towards world peace through deep and meaningful interfaith cooperation, providing moral guidance to the new generation of youth and empowering them to make positive contributions and create a more compassionate and harmonious future for all.

Moreover, during his one-on-one meetings with the Pope, Kundeling Rinpoche presented a book authored by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as a memento.

The organising committee also extended their invitation to Kundeling Rinpoche to attend a religious conference that is scheduled for 2025 in England.

Symposium on Enhancing Tibetan School Education Begins in Dharamshala

05 December 2024, [CTA](#)



Symposium on Enhancing Tibetan School Education Begins in Dharamshala. Photo / Tenzin Phende / CTA

A two-day *Symposium on Enhancing Tibetan School Education* commenced earlier this morning in Dharamshala at the Hotel Norbu House to deliberate on further developing the quality of the existing Tibetan education system, formulating and strategising for future education-driven initiatives, and nurturing Tibetan students in line with the principles of Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile.

Professor Ven Samdong Rinpoche, the former Kalon Tripa of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), graced the opening ceremony of the symposium as its chief guest, along with Kalon (Minister) Tharlam Dolma Changra and Secretary Jigme Namgyal Namgyalkhang from the Department of Education (DoE).

The event began with a welcome address from Secretary Jigme Namgyal, who succinctly provided an introduction to the objectives of the Tibetan education system. “Education has been one of the top priorities of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama after coming into exile. Recognising its transformative importance, His Holiness emphasised the importance of providing the Tibetan children with traditional and modern quality education because it is the only way to develop a

brighter future,” said the Education Secretary and further elaborated on the subsequent establishment of Tibetan schools in exile.

“Today, we have 62 schools in India and Nepal under four different school systems.” For this, the Secretary acknowledged gratitude to all the respective governments and supporters for their assistance in Tibetan education endeavours in exile. “Out of the modest budget of the Central Tibetan Administration, we allocate around 30 per cent for the education of Tibetan children”, which he proudly affirmed that it surpasses the figures of some of the leading nations in the world. However, the Secretary disclosed the presence of a few shortcomings that impede the success of Tibetan education, which aims to foster students with “genuine human intelligence”. According to him, the objectives also include nurturing responsible Tibetans who are dedicated to advancing the Tibetan cause. He underscored the importance of such conferences in identifying solutions and devising strategies.

Following this, each participant of the symposium introduced themselves before the gathering. The participants consist of Kamala Makunda, Teacher, Centre for Learning, Bangalore; Karma Chungdak, Founding and Former Director, Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society; Krishna Kumar, Former Director, NCERT; Latika Gupta, Assistant Professor, DoE, University of Delhi; Geshe Lhakdor, Director of Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala; Neha Vaidya, Chief Operating Officer, iTeach Schools; Padma M. Sarangapani, Education Professor and Chairperson, CETE, TISS Mumbai; and Tenzin Tsenlek, Former Education Director, Tibetan Children’s Village.

With a brief self-introduction, Education Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra presented an overview of the DoE and its key responsibilities with a particular spotlight on the undertakings of the CTA’s Education Council and Advisory Committee. The Kalon stated that all the members of this committee had made assessment visits to Tibetan schools beginning from 2019 to understand the ground realities and recognise ways to improve flaws in the system.

The Education Kalon voiced her concerns over two issues that came to the members’ attention after the visits. “One of the biggest concerns is the declining enrolment. In 2012, the strength (of students in Tibetan schools) was 23,684. Now, in 2024, it is 13,035, which declined more than ten thousand,” Kalon stated. Despite the DoE’s intensified efforts in improving Tibetan education standards through various workshops and other initiatives, the problem of this dwindling enrolment arises from three primary reasons: the cessation in the regular number of Tibetans coming from Tibet since 2008, the increase in

Tibetans emigrating to west from Tibetan settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan, and the falling birth rate of the exile Tibetan community.

The second concern, Kalon Tharlam Dolma said, is the number of Tibetan children with special needs. She revealed that 294 students under this category currently study within the four education systems: TCV, THF, STSS and Snowlion Foundation.

In his keynote address, Kalon Trisur Ven Samdong Rinpoche shared his profound insights on the Buddhist perspective of education and highlighted the pivotal roles of educators, parents, and school administration in achieving positive academic outcomes. Rinpoche further highlighted the complementary practices of hearing, contemplating, and meditating for dispelling ignorance in students' minds and awakening their understanding, which he said is the fundamental purpose of education.

Kalon Trisur Ven Samdong Rinpoche, who has served as Principal at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi, as well as at the Central School For Tibetans, Dalhousie, remarked, "Merely hearing (information) is like temporarily borrowing someone else's knowledge. Without deep contemplation, simply hearing something is insufficient. Therefore, it's crucial to use contemplation to deeply understand what has been heard and ultimately internalise the knowledge through meditation."

In addition, Rinpoche emphasised the importance of mutual engagement in the educational process, stressing that both teachers and students should view themselves as learners. He highlighted that true learning occurs when both parties actively participate in the process of growth and discovery. In particular, Rinpoche remarked that if students show shortcomings, it is the teacher's responsibility to address these gaps, inspire curiosity, and ignite a passion for knowledge in the students' minds, without which, education may become a burden to students. Finally, Rinpoche stressed the importance of Tibetan Buddhist teachings as a foundation for the immediate and long-term well-being of humans. He implored Tibetan youths to take responsibility for maintaining and propagating Buddhist learning and practice.

Before concluding the inaugural, Additional Secretary Tenzin Dorjee, Head of the Academic Section of the DOE, conveyed a vote of thanks.

Tibetans in France protests against Musée Guimet for 11th time

04 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Tibetan protestors outside the Musée Guimet on December 1, 2024 (Photo/SFT)

Tibetan activists and supporters in France held their 11th protest outside the Musée Guimet on Sunday, intensifying their call for the museum to end what they describe as the systematic erasure of Tibetan identity. They denounced the renaming of the Tibetan exhibition to "Himalayan World" as a deliberate act of negating Tibet's existence and cultural distinctiveness. The protest, organised by Students for a Free Tibet France (SFT France), was bolstered by the presence of Pema Doma, Executive Director of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), who traveled from New York to stand in solidarity with the activists and the Tibetan community in Paris.

Addressing the crowd, Pema Doma highlighted the enduring struggle for Tibetan's survival and identity. "I was born in the United States to a daughter of refugees. When my mother was born, her father was a prisoner. He spent years in prison because he was fighting for the Tibetan people. Decades later, I find myself here in Paris, fighting the same battle for the protection of our Tibetan cause and our community," she said.

Pema also praised the resilience of the Tibetan diaspora and underscored Paris's significance as home to one of the largest Tibetan exile communities outside Asia. She expressed profound disappointment in Musée Guimet's director, Yannick Lintz, for renaming the museum's Tibetan exhibition to "Himalayan World." According to Pema, the change undermines Tibet's distinct cultural identity and panders to external pressures, likely from the Chinese government.

Pema firmly rejected attempts to dilute Tibet's historical and cultural significance. "Tibet has existed for thousands of years—over 10,000 years," she asserted. "The decision by Yannick Lintz to change the exhibition from Tibet to "Himalayan World" at Musée Guimet just to satisfy those who may be pressuring her

shows that she is not fulfilling the duties of her responsibility to this museum, the Tibetan community in Paris, the French people, and millions of Tibetan people around the world.”

She drew attention to the harsh realities facing Tibet today, emphasising the Chinese government’s attempts to erase Tibetan identity through measures such as colonial boarding schools, where over one million Tibetan children are currently being raised under Chinese state control. “The Chinese government would not like Tibet, Tibetan people, language, religion, history, and culture to exist. The French should not be complicit in that mission.”

Concluding her address, Pema called upon museum visitors to recognise and honour Tibet’s existence. “Tibet should not be silenced and Tibet exists. No amount of propaganda will ever change the fact,” she declared.

On their social media platform, SFT France reaffirmed their unwavering stance, demanding the immediate restoration of the name. “Tibet is not a geographical concept. It is a people, a nation, a memory, a civilisation. Each object in this collection carries the history of a people being silenced. We will not be silent. Tibet will remain Tibet,” the statement read.

The protest campaign has gained additional significance following its victory at Paris’s Musée du quai Branly, which reversed its use of the term “Xizang” to “Tibet” for its Tibetan artefacts after public protest.

Representative Tsering Yangkyi Makes Inspection Visit to Sunday School for Tibetan Language and Culture in London

03 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Representative Tsering Yangkyi of the Office of Tibet, London, made an inspection visit to the Sunday School for Tibetan Language and Culture in London on 1 December 2024.

The visit began with a brief overview of the school by Tenzin Zeydhan from the Office of Tibet. The Representative was introduced to the teachers, the parents’ committee, and the classrooms of the school, which are named Potala, Yumbu Lakhang, Norling, and *Dranyen* class.

Thereafter, the Representative examined each class, spending approximately 15 minutes and engaged with the students. She encouraged incorporating the Tibetan language in one’s daily communications with fellow Tibetans and emphasised the role of parents in realising this effort. Further underscoring the continued existence of such Tibetan language schools in the West to ensure the preservation of Tibetan language and culture, the Representative implored parents to enrol their children in these schools. “More

than reiterating one’s devotion to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, it is imperative that we must demonstrate it through our actions,” said Representative Tsering Yangkyi.

During the discussions with teachers, the latter shared that, despite the challenges, they were encouraged by hearing about the strong Tibetan language skills of students from England during their Summer School programs in Dharamshala.

The Representative commended the teachers for their dedication to teaching Tibetan alongside their regular work, calling it a significant contribution. She emphasised that their efforts are taking place at a critical time for the survival of the Tibetan language, a moment almost unprecedented in Tibetan history. She further urged them to continue striving to fulfil the noble wishes of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, especially as he ages, and encouraged everyone to contribute to the community’s goals to the best of their abilities.

A member of the parents’ committee, Khenrab, then delivered a vote of thanks before wrapping up the event.

Tibetan Artists Festival concludes with vision of forming Tibetan Arts Council

02 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



(L-R) Tsering Paljor, Ngawang Sherab and Jhola Techung performing 'Ngatso Bod kyi Drokpa' at the closing ceremony of the festival on Dec.1, 2024 (Phayul photo)

The Tibetan Artists Festival, a vibrant three-day celebration of Tibetan creativity and heritage organised by TibetWrites, concluded on Sunday night with a landmark announcement. During the closing ceremony, Bob Ankerson, President of the Tibet Fund, announced the formation of the Tibetan Arts Council, a transformative initiative aimed at empowering Tibetan artists and amplifying their voices globally. He acknowledged TibetWrites’ efforts to better understand the aspirations and needs of the Tibetan artist community, drawing parallels between their mission and that of the Tibet Fund. “Over the past

several years, we have been supporting organisations such as Drung, TibetWrites, and Khadhok,” he noted. Ankerson shared insights into the festival’s brainstorming sessions, where participating artists identified challenges and opportunities in the Tibetan arts ecosystem. One of the top priorities was the establishment of a Tibetan Arts Council, envisioned as a free and open membership association for Tibetan artists and arts organisations.

“This council will be shaped and driven by the Tibetan artist community itself,” Ankerson said, announcing the formation of an interim steering committee to map out the council’s structure and an international advisory board comprising established Tibetan artists to guide its initiatives. “On behalf of the Tibet Fund, we look forward to facilitating the next steps of mapping out the specifics and then helping to support and raise funds for new initiatives in the coming years.”



Bob Ankerson addressing the gathering during closing ceremony of the Tibetan Artists Festival in Dharamshala on Dec. 1, 2024

Reflecting on the significance of the festival, Ankerson expressed deep admiration for the participating artists, emphasising their critical role in keeping the Tibetan culture vibrant and creative as it evolves, adapts, and transforms over time. “We don’t know what the next generations of Tibetan artists will create in 20 and 30 years but I am pretty sure, they will be inspired by your creations in the same way that many of you were once inspired by Rangzen Tsundue and Jhola Paljor,” he remarked.

The event was also attended by President Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). In his speech, President Tsering highlighted the remarkable progress the Tibetan community has achieved over the past 65 years under the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, including significant strides in the arts—ranging from writing and cultural performances to poetry and painting. He emphasised that if arts and creativity continue to play an active role in advancing the Tibetan cause, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is committed to supporting and fostering the artistic community.

He also acknowledged the panel discussions held during the festival, which he noted were a first in exile,

expressing hope for continued positive progress. He lauded the festival as a valuable platform for raising awareness about the Tibetan cause, not only within the exile community but also among a broader global audience.

Bhuchung D. Sonam, who is responsible for the conception of the festival told *Phayul*, “I am very happy that we were able to organise the Tibetan Artists Festival. As far as I know, this is the first time something like this has been done. Bringing together nearly 30 artists from Canada, Australia, the US, and across India to a place like this for three days is, in itself, a great success. Many of the artists returned to Dharamshala after many years, and they recognised the potential of art as a significant cultural soft power. It has also inspired them to continue engaging in their creative pursuits, such as making music and writing books, when they return to their respective places,” he said.

Speaking on the eventual formation of the Tibetan Arts Council, Bhuchung highlighted the challenges faced by Tibetan artists scattered across different countries. “Right now, our artists are dispersed across various nations, functioning within diverse cultural backgrounds and political circumstances. This fragmentation causes us to lose valuable opportunities, including funding, to create a unified platform for showcasing our work,” he explained.

He noted the lack of awareness among artists about available platforms and resources. “Writers, artists, and musicians each have their own spheres, but many are unaware of the possibilities available to them. We hope the Tibetan Arts Council will eventually establish networks and systems to provide not just financial support but also other resources to raise awareness through the work of artists spread across different countries,” Bhuchung stated.

CM lauds pivotal role of Tibetans in preserving ancient Indian philosophy

02 December 2024, [Arunachal Observer](#), Pradeep Kumar

The Tibetans have played a pivotal role in preserving ancient Indian knowledge, philosophy and Buddhist traditions. Their selfless efforts have ensured the survival of our rich cultural heritage, said Chief Minister Pema Kahndu while discussing future strategy for their settlement with Tibetan Settlement Officers. Dharamshala-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), in *Tibet.com*, quoted CM Khandu as saying, “I had the opportunity to meet with Tibetan Settlement Officers and members of Tibet Support Group of Arunachal Pradesh (TSGAP)”. He assured all possible support to Tibetan community living in settlements,

like Tenzingaon, Miao, Tezu and Tuting, which is doing rounds in social media platform.

The CM also lauded proactive role of TSGAP, particularly president Tarh Tarak and secretary general Nima Sange (who were in the team).

In appreciation, Kalsang Tseten wrote: "Thank you so much, Honorable Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu Ji, for your unwavering support for Tibet and the Tibetan cause. Your genuine dedication to the Tibetan people and your steadfast faithfulness to His Holiness the Dalai Lama will forever be remembered and cherished by Tibetans worldwide.

"May the blessings of His Holiness empower you with wisdom and strength to continue leading Arunachal Pradesh with grace and vision, ushering in progress and prosperity for your state and its people. Your leadership is an inspiration, and we are deeply grateful for your enduring solidarity with Tibet".

The TSGAP and Core Group for Tibetan Cause-India (CGTC-I) are off springs of 1959 **Tibetan uprising and giving momentum to the case.**

Facilitated by India Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO), the CBTC-I, had met in New Delhi's Bureau of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, chaired by its national convener R.K. Khrimy, to mainly focus on its by-laws.. The meeting was attended by prominent figures, including Bureau of His Holiness The Dalai Lama representative Jigmey Jungney, CTA Information and International Relations department additional secretary Tenzin Lekshay, national co-conveners Ven. Lama Chosphele Zotpa, Delhi CGTC-I regional convener Pankaj Goyal, Surender Kumar and Arvind Nicose. .

After address of ITCO acting coordinator Tashi Dekyi and keynote address of Khrimy, all had indepth discussion on new and existing suggestions of members which generated a positive and energetic atmosphere, reinforcing the collective commitment to the cause of Tibet and the pursuit of truth.

The CGTC-I serves as the central apex body of all Tibetan Support Groups (TSGs) across India, dedicated to advocating for the restoration of basic human rights and freedoms for the people of Tibet.

Moreover, the TSGAP led by Tarak is meeting often besides visiting Tibetan settlement areas to take stock of prevailing situation and apprising the inhabitants on various ongoing initiatives to ensure their return to Tibet.

Tibetan uprising on 10 March 1959, which erupted in Tibet capital Lhasa following invasion of of the People's Republic of China (PRC) after the Seventeen Point Agreement was reached in 1951 that changed the course of political history.

The Tibetan protesters feared that the PRC might arrest their spiritual leader the 14th Dalai Lama. Though the uprising initially was peaceful protests, but clashes quickly erupted as the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) used force to quell the protests.

The 14th Dalai Lama escaped from Lhasa, while the city was fully retaken by Chinese security forces. Thousands of Tibetans were killed during the uprising. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began had given covert support to the rebellion and the rebellion had spread to Lhasa which had filled with refugees. Opposition to the Chinese presence in Tibet grew in Lhasa.

In mid-February 1959 the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party's administrative office circulated an internal report in Xinhua News Agency on how "the revolts in the Tibetan region have gathered pace and developed into a nearly full-scale rebellion," in a "situation report" for top CCP leaders.

On 10.03.1959, the 14th Dalai Lama with members of his family and his Govt disguised in PLA uniform left Norbulingka palace and entered Lhun-tse Dzong on March 26 when the Dalai Lama he sent a letter to Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru explaining the political situation in Tibet and requesting asylum.

The CIA also cabled Nehru's office seeking permission for the Dalai Lama's party to cross the border. In response, Nehru sent a detachment of the Assam Rifles to the border post in Chuthangmu near Tawang. The Dalai Lama and his entourage crossed the McMahon Line on March 31. The same day, Nehru made an announcement in the Parliament that the Dalai Lama should be treated with respect. He had reached Tawang and stayed in Tawang Monastery before proceeding to Dharamshala where the GoI had allowed to set up the Tibetan Govt in Exile headquarters.

. About 80,000 Tibetans followed the Dalai Lama to India within the next year, but data put global Tibetans diaspora at around 1.5 lakh.

Young Tibetans Gathered for Europe V-TAG Strategy Meeting in Stockholm

01 December 2024, [CTA](#)

More than 30 young Tibetans, primarily members of the Tibetan Youth Association (V-TAG) from six regions (Sweden, UK, Norway, France, Belgium and the Netherlands) under the jurisdiction of the Offices of Tibet in London and Brussels, gathered in Stockholm, Sweden, for a three-day Europe V-TAG Strategy meeting and training. The meeting was organised by the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and was facilitated locally by the Tibetan Community in Sweden.

The meeting opened with a welcome address by Lobsang, president of the Tibetan Community in Sweden, followed by an inaugural speech from Tenzin Lekshay, Official Spokesperson and Additional Secretary for International Relations at the DIIR.

Additional Secretary Lekshay highlighted the importance of empowering young Tibetans to advocate for the Tibetan cause, emphasising the need to build the capacities of the youth for future leadership in the Tibetan movement.

The first day featured a talk by Mattias Bjornerstedt, Chairperson of the Swedish Tibet Committee, who discussed the challenges and opportunities for Tibetan advocacy in Europe. Drawing on his extensive experience with the Tibetan cause, Bjornerstedt provided valuable insights into the current landscape and the future potential for European engagement.

Country coordinators from the V-TAG groups in the UK, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands also shared their reports, reflecting on past activities and outlining their plans for the future.

In the afternoon, Wangpo Tethong, Executive Director of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), Europe, led a training session on effective advocacy, engaging participants in group discussions aimed at strengthening their advocacy skills.

The day's sessions concluded with a cultural celebration, as participants enjoyed traditional Tibetan dances, showcasing the vibrant cultural heritage of Tibet.

Ven. Thupten Wangchen and Thupten Gyatso, members of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile from Europe; Thupten Tsering, Coordinator of the Office of Tibet, France; Tenzin Kunga, Secretary of the Office of Tibet, London; Tenzin Phuntsok, EU Coordinator of the Office of Tibet, Brussels; and Ngawang Choedhar, DIIR Project Officer attended the meeting.

The meeting aims to further empower Tibetan youth (V-TAG) across Europe, providing them with the tools and strategies needed to continue their advocacy work for the Tibetan cause.

Tibetan government-in-exile flags 'colonial style' schools at UN forum

01 December 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Dar Ovais

UN advocacy officer from the Tibet Bureau Geneva condemned the Chinese government for what he described as a systematic campaign of cultural destruction that threatens the survival of Tibetan identity

With the Dharamshala-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) repeatedly accusing China of forcibly enrolling Tibetan children in the colonial-style boarding schools in occupied Tibet, the critical schooling situation was also flagged at the recently held 17th United Nations Forum on Minority Issues at Geneva.

During the session on "minority representation in education", Phuntsok Topgyal, the UN advocacy officer from the Tibet Bureau Geneva condemned the

Chinese government for what he described as a systematic campaign of cultural destruction that threatens the survival of Tibetan identity.

Notably, the officer disclosed that over 1 million Tibetan children have been forcibly enrolled in colonial-style boarding schools where Tibetan language instruction is banned, and Mandarin is enforced as the only medium of communication. He further detailed the demolition of sacred sites like Atsok Monastery and the relocation of Tibetan populations from their ancestral lands.

"The persecution is not limited to infrastructure and education," Topgyal said, adding, "Advocates for Tibetan cultural preservation face severe repression, with individuals like Tsering Tso detained for speaking out against ethnic discrimination. The removal of young monks from religious institutions signals a direct attack on the transmission of Tibetan traditions to future generations."

Earlier, the CTA had called for immediate intervention to the situation from the international communities, stating that China's continuation and strengthening of compulsory and colonial-style boarding schools across Tibet is resulting in cultural erasure and loss of Tibetan identity.

The CTA had in September said the recent reports from reliable sources in the Ngaba region of Tibet have raised serious concerns about China's educational policies and practices that are targeted at young Tibetan monks and nuns and pose a threat to the preservation of traditional Tibetan culture, religion, and way of life.

The UN Forum on Minority Issues meets annually for two working days allocated to thematic discussions pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 6/15 of September 28, 2007, and resolution 19/23 of March 23, 2012. This year, the theme of the UN Forum was the representation and self-representation of minorities in public spaces and discourses.

Based on the dialogue and contributions of the participants a summary of the discussion of the Forum will be prepared by the Chairperson of the UN Forum, and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues prepares a report on the recommendations of the UN Forum to the Human Rights Council.

CHINA POLITICS

Corruption galore in China's new detention system targeting the corrupt, dissent

30 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has built or expanded more than 200 specialized detention facilities nationwide under a new law to interrogate suspects ensnared in Xi Jinping's widening anti-corruption drive as the Chinese leader extends his crackdown beyond the ruling Communist Party to a vast swath of public sectors, reported the *edition.cnn.com* Dec 28. However, the anti-corruption campaign is seen as selective, mainly targeting those seen as threat to the Xi Jinping leadership, besides being prone to abuse by a corrupt officialdom, and therefore largely ineffective, according to this report and the *firstpost.com* Dec 28. Indeed, the *CNN* investigation report noted that since taking power in 2012, Xi had launched a sweeping campaign against graft and disloyalty, taking down corrupt officials as well as political rivals at an unprecedented speed and scale as he consolidated control over the party and the military.

The expanded detention regime, named "liuzhi," or "retention in custody," comes with facilities with padded surfaces and round-the-clock guards in every cell, where detainees can be held under harrowing conditions for up to six months without ever seeing a lawyer or family members, said the *edition.cnn.com* report.

The report called it an extension of a system long used by the party to exert control and instil fear among its members.

A National Supervisory Commission (NSC) was founded in 2018 as part of the constitutional revision that cleared the way for Xi to rule for life. It consolidated the government's anti-graft forces and merged them with the party's disciplinary arm, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). The two agencies work hand in glove and share the same offices, same personnel and even the same website – an arrangement that expands the remit of the party's internal graft watchdog to the entire public sector.

A criminal defence lawyer, requesting anonymity due to fears of retribution from the government, has said many of their clients had detailed abuse, threats and forced confessions while in liuzhi custody.

"Most of them would succumb to the pressure and agony. Those who resisted until the end were a tiny minority," the lawyer said.

The report cited state media as saying the expanded jurisdiction fills longstanding loopholes in the party's anti-corruption fight and enables graft busters to go after everyday abuse of power endemic in the country's behemoth public sector, from bribes and

kickbacks in hospitals to misappropriation of school funds.

However, critics say it is another example of the party's ever-tightening grip over the state and all aspects of society under Xi, China's most powerful and authoritarian leader in decades, it added.

The spate of construction of liuzhi centres appears to be largely driven by a surge in demand for detention cells due to the NSC's new broad remit, as well as efforts to make liuzhi facilities more standardized and regulated than the hotels and villas often used for a controversial practice – now disbanded – known as “shuanggui,” or “double designation”, before the NSC was established and which targeted party officials, the report said.

Authorities are seen to have laid down standard construction rules for liuzhi centres – including a national plan for building these facilities between 2023 and 2027 – which is a financial burden especially for poor local administrations.

For example, the report noted that Dingxi, one of the poorest cities in the northwestern province of Gansu, had said its 305-million-yuan (\$42 million) detention centre would be built following requirements specified by the CCDI and NSC to achieve the “standardized, law-based, and professional operations” of the liuzhi facility.

This massive complex, featuring 542 rooms, will include 32 detention cells, accommodation for investigators and guards to live on site, as well as other facilities to meet their daily needs, according to a 2024 budget document of the city's anti-graft agency, the report said.

Despite a national supervision law, introduced in 2018 to regulate the NSC, legal experts have said the legislation only wraps a thin veil of legality around a detention regime that operates outside the judicial system, lacks external oversight and remains inherently prone to abuse.

“In the past, it was extra-legal. Now, some critics call it ‘legally illegal,’” a Chinese legal scholar who has studied the NSC has said, speaking on condition of anonymity, citing fears of government retribution.

And China's opaque court system, which answers to the Communist Party, already boasts a conviction rate above 99%, the report noted.

Abuses of the system appear to be common. In September, Zhou Tianyong, a top economist and former professor at the elite Central Party School, where the Communist Party trains its senior officials, warned that local authorities had been using corruption probes to extort money from private entrepreneurs to fill their strained coffers, the report said.

It said that in recent years, allegations of abuse and forced confessions had emerged in multiple liuzhi cases publicized online. For example, Chen Jianjun, an

architect-turned-local official, has claimed that he was deceived and forced into making false confessions of bribe-taking while detained under liuzhi in 2022 in the northwestern city of Xianyang.

Given the extreme conditions under which liuzhi detainees are held, “where both the body and the mind are pushed to their limits,” it becomes increasingly difficult to tell whether the detainee is giving an “honest confession” based on facts or opting for “full cooperation” by compromising the truth under unbearable pressure, the report cited Dacheng, a Beijing-based law firm, as saying said in an article on its social media account.

Structural reforms to address systemic corruption have yet to be implemented– or even fully ideated– leaving the root causes of graft largely unaddressed. While the crackdown has removed numerous officials, its long-term effectiveness remains uncertain, noted the *firstpost.com* report.

China makes room for younger faces on middle rungs of Communist Party promotions ladder

28 December 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

A number of ‘post-70s’ officials born between 1970 and 1979 have achieved full ministerial rank this year

A slew of cadres in their early 50s clinched significant administrative positions with full ministerial rank this year, as China's ruling [Communist Party](#) moves younger faces into mid-tier leadership positions.

The latest to be promoted was Liu Jie, 54, who was made acting governor of Zhejiang in eastern China on December 18. Zhejiang is well known as a power base of President [Xi Jinping](#), who governed the province in the early 2000s.

Liu's appointment makes him China's youngest provincial governor. He is also the third “[post-70s](#)” [cadre](#) – a term used to describe officials born between 1970 and 1979 – to achieve full ministerial rank.

After graduating from University of Science and Technology Beijing with a degree in metallurgy, Liu started his career in 1992 as a technician with Xiangtan Iron and Steel Group in central Hunan province.

He spent nearly 15 years with the state-owned firm, rising to general manager before being appointed director of the Hunan Department of Commerce in 2008.

After a decade-long rotation to Jiangxi province in the southeast and Guizhou in the southwest, Liu's career took a decisive leap in 2021 when he was picked to replace a scandal-hit party boss in Zhejiang.

Liu, who was born in January 1970, was transferred to serve as party chief of Zhejiang's e-commerce hub of Hangzhou after his predecessor [Zhou Jiangyong](#) crashed out in the corruption scandal.

His fellow post-70s ministerial-level officials are Li Yunze, director of the National Financial Regulatory Administration (NFRA), who was born in September 1970, and the two months younger A Dong, first secretary of the Communist Youth League.

Li spent decades with what is now China Construction Bank before his promotion while A Dong served as director of policy at the State Oceanic Administration before he was appointed mayor of Sansha in 2017.

Sansha, on the southern island province of Hainan, was established as a city in 2012 to assert Beijing's claims to the resource-rich South China Sea.

A Chinese political observer who declined to be identified said Liu seemed to be leading the political race among the trio, despite their similar rankings. The Zhejiang governorship, he said, was "more comprehensive" and had more political significance.

The [Communist Youth League](#) was once seen as a cradle for China's future political stars, but has receded in significance in recent years.

"The Communist Youth League has been marginalised by Xi, as he prefers cadres with grass-roots or actual administrative track records. It is no longer the fast promotion track of [former president] Hu Jintao's days," the observer said.

"Li Yunze's NFRA is an important financial regulator but its responsibility is much narrower compared to a governor," he added.

In contrast, "taking top leading positions in Zhejiang and Fujian, where Xi has worked for decades, also carries prominent political weight", the observer noted.

Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at Tsinghua University's National Institute of Strategic Studies, said the Chinese ruling party was sourcing most of its next generation of leaders from three groups – government administrators, state-owned enterprise managers, and professional and technical talent pools.

"All of them are well-educated. Beijing is rotating them to different job functions, especially the security aspects, so that they are exposed to vastly different works. The competition among them is very tough," he said.

A handful of officials born in the late 1960s have also achieved ministerial rank in the past two years, most prominently Beijing mayor Yin Yong and Sichuan governor Shi Xiaolin, both born in 1969 and widely regarded as rising political stars.

Yin, who has a doctorate in engineering from Tsinghua University and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard Kennedy School, spent two decades with the State Administration of Foreign Exchange and the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

He was rotated out of the deputy central banker's role to become deputy mayor of Beijing in 2018.

Shi was appointed party boss of Sichuan's provincial capital Chengdu in 2021, becoming the youngest person to hold the post, after nearly three decades in Shanghai.

Shi, a Shanghai University graduate in electrical engineering, rose through the party ranks to head the city's [united front](#) work department in 2017. She was subsequently transferred to other regional roles.

Observers in China have also been tracking the careers of several other prominent post-70s senior officials to have risen to deputy ministerial-level posts in recent years.

They include Zhu Zhongming, the 1972-born newly appointed Shanghai security head. Zhu served in various positions in the Zhejiang finance department when Xi and Premier Li Qiang held leading positions in the province.

Other names in the fray are Hubei's deputy party secretary Zhuge Yujie, born in 1971, and Shi Guanghui, deputy secretary and security head of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, born in 1970. Both previously served extensively in Shanghai.

Zhu, who spent three years as deputy finance minister from 2021 before his rotation to Shanghai, is widely regarded as a leading candidate to succeed the city's mayor Gong Zheng, who reaches the official retirement age of 65 in March.

Observers said that Yin, the Beijing mayor, was ahead of the similarly aged field in terms of party appointments.

He has been a full member of the powerful Central Committee since the 20th party congress in 2022, while Shi Xiaolin and the rest of the post-70s cohort are still alternate members of the top decision-making body

China's Xi vows to stop mass killings known as 'revenge on society crimes'

27 December 2024, [AP News](#)

The order came from the top.

China's leader Xi Jinping wants the recent spree of mass killings that shocked the country not to happen again. He ordered local governments to prevent future "extreme cases."

The attacks, where drivers mow down people on foot or knife-wielding assailants stab multiple victims, are not new in China. But the latest surge drew attention. Local officials were quick to vow to examine all sorts of personal disputes that could trigger aggression, from marital troubles to disagreements over inheritance. However, the increasing reach into people's private lives raises concerns at a time when the Chinese state has already tightened its grip over all social and political aspects in the East Asian nation.

'Revenge on Society Crimes'

This is how people in China label these attacks.

In November alone, three took place: A man struck people at an elementary school in Hunan province, wounding 30, after suffering investment losses. A student who failed his examination stabbed and killed eight at a vocational school in the city of Yixing. The most victims, 35 people, resulted from a man mowing down a crowd in the southern city of Zhuhai, supposedly upset over his divorce.

While pinpointing the exact motive of such attacks can be difficult, there is an overwhelming feeling of being pressured within Chinese society, experts say.

“On the surface, it seems like there are individual factors, but we see there’s a common link,” Wu Qiang, a former political science professor, said. “This link is, in my personal opinion, every person has a feeling of injustice. They feel deeply that this society is very unfair and they can’t bear it anymore.”

Since 2015, Chinese police have targeted human rights lawyers and non-profit advocacy groups, jailing many, while keeping tight surveillance on others, effectively destroying the civil society that had been active from the early 2000s to 2010s.

Wu was fired from Tsinghua University after conducting fieldwork during the 2014 Occupy protests in Hong Kong. He says police officers have been regularly stationed outside his home in Beijing since last year.

Keeping a tight lid on the killings



A man lights a candle near flowers placed outside the Zhuhai People's Fitness Plaza, where a man deliberately rammed his car into people exercising at the sports center, killing some and injuring others in Zhuhai in southern China's Guangdong province on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan, File)

A decade ago, media outlets could report an incident as it developed and even share a suspect's name. Nowadays, it's rarely possible.

During the 24 hours before the death toll was released in the Zhuhai slaying, state censors were quick to remove any videos of the incident and eyewitness accounts shared online. In the case of the Hunan elementary school attack, authorities shared the number of the wounded only after the court sentencing, nearly a month later.

A tally of violent attacks can be documented in other countries; notably, the U.S. had 38 mass killings so far this year, according to an Associated Press database. But in China, a lack of public data makes it hard to decipher mass killing trends.

“From 2000 to 2010, there was a lot of discussions, including how do we help these people by making structural changes to reduce these risks, but now there’s not,” said Rose Luqiu, a well-known former journalist with state-owned Phoenix Television and an associate professor at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Luqiu believes the government may be enforcing censorship thinking it will prevent copycats from imitating such crimes.

“Things will only become more and more strict,” she predicted. For the Chinese state, “the only method to deal with it is to strengthen control.”

Officials vow to ferret out hidden risks

After the Zhuhai attack, Xi called on all local governments “to strengthen prevention and control of risks at the source, strictly prevent extreme cases from occurring, and to resolve conflicts and disputes in a timely manner,” according to the official Xinhua news agency.

The AP found at least a dozen local government notices, from small towns to big cities, announcing actions in response.

In eastern Anhui province, a ruling Communist Party leader inspected a middle school, a local police station, and even the warehouse of a chemical factory where he urged the workers to “ferret out any hidden risks.” He said they must “thoroughly and meticulously investigate and resolve conflicts and disputes,” including in families, marriages and neighborhoods.

Police and prosecutors issued similar statements.

The Ministry of Justice promised to curtail conflicts by looking into squabbles over inheritance, housing, land and unpaid wages.

However, many expressed worry over how such disputes will be detected.

“I think we’re at the beginning of a vicious cycle,” said Lynette Ong, a professor at the University of Toronto and author of “Outsourcing Repression: Everyday State Power in Contemporary China.” “If you nip the conflict in its bud, you’d imagine the system then would impose a lot of pressure ... on schools, enterprises and factories.”

The new announcements reminded Ong of China's strict policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Neighborhood committees, the lowest rung of government, set up fences and barriers in front of buildings to control entry and exit and broke into homes in extreme cases to disinfect the apartments of people who had caught the virus.

Eventually, people protested en masse.

“If we see non-sensible measures being introduced, you’ll be met by resistance and anger and grievances

from the people, and it's going to feed into this vicious cycle where more extreme measures are going to be brought," she said.

VOA Mandarin: Four generals' absence from Chinese ceremony sparks power struggle speculation

26 December 2024, [VOA](#)

The Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China appointed Chen Hui as political commissar of the army and promoted him to the rank of senior general on Monday. However, former army political commissar Qin Shutong and three other senior generals were absent from the ceremony. Experts said the four might have been dismissed because of corruption issues, and that the incident might reveal power struggles within the Communist Party and the military.

[Click here for the full story in Mandarin.](#)

2 more Chinese generals fall after anti-corruption drive delivers big changes to military

26 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Vanessa Cai

NPC Standing Committee announces Lieutenant General You Haitao and Vice-Admiral Li Pengcheng removed from China's top legislature



Beijing has stripped two more generals in the People's Liberation Army of their lawmaker status, as China continues a wider anti-corruption drive into the country's military.

In a notice on Wednesday, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) confirmed that Lieutenant General You Haitao, former deputy commander of China's army, and Vice-Admiral Li Pengcheng, former naval commander of the PLA Southern Theatre Command, had been removed from the country's top legislature.

A separate NPC statement said You and Li were suspected of "serious violation of laws and discipline" – a phrase that usually refers to corruption.

The downfall of the two generals comes amid a slew of personnel changes within the PLA, with several senior officers brought down by corruption

charges. Miao Hua, a member of the powerful Central Military Commission and the director of its political work department, was placed under investigation for corruption in November.

You, 66, became the deputy commander of the army in early 2016. Previously he was deputy commander of the Nanjing Military Region and was promoted to lieutenant general in 2014.

Li, 61, previously served in roles including the deputy chief of staff of the PLA Navy's North Sea Fleet, director of the Navy Equipment Research Institute, and chief of staff of the East Sea Fleet.

Li served as the naval commander of the Southern Theatre Command after his predecessor, Ju Xinchun, was dismissed from the NPC in December last year alongside eight other PLA generals, including a number of senior members of the PLA Rocket Force which oversees the country's nuclear arsenal.

The recent personnel changes also include the promotion of long-time air force officer Chen Hui to the rank of general, confirming him as the new army political commissar to oversee ideology, political education and unit morale, state news agency Xinhua said on Monday.

Chen replaced Qin Shutong, 61, whose appointment as the army political commissar was made public in January 2022. Qin's whereabouts are not known.

In September, it was announced that Deng Zhiping, a deputy commander of the army, was removed from the NPC for suspected corruption. Deng, 60, was hailed as a war hero during China's border clashes with Vietnam in the 1970s and 80s.

Beijing also placed two of its former defence ministers, Li Shangfu and Wei Fenghe, under investigation in June.

Wei served in the role from 2018 to 2023. Li was promoted to the job in March 2023 but sacked in October the same year after vanishing from the public eye, making him the country's shortest serving defence minister.

Both are expected to face indictments in their corruption cases.

VOA Mandarin: Chinese graduate school applications drop as youth unemployment rises

25 December 2024, [VOA](#)

Graduate school applications in China have declined for the second consecutive year, with 500,000 fewer applicants for the 2025 entrance exams compared with the previous year. Simultaneously, competition for civil service positions has intensified, signaling a societal shift away from the traditional "degree obsession."

[Click here for the full story in Mandarin.](#)

China sets dates for 'two sessions' as investors await 2025 economic growth target

25 December 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Premier Li Qiang expected to deliver work report when top legislature's meeting opens on March 5, but he will skip press conference again

China's top legislature will begin its annual parliamentary meeting on March 5 next year – a session that will be closely watched by investors as Beijing will announce its growth target and decide on ways to stimulate the country's stalled economy.

The start date of the third annual session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing was announced by the NPC Standing Committee on Wednesday.

On the same day, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the country's top political advisory body, announced March 4 as the tentative start date for its annual session.

China typically holds these meetings, known as the "two sessions", in early March.

During the meetings, the Chinese government is expected to reveal its annual policy plans for the economy, military, trade, diplomacy, the environment and other areas for deliberation and approval.

The meeting is expected to last about a week, with President Xi Jinping and other top Communist Party leaders joining the group discussions. Xi's speeches during these deliberation sessions are usually regarded as important signs of China's priorities and direction.

Premier Li Qiang is expected to deliver an annual government work report to legislators at the NPC's opening session. It will be followed by two written reports from the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance outlining plans and the budget.

Although there will be several tightly scripted press conferences during the two sessions, including one by Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Li will not hold a press conference at the end of the event, following a change introduced last year.

Beijing scrapped the premier's press conference in March, saying it "often overlapped with similar events". The conference – first held in 1988, though it did not become an annual practice until 1993 – was once one of the highlights of the two sessions.

This year's two sessions will draw special attention as the world waits for Beijing to decide on its growth target and corresponding policies to achieve it as the Chinese economy faces uncertainty from Donald Trump's tariff threats, sluggish domestic consumption and a property slump.

Lynn Song, ING's chief economist for greater China, said the growth target would set the tone for government policy for the coming year.

"The growth target set will also show how serious policymakers are about shoring up growth amid what will likely be a less supportive external environment in 2025," he said.

Song added that China had rarely failed to meet its growth targets, with only two years on record when growth fell significantly short of the goal – in 1990 and 2022.

Song said he expected China to either announce a growth target of "around 5 per cent" for a third consecutive year in 2025 or "above 4.5 per cent".

"Either of these targets would set a relatively acceptable floor for growth and would send a message that the government remains confident in its ability to stabilise growth," he said.

Global investors have questioned the speed and aggressiveness of Beijing's fiscal and monetary policy easing to counter economic headwinds, and the government work report is expected to offer more clues.

Beijing has indicated its policy focus is likely to shift towards boosting domestic demand, as the odds of export demand holding up are not high. It is also likely to offer targeted support for industries affected by tariffs.

The world will also be watching for any changes to China's military spending. China raised its military budget by 7.2 per cent this year, the same as last year.

China says economists who spread 'inappropriate' views should be fired

23 December 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Stella Yifan Xie

Securities watchdog says brokerages must help 'boost investor confidence'



Chinese regulators say brokerage economists must "play a positive role in interpreting government policies and boost investor confidence." © Reuters

China has issued a directive to the country's brokerage firms as it aims to change perceptions of its flagging economy: monitor speeches by top economists and fire them if necessary.

Chief economists at Chinese brokerages must "play a positive role in interpreting government policies and boost investor confidence," the industry watchdog Securities Association of China (SAC) told its members

last week, according to the state-run financial newspaper Securities Times.

However, if the individuals have "repeatedly triggered reputational risk over inappropriate commentaries or behaviors" within a certain period of time or caused "major negative impacts," the company shall "severely deal with the person until termination of employment," said the notice, without elaborating on the definition of inappropriate comments.

The order marks a fresh attempt by Beijing to rekindle confidence and hasten growth by avoiding negative takes on the world's second-largest economy. But some analysts and economists are concerned that censorship would only deepen the public's frustration over the economy's sluggish performance and increase the risk of policy missteps.

One Chinese economist at a bank received an internal warning in recent months, in part for making public comments on the economy, Nikkei Asia learned.

The Chinese government has long been sensitive about critiques on economic affairs, but the latest directive represents "the turning of the screw to clamp down on free and open discussion of economic issues," said George Magnus, a research associate at the University of Oxford's China Centre and a former chief economist at UBS.

"It might be that they want to make sure there is only one narrative coming out of China, which is the government's narrative," he said. "But you can't solve the issues if you can't discuss them."

Chief economists are barred from attending meetings and events or publicizing opinions without approval from the brokerages they work for, according to the guidance from SAC, which is supervised by the China Securities Regulatory Commission. Companies should not hire economists with "tarnished records," it added.

The CSRC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The stern warning by the securities regulator came just weeks after candid speeches by two prominent Chinese economists fueled discussions on social media about the reliability of official economic indicators, including the unemployment count and overall growth rate. Access to the social media accounts of Gao Shanwen and Fu Peng were restricted after their speeches went viral.

China's post-pandemic recovery has fallen short of expectations, leading to debates about whether the country is stuck in stagnation similar to Japan's experience in the 1990s. Last year, China's official growth rate was 5.2%, the slowest pace since 1990 apart from two years when COVID-19 curbs disrupted activity.

At the annual economic work conference last year, Beijing urged officials to promote the "bright theory" of the economy, as it battled against a property market

meltdown and slumping stocks. The country's top intelligence agency warned the public against those who "denigrate China's economy through false narratives." Negative commentaries and articles about the state of the economy have vanished from Chinese media.

Since September, Chinese leaders have sought to inject confidence with a broad range of stimulus measures such as cutting interest rates, lowering mortgage costs and extending cheap loans for companies to buy back shares to shore up the stock market.

Nevertheless, consumer inflation dropped to a five-month low in November. Exports slowed sharply last month while imports fell unexpectedly.

Beijing vowed to boost domestic demand and ramp up fiscal spending by issuing more debt next year at a key political gathering this month, as it braces for shocks from a second U.S. presidency under Donald Trump, who has threatened to hike tariffs on Chinese goods. Officials continue to strike a positive tone.

Han Wenxiu, deputy director of the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs, said earlier this month that China's economy is expected to grow by around 5% in 2024, a target that many economists believe to be tough to hit without bolder stimulus.

China's security ministry says foreign spies are slandering revolutionary heroes online

23 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Yuanyue Dang

Overseas intelligence agencies are 'flooding online comment sections with unofficial and fake history', ministry says



China's leading anti-spy agency has blamed foreign agents for comments on social media that it says distort history and "slander" revolutionary heroes.

"There are foreign spy agencies flooding online comment sections with unofficial and fake history about our country's historical heroes, trying to discredit and slander our historical culture and heroic role models, and dispel people's admiration for heroes and their identification with our historical culture," the

Ministry of State Security said in a social media post on Monday.

The post on the ministry's official WeChat account warned that "some foreign spy agencies" were "stealing state secrets, disrupting online order and posing a threat to national security".

Foreign spies pretended to be interested in politics, military matters, economics or science and technology and tried to steal information by interacting with social media users, the ministry said.

It said officers had discovered that spies were using "manual screening or algorithmic capture" to entice people to post sensitive information such as the "parameters, serial numbers and developers of our research equipment" in the comments under a video about a "certain Chinese technology project".

The spies also recruited trolls or used bots to "recklessly fabricate and spread false statements that discredit our government and policies", the ministry added.

The ministry has become increasingly active on social media with warnings about the risk posed by foreigners.

It said foreign spies "maliciously [post] sensitive topics" on Chinese social media and "flood the screen with provocative and reactionary comments, inflaming public sentiment, and try to provoke disputes and create chaos".

The post did not say which countries were responsible for doing this or what social media platforms they were targeting.

The ministry warned government employees in sensitive positions not to post classified information online or reveal their jobs "to avoid being exploited by people with ulterior motives".

It also asked social media users to report any "reactionary, sensitive or other negative information that endangers our national security" and avoid posting "rumours or slanderous comments that discredit our country's history, revolutionary process, development and construction".

China has a strict law protecting the Communist Party's heroes and martyrs.

Some have questioned whether heroic stories about these people have been embellished for propaganda purposes, but Beijing calls discussion or research that challenges its official version of history "historical nihilism".

Journalist Luo Changping was jailed for seven months in 2021 for "insulting" soldiers who died in the Korean war.

The Chinese authorities have been increasingly vocal about national security and changed the law last year to broaden the definition of espionage.

The ministry opened a WeChat account in August last year and has since used the social media platform to

warn that public foreign spy agencies are targeting Chinese citizens and companies.

Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign nets record number of 'tigers' in 2024

22 December 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Fifty-six high-ranking officials placed under investigation this year as graft-buster targets central agencies

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's war on corruption has ensnared a record number of high-ranking officials this year, with 56 senior cadres at vice-ministerial level or above being investigated, a tally by the South China Morning Post has found.

That marks a jump of nearly 25 per cent from 2023, when 45 high-ranking officials were subject to graft probes by anti-corruption agency the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, or CCDI.

According to the Post's analysis, corruption cases involving top party organs and ministries have doubled, while there was also an increase in cases within the aviation and defence industries.

But in 2024 there were fewer corruption cases in the finance sector – a key focus of the campaign last year. Deng Yuwen, former deputy editor of the Study Times newspaper published by the Central Party School, said more officials were getting caught up in the campaign. "The anti-corruption net has been cast wider while the mesh is getting smaller – so more are getting caught and fewer can slip through," he said.

All of this year's ensnared "tigers" – as the CCDI calls disgraced top-level officials – were from a pool of "centrally managed cadres", meaning they were at the vice-ministerial level and above. While some were ranked slightly lower, they held key positions in critical sectors.

Taking the count to 56 on Monday was Wu Cunrong, the 61-year-old head of the provincial political advisory body in Shanxi. The CCDI said Wu had been placed under investigation and was "suspected of serious violations of discipline and law" – a euphemism for corruption. Wu was the party boss of Hefei, capital of Anhui province, in 2011 and became deputy party boss of Chongqing a decade later.

Twelve of the 56 officials detained this year held positions in central Communist Party and state agencies – double the number in 2023, suggesting more of a focus on the top party apparatus and ministries.

Some of the more prominent officials placed under investigation include former justice minister Tang Yijun, agriculture minister Tang Renjian and national sports chief Gou Zhongwen.

In addition to corruption allegations, the three men are also accused of failing to implement the instructions of party leaders and political disloyalty. They are awaiting trial after being kicked out of the party and removed from their public positions.

Deng, who is now an independent political analyst based in the US, said the focus on high-ranking officials from central agencies was consistent with Xi's instruction to the CCDI during the 2022 party congress. He said Xi had called on inspectors to "intensify efforts to uproot corruption in sectors with a high concentration of power, funds and resources".

"The central agencies are at the top echelon of China's political power structure," Deng said. "The top officials are surrounded by local governments lobbying for projects, funding or subsidies, or businesspeople wanting approvals or licences."

One example is the corruption allegations against Xu Ying, who was deputy director of the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration – the powerful agency that controls China's US\$30 billion tobacco market and has sole decision-making power over the lucrative production and distribution chain. Xu was sacked and expelled from the party, and is also awaiting trial.

There was also an increase in the number of cases at non-financial state-owned enterprises in 2024, with six SOE bosses under investigation compared to three last year. Among them is Tan Ruisong, former chairman of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China.

Dozens of top and former aviation and defence industry executives have also been placed under investigation in the past year, including Zhu Zhisong, head of Shanghai's free-trade zone. Zhu was previously in charge of Shanghai's aerospace bureau, which serves as a research and development base for rockets and missiles. It followed a corruption investigation into his former deputy at the bureau, Dai Shoulun.

Three senior aerospace and defence executives were also expelled from the nation's top political advisory body in December last year.

Xi's sweeping anti-corruption campaign – which has been under way since late 2012 – has also had the military in its sights, a crackdown carried out by the People's Liberation Army's anti-graft watchdog. Officials from the PLA Rocket Force that oversees the nuclear arsenal have been a focus since last year.

In the most recent case, Central Military Commission ideology chief Miao Hua was suspended last month and is being investigated for "serious violations of discipline". In June, Beijing announced that former defence minister Li Shangfu and his predecessor Wei Fenghe were being investigated for corruption, and that they had been expelled from the party and stripped of their military ranks.

Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said Xi was purging both the buyers and sellers in China's defence industry.

"His military disciplinary inspectors have taken down several top generals, while the CCDI, which oversees the civilian officials, crack down on defence SOEs," Wu said. "This is the most intensive year for the military crackdown – and there's no end in sight."

Deng said SOEs were also in the crosshairs because of their role in Beijing's push for technological self-reliance and in strategic projects, and also because they are major employers at a time when the economy is struggling.

Four senior state bankers were placed under investigation for corruption this year, compared to eight in 2023. But none of this year's banking "tigers" are at the top level. Last year the finance world was shocked by the downfalls of former China Everbright Bank presidents Li Xiaopeng and Tang Shuangning, and former Bank of China president Liu Liange.

This year also saw several rising young political stars caught up in graft probes – Yang Fasen, who was the Qinghai province security chief, Beijing's deputy mayor Gao Peng, and Tibet's deputy government head Wang Yong.

Wang Huning urges efforts to forge sense of community for Chinese nation

19 December 2024, [CPPCC](#)

Wang Huning, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, on Wednesday urged efforts to forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation and to grasp the importance of taking the correct and distinctively Chinese approach to handling ethnic affairs.

Wang, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks at a meeting on the work on ethnic affairs.

Wang stressed the need to highlight the prominent features of the Chinese civilization and consolidate the sense of identity with the motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, the CPC and Chinese socialism among all ethnic groups.

He also called for measures to accelerate modernization in areas with large ethnic minority populations, promote exchanges between different ethnic groups, and improve laws, regulations and policies concerning ethnic affairs.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang pledges to crack down on unfair targeting of private firms

18 December 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Companies have complained of being unjustly targeted by law enforcement to raise funds for cash-strapped local governments

Chinese Premier Li Qiang has warned local governments not to target private companies with unfair fines and promised further measures to improve the business environment next year.

The pledge – made at a meeting of the State Council, China’s cabinet, on Monday – follows accusations that some local authorities have been trying to raise extra funds by targeting private firms outside their jurisdictions.

This year Beijing has announced a series of measures to improve the business environment as part of its efforts to boost the faltering economy.

This includes a drive by the country’s top prosecuting authority to strengthen legal protections for private enterprises.

According to state news agency Xinhua, Li said that the abuse of administrative punishments and unfair law enforcement are still problems in some parts of the country and in certain sectors.

He told the meeting it is important for the government to start with the issues that are of “grave concern to the public and businesses” and standardise the exercise of power across the nation.

A special campaign will be launched in 2025 to regulate business-related law enforcement with the aim of improving the business environment and boosting market confidence, Li said.

He pledged that the government’s enforcement of administrative law will be fully transparent and on the record and will include a review process for major decisions.

He also vowed to keep the channels for appeals open and said “soft measures” could be taken to tackle minor offences.

He also vowed to strengthen the supervision of law enforcement, pay attention to local governments that allow the “abnormal growth of fines and confiscations” and ensure frequent out-of-jurisdiction law enforcement and consistent maximum penalties.

He said the authorities should respond to the problem of unreasonable fines and punishments by reviewing and standardising penalties to ensure they are proportionate and consistent.

In recent years, Chinese entrepreneurs have complained of being targeted by law enforcement to milk them for cash, often using trumped up criminal charges or preying on firms outside their jurisdiction.

While this process is officially known as “profit-driven law enforcement”, Chinese entrepreneurs have described it as “distant fishing”, likening the police to fishermen who venture far out to sea for their catch.

The problem is compounded by the mounting debts and falling revenues many local governments are

facing, something that also increases the pressure to find alternative sources of funding.

In November, a report by prosecutors in the eastern province of Zhejiang outlining how police could abuse their powers to target private businesses went viral online.

The report gave details of a case where two police officers from an unnamed province had been extorting money from entrepreneurs in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces. The officers were eventually jailed for abuse of power.

In October, Zheng Shanjie, the head of the National Development and Reform Commission, the country’s top economic planning body, said there would be a crackdown on unauthorised and “profit-driven enforcement” measures, as well as arbitrary fines, inspections and business closures.

China’s anticorruption crackdown is impeding its military buildup plans, Pentagon says

18 December 2024, [CNN](#), Haley Britzky

A widespread anticorruption campaign within the senior levels of the Chinese military and government is impeding its push to build up its military by 2027, the Pentagon says in a new report released on Wednesday.

“In the second half of 2023 alone, at least 15 high ranking military officials and defense industry executives were removed from their posts for corruption ... This wave of corruption related investigations and the removal of senior leaders may have disrupted the [People’s Liberation Army’s] progress toward its 2027 goals,” a senior defense official told reporters this week in a briefing on the China Military Power report, which is delivered to Congress annually and outlines China’s military and security developments.

The official added that it is “having some impact already” and will “inevitably” come up again as the Pentagon continues to track the campaign’s impact on development and acquisition of military capabilities, as well as major construction projects and personnel.

The report also says that China is “almost certainly” learning from Russia’s war in Ukraine and applying those lessons to its approach to Taiwan. Specifically, the senior defense official said China is looking to “advance their objectives” in the information space and has seen the sanctions against Russia as a sign China needs to be more self-reliant to be able to withstand additional penalties.

The report also said China has an estimated 600 operational nuclear warheads, up roughly 100 since last year’s report was released. It says that they will have more than 1,000 operational nuclear warheads by 2030, and while the senior defense official said it

was in line with their previous assessments, they added that they certainly expect China will “continue expanding and modernizing their force” beyond 2030. China’s leader Xi Jinping has laid out an ambitious plan to “modernize” the PLA by 2035 and transform it into a “world class” military by mid-century. American officials believe Xi has instructed the PLA to be ready to invade the self-governing island of Taiwan by 2027, though they have stressed that doesn’t mean an invasion will occur in 2027.

Amid the push, though, Xi is increasingly turning against members of his own government and struggling with disloyalty in the ranks, CNN has reported. Indeed, the Pentagon’s report pinpoints numerous recent incidents of senior officials within the military, government, and defense industry, being fired or investigated.

In November, for example, a top military official viewed as a close protégé of Xi was suspended and placed under investigation for corruption. The senior official also said that while more senior people within China’s military get the most attention, personnel are purged “at all levels.”

Wednesday’s report says that political leaders in China “probably view” the campaign against corruption “as a necessary tool to build a professional fighting force as part of the PLA’s 2027 modernization goals.”

But that “frequent turnover and replacement of high-level personnel” specifically is what is impacting the PLA’s 2027 goal, the senior defense official said. For example, on a major construction project or within their defense industry, the official said, turnover at that scale could slow down projects.

Experts say corruption within the defense industry in particular is relatively unsurprising given the relentless focus China has had on increase its procurement of weapons systems and warships. Victor Shih, a political science professor at the University of San Diego, previously told CNN that the push to modernize the PLA Navy alone provides plenty of opportunities for corruption.

“[O]nce they uncover corruption in one place or involving one senior official, there’s sort of a bit of a spiraling kind of effect where it inevitably seems to draw in additional officials,” the senior official said. They added it was unlikely Xi would abandon the anticorruption campaign, as he has made it a “hallmark of his tenure.”

“I think they’ve identified it as something that really has posed great risks to the political reliability and ultimately the operational capability of the PLA,” the official said, “so I would certainly expect them to continue to pursue the anticorruption campaign.”

China’s top political advisor again calls for community-for-Chinese-nation drive among ethnic minorities

18 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In yet another reported meeting on work on ethnic affairs by a Sinicization-obsessed party-state of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), top leader Wang Huning has on Dec 18 urged efforts to forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation and to grasp the importance of taking the correct and distinctively Chinese approach to handling ethnic affairs.

Chinese leaders employ cryptic euphemisms in their policy documents and official remarks whose actual implementations are all about forced assimilation of the ethnic minorities and the destruction of their cultural identity under the ongoing Sinicization drive for Han-homogenizing the PRC.

Wang, 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, made the remarks at a meeting on the work on ethnic affairs, reported China’s official *chinadaily.com.cn* Dec 18.

The report did not give any details about that meeting, such as who all took part in it, what its agenda was, and its decisions.

The report said Wang stressed the need to highlight the prominent features of the Chinese civilization and consolidate the sense of identity with the motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, the CPC and Chinese socialism among all ethnic groups.

He was stated to have also called for measures to accelerate modernization in areas with large ethnic minority populations, promote exchanges between different ethnic groups, and improve laws, regulations and policies concerning ethnic affairs.

The EU Expresses Concern About Deteriorating Situation in Tibet

13 December 2024, [CTA](#)

On 10 December, 2024, the European Union (EU) delegation in China issued a statement marking International Human Rights Day, reaffirming the EU’s commitment to the protection of human rights globally. The statement highlighted ongoing concerns about human rights abuses in China, with particular reference to Tibet and expressed the EU’s serious concerns about the deterioration of civil, cultural, and political freedoms.

The EU highlighted the severe restrictions placed on freedom of speech, expression, movement and assembly in Tibetan areas where Tibetans continue to

face tight controls on their ability to express dissent. The statement also noted the ongoing limitations on international travel for Tibetans, with restrictions on obtaining passports and stringent controls on the movement of Tibetan religious leaders, such as Lamas.

The EU expressed concerns over the repression of religious freedoms, including the monitoring and restriction of religious practices. Tibetan Buddhism remains under increasing state control, with religious practices being aligned with the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The statement also flagged the establishment of mandatory boarding schools for Tibetan children, where children are forcefully separated from their families, as a significant concern for the preservation of Tibetan cultural and linguistic identity.

The EU delegation raised alarms about efforts to suppress Tibetan language and culture, citing the closure of schools that teach in Tibetan, such as the Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational School in Golog. Such closures, along with the promotion of Mandarin-language education, risk leading to cultural erasure.

The EU reiterated its call for the immediate and unconditional release of 6 Tibetan political prisoners (Chadrel Rinpoche, Anya Sangdra, Go Sherab Gytaso, Golog Palden, Semkyi Dolma and Tashi Dorje) arbitrarily detained for exercising their fundamental rights. It emphasised the importance of fair trials, the abolition of practices like "Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location" (RSDL), and an end to torture and ill-treatment. The EU's concerns regarding arbitrary detention extend to Tibetan political prisoners, particularly those arrested for peaceful advocacy of Tibetan rights and independence.

The EU delegation reaffirmed the importance of international engagement with Tibet, encouraging more visits from the international community and civil society organisations to monitor the situation and promote dialogue. A side visit to Tibet took place in June 2024 as part of the 39th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, demonstrating the EU's ongoing interest in raising human rights concerns in the region.

In conclusion, the EU's statement on International Human Rights Day 2024 underscores its ongoing concern about the human rights situation in Tibet. The delegation called on China to respect and protect the rights of Tibetans, emphasising the importance of cultural preservation, religious freedom, and the right to self-expression. The EU also urged China to engage more constructively with international human rights mechanisms and to create an environment where Tibetans can freely practice their religion and maintain their cultural identity.

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

The CPC Central Committee approved the expulsion of Wu Yingjie from the party due to improper family traditions

11 December 2024, [Kzaobao](#), Lianhe Zaobao

The website of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission reported on December 10 that with the approval of the CPC Central Committee, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission have initiated an investigation into the serious violations of discipline and law by Wu Yingjie, former member of the Standing Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former director of the Culture, History, and Learning Committee.

Upon investigation, it was found that Wu Yingjie had lost his ideals, beliefs and principles of Party spirit, deviated from his original aspiration and mission, failed to implement the Party Central Committee's Tibet governance strategy in the new era, intervened in engineering projects on a large scale, sought profit for personal gain, seriously affected Tibet's high-quality development, failed to fulfill his main responsibility of comprehensively and strictly governing the Party, contributed to the growth of corruption, and damaged the political ecology; he violated the spirit of the Central Committee's eight regulations and accepted banquets in violation of regulations; he had a weak sense of organization and did not truthfully explain the problems during organizational interviews and inquiries; he lost his integrity and accepted gifts and cash, and used his power to seek special treatment for his relatives; he interfered with discipline and law enforcement in violation of regulations; he had a bad family style and failed to supervise and educate his family members; he used public power as a tool to seek personal gain, used his position to seek profits for others in engineering contracting and other aspects, and illegally accepted huge amounts of property.

Wu Yingjie seriously violated the party's political discipline, organizational discipline, discipline on integrity, work discipline and discipline in life, constituted a serious duty violation and was suspected of bribery, and did not stop after the 18th CPC National Congress. The nature of his violations is serious and the impact is bad, and he should be dealt with seriously. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the "Regulations on Disciplinary Actions of the Communist Party of China", "Supervision Law of the People's Republic of China", "Administrative Punishment Law of the People's Republic of China for Public Officials", etc., after the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Standing Committee meeting studied and reported to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for approval, it was decided

to expel Wu Yingjie from the party; the National Supervision Commission shall expel him from public office; confiscate his illegal gains; and transfer his suspected criminal issues to the procuratorate for examination and prosecution in accordance with the law, and transfer the relevant property together.

On June 16 this year, it was reported that Wu Yingjie was under investigation.

According to his public resume, Wu Yingjie, male, Han nationality, was born in December 1956 in Changyi, Shandong Province. He joined the Communist Party of China in May 1987 and started working in October 1974. He has a postgraduate degree from the Central Party School.

He has worked in Tibet for a long time, and has served as: deputy secretary and director of the Party Leadership Group of the Tibet Autonomous Region Education Department, vice chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region Government, member of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee and Minister of the Propaganda Department, member of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee, deputy secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the Regional Government and executive vice chairman, executive vice secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee, and secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee.

In October 2021, he was appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Education, Science, Culture and Health Committee of the 13th National People's Congress; in March 2023, he was appointed as the Director of the Culture, History, and Learning Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning's Regular Press Conference on December 11, 2024

11 December 2024, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

At the invitation of Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Expatriates Badr Abdel Aaty will visit China and co-chair the China-Egypt foreign ministers' strategic dialogue from December 12 to 13.

TASS: According to media reports, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev began his visit to China today. Could the Foreign Ministry provide more information on that? Does China have any expectations for this visit?

Mao Ning: Chairman of the United Russia party Dmitry Medvedev's visit is an important event of high-level exchange between China and Russia. The Chinese side

will release timely information about the visit. Please stay tuned.

Beijing Daily: The US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies recently issued a report entitled "China's Intelligence Footprint in Cuba: New Evidence and Implications for US Security," saying that there are four sites within Cuba that are most likely to be supporting China's efforts to collect intelligence on the United States and its neighbors and suggesting that the United States and its regional partners should carefully monitor China's growing role in Cuba. What's China's comment?

Mao Ning: I noted what you mentioned. As Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío said, the US think tank's accusations of so-called Chinese military bases in Cuba are just tales that do not exist and no one has seen.

Let me stress again that China's cooperation with Cuba is done aboveboard, and does not target any third party. We certainly would not accept any deliberate vilification and smear from any third party. It is widely known that US intelligence agencies have an egregious record in Latin America and the Caribbean. The US unlawfully occupied Guantanamo Bay as its military base and imposed blockade and sanctions against Cuba for over six decades, which has been catastrophic for the Cuban people.

China once again urges the US to follow the just call of the international community, lift the blockade and sanctions on Cuba as soon as possible, remove Cuba from the list of "state sponsors of terrorism," and stop creating barriers that hinder Cuba's socioeconomic development.

AFP: A senior security official in Taiwan told AFP today that apparent military drills conducted by China this week around the island are aimed at drawing a red line ahead of the incoming US presidential administration of Donald Trump. Can the Foreign Ministry confirm today these Chinese military drills and does it have any comment?

Mao Ning: I would refer you to the competent Chinese authorities for your specific question. Let me say that the Taiwan question is the first red line that cannot be crossed in China-US relations and this has always been our position. Upholding the one-China principle is the key to ensuring peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. China will firmly safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Hubei Media Group: In a statement issued on December 10 local time, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly announced sanctions against some Chinese personnel for alleged human rights violations. Do you have any comment on this?

Mao Ning: Without any factual basis, the Canadian government made false allegations against China in the name of human rights and imposed illicit sanctions on Chinese personnel. This is gross interference in

China's internal affairs and a serious violation of international law and the basic norms governing international relations. China firmly opposes and strongly condemns this.

The Chinese government follows a people-centered development philosophy and attaches absolute importance to respecting and protecting human rights. China has achieved enormous progress in human rights and made important contribution to the world's human rights cause. This is a simple fact that no one without bias can deny.

Canada faces its own list of human rights issues. Its own human rights record has not been spotless. Even today, Canada's indigenous people still face systemic racial discrimination and unfair treatment. Instead of dealing with it, Canada chooses to smear and vilify other countries and spread lies about China's alleged human rights issues. This is a typical move of "thief-crying-stop-thief" and can hardly convince the world. Facts have laid bare Canada's double standards and hypocrisy. Canada is in no position to lecture others on human rights and point fingers at others' human rights situation, nor do they have any right to act as a judge and arbitrarily impose sanctions.

China strongly urges Canada to reflect on itself, stop interfering in China's internal affairs, stop undermining China's interests and image under the pretext of human rights, stop its poor political stunt and immediately lift its unlawful sanctions against relevant Chinese personnel. We will take all measures necessary to firmly defend our sovereignty, security and development interests.

News 1 Korea: ROK media reported that the new Chinese ambassador to the ROK will travel to the ROK this month to assume office. What's China's comment and expectation?

Mao Ning: You may follow our ministry's website for any update on the new Chinese ambassador to the ROK. On China-ROK relations, our position is consistent. We stand ready to work with the ROK to advance China-ROK relations.

Reuters: China has approved no loans to Cambodia this year, despite being historically its top creditor country. This is according to data from Cambodia's finance ministry. Is there a particular reason for this?

Mao Ning: I would refer you to the competent Chinese authorities for your specific question. Let me say that China and Cambodia are iron-clad friends. We will continue to strengthen cooperation with Cambodia in various fields and support Cambodia in pursuing development and improving people's livelihood.

AFP: The United States said yesterday that it is offering a US\$10 million reward for information leading to the arrest of a Chinese man and co-conspirators who are wanted for hacking computer fire walls in order to commit fraud. This was in April of 2020 and the US Treasury said it had imposed

sanctions on the man's company. Does the Foreign Ministry have any comment on this case?

Mao Ning: China has always opposed and fought all types of cyberattacks in accordance with the law. We firmly reject using unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction against Chinese entities and individuals. We urge the US to stop using cybersecurity issues to smear and vilify China, and stop imposing illicit unilateral sanctions. China will do what is necessary to protect the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies and citizens.

CCTV: On December 10, the US Commerce Department added two Chinese high-tech companies to the "Entity List" for "human rights violations." What is China's comment on this?

Mao Ning: The so-called sanctions you mentioned are a blatant suppression of Chinese high-tech companies in the name of human rights. The move further reveals the US's true intention of depriving the Chinese people's right to development. Protecting human rights is just a pretext they use to advance that objective. Such schemes will not succeed.

If the US truly cares about human rights, it should take care of its own human rights deficit first, rather than politicizing and weaponizing human rights issues to meddle in other countries' internal affairs and harm other countries' interests.

China's record 'worsening' on Human Rights Day, activists say

10 December 2024, [RFA](#)

There is less and less room to criticize the government, follow a religion or receive justice in a court of law.



Chinese rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong appears in People's Court, August 22, 2017, in Changsha, China. (Changsha Intermediate People's Court via AFP)

The right to criticize the government, follow a religion and to get a meaningful defense in court are all deteriorating in China, activists told Radio Free Asia on Tuesday, Human Rights Day.

Over the past year in China, [45 pro-democracy activists](#) and former lawmakers in Hong Kong were jailed for "subversion" after organizing a democratic primary, [prominent dissident Xu Zhiyong held a](#)

[hunger strike](#) to protest his treatment in prison and [a journalist was jailed](#) for having lunch with a Japanese diplomat.

The ruling Communist Party has stepped up its suppression of public speech, organized religion and personal freedoms, while continuing to persecute anyone agitating for change, rights activists told RFA Mandarin in recent interviews.

On this day in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed the inherent, inalienable rights of every person “without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Some of that language is echoed in China’s Constitution.

Article 34 guarantees citizens “the right to vote and stand for election,” while Article 35 guarantees “freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration.”

Article 36 promises them freedom of religious belief.

But activists say there is less and less protection for anything resembling those rights in China today.

“Right now, we don’t feel that human rights have improved,” Shandong-based rights activist Lu Xiumei told RFA Mandarin. “Controls have become more severe, and there are more rules and regulations.”

1,700 prisoners of conscience

According to the China Political Prisoner Concern Database, there are more than 1,700 known prisoners of conscience behind bars.

While many once believed that the internet would be impossible for the authorities to control, eventually leading to greater freedom of speech in China, the government has spent the last 30 years [perfecting its control](#) of online spaces.

“On social media platforms like WeChat and TikTok, it is almost impossible to post comments that have a negative impact on the government,” Jiangsu-based rights activist Lu Jianrong told RFA Mandarin. “You can only praise the government.”

Police have [targeted young people](#) who dress up for Halloween, particularly if their costumes had a satirical twist, while online censors have been [going after social media accounts](#) that use “unauthorized” language, including puns and homophones, to get around censorship.

Meanwhile, [life is getting harder for women](#) and for the [LGBTQ+ community](#).

The party is also cracking down on its own officials if they’re [found in possession of banned books](#), and [taking direct control](#) over the running of the country’s universities.

And it’s [training up the next generation](#) of religious leaders under President Xi Jinping’s “sinicization” of

religion policy, to ensure that they put loyalty to the government ahead of the requirements of their faith.

A Protestant pastor from the central province of Henan who gave only the surname Li for fear of reprisals told Radio Free Asia: “There is almost no religious freedom; they don’t want to give believers any room to breathe at all.”

“A lot of churches have been banned, and are still being banned,” he said.

No criticism allowed

Even pursuing complaints against the government using its own official channels can get a person in hot water.

“Take Xu Weibao for example, a petitioner from Taizhou,” Lu Jianrong said. “He has been persecuted to the point that he can no longer survive in his hometown, and has had to move somewhere else.”

Many who [complain about official wrongdoing](#) are targeted for harassment, extrajudicial detention and even physical violence, or locked up in a psychiatric institution for “mental illness.”

“There’s another petitioner from Taixing who was held in a psychiatric hospital for three years,” Lu said. “He’s still under surveillance, and has no freedom at all.”

A human rights lawyer who asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals said that prior to the 2015 crackdown on public interest law firms and rights lawyers, the profession wasn’t generally regarded as a threat to the ruling party.

Now, they’re seen as a natural enemy of the Chinese Communist Party, he said.

“Many have had their licenses revoked, and some have also been sent to prison,” he said.

Heavier sentences

Lawyer Li Fangping, who [represented the jailed Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti](#) said rights protections are getting weaker across the board in China.

“There’s a serious regression,” Li said. “We are seeing cases getting much heavier sentences now, especially for people who try to speak out, which is getting harder and harder.”

He said there has been scant information about the [status of Ilham Tohti](#) in prison.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning hit out on Tuesday at criticisms of China’s human rights record, saying the government had massively advanced its citizens’ social and economic rights.

“Some countries have used human rights as a weapon to serve their political agenda,” Mao told a regular news briefing in Beijing.

“We also hope that certain countries will discard megaphone diplomacy and stop interfering in other countries’ internal affairs under the pretext of so-called human rights issues,” she said.

Also in Beijing, independent journalist Gao Yu said local police had once more taken steps to stop her from speaking out on Dec. 10.

“The police came to my house on Human Rights Day,” Gao said in a post to her X account, adding that she had used the day to commemorate late Nobel peace laureate and dissident Liu Xiaobo, whose subversion trial was held on Dec. 10, 2009.

Liu, who co-authored the Charter 08 manifesto calling for sweeping political change, [died of liver cancer](#) in prison in 2017 despite multiple applications for medical parole.

“I climbed up a ladder and tied a yellow ribbon to the window railing in front of them,” Gao wrote, adding that the local state security police were once more keeping watch outside her apartment building in a vehicle now very familiar both to Gao and her neighbors.

“Today is the 74th Human Rights Day, and the seven-seater Buick is here again,” she wrote.

Xi Jinping calls for wider use of Mandarin in China's border areas amid security push

10 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Vanessa Cai

Leader tells Politburo study session that the unity of all ethnic groups ‘like pomegranate seeds tightly held together’ should be promoted

President [Xi Jinping](#) has called for national security and social stability to be upheld in China's border regions and for Mandarin to be spoken more broadly in those areas, according to state media.

Addressing a Politburo study session on Monday, Xi said maintaining security and stability was the “baseline requirement” for border governance, state news agency Xinhua reported on Tuesday.

The Chinese leader said efforts should be made to improve social governance, infrastructure and “the overall ability to defend the country and safeguard the border”.

He told members of the ruling party's top policymaking body that it was necessary to guide all ethnic groups in border regions to “continuously enhance their recognition of the Chinese nation, Chinese culture and the Communist Party”.

He also said use of the common Chinese language, Mandarin, and nationally unified textbooks should be promoted.

“We should continue to deepen efforts on ethnic unity and progress, actively build an integrated social structure and community environment, and promote the unity of all ethnic groups – like pomegranate seeds tightly held together,” he said.

Xi renewed those calls as the 24-member Politburo held a group study session on the history of Chinese border governance.

The Politburo regularly holds such sessions, with discussion usually led by an academic – Monday's

session was led by Li Guoqiang, vice-president of the Chinese Academy of History.

China's borderlands stretch across five provinces – Yunnan in the southwest, Gansu in the northwest, and Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang in the northeast – as well as four autonomous regions – Tibet and Xinjiang Uygur in the west, Inner Mongolia in the north and Guangxi Zhuang in the south.

Ethnic tensions in those autonomous regions, especially Xinjiang and Tibet, have historically been a challenge for Beijing.

In August, authorities in Xinjiang vowed to make stability and security their top priority and to turn the far western region into a “strategic barrier” against geopolitical risks. Xinjiang shares borders with countries including Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. China has been accused of human rights abuses against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang – claims Beijing has denied.

In recent years, authorities have also stepped up efforts to promote Mandarin-language education as part of a nationwide drive to assimilate people from ethnic minorities into the majority Han culture.

However, such calls have been controversial. In 2020, efforts to promote the use of Mandarin rather than Mongolian in schools in Inner Mongolia prompted large-scale street protests over fears that the native language would be wiped out.

On Monday, Xi said modernising the border governance system and governance capacity was essential.

“The development of border areas must be incorporated into the overall strategy of Chinese-style modernisation, regional coordinated development strategies, and major regional strategies,” he said, according to the Xinhua report.

The Chinese leader also called for efforts to support border areas to leverage their resources and advantages to achieve development.

He said it was important to improve the standard of living in the border regions and to speed up development of infrastructure and basic public services.

Xi also called for more multidisciplinary research on border history and governance and for accelerated efforts to establish a Chinese “knowledge system” on border studies.

China's villages put to Communist Party loyalty test in national anti-corruption campaign

08 December 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

About 77,000 village officials were reprimanded in first three quarters of this year

Tens of thousands of anti-corruption inspectors have fanned out across China to carry out the first national check on the party loyalty of cadres in the country's half a million villages.

The announcement of the campaign came a month after the Communist Party's graft watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), said 77,000 village party bosses faced disciplinary action in the first three quarters of this year, a year-on-year increase of nearly 70 per cent.

The village is the lowest level in China's administrative hierarchy and was added to the inspection remit of county and municipal party committees for the first time in regulations introduced in February.

In an editorial published on November 25, the China Discipline Inspection and Supervision News, the CCDI's official newspaper, said the inspection of the village-level governments was key to resolving grass-roots issues and reinforcing governance at this level.

It said it would be "a strong guarantee" for consolidating President Xi Jinping's poverty alleviation campaign and rural revitalisation plans.

At an inspection planning meeting a few days earlier, CCDI chief and Politburo member Li Xi said the investigations were necessary to rectify "misconduct and corruption that occur on people's doorsteps" and to win more public support for the party.

The top priority, Li said, was to check on the cadres' "political loyalty" to the party, to ensure they implemented the leadership's decisions and policies, and to find solutions to urgent problems, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Inspectors found over 50 per cent more corruption, abuses of power, and dereliction of duty problems in the villages this year, compared with 2023.

Village official, Hainan province

A village official in Hainan province, who declined to be named, said the inspectors coming to his area were led by provincial officials who have never served in the county or municipality – part of a strategy to prevent collusion.

"China's cities and counties are largely 'acquaintance societies', where people all know each other, or are connected to each other in some way. So inspectors from higher up or other jurisdictions can uncover problems better," the official said.

He said that under the new approach, the inspectors had found over 50 per cent more corruption, abuses of power, and dereliction of duty problems in the villages this year, compared with 2023.

An official in Hunan province said similar arrangements were in place there but the teams would focus on "the most notorious villages".

"There are neighbouring villages that organised thousands of people in massive fights over minor disputes in the 1990s. Some villages were known for their participation in telecom scams. We will ensure

the teams led by provincial inspectors pay special attention to them," the Hunan official said.

Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said corruption in villages in more developed provinces was mainly linked to land acquisition and development.

In poorer areas, corrupt village chiefs were more likely to be involved in embezzlement or misappropriation of poverty alleviation funds and other government subsidies.

Beijing spent nearly 1.6 trillion yuan (US\$221 billion) on its poverty alleviation campaign from 2013 to 2021, while the agricultural ministry has pledged up to 7 trillion yuan to finance rural revitalisation projects.

"Many of the villages' party chiefs have monopolised decision-making power. There have been inadequate checks and balances," Wu added.

China's security chief urges all-out efforts to ensure safe New Year and Spring Festival

08 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Sylvia Ma

Call from Chen Wenqing comes as China doubles down on social stability and judicial fairness after string of public attacks

China's top security official Chen Wenqing has called for all-out efforts to ensure social security and stability during the coming New Year and Spring Festival holidays.

Spring Festival or Lunar New Year, is China's biggest annual celebration and falls on January 29 this time.

Chen issued the call for stronger security measures at key venues and for major events as he toured central Hubei province last week, state news agency Xinhua reported on Saturday.

He also called for increased street patrols to "bolster the public's sense of security" through greater police presence, the report said.

Chen is head of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, which oversees China's law enforcement agencies. He is also a member of the ruling Communist Party's elite decision-making Politburo.

One stop on the trip was Hubei's high court, where he said judicial efforts should "fully consider the social harm caused by criminal acts and focus on the people's real concerns" to ensure fairness and justice. Serious and vicious violent crime must be punished swiftly and severely in accordance with the law, he added, so as to effectively safeguard the legitimate rights of the people.

China has doubled down on social stability and judicial fairness after a string of mass killings, set against the backdrop of economic struggles and rising unemployment.

On November 11, an SUV ploughed into a crowd at a sports centre in Zhuhai, in southern Guangdong province, leaving 35 dead and 43 injured.

Days later, a knife attack by a former student at a vocational college in the eastern province of Jiangsu, claimed eight lives and injured 17.

Three days later, an SUV hit a group of parents and children outside a primary school in Changde, in central Hunan province.

In the Zhuhai case, police said the 62-year-old suspect was angered by court decisions regarding the division of property in his divorce.

In a rare commentary for party mouthpiece People's Daily last week, a senior judicial official from Zhejiang urged judges and prosecutors to pay more attention to solving conflicts and ensuring fairness, rather than just closing cases.

The Ministry of Justice met late last month to discuss specific measures to solve conflicts in the wake of the attacks. It called on local officials to look into "marriage issues, neighbour relations, inheritances, property and land disputes and wage arrears" to tackle problems before they can escalate.

During his trip to Hubei, Chen also urged authorities to speed up the establishment of standardised county-level governance centres, which would make dispute resolution easier as people would need to visit just "a single place".

Efforts should be stepped up to resettle released prisoners, help people with severe mental disorders, and prevent juvenile crime, Chen added, while calling for more information sharing and inter-department coordination for a mechanism that can effectively prevent harmful behaviours while providing care.

In wake of mass attacks, China's judges urged to ensure fairness to maintain stability

03 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Phoebe Zhang

In rare People's Daily commentary, senior official calls on judiciary to focus on fixing conflicts to prevent 'social risks from escalating'

China's judges and prosecutors must pay more attention to solving conflicts and ensuring fairness rather than just closing cases, a senior judicial official said in a rare commentary, as authorities reflect on a string of mass killings in recent weeks.

Wang Chengguo, secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of Zhejiang province, wrote in the official People's Daily on Tuesday that China's judicial system must focus on maintaining social stability as its main task.

He said China faced "an increasing number of uncertain and unpredictable factors", and law enforcement and judicial work served to achieve justice in individual cases and were crucial channels for

repairing social relations and advancing social governance.

If officials focus on judicial procedure and aim to close cases quickly, ignoring individual justice, or if they apply laws mechanically to simplify cases without solving the actual problems, they might "intensify conflicts between the parties involved", Wang wrote.

He called for solving problems and strengthening governance "at the root" to prevent "various social risks from escalating".

Wang's commentary is likely a reflection of recent mass incidents, said a political scientist who asked to remain anonymous.

"The commentary meant that unfair judicial decisions and improper handling of cases can trigger social instability, and that authorities should pay attention to these factors," he said.

"Furthermore, there is also the need to strengthen the judicial branch and increase punishment for crimes, including crimes that cause large-scale harm to groups of people."

China has faced an unusually high number of mass killings in recent weeks, which unfolded against the backdrop of an economic slump and high unemployment.

On November 11, an SUV rammed into a crowd of people exercising in Zhuhai in the southern province of Guangdong, killing 35 and injuring 43.

On November 16, at a vocational college in Wuxi in Jiangsu province, a former student killed eight and wounded 17 with a knife.

Three days later, an SUV hit a group of parents and children outside a primary school in Changde in the central province of Hunan. Local police reported that several children were injured and needed hospital treatment, but there were no deaths.

Local police said the suspect in the Zhuhai killing, a 62-year-old man, was unhappy about court decisions regarding the division of property in his divorce.

Wang said that to promote social harmony in judicial work, there must be laws and regulations as well as a conflict-solving mechanism to encourage communication between parties and seek a compromise that satisfies all sides. He called for community volunteers to take part in solving conflicts and urged the use of big data and other technical measures to promote efficiency.

He added that officials should improve their abilities and "act as a bridge to communication" to balance the interests of all sides and solve problems in creative ways.

On November 22, China's Ministry of Justice held a meeting to discuss specific measures to solve conflicts. It called for local officials to look into "marriage issues, neighbour relations, inheritances, property and land disputes and wage arrears" in an effort to nip problems in the bud.

President Xi Jinping has promoted the “Fengqiao experience” – a model of solving problems at the community level – to manage disputes and social relations. Its motto is “small things do not leave the village, big things do not leave the town, and conflicts do not turn over”.

In a 2021 speech recorded in Qiushi, the Communist Party’s most authoritative theoretical journal, Xi said China’s special circumstances meant it could not become “a country of litigation”.

“We have 1.4 billion people. If everything, big or small, has to be decided by a lawsuit, our system wouldn’t be able to bear the burden,” he said, while calling for more mediation of conflicts and insisting on the Fengqiao experience.

China’s Xi calls for the protection of Belt and Road Initiative interests overseas

03 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Liu Zhen

China must protect its overseas interests related to the [Belt and Road Initiative](#) amid growing global risks, President [Xi Jinping](#) said on Monday.

Speaking at a working conference on the projects, Beijing’s sprawling effort to build out a global infrastructure and trade network that connects to China, Xi warned that the international environment has become “tough and complicated”.

“In recent years, the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change, with a significant rise in unilateralism and protectionism, and regional conflicts and upheavals have become frequent,” Xi told the meeting.

“Against such circumstances ... it is necessary to appropriately respond to various risks and challenges, effectively overcome the impact of geopolitical conflicts, correctly address the relationship between enhancing the sense of gain of the partner countries and ensure the benefits to our country, and effectively safeguard the security of our overseas interests,” he said.

Xi added that there are still more opportunities than challenges in promoting the initiative, despite the more challenging environment.

“We must strengthen our strategic confidence, maintain our strategic determination and have the courage to take on responsibilities,” he said, calling for an improvement in project risk control and a mechanism to protect the interests of host countries. It has entered a “new phase”, said Xi, which should combine major “iconic” infrastructure constructions with “small and beautiful” projects that would improve the livelihoods of local populations, expand into new emerging fields to explore “new space for win-win development that is of higher-standard, more resilient and sustainable”.

The initiative was first proposed by Xi in 2013, involving ambitious plans to build power plants, roads, railways, ports and other infrastructure overseas mainly by Chinese companies and funded by Chinese investment development bank loans.

Through these projects, China has deepened its relations with Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

They are seen as a way for China to expand its countries such as the United States and some of its allies. As the geopolitical tensions increase between China and the West, some major partners, such as Italy and Australia, have announced they are pulling out from the programme.

Critics have accused Beijing of saddling some project partner countries with unaffordable loan repayment terms, leading some of them to call the belt and road projects “debt traps”.

Some have also said that the projects bring little benefit to local economies, and levelled accusations of low transparency, corruption or human rights violations, as well as environmental damage.

Some high-profile projects under the initiative, such as the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, struggled to repay the Chinese loans. Other projects like the Melaka Gateway project in Malaysia, have been cancelled or scaled down.

In addition, Chinese expatriates and construction sites of belt and road projects in Pakistan – a key investment destination and host of some of flagship programmes – have been targeted by terrorists.

Monday’s meeting was attended by senior Chinese officials involved in the projects and was the fourth edition following those in 2016, 2018 and 2021.

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

Highlights China's human rights violations in Tibet-2024

30 December 2024, [The Tibet Post](#), Tenzin Lhadon

Chinese government forcefully crackdown Tibetan peaceful protestors for protecting their land and river from construction mega dam on them and force to shift Monasteries and Villages, shutting down famous Tibetan-run schools and Monastery schools, forcefully to take out young monks out of the Monasteries schools and forcefully to put in the Chinese colonial style boarding school. China also detains arrest, imprison and even kill Tibetans for merely exercise basic rights and freedom, practice religion.

Around 300 Tibetans gathered in front of the Dege county government building on February 14, 2024 to protest against the construction of the largest hydroelectric power plant in their region and the forced displacement of their homes and monasteries. Hundreds of Tibetans begged the Chinese authorities to halt the construction of the Kamtok dam on the Drichu River in the Gege region. However, instead of listening to the Tibetans, the Chinese police and army arrested hundreds of Tibetans and severely beat them, on February 22, 2024.

Chinese government has forcibly shut down the most popular school, the Gangjong Sherig Norbu School, where Tibetan students from three provinces of Tibet come to study and where the graduates are well-trained students who do excellent work in Tibetan societies. The teachers and students cried so hard that they could not control their sadness at the closure of their beloved school after 30 years.

Chinese police killed a Tibetan monk by torturing him while in detention. Chinese police detained a Tibetan monk named Losel from Sera monastery in Lhasa, Tibet, in May 2024, on suspicion of sharing information about Tibet with Tibetans in exile. He died as a result of the beatings, ill-treatment and torture he suffered during his detention.

A Tibetan man named Damdul died in November 2021, after being brutally tortured by Chinese police while in the detention. He had been arrested on March 5, 2021, for sharing the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Chinese social media and for keeping photos and CDs of His Holiness in his home in Lhasa, the Capital of Tibet.

Chinese authorities sentenced a Tibetan monk named Lobsang Tashi from Kriti monastery to three years in prison, in a secret trial, at the end of 2021, over allegedly contacting prayers for those who died during the Covid-19 pandemic, and making offerings (money offering to pray) to offices of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche for the deceased.

China has conducted major crackdowns on religious freedom in all parts of Tibet, continued over the years, and 269 [Tibetan](#) people were placed under

investigation for allegedly involving in so-called "illegal spiritual practices", on March 25, 2024 and those arrested may face prison terms ranging from 5 to 17 years.

Chinese authorities arrested a well-educated young Tibetan monk named Tenzin Chenrab and writer from Nyakchu County, in eastern Tibet, in September 2023, for possessing a photo of Tibet's spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and several e-books in his phone. Tenzin Chenrab's 53-year-old mother died after not hearing his only son for long time.

Chinese authorities murdered a girl named Tsedon , a second-year undergraduate in Tibet University in Lhasa, Tibet, on January 15, 2024. She was detained by Chinese police in Ritso Township, Nyemo County, central Tibet, on December 26, 2023 with explaining reason for detention. After 21 days in detention, the police informed her family that she was dead and refused to return her body to the family members.

Chinese authorities arrested a Tibetan monk called Jampa Choephel from Rebgong County, in March, 2024, for posting the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his social media platform (Wechat). After five months in detention, he was sentenced by a Chinese court last month to one and a half years in prison.

A Tibetan woman named Tsering Tso , arrested by the Yushu police on June 29, 2024, accused of 'endangering social stability', interrogated and detained for 10 days, then released on July 8, 2024. Who had exercised her rights and criticised the Chinese authorities for their racial discrimination against Tibetans and for posting videos on the social media app about the incident. This is six times she has been detained by Chinese authorities.

Chinese authorities have banned Tibetans from entering the Atsog Moastery in Dragkar County, northern Tibet. But on April 9, 2024, hundreds of Tibetans circled the monastery to pray and bid farewell to the soon-to-be-demolished temple. This is because the monastery will be demolished to build a huge dam on the Yellow River near the monastery.

Chinese authorities from WeChat Company have indiscriminately shut down the "Great Sheep-fold ," a popular blog in the Tibetan language on WeChat on April 2, 2024, which contained over 10,000 pieces directly related to the cultural heritage and humanistic literature of Tibet.

Chinese authorities arrested a Tibetan monk called Lobsang Thamke in June, 2023, for allegedly publishing Tibetan books from outside Tibet and contacting Tibetans in exile.

China detains a young Tibetan, Tsowoe Tsering , after he openly denounced the illegal extraction of sand by a Chinese company (Anhui Xianhe Construction Engineering Co, Ltd) in Tibet, on the banks of a river in

Tsa-Ri-Ma Township of Gakog County, Ngaba, Tibet, on October 15, 2024.

Tibetan language rights activist Tashi Wangchuk detained again by Chinese authorities on October 22, 2024, over allegedly spreading misinformation about China and making accusations against government policy in his videos on the social media. He was released after 15 days in detention.

The Chinese government has issued a statement warning Tibetans that Tibetans, particularly monks on early April, 2024, cannot do anything related to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, including keeping and hanging a picture of him and praying for him, cannot perform religious rituals after his death and cannot disrupt the process of his reincarnation by China.

CCP force Tibetan officials to sign a pledge not to practice religion, on January 22, 2024. Chinese authorities in Wolong Township, Wenchuan County, eastern Tibet, forced Tibetan officials to sign a pledge: "not to believe in religion, not to participate in religious activities, never to promote or spread religion anywhere and always to listen to the Chinese Communist Party, be grateful to the Party, follow the Party".

On December 14, 2024, Chinese authorities in Gonghe County, northeastern Tibet, arrested well-known Tibetan entrepreneur and Internet celebrity Sonam Choedup , whose Internet name is Aga Gelek Tsang (better known as Aga Gelek), along with his partners and friends, including Kunsang Dorjee, Tenpa, Tsenthar Gyal and Tashi Loden, in the name of China's "sweep away the black and eliminate the evil" political campaign. The entrepreneur has helped many Tibetan students, disabled students and small Tibetan entrepreneurs. He has also participated in charity work and disaster relief operations, making substantial donations.

Chinese authorities torture Tibetan village head to death amid crackdown on Tibetan Language

25 December 2024, [ANI](#)

Chinese authorities have wrongfully arrested over 20 Tibetans and tortured to death a Tibetan village head Gonpo Namgyal, who was subjected to months of severe torture, including repeated electric shock sessions during his detention, as per a report in Tibet.net.

The Central Tibetan Administration reported that Namgyal, a village head in Ponkor township, Darlag County, located in the Tibetan region of Amdo (now part of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Gansu provinces) tragically died on December 18. His death comes after over seven months of inhuman treatment in custody, where he was held for participating in a cultural

campaign led by the Tibetan Language Association. The crackdown in May 2024 followed the launch of the "Pure Mother Tongue" campaign, spearheaded by the association under the leadership of Khenpo Tenpa Dhargye, a Tibetan Buddhist teacher.

The campaign aimed to preserve the Tibetan language, which has been increasingly threatened by Chinese policies promoting Mandarin as the dominant language. The Chinese government arrested Khenpo Tenpa Dhargye and Gonpo Namgyal, along with several others, accusing them of "endangering state security." They were taken to Golog Prefecture headquarters for detention, reported by the Central Tibetan Administration.

While Gonpo Namgyal was eventually released due to ill health, he passed away within three days of his release. During the preparation of his body for cremation, it was discovered that many of his internal organs had been burned, presumably due to the electric torture he endured while in custody. Khenpo Tenpa Dhargye, a close associate of the revered Lama Jigme Phuntsok, had been a vocal advocate for the preservation of Tibetan culture, including language and traditional practices. His arrest and the ongoing uncertainty surrounding his condition have deeply concerned Tibetan communities in the region, prompting widespread religious prayers and ceremonies for his health and safe release. The Chinese government's continued persecution of influential Tibetan figures like Khenpo Tenpa Dhargye and Gonpo Namgyal reflects its broader effort to suppress Tibetan identity and resistance. These actions are seen as part of a systematic attempt to undermine Tibetan culture and language in favour of a "Chinese national unity consciousness," at the cost of basic human rights for Tibetans.

China's top procuratorate orders arrest of former senior political advisor

24 December 2024, [Global Times](#)

China's Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) has ordered the arrest of Wu Yingjie, a former member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), for suspected bribe-taking, the SPP said Tuesday.

Wu was also former head of the Committee on Culture, Historical Data and Studies of the CPPCC National Committee.

The case was transferred to procuratorial authorities for examination and prosecution following the conclusion of an investigation by the National Commission of Supervision.

The handling of the case is underway.

China: Five years on, activists jailed in 'cruel' 2019 crackdown must be released

23 December 2024, [Amnesty International](#)

It is time to step up demands for the Chinese government to release human rights defenders detained after attending a social gathering five years ago, Amnesty International said today.

In December 2019, a number of human rights activists met in the southeastern city of Xiamen for a dinner and discussion of social issues. From the 26th of that month, and over the weeks that followed, Chinese authorities forcibly disappeared human rights lawyer Ding Jiayi and legal scholar Xu Zhiyong until they resurfaced in government detention.

Amnesty International considers both men prisoners of conscience and has consistently advocated for their immediate and unconditional release.

"The Xiamen crackdown epitomizes the Chinese authorities' all-out assault on civil society and the cruelty with which they treat peaceful rights advocates," said Sarah Brooks, Amnesty International's China Director.

At least five other activists were also targeted, and detained, for their affiliation with the gathering. In the months that followed, all seven activists were reportedly held in "residential surveillance at a designated location" (RSDL), a form of secret incommunicado detention that places detainees at increased risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

"Over the past five years, Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi – along with several of their companions – have endured arbitrary detention, torture and unfair trials, merely because they attended a private gathering and discussed the civil society situation and current affairs in China."

Following closed-door trials, on 10 April 2023 Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi were **sentenced to 14 and 12 years in prison respectively** for "subverting state power". In October 2024, Xu Zhiyong began a hunger strike to protest his treatment in prison, which included being harassed by fellow cellmates, apparently at the behest of prison officials.

"The continued imprisonment of Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi is an outrage, and the international community must ramp up pressure on the Chinese government to address this injustice and secure their release," Sarah Brooks said.

The Chinese authorities must immediately release Ding and Xu and stop punishing all those who participated in the Xiamen gathering.

Both Ding and Xu have been the subject of recommendations to Chinese authorities by multiple governments and by UN officials, including High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk. Yet concrete actions to demand access to these

individuals or to increase the consequences to Chinese authorities for their crackdown on human rights defenders have not materialized.

“The harsh sentences meted out to Xu and Ding are meant to send a message: that to fight to defend one’s rights is unacceptable to the Chinese government. Yet they persisted, and now their family members carry on advocating for their release with that same conviction.”

Ding Jiayi’s wife, Sophie Luo, told Amnesty International ahead of the fifth anniversary of the Xiamen gathering: “I know that attending a private gathering does not violate any laws, and these citizens should not be imprisoned for even a day. Therefore, I will fight tirelessly for the dismissal of this case.”

A support group active online coordinated by activists in and outside of China is collecting messages and prayers to share with Xu, despite censorship and the risk of government retaliation.

“The Chinese authorities must immediately release Ding and Xu and stop punishing all those who participated in the Xiamen gathering. The grim picture painted by their continued imprisonment should galvanize international condemnation for China’s crackdown on civil society,” Sarah Brooks said.

Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi were prominent members of the New Citizens’ Movement, a loose network of activists founded by Xu in 2012 to promote government transparency and expose corruption. Both had been jailed previously due to their advocacy; Ding served three and a half years and was released in October 2016, while Xu – whose sentence was slightly longer – was released in 2017.

Xu and Ding appealed their 2023 convictions, but in November 2023, the Shandong Provincial High Court upheld the verdict and sentence against them. Both have now requested a second appeal.

In jail, Ding and Xu have been deprived of fundamental rights, including access to reading and writing materials; have severe restrictions on their right to communicate with family and friends; and have reported challenges seeking medical care. Possibly in response to his hunger strike, the Chinese authorities allowed Xu to meet with his lawyer on 26 November 2024. It appears that Xu has since stopped his hunger strike.

Human rights defenders in China continue to face intimidation, harassment, arbitrary detention, as well as torture and other ill-treatment for defending human rights and exercising their freedoms of expression and association. Such retaliation often also extends to their family members and colleagues.

As in many cases of Chinese activists, friends and family of Xu and Ding have faced threats and harassment for speaking out. For years, Xu was not only prevented from seeing his family but lacked legal counsel of his choosing; three lawyers appointed by

his family withdrew from representing Xu, reportedly due to threats and intimidation from Chinese authorities.

Other human rights activists targeted in connection with the Xiamen gathering include:

- Chang Weiping was sentenced to three and a half years in prison; he has served his sentence and was released in July 2024 but remains subject to a travel ban
- Li Qiaochu received a sentence of three years and eight months; she has served her sentence and was released in August 2024 but remains subject to a travel ban plus two years of deprivation of political rights
- Zhang Zhongshun was sentenced to four and a half years in prison in November 2024
- Dai Zhenya and Li Yingjun were released on bail after spending time in RSDL, and they are also subject to a travel ban.

Amnesty International considers a prisoner of conscience to be any person imprisoned solely because of their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs, their ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, socio-economic status, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other status, and who has not used violence or advocated violence or hatred in the circumstances leading to their detention.

Prominent Tibetan activist detained for two weeks amid Chinese discrimination

21 December 2024, [ANI](#)

A prominent Tibetan rights activist, Tsering Tso, was detained for two weeks in Qinghai province from November 29 to December 13 on charges of "spreading false information" and "causing trouble" via social media, as reported by Radio Free Asia. The 39-year-old has long been outspoken against Chinese authorities, advocating for equal rights for Tibetans and exposing discrimination faced by her community.

Radio Free Asia reported that Tso, who operates a travel business in Tibet and across China, has been detained or harassed multiple times in the past five years. Her recent detention stemmed from a video she posted in November 2024, in which a police officer at the Public Security Bureau in Trika County, also known as Guide in Chinese, denied her passport application, claiming she had a criminal record.

Tso's social media posts frequently criticise Chinese authorities for their discriminatory practices, particularly regarding the treatment of Tibetans. Upon her release, Tso expressed defiance, stating, "The laws in Qinghai differ from those in China. Each time I report on the police force's discriminatory

practices and violations of their disciplinary rules, they exert their power to detain and pressure the whistleblower on false charges arbitrarily." Tso has been a vocal critic of the challenges Tibetans face in running businesses in their homeland, accusing local officials of corruption and abusing their power for personal gain. In October 2023, two videos surfaced showing Tso highlighting the difficulties Tibetans face in obtaining business licenses and accusing local leaders of corruption. She also raised concerns over the unfair treatment of two Tibetan monks, who were subjected to additional scrutiny and required to obtain extra permits during their pilgrimage, while Chinese tourists were not. Earlier this year, Tso endured a 10-day detention for "endangering social stability" after speaking out against these discriminatory practices. Tso's activism reflects the ongoing struggle for equal rights for Tibetans, who continue to face systemic discrimination under Chinese rule.

Testimony of a Chinese human rights defender: inside China's brutal prison system

18 December 2024, [HRIC](#)

"Killing someone here is as meaningless as killing a dog. We wouldn't even need to bury you. We'd just take you straight to the crematorium and burn you. It's very near here, you know."

HRIC has translated the harrowing testimony of Xie Wenfei (谢文飞), a Chinese human rights defender whose courage and suffering expose the horrifying depths of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) oppression. His statement was [originally published in commemoration of Human Rights Day \(10 December 2024\)](#). Xie, born in 1977 in Hunan Province, is known for his involvement in the Southern Street Movement, which advocates for democratic reform in China. His commitment to human rights has cost him his freedom, his health, and very nearly his life. In his statement, translated in full below, Xie depicts in graphic detail the brutal consequences faced by human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists, and intellectual dissidents who dare to confront the authority of the CCP.

On 29 April 2020, Xie published an article commemorating Lin Zhao, a dissident executed during the Cultural Revolution for her criticisms of Mao Zedong. By the evening, he had been seized. Xie was detained by the police in Chenzhou, Hunan, on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," a deliberately vague and politically motivated accusation which the CCP levies against activists and critics. Thereafter, Xie was plunged into a nightmare of state-sanctioned physical violence, psychological torment, degradation and dehumanization in China's

detention centers and prisons. Xie's testimony offers a stark reminder of the CCP's disdain for basic human rights, and the chilling lengths it will go to in silencing political opponents.

Xie's story demonstrates clearly why international actors—including governments, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders—must not look away. We must continue to hold the CCP accountable for its violations. The prison abuses described by Xie reveal the darker realities of a government which not only tramples on fundamental principles of human dignity but seeks to legitimize its authoritarian model under the guise of global leadership. This is not just China's problem—it is a global problem. If Beijing is allowed to normalize this system while positioning itself as a global leader, it will embolden other authoritarian regimes and undermine the very foundations of international human rights. We cannot let China rewrite the rules. China's authoritarian practices must not become further normalized on the world stage.

Xie's testimony not only chronicles the inhumane treatment he suffered but also serves as a powerful reminder of the price paid by those who resist the CCP. Beijing's official narrative of 'progress' and 'prosperity' rings hollow when confronted with testimonies like Xie Wenfei's, which reveal a system built on brutality, silence, and fear. This is the truth behind the propaganda. His closing reflection, quoting Alexis de Tocqueville, reminds us that the treatment of prisoners reveals the true measure of a society's civilization. What does this say about China under the CCP? And what does it say about us if we fail to act?

On Human Rights Day, I want to share my personal experiences as a human rights defender.

On the morning of 29 April 2020, I published an article titled A Memorial for Lin Zhao. [Editor's note: Lin Zhao, 1932–1968, was a prominent Chinese dissident who was imprisoned and later executed for her criticism of Mao Zedong's policies during the Cultural Revolution.] That same evening, two burly men dressed in black (each weighing about 90 kilograms, as I estimated) ambushed me. They were hiding in the dark, waiting. When I tried to avoid them, they seized me, and without saying a word, pinned me to the ground. They held me there for a long time. Once I was taken to the case-handling center, I noticed that their T-shirts bore the words "Branded Ironhead" on the chest.

What human rights can we speak of?

On 28 May 2022, I was transferred from the Zixing Detention Center along with 146 others to Chenzhou Detention Center. In Cell 401, because I refused to squat, one brute took advantage of my unguarded moment and slapped me sharply across the face. I kicked him away without hesitation, but this led immediately to a group of thugs attacking me. I was forced to fight back in self-defense.

Unexpectedly, a person nicknamed "Director Li" entered the room and, again catching me off guard, slapped me hard in the face. (This surprised me because, despite having been detained in several detention centers previously and serving over six years in prison, I had never been struck by a police officer before.) After he left, at least seven or eight thugs, emboldened by his implicit encouragement, swarmed and overwhelmed me. I was beaten until I was dizzy, my head pounding as if it would explode. Multiple lumps formed on my scalp. The whole world seemed to spin, and I could barely stay upright.

Deputy Director Li later took me to the interview room. When I requested medical treatment for my injuries, he coldly refused. He then ordered me back to Cell 401. I replied bitterly that they might as well beat me to death. His reply? "Killing someone here is as meaningless as killing a dog. We wouldn't even need to bury you. We'd just take you straight to the crematorium and burn you. It's very near here, you know." (This was the first time I learned just how close the crematorium was.) My head throbbed so severely it felt as though it was about to burst, like the torment Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, endured when the monk Tang Seng chanted the tightening spell in Journey to the West. Writhing on the floor in pain, I succumbed to a combination of rage and despair and collapsed.

Li ordered that I be dragged into solitary confinement in Cell 6011. When I woke up, I found myself lying on a concrete floor with a puddle of water beside me. My head was near the toilet. My socks were worn through, and the only "bed" in the room was a single wooden plank cemented to the wall.

For several days, my head continued to ache intensely, and the lumps on my scalp showed no signs of subsiding. I pressed the alarm button repeatedly for four days, requesting medical attention, but I was ignored. A three-day hunger strike didn't bring any results either. No one admitted I had been beaten.

What human rights can we speak of?

On 30 May 2023, I was transferred from the Zixing Detention Center to Chenzhou Prison. Upon our arrival, they forced the 14 of us from Zixing to strip naked and perform squatting frog jumps in unison. I refused. Within an hour of arriving, I was confined to a 0.18-square-meter iron cage on the second floor of the reception center. The indoor temperature that day was 30°C, and for over eight hours, I was given only a small spoonful of water, no food, and my clothes were drenched with sweat.

That evening, I was transferred to a "high-security" area on the fifth floor, where, for two weeks, I was confined to a 0.7-square-meter iron cage for over 15 hours a day. For six consecutive days, I was not allowed to bathe, and for several days, I was denied both water

and access to the toilet. I started a hunger strike. This changed nothing.

In front of over a dozen people (eight in iron cages and several wearing green vests), Warden Liang declared: "This person (referring to me) should be locked up tightly. Don't give him water. Don't let him use the toilet. Just make sure he doesn't die here."

Outraged, I requested to be put on a tiger bench—a notorious torture device—as both an act of defiance and a way to expose the system's cruelty. Within two hours, my "wish" was granted. After less than ten minutes on the tiger bench, my hands swelled up, sweat poured from my head, forming a stream, and my clothes were drenched. The bench, designed for someone 10 centimeters taller than me, required them to forcibly stretch me forward to cuff my hands, which was extremely painful and exhausting. Onlookers could see that my condition was dire.

Several hours after being released from the tiger bench, my right thumb was numb, and I couldn't move it properly for five days. Even two months later, it still felt as though connected to a low-voltage electric current.

What human rights can we possibly speak of?!

On 8 June 2023, in a document required by the prison, I wrote: "Since my arrival at Chenzhou Prison on 30 May, I have not been treated as a human being. Regardless of whether I am an ordinary person, a detained prisoner, a political prisoner, or even someone convicted of the gravest crimes, I am a human, and therefore I am entitled to the most basic human rights. Individual human dignity is an integral part of humanity's collective dignity, and the latter is composed of the former. Even if a prison aims to 'reform' individuals, it cannot do so at the cost of trampling on and sacrificing human dignity."

On 25 June 2023, I was transferred to Changsha Prison in Hunan province. My two boxes of books were not allowed inside, and even my attempt to bring in a single copy of 300 Tang Poems and Collected Annotations of the Four Books was rejected under the guise of a "zero possessions" policy. This was a supervisory measure personally introduced by Prison Director Lei Jianhua, designed to showcase his ultimate authority.

In early July, a fellow prisoner, aged 42, from Liuzhou, Guangxi, who arrived at the detention center on the same day as me, died. No one was held accountable; nothing happened. For nearly two months in the detention center, we were forbidden to read or write. I requested three times to borrow Records of the Grand Historian from the bookshelf but was denied each time.

On 21 August 2023, after being assigned to the Fourth Division, I was subjected to the punishment of being pinned to the corridor floor for five days in a row - all because I had refused the arbitrary command to

squat. This punishment was carried out as a display to “make an example” of me and my disobedience. On 27 August 2023, I was beaten by both prisoners and officers for refusing to sing “red songs” as ordered. [Editor’s note: These are revolutionary propaganda songs glorifying the Chinese Communist Party and its leaders, often used as a tool of political indoctrination.] Officer Xie, the tallest officer in the division, kicked me violently, and told me: “Because this is a political matter, I can hit you, and I won’t face any consequences. Go ahead and complain to the Commission for Discipline Inspection; complain to the procuratorate, or even the prison director—I don’t give a shit.”

What human rights can we speak of?

On 29 August 2023, I was denied access to the toilet for so long that when I was finally permitted during a group break, it took me 20 minutes to urinate in broken intervals. I was verbally punished by an officer that same day.

Then, every morning and afternoon when water was distributed, I was only allowed one-third to half the usual amount. I was permitted to use the toilet only once each morning and afternoon. Fortunately, a slightly kind-hearted “Aunt Wu” ensured the punishment was not strictly enforced. A week later, I was returned to “normal” access, but the rule of only being allowed to fetch water twice a day remained in effect until my release on 29 October 2024. Every morning and afternoon, I endured thirst for two to three hours before I could drink hot water. My severe prostatitis went untreated. From 21 August to 30 December 2023, I and others filed requests to use the toilet a total of eight times, five of which were outright denied.

What human rights can we possibly speak of? This was worse than being an animal.

In the 16 months I served at Changsha Prison, I read only five books—less than what I read in one month at Heyuan Prison. Either I was prohibited from reading or I had no time or energy to do so. My six-year practice of calligraphy was forcibly ended—I was never even allowed to touch a writing brush.

As I wrote in a letter to Director Lei, which will never receive a reply: from the moment my two boxes of books were left outside Changsha Prison’s gate, my prison life became a nightmare. For someone like me, who has read for over a decade, having books to read makes even hell bearable. Conversely, being deprived of books makes even heaven feel like hell. My thanks to the prison education office for providing me with Francis Fukuyama’s *Political Order and Political Decay* on 8 March 2024, after I was beaten on 3 March and left with no avenue for complaint. It slowly brought me back to life.

Before the strict implementation of the “9511” system in August 2024, we worked over 60 hours per week for

13 months. [Editor's note: "9511" refers to a prison management system in which prisoners are required to work 9 hours per day for 5 days a week, devote 1 day to study or "re-education," and are permitted 1 day of rest.]

After moving to the new Changsha Prison site on 23 March 2024, we were forced to work extra night shifts for over a month. Personally, I was fortunate to endure only one such shift; however, among the 170+ other prisoners in my group, dozens were forced to work night shifts daily. Those who failed to complete required tasks faced a range of different punishments. At the new site, in pursuit of so-called “dining order,” our meals—served in stainless steel trays—were placed on stainless steel tables before our shifts ended. By the time we ate, the food was stone cold, even in March, when many prisoners still wore winter clothes due to poor health. My complaints yielded no improvement. I remembered how, over a decade ago, the pigs we raised at home had their swill warmed for them— they never ate cold.

As a human rights defender, I was reduced to a state worse than that of pigs.

What human rights can we speak of?

Many may cite Article 7 of the People’s Republic of China’s Prison Law, which ostensibly guarantees prisoners’ rights and dignity. But any clear-headed person knows how far we are from achieving a rule-of-law society—if anything, we are moving further away from it.

Furthermore, Director Lei openly stated at an assembly that our identity “is that of criminals, what people normally refer to as ‘bad people’ (I strongly protest this statement and will demand a public apology from Director Lei when the time is right). We are here ‘to be punished.’” He even boasted that Changsha Prison was already the best in China, the number one in Hunan. If it were any better, Dickens-inspired citizens dissatisfied with everyday life would flock here.

Under Director Lei’s “enlightened leadership,” marked by his tyrannical authority, few dared to file complaints. Even if they did, as in my case—when I was beaten, I wrote to the procurator stationed at the prison, and requested to meet my lawyer Zhang Lei—the complaint was torn up before my eyes.

"In Chinese prisons, especially in Changsha Prison, do not speak to me of human rights!"

This is Changsha Prison’s resounding declaration!

French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville once said:

“The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by examining its prison system.”

Oh, how these words ring true.

Rights group urges China to release jailed Tibetan activist

17 December 2024, [UCA News](#)



A Tibetan protester shouts slogans from a police vehicle after being detained near the Chinese embassy during a demonstration in New Delhi on October 1, 2024, against the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. (Photo by Sajjad HUSSAIN / AFP)

A leading human rights group in Asia has urged China to unconditionally release a Tibetan environmental activist who was jailed after he published a video on illegal sand mining in Sichuan Province.

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), in a Dec. 16 statement, expressed “deep concern” over China imposing an eight-month jail term on environmental activist Tsogon Tsering. The rights group asked the Chinese government “to immediately and unconditionally release” Tsering.

Tsering was jailed on Oct. 27, accused of “disturbing social order” after he published the video on illegal sand and gravel mining in Tsaruma village, Kakhog County, Ngaba Prefecture.

The group said Tsering’s social media account was taken down, and all search terms related to his name were blocked. His whereabouts remained unknown until his sentencing.

Tsering’s case is similar to Anya Sengdra’s, who is serving a seven-year sentence after exposing illegal mining in Gade County in the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Earlier in 2024, four Tibetan environmental activists were arrested in a village in Chamdo Prefecture for raising concerns about alleged illegal land grabbing by Chinese authorities, the statement said.

The group’s executive director Mary Aileen Diez-Bacalso expressed “solidarity with the people of Tibet,” who face socio-cultural repression and environmental challenges.

Chinese authorities have been targeting Tibet and its people since 1950s, when China annexed Tibet, claiming it to be an integral part of Chinese territory.

“Fearing retaliation and reprisals, Tibetans including environmental human rights defenders and journalists – have been effectively silenced, allowing China to

govern the region with total impunity,” the rights group alleged.

Chinese authorities continue to “criminalize legitimate expressions of concern over Tibetan people’s fundamental freedoms” under the guise of national security and ethnic unity, the rights group said.

It asked the Chinese government to stop the arrest and imprisonment of Tibetan environmental rights defenders peacefully advocating for their rights.

It also demanded that China adhere to international human rights standards, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Tibetan environmental activist sentenced to 8 months in prison

02 December 2024, [RFA](#)

Tsogon Tsering made a rare public appeal against the illegal extraction of sand and gravel mining from a local river.



Tsongon Tsering, a Tibetan from Tsaruma village in Kyungchu county in southwestern China’s Sichuan province, calls for authorities to take action against illegal sand and gravel mining taking place since May 2023 on the Tsaruma River. (Image from citizen video via WeChat)

A Tibetan environmental activist from China’s Sichuan province has been sentenced to eight months in prison, after he made a rare public appeal to authorities over a company he accused of illegally extracting sand and gravel from a river, two Tibetan sources told RFA.

Tsongon Tsering, 29, from Tsaruma village in Ngaba prefecture, called Aba in Chinese, openly posted a 5-minute video in which he held up his government ID card and accused Anhui Xianhe Construction Engineering Co. of the illegal activity along the Tsaruma River since May 2023.

On Oct. 27, the Kyungchu County People’s Court charged Tsering with “disturbing social order” and “provoking trouble and picking quarrels” for raising concerns about the environmental impact of the sand and gravel extraction, including reduced water levels, soil erosion and risk to homes located near the river, the sources said.

Until the news of his sentencing last week, Tsering's whereabouts and condition had remained unknown since "a day or two after" Oct. 20, when authorities had summoned him a second time on the pretext of investigating the matter and detained him. Authorities initially summoned Tsering and other villagers for questioning on Oct. 18, just two days after Tsering made the online public appeal — a rare move in Tibet, where speaking out against authorities or state-approved projects often leads to reprisals. At the time, they were all released back to their homes, but Tsering was detained.



A view of an area where sand and gravel are being illegally extracted from the Tsaruma River in Kyungchu county, southwestern China's Sichuan province, in an image posted on WeChat by Tibetan resident Tsongon Tsering, Oct. 15, 2024. (Tsongon Tsering/WeChat)

Tsering is currently being held in Kyungchu County Prison and faces continued investigation and threats of extended sentencing, the sources told RFA.

"Authorities have also indicated to the family that the eight-month-long prison sentence is not final, emphasizing that they will continue to investigate the matter completely before making a conclusive ruling," one of the sources said.

Speaking out

Tsering's detention is an example of the risks Tibetans face for speaking out and the swift action authorities take to silence those who raise concerns about environmental degradation in their communities, especially when linked to Chinese companies.

Other Tibetan environmental defenders, such as Anya Sengdra, have faced persecution for their activism. In 2019, Chinese authorities sentenced Sengdra to a seven-year prison term on charges of disturbing social order after he complained online about corrupt officials, illegal mining and the hunting of protected wildlife.

"Authorities are treating Tsering's environmental advocacy as criminal activity and accusing him of stirring up social unrest for personal vendettas," said the second source. "His family and locals are under heavy surveillance and restrictions on sharing information about his case."



A view of the results of illegal sand and gravel extraction along the Tsaruma River in Kyungchu county, southwestern China's Sichuan province, in an image posted on WeChat by Tibetan resident Tsongon Tsering, Oct. 15, 2024. (Tsongon Tsering/WeChat)

Authorities acted quickly after Tsering's video became popular on Chinese social media, shutting down his WeChat account and censoring all search terms related to his name on the platform.

The video, which gained significant attention online, had been widely shared by other platform users, but those posts were taken down as well, so that all related content had been censored by Oct. 17.

In the video, Tsering describes Anhui Xianhe Construction Engineering's extensive mining operations and repeated appeals made by Tibetans to local authorities to take action against the company for causing environmental harm.

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

China completes building highest-altitude, largest-capacity hydropower project in Yellow River basin in Qinghai

30 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China said Dec 30 that it was set to complete today the final testing of the second unit of the Maerdang Hydropower Station, the highest-altitude and largest-capacity hydropower project under construction in the Yellow River basin, located in Qinghai province. The first unit was put into operation in April this year.

There are no available details about the relocation of local Tibetans from the building of this major dam project which began in 2011 at Marteng (Chinese: Maerdang) in Ragya (Lajia) Town of Machen (Maqen) County, Golog (Guoluo) Prefecture.

A research on the Longyangxia reservoir, also in Qinghai province, by Jarmila Ptackova from the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic, in 2016 stated that the building of other dams in the province – Bingling, Jishixia, Dahejia, Huangfeng, Banduo, Yangdian, Maerdang, Shitouxia and Nazixia – will require the further relocation of 51,855 people by 2020.

On Dec 31, the five turbine generators, including four 550,000-kilowatt units and one 120,000-kilowatt unit, will be put into operation to generate electricity, reported China's *official globaltimes.cn* Dec 30, citing China Group Media.

Located at an average altitude of 3,300 metres, the hydropower station has a total installed capacity of 2.32 million kilowatts. To harness the power of the fast-flowing water, the Maerdang Hydroelectric Station was built in a steep canyon, the report said.

Located in a nature reserve, the report claims that the construction of the hydropower station aimed to minimize its impact on local wildlife, providing some details about measures that had been taken for the purpose.

"Due to its challenging high-altitude terrain, the Maerdang Hydropower Station only began construction in recent years. Its completion and operation represent a major technological milestone," Lin Boqiang, director of the China Centre for Energy Economics Research at Xiamen University, has said.

China approves Tibet mega dam that could generate 3 times more power than Three Gorges

26 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Holly Chik

Hydropower project on Yarlung Tsangpo River could get unprecedented investment to tackle daunting engineering challenges

China has approved the construction of a colossal hydropower project on Tibet's longest river that could generate three times more energy than the Three

Gorges Dam, state news agency Xinhua reported on Wednesday.

The mega hydropower project, set to be built on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet autonomous region, presents unprecedented engineering challenges.

Total investment in the dam could exceed 1 trillion yuan (US\$137 billion), which would dwarf any other single infrastructure project on the planet.

The report did not specify when construction would begin, or where it would take place.

The Yarlung Tsangpo flows across the Tibetan Plateau, carving out the deepest canyon on Earth and falling a staggering 7,667 metres (25,154 feet), before reaching India, where it is known as the Brahmaputra River

The dam will be built in one of the rainiest parts of mainland China.

The project is expected to generate nearly 300 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity annually. By contrast, the Three Gorges Dam, which now has the world's largest installed capacity, was designed to produce 88.2 billion kWh.

In 2020, Yan Zhiyong, then chairman of state-owned Power Construction Corporation of China, said the location on the Yarlung Tsangpo was one of the most hydropower-rich areas in the world.

"The lower reaches area features a vertical drop of 2,000 metres over a 50km (31 miles) distance, representing nearly 70 million kilowatts of resources that could be developed – that is more than three Three Gorges Dams with an installed capacity of 22.5 million kilowatts," he said.

To harness the hydropower potential of the river, four to six 20km-long tunnels must be drilled through the Namcha Barwa mountain to divert half of the river's flow at about 2,000 cubic metres per second.

Additionally, the project site is located along a tectonic plate boundary where earthquakes may occur, and the geology of the plateau differs significantly from that of the plains.

According to a 2023 report, the hydropower station is expected to generate over 300 billion kWh of electricity each year – enough to meet the annual needs of more than 300 million people.

Xinhua said the hydropower project would prioritise environmental protection.

"Through extensive geological exploration and technical advancements, a solid foundation has been laid for the science-based, secure and high-quality development of the project," it said.

The dam would also drive the development of nearby solar and wind energy resources, adding to the region's clean energy base, Xinhua reported.

"This represents a major move in China's green and low-carbon energy transition," the report said.

"It is also of great importance to advancing the country's strategy for carbon peaking and carbon neutrality and to coping with global climate change."

Beijing first announced plans to build the dam in 2020, raising concerns in India about its impact on the country's water and food security. Some also worry that China could weaponise water by using it to cause floods or induce droughts.

However, a 2023 study by scientists at Tsinghua University's department of hydraulic engineering said the project could benefit China, India and Bangladesh if the countries were to cooperate.

The researchers said reservoir storage could increase the minimum water flow during the dry season and add one to four navigable months per year for the Indian portion of the river.

Using reservoir storage to manage flood peaks can reduce flood-affected areas by as much as 32.6 per cent in India and 14.8 per cent in Bangladesh, according to the study.

"The construction of [a] mainstream cascade hydropower system with reservoir storage would have enormous benefits for hydropower development, waterway navigation and agricultural production in the Yarlung Tsangpo-Brahmaputra River basin," they wrote in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Hydrology: Regional Studies*.

Satellite images show huge construction activity on Chinese side near Arunachal Pradesh

21 December 2024, [Eastern Sentinel](#)

Amid ongoing debates between the state government and anti-dam activists, villagers over the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, recent satellite images from Google Maps reveal significant construction activities near the Chinese-occupied Tibet region, close to Indian territory (Arunachal Pradesh). These developments are occurring on the left bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo River, known as the Siang River in Arunachal Pradesh and the Brahmaputra in Assam. In his recent visit to Boleng in Siang district, Chief Minister Pema Khandu reiterated that the Siang project is a central initiative and will be executed to counter potential threats from China. Khandu revealed that China has approved the construction of a massive project capable of generating 60,000 MW of power on the Yarlung Tsangpo, just upstream from its entry point into India at Tuting in Upper Siang district. Satellite images depict extensive activities near the left bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo, including heavy machinery, excavators, cylindrical structures, and blue painted camp-like formations. As per the Google Map, the construction site lies approximately 5km from the nearest ITBP post in Gelling, Upper Siang, 5.75 km from Gelling village the last Circle HQ in Tuting under Upper Siang District, 1.62 km from the McMahon Line, 35 km from Medog town in the Nyingchi region of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China.

However, the images also show significant earth-cutting work, road formations, and landslides, although the exact purpose of these activities remains unclear. The presence of massive vehicles and camps has fueled speculation about China's alleged megadam construction project, as claimed by CM Khandu in his recent speech, or could be a road development project near McMahon Line.

CM Khandu also added that, the Chinese government, which is not signatory to the International Water Conventions, intends to divert the water from the multiple water reservoirs to be created under the project to dry regions of Tibet and elsewhere in the country.

"In such a scenario it is inevitable that volume of water in Siang river will drastically get reduced so much so that during winters you will be able to cross the mighty Siang on foot. If China releases water from their dams all of a sudden, a trail of unimaginable destruction will sweep through the Siang belt, Assam and Bangladesh," said CM in his recent speech at Boleng. Reiterating that Arunachal Pradesh has about 50% of the country's hydropower potential, Khandu informed that the 12500 MW that would be generated from the projects for which MoUs have been signed with PSUs will generate about Rs 10000 crores annually for the state exchequer.

"Please be informed that the 12500 MW, I am mentioning does not include the Siang project. We do not know yet the amount of power that this project will generate if at all executed," Khandu added.

New flight to connect Tibet's capital with Singapore

20 December 2024, [RFA](#), Lobe Socktsang and Tenzin Norzom

Experts see move as part of China's strategy to wield greater influence in Southeast Asia.



The sky is reflected in glass windows as women in traditional dress sit outside of Lhasa Gonggar International Airport in Lhasa in Tibet Autonomous Region, May 31, 2021. (Mark Schiefelbein/AP)

Come Christmas Day, Tibet's capital will see its first flight to Singapore take off from Lhasa Gonggar International Airport in a move the Chinese

government says is aimed at boosting tourism, economic growth and fostering cultural exchanges.

This is the second international flight to be launched from Lhasa. In December last year, China allowed Nepal's Himalaya Airlines to resume international flights linking Lhasa with Kathmandu.

West Air, a unit of China's state-owned HNA Aviation Group, will operate three round-trip flights per week that connect the Tibetan plateau with the Southeast Asian island nation via a transit stop at the southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing, the company said in a statement.

Additional international routes from Lhasa to Hong Kong and other destinations are also expected to be launched early next year, according to the regional civil aviation administration office of the Tibet Autonomous Region, or TAR.

The opening of international air routes will enhance Tibet's "international visibility, attracting more domestic and foreign tourists to explore the region, and it will also further expand the regional tourism market," said Wang Yueyue of the TAR's Culture and Tourism Department.

Southeast Asia influence

Analysts believe the move to add a flight to Singapore — one of the most supportive partners in China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative — is in line with Beijing's efforts to strengthen ties with Southeast Asian nations and exude more influence in the region. The initiative is a Chinese development strategy to improve trade, infrastructure, investment links and regional integration between Asia, Africa and Europe. "As a major economy in the region, Singapore offers China significant economic leverage and connectivity advantages, which can help solidify Beijing's influence across Southeast Asia," Sana Hashmi, a postdoctoral fellow at the Taipei-based Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, told Radio Free Asia.

In a statement, West Air said the new route will serve as a bridge linking western China and the ASEAN region, creating an "air corridor" for the development of a new land-sea corridor in the west.

"Looking ahead, West Air will expand its investments in 'Belt and Road' countries and open additional routes to meet growing passenger demand while supporting national strategies and regional development," the company added.

Chinese government officials have repeatedly emphasized the importance of Tibet to China's Belt and Road initiative, citing Tibet's geographical advantages and serving as a 'gateway to South Asia.'

Foreign Minister Wang Yi in 2021 also made promises to support Tibet's opening-up and deepen its cooperation with neighboring countries to jointly contribute to Belt and Road projects.

Tibet travel challenges

But international tourists going to Lhasa must still obtain special Tibet travel permits, in addition to a Chinese visa — and other permits if going elsewhere in the TAR.

“While additional flight connectivity is useful, it does not address the essential issue about traveling to and from Tibet which is government scrutiny and travel permits,” said Manoj Kewalramani, a fellow in China studies at Bengaluru, India-based Takshishila Institution.

China and Singapore implemented a visa-free entry policy, with up to 30 days of stay allowed for their citizens traveling for family, tourism or business purposes.

But to enter Tibet, they must possess a Tibet travel permit, which tour operators obtain by submitting applications on their behalf.

Foreign tourists must also stick with group tours. Independent travel in Tibet is prohibited.

For travel outside Lhasa city to other parts of the TAR such as Shigatse or Shannan, visitors are required to apply for an additional permit referred to as the Aliens’ Travel Permit, issued by the Public Security Bureau.

For travel to border areas or sensitive military zones such as Mount Kailash or Lake Manasaravor in Ngari region, visitors require a Military Area Entry Permit and a Foreign Affairs Permit, issued by the respective offices in Lhasa.

Travel to other sensitive areas requires an additional permit from the local cultural antiquities department.

China has expanded its nuclear force and strengthened ties to Russia, the Pentagon says

19 December 2024, [AP News](#), Lolita C. Baldor

China is expanding its nuclear force, has increased military pressure against Taiwan and has strengthened its ties with Russia over the past year, according to a Pentagon report Wednesday that details actions accelerating key areas of conflict with the United States.

The report, however, also notes that the recent rash of corruption allegations within China’s powerful Central Military Commission, which oversees the People’s Liberation Army, is hurting Beijing’s military growth and could slow its campaign to modernize.

The impact, said a senior defense official, is a bit of a mixed bag because while there has been progress in some programs, China has slid back in others.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the U.S. assessment, warned that Beijing is working toward developing a more diverse and technologically sophisticated nuclear force. While the expected number of nuclear warheads has maintained consistent growth, China is broadening its targeting abilities.

Beijing is going to be able to go after more and different types of targets, do greater damage and have more options for multiple rounds of counterstrikes, the official said. The U.S. is urging China to be more transparent about its nuclear program, while also warning that America will defend its allies and take appropriate steps in response.

According to the report, which provides the annual U.S. assessment of China’s military power and is required by Congress, China had more than 600 operational nuclear warheads as of May, and the U.S. expects it will have more than 1,000 by 2030.

The Chinese Embassy, in response, said China has always “firmly adhered to a nuclear strategy of self-defense,” follows the no-first-use nuclear policy and maintains its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security.

Liu Pengyu, the embassy spokesman, said such annual reports by the Pentagon are “filled with ‘Cold-War’ thinking and zero-sum game mentality, which China firmly opposes.”

The Biden administration has worked to maintain a balance with China, building up the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region to be ready to counter Beijing while also encouraging increased communications between the two countries at the diplomatic and military levels.

That uptick in talks has coincided with a decrease in coercive and risky intercepts of U.S. aircraft since late 2023, compared with the previous two years. China still, however, does what the U.S. military considers “unsafe” flights near American and allied forces in the region.

The Pentagon’s national defense strategy is built around China being the greatest security challenge for the U.S., and the threat from Beijing influences how the U.S. military is equipped and organized for the future.

The corruption within the PLA has resulted in at least 15 high-ranking officials being ousted in a major shakeup of China’s defense establishment.

“This wave of corruption touches every service in the PLA, and it may have shaken Beijing’s confidence,” the report said.

In June, China announced that former Defense Minister Li Shangfu and his predecessor, Wei Fenghe, were expelled from the ruling Communist Party and accused of corruption. Last month, another senior official, Miao Hua, was suspended and put under investigation, according to China’s Defense Ministry.

The U.S. report points to a persistent increased military presence by China around Taiwan, the self-governing island that China claims as its own. It said China’s navy has been in the region more and that there have been increased crossings into the island’s air defense identification zone and major military exercises in the area.

Just last week, a large deployment of Chinese navy and coast guard vessels in the waters around Taiwan triggered alarm as Taiwanese officials said it looked like China was simulating a blockade. Officials have said there were as many as 90 ships involved in what Taiwan described as two walls designed to demonstrate that the waters belong to China.

Taiwan split from communist China in 1949 and has rejected Beijing's demands that it accept unification. China says it will do so by force if necessary, and leaders have said they want to be ready to do so by 2027. Beijing also has demanded that Washington not interfere with the Taiwan issue, citing that it is an internal matter.

The United States is obligated under domestic law to help defend Taiwan and give it weapons and technology to deter invasion.

The island democracy has been the chief source of tension between Washington and Beijing for decades and is widely seen as the most likely trigger for a potentially catastrophic U.S.-China war.

More broadly, the report concluded that the PLA continued its drive to develop greater military capabilities but "made uneven progress toward its 2027" milestone for modernization.

One area of expansion, the report said, is with unmanned aerial systems, which officials said are "quickly approaching U.S. standards."

Regarding Russia, the report said China has supported Russia's war against Ukraine and sold Russia dual-use items that Moscow's military industry relies on. Dual use items can be used for both civilian and military purposes.

China has improved military infrastructure and training along LAC: US report

19 December 2024, [The New Indian Express](#), Mayank Singh

In addition to continued PLAA deployments to the Indian border and Burma, the PLAA conducted multiple large-scale exercises in training areas throughout the country.

The US Department of Defence, in its latest report, said that China has improved its training and infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control aimed at long-term sustenance of the troops along the de-facto borders.

Mentioning the People's Liberation Army, the Report says that the PLAA continued to improve its methods and standards of training combined arms units. Training encompassed individual to collective soldier events integrating reconnaissance, infantry, artillery, armour, engineers, and signal units.

In addition to continued PLAA deployments to the Indian border and Burma, the PLAA conducted multiple large-scale exercises in training areas throughout the country.

The 2024 report to the US Congress on the military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC) covers security and military developments involving the PRC through early 2024.

The report, to elaborate its point about the Chinese actions along the LAC linking it with the military infrastructure spruce-up, gives the background of China's tensions with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

LAC - a disputed border between the PRC's western provinces and India's northern provinces—sparked a standoff between PRC and Indian forces in mid-May 2020, which escalated on June 15, 2020, after a skirmish ensued in the Galwan Valley between the Indian Army and PLA forces that ended with 20 Indian soldiers and four PRC soldiers dead.

The two sides agreed to tactical pull-backs from most of the contested areas in early 2021 but standoffs continued at two locations in Ladakh on the Western Sector of the LAC.

In late 2022, PRC and Indian forces engaged in an unarmed clash near Tawang along the Eastern Sector of the LAC separating Tibet and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

This was the first such clash since the 2020 skirmish although local commanders quickly defused the clash and the overall standoff did not substantively escalate. "These engagements coincide with a significant and sustained escalation in military infrastructure to support a long-term presence on the LAC," says the DoD.

In late 2023, India hosted the 20th round of commander-level meetings with the PLA. Both sides agreed to maintain communication and dialogue through military and diplomatic channels.

In 2020, PLA Special Operations Forces (SOF) from the Tibet Military Region were deployed to the border with India following clashes between PRC and Indian forces along the LAC, the report adds.

Currently, there has been disengagement from all standoff points in Eastern Ladakh with the latest being those at the Depsang and Demchok in October.

The PRC has defined its core interests, says the report, as issues so central to its national rejuvenation that the official position on them is not subject to negotiation or compromise and this also includes the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

The PRC began using the term in 2003, initially in reference to sovereignty issues regarding Taiwan and later Tibet and Xinjiang. In 2009, the senior PRC official for foreign affairs publicly defined the elements of core interests: 1) preserving the PRC's political system, 2)

defending the PRC's sovereignty and territorial claims, and 3) promoting the PRC's economic development.

The list of core interests has grown over the last decade with President Xi increasingly using the terms of a national security law passed in 2015 to extend the formal status of "core interest" to territorial disputes in the South China Sea (SCS), the Senkaku Islands, and the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

On the Chinese Military, the report mentions that the Western Theater Command (WTC) is oriented toward India and counterterrorism missions along the PRC's Central Asia borders.

"The WTC focuses on Xinjiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions, where the CCP perceives a high threat of separatism, terrorism, and extremism. The WTC is geographically the largest theater command in the PRC and is responsible for responding to conflict with India, border interactions with Central Asian states, and what the PRC refers to as the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism in Tibet and Xinjiang," it says.

The WTC's primary focus is on securing the PRC's border with India. In recent years, differing perceptions between India and the PRC regarding border demarcations have facilitated multiple clashes, force buildups, and military infrastructure construction.

In June 2020, PLA and Indian patrols clashed in Galwan Valley—the most violent clash between the two countries in 45 years. The PLA has not drawn down its positions or troop numbers since the 2020 clash and has built infrastructure and support facilities to maintain multiple BDE deployments along the LAC.

WTC and Indian commanders have held 21 corps commander-level talks since the 2020 clash.

Adding about the modernisation, the PLA has sought to modernize its capabilities and improve its proficiencies across all warfare domains, is "to become a joint force capable of the full range of land, air, and maritime as well as nuclear, space, counter space, electronic warfare, and cyberspace operations.

Despite its progress, the force still has significant deficiencies including in commander proficiency, long-distance logistics, and urban warfare." Added the report.

China in the Region

China-East Turkestan

China's United Front takes Taiwanese youth on Xinjiang trips

27 December 2024, [RFA](#), Ha Syut and Ray Chung



A delegation of Taiwanese businesspeople visits northwestern China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Aug. 2024. (China News Service)

Organizers are accused of ‘whitewashing’ the Chinese Communist Party’s human rights record in the Uyghur homeland.

China’s United Front influence and outreach operations are recruiting children and young adults in democratic Taiwan for heavily subsidized tours to the northwestern region of Xinjiang, in a bid to distract them from widespread human rights abuses in the region, according to commentators and government officials.

The Chinese Communist Party, which has never ruled Taiwan, insists that the island submit to “unification” under Beijing’s rule, whether by through its soft power and propaganda operations, or by military force, if necessary.

Its “soft power” operation has already targeted the island’s social media influencers and celebrities with paid junkets, while key ally and former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in April, throwing his political influence behind Beijing’s narrative that Taiwan is a renegade Chinese province rather than a sovereign country.

Now, it seems Beijing is going after children and younger people directly, enlisting them on tours to Xinjiang that take participants on a whistle-stop tour of the Chinese Communist Party’s favorite stereotypes about the millions of Turkic-speaking Uyghurs and Kazakhs who live there, complete with dancing Uyghurs and barbecued meat.

The Xinjiang Provincial Federation of Taiwan Compatriots, a United Front organization based in Urumqi, recently advertised a nine-day tour to Xinjiang on Taiwan’s PTT Bulletin Board discussion forum, calling for participants aged 16-40.

When Radio Free Asia contacted the organizers, they said participants would only need to pay NT\$24,800 (US\$755) per person, with “tour fees, transportation,

accommodation and insurance all covered by the Chinese hosts.”

As well as travel documents, participants would need to share their Taiwanese ID card numbers, their educational background, their company and department, an emergency contact and a mobile phone number before they could be accepted onto the trip, they said.

‘Find out for themselves’

Meanwhile, the Taiwanese volunteer nonprofit group Waker, which sends volunteers around the world, has been criticized on social media for sending groups of volunteers to Xinjiang, with some comments accusing them of whitewashing the mass incarceration of millions of Uyghurs in “re-education” camps and forced labor facilities since 2017.

Waker replied to the comments on Instagram and Facebook, saying it “had never heard of anyone being exploited” in Xinjiang, and called on people to travel to Xinjiang to “find out for themselves.”

The charity has close ties to the Chinese Communist Party, according to reports in Chinese state media. Its founder Shen Yangyang is the daughter of former Kuomintang general Shen Tsui, and has been running “poverty alleviation” programs in remote rural areas of China since 2004.

The group will soon be led by Shen’s son Chu Yung-Hsiang, who led a 46-member youth delegation to Xinjiang in November under the aegis of the Straits Economic and Cultural Interchange Association that was also attended by Chinese Communist Party United Front officials.

‘Spiritual unity of compatriots’

Taiwan has never been ruled by Beijing, nor formed part of the People’s Republic of China, and is formally governed by the Republic of China government, formed after the 1911 fall of the Qing Dynasty under Sun Yat-sen, which later fled to Taipei after losing the civil war to Mao Zedong’s communists on the mainland.

While China insists on eventual “unification” with Taiwan, by armed invasion if necessary, the majority of Taiwan’s 23 million people have no wish to give up their democratic way of life to submit to Chinese rule. China has threatened the death penalty for supporters of Taiwan independence, while Taipei says Beijing has no jurisdiction over the actions of its citizens.

A recent public opinion poll from the Institute for National Defense and Security Research showed that 67.8% of respondents were willing to fight to defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion.

China’s aim is to underline the “spiritual unity of compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait,” and Beijing sees “uniting Taiwan compatriots and winning the hearts and minds of Taiwanese people” as a “fundamental driving force for unification,” according

to an Oct. 16 article by politics professor Wu Guoguang for the Asia Society.

“Ordinary Taiwanese citizens are viewed as ‘family members’ of an imagined reunified China, Taiwan’s political elites who oppose Taiwanese independence are ‘friends,’ and whoever supports independence are ‘enemies,’” Wu wrote.

Planting an illusion

Taiwanese national security analyst Shih Chien-yu said the trips are a way of undermining the reporting of China’s human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

“These people may have heard about the re-education camps in Xinjiang, and they may have heard the idea that this is genocide,” Shih told RFA in a recent interview. “But when they visit, they won’t see any of these things.”

“That will plant the illusion that nothing bad ever actually happened in Xinjiang, which is exactly what the Chinese Communist Party wants them to think,” he said.

Waker hadn’t responded to repeated requests for comment by the time of writing.

The Taiwan government’s Mainland Affairs Council said it continues to be concerned about such trips, which it termed “false exchanges” masking United Front infiltration.

“The Chinese Communist Party is trying to lure people from Taiwan, particularly young people, to China on sightseeing trips ... to whitewash its human rights abuses,” it said in a response to a query from RFA.

“The public shouldn’t cooperate with this United Front propaganda by the Chinese Communist Party for personal gain, nor belittle the sovereign status of our country,” it said.

Yet, the trips still seem popular.

In May, a 46-member delegation of Taiwan’s Industrial and Commercial Construction Research Association visited Xinjiang on an “exchange,” Chinese state media reported.

They were warmly welcomed on May 18 by Li Fuqiang, deputy director of the United Front Work Department of the Xinjiang Party Committee.

Hsiao Yu-lin, leader of the visiting delegation, said the group could “get a sense of the great socioeconomic achievements Xinjiang has made.”

“I ... recommend more Taiwan compatriots visit Xinjiang to further promote in-depth exchanges and integration,” Hsiao was quoted as saying in an official report.

Political agenda

But not everyone just swallows Beijing’s narrative, hook, line and sinker.

Hsiao Hau-yu took a two-week trip to Xinjiang in 2019 while he was in high school at the invitation of Beijing’s Taiwan Affairs Office, alongside about 40 students from Hong Kong and Macau, with a similar itinerary to those recently advertised for young people.

“The itinerary was very full, with less than an hour of free time after lunch or dinner,” Hsiao remembered in a recent interview with RFA Cantonese. “They took us to a vineyard to see some big, very beautiful grapes, and some very happy local farmers who gave us Xinjiang barbecue.”

But Hsiao also spotted a political agenda, with propaganda suggesting that Xinjiang had been settled by majority Han Chinese from ancient times, and plenty of assurances that the region was “very safe.”

“Their strong desire to create a sense of security made me nervous,” Hsiao said. “The police were carrying pretty big weapons on the street, and we had to go through a security detection scan to go onto public transportation or into our hotel.”

“I still remember there was a guy in sunglasses I’d never seen before following behind the whole time on our trip to the ancient city,” he said. “I don’t know who he was, but he followed us and made sure we didn’t break away from the group.”

He said he was told that the security measures were to prevent “terrorist” attacks, and warned participants not to have private contact with any residents of the region.

On a trip to a local school, he still remembers a general sense of unease, and in particular a slogan written up on the blackboard by students: “Where darkness arises, sweep it away; where evil arises, eliminate it; where chaos arises, govern it.”

“It’s hard to imagine that this was written by a child of maybe 10 or 12 years old,” he said. “They were writing this stuff before they could even speak Mandarin well.”

He said Taiwanese could still benefit from such trips, if they don’t lose their capacity to think critically.

“I still think we should go if we have the chance,” he said. “Just don’t accept everything they try to tell you.”

Digging of 46 illegal wells by Chinese migrants threatens Xinjiang’s ecological balance: Report

25 December 2024, [ANI](#)

The discovery of 46 illegal wells dug by Chinese migrants in the remote Xinjiang region has heightened tensions with Uyghur residents and disturbed the region’s ecological balance, as reported by Radio Free Asia.

Water disputes have long been a point of contention between native Uyghurs and Chinese settlers, particularly in regions controlled by the state-run Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), known as Bingtuan. This organisation, which is responsible for land development, border security, and maintaining stability in the region, is predominantly made up of Han Chinese.

The issue came to light after residents in Korla, Xinjiang’s second-largest city, raised alarms about a surge in illegal wells on the city’s outskirts. These wells reportedly dug to irrigate cotton and vegetables, have drained vital underground water reserves.

Authorities launched an investigation after the complaints were filed. A source in Xinjiang, speaking anonymously for security reasons, confirmed that 46 illegal wells were uncovered this year in Korla alone.

The individuals responsible for drilling the wells are primarily from the 29th Battalion of the Bingtuan’s 2nd Division, along with other Chinese settlers residing in a nearby economic development zone. Despite ongoing efforts to address the issue, a police officer involved in the investigation told Radio Free Asia that legal proceedings have been slow, and suspects were released after brief questioning. The officer added that authorities used “stability” and “unity” to justify the lack of punitive action. The difficulty in holding the perpetrators accountable stems from the fact that many of the individuals involved are Han Chinese, complicating the legal process. The Bingtuan, which has played a key role in promoting Han Chinese dominance in Xinjiang, is seen as a major factor in the marginalisation of Uyghurs and other indigenous ethnic groups. Tensions are already high, and the illegal wells have further strained relations between the two communities, amplifying existing grievances over water access and resource distribution in the region.

Reinvestigation: Better lives in Xinjiang villages refute “forced labor” allegations

26 December 2024, [Xinhua](#)

When Zhou Jin’an returned to the village he once worked in for years in southern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, he was warmly received by the villagers, who shook hands with him and invited him to their homes for a chat over tea.

Zhou used to be a member of the residential work team in that village. Such teams are groups of personnel, either from regional government departments or state-run enterprises, dispatched to poor rural areas to help boost local development.

Earlier this year, The Economist published an article claiming that work teams in Xinjiang villages sought to compel local Uyghur farmers to seek alternative employment. However, such allegations, hyped by Western media in recent years, unravel when one observes the interactions between local farmers and Zhou and his colleagues.

“THEY HELPED EVERY HOUSEHOLD”

In early 2015, Zhou, who works for a state-run company, was dispatched to work in a village in Yutian, a county on the southern edge of the Taklamakan Desert and among the last counties in Xinjiang to eliminate absolute poverty in late 2020.

At that time, Zhou could not imagine he would work and live for over eight years in villages in Yutian. Almost all residents there are Uygur farmers, who traditionally earn a living by growing wheat, corn, and roses and raising sheep and poultry.

"We brought agricultural experts to guide the villagers in farming. We built vegetable greenhouses and a small processing plant for local produce, such as roses and cistanche, a Chinese herbal medicine. We would help all households that had difficulties. That was what we were there to do," said Zhou.



This photo taken on Nov. 6, 2024 shows villagers drying cistanche deserticola, a Chinese herbal medicine, near Daliyabuyi Village, Yutian County of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Chen Shuo)

Zhou was part of an eight-member team working in a village of around 1,600 residents. One daily routine was visiting households so that he could get to know what assistance they needed.

Since many middle-aged and elderly villagers were not fluent in Mandarin, Zhou's Uygur colleagues would translate for him. Sometimes, younger members of the household would translate. Rayila Matturzi was one of them.

The 25-year-old, the eldest of four siblings, was a high school student when Zhou and his colleagues came to work in her village.

With her mother farming at home and her father doing construction work, Rayila's parents brought in a limited income, while her younger brother was diagnosed with epilepsy, a chronic disease that requires long-term treatment.

"The work team did so much for my family. They contacted a hospital for my younger brother, funded his treatment and my studies, and always came to see us with things like flour, meat, and the medicines my brother needed. And it was not just for my family. They helped every household in the village," said Rayila, now a senior student majoring in English at a university near Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital.

She was especially grateful to Zhou. "Every time Uncle Zhou came to my home, he would ask about my life and studies and encourage me. He would say, 'If you need any help, just tell me.' I really liked sharing my stories with him. All the villagers think he is a great man," she said.

To support Rayila's family, Zhou helped her mother secure a part-time job as a cleaner, providing an additional source of income. Earlier this year, through a friend's recommendation, Rayila's mother began working as a cook at her son's school, where the canteen staff are all from low-income households, as part of a program to support these families.

"My family is much better off now. All the villagers are better off now. Everything in the village has been improved -- the roads, the houses, the school, the health facilities," said Rayila. "Without the work team, there would not have been such great changes."

Tuersun Aibai, an associate professor at the School of Journalism and Communication at Xinjiang University, who has been studying social changes in southern Xinjiang, said that those work teams have been serving the local people and boosting the development of rural areas "with a pure intention and concrete achievements."

The recognition and support of local people of all ethnic groups testifies to that, he added.

"EVERYONE WANTS A BETTER LIFE"

Rayila was surprised by Western media allegations that work teams in Xinjiang villages forced "reluctant farmers to leave and do other forms of work."

"That is ridiculous. We earn money on our own and spend it for ourselves. Everyone wants a better life," she said. "The work team would help those looking for a job to find one that matches their skills. But we don't need to be 'forced' to work. Why would they talk about us like that?"

Rayila noted that Uygur people, particularly the younger generation, are keen to seek employment instead of relying solely on farming at home. "Most villagers want to find a job nearby or in the county town. Some young people even explore opportunities in big cities or other provinces," she said.

Official statistics show that the Uygur population in Xinjiang, concentrated in the southern part of the region, increased by 16.2 percent to 11.62 million from 2010 to 2020. Yan Xueqin, an associate professor at the School of History and Society at Xinjiang Normal University, said most of the Uygur population had long been farmers despite scarce arable land in southern Xinjiang, where the landscape features vast deserts and mountains.

"The per capita arable land in southern Xinjiang has become even smaller, and the added value of farm products there is still low. Farming alone cannot help improve the living standards of the local people. That's

one reason locals seek other forms of work to supplement their incomes," Yan said in a report.

Yan's team surveyed 3,028 rural Uygur households in southern Xinjiang in 2020 and 2021 and found that their incomes had improved and diversified, with wage incomes making up the highest proportion at 41.5 percent, followed by household-based farming incomes at 33.7 percent.

Across China, rural residents have long been moving in huge numbers to cities and towns to work. The trend has gained momentum among the Uygur population, with a younger generation more fluent in Mandarin, better educated, and willing to seek opportunities in more developed areas.

Rayila has observed the trend. "A young couple in my village who once worked in Hubei (a central Chinese province) asked me to help them improve their Mandarin," she said. "They told me that they wanted to return to work and live there because they enjoyed working and living in a developed city."

Zhou noted the changes in the lifestyles of his fellow Uygur villagers. "With higher incomes, people now like to refurbish their homes, enjoy better food and dress well, and want to provide their children with a better education and brighter future," he said.

Chinese surveillance tech firm Dahua exits projects in Xinjiang

24 December 2024, [SCMP](#)

The company was added to a US trade blacklist in 2019 on claims it aided in human rights abuses in Xinjiang

China's video surveillance equipment maker Zhejiang Dahua Technology said that it and its subsidiaries have agreed to terminate or exit five projects they signed with local governments in China's Xinjiang region, a stock exchange filing showed on Monday.

Some of the projects, awarded between 2016 and 2017, have been terminated in advance, while others were still in operation, Dahua said in a filing to the Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

The company will cease operating the projects and proceed with asset disposal and debt resolution works, it said. Dahua did not give a reason for the withdrawal.

Dahua's statement came after another Chinese surveillance camera manufacturer, Hikvision, said earlier this month it had exited contracts with five local governments in Xinjiang. It also did not say at the time why it was pulling out.

The US added Dahua and seven other tech firms to its trading blacklist in 2019 for allegedly being "implicated" in "repression and hi-tech surveillance" against Uygurs and other members of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

Dahua had said the US decision lacked "any factual basis."

The Chinese government has repeatedly rejected allegations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang and has criticised or targeted companies for removing firms operating in the region from their supply chains.

Illegal wells in Xinjiang spark tension and dry up the land

24 December 2024, [RFA](#), Shohret Hoshur

Fighting over water resources has been a source of friction between Uyghurs and Han Chinese.



Workers maintain a cotton field of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, in Alar, northwestern China's Xinjiang region, China March 26, 2021. (China Daily via Reuters)

The discovery of 46 illegal wells dug by Chinese migrants in the far western region of Xinjiang has intensified tension with Uygur residents and disrupted the ecological balance of the region, people with knowledge of the situation told Radio Free Asia. Fighting over water resources has been a source of friction for years between native Uyghurs and Chinese settlers in areas under the control of the state-run Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, or XPCC, called Bingtuan in Chinese.

Authorities investigated after residents in Korla, or Kuerle in Chinese, the second-largest city in Xinjiang, complained about the proliferation of wells on the outskirts of the city, a source in Xinjiang said, asking not to be identified for security reasons.

The wells, dug to grow cotton and vegetables, have drained vital underground reserves, he said.

As a result, authorities discovered 46 illegally drilled holes this year alone in Korla, a policeman in Bayingholin prefecture's Public Security Bureau who had participated in this case in its early phase told Radio Free Asia.

The residents accused of drilling the holes without a permit are from the 29th Battalion of the Bingtuan's 2nd Division and Chinese settlers living in an economic development region on the outskirts of Korla, the officer said.

"We have been working on water management, water control, and identifying water wells since February,

and we continue to work on those issues,” the police officer said.

Little accountability

But legal authorities have slowed down reviewing the cases, and the suspects were released after brief questioning, the Uyghur source said, with officials using “stability” and “unity” as excuses to let them go. Authorities could not hold all perpetrators accountable because the activities likely involved Han Chinese, he said.

The Bingtuan is a state-run economic and paramilitary organization of mostly Han Chinese who develop the land, secure borders and maintain stability in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, or XUAR, where about 12 million mostly Muslim Uyghurs live.

Made up of 14 divisions, the Bingtuan is one of the foremost institutions of Han dominance and marginalization of Uyghurs and other indigenous ethnic groups in the region, according to the Uyghur Human Rights Project.

The well-drilling began in 2012 when demand for cotton surged, the Uyghur source told RFA.

Those who stole the water conducted their activities at night using advanced technology to pump it from a depth of 200 meters, or about 660 feet, he said.

“Since they drill these wells in a forested area, a place that people hardly go, it was hard to discover their illegal activities,” the Uyghur source said.

It costs about 150,000 yuan (US\$20,600) to drill a well and make it operational, he said, an amount that Uyghurs would not likely be able to come up with.

Though the issue has sparked friction many times before, the government has protected the Han Chinese residents, he said.

The policeman initially said there were some Uyghurs among those held responsible, but when pressed for further information, he said most of those who drilled the illegal wells were Chinese who had settled in the area, including Bingtuan workers.

Staff at relevant government organization in Korla contacted by RFA declined to answer questions, but did not deny that Chinese settlers there had stolen water.

Drying up the land

The growing dependence on groundwater in the Korla area since the 1990s has reached a level that is disrupting the ecological balance, said the source familiar with the situation.

“We must control this or it will lead to a further decline in groundwater levels,” he said. “In some areas of our protective forests, the Euphrates poplars are withering and drying up.”

Peyzulla Zeydin, an ecological devastation researcher from Korla who now lives in the United States, told RFA that the misuse of water resources, including underground water, has severely impacted the region’s protective forests over time.

“In the 1990s, when we dug water wells, we could find water at just 10 meters,” he said. “Now, even at 30 meters, we can’t find water.”

“It’s getting worse because the underground water recycling system has been disrupted,” Zeydin said. “One of the main causes of the declining water levels is the growing population and the over-expansion of farmland. This has interrupted the natural underground water replenishment cycle.”

Zeydin said research indicates that the Bingtuan’s 1st Division battalions in the Korla area have overused and controlled the water resources there, leading to the drying up of Euphrates poplar trees along the lower streams of the Tarim River.

“The water level is dropping every day, and it has now reached a depth of 100 meters [330 feet],” he said.

Chinese agricultural products linked to Uyghur forced labour, report suggests

21 December 2024, [ANI](#)

Chinese exports of agricultural products such as tomatoes, chilli peppers, and marigolds from the Xinjiang region are tainted by forced labour and land transfers from Uyghur peasants to Chinese businesses, as highlighted by a new research report.

According to Radio Free Asia, the 136-page report, authored by Adrian Zenz and I-Lin Lin from the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, highlighted the forced assimilation and political indoctrination of Uyghur workers involved in the cultivation of these products.

The report also exposes the role of major Western companies, including Kraft Heinz, Nestle, PepsiCo, Del Monte, McCormick, Unilever, and L’Oreal, which import these goods. The goods often enter supply chains through intermediaries, obscuring their origins. The report identified 72 international companies and 18 Chinese firms that either have production in Xinjiang or are linked to the region’s agricultural supply chains.

Adrian Zenz, one of the researchers, told Radio Free Asia that the extensive use of forced labour and coerced land transfers in Xinjiang is directly serving the Chinese government’s political goals, including the long-term transformation of the Uyghur population. These practices are also contaminating global supply chains.

Zenz emphasised in an interview with RFA, “It means that we have a much bigger system of forced labour and forced land transfer that is affecting many agricultural communities in Xinjiang and is directly serving the political goals of the regime to achieve political long-term transformation of these populations and taint the supply chains as a result.”

Among the implicated Chinese companies are COFCO Tunhe Tomato, Xinjiang Chalkis (which processes tomatoes and fruits), and Chenguang Biotech Group, a high-tech firm specialising in plant-based ingredients. These companies have subsidiaries in the United States and Europe, further complicating the traceability of their products. The report also draws attention to the ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including the mass detainment of Uyghur Muslims and the use of forced labour. It states that Xinjiang is home to the world's largest state-imposed forced labour system, with up to 2.5 million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities at risk of coerced labour. (ANI)

West urged to lift Xinjiang sanctions

18 December 2024, [ECNS](#)

International experts are urging Western countries, including the United States, to lift sanctions against the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, claiming the measures are based on unsubstantiated allegations of "forced labor" and have caused widespread job losses. The comments were made on Monday during the International Symposium on Employment and Social Security in Xinjiang, held in Urumqi, the regional capital. More than 210 representatives from 44 countries, regions and organizations attended the event.

According to Xinjiang's regional government, by the end of 2023, sanctions had disrupted operations at more than 100 local enterprises. Sanctioned textile and garment factories were forced to cut production or shut down entirely, resulting in significant layoffs. Despite the challenges, Xinjiang continues to trade with 192 countries and regions, officials said.

Erkin Tuniyaz, chairman of Xinjiang's regional government, described employment as fundamental to improving livelihoods and said the region is committed to protecting workers' rights under the law. "Some anti-China forces have ignored these facts and spread baseless accusations about so-called 'forced labor,'" Erkin said. "These unilateral sanctions are despicable acts, and their motives are becoming increasingly clear to the international community."

The sanctions have particularly affected Xinjiang's cotton, textile, tomato, photovoltaic and chemical industries, all of which are highly mechanized, officials said.

Experts at the symposium argued that allegations of "forced labor" are based on internet rumors and statements from anti-China groups, lacking legal or factual basis.

Alena Douhan, the United Nations special rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive

measures, criticized the sanctions and said they represent a reversal of the burden of proof.

"Anything associated with Xinjiang is now accused of being linked to 'forced labor,' and the accused must prove their innocence," Douhan said via video link. "I call on the sanctioning parties to lift and suspend all unilateral sanctions applied to China, its nationals and companies without the authorization of the UN Security Council."

Mark Levine, a U.S. sociologist and professor at Minzu University of China, said the claims contradict his own experiences in Xinjiang.

"I have seen how the Chinese government has worked to improve the lives of its people over the past 19 years," said Levine, who has lived in China since 2005 and has visited Xinjiang three times. "Through my travels to cities and the countryside, I witnessed the successful eradication of extreme poverty."

Li Juan, director of the legislative affairs committee of the regional people's congress, said the sanctions target basic industries essential to Xinjiang's development.

"Unilateral sanctions under the pretext of 'forced labor' are depriving people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang of their right to employment," Li said.

China Demolishes Uyghur Business Landmark in Xinjiang

15 December 2024, [Shia Waves](#)

Reports emerged that the Chinese government has demolished the Rebiya Kadeer Trade Center in Urumqi, Xinjiang, a significant site for Uyghur culture and commerce, VOA revealed on Friday.

Once home to over 800 mostly Uyghur-owned businesses, the center had been vacant since 2009. Local business owners were reportedly ordered to vacate the area prior to the demolition, which was conducted without public announcement.

This action has drawn condemnation from Uyghur rights activists, who view it as part of China's ongoing efforts to suppress Uyghur identity and heritage. The demolition coincides with increasing international scrutiny of China's policies in Xinjiang, with allegations of mass detentions and cultural erasure being labeled as crimes against humanity.

Rebiya Kadeer, the center's namesake and a prominent Uyghur rights advocate, described the demolition as a calculated effort to erase her legacy. After being imprisoned for her activism, Kadeer has lived in exile in the U.S. since 2005, continuing her fight for Uyghur rights. She reported that her family members have faced persecution, including detention, as a result of her activism. The Chinese governme

China-Hong Kong

Explained: 6 Hong Kong activists against whom arrest warrants have been issued

24 December 2024, [The Indian Express](#)

A reward of \$1 million Hong Kong dollars (around \$130,000) has also been announced for information leading to arrests of activists based in the UK and Canada.

As part of its larger crackdown on activists in recent years, Hong Kong's Deputy Commissioner of Police (National Security) announced on Tuesday (December 22) that wanted notices were issued against "six anti-China disruptors who have fled overseas."

The National Security Department of the police force also said **\$1 million Hong Kong dollars** (around \$130,000) will be awarded for information leading to their arrests. Several national security offences, such as secession, subversion and collusion with foreign forces, have been cited as grounds for the warrants.

Such notices have been issued in the past as well, following protests in 2019-20 against the increasing control of mainland China's government on the political system of Hong Kong. The six people named in the latest warrants range from political activists based overseas for the last few decades, to young students.

Tony Chung, 23

Chung was the former leader of the now-defunct pro-independence group Studentlocalism.

In 2021, he was sentenced under Hong Kong's national security law of 2020, which criminalised calls for the city's secession from China. At the time, he was the **youngest person to be sentenced** under it for a term of around three years. Following his release in 2023, he fled Hong Kong to seek asylum in the UK, going against the supervision order imposed on him.

He later told the *BBC* that he was thrown into a situation that was "an even bigger and more dangerous prison" than the one he had left. The police also reportedly asked him to report the whereabouts of other pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong.

Carmen Lau, 29

Lau is a former district councillor and current activist with the US-based Hong Kong Democracy Council in the UK.

She told *Radio Free Asia* in an interview this year that she fled the city in 2021 amid a "crackdown on political opposition and dissent".

Over time, she said, "We are seeing so many Hong Kong communities and organizations springing up in the U.K., and everyone is finding their role, finding different things to work on."

Notably, the UK held control of Hong Kong for 99 years until 1997. Under the terms of the **Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984**, it handed over the city to China

on the condition that for the next 50 years (from 1997 to 2047) its economic and political autonomy should be retained. These historical ties have led many in Hong Kong to turn to the UK for asylum and immigration.

Chloe Cheung, 19

Cheung is a Communications and Media Assistant at the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong, which is based in the UK. The organisation recently amplified a post on X, which was critical of the recent warrants.

It said Chloe left Hong Kong at the age of 15. "Instead of attending university after graduation, she dedicated her youth to the movement" and campaigned for political prisoners in Hong Kong, it added. Cheung has also been involved in forming activist groups in Leeds, UK.

Dr Chung Kim-wah, 62

Chung was previously a senior member of the independent polling organisation Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute.

A short profile from the University of Oxford notes: "Dr Kim Wah Chung is a retired academic who has been teaching and doing research in Hong Kong for more than 30 years before his retirement in 2020. He then became the Deputy CEO for the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute for two years before he moved to UK, in 'exile' as some would say, in late April 2022. He has extensive knowledge of public administration, social policies, social welfare and social development of Hong Kong and China." He delivered a talk at the university in 2024.

According to the *South China Morning Post*, Chung was accused of having "repeatedly advocated the city's independence between May and June on a social media platform and called for sanctions against Beijing and Hong Kong between 2020 and 2023."

Joseph Tay, 62

Tay is a co-founder of the Canada-based NGO HongKonger Station.

According to his LinkedIn profile, since 2021 his radio show has also been broadcast daily nationwide "to a total of 81,680 people identified "Hong Konger" as their ethnic origin, while 213,855 people listed their place of birth as Hong Kong." He is currently campaigning to be a candidate in the upcoming Canadian elections from the Conservative Party.

SCMP reported he was "charged with inciting secession and collusion with foreign forces after he allegedly posted videos calling for international sanctions on social media platforms via his channel between July 2020 and June this year."

Victor Ho, 69

Ho is a YouTuber and was earlier a journalist and has been based in Canada for the last few years. He came under the radar of Hong Kong authorities when he, along with some activists, announced elections to a "Hong Kong Parliament".

According to Canadian media organisation *Global News*, Ho said the goal was to establish a parliament that “can truly reflect the will of Hong Kongers”, criticising China’s influence in Hong Kong’s electoral process.

In 2014, **students led protests** in Hong Kong against China’s attempt to change the voting system in elections. Authorities said they would first screen the candidates who could contest in the polls. Ultimately, the proposal did not come into force.

US report says Hong Kong becoming ‘nearly indistinguishable’ from Chinese cities, as Beijing condemns ‘arrogance’

23 December 2024, [HKFP](#)

“The façade of an alternative system of political governance that was promised to last 50 years... has withered away as Hong Kong becomes nearly indistinguishable from any other neon-lit city on the Chinese mainland,” the report read.

A US report which alleged that Hong Kong’s unique system had been “withered away,” leaving it “nearly indistinguishable” from mainland cities, has been condemned by the local government and Beijing.

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) – a US government body monitoring human rights conditions in China – published its annual report on Friday. It said violations of human rights are “most brutally implemented in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Tibet, and Hong Kong.”

“The façade of an alternative system of political governance that was promised to last 50 years... has withered away as Hong Kong becomes nearly indistinguishable from any other neon-lit city on the Chinese mainland,” the report read. “Indeed, Hong Kong officials may now be more zealous than their mainland counterparts in enforcing national security laws.”

In response, the Commissioner’s Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong said in a Chinese-language statement on Saturday that the “so-called report” was a tactic which “grossly interferes” in the internal affairs of mainland China and Hong Kong.

The Office said the report “fully exposed the ignorance, prejudice, and arrogance of certain U.S. politicians.”

“No matter how many such reports the U.S. side throws out, they cannot shake the prosperous and stable situation in Hong Kong...” the statement has read.

Separately, in a Saturday statement, the Hong Kong government said the report “smack[s] of despicable political manipulation with ill intentions.” It warned the US side against “interfering” in Hong Kong affairs.

Rights abuses

The CECC report pointed to “the arbitrary application of national security laws” and an “ongoing criminal prosecution” against Hong Kong pro-democracy activists based on national security and sedition laws.

The report named pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai, former chief editor of defunct media outlet Stand News Chung Pui-kuen, human rights lawyer and activist Chow Hang-tung and student activist Joshua Wong as figures who had been prosecuted after they “peacefully exercised their rights.”

Lai is still on trial for two counts of taking part in a “conspiracy to collude with foreign forces” under Beijing’s security legislation. Wong – last month – was sentenced to 56 months in jail under the same legislation along with 44 democrats. Chow, meanwhile, is awaiting her national security trial.

In late September, Chung Pui-kuen was jailed for one year and nine months under the sedition law, the first such conviction of journalists since the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

Separately, the CECC also raised concerns that some foreign judges had resigned from Hong Kong’s highest court this year, and that Hong Kong police issued warrants for at least 13 overseas-based Hong Kong activists.

The report also highlighted that a Hong Kong court had granted a government application to demand social media platforms to take down a protest song. And US tech giant Google’s YouTube blocked access to more than 30 videos of *Glory to Hong Kong* for viewers in Hong Kong.

The fact that annual vigils in Victoria Park commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown were no longer held was also another example of a human rights concern listed by the CECC.

In response, the Hong Kong government said the report “ignores the severe national security threats posed by the riots and the Hong Kong version of [a] ‘color revolution’ in 2019,” adding that all national security laws in Hong Kong were established to “safeguard national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.”

“The laws also better safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of the residents of the HKSAR and other people, including those doing business, in the city,” the statement read. It added: “The relevant laws have set out clear definitions and criminal elements which will not affect regular exchanges between Hong Kong residents and people here for business with foreign countries.”

Xi Jinping tells Hong Kong’s John Lee country has ‘very high expectations’

19 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Natalie Wong and Emily Hung

Chinese President Xi Jinping has met Hong Kong's leader for the second time in a week, telling him the country has "very high expectations" of the city and urging officials to go "all out" to boost the economy. The pair spoke at a closed-door meeting on Thursday afternoon in Macau, as Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu joined Xi on the second day of his visit to the casino hub for celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the city's return to Chinese administration.

"The country has very high expectations of Hong Kong. [I] hope Lee and the administration will govern firmly and steadily, make all-out efforts to boost the economy and strive for development and create a brighter future for Hong Kong," Xi said, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

Xi also reportedly told Lee that Hong Kong and Macau should "learn from each other" and "strengthen exchanges and cooperation", as the implementation of the "one country, two systems" governing principle entered a new stage.

Lee voiced his gratitude to Xi and stressed his determination to lead Hong Kong's economic advancement, improve livelihoods and integrate the city further into the Greater Bay Area.

The president's chief of staff, Cai Qi, and Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office director Xia Baolong also attended the meeting.

Lau Siu-kai, a consultant with the semi-official Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies think tank, said the brief meeting – the second in a week between Xi and Lee – underscored Beijing's expectations of Hong Kong.

"Lee must attach great importance to President Xi's requirements, implement the central government's instructions and guidance and do a better job in order to gain the trust and confidence of the central government," Lau said.

Lee made a four-day duty visit to the capital last week, briefing Xi and Premier Li Qiang about Hong Kong's economic and political situation on Friday.

The city leader was urged to actively seek reforms and generate fresh economic momentum through innovation, after Xi endorsed Lee's efforts to safeguard national security and bolster Hong Kong's international influence.

On Thursday evening, Lee, Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po and Secretary for Justice Paul Lam Ting-kuok joined the president at a gala dinner held at the East Asian Games Dome in Taipa. Lee spoke briefly with incoming Macau leader Sam Hou-fai.

The Hong Kong leader also greeted former Macau chiefs Edmund Ho Hau-wah and Fernando Chui Sai-on. Lee has likened the relationship between Macau and Hong Kong to that of brotherhood, saying the two cities could seek greater collaboration, adding there

would be plenty of opportunities to discuss the relationship with Sam in the future.

China Customs seizes Hong Kong geography textbook said to wrongly depict Chinese borders

17 December 2024, [HKFP](#), Irene Chan

China Customs said the books "are suspected of endangering China's national unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity."

A thousand copies of a geography textbook which was said to have incorrectly depicted China's borders have been seized by China Customs before they were exported to Hong Kong.

The Chinese authority said on its official WeChat account on Friday that the publications were seized at the Huanggang checkpoint, which is on the border of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, after customs personnel found the books inaccurately showed China's boundaries.



Personnel of China Customs check and seize 1,000 copies of a geography textbook in Huanggang checkpoint in late 2024. Photo: China Customs.

According to the authority, the maps shown in the textbook did not accurately draw the borders near the Aksai Chin area, those near the South Tibet area, and did not include the Diaoyu Islands, including Chiwei Yu, islands in the South China Sea, and a U-shaped boundary line which consist of 10 dashes showing waters claimed by Beijing in the South China Sea.

Both Aksai Chin and South Tibet lie on China's border with India, and are also claimed by New Delhi, while the disputed Diaoyu Islands are claimed by Taiwan and controlled by Japan, where they are known as the Senkaku Islands. Additionally, Beijing's claims to much of the economically important South China Sea are also subject to competing claims from neighbouring countries and have been ruled to have no legal basis by an international court.

China Customs said the books "are suspected of endangering China's national unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity."

It added: "Maps are the primary representation of a country's territorial boundaries, reflecting the scope of national sovereignty... Any printed materials and

publications that do not comply with China's regulations on the content of publicly available maps are strictly prohibited from entering or leaving the country."

The statement also published the map from the textbook, highlighting the areas that were said to inaccurately depict China's borders.

Ming Pao reported that the textbook was titled *HKDSE Exam Series Getting 5** in 9 Weeks: Geography*, which was first published in 2018 by the Hong Kong Educational Publishing Company.

The textbook was not on the Education Bureau's recommended textbook list and therefore had not been assessed by the authority.

In response to HKFP, the bureau said it had asked all local schools to get the Chinese standard map from the Chinese government website if they need to produce maps for teaching purposes.

"If schools find that teaching resources involve serious crimes, unethical conduct, have the potential to be illegal, or contain information and content that pose risks to or are detrimental to national security, they should immediately remove or cease using them," the authority said in a Chinese written response.

It added that publishers should "continuously review national maps and related text" in textbooks and should immediately revise them if the information was not up to date.

HKFP has also reached out to the publisher for comment.

Updated Chinese standard Map

In March, China Customs tore a page from a Hong Kong history textbook being carried by a student as they exited Hong Kong, saying the page contained a map inaccurately showing Chinese borders, HK01 reported.

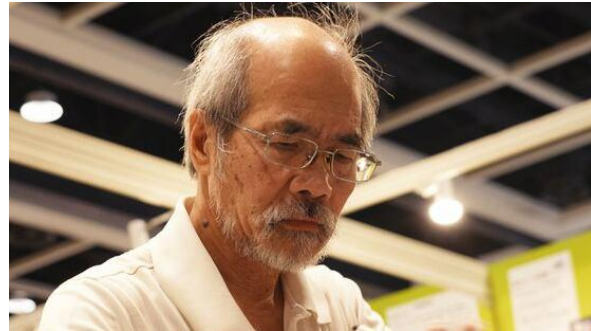
The map in the history book was said to have presented Diaoyu Dao as Diaoyu Tai, a name used by Taiwanese authorities, and had not includes the U-shaped 10-dash line.

Citing the publisher, HK01 reported that the book had been printed before Chinese authorities updated the Chinese Standard Map in August 2023, and therefore it had not had enough time to revise the textbook, get it reviewed by the Education Bureau and reprint it.

Hong Kong officials learn neighborhood surveillance from China

05 December 2024, [RFA](#), Wei Sze and Dawn Yu

The city will be carved into subdistricts, with volunteers watching for potential signs of unrest.



Current affairs commentator Johnny Lau in an undated photo. (Wei Sze/RFA)

Hong Kong is sending district councilors and other local officials to mainland China to learn how the ruling Chinese Communist Party uses local networks of volunteers to monitor the population and target potential unrest before it happens.

China's "red armband" brigade of state-sanctioned busybodies have been dubbed the biggest intelligence network on the planet by social media users, and have supplied information that has also led police to crack major organized crime, according to state media.

Neighborhood committees in China have long been tasked with monitoring the activities of ordinary people in urban areas, while its grid management system turbo-charges the capacity of officials even in rural areas to monitor what local people are doing, saying and thinking.

These local forms of surveillance and social control are known in Chinese political jargon as the "Fengqiao Experience."

Now, it looks as if Hong Kong will be adopting similar measures, according to the city's Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Alice Mak, who confirmed that 18 local officials had already been to the eastern province of Zhejiang to study the system.

"Through classroom study and on-the-spot understanding of the practical methods of the Fengqiao Experience ... district councilors understand that regional governance requires strengthening communication with citizens, understanding their emergencies, difficulties and worries, as well as the early detection and resolution of citizens' problems," Mak told the Legislative Council on Wednesday. She said the Fengqiao Experience will be implemented in Hong Kong by newly introduced "care teams," and that further training is in the pipeline.

In July 2021, China empowered local officials at township, village and neighborhood level to enforce the law, as well as operating a vastly extended "grid management" system of social control in rural and urban areas alike.

According to directives sent out in 2018, the grid system carves up neighborhoods into a grid pattern with 15-20 households per square, with each grid

given a dedicated monitor who reports back on residents' affairs to local committees.

Hong Kong's care teams are also expected to help the authorities inform the public, as well as reporting the views of the public to the government, according to a 2022 document announcing their deployment.

Detecting grievances

Current affairs commentator Johnny Lau said the ongoing crackdown on public dissent under two national security laws isn't enough for the authorities, who want to nip any signs of potential unrest in the bud.

"The authorities are taking the big-picture view that there will be a lot of public grievances given the current economic problems," Lau told RFA Cantonese in a recent interview. "It's clear that more grassroots work will have to be done to prevent any outbreak of such grievances."

He said the District Councils, which now contain only members judged "patriotic" following recent changes in the electoral system, will be the mainstay of the new approach, with the care teams staying in touch with local residents in neighborhoods.

But he said there are also plenty of technological options for keeping an eye on what people are up to. Former pro-democracy District Councilor Cheung Man-lung said the care teams won't necessarily be effective if people don't trust them, however.

"Community work is always based on public trust in those in positions of responsibility," Cheung said. "If people don't trust them, then there'll be a lot of problems [with this approach]."

Cheung said he hasn't seen much of his local care team, despite the bursting of a water main in his neighborhood recently.

Chief Executive John Lee, who was "elected" unopposed following changes to the electoral rules in 2022, first announced the establishment of care teams in his October policy address of that year, saying they would "take part in community-building" across Hong Kong's 18 districts.

The government would carve up districts into sub-districts, and seek to engage local organizations and groups, including young people and ethnic minorities to take part in community building, he said.

The first care teams, chosen for their patriotism and willingness to follow the government's lead, were deployed in Tsuen Wan and Southern districts in 2023. The government changed the rules governing District Council election after the 2019 poll resulted in a landslide victory for pro-democracy candidates that was widely seen as a ringing public endorsement for the pro-democracy movement despite months of disruption and clashes.

China- Nepal

Nepal, China universities sign collaboration agreement

30 December 2024, [Kathmandu Post](#)

Lumbini Buddhist University and Beijing Language and Culture University to work together on cultural exchange, language education, and research. Lumbini Buddhist University and Beijing Language and Culture University have signed a collaboration agreement in the presence of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

At an event held at the Prime Minister's official residence in Baluwatar, officials from Lumbini Buddhist University and Beijing Language and Culture University exchanged the agreement documents.

As per the agreement, both universities will collaborate on cultural exchange, language teaching, and research initiatives. Additionally, a Nepal Institute of China will be established in Beijing, and a China Institute of Nepal will be set up in Lumbini.

This agreement builds on an earlier understanding between Nepal and China to promote volunteer-based Chinese language teaching during PM Oli's official visit to China from December 2–5.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Oli, who is also the Chancellor of Lumbini Buddhist University, expressed happiness over the growing academic and cultural ties between Nepal and China. "The two nations share a centuries-old bond, and this collaboration marks another step forward in strengthening our relationship," Oli said.

The event was attended by National Planning Commission member Geeta Kumari Paudyal Adhikari, Lumbini University's Registrar Dr Tilak Ram Acharya, and officials from the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, among others.

Himalayan Yak: No more treasure for mountain people as Tibet restricts trade

24 December 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#), Ananda Gautam

Due to the restrictions that started since Covid, yak population has risen significantly, causing a burden for herders along the Nepal-China border.



According to the Yak Farmers Federation, Taplejung, each family is rearing between five to 400 yaks. Shutterstock

Nupu Sherpa of Tokpegola, situated around 4,100 meters above sea level in Mikwakhola Rural Municipality in Taplejung, sold 20 yaks in Tibet, China, back in 2019.

He earned Rs110,000 per head, as there were no border restrictions on taking yaks to the Chinese market.

Sherpa and five other herders in Thudam, Sankhuwasabha, a higher pass known as a centre for yak herding, used to sell yaks by crossing the Chinese border.

During the pre-Covid period in 2019, the last time they traded yaks to Tibet, they brought Rs5 million each.

But since then, they have not been able to export yaks to Tibet.

“While trading in Tibet at that time, the 1 Chinese yuan was equivalent to Rs16,” said Sherpa. “I have heard that the rate has increased, but sadly, we cannot sell yaks anymore.”

Sherpa currently owns 75 yaks, and all are mature enough to be sold. Normally, yaks have a life expectancy of 15-20 years, and after that, they turn thin and old. So, the commercial value of yak is at the age of 12.

“The old yak does not fetch a good price, so selling them while they are still valuable is important,” said Sherpa. Now, to make ends meet, Sherpa has been making dog chews from yak milk.

In the upper reaches, when the market in Tibet was open and vibrant, yaks were used as pack animals.

“But now, rearing yaks has become a burden for many people,” said Sherpa.

Nearly 180 households like Sherpa’s have the same problem—no market access.

According to the Yak Farmers Federation, Taplejung, each family is rearing between five to 400 yaks.

Sherpa, also president of the federation, said that their only alternative is to let yaks die.

Yak farmers have requested Netra Prasad Sharma, chief district officer, to raise the issue with the officials on the other side of the border.

Accordingly, on December 14, a meeting was held between the key officials of Taplejung and Dinggye County in southwest Tibet.

“We have raised the issue, including to allow trade of agricultural products. It was the main agenda from our side at the meeting, but Tibet showed reluctance to resolve the issue faced by Nepalis living at the Nepal-China border point,” said Sharma.

During the meeting, the Chinese representative said that Beijing would make the decision regarding livestock trade and that they would make requests to the higher authority.

“We are hopeful the issue will be addressed,” said Sharma.

The border people tried to export yak, milk, dog chew and ghee on different occasions but were returned, said Sharma.

Kimathanka in Sankhuwasabha and 13 other trans-Himalayan trade points along the Nepal-China border were reopened in May after four years of closure.

In May, then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha reached Tibet through the Kimathanka border point, and Vice-chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region Silang Nima jointly opened the traditional trading points amid a function in the Tibetan town of Chentang.

They announced the reopening of 14 of the 21 trading points in various districts along Nepal’s mountain range.

Chinese authorities closed the border passes in January 2020 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, which severely disrupted the livelihoods of Nepalis living in remote mountain villages close to Tibet.

“We have raised the issue at Nepal’s home ministry,” said Sharma.

The locals who lost one of the crucial markets after Covid-19 were hopeful that the reopening of the border in May for people and trade movements would revive the yak trade.

The residents in far-flung northern borders believe that the trade restrictions have also affected Tibet.

Mingma Diki of Olangchung Gola said her family would buy yak calves from Tibet, rear them in Nepal and sell them back to Tibet after they matured.

“It’s strange that free trade with Tibet has stopped altogether.”

Locals suspected that China might have stopped the yak trade due to lumpy skin disease that spread in Nepal in 2023. The first outbreak of lumpy skin disease in Nepal started in June 2020. By 2023, more than 48,000 cattle have died from the disease that has affected all of the country’s 77 districts.

More than 3,000 livestock were affected by lumpy skin in Taplejung, according to the Livestock Service Office. Tibet, however, has not officially made any statement about stopping yaks from coming from Nepal.

"We submitted a special proposal on this issue, but Beijing declined it," said Chheten Sherpa Lama, ward chairman of Phaktalung rural municipality, who was in the Nepali delegation with chief district officer Sharma, to Tibet as a translator.

The population of yak has been increasing and causing additional burden to farmers, said Lama.

"Feeding yaks is becoming increasingly difficult, and fodder shortages are adding to our hardship."

As per the District Livestock Office statistics, there are around 8,000 yaks in Taplejung.

The federation said that even if a yak is priced at Rs50,000, Taplejung has yaks worth Rs400 million.

Around 60 percent of yaks are at the age to be sold.

Locals of the mountain region have been rearing yaks at 3,000 to 5,000 metres as their traditional occupation. They are reared particularly in the higher passes of Sirijunga, Phaktalung, Mikwakhola, Meringden and Phungling.

According to the locals, yaks have also become prey to snow leopards, bears and wolves.

China-Nepal railway to be a game changer, transform Nepal from landlocked to landlinked: former envoy

23 December 2024, [People's Daily Online](#), Yin Yeping

The China-Nepal cross-border railway project will be a game changer in the trans-Himalayan region connecting not only Nepal and China but also China and South Asia as a whole, Leela Mani Paudyal, a former Nepali ambassador to China, told the Global Times in an exclusive interview.

The remarks came as China-Nepal ties have been further strengthened after the visit of Nepali Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to China earlier this month. During the visit, important consensuses were reached, including a pledge to "steadily advance the feasibility study of the Jilong/Keyrung-Kathmandu Cross-Border Railway, and planning to hold the 9th Working Meeting on China-Nepal Railway Cooperation," per a joint statement.

The Chinese side will continue to help Nepal train professionals in the field of railways. Both sides also expressed their readiness to sign the memorandum of understanding on building the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, according to the joint statement.

Talking about the significance of this project for China-Nepal bilateral trade and Nepal's economic development, Paudyal said that "the railway will enable Nepal to utilize the transit facility available to Nepal via China... The railway will transform Nepal from a landlocked country to land-linked one," the former envoy said.

China-Nepal bilateral trade has seen robust growth. From January to November 2024, it amounted to 13.50 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 18.1 percent, according to the latest data released by China's General Administration of Customs. Both imports and exports saw steady growth.

Given what has already been achieved, there is still potential for bilateral trade to be further boosted after the railway project is launched, the former Nepali ambassador said, adding that the railway will help link some of Nepal's industries to the value chain of Chinese production. "The railway will certainly boost trade and investment in Nepal," he said.

The railway project will not only support trade but also tourism, Paudyal said, as Nepal has become a popular travel destination for many Chinese visitors. According to data from the Nepali tourism authority, in November alone, at least 114,501 tourists visited the country, 9,458 of whom were from China.

During the Nepali Prime Minister's visit to China, the Chinese side expressed support for Nepal's declaration of 2025 as Nepal Visit Year in China, the Xinhua News Agency reported, indicating closer ties in the tourism sector between China and the South Asian country.

In a previous interview with the Global Times, Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song said that the China-Nepal railway comprises both a Chinese and Nepali section, and both sides were accelerating efforts to promote the project.

Meanwhile, Southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region is steadfastly promoting the Xigaze-Jilong section of the railway according to its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), which includes planning and building a stretch of railway at Jilong Port, Chen said, noting that related projects will constantly enhance the autogenic capacity of Nepal's economy and give wings to Nepal's development.

The railway project is just one example of growing China-Nepal bilateral cooperation. Paudyal said that China's support for Nepal's development efforts is commendable.

"Both the Belt and Road Initiative and Chinese support were aimed at facilitating the socio-economic development of Nepal; therefore, we reject any attempt to make this development initiative a geopolitical issue," Paudyal said, referring to some foreign media reports smearing China-Nepal cooperation.

Nepal embraces China's BRI

18 December 2024, [The Pioneer](#), Parul Chandra

Nepal's deepening ties with China through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have set alarm bells ringing in New Delhi

India has cause for extreme worry. In yet another indicator of China's growing sway over Nepal, the two are moving forward to implement Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Himalayan nation. India is not only opposed to this in principle on grounds of sovereignty but also fears it will enable China to increase its already considerable inroads into Nepal.

If 2017 marked Nepal's initial step to coming on board the BRI with an MoU, the year 2024 marks a giant leap for the Himalayan nation in that direction. A framework agreement for cooperation on the BRI was signed during Nepalese PM K P Sharma Oli's visit to China in early December, apart from nine other pacts. With the strategically located Himalayan nation having become a hub for Great Powers contestation, the US too would be uneasy with the latest Beijing-Kathmandu tango. While the US had managed to get Nepal on board its own Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact to fund Kathmandu's power and transport infrastructure, the BRI seems far broader. Kathmandu is trying to play down the framework as just a continuation of the 2017 MoU. The framework, however, underlines Kathmandu and Beijing's renewed push for the BRI, an initiative on which New Delhi harbours deep suspicions for what it perceives as China's hegemonic ambitions through debt-trap diplomacy. Sovereignty is another major concern, with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), another project under BRI, passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

India is certainly worried about PM Oli-led Nepal once again moving into China's sphere of influence. The CPN-UML leader is widely seen as being pro-China, and bilateral ties with India were prickly during his previous stints as the PM. India has yet to host Oli since he took charge as PM in July this year for the fourth time, with him first heading for Beijing, in a break from the tradition of visiting New Delhi. Also, showing scant regard for New Delhi's sensitivities, the Oli government recently allowed 220 Buddhist monks from China to travel to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha even as the Nanhai Buddhism Shenzhen roundtable was being held in Kathmandu.

Oli delivered the inaugural address at this roundtable. There were also reports the China-appointed Panchen Lama would travel to Lumbini, though it did not eventually happen.

The Oli government's encouragement of Beijing's concerted moves to claim Buddhism as a shared heritage will not go down well with New Delhi, which has been making its efforts to build on its shared Buddhist heritage with Nepal.

Kathmandu's thrust on greater economic cooperation with Beijing – the BRI is part of this endeavour – would also whittle down India's influence over Nepal. The BRI framework agreement, incidentally, also envisages the

opening of branches of Chinese banks and financial institutions in Nepal. India has traditionally had deep economic linkages with Nepal, nurtured in no small measure due to reasons of geography – the two neighbours share a long and porous 1,751-km-long border.

This, along with the landlocked nature of Nepal, has helped India become its largest trading partner. During the 2022-23 fiscal, bilateral trade was pegged at \$8.85 billion. This included \$8 billion of exports from India to Nepal, with \$840 million of exports in the reverse direction. As per the Nepal Rastra Bank, India's share in Nepal's trade accounted for 64.1% in 2022-23. PM Oli sees cooperation on BRI as a means to forge closer economic ties with China, with the framework agreement resolving to deepen the economic partnership by "injecting new momentum to trade, infrastructure and connectivity cooperation".

Not a single project under the BRI rubric has been executed in Nepal since the 2017 MoU. Nepal would be hoping that the 10 initial projects, including those meant to boost regional connectivity, will now see the light of day. India has its work cut out and should ensure it does not come across as overbearing. India's approach in the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura border dispute, where New Delhi ignored Kathmandu's request for foreign secretary-level talks, is a case in point.

It led Oli, in his earlier stint as the PM, to cock a snook at New Delhi by changing his country's map showing the disputed territories as part of Nepal.

Neither did New Delhi show respect due to a close neighbour when it decided to give a quiet burial to the joint 2018 Eminent Persons Group (EPG) report, which suggested that the 1950 Treaty of Peace And Friendship be replaced with a new one?

Nepal has also been unhappy with India's refusal to give overflight rights for aircraft using the Chinese-built Gautam Buddha International Airport in Lumbini. India would do well to remember that its domineering approach only serves to alienate a close neighbour further and push it into China's ever-willing embrace. India should not lose sight of its strategic imperatives.

Chinese class restarted for Nepali journalists

16 December 2024, [Xinhua](#)

The Chinese class was relaunched on Monday for 40 Nepalese journalists from different media outlets.

In addition to basic Chinese language knowledge, special courses catering to journalistic work were offered as well, said Li Shuangcheng, director of the Confucius Institute at Kathmandu University.

Addressing the opening ceremony held at the Confucius Institute situated in Lalitpur, Li noted that Chinese cultural elements were integrated into the course, allowing the learners to appreciate the charm of Chinese culture and enhance their comprehensive understanding of Chinese society and people.



Li Shuangcheng, director of the Confucius Institute at Kathmandu University, addresses the opening ceremony of a Chinese class for Nepalese journalists at the Confucius Institute in Lalitpur, Nepal, Dec. 16, 2024. The Chinese class was relaunched on Monday for 40 Nepalese journalists from different media outlets. (Photo by Sulav Shrestha/Xinhua)

Kishor Shrestha, chairman of the Nepal-China Media Forum, recalled that the Chinese class was first started in May 2019 and had to be halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sharing his own experiences, Shrestha urged the learners to learn both the Chinese language and characters, stressing that Chinese is becoming an international language gradually.

"The Chinese language is one of the most spoken languages in the world and I'm really excited to be a part of this class," said Shristi Kafle, one of the learners.

"I believe that if I master this language, it will help me understand China, Chinese history and Chinese society better, and it will also help me to enhance my reporting skills about China," she added.

Kishor Shrestha, chairman of the Nepal-China Media Forum, speaks at the opening ceremony of a Chinese class for Nepalese journalists at the Confucius Institute in Lalitpur, Nepal, Dec. 16, 2024. The Chinese class was relaunched on Monday for 40 Nepalese journalists from different media outlets. (Photo by Sulav Shrestha/Xinhua)

Nepal media note absence of Beijing's Panchen Lama
16 December 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

Gyaltzen Norbu, was reportedly due to travel to a Chinese-organised Buddhist conference in Nepal

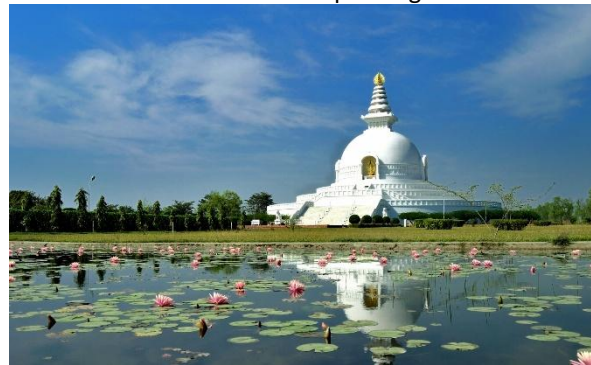
Over the weekend, Nanhai Buddhism Shenzhen Roundtable took place in Nepal. 220 Chinese Buddhist monks arrived on a chartered flight for the Chinese-organised Buddhist events in Kathmandu and Lumbini. Tibet watchers were paying particular attention to this delegation after reports last week that the Chinese-imposed Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, would be among them.

One report in the online newspaper Nepal Aaja, suggested that Gyaltzen Norbu would arrive in Nepal on 14 December. The article noted that the visit of Beijing's Panchen Lama was "part of China's effort to extend its influence over Buddhist communities in South Asia", with the Chinese government appearing to be "leveraging cultural and religious diplomacy to reinforce its soft power."

Reports from Nepal over the weekend state that Gyaltzen Norbu never made the trip to Nepal. These follow reports last week from Nepal that the government of Nepal itself blocked the trip.

The Kathmandu Post reported that due to the sensitivity of Gyaltzen Norbu's visit, the Government of Nepal told the Chinese embassy that he would not be welcome, citing Nepal's "neutrality on religious matters". The Chinese embassy has since denied that it was ever the intention for Gyaltzen Norbu to travel to Nepal.

Security sources quoted in Nepalese media even raised the possibility that Gyaltzen Norbu may attempt to enter Nepal with an assumed identity or in disguise, risking a geopolitical crisis. Rigorous checks were therefore carried out on each passenger.



The Monastery of World Peace, Lumbini, credit Kushal Kafle

Nepal is located between Chinese-occupied Tibet and India, with Lumbini located close to the Indian border. Lumbini is also significant as the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha.

The Kathmandu Post article last Thursday quoted Lyarkal Lama, vice-chairman of the Lumbini Development Trust, who said that the Panchen Lama "has been trying to visit Nepal for the past ten years [...] He is such a powerful person, he can come here only with the permission of our prime minister."

Born in 1990 and raised in Beijing, Gyaltzen Norbu has been promoted as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Chinese government since 1995, when he was enthroned at Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse.

At 16, he addressed the 2006 World Buddhist Forum in 2006, which was the first major international religious conference in the People's Republic of China since its founding in 1949. Ten years later, he returned to Shigatse, the historic seat of the Panchen Lama, to carry out the Kalachakra, a major religious teaching. It was the first time in half a century that the Kalachakra initiation had been held in occupied Tibet.

While Beijing has attempted to promote Gyaltzen Norbu, he remains widely rejected among Tibetans, who instead continue to demand information about Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was identified by the 14th Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama in 1995 but was detained by Chinese authorities days later and has not been seen since. He had only recently turned six years old, making him the world's youngest political prisoner.



Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, missing since 1995

The enforced disappearance of the Panchen Lama and Beijing's appointment of its own Panchen Lama are part of a broader strategy by the Chinese government to exert control over Tibetan Buddhism, which is central to Tibet's identity and closely intertwined with the struggle against its occupation.

Monks and nuns have been at the forefront of protests against the occupation and human rights abuses, notably in the 2008 Tibetan uprising, where one of the key catalysts was a march by 200 monks from Labrang Monastery.

The Chinese government closely regulates Tibetan monasteries, which are required to display loyalty to the Chinese state and the Chinese Communist Party. CCP members have stated on numerous occasions that the Chinese government is the ultimate authority on aspects of Tibetan Buddhism such as reincarnation and the identification and certification of Tibetan lamas and religious teachers. This includes the Panchen Lama and also the lineage of the Dalai Lama.

Chinese officials have stated clearly that Beijing's control over the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is strategic. In 2015 Zhu Weiqun, then the Chairman of China's Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs, [wrote](#) in the state-run Global Times that the succession "is first and foremost an important political matter" adding that "whoever has the name of Dalai Lama will control political power in Tibet."

"For this reason," Zhu concluded, "since historical times, the central government has never given up, and will never give up, the right to decide the reincarnation affairs of the Dalai Lama."

Despite the public rejection, Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli inaugurated the Chinese-organised event on Friday and was recently in China to sign a Belt and Road Initiative Framework Agreement.

The government of Nepal also continues to prevent any visit from the 14th Dalai Lama, a point reiterated by a senior security official in Nepal: "We have not allowed the Dalai Lama to come to Nepal. By the same token, we also can't allow a similar China-backed religious figure to visit Nepal."



Gyaltzen Norbu conducting the Kalachakra in Shigatse, Tibet, in 2016

Nepal is likely to continue to come under pressure from its larger neighbours. Rishi Gupta, Assistant Director of the Asia Society Policy Institute, [wrote on Friday](#): "While the government of Nepal may have refused entry to the Panchen Lama this time [...] this decision is far from a permanent safeguard." He concluded that the "risk of Nepal becoming a staging ground for Beijing's Sinicisation efforts remains alarmingly real."

Following the reports that Gyaltzen Norbu was visiting Nepal, Free Tibet joined its partners in the Tibet

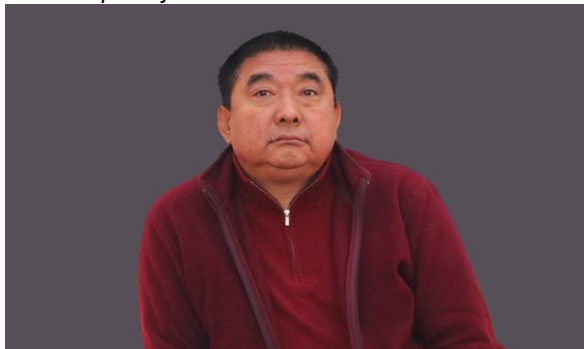
movement in drafting a letter to Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, urging him to disinvite him. The letter was also submitted by Tibetans to Nepalese embassies around the world, including the UK embassy in London. The letter [can be read here](#).

Controversial monk behind attempts to bring China-appointed Panchen to Nepal?

15 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While the Government of Nepal permitted the holding of the Nanhai (South China Sea) Buddhism Shenzhen Roundtable in the country, but pointedly rejected any idea of the China-appointed Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu attending it, Lyarkar Lama, the controversial Vice Chairman of the Lumbini Development Trust, kept looking to bring him to the conference, according to Nepali media reports.

The visit has been halted, but the issue has raised critical questions, particularly about the role of Lyarkar Lama in facilitating such a controversial visit, noted [nepalaja.com](#) Dec 13.



It said that despite preparations by Chinese stakeholders to bring the “Panchen Lama” to Lumbini, senior government officials actively worked to address the issue’s sensitivity and prevent the visit.

This situation has placed a spotlight on Lyarkar Lama, who has been criticized for his involvement in managing the arrangements for the “Panchen Lama’s” visit, the report said.

The report cited Lyarkar Lama’s history as one fraught with legal, moral, and professional controversies, making his role in the Lumbini Development Trust highly contentious.

Earlier, on Dec 15, 2015, Kathmandu police discovered 14 bullets in Lyarkar Lama’s locker at the Nepal Investment Bank. The possession of such items by a Buddhist monk raised severe legal and ethical concerns, the report said.

His appointment as Vice Chairman of the Lumbini Development Trust was stated to be equally controversial.

Nepal’s Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation regulations say individuals with proven criminal records are ineligible for such positions. Nevertheless,

the then Tourism Minister Sudan Kirati recommended Lama for the role, and the appointment was approved by the cabinet under Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda).

It was at that time reported by the [kathmandupost.com](#) Aug 6, 2023, that Lama was appointed to the post (for a five-year term) despite the fact that he had earlier been charged with several crimes, including foreign employment fraud, possession of illegal firearms, accumulating property disproportionate to his known source of income, and possession of dual citizenship and passport.

He was stated to be a central committee member of the CPN (Maoist Centre) headed by Prachanda.

Before that, he was CPN-UML member, and became the state minister for finance in the Jhala Nath Khanal-led government in 2011. The party had made him a lawmaker under the proportional representation category after the first Constituent Assembly election. However, he was reported to have resigned from the post on Apr 21, 2011, just 11 days after assuming office, after he ran into controversy for possessing a Nepali citizenship certificate, an Indian passport and a Tibetan refugee identity card.

The report continued that he then quit the UML and later joined Prachanda’s Maoist party, which in Feb 2015 made him a lawmaker.

He was also, earlier, appointed the chairman of the then Monastery Management and Development Committee (later renamed as the Buddhist Philosophy Promotion and Monastery Development Committee), by the Nepali Congress in 2001-02, the report said.

Li Qiang Holds Talks with Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli

13 December 2024, [Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America](#)



On the morning of December 3, 2024, Premier Li Qiang of the State Council held talks with Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli, who is on an official visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Li Qiang said that China and Nepal are traditional friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations nearly 70 years ago, China-Nepal relations have maintained sound and steady development. In 2019, in particular, the bilateral relationship was elevated to the strategic partnership of cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity, which has driven the vigorous expansion of exchanges and cooperation in various fields between the two sides and brought tangible benefits to the two peoples. President Xi Jinping will meet with Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to make a new strategic plan for further deepening bilateral relations. China is ready to work with Nepal to follow through on the important common understandings reached between the leaders of the two countries, continue to consolidate and deepen political mutual trust, push for deeper development of bilateral relations and cooperation, and build an even closer China-Nepal community with a shared future to provide more benefits to the two peoples.

Li Qiang pointed out that China firmly supports Nepal in exploring a development path suited to its national conditions, and is ready to work with Nepal to enhance the synergy of development strategies, leverage the leading role of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation in bilateral cooperation, and actively expand two-way trade and investment, and strengthen connectivity through ports, roads, railways, airlines and telecommunications, adding impetus to Nepal's transformation from a "land-locked country" to a "land-linked country". China encourages competent Chinese enterprises to invest and do business in Nepal and is ready to import more quality products from Nepal. Li Qiang called on the two sides to successfully hold a series of commemorative activities through joint efforts to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year, deepen people-to-people exchanges and sub-national cooperation in tourism, education and medical care, and promote better understanding and amity between the two peoples. China supports Nepal in playing a greater role in international and regional affairs and is ready to fortify coordination and cooperation with Nepal in multilateral fields.

KP Sharma Oli said that under the strong leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has made great achievements in promoting Chinese modernization, high-quality development, and poverty alleviation. The all-round friendly relations between Nepal and China are based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and have grown from strength to strength, setting a fine example of friendly relations between countries with different social systems and of different sizes. Nepal's determination to abide by the one-China principle will not waver, and it will not allow

any force to use Nepal's territory for anti-China activities. Nepal believes that Taiwan and Xizang are inalienable parts of China and Xizang-related affairs are China's internal affairs. Nepal appreciates China's long-term support for Nepal's economic and social development and has always regarded China as a reliable partner. Nepal is ready to take the opportunity of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations next year to further strengthen high-level exchanges with China, consolidate traditional friendship, promote practical cooperation in connectivity, trade, investment, energy, agriculture, tourism, healthcare, people-to-people exchanges and other fields, jointly address common challenges such as climate change, and strengthen coordination on multilateral affairs, so as to achieve greater development in bilateral relations.

After the talks, Premier Li Qiang and Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli jointly witnessed the signing of a number of bilateral cooperation documents on economy, technology and trade.

Prior to the talks, Li Qiang held a welcoming ceremony for KP Sharma Oli at the North Hall of the Great Hall of the People.

Wu Zhenglong attended the above activities.

Nepal shoots down the prospect of Panchen Lama's visit

12 December 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#), Anil Giri

Foreign ministry told Chinese Embassy the Lama would not be allowed due to Nepal's neutrality on religious matters.

Last week, there was an undercurrent of tension in certain diplomatic circles in Kathmandu after information of the China-backed Panchen Lama visiting Nepal was leaked. Beijing has projected Panchen Lama as the successor to Dalai Lama, a characterisation rejected by Western countries as well as Tibetans refugees in exile.

According to three government officials from different ministries and agencies, as soon as the information of the Panchen Lama's likely visit in mid-December—to attend a function in Lumbini and later an event in Kathmandu—was leaked, officials from Home and Tourism ministries started poring over the list of each and every passenger travelling in chartered flights from Chengdu to Lumbini via Air China. (The tip-off was that he would be travelling via Air China.)

The Panchen Lama was supposed to fly to Lumbini directly from Beijing, along with his security guards and other officials. As of Wednesday evening, no new approval has been sought to land an aircraft in Lumbini with Beijing as its point of origin. Instead, a pre-approved flight on the route was cancelled on the same day, said officials at the Ministry of Tourism.

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation gave the approval to organise the religious function in Lumbini and in Kathmandu under the banner of Nanhai Buddhism Round Table–2024.

“We could not spot his name anywhere but he might have multiple passports with multiple names and identities,” one home ministry official who was involved in the verification process said. “There are several ways to disguise identity and so we were cautious as well as alert.”

Even on Wednesday morning, Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak, Home Secretary Gokarna Mani Duwadi, and acting foreign secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai, among other senior officials, were engaged in a verification process to ascertain whether the Panchen Lama, whose name is Gyaincin Norbu, was actually travelling to Nepal to attend some function.

“He [Panchen Lama] has been trying to visit Nepal for the past ten years and he especially wanted to come here on Buddha Jayanti,” Lyarkal Lama, vice-chairman of the Lumbini Development Trust, told the Post. “He is such a powerful person, he can come here only with the permission of our prime minister.”

Lyarkal will be in Lumbini on December 14 where a special religious function is being held. “As the Panchen Lama is a high-profile Chinese leader equivalent in rank to the Chinese vice president it was impossible for us to give him security,” said Lyarkal. “Such security arrangements are a matter to be settled between two governments.”

Lyarkal said that the Panchen Lama’s visit could add to Nepal’s geopolitical challenges and as such he might not visit this time.

After pressure started piling up on the government from both in and outside the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote a diplomatic note to the Chinese Embassy and sought a clarification on whether the Panchen Lama was actually visiting Nepal. It also said that the government would not permit him to visit Nepal due to its policy of maintaining neutrality in religious matters.

“We have not allowed the Dalai Lama to come to Nepal,” a senior security official said. “By the same token, we also can’t allow a similar China-backed religious figure to visit Nepal.” The Dalai Lama as well as the Panchen Lama have tried to visit Nepal several times in the past but each time the Nepal government has stopped them from coming.

The Dalai Lama has the backing of Western countries and most of the Tibetan communities in exile, even though China calls him a “separatist”.

The foreign minister communicated via the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu that it cannot permit Norbu, the Chinese Communist Party-backed Panchen Lama, to visit Lumbini to attend a religious function on December 14, said a senior foreign ministry official.

“At least I have not heard about this,” Home Minister Lekhak told the Post. “There is no information on his visit.”

But it was Lekhak who first came to know about the Panchen Lama’s impending visit to Kathmandu and communicated the same to Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba when she was part of Prime Minister KP Oli’s delegation in China.

At least 227 Chinese monks and officials of the Buddhist Association of China are arriving in Lumbini on chartered Airbus A330 flight later this week. (The Post has seen the flight details.) The Chinese side had asked for the permission for the chartered flight with the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal on November 18. Security sources told the Post that they had the information that the Panchen Lama was likely to visit Lumbini in disguise by hiding among the 227 Chinese monks and officials. If this happened, they feared, it could create a diplomatic and geopolitical crisis.

Four persons aware of this development told the Post that as soon as Prime Minister Oli landed in China on December 2, a communication was received that an Air China chartered flight was coming from Chengdu to Kathmandu in mid-December carrying VIP Buddhist monks.

Later, the information was forwarded to Home Minister Lekhak and Tourism Minister Badri Pandey. Then, Home Minister Lekhak called Foreign Minister Deuba in Beijing to inform her that the China-backed Panchen Lama was visiting Nepal—reportedly, with Prime Minister Oli himself giving the permission for his visit.

After this, Foreign Minister Deuba spoke to Prime Minister Oli and later told Nepali officials that the prime minister was in fact unaware of the Panchen Lama’s visit and he had given no such permission.

The Lumbini Development Trust also flagged the matter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the trust wrote a letter to foreign ministry about a possible visit of the Panchen Lama to Nepal, the ministry had sent a diplomatic note to the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu and sought details of the visit.

The Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu denied that the Panchen Lama was visiting Kathmandu. The government of Nepal also told the Chinese Embassy that it will not allow him to visit for multiple reasons, said foreign ministry officials familiar with the development. Bishnu Rimal, chief political advisor to the Prime Minister Oli, said the information that the Panchen Lama is visiting Nepal is “one hundred percent false.”

Foreign Minister Deuba, who is currently on a tour of Europe, told the Post over the phone that news about the visit of the Panchen Lama to Nepal is absolutely incorrect and the government would not allow him to come. “He is not coming,” she said. “When we sought

clarification from the Chinese Embassy, it also denied that he was coming.”

Deuba added, “As soon as we got the information about this, we enquired about it with the Chinese Embassy. Even the home minister and other senior officials were trying to fix the issue but they could not verify that the particular person was coming.”

On Tuesday, a 10-member delegation of Chinese monks led by Yin Shun, vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, arrived in Kathmandu and left for Lumbini to lay the ground for the visit of other dignitaries.

They will later join at a function in Kathmandu named 2024 Nanhai Buddhism Round Table on Friday, according to an invitation sent by the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu.

The 2024 Nanhai Buddhism Round Table will convene on December 13, 2024, reads the Chinese Embassy notice sent to the media.

The event, which will be attended by Buddhists from 20 countries, will end on Sunday.

Correction:

An earlier version of this report erroneously mentioned Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the China-appointed Panchen Lama. In fact, Nyima was appointed by the Dalai Lama. The name of China-appointed Panchen Lama is Gyaincain Norbu. The report has been corrected.

Panchen Lama to make rare visit to Nepal after Tibet trip, reports say

12 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Sylvie Zhuang

The trip, which has not been confirmed by Beijing or Kathmandu, comes months before the Dalai Lama is expected to unveil a succession plan

The Panchen Lama, Tibet’s second highest religious figure who sits on China’s top political advisory body, will make a rare visit to Nepal, according to Nepalese media reports.

It comes just months before the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, is expected to reveal a succession plan. That plan is likely to be contested by Beijing, which sees the Dalai Lama as a separatist pushing for Tibetan independence.

Gyaincain Norbu – the Panchen Lama chosen by Chinese authorities – will visit Nepal on a four-day trip from Saturday to attend the South China Sea Buddhism Round Table, news site Nepal Aaja reported on Tuesday.

The visit to Nepal, which is home to a large population of ethnic Tibetans, has not been confirmed by either the Chinese or Nepalese governments.

It follows a visit to China last week by Nepal’s Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, when he told Chinese Premier Li Qiang that Kathmandu regards Tibet

and Taiwan as inalienable parts of China and that Tibet-related affairs are China’s internal affairs.

The purpose of the Panchen Lama’s visit is “religious harmony”, an official with the Nepalese government’s Lumbini Development Trust told news site My Republica on Wednesday.

The Panchen Lama is a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, as well as vice-president of the state-backed Buddhist Association.

He has just spent five months in Tibet promoting traditional Chinese culture and national unity, state news agency Xinhua reported last week.

Nepal will be just his second foreign trip after a visit to Thailand in 2019.

It comes as the Dalai Lama could soon unveil a succession plan. He has previously said that he would address the issue of his reincarnation – a constant source of tension between Beijing and the Dalai Lama – after he turns 90 in July.

Beijing has accused the Nobel peace laureate of being a “separatist” and of inciting unrest among Tibetans in China in the 1980s and in 2008. There are also concerns that the Dalai Lama’s death may trigger social tensions.

The People’s Liberation Army seized Tibet in 1950, a year after the Communist Party won the Chinese civil war. The Dalai Lama fled a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959 and has lived in exile in India since then.

According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, when the Dalai Lama dies, he will be reincarnated as a young child. This child must be found through a series of searches and rituals.

The next Dalai Lama must also be recognised by the current Panchen Lama. After the previous Panchen Lama died in 1989, a government-led search team identified a child as his reincarnation through a ritual in 1995 – but the Dalai Lama has refused to recognise the current Panchen Lama.

The Dalai Lama previously proposed ending his reincarnation, which would avoid Beijing’s involvement in the matter. But Beijing has insisted that his reincarnation must follow Chinese law.

BRI Cooperation Framework made public

10 December 2024, [The Rising Nepal](#)

The Framework for Belt and Road Cooperation signed between Nepal and China on December 4 during Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli’s China visit has been made public on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs released the document of the BRI Cooperation Framework.

As stated in the document, the BRI Cooperation Framework was formulated to establish a structured

basis to undertake further negotiations on the projects.

"The two sides shall respect each other's sovereignty and common interests and work together to improve people's livelihoods through mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation. This Cooperation Framework will accord due consideration to the developmental stages of China and Nepal, with particular emphasis to Nepal's specific development requirements and priorities," according to the document released.

On cooperation principle, joint consultation for common development, pragmatic cooperation for meaningful effects and policy environment for increased investment have been highlighted.

Likewise, the two sides have concluded this Cooperation Framework to establish and deepen economic partnership to promote the common development of China and Nepal by injecting new momentum to trade, infrastructure and connectivity cooperation by accelerating the development of priority projects; to realize the mutual interests shared by the two sides to give effect to the MoU by providing a structured guidance to undertake negotiations for the implementation of the prospective projects and to identify and develop projects that fall within the scope of the area of cooperation.

The Chinese side will support Nepal's development efforts under the framework of jointly building the Belt and Road, by providing technical and financial assistance. The two sides will work to ensure technical support, and aid financing modalities that suit the need of the two sides and of the requirements for sovereign initiated projects. "The two sides will conduct objective analysis of technical, financial, commercial and economic feasibility and ensure value for money for the prioritized projects. The two sides will continue to call upon international multilateral financial development institutions or mechanisms to provide more financial support for promoting connectivity and development," the Cooperation Framework states.

Similarly, Nepal and China agreed to jointly build the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network through the construction of ports, roads including bridges and tunnels, railways, aviation infrastructure, telecommunication projects, electricity transmission lines to upgrade the level of connectivity.

Tokha-Chhahare Tunnel, Hilsa-Simikot Road Project, Kimathanka-Khandbari Road and Kimathanka Bridge and Integrated Check Post Project, Nepali section of the China-Nepal Cross-Border Railway Project, Amargadhi City Hall Project, Jilong-Rasuwadhi-Chilime 220 KV Cross Border Power Transmission Line, Madan Bhandari University of Science and Technology, Kathmandu Scientific Center and Science Museum, China-Nepal Friendship Industrial Park and Jhapa

Sports and Athletics Complex have been listed as the projects to be developed in the BRI Cooperation Framework.

Nepal's leader visits Beijing, joint statement uses 'Xizang' to refer to Tibet

06 December 2024, [RFA](#), Tenzin Pema and Tenzin Norzom

Use of China's preferred term is seen as a warning sign for Tibetans.



Nepal's prime minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, center, and his wife Radhika Shakya prepare to depart the Tribhuvan International airport in Kathmandu, Dec. 2, 2024. (Aryan Dhimal/AFP)

Nepal referred to Tibet as "Xizang" in a statement issued after its new Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli completed a four-day visit to Beijing this week, his first trip outside the country after his election -- not India, as is traditionally the case.

Xizang is a term promoted by Beijing, but Tibetan advocates say it is yet another attempt by China to erase their distinct cultural heritage.

Both moves highlight China's growing influence in Nepal -- and its hopes to reap the economic benefits of closer ties to Beijing, experts and Tibetan advocates said.

"The joint declaration between Nepal and China in which the word 'Xizang' is used instead of Tibet shows the lengths to which Nepal is willing to go to appease China," said Sriparna Pathak, an associate professor of China studies at the O.P. Jindal Global University in Haryana, India, and a former consultant at India's foreign ministry.

"This is a complete disregard of the Tibetan cause, the struggle and the history," she told Radio Free Asia.

"This does not augur well at all for Tibetans living in Nepal."

China experts cite the promises of millions of dollars of Chinese investment as a reason for the Nepalese government restricting Tibetan activities in the country.

Oli's extended visit, which ended Thursday, also included an agreement related to China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI, a grand plan to boost global trade through infrastructure development.

In other signs of China's influence, Nepali police regularly detain Tibetans in Kathmandu for "questioning" during high profile visits by Chinese officials.

Authorities also increase surveillance on Tibetan refugee settlements during cultural celebrations like the Tibetan New Year or the birthday of Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama.

Stalled BRI projects

In the joint statement issued this week by Nepal and China, the two sides emphasized the importance of "law enforcement cooperation."

China said it is "willing to provide support for Nepal to the best of its capacity through capacity building, including trainings in the field of combating cyber crimes, and assistance of police supplies."

Nepal signed an initial agreement to join the BRI in 2017, but highway construction and other projects have stalled since then.

Oli's visit included the signing of a framework agreement to get those projects off the ground with feasibility studies.

China has previously promised to transform Nepal from a "landlocked nation into a land-linked hub."

Nepal, in turn, has reaffirmed its allegiance to China, particularly on issues related to Taiwan and Tibet, with the use of Xizang in official documents as the latest example.

'Serving Beijing's agenda'

The term "Xizang" was first used in official Chinese government diplomatic documents in 2023. Chinese Communist Party scholars had advocated for the use of "Xizang," which they have said would help promote China's legitimate occupation and rule of Tibet.

In this week's joint statement, Nepal "reiterated that Xizang affairs are internal affairs of China, and that it will never allow any separatist activities against China on Nepal's soil."

That was another example of China "using its power to make a smaller country serve its political agenda," said Tencho Gyatso, president of Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet.

"Whatever name is used does not alter the fact that the Tibetan people are suffering under China's misrule," she told RFA.

Economic diplomacy

The previous prime minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, visited Beijing in September 2023.

The joint statement issued afterward only referred to Tibet – not Xizang – but it did state that Nepal would "never allow any separatist activities against China on Nepal's soil."

Similarly, just after Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in 2019, Nepal reiterated its "determination on not allowing any anti-China activities on its soil."

"Over the years, the space for Tibetans in Nepal has continued to remain constrained," said Manoj

Kewalramani, a China Studies fellow at Bengaluru, India-based Takshashila Institution.

"I think this trend is likely to continue. Beijing has always used economic diplomacy to serve such political ends," he said. "These are among the strings that come with Chinese money."

The BRI framework cooperation agreement highlighted Nepal's preference for grants instead of loans to fund the projects. That issue delayed the signing of the deal for a day, but both countries eventually agreed on Wednesday to a combination of grants and loans in the framework.

Critics have accused China of "debt diplomacy" – trapping nations with financial liabilities for major infrastructure projects they can ill-afford and which then could be leveraged for Beijing's political benefit.

Nepal's Multimillion-Dollar Pilgrimage Industry Crumbles Under China's Tibet Restrictions

07 December 2024, [Republic](#), Yuvraj Tyagi

Nepal's tourism faces a severe setback due to declining tourist arrivals, primarily caused by China's continued ban on Indian pilgrims entering Tibet.

Nepal's tourism industry faces a severe downturn as a significant decline in Indian tourist arrivals continues, attributed in part to China's ban on Indian pilgrims entering Tibet for the Kailash-Manasarovar pilgrimage. According to a report by Kathmandupost.com on December 2, 2024, Nepal Tourism Board officials highlighted that the ongoing restrictions have dealt a devastating blow to the nation's economy, particularly its tourism-dependent sectors.

For decades, Nepal served as a gateway for Indian pilgrims travelling to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar, sacred destinations in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bonism. Despite the reopening of Nepal-Tibet border points in May, Beijing has maintained strict restrictions on Indian nationals wishing to undertake this pilgrimage. Analysts believe these restrictions stem from lingering geopolitical tensions between India and China, leaving Nepal caught in the crossfire of strained bilateral relations.

Impact on Nepal's Economy

The disruption of the Kailash-Manasarovar pilgrimage has wreaked havoc on Nepal's tourism economy. The pilgrimage, typically held from April to October, once brought an influx of Indian tourists, generating significant revenue for multiple sectors, including tour operators, hotels, airlines, and helicopter services.

"The absence of Indian pilgrims has devastated the multimillion-dollar businesses of hotels, porters, and transport operators," said Basu Adhikari, Managing Director of Touch Kailash Travel and Treks, a report by Kathmandu Post stated.

The downturn has created a ripple effect, pushing businesses to the brink of collapse. Many stakeholders have urged urgent action to address the financial shortfall and support affected communities.

Broader Challenges in Nepal's Tourism Sector

China's restrictions are not the only hurdles facing Nepal's tourism industry. Rising fares have made travel to Nepal cost-prohibitive for many potential visitors. Additionally, a spate of high-profile bus and aeroplane accidents has raised safety concerns, further deterring international travellers.

These compounded challenges have significantly reduced visitor arrivals, exacerbating the financial strain on an industry already grappling with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders warn that without immediate intervention to enhance safety standards and reduce travel costs, Nepal risks losing its foothold as a favoured destination for global travellers.

Diversifying Nepal's Tourism Offerings

In response to the crisis, Nepal is working to diversify its tourism sector by promoting alternative attractions and experiences. However, stakeholders agree that the potential reopening of Tibet to Indian pilgrims remains pivotal to reviving the industry.

The Kailash-Manasarovar pilgrimage has long been a cornerstone of Nepal's tourism revenue. Its absence underscores the urgent need for long-term strategies to reduce dependency on pilgrimage tourism. Efforts are underway to promote Nepal's adventure tourism, heritage sites, and eco-tourism opportunities.

A Difficult Path to Recovery

The future of Nepal's tourism industry depends heavily on China's willingness to lift its ban on Indian pilgrims travelling to Tibet. Without this critical source of revenue, Nepal faces an uphill battle in stabilizing its tourism-dependent economy.

Beyond geopolitical factors, Nepal must address internal issues, including safety concerns and high travel costs, to regain the trust of international visitors. The current crisis highlights the fragile nature of Nepal's tourism sector and its vulnerability to external influences.

While stakeholders remain hopeful for a resurgence, Nepal's path to recovery will require concerted efforts from the government, private sector, and international partners. The lifting of restrictions on the Kailash-Manasarovar pilgrimage could serve as a turning point, revitalizing the industry and bringing much-needed economic relief to the nation.

Nepal PM Oli reaffirms 'One China' policy, bans anti-China activities

05 December 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Nepal PM K.P. Oli and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the State Hall in Beijing on Dec. 3, 2024 (Photo/Getty)

Nepal's Prime minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, on Tuesday, reiterated the country's strong commitment to the 'One China' policy, stating that no anti-China activities will be permitted on Nepali soil. Oli made these remarks during an official visit to China, where he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the State Hall in Beijing.

In the meeting, Oli emphasized Nepal's position that issues concerning Tibet and Taiwan are internal affairs of China and that both regions are integral to Chinese sovereignty. The leaders discussed a wide range of bilateral topics, including connectivity, industrial and infrastructural development, medical and agricultural cooperation, trade and tourism, investment, science and technology, disaster management, sports, and poverty alleviation. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, spokesperson for Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, disclosed that the discussions culminated in the signing of a nine-point agreement encompassing several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).

The agreements include projects like the Tokha-Chhare tunnel to connect Nepal with the Tibet border, reconstruction of the Basantpur Durbar damaged in the 2015 earthquake, export of buffalo meat, deployment of Chinese language teachers, cash assistance worth \$41 million, and initiatives in economic and technical cooperation, as well as media exchanges.

Oli, a pro-China leader and chair of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), has consistently praised Xi Jinping's policies, particularly in poverty alleviation and development. However, the deepening ties between Nepal and China have sparked concerns over the treatment of Tibetan refugees in Nepal, whose rights have been increasingly curtailed in recent years.

A 2023 report by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) and the Asian Dignity Initiative, titled *Languishing in Limbo: Tibetan Refugees in Nepal*, revealed a marked deterioration in the rights of Tibetan refugees. The [report](#) highlighted that Nepal's economic dependence on China, tied to its adherence to the 'One China' policy, has led to

restrictive measures such as halting the issuance of Refugee Cards (RCs), banning cultural and religious celebrations, and prohibiting public commemorations of the Dalai Lama's birthday.

This is not the first time Oli has affirmed Nepal's commitment to the 'One China' policy. He made similar statements in [October 2024](#) during a high-level meeting in Kathmandu with a Chinese delegation led by Chen Jining, a senior Communist Party official. Similar commitments were also expressed during Xi Jinping's 2019 visit to Nepal and Oli's 2018 official trip to China.

Oli, serving his fourth term as Prime Minister since succeeding Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) in July, has visited Beijing twice during previous terms. In a break from tradition, his first visit during his new term was to China instead of India, reportedly due to the absence of an invitation from New Delhi. The visit occurs against the backdrop of stalled Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects between Nepal and China, originally signed in 2017 with much enthusiasm but with little progress to date.

China-Pakistan

CPSC inaugurates 'China Corner' at ISSI library

27 December 2024, [Business Recorder](#)

China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised the inaugural ceremony of "China Corner" at the ISSI Library.

The event was graced by Ambassador Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to Prime Minister/Minister of State (Foreign Affairs), Pakistan Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi and Shi Yuanqiang, Deputy Head of Mission at Embassy of China in Pakistan.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted that ISSI has been serving as an important hub for research on China in Pakistan with multiple institutional collaborations with Chinese think tanks and universities. The ISSI is also a dialogue partner for the Pakistan-China Think Tank Forum with the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) as part of the Joint Working Group of CPEC on International Cooperation.

During his remarks, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi stated that Pakistan-China relationship has surpassed the traditional construct of inter-state relations and is now a comprehensive and unique partnership built on mutual trust, mutual support and mutual respect as its foundational principles.

Shi Yuanqiang, Deputy Head of Mission at Embassy of China, emphasised that ISSI has made outstanding efforts to promote mutual understanding and

information about China. Chinese Embassy has been cooperating with ISSI and also contributed books and CDs for the "China Corner".

He added that Pakistan and China are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and iron-clad friends and that the friendship between the two countries has stood the test of time and is as solid as rock and as stable as Mount Tai. The salience of bilateral relationship is shared by highest level of leadership of both countries, and China is ready to work with Pakistan to help build a China-Pakistan community of shared future.

In his address, the chief guest, Ambassador Syed Tariq Fatemi, elaborated that there is something very fascinating about Pakistan-China relations that has perplexed scholars of international relations abroad for years. The history of both countries shows that despite huge differences between the people and philosophies of the two countries the relationship continued to strengthen.

Pakistan was among the first to recognise China, it was also the first to advocate for Chinese membership in the UN. In the shape of CPEC, Pakistan has been fortunate enough to be the first symphony in the Chinese orchestra of BRI.

To recognise the cooperation between two countries is not only good for the two countries but for the entire region. He added that the Chinese leadership had reaffirmed to the prime minister in their latest meetings that CPEC will not only continue to go forward but would also be enlarged and expanded.

Earlier, in his opening remarks Dr Talat Shabbir, director CPSC, stated that the "China Corner" will provide comprehensive access to information and resources about China's governance model, economic policies, and diplomatic strategies. This repository will be a resource for fostering knowledge, dialogue, and collaboration.

Pakistan plans to acquire 40 planes of China's latest stealth fighter J-35: Report

23 December 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

Pakistan plans to procure 40 jets of advanced Chinese stealth fighter J-35, which, if materialised, will mark the first export of China's latest jet, according to a media report on Monday. The sale would mark Beijing's first export of fifth-generation jets to a foreign ally and is expected to recalibrate regional dynamics, particularly in relation to Pakistan's rival India, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. The Post quoted Pakistan media reports stating that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) had approved the purchase of 40 aircraft, expected to be delivered within two years, to replace its ageing fleet of American F-16s and French Mirage fighters.

The acquisition of new aircraft was pursued despite the serious economic crisis faced by Pakistan. There is no official confirmation in Beijing or mention of such a deal in the official media here, though speculation is rife since the J-35, primarily regarded as a jet fighter meant for Chinese aircraft carriers, was exhibited at the prestigious annual air show at Zhuhai city last month attended by top PAF officials. The land-based version of J-35 was called J-31, according to previous reports. China is currently the only country in the region to have developed stealth aircraft.

PAF chief Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu said in January that "the foundation for acquiring the J-31 stealth fighter aircraft has already been laid", according to the Post report.

All weather allies, China and Pakistan, shared a deep military relationship shrouded in secrecy. Beijing has been helping the modernisation of all three wings of the Pakistan military as it modernised its own armed forces with billions of dollars of defence expenditure. China has helped Pakistan to jointly develop and operate the J-17 Thunder fighter jet, the mainstay of the PAF.

China has delivered four advanced naval frigates to the Pakistan Navy in the last few years to enable it to play a bigger role along with its navy in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

The reports of Pakistan's plans to acquire China's latest fighter jets come in the backdrop of the visit of top PLA General Zhang Youxia to Pakistan last month, during which he held one-on-one talks with Pakistan's Army chief Gen Asim Munir.

Gen Zhang is Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall command of the Chinese military headed by President Xi Jinping. A readout issued by the ISPR after the talks said their engagements focused on "matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, measures for regional stability, and enhancing bilateral defence cooperation".

Gen Zhang's visit coincided with the arrival of 300 Chinese troops to Pakistan to take part in counterterrorism drills.

According to Pakistan media reports, China is pressing Pakistan to allow its security firms to protect about 20,000 Chinese personnel working on the projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), who are increasingly coming under attacks from militant groups in Pakistan.

For its part, Pakistan says it has deployed over 30,000 military and para-military personnel to protect the Chinese workers.

Pakistan has been reportedly resisting Beijing's pressure to deploy Chinese troops over sovereignty concerns, according to the reports.

Pakistan slams U.S. official's remarks on its missile capabilities

21 December 2024, [Xinhua](#)

Pakistan on Saturday slammed a senior U.S. official's statement on the country's missile capabilities and delivery means, calling it "unfortunate."

"The allegations are unfounded, devoid of rationality and sense of history. The recent spate of U.S. allegations towards a major non-NATO ally would be unhelpful for the overall relationship, especially in the absence of any evidence in this regard," said Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, spokesperson of Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Baloch said that Pakistan's strategic capabilities are meant to defend its sovereignty and preserve peace and stability in South Asia, and any irrational assumption of hostile intent from Pakistan by any other country, including the United States, is perplexing as well as illogical.

Pakistan has always sought to engage constructively with the United States on all issues, including the need to pursue a balanced approach to security and stability in the region, she said.

China, Pakistan wrap up counterterror drills amid concerns over attacks

20 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Hayley Wong

More than 300 PLA troops took part in the exercise, which was held as Beijing is pressing Islamabad to do more to protect Chinese nationals

China has wrapped up nearly three weeks of [joint counterterrorism drills](#) with Pakistan and signalled future "cross-border strategic projection" between the two militaries.

It comes as Beijing has stepped up pressure on Islamabad to do more to stop attacks targeting its nationals in the neighbouring South Asian country.

The [People's Liberation Army](#) sent troops to Pakistan for the exercise – dubbed Warrior-8 – which focused on "joint counterterrorism clearance operations", state broadcaster CCTV reported on Wednesday.

"Through this exercise, our strategic projection and inter-force combat capabilities were tested, laying the foundation for the upcoming cross-border strategic projection and joint combat missions," a PLA Air Force officer told CCTV.

The exercise, which finished on Saturday, also involved live-fire simulations, the use of drones for reconnaissance and counter-attack, as well as airborne assault, according to the report.

It included footage of troops disembarking from helicopters, and said missions had been coordinated between the two militaries as well as between their air and ground forces.

The PLA sent more than 300 troops to Pakistan from its Western Theatre Command in mid-November, weeks after a suicide bombing near Jinnah International Airport in the southern city of Karachi [killed two Chinese nationals](#).

The exercise was the two countries' eighth joint counterterrorism drill and their first since 2019. The Pakistan Army said the exercise was launched at a northwestern counterterrorism facility.

China has increased diplomatic pressure on Islamabad after a series of attacks in Pakistan targeting Chinese infrastructure and citizens in recent years.

After the Karachi attack, China's foreign ministry demanded efforts by Islamabad to "effectively close the security loopholes".

A ministry spokesperson said Islamabad should also introduce "more targeted measures to provide full protection for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan".

Thousands of Chinese nationals are working on infrastructure projects in Pakistan as part of the economic corridor – a flagship Belt and Road Initiative project – and Beijing has also reportedly pushed Islamabad to allow its own security staff to provide protection for Chinese nationals there.

Reuters reported last month that Beijing had sent a written proposal to Islamabad with a clause allowing security agencies and military forces into each others' territory to assist in counterterrorism missions and conduct joint strikes. Neither side has confirmed the proposal.

Islamabad has carried out military offensives against separatist insurgents in Pakistan, including one in late November that killed four terrorists in three separate incidents in Balochistan province – home to major projects under China's belt and road scheme.

Those efforts are aimed at deterring militant groups like the separatist Balochistan Liberation Army, which has accused Pakistan's military of colonising the province with the help of China.

No groups have claimed responsibility for some of the attacks targeting China, including a suicide bombing near a Chinese dam project in Pakistan's northwest in March. Five Chinese engineers and their Pakistani driver were killed in that attack while they were on the way from their camp to the construction site in Dasu in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

China Refuses Nuclear 'Second Strike' Capability for Pakistan

18 December 2024, [The Defense Post](#), Inder Singh Bisht

China turned down Pakistan's request for a nuclear second-strike capability earlier this year in return for a military base in the strategic port city of Gwadar.

The request was made during bilateral talks over the Chinese base interest, *Drop Site* revealed, citing sources.

According to the investigative outlet, Islamabad had already "privately" promised Beijing the facility in return for economic and military assistance.

The assistance has been framed as insulation against a potential US backlash in response to the decision.

It includes modernization of Pakistan's military and intelligence capabilities to keep pace with traditional rival India.

Pakistan has strong economic ties with both the West and China and has sought to strike a delicate balance between the two.

Over a period of time, however, China has been projected as a more "natural ally" of Islamabad, necessitating greater integration with Beijing.

China is already Pakistan's biggest monetary lender and defense supplier.

However, Islamabad's latest request for a "second" nuclear strike capability has not gone down well with Beijing, according to *Drop Site*.

The chief concern over such a move is becoming a party to nuclear proliferation and potentially violating international laws.

China is classified a nuclear weapon state (NWS) under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which bars it from transferring nuclear weapons, technology, and material to a non-NWS state.

Despite possessing a proven nuclear arsenal, Pakistan is a non-NWS country as it is not a signatory to the NPT. A violation of NPT could draw sanctions and economic and diplomatic consequences.

Nuclear 'Second-Strike' Capability

A nuclear "second-strike" capability is assured retaliation to a nuclear first strike. It is a perceived deterrence to an adversary's attempt to win a war with a decisive first nuclear strike.

"Second strike is designed to call a bluff and check a threat," *Drop Site* quoted military technology expert **Kelsey Atherton** as saying.

"If a country devotes significant resources to not just a nuclear arsenal, but a nuclear arsenal that can still be put into use even if some of it is destroyed, then the stakes of a first strike become too high to contemplate."

Pakistan's quest for the second-strike capability was reported soon after India's recent testing of a

submarine-launched nuclear-capable ballistic missile (SLBM).

The 3,500-kilometer- (2,175 miles) range K4 SLBM was tested from the newly commissioned INS Arighat, which is the country's second indigenous nuclear ballistic missile submarine.

An SLBM is considered the most reliable "second-strike" capability as it remains hidden from adversaries' sensors for longer, unlike the other branches of the nuclear triad: land-based nuclear missiles and air-launched assets.

The K4 is capable of striking all of Pakistan and most of China. A longer-range K5 with a range of 5,000 kilometers (3,107 miles) is also expected in the coming years.

Another mode of second strike could be a hardened underground silo, which could withstand even a nuclear strike.

Gwadar

China is investing billions in the South Asian country's infrastructure as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a key component of the larger Belt and Road Initiative.

The Gwadar deep-water port is at the end of a 3,000-kilometer (1,864 miles) land corridor connecting China's Xinjiang province to the Arabian Sea.

The corridor is designed to allow Chinese trade to bypass the vulnerable Malacca Strait, a narrow sea lane between Malaysia and Indonesia which could be blockaded by the US Navy during a conflict.

Not just an alternative to the Malacca choke point, a militarized Gwadar could allow China to impose its own blockades on Western energy shipments in the Middle East as a tit-for-tat move.

The city lies in the restive Balochistan province, which has been beset with protests and militant attacks for years.

A large part of the backlash is against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is perceived to be aiding the siphoning off of the province's natural resources.

Many Chinese nationals working on the project have been killed and injured in militant attacks, straining relations between the two strategic allies.

CHINA: Pakistan, China's diplomatic relations deteriorates

17 December 2024, [Daily Trust](#)

Pakistan and China, long hailed as "all-weather allies," are experiencing significant strain in their diplomatic relations.

Beijing's growing frustration with Islamabad's inability to ensure the safety of Chinese nationals and projects within Pakistan has come to the fore.

This tension, marked by an unusually public diplomatic spat, reflects deeper issues in the partnership between these two nations, which have historically prided themselves on their strategic and economic alignment.

"As if Pakistan's government wasn't under pressure enough – with thousands of protesters on the streets and the capital Islamabad in lockdown amid calls to release former prime minister Imran Khan – relations with neighbouring China are also going from bad to worse," according to The Interpreter, an Australia-based think tank.

Recently, a rare diplomatic dispute has highlighted Beijing's increasing frustration over the safety of its citizens in Pakistan.

"It is unacceptable for us to be attacked twice in only six months," stated China's ambassador in Islamabad, Jiang Zaidong, in a notably candid reaction to remarks by a senior Pakistani politician perceived as downplaying the threat.

"President Xi [Jinping] cares about Chinese people's security and puts people's lives first," Jiang added. "He especially cares about the security of the Chinese people in Pakistan."

China and Pakistan share a relationship rooted in mutual interests, strategic necessity, and economic collaboration.

Since the 1960s, the two countries have fostered ties in various domains, including military cooperation, infrastructure development, and countering regional rivals, primarily India.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a cornerstone of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), epitomizes the partnership.

Launched in 2015, CPEC has seen investments exceeding \$62 billion, promising infrastructure development, energy projects, and trade connectivity. In return, China has reaped access to strategic ports like Gwadar and an economic corridor to the Arabian Sea.

However, the partnership has increasingly been tested, especially as security threats in Pakistan have escalated, directly impacting Chinese interests.

Beijing's anger stems primarily from repeated attacks targeting Chinese nationals and projects in Pakistan, particularly in the volatile Balochistan province.

Over the past few years, separatist groups like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) have claimed responsibility for attacks on Chinese engineers, workers, and infrastructure.

These groups view China's investments in the region as exploitative, accusing it of neglecting local communities while profiting from the province's resources.

China's patience appears to be wearing thin. The lack of tangible progress in curbing attacks on its citizens

and infrastructure projects has led to unusually pointed remarks from Beijing.

In recent months, the Chinese government has explicitly voiced concerns over Pakistan's inability to provide adequate protection.

In a rare public rebuke, Chinese diplomats criticized Pakistan's handling of security arrangements.

This comes amidst reports that Beijing has considered withholding further CPEC investments until tangible improvements are made.

Such a stance is unprecedented, considering China's historically cautious approach to publicly addressing issues with its allies.

The safety of its citizens has become a top priority for Beijing. Reports suggest that China has pushed for greater involvement in Pakistan's internal security measures, including deploying Chinese private security firms to protect its assets and nationals.

While Pakistan has allowed some degree of external security presence, such measures are often met with domestic resistance, complicating the situation further.

Beyond security, economic tensions have also emerged.

Pakistan's ongoing financial crisis has raised concerns about its ability to repay Chinese loans under CPEC.

Beijing, facing its own economic challenges post-COVID-19, appears reluctant to provide unconditional bailouts.

This has led to a more transactional dynamic in their relationship, replacing the earlier camaraderie with pragmatism.

Balochistan remains a flashpoint in the Pakistan-China relationship.

While the region is critical to CPEC, its socio-political challenges—ranging from separatist insurgency to local discontent—pose significant hurdles.

Pakistan's inability to address these issues undermines its credibility as a partner, frustrating Beijing.

China's growing interest in balancing its regional partnerships has also contributed to the evolving dynamic.

While Pakistan remains important, Beijing has been exploring closer ties with India, particularly in trade and technology.

This shift, however subtle, may signal a recalibration of China's South Asia strategy, further complicating its ties with Pakistan.

On the other hand, faced with mounting pressure, Pakistan has taken steps to reassure Beijing.

The Pakistani government has promised enhanced security measures, including establishing special security forces dedicated to protecting CPEC projects. However, systemic challenges such as political instability, economic constraints, and persistent insurgency limit Islamabad's ability to deliver.

The Pakistani military, a key stakeholder in CPEC, has intensified efforts to secure Chinese investments. Joint military drills and counterterrorism operations have been conducted to address security threats.

Despite these measures, attacks continue, underscoring the complexity of the issue.

The growing rift between Pakistan and China raises questions about the future of their partnership.

While mutual interests remain strong, the relationship will likely see a shift from one based on unconditional support to a more conditional, performance-driven alliance.

The deterioration in Pakistan-China relations underscores the challenges of maintaining a strategic partnership amid growing security concerns.

For Pakistan, the stakes are high; losing China's support would significantly impact its economic and geopolitical standing, while for China, the situation serves as a cautionary tale about the risks of large-scale investments in volatile regions.

While the partnership is unlikely to collapse entirely, it is poised to undergo significant recalibration, according to experts.

CPEC Phase 2.0: Pakistan-China partnership enters new era with high-level engagements in Beijing

15 December 2024, [The Express Tribune](#)

Contrary to slowdown rumors, recent developments signal renewed vigor strategic focus on advancing next phase of CPEC



NDRC spokesperson says the CPEC has made significant progress, as expressways, vocational schools and power plants funded by China have been put into operation in Pakistan. PHOTO: REUTERS/FILE

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, remains the cornerstone of economic cooperation between China and Pakistan.

Contrary to rumors suggesting a slowdown, recent developments signal a renewed vigor and strategic focus on advancing the next phase of CPEC, dubbed CPEC Phase 2.0. This pivotal phase aims to redefine the framework of bilateral relations through deeper collaboration, advanced technological transfer, and transformative socio-economic projects.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, is spearheading Pakistan's engagement in a series of high-profile events in China, including the High-Level Seminar on CPEC 2.0 in Beijing and the 3rd Forum on China-Indian Ocean Region Development Cooperation in Kunming. His participation underscores Pakistan's seriousness in revitalizing CPEC, addressing unresolved issues, and charting a robust roadmap for Phase 2.0, which envisions long-term prosperity for both nations.

CPEC Phase 2.0: Strengthening Pakistan-China Ties

At the heart of these engagements lies China's unwavering commitment to transforming CPEC into a strategic partnership that fosters growth, development, and connectivity.

Far from being sidelined, CPEC is evolving into a multi-dimensional framework with five key thematic corridors—Growth Corridor, Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor, Innovation Corridor, Green Corridor, and Opening-Up/Regional Connectivity Corridor.

These initiatives, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, align seamlessly with Pakistan's 5Es framework of Economy, Exports, Environment, Energy, and Equity, conceptualized under Ahsan Iqbal's visionary leadership.

China's eagerness to propel CPEC into Phase 2.0 is evident from its invitation to a 27-member high-level Pakistani delegation to Beijing. This delegation comprises seasoned professionals and experts from diverse fields who will receive specialized training to build their capacity for collaborative projects with Chinese counterparts.

This initiative reflects China's commitment to transferring cutting-edge technologies, modernizing Pakistan's infrastructure, and fostering a knowledge-based economy.

Strategic Focus on Mutual Benefits

During the preparatory orientation session in Islamabad, chaired by Ahsan Iqbal, the Minister stressed the importance of the delegation's mission, describing it as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to learn from China's transformative journey.

He highlighted how China has lifted over 800 million people out of poverty, achieving unparalleled economic progress. This remarkable transformation serves as an inspiring blueprint for Pakistan, which aims to replicate China's success through sustainable development and poverty alleviation initiatives under CPEC Phase 2.0.

The delegation's agenda includes key focus areas such as:

- Establishing an economic growth corridor with clear priorities.
- Advancing tech-driven industries and fostering innovation.
- Addressing poverty alleviation, education, and healthcare through targeted socio-economic projects.

- Accelerating energy transitions and promoting sustainable economic models.
- Expanding exports and building global supply chain linkages.

This multifaceted approach aims to position Pakistan as a regional manufacturing and trade hub, serving as an economic engine for South Asia.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal's Role in Rebuilding Trust

Ahsan Iqbal's visit to China and participation in these critical engagements are expected to rebuild mutual trust and reassure Chinese leadership of Pakistan's commitment to CPEC.

The Minister has a proven track record in successfully implementing Phase 1 projects, particularly in infrastructure, energy, and Gwadar development. He has also been instrumental in advocating for the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), paving the way for industrial relocation from China to Pakistan.

Chinese authorities have often acknowledged and praised Ahsan Iqbal's significant role in steering CPEC projects. His presence in Beijing will send a strong message about Pakistan's resolve to resolve outstanding issues from Phase 1, particularly regarding project security and operational challenges. A key highlight will be his assurance to Chinese counterparts about prioritizing the security of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan, a critical concern for the Chinese government.

Charting the Path for Future Success

The seminar in Beijing, co-organized by Pakistan's Ministry of Planning and China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), will mark the official launch of CPEC Phase 2.0. This high-level event symbolizes the deep-rooted partnership between the two countries and their shared vision for a prosperous future.

With the emphasis on capacity building, this exercise aims to equip Pakistani experts with the skills and strategic vision needed to collaborate effectively with their Chinese counterparts.

The delegation's findings and recommendations will form the cornerstone of a comprehensive blueprint for CPEC Phase 2.0, ensuring its alignment with global sustainable development goals.

A Bright Future Ahead

CPEC Phase 2.0 represents a paradigm shift in Pakistan-China relations. With a focus on innovation, technology transfer, and sustainable development, this new phase promises to unlock Pakistan's economic potential and position it as a regional leader. The visit of Ahsan Iqbal and the active participation of Pakistani experts in these high-level engagements reflect Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the success of CPEC. Despite efforts to jeopardise this golden partnership, the China-Pakistan brotherhood is only becoming stronger.

As the two nations strengthen their partnership through initiatives like these, the world will witness CPEC Phase 2.0 emerge as a model of international cooperation and economic integration, benefiting not only China and Pakistan but the entire region.

China keen to invest \$1 billion in Pakistan to establish medical city

14 December 2024, Times of India

A Chinese business delegation has met with President Asif Ali Zardari here and expressed interest in investing \$ 1 billion to establish a medical city in Pakistan, according to a media report. Pakistan has held strong bilateral relations with China which has supported it through many investments and development projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project which was termed as a "lifeline" for the country's economy. The delegation of Chinese investors during a meeting with Zardari on Thursday outlined their plans to invest \$ 1 billion into creating the medical city in Karachi's Dhabeji Economic Zone which is outside Pakistan's biggest city and financial hub. The medical city would be Pakistan's first fully integrated pharmaceutical and medical ecosystem. Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) which is tasked with the running of the Dhabeji Economic Zone said in a statement that the pledge by the Chinese investors is an example of the growing economic ties between the two countries.

The meeting which was also attended by Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah and the Chinese Consul General was held after successful negotiations between the Sindh government and the conglomerate of Chinese investors. President Zardari, according to the statement, highlighted the importance of fostering deeper economic and trade cooperation between Pakistan and China.

The statement said that the Chinese delegation also showed interest not only in the health sector but also in several other key areas, including agriculture, livestock, energy, transport, and manufacturing. The President also told the government is committed to facilitate and provide cooperation to Chinese investments in Pakistan. "We welcome Chinese investors and are determined to provide them with every possible support," he added.

The Sindh Chief Minister also told the investors that the government had introduced Chinese language courses in the province to remove language barriers and enhance cultural ties between the two countries.

Pakistan Requested Nuclear Weapons Assistance From China in Talks Over Strategic Port

13 December 2024, [Drop Site](#), Murtaza Hussain and Ryan Grim

In bilateral talks this year, Pakistan asked China for a nuclear second-strike capability in exchange for the Gwadar Port—a demand that was rebuffed by China. Negotiations between the Pakistani military and China over the future use of a strategic port in the city of Gwadar have stalled over major demands made by Islamabad for support from Beijing, including the provision of a second-strike nuclear capability that would significantly upgrade Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

The breakdown of talks with China comes amid a broader crisis facing the military, with public discontent over a failing economy, rigged elections, and the imprisonment of former prime minister Imran Khan triggering mass public protests in the capital this November. China has been long cited as a potential savior for the country's flailing economy. But, as Drop Site News has learned, that relationship appears to be in free fall over public and private disputes over security concerns, as well as China's demand to build a military base inside Pakistan.

Earlier this year, Drop Site [reported](#) on negotiations over the creation of a Chinese military base at the strategic Pakistani port city of Gwadar. According to classified Pakistani military documents, Pakistan had given private assurances to China that it would be permitted to transform Gwadar into a permanent base for the Chinese military.

As part of those ongoing talks, as Drop Site has learned from sources informed about the conversations, Pakistan's military-backed government has asked China to provide it sweeping concessions, including economic and military aid to insulate it from Western backlash over the strategically located port. But the request for a nuclear second-strike capability to be provided to Islamabad by Beijing goes well beyond previously known demands.

A second-strike capability is a highly prized form of military deterrent, as it allows a country to retaliate even if it suffers an attack that cripples other components of its nuclear triad. Possession of a second-strike capability is intended to deter hostile powers from attempting to win a war with a decisive nuclear first strike of their own, by guaranteeing that they would also face some form of nuclear retaliation regardless, whether from attacks carried out by nuclear-armed submarines or missiles stored in hardened silos.

"Second strike is designed to call a bluff and check a threat," said Kelsey Atherton, a military technology expert who has published on nuclear weapons, speaking generally. "If a country devotes significant

resources to not just a nuclear arsenal, but a nuclear arsenal that can still be put into use even if some of it is destroyed, then the stakes of a first strike become too high to contemplate."

In the already select group of nuclear-armed countries worldwide, China is part of a small subset that maintains this capacity. According to sources with knowledge of the talks between Beijing and Islamabad, the demand for a second-strike capacity in exchange for Gwadar was deemed unreasonable by the Chinese side, leading to a stalling of negotiations. The failure to reach an agreement on the subject seems to have further soured the turbulent relations between the two allies and pushed back any agreement on militarization of Gwadar, despite Pakistan's repeated promises that it would be made available for Chinese use.

The ongoing talks between the two countries have taken place in a format known as the Consultation on Strategic Defense and Security Cooperation, or the 2+2 Dialogue. Previous rounds of 2+2 talks had been held in Beijing and the city of Urumqi, in China's Xinjiang region. The last round was held in Islamabad this January.

The Pakistani consulate in New York and the Chinese embassy in Islamabad did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

The Pakistani military has now found itself stuck with an increasingly difficult balancing act, as it attempts to maintain good ties with both the U.S. and China, even as the relationship between Beijing and Washington grows more and more hostile. With Donald Trump set to take office in the U.S. in January 2025, his expected hawkish stance on China and potential skepticism toward the Biden-era alliance with the Pakistani military junta could further complicate Pakistan's position and risk crucial support from both countries.

"The food is already on the plate"

The status of Gwadar, prized by China for strategic reasons, has long been a particular area of concern for the U.S., which is in the midst of a broad campaign to contain China in the Indo-Pacific region. The view held in Chinese security circles is that militarization of Gwadar is inevitable. Or, as a People's Liberation Army officer quoted in a 2020 study published by the U.S. Naval War College said, "The food is already on the plate; we'll eat it whenever we want to."

Beijing has pushed Pakistan hard to allow it access to Gwadar, currently the site of joint economic cooperation between the two countries, for military purposes—including, according to Drop Site's sources, the ability to permanently station troops, military equipment, and resources for maintenance and logistics at the port.

Access to Gwadar would allow China to break free from U.S. naval blockades on its vital energy shipments in the Strait of Malacca, while potentially allowing the

People's Liberation Navy to conduct its own blockades on Western energy shipments in the Middle East should a war break out.

In return for Gwadar, Pakistani officials taking part in the talks have asked Beijing to provide sweeping indemnification against any political, economic, and diplomatic blowback that Islamabad may suffer from the U.S. over granting the port to China, as well as support with modernizing its military and intelligence capacities to keep pace with rival India.

Yet it is the demand for second-strike capacity that reportedly antagonized China the most. Granting the demand would represent a major upgrade to Pakistan's own nuclear capability, but would also require China to become party to nuclear proliferation in the subcontinent and potentially violate international law.

As a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, China is classified as a nuclear-weapon state (NWS). The treaty explicitly prohibits NWS parties from transferring nuclear weapons, technology, or materials to any non-nuclear weapon state for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons. Pakistan, which is not a party to the NPT, is considered a non-nuclear-weapon state under the treaty framework.

A second-strike capability would be a huge and expensive augmentation to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, entailing significant costs and technical complexity. Since the early 1990s, Pakistan has invested heavily in expanding and modernizing the nature of its nuclear arsenal, maintaining the fastest growing nuclear weapons stockpile in the world.

A 2016 report by the Carnegie Endowment for Peace noted that Pakistan's "ongoing arms buildup, continuing fissile material production, and investment in sea-based second-strike capabilities suggest a shift toward a complex deterrence posture rooted in the notion of maintaining a strategic balance," while citing retired senior Pakistani officers who stated, "a second strike capability is being developed by equipping the conventional submarines with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles."

Providing nuclear weapons technology to another country would not only risk damaging China's global reputation, but also trigger likely diplomatic and economic consequences, including possible nonproliferation sanctions.

Despite longstanding security and political ties, relations between Pakistan and China have come under severe strain in recent years. In another decision that reportedly infuriated Beijing, during a joint naval exercise last year known as Sea Guardians III, Pakistan did not allow Chinese ships to make a port call at Gwadar, in apparent deference to American sensitivity about China's presence at the site.

Protests and Insurgents

The 2+2 negotiations have taken place against the backdrop of a deteriorating political, economic, and social situation in Pakistan. Mass protests in Islamabad in November by supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan—who was deposed by Pakistan's military in 2022—paralyzed the capital for days, before a violent crackdown by the military killed an unknown number of protestors and dispersed the demonstrations. Militant and separatist violence in multiple provinces have also killed dozens of Pakistani security forces in recent months, while the country's leadership struggles to find solutions for widespread inflation and energy shortages.

The continued deterioration of Pakistan's relationship with China in this climate could cost it dearly. Pakistan today owes China billions of dollars in loans, Chinese energy companies power much of Pakistan, and, in the past few decades, Pakistan's major weapon purchases, including fighter jets and naval ships, have originated from China. So far these investments have not paid dividends for Pakistani citizens, who have continued to struggle with inflation and shortages despite China's increasingly visible footprint in the country. And terrorist factions in certain regions of the country have lashed out against China's presence, killing several Chinese engineers and citizens in repeated attacks. In recent months, China has also aired rare public criticism of Pakistan over its failure to protect Chinese nationals in the country from terrorist attacks carried out by separatist insurgents in the province of Balochistan.

"China prioritizes the safety of its citizens globally," Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said in a heated public exchange recently. "We cannot proceed with our projects if security concerns remain unresolved."

Balochistan is an important part of a major Chinese infrastructure project known as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as well as the Gwadar port that China has sought to augment its own military capacity in the Indian Ocean. While CPEC was launched with grand promises of economic revival, it has so far proven to be a disappointment to both Islamabad and Beijing, partly due to ongoing militant violence and political instability inside Pakistan.

Militants in Balochistan have accused China of helping facilitate the exploitation of their province, by carrying out development projects aimed at sapping its resources for the benefit of the government in Islamabad. They are also motivated by longstanding grievances with the Pakistani state, whom they accuse of neglecting their economic and political rights. The Baloch are an ethnic group spanning multiple countries in the region, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, and insurgents have sought to secede and form a new state from these contingent parts. The insurgency in Pakistan is also believed to be

supported by India, whom Pakistan also accuses of helping orchestrate terrorist attacks inside the country aimed at undermining foreign investment.

This week, Pakistani media reported that the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning Development was informed that Pakistan and China were entering into a joint security agreement to combat the terror attacks. Drop Site reported the existence of this proposed arrangement this September, in an article that was attacked by representatives of the Pakistani government at the time as fake news intended to harm the country's institutions.

The Pakistani military now finds it in a position where it is alienating its closest ally in Beijing, while also failing to reap meaningful benefits from the U.S., where the Biden administration has shown limited appetite for reengagement. A growing upsurge of criticism from lawmakers over the military's crackdown on democracy and imprisonment of Khan is now threatening to turn the country into a pariah in Washington, with little prospect that the incoming Trump administration will act to intervene in Pakistan's favor.

As the Pakistani government reels from these overlapping economic and political crises under military rule, it now faces the prospect of isolation from the majority of its own public, the U.S. government, and its closest foreign allies in Beijing. Far from helping guarantee its economic and security interests as had once been hoped, the stalled negotiations over Gwadar now threaten to add one more insolvable item to the military's growing list of dilemmas.

CM Maryam hails Pak-China ties as time-tested

10 December 2024, [Dunya News](#)

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday said the friendship between China and Pakistan stood the test of time.

On the second day of her visit, she met with the Minister of International Department of Communist Party of China (CPC) Liu Jianchao. She thanked the minister for a warm welcome and praised the long-term vision of CPC.

She said due to the sincere efforts of the Chinese leadership, China has emerged as a leading economy at the international horizon.

The chief minister also highlighted the deepening connection between the people of both countries. She said their friendship demonstrated the ever-growing bond of masses in both sides of the aisle.

She expressed her appreciation for the huge success of China's rural sector and said Punjab would like to emulate that model. The CM her government would

praise any cooperation of China to empower Punjab in models like local governance and rural development. She, meanwhile, expressed her desire to focus on youth development to reap dividends.

Pakistan becomes third-largest buyer of Chinese solar panels

09 December 2024, [The Express Tribune](#)

Pakistan imported 13 gigawatts of solar panels during the first half of the current fiscal year.

Pakistan's energy landscape is undergoing a dramatic transformation as the country becomes the third-largest importer of Chinese solar panels, fueled by soaring electricity prices and a growing shift toward renewable energy, according to a World Economic Forum report.

In a remarkable development, Pakistan's push toward solar adoption is rapidly accelerating, driven largely by market dynamics and external pressures, with minimal political backing.

As a result, Pakistan now ranks as the world's sixth-largest solar market, and is the third-largest buyer of Chinese-made solar panels, with imports surging to 13 gigawatts (GW) in the first half of 2024. The total expected imports for the year could reach 22GW, marking a significant leap forward in the country's transition to solar power.

The country's growing reliance on solar energy has been largely influenced by the dramatic rise in electricity tariffs, which have increased by 155% over the past three years. With grid electricity costs spiraling, many consumers, industries, and businesses have turned to solar power as a more cost-effective and reliable solution. This shift is reshaping the energy landscape and offering a glimpse into the future of energy use in emerging markets.

The surge in solar adoption has been significantly aided by China's overproduction of solar panels, which has driven down costs, making solar power more accessible to countries like Pakistan. Solar power now serves as an attractive alternative to the country's strained national grid, which has long struggled with reliability issues and inefficiencies.

In response to the growing demand for solar power, Pakistan has seen industrial, agricultural, and residential sectors embrace solar energy in a big way. The first half of 2024 alone saw the import of 13GW of solar panels from China, with estimates suggesting total imports could reach 22GW by year-end. This marks a major milestone in Pakistan's energy transition, positioning the country as one of the fastest-growing solar markets globally.

The shift to solar energy has been largely market-driven, with little direct political intervention. While the Pakistani government has shown limited support

for the transition, factors such as the rising cost of grid electricity and the overproduction of solar panels in China have played a key role in accelerating the shift toward solarization.

One of the driving forces behind the solar boom is the country's mounting electricity costs. With grid electricity prices having risen by more than 150% in just three years, many businesses and consumers have sought to reduce their reliance on the national grid by installing solar power systems. In addition to the financial incentives, the declining cost of solar panels, primarily driven by China's production surplus, has made solar power more affordable and accessible.

The rapid rise in solar adoption, however, comes with challenges. As more consumers and businesses disconnect from the national grid, the demand for grid electricity declines, pushing up the fixed costs that those who remain connected must bear. These rising capacity payments are straining Pakistan's already fragile financial system, contributing to further instability in the energy sector.

Pakistan's power grid, which has long been plagued by inefficiencies and underinvestment, is struggling to cope with the growing integration of solar power. The country's national grid, unable to provide consistent and reliable electricity, is facing the risk of further deterioration as more and more consumers abandon it in favor of self-generation via solar panels.

The need for grid modernization has become more urgent as solar power adoption accelerates. The integration of distributed renewable energy sources like solar is creating new challenges for Pakistan's electricity infrastructure, and experts warn that without significant upgrades, the national grid could face a downward debt spiral, exacerbated by the rising costs of capacity payments.

In addition to these challenges, the country's inconsistent energy policy, which has been marred by inefficiencies in electricity production, pricing, and regulation, is further deepening the energy crisis. Recent electricity price hikes, which some see as an alternative tax on consumers, have led to a sharp decline in grid electricity consumption, prompting more industries and businesses to turn to solar energy. Despite these difficulties, Pakistan's energy transition offers significant lessons for other emerging economies. The country's experience demonstrates the importance of reducing reliance on traditional energy sources while balancing the need for grid stability and economic sustainability. With China playing a central role in Pakistan's solar energy shift, both as a key supplier of solar panels and an investor in the country's energy projects, the global nature of this transition is clear.

The momentum toward solar energy adoption in Pakistan has been further accelerated by falling battery costs, which are enabling more consumers to

adopt solar-plus-storage solutions. This trend is expected to continue, with solar power expected to play an increasingly vital role in the country's energy mix.

However, experts warn that the rapid transition to solar energy, if not managed effectively, could have unintended consequences for the national grid. The growing reliance on distributed solar power systems is raising questions about the long-term viability of traditional state-run grids, which have been unable to meet the country's rising demand for energy.

Pakistan's experience highlights the urgent need for grid modernization, investment in smart energy infrastructure, and comprehensive market reforms to ensure the smooth integration of renewable energy sources. Additionally, as the global demand for clean energy continues to rise, emerging economies like Pakistan will need to rethink their energy strategies to avoid falling behind in the global race to decarbonize.

China, Pakistan flexing military muscle at anti-BRI militants

04 December 2024, [Asia Times](#), Richard S Ehrlich

Joint Warrior VIII exercise practices protecting Belt and Road Initiative projects from anti-Chinese insurgent attacks in Baluchistan

China's joint, three-week anti-terrorism exercise in Pakistan from November 20-December 11 aims to help defend Beijing's \$70 billion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects against deadly anti-Chinese insurgents in Baluchistan province.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which includes upgrading Pakistan's north-south roads and Karakoram Highway to link Kashgar in China's landlocked Xinjiang province directly to Pakistan's hammerhead-shaped peninsula and port of Gwadar in Baluchistan on the Arabian Sea, close to the Persian Gulf, is under threat.

The CPEC is also expanding Gwadar's deep-water port so large Chinese vessels will have a much shorter route for shipping petroleum from the Persian Gulf to oil-hungry China. Currently, oil-laden ships bound for China depart the Middle East through the Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea and then route south around India toward Singapore.

To reach China's east coast ports, those ships must pass through the congested Malacca Strait, where US-backed Singapore monitors its narrow waters. Before docking in China, they then must sail up the South China Sea, which is wracked by US-China and regional rivalry to control its shipping lanes, islands and undersea resources.

The CPEC, however, would enable oil vessels from the Persian Gulf to stay in the Arabian Sea and unload their cargo at Gwadar for overland vehicle transport

north to China's Xinjiang.

"The deepening relationship between China and Pakistan through CPEC could strain US-Pakistani relations, driving Islamabad closer to Beijing," Washington-based Newlines Institute reported on November 14.

In addition to a sleek 1,860-mile (3,000-kilometer) highway and upgraded port, the CPEC projects at Gwadar include construction of a new Gwadar International Airport, a desalination plant, a coal-fired power plant, container berths and terminals for bulk cargo, grain, oil and liquified natural gas. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) sent more than 300 special operations, army aviation and logistic support troops from its Western Theater Command to the Pakistan-China Joint Exercise, Warrior VIII, which ends on December 11, China Military online reported. China's Western Command "guards the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India and the China-Pakistan boundary," the Press Trust of India news agency reported on November 19.

China- Taiwan

China's propaganda office taps Taiwanese god of cities as ally

25 December 2024, [RFA](#). Huang Chun-mei

Cheng Huang, god of cities, is the latest deity to be co-opted in the cause of 'unification.'

The Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department is counting on a new ally in the fight to persuade Taiwan's 23 million people to give up their democratic way of life to be ruled by Beijing -- Cheng Huang, the god of cities.

Officials in the southeastern province of Fujian, just across the Taiwan Strait from self-ruled Taiwan, invited hundreds of Taoists, temple representatives, scholars and experts to a lavish cultural exchange event last month, according to the provincial government's official website.

The event included seminars on Cheng Huang temples across Fujian as well as beliefs around the god in Taiwan, particularly in smaller towns on the island, the Nov. 14 report said.

Cheng Huang isn't the first supernatural being to be enlisted by the Chinese Communist Party in pursuit of its political goals, in this case, to control Taiwan, whether by soft power and propaganda or by military force if necessary.

China has already tried to co-opt the sea goddess Matsu, widely revered in Taiwan, as part of a United Front operation targeting millions of voters.

And it has also encouraged the worship of the controversial Tibetan dharma protector Shugden, a move at loggerheads with the Tibetan Buddhist Gelugpa sect of the exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The United Front is a shadowy government agency in charge of seeking Chinese influence outside the country through individuals and often innocuous-sounding organizations.

The Chinese Communist Party embraces atheism and exercises tight controls over any form of religious practice among its citizens, requiring them to join government-backed governing bodies and to display the Chinese flag, along with other demonstrations of loyalty to Beijing.

But apparently it isn't opposed to using religion to further its political objectives.

Religious cross-straits links

Cheng Huang emerged in Chinese folk belief as a spirit protector of city walls and moats, and later diversified into a more complex deity with his own following and underworld bureaucracy mirroring structures found in the land of the living.

"Cheng Huang culture is one of the important links connecting compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait," the report quoted Cheng Ming-hui of Taiwan's Wuji Sanching Temple as saying.

"I hope we can to hold more such activities in the future to further enhance the understanding and friendship between believers on both sides of the Taiwan Strait," Cheng said.

Taiwan has never been ruled by Beijing and is formally governed by the Republic of China government, formed after the 1911 fall of the Qing Dynasty under Sun Yat-sen, that later fled to Taipei after losing the civil war in 1949 to Mao Zedong's communists on the mainland.

While China insists on eventual "unification" with Taiwan, by armed invasion if necessary, the majority of Taiwan's 23 million people have no wish to give up their democratic way of life to submit to Chinese rule. Ho Cheng-Hui, who heads Taiwanese civil defense organization the Kuma Academy, said China likes to cash in politically on religious devotion of any kind, citing its involvement in the cult of Matsu as an example.

"They are catering to the customs of the Taiwanese people, but with other motives behind it," Ho said. "They call it religious exchange, but actually it's a United Front operation -- scholars have defined it as the warfare of influence in recent years."

"Some Taiwanese take part in these so-called exchanges because of their religious feeling, or sense of the historical origins [of their beliefs]," he said. "But that's not what's happening here."

He called on religious believers in Taiwan to become more aware of China's motives, "so as not to be used" by Beijing.

'Living chess pieces'

Wu Se-Chih, a researcher at Taiwan's Cross-Straits Policy Association, agreed.

"There is also a certain degree of United Front motivation," he said. "China will always try to leverage any United Front gains from the people of Taiwan."

Wu said the "deep connection between folk beliefs and local politics" in Taiwan also offers a channel for funds to flow into -- and influence -- the island's messily democratic political life.

The Chinese government has acquired a number of local temples in Taiwan in recent years, which he described as "living chess pieces" in Beijing's hands, to boost its influence in Taiwanese politics at a local level. "These interest groups haven't been subjected to enough supervision," Wu said. "That's the main reason the Chinese Communist Party targets local temples."

And there are also personal risks involved for any religious believers traveling to China, according to Wu, who cited the recent detention of three elderly Taiwanese members of the I-Kuan Tao religion in Zhongshan city.

"Sometimes the red lines aren't very clear ... so people need to think twice and be vigilant, which is the best way to protect themselves," Wu said.

Chinese hackers attack Taiwan's legislature nearly a million times each month

24 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Apart from intimidating large-scale military drills and a propaganda onslaught, China has been attacking Taiwan with a relentless wave of cyber-attacks as well, averaging nearly a million hacking attempts each month on the latter's legislative Yuan alone.

Chinese hackers on average attack the Legislative Yuan (LY) 900,000 times a month, reported *taipeitimes.com* Dec 23, citing the legislature's information technology (IT) department.

The report said the Department's head Cheng Hui-pin made the remarks after Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Chung Chia-pin asked questions about the security and quality of the legislature's wifi service during the Judiciary and Organic Laws and Statutes Committee's review of the legislature's budget on Dec 12.

Chung has said the Legislative Yuan's network is connected to devices with sensitive information that could harm national security if the system is compromised, adding that the legislature's wifi is slow and experiences frequent outages.

He has said the department routinely reviews the legislature's cyberdefenses as required under the Cyber Security Management Act.

Following negotiations between the DPP and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) members of the committee, the lawmakers have issued a resolution, demanding the IT department solve the issues without freezing its budget.

The IT department is directed to test all devices connected to the legislature's network for security and check audio equipment, lawmakers have said, adding that soundproofing should be installed in the chambers.

Taiwan reports 8 Chinese aircraft, six naval vessels around its territory

24 December 2024, ANI

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) on Tuesday reported the operation of eight Chinese military aircraft and five naval vessels. The aircraft and vessels were detected operating around Taiwan until 6 am (local time) on Tuesday.

Of the eight People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, six of them crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern and southwestern Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).

Sharing a post on X, MND wrote, "8 PLA aircraft and 5 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today." The post added, "6 of the aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern and southwestern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

Meanwhile, following the White House announcement of arms sales and assistance to Taiwan, China's foreign ministry said that the "Taiwan issue" is the core of China's interests and the "first red line that cannot be crossed in China-US relations," Taiwan News reported.

Further, the ministry also accused the US of "playing with fire."

A spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry on Sunday condemned the latest US arms package to Taiwan, stating that it "seriously violates the one-China principle and the three Sino-US joint communiques, especially the 'August 17' communique, seriously infringes on China's sovereignty and security interests, and seriously violates the US leaders' commitment not to support "Taiwan independence."

The spokesperson claimed that Washington's actions sent a "seriously wrong signal to the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces."

Recently, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte also criticised China's stance towards Taiwan and said that "China is bullying Taiwan, and pursuing access to

critical infrastructure in ways that could cripple societies."

He said, "We need to be clear-eyed about China's ambitions. China is substantially building up its forces, including its nuclear weapons - with no transparency and no limitations. From 200 warheads in 2020, China is expected to have more than 1,000 nuclear weapons by 2030. Its space-launch investments are skyrocketing. China is bullying Taiwan, and pursuing access to our critical infrastructure in ways that could cripple our societies." (ANI)

Former Taiwan leader emphasises shared historical roots of island and mainland Chinese

25 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Lawrence Chung

On his fifth student exchange programme, Ma Ying-jeou accuses ruling DPP of being behind unprecedented crisis in culture

Former Taiwanese leader Ma Ying-jeou has vowed to protect the island's deep-rooted cultural and historical ties with mainland China while accusing the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) of having a "misguided political agenda" in attempting to sever these links.

"In the past several decades, Taiwan has played a vital role in preserving and promoting Chinese culture. But today, Chinese culture in Taiwan faces an unprecedented crisis," Ma said at a seminar in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Monday. "The DPP's political manipulations have steered Taiwan in the wrong direction of de-sinicisation."

The seminar, held at Chengdu's renowned Du Fu Thatched Cottage in the southwestern province, was co-hosted by the Ma Ying-jeou Foundation, the mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office's (TAO) Centre for Cross-Strait Research and Sichuan University.

It brought together high-ranking mainland officials, including TAO director Song Tao, academics and participants from both sides of the Taiwan Strait to discuss preserving Chinese cultural heritage.

In his speech, Ma highlighted the linguistic, cultural and historical commonalities shared across the strait, emphasising that people on both sides were descendants of Emperor Yan and the Yellow Emperor. "Chinese civilisation is the world's only ancient culture to have endured 5,000 years without interruption," he said. "This is a testament to the combined efforts across the strait that have ensured Chinese culture not only survives but continues to thrive."

Ma highlighted the core values of Chinese culture, including reverence for history, gratitude and a deep sense of heritage. These traditions, he argued, had been the cornerstone of Chinese resilience over millennia.

“Most Taiwanese people maintain a strong sense of identity with Chinese culture and the Chinese nation,” Ma asserted. “Any attempts by the DPP to promote de-sinicisation are bound to fail because Chinese culture is deeply rooted in the bloodline of its people.”

He called on his generation to “take responsibility for correcting these missteps” and pledged to mobilise all efforts to “preserve this shared heritage despite today’s unprecedented challenges”.

Song echoed Ma’s sentiments, describing Chinese culture as the “common root and soul” of compatriots on both sides of the strait. He urged adherence to the “1992 consensus”, opposition to separatism and resistance against foreign interference. The consensus, a point of contention spearheaded by the DPP, refers to an agreement that both sides recognise one China but with differing interpretations of its meaning.

Ma is leading students on a nine-day visit to mainland China to promote cross-strait cultural exchanges. They started in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, on December 18, and are set to end the trip in Sichuan before returning to Taiwan on Thursday.

It marks his fifth student exchange programme involving three groups from Taiwan and two from the mainland in the past two years.

Ma, who has positioned himself as a staunch defender of the island’s shared heritage with the mainland, has long accused the DPP government of undermining centuries-old cultural ties for political gain.

Before leaving for Harbin on December 18, he emphasised that as a former leader, he is responsible for fostering exchanges and must “build a bridge of peace, transcend political hostilities and reflect the public’s desire for cross-strait engagement”.

However, Ma’s efforts have drawn sharp criticism from Taiwan’s pro-independence camp, which accuses him of aligning with Beijing’s agenda and undermining Taiwan’s sovereignty.

DPP lawmakers and politicians have said that by promoting these exchanges, Ma is playing into Beijing’s hands and diminishing Taiwan’s standing as a self-governed democracy.

Cross-strait relations have grown increasingly tense since the DPP’s Tsai Ing-wen assumed the presidency in 2016 and rejected the one-China principle. Her successor, William Lai Ching-te, who took office in May, has further strained ties with Beijing by declaring that Taiwan and the mainland “are not subordinate to each other”.

While Beijing views Taiwan as part of its territory and has not ruled out using force to achieve unification, most countries, including the United States, do not formally recognise Taiwan as an independent state. However, Washington opposes military aggression and supports Taiwan’s self-defence through arms sales.

Reunification is inevitable: TAO

25 December 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Chen Yu-fu and Hollie Younger

The reunification of China and Taiwan is “non-negotiable,” China’s Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) said today in response to an article by a Chinese academic suggesting that China would not set a timetable for the annexation of Taiwan in the next four years.

China’s focus for the next four years would instead be revitalizing the economy, and not deciding a time to invade Taiwan, the head of Beijing’s Tsinghua University Department of International Relations Yan Xuetong (閻學通) wrote in an article for *Foreign Affairs* magazine on Friday last week.

The TAO today said it is the personal opinion of an academic.

Since 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), China’s government and the Chinese people have committed to one day “resolve the Taiwan question” and “realize China’s complete reunification as a historic mission and unshakeable commitment,” it said.

The reunification of the motherland is non-negotiable for the great revival of the Chinese race, TAO spokesman Chen Binhua (陳斌華) said in a news release.

In Yan’s article “Why China isn’t scared of Trump,” Yan said that US president-elect Donald Trump would take more extreme policies to limit China’s development in his second presidential term, further destabilizing US-China relations.

However, China’s leaders learned valuable lessons from Trump’s first term in office and “do not look at Trump with fear,” he wrote.

“As Trump courts an escalation in the trade war, his administration will likely ramp up military pressure on Beijing,” especially in relation to the South China Sea, as Taiwanese independence remains “a source of friction between Beijing and Washington, but China and the United States are unlikely to go to war over it,” he said, as Trump “will not want to get entangled in the matter of Taiwan.”

China and the US would instead focus on rebuilding their economies and domestic reforms, he added.

Experts sound alarm over low awareness of China threat among Taiwan’s youth

21 December 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#)

A survey showing that less than 40 percent of young Taiwanese support regulating influencers in Taiwan linked to pro-China unification efforts has sparked concern among experts that the younger generation lacks vigilance in the face of threats from across the Taiwan Strait.

At a seminar in Taipei on Friday, the Asia-Pacific Elite Interchange Association (APEIA) released the results of a survey examining public views on China's United Front tactics targeting Taiwan and other recent cross-strait issues.



Experts in cross-strait relations, including Asia-Pacific Elite Interchange Association Secretary-General Arthur Wang (first right) and The Prospect Foundation Vice President Raymond Sung (third left), discuss the influence of China's United Front efforts at a seminar in Taipei Friday. CNA photo Dec. 21, 2024

The findings showed that 56.3 percent of all respondents agreed that laws should be amended to regulate Taiwanese influencers involved in China's United Front efforts. Meanwhile, 25.7 percent disagreed and 18 percent had no opinion.

Among respondents aged 20 to 24, only 37.9 percent agreed, significantly less than the 49.1-70.6 percent observed across other age groups.

The survey was carried out against the backdrop of China allegedly recruiting Taiwanese influencers to help carry out its United Front work. The revelations were highlighted by YouTuber Pa Chiung (八炯) in a documentary.

In the video, Pa Chiung interviewed Taiwanese rapper Chen Po-yuan (陳伯源), who described how he had worked with government agencies in China to promote his music before realizing he was being used to support a pro-unification agenda.

The United Front is a strategy used by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to influence and co-opt individuals or organizations to advance its political and strategic goals, including pushing for unification with Taiwan.

Arthur Wang (王智盛), secretary-general of the APEIA and an expert on cross-strait relations, described the comparatively low awareness of Chinese United Front efforts among young Taiwanese as a "warning signal." "This suggests that to some extent... our young people have indeed lost their vigilance," Wang said, attributing the results to the influence of Chinese social media platforms and the prevailing perception that cross-strait exchanges are harmless.

He urged society to address the relatively low vigilance of Taiwanese young people in recognizing China's United Front efforts, particularly among those with prolonged exposure to Chinese social media.

Following the same vein, Raymond Sung (宋承恩), vice president of the Prospect Foundation, said that the issue with influencers lies in the fact that most of their content focuses on topics such as fashion and makeup, which seem harmless and lifestyle-oriented.

"However, on certain political issues, they (influencers) align with the narratives that China wants to promote," Sung said, adding that it might influence how Taiwanese youth perceive China.

The survey, commissioned by the APEIA, was conducted by DADI Opinion Research from Dec. 17 to 18 through telephone interviews with adults aged 20 and above in Taiwan.

According to the APEIA, 1,001 valid samples were collected, with a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

VOA Mandarin: China faces operational challenges if it were to invade Taiwan, US says

19 December 2024, [VOA](#), Tina Chung

The U.S. Defense Department's annual report on China's military power, released this week, says the PLA is accelerating modernization, but it still faces several operational challenges in executing a rapid and decisive invasion of Taiwan.

[Click here for the full story in Mandarin.](#)

Taiwan-Shanghai forum opens after military tensions

17 December 2024, [RFA](#), Alan Lu

The forum is an avenue for contacts when top-level communications are frozen though some Taiwanese are skeptical.



Shanghai Vice Mayor Hua Yuan and Taipei Mayor Chiang Wan-an pose for a photo at the annual city forum in Taipei, Dec. 17, 2024. (Ann Wang/Reuters)

An annual forum between the cities of Shanghai and Taipei that is meant to promote dialogue across the Taiwan Strait has opened about six months late after

tensions including unprecedented Chinese sabre-rattling raised doubts that it could be organized this year.

The Shanghai-Taipei City Forum opened in the self-ruled island's capital on Monday with a visit by Hua Yuan, the deputy mayor of China's largest city, presided over by Taipei's mayor, Chiang Wan-an.

Chiang, in his opening remarks, acknowledged the recent tensions between Beijing and the island it regards as its territory and has vowed to take over by force if necessary.

Just last week, China's military deployed what one senior Taiwan official called a "staggering" array of ships and aircraft in the seas and skies around the island in a show of force that analysts said could be aimed at setting red lines for the incoming administration in the United States, Taiwan's main ally. "I always say that the more tense and difficult the moment, the more we need to communicate," Chiang told the visiting Chinese delegates at the forum.

Chiang called for talks.

"More dialogue and less confrontation; more olive branches of peace and less sour grapes of conflict. More lights from fishing boats to adorn the sunset; less of the howls of ships and aircraft," said Chiang.

Chiang, a member of Taiwan's main opposition party, the Kuomintang, which traditionally advocates for closer cross-strait ties while rejecting accusations it is pro-Beijing, is widely seen as a possible presidential candidate.

The forum is an annual platform for dialogue and cooperation between the two cities. Established in 2010, it serves as a semi-official channel for communication, focusing on practicalities such as economic collaboration, tourism, education, culture, and public services.

The city-to-city is seen as a useful avenue for people-to-people exchanges, especially when official cross-strait communications are limited.

Entry bans

This year's forum was initially planned for July or August but was postponed as the tensions raised doubts about the schedule, until an agenda was finally drawn up late in the year.

The event has not been without its casualties.

As tensions surged last week with the Chinese show of force, Taiwan banned entry to Shanghai Taiwan Affairs Office Director Jin Mei and nine Chinese media personnel.

Assistant Professor of Taiwan's Shoochow University's Department of Political Science Chen Fang-Yu told Radio Free Asia that the forum, in principle, should be a "positive event," especially as it involves official exchanges from both sides.

"However, since 2016 China has unilaterally cut off all opportunities for official dialogue with Taiwan," he

said, adding that Taipei seemed "urged" to host the forum this year.

Chen noted that Taipei Mayor Chiang had vowed in his 2022 election campaign that the forum would only be hosted when the Chinese Communist Party stopped sending military aircraft and vessels to harass Taiwan.

"Clearly, this goal has not been met," Chen said.

At the forum, Shanghai Mayor Hua called for practical cooperation between the two sides and said that Shanghai tour group trips to Taiwan would resume, although China has yet to fully restore the levels of tourism to the island seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait have always been one family. We often come and go, getting closer and closer to each other," Hua told the forum.

However, Chen warned that the offer to resume tour groups from China could be seen as a Chinese tactic to promote its pro-unification agenda.

"It feels like they are treating the reopening as some kind of favor to Taiwan," Chen said, referring to the resumption of group tours.

China's new tactic against Taiwan: drills 'that dare not speak their name'

13 December 2024, [Reuters](#), Ben Blanchard, Yimou Lee and Angie Teo

Beijing has unveiled a new tactic on Taiwan, the democratic island it claims as its own, officials and experts say: large-scale drills with no fanfare to normalise a heightened military presence and let the U.S. know that China can act whenever it wants.

For four days this week, Taiwan went on alert in response to what it said was China's largest massing of naval forces in three decades around Taiwan and in the East and South China Seas.

China's military said nothing until Friday when it quoted ancient Chinese tactician Sun Tzu's Art of War, a favourite of the communist republic's founder Mao Zedong.

"Just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions," the defence ministry said, a cryptic statement that neither confirmed nor denied that Beijing had been holding military exercises.

The initial silence was a departure from China's past practice of unleashing a massive propaganda push to coincide with war games around the island.

A senior Taiwan security official this week termed China's activities as "drills that dare not speak their name".

China's "Joint Sword-2024B" war games in October were accompanied by a flood of military and state media graphics and videos lambasting Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te, a person Beijing denounces as

a "separatist". One animation caricatured Lai with devil-like pointed ears.

Lai rejects Beijing's claims of sovereignty over Taiwan, saying only the island's people can decide their future. Security sources had expected China to launch new drills to coincide with Lai's trip this month to the Pacific, where he stopped over in Hawaii and the U.S. territory of Guam. Beijing opposes any foreign engagements for Taiwan leaders.

"I clearly believe this is the beginning of the 'mid-stage' of normalisation," Chen Kuan-ting, a lawmaker for Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) who sits on parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee, told Reuters.

"Neighbouring countries have to be aware that if they don't respond accordingly, they themselves may become the next target."

Neither the United States nor Japan, Taiwan's two most important security partners, have confirmed the scale of China's military movements, although both expressed concern. Taiwan signalled late Thursday the activities had wound down by closing its emergency response centre.

One fear Taiwan has is of Chinese drills suddenly turning into an actual attack, and a Taiwan intelligence official said this week China was trying to wrongfoot them by keeping mum.

"By not announcing the drills in advance, they want to lower our alertness and catch everyone off guard when they keep appearing around Taiwan," senior defence ministry intelligence officer Hsieh Jih-sheng told reporters.

"CONTROL THE FIRST ISLAND CHAIN"

Analysts say that Beijing's activities, conducted in near silence and followed by an opaque statement are meant to create confusion. "What's changed here is the scale of the exercise and lack of clarity from China about what was involved," said Drew Thompson, a former U.S. Department of Defense official and now a senior fellow at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

"This only underscores the lack of certainty of China's intentions."

China has over the last five years sent its warships and warplanes almost daily into the waters and air space around Taiwan, in what Taiwanese officials see as a creeping effort by China to "normalise" its military presence.

Taiwan's defence ministry said this time the naval deployment extended across the First Island Chain, which runs from Japan through Taiwan, the Philippines and on to Borneo, enclosing China's coastal seas.

Its control by China could prevent U.S. forces coming to Taiwan's assistance in the event of conflict.

"It's a tricky operation, showing on the one hand their dissatisfaction with Taiwan, and on the other showing the U.S. and its allies that it has military muscle, flying

the flag, to show their ability to control the First Island Chain," said Su Tzu-yun, a research fellow at Taiwan's top military think tank, the Institute for National Defence and Security Research.

A regional security diplomat said the lack of any announcement ahead of time signalled the normalisation of war simulations around Taiwan.

"China seems to be more concerned with preventing or delaying an intervention into the First Island Chain, than with controlling the area around Taiwan," the diplomat said.

"One day they will have exercised all they need and feel fully confident to deal with anything that might occur during their aggression towards Taiwan."

Chinese officials arrive in Taipei for rare visit

16 December 2024, [Reuters](#)

A delegation of Chinese officials led by a deputy Shanghai mayor arrived in Taipei on Monday for an annual city-to-city forum, a rare visit happening at a time of heightened Taiwan-China military and political tension.

China, which claims the democratically governed island as its territory, last week carried out large-scale military activities near Taiwan, and regularly sends fighter jets and warships into the skies and waters around the island.

Shanghai Vice Mayor Hua Yuan arrived at Taipei's downtown Songshan airport to attend Tuesday's Taipei-Shanghai City Forum, which was first held in 2010, and did not answer questions shouted at him by reporters.

A small group from the pro-independence Taiwan Republic Office shouted "Taiwan and China, separate countries" as he left the airport.

"There is no goodwill. The communist bandits continue to hold military drills," Chilly Chen, head of the group, told Reuters.

Taipei Mayor Chiang Wan-an, from the main opposition Kuomintang party that traditionally favours close ties across the strait although it denies being pro-Beijing, has said visits like this are needed more than ever at times of tension.

Chiang, who visited Shanghai last year for the same city forum, will host Hua at a banquet in the evening.

Taiwan's government last week blocked some members of the Shanghai delegation from attending, saying given China's stepped up military threats it had to take into account "the overall situation" when granting permission for the visit.

Adding to the drama, Taiwan's government on Friday demanded China release three members of a Taiwanese religious group arrested while in the country. China says they are suspected of organising an underground cult.

Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council said on Monday the government was showing goodwill by allowing the forum to take place even in the face of the "still serious situation across the Taiwan Strait".

Taiwan's government has called for new talks with China but Beijing refuses to engage with President Lai Ching-te, calling him a "separatist".

Lai says only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

After Days of Military Activity, China Restates Its Hard Line on Taiwan

14 December 2024, [G Captain](#)

China's defense ministry on Friday broke its silence about days of military activities around Taiwan, saying it was entitled to stage exercises and the military would "not be absent" if required to fight separatist forces.

Taiwan's defense ministry on Monday went on alert and activated an emergency response center after reporting a surge in Chinese military activity, both nearby and more broadly in the East and South China Seas.

China's military had not announced any maneuvers. Beijing views democratically governed Taiwan as its territory – a claim rejected by Taipei, which says that only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

In a statement responding to a question on Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's recent visits to Hawaii and the U.S. territory of Guam, and whether or not China had held drills, China's defense ministry offered neither confirmation nor denial.

"Whether or not to hold exercises and when to hold them is a matter for us to decide on our own according to our own needs and the situation of the struggle," it said.

"Regardless of whether or not exercises are held, the People's Liberation Army will not be absent and will not be soft in its fight against independence and for reunification."

Any reliance on "foreign forces to seek independence" – the usual wording China uses to warn the United States off supporting Taiwan – would be severely punished and was "doomed to failure," the ministry added.

China has staged two rounds of war games around Taiwan so far this year, most recently in October, saying they were a warning against "separatist acts" and vowing to take further action if needed.

TAIWAN SAYS CHINA'S THREAT IS EXPANDING

On Friday, Taiwan's defense ministry said China's threat towards the island had been evolving since 2022, when it began staging the current round of war

games, from "deterring Taiwan" to "impacting the First Island Chain," an area that stretches from Japan through to Taiwan, along the Chinese coast and into the South China Sea.

"China's long-term goal of deterring regional parties and disrupting the rule-based international order will not be endorsed by the international community," it said in a statement.

The United States has repeatedly expressed concern about tensions in the Taiwan Strait, and once or twice a month sends military aircraft or warships on missions there.

Late on Friday, Taiwan's defense ministry said a U.S. P-8A Poseidon reconnaissance and patrol plane had flown through the Taiwan Strait in the morning, the first such publicly acknowledged flight since Nov. 26. Security sources had expected China to hold drills to coincide with Lai's U.S. trip, and also to send a warning to the incoming Trump administration about China's red lines.

On Thursday, the de facto U.S. embassy in Taiwan said that Chinese military activity in the region was currently elevated but it did not see that as a response to Lai's U.S. visit.

Later that day, Taiwan's defense ministry said it had disbanded its emergency response center, signaling an end to the current round of Chinese military activities.

On Friday morning, the ministry said the number of Chinese military aircraft operating nearby was down sharply.

Taiwan's coast guard said that nine Chinese coast guard ships off the coast had headed northwards after carrying out "undue" activities in recent days.

China jeopardised peace with its military threat: Taiwan Defence Ministry

13 December 2024, [India Narrative](#)

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) on Friday released a rousing video highlighting Taiwan's defence capabilities and informing of the threat posed by the Chinese military to Taiwan.

The video was shared by the Taiwanese Defence Ministry through a post on X.

"The threat posed by #PLA to Taiwan and the region has escalated from coercion to directly affecting the First Island Chain, undermining the rules-based international order. #ROCArmedForces continue to forge our capabilities and deter war", the MND said.

The video showcased Taiwan's defence capabilities, its weapons and the armed forces personnel in action, preparing and training.

"PRC has jeopardised the peace with its military threat, challenged the rule-based international order.

Its action will never earn the approval from the international community”, the video noted.

“To safeguard our territory, and sovereignty, and maintain regional security, the R.O.C. Armed Forces closely monitor our adversary and has adjusted reactions accordingly. We train at the moment, we face our opponent and keep up our work in force buildup. We forge our capabilities in rigorous training. Our faith is from our strength. We stand firmly to safeguard our national security”, the video said.

The video comes after the Chinese incursions near Taiwan’s territory have seen an uptick in recent times. On Saturday, the MND reported that 12 Chinese military aircraft, 14 naval vessels and 9 official ships were detected operating near Taiwan until 6 am (local time). The details were shared by Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defence (MND) in a post on X.

Earlier on Wednesday in a post on X, the MND said, “Confronting normalized #PLA provocations, apathy is not an option. #ROCArmedForces seize every training opportunity!”

Taiwan-China issue is a complex and longstanding geopolitical conflict centred on Taiwan’s sovereignty. Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), operates its own government, military, and economy, functioning as a de facto independent state. However, China considers Taiwan a breakaway province and insists on the “One China” policy, which asserts that there is only one China, with Beijing as its capital.

This has fuelled decades of tension, especially since the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), when the ROC government retreated to Taiwan after the Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, took control of mainland China.

Beijing has consistently expressed its goal of reunification with Taiwan, using diplomatic, economic, and military pressure to isolate Taiwan internationally. Meanwhile, Taiwan, supported by a significant portion of its population, continues to maintain its independence.

Taiwan Flags Alarming Threat After China Deploys Largest Naval Fleet

10 December 2024, [StratNews Global](#)

Taiwan is alarmed at the rise in Chinese military activities around its waters and airspace though China's military has not announced any drills. China's muscle flexing is seen as an expression of its anger over the U.S. visit of President Lai Ching-te.

China’s war games with Taiwan took a serious turn after Beijing deployed its largest navy fleet in regional waters in nearly three decades.

This is posing an alarming threat to the island nation, its Defence Ministry said.

Defence Ministry spokesperson Sun Li-fang said that the scale of the current Chinese naval deployment in an area running from the southern Japanese islands down into the South China Sea was the largest since 1996.

China had held war games around Taiwan ahead of the 1996 Taiwanese Presidential elections.

China’s military is yet to comment and has not confirmed it is carrying out any exercises.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory over the island’s rejection, had been expected to launch drills to express its anger at President Lai Ching-te’s tour of the Pacific.

The tour which included stopovers in Hawaii and the U.S. territory of Guam, ended on Friday.

Taiwan’s military raised its alert on Monday after saying China had reserved airspace and deployed naval and coast guard vessels.

“The current scale is the largest compared to the previous four,” Sun said.

“Regardless of whether they have announced drills, they are posing a great threats to us.”

Senior ministry intelligence officer Hsieh Jih-sheng said at the same Press conference there have so far been no live fire drills in China’s seven “reserved” air space zones.

Of these, two are in the Taiwan Strait, but there had been a significant increase in Chinese activity to the north of Taiwan over the last day.

The number of Chinese Navy and Coast Guard ships in the region, was “very alarming”.

He added that China was taking aim at not only Taiwan but other countries in the region as well.

A Taiwan security source told Reuters that the number of the Chinese Navy and Coast Guard ships in the region remained at 90.

China’s deployment in the First Island Chain – which runs from Japan through Taiwan, the Philippines and on to Borneo, enclosing China’s coastal seas – is aimed at area denial to prevent foreign forces from interfering, Hsieh said.

The ministry said that the Chinese Navy is building two “walls” in the Pacific.

While one is at the eastern end of Taiwan’s Air Defence Identification Zone, the other is further out in the Pacific.

“They are sending a very simple message with these two walls: trying to make the Taiwan Strait an internal sea” of China, said Hsieh.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Defence Ministry said it detected 47 military aircraft operating around the island over the past 24 hours,

The ministry also detected a dozen Navy vessels and nine “official” ships, which refers to vessels from ostensibly civilian agencies such as the Coast Guard.

Of the aircraft, 26 flew in an area to the north of Taiwan off the coast of China's Zhejiang province, six in the Taiwan Strait and a further 15 to the island's southwest.

The ministry provided these details in a map in its daily morning statement on Chinese activities.

A senior Taiwan security source told Reuters that the Chinese aircraft simulated attacks on foreign naval ships and practised driving away military and civilian aircraft as part of a "blockade exercise".

Lai and his government reject Beijing's sovereignty claims, saying only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

China says the Taiwan issue is the "core of its core interests" and a red line the United States should not cross.

China has held two rounds of major war games around Taiwan so far this year.

Taiwan reports near doubling of Chinese warships nearby

08 December 2024, [Reuters](#)

Taiwan's defence ministry said on Sunday that China had nearly doubled the number of its warships operating around the island in the previous 24 hours, ahead of what security sources expect will be a new round of war games.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has been angered by visits by President Lai Ching-te to Hawaii and the U.S. territory of Guam as part of a Pacific tour. Lai returned from the week-long trip on Friday night.

Beijing has held two rounds of war games around Taiwan this year.

In its daily morning report on Chinese military activities, Taiwan's defence ministry said there were 14 Chinese warships operating nearby, up from the eight it reported the previous day.

The ministry said it had detected four Chinese balloons flying over the Taiwan Strait, one of which had brushed the top of the island.

Weather will likely be a factor in China's decision on any war games, security sources say. Weather in the strait has been poor this weekend.

China's defence ministry did not answer calls to its news office seeking comment outside of office hours on Sunday.

But in a strongly worded commentary on its WeChat account on Sunday, China's Ministry of State Security said Lai's efforts to "use arms to seek independence" and cosy up to the United States were doomed to fail.

Taiwan's government is putting on a "false display of power" while the U.S. government is "acting in cahoots with gangsters and jackals" in supporting Taiwan, it said.

"No country, organisation or individual should underestimate the strong determination, firm will and powerful capacity of the Chinese government and people to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said.

No one should presume they can "step out of line on the Taiwan issue without having to pay a price", the ministry added.

Lai and his government reject Beijing's sovereignty claims.

China slaps sanctions on 13 US military firms over Taiwan arms sale

05 December 2024, [Reuters](#)

China has decided to impose sanctions on 13 U.S. military firms from Thursday, in response to the sale of U.S. arms to Taiwan, the foreign ministry said after the United States arranged for Taiwan's president to transit through its territory.

The step follows China's strong objection to the United States authorising a potential \$385-million sale of spare parts and support for F-16 jets and radars to Taiwan, which Beijing says undermines its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

China, which considers Taiwan its own territory and its President Lai Ching-te a dangerous separatist, opposes any foreign interactions or visits by the island's leaders.

Companies targeted by the sanctions include Teledyne Brown Engineering Inc, BRINC Drones Inc and Shield AI Inc, the foreign ministry said in Thursday's statement.

Other companies facing sanctions are Rapid Flight LLC, Red Six Solutions, SYNEXXUS Inc, Firestorm Labs Inc, Kratos Unmanned Aerial Systems Inc, HavocAI, Neros Technologies, Cyberlux Corporation, Domo Tactical Communications and Group W.

In addition, China will freeze the assets of six executives from five companies including Raytheon, BAE Systems and United Technologies, in China, and bar their entry to the country.

Chinese organisations and individuals are also prohibited from dealing with them.

CHINA- US

China sanctions 7 companies over US military assistance to Taiwan

27 December 2024, [AP News](#)

The Chinese government placed sanctions on seven companies on Friday in response to recent U.S. announcements of military sales and aid to Taiwan, the self-governing island that China claims as part of its territory.

The sanctions also come in response to the recent approval of the U.S. government's annual defense spending bill, which a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said "includes multiple negative sections on China."

China objects to American military assistance for Taiwan and often imposes sanctions on related companies after a sale or aid package is announced. The sanctions generally have a limited impact, because American defense companies don't sell arms or other military goods to China. The U.S. is the main supplier of weapons to Taiwan for its defense.

The seven companies being sanctioned are Insitu Inc., Hudson Technologies Co., Saronic Technologies, Inc., Raytheon Canada, Raytheon Australia, Aerkomm Inc. and Oceaneering International Inc., the Foreign Ministry statement said. It said that "relevant senior executives" of the companies are also sanctioned, without naming any.

Any assets they have in China will be frozen, and organizations and individuals in China are prohibited from engaging in any activity with them, it said.

U.S. President Joe Biden last week authorized up to \$571 million in Defense Department material and services and military education and training for Taiwan. Separately, the Defense Department announced that \$295 million in military sales had been approved.

The U.S. defense bill boosts military spending to \$895 billion and directs resources toward a more confrontational approach to China. It establishes a fund that could be used to send military resources to Taiwan in much the same way that the U.S. has backed Ukraine. It also expands a ban on U.S. military purchases of Chinese products ranging from drone technology to garlic for military commissaries.

Zhang Xiaogang, a Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson, said earlier this week that the U.S. is hyping up the "so-called" threat from China to justify increased military spending.

"U.S. military spending has topped the world and keeps increasing every year," he said at a press conference. "This fully exposes the belligerent nature of the U.S. and its obsession with hegemony and expansion."

The Foreign Ministry statement said the U.S. moves violate agreements between the two countries on Taiwan, interfere in China's domestic affairs and undermine the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Taiwan's government said earlier this month that China had sent dozens of ships into nearby seas to practice a blockade of the island, a move that Taiwan said undermined peace and stability and disrupted international shipping and trade. China has not confirmed or commented on the reported military activity.

China Reacts After Biden Signs Record US National Defense Bill

24 December 2024, [NewsWeek](#), Micah McCartney

What's New

Beijing has issued a sharp rebuke after U.S. President Joe Biden on Monday signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025, citing its "negative content on China."

Newsweek reached out to the U.S. Defense Ministry with a request for comment by email.

Why It Matters

Of the record \$895 billion the bill authorizes in spending—a 1 percent increase over last year and the largest defense budget in U.S. history—\$15.5 billion is allocated to the U.S. Pacific Deterrence Initiative, established in 2021 to strengthen Indo-Pacific defense capabilities to counter China's growing military influence.

Additionally, the act authorizes up to \$300 million in military articles and training for Taiwan, the self-governed island democracy that Beijing's Chinese Communist Party claims as its territory and has vowed to someday unify with.

What To Know

"The U.S. determined to sign into law the 'National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025,' containing negative content on China, playing up the 'China threat' narrative year after year," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said during Tuesday's regular press briefing.

She accused Washington of "trumpeting for military support to Taiwan," undermining China's sovereignty and development, and limiting exchanges between the two nations. Mao also urged the U.S. to abandon its "Cold War mentality," cease arms sales to Taiwan and stop "weaponizing sci-tech, economic and trade issues."

"The U.S. should also stop finding pretexts for increasing military expenditure and maintaining hegemony," Mao added, warning of "strong and resolute measures" if these actions persist.

The U.S. does not maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan but remains its primary arms supplier. Last week, Taiwan received the first batch of 38 Abrams tanks from an order of 108 approved by Congress in 2019.

The delivery is part of Taiwan's efforts to bolster its defenses amid increasing Chinese military deployments and exercises aimed at intimidating the Beijing-skeptical government of President Lai Ching-te.

What People Are Saying

Li Haidong, international relations professor, China Foreign Affairs University told the *Global Times*: "the U.S. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 will bring a negative impact and uncertainties to China-U.S. relations next year, because it is an act aimed at meeting the demands of hawkish and anti-China forces to hype the 'China threat' rhetoric worldwide and provide pretexts for the U.S. military industrial complex to earn more money."

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted on X, formerly Twitter: "We welcome U.S. government approval of arms sales totaling \$295 million to Taiwan, reaffirming its commitment to our defense in line with the Taiwan Relations Act and #SixAssurances. We continue to strengthen our self-defense & bilateral security ties to secure #IndoPacific peace."

What Happens Next

Given the broad bipartisan support for Taiwan in Congress, defense support for the island, including arms sales, is likely to continue.

Some U.S. officials, including CIA Director Bill Burns and former U.S. Indo-Pacific Command chief John Aquilino, believe Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered his military to be capable of an offensive against the island by 2027, but this does not mean he plans to give such an order.

US government starts another investigation targeting these Chinese technology companies

24 December 2024, *Times of India*

The Biden administration opened a trade investigation into China's production of older-style semiconductors, setting the stage for potential tariffs or other trade restrictions when President-elect Donald Trump takes office in January.

The probe, conducted under Section 301 of the Trade Act, targets "legacy chips" that power everyday devices from cars and household appliances to telecommunications equipment and military systems. U.S. officials warn that China's aggressive expansion in semiconductor production, backed by government subsidies, threatens to dominate global supply chains. "China's policies are enabling its companies to rapidly expand and offer artificially lower-priced chips that threaten to significantly harm their market-oriented

competition," said U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo revealed that two-thirds of U.S. products contain Chinese-made chips, with half of companies unaware of their chips' origin.

The investigation will examine China's practices in producing silicon carbide substrates and other semiconductor components, with officials expressing concern that Chinese suppliers often price chips 30-50% below U.S. competitors. The Commerce Department projects China could control more than 40% of global capacity in foundational chips by 2032. China's Commerce Ministry strongly opposed the investigation, calling it "protectionist" and warning it would "take all necessary measures" to defend its interests. The ministry argued that U.S. companies dominate the global chip market and receive substantial government subsidies.

The probe, which includes public hearings scheduled for March, will be handed to the incoming Trump administration for completion. The investigation could provide Trump a ready pathway to implement his proposed 60% tariffs on Chinese imports, though some industry groups urged caution about potential supply chain disruptions.

US nuclear expansion unlikely to deter China, finds CSIS-MIT study

22 December 2024, [Business Standard](#)

Three scenarios culminated in mutual annihilation, with both the US and China engaging in a nuclear exchange that decimated cities and resulted in millions of casualties

A recent unclassified war game conducted by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has revealed that increasing US nuclear capabilities would not deter China from employing atomic weapons in a conflict over Taiwan, Taipei Times reported.

The findings, published in a report on Friday, challenge current calls among policy experts to expand and modernise the US nuclear arsenal in response to China's growing military strength.

The table top exercise, described as the first large-scale unclassified simulation of a potential nuclear war over Taiwan, explored scenarios where nuclear weapons might be used. According to the report, the US's nuclear capabilities, beyond ongoing modernisation efforts, had minimal impact on Beijing's willingness to deploy nuclear arms. Instead, the exercise highlighted the conditions under which either side might face pressure to resort to nuclear strikes, rather than the likelihood of such weapons being used.

The CSIS study pointed to a recurring pattern where Chinese forces faced the greatest pressure to use nuclear weapons when defeat appeared imminent. "Building on US concerns, this suggests that China could be moving away from its no-first-use policy during critical conflicts," the report noted.

Researchers concluded that while favourable outcomes were possible in some scenarios, "complete victory was unachievable" when nuclear weapons were involved, reported Taipei Times.

In contrast to last year's CSIS-MIT simulation, where nuclear arms were excluded and the US secured a decisive victory, the latest war game revealed more complex and devastating results.

Over 15 iterations of the exercise, Chinese forces retreated from Taiwan five times, with four of these scenarios occurring without nuclear weapons being used.

"The US team was the first to use nuclear weapons in only one iteration of the war games. In another iteration, Taiwan returned to the 'status quo' after the US hit PLA forces in Taiwan with nuclear weapons following a Chinese nuclear strike on Taiwanese forces," Taipei Times reported.

Three scenarios culminated in mutual annihilation, with both the US and China engaging in a nuclear exchange that decimated cities and resulted in millions of casualties. In five iterations, China managed to gain a foothold in Taiwan following the use of nuclear weapons, and one exercise concluded without a decisive outcome, Taipei Times reported.

The study urged Washington to consider diplomatic strategies to prevent nuclear escalation in a Taiwan conflict. Drawing parallels to the Cuban missile crisis, CSIS senior adviser Mark Cancian, who co-authored the report, said, "The US withdrew nuclear missiles from Turkey during the Cuban missile crisis to allow Soviet Russia an off-ramp at relatively little cost."

He emphasised the need for pre-emptive discussions with allies to identify potential concessions for China. "Our concern is that time will not be available when nuclear weapons are used," Cancian added.

Eric Heginbotham, a co-author and MIT researcher, noted that the simulation did not align with recommendations to expand the US tactical nuclear arsenal or develop new delivery systems. "The one US team that employed tactical nuclear weapons used fewer than 12 weapons, in comparison with the more than 600 weapons the US currently has," Heginbotham said.

He also emphasised that participants did not identify a need for delivery capabilities beyond those the US already possesses, while the teams representing China did not perceive any constraints in the US's ability to deploy nuclear weapons.

China says US 'playing with fire' by giving Taiwan more military aid

22 December 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Beijing calls on the US to stop 'dangerous moves' that 'undermine peace and stability' in the Taiwan Strait.



US President Joe Biden speaks after touring the building site for a new computer chip plant for Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, in Phoenix [File: Patrick Semansky/AP]

China has warned the United States of “playing with fire” after Washington announced more military aid and sales to Taiwan.

A statement from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday urged the US to stop its “dangerous moves that undermine peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait”.

China, which has ramped up political and military pressure on Taiwan in recent years, has repeatedly called for the US to cease sending arms and assistance to Taiwan, which Beijing claims as part of its territory. The US does not officially recognise Taiwan diplomatically, but it is the self-ruled island’s strategic ally and largest supplier of weapons.

On Friday, the White House said the outgoing Biden administration had authorised up to \$571.3m in defence assistance to Taiwan. While the White House statement did not provide details of the package, it came less than three months after a \$567m aid was announced.

“This move gravely infringes on China’s sovereignty and security interests,” the Chinese Foreign Ministry said, adding it “firmly opposes this action”. China “has lodged stern representations with the US at the earliest opportunity”, it added.

China’s Taiwan Affairs Office said such actions by the US “contradict its leaders’ serious commitments” to not supporting “Taiwan’s independence”.

“We demand that the US immediately cease arming Taiwan and handle the Taiwan issue with the utmost caution,” said the Chinese office’s spokeswoman Zhu Fenglian, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

In October, the US approved \$2bn in arms sales to Taiwan, including the first-time delivery of an

advanced surface-to-air missile defence system, drawing China’s criticism and war drills by its army around Taiwan.

Taiwan earlier this month demanded that China end its ongoing military activity in nearby waters, which it said undermined peace and stability and disrupted international shipping and trade.

US President-elect Donald Trump has said he would not commit to defending Taiwan if China were to invade during his presidency. Trump has also said Taiwan should pay the US for defending it against China, likening the relationship to insurance.

Guilty plea exposes Chinese 'secret police station' in New York

21 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In a damning indictment of China’s transnational repression of its critics and others, a Chinese resident in New York who operated a “secret police station” in the Chinatown district of Manhattan to aid Beijing’s targeting of dissidents has pleaded guilty on Dec 18 to conspiring to act as an unregistered foreign agent, reported *Reuters* Dec 19.

Chen Jinping, 61, has entered the plea at a hearing in Brooklyn Federal Court before US District Judge Nina Morrison. He is said to face up to five years in prison when sentenced on May 30, 2025.

Chen has also admitted in court to removing an online article about the alleged police station on behalf of China’s government in Sep 2022. He has said he was not registered with the Justice Department as a foreign agent at the time, as US law requires of people acting for other countries.

Chen and a New York-based co-defendant, Lu Jianwang, were initially arrested on Apr 17, 2023. Lu has pleaded not guilty to the same charge, as well as to obstruction of justice.

The report noted that the arrests followed a 2022 investigation published by Spain-based advocacy group Safeguard Defenders that reported China had set up overseas “service stations,” including in New York, that illegally worked with Chinese police to pressure fugitives to return to China.

China continues to deny having set up any such facility in other countries. “There are no so-called secret police stations,” Lin Jian, spokesperson at the Chinese foreign ministry, has said Dec 19, when asked about the Manhattan case at a regular news conference.

“(China) has always strictly abided by international law and respected the judicial sovereignty of all countries,” Lin has claimed, adding he had no knowledge of the specifics of the case.

China maintains that there are centres outside China run by local volunteers, not Chinese police officers, that aim to help Chinese citizens renew documents

such as driving license and offer other services. It has accused Washington of fabricating the charges to smear China's image.

While the facility may indeed be helping to provide such service, prosecutors have also said that in 2022, Lu was asked by Beijing to locate an individual living in California who was considered a pro-democracy activist.

Before that, in 2018, Lu had sought to persuade an individual considered a fugitive by China to return home, prosecutors have said.

China refutes U.S. irresponsible report on military, security developments

20 December 2024, [Beijing Review](#)

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on December 19 urged the United States to view China's strategic intention and defense development in an objective and rational way, in response to an irresponsible U.S. report on China's military and security developments. "This report, like the ones we've seen before, lays little emphasis on truth. It is filled with bias and designed to amplify the 'China threat' narrative only to justify the U.S. desire to maintain military supremacy," spokesperson Lin Jian told a daily press briefing.

Lin said China is fully committed to being a force for peace, stability and progress in the world, and is equally determined to defend its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

"We call on the United States to abandon the Cold War mentality and hegemonic way of thinking, view China's strategic intention and defense development in an objective and rational way, stop issuing this kind of irresponsible report year after year, and make sure what it does is conducive to a stable relationship between the two countries and the two militaries," Lin said.

Trump meets TikTok CEO after saying China, US can 'solve all world's problems' together

17 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Khusboo Razdan

President-elect said the two countries can work together when pressed about his invitation to the Chinese leader to attend inauguration

US president-elect Donald Trump said on Monday that Beijing and Washington could work together "to solve all of the problems of the world", a sweeping statement issued a little more than a month before he returns to office.

Hours after making the remarks in a press conference at Mar-a-Lago, Trump met TikTok CEO Chew Shou Zi at the Florida resort, according to US media reports.

The meeting coincided with the company's emergency appeal to the US Supreme Court for a temporary halt on the ban, which would take effect if it fails to secure

a non-Chinese buyer on January 19, a day before Trump officially takes the White House.

Earlier in the day, Trump signalled during a news conference that he was willing to block the ban on TikTok, which has more than 170 million domestic monthly users on its platform in the US.

"We'll take a look at TikTok. You know, I have a warm spot in my heart for TikTok. TikTok had an impact, so we're taking a look at it," he said, hailing the platform for boosting his connection with young American voters during the campaign.



Both Trump and the social media platform kept the meeting low-key, with neither side confirming the meeting, nor issuing any statement on what was discussed. Media reports from the US said it was not clear what the two men talked about.

Experts have said that Trump has limited options when it comes to saving TikTok from the ban. The meeting followed Trump's hopeful remarks about Chinese President Xi Jinping's response to his invitation to attend the January 20 presidential inauguration. During his press conference at Mar-a-Lago ahead of the TikTok meeting, Trump said Xi "hasn't said one way or the other" about whether he will attend.

The issue was "something we barely discussed", Trump said, adding that he has had "some very good conversations" with the Chinese leader through letters.

"You know, because China and the United States can, together solve all of the problems of the world, if you think about it. So it's very important. And you know, he was a friend of mine," Trump added.

Reflecting on the meeting the two men had at Mar-a-Lago in 2017, Trump said: "He was here for a long time, right in that spot, except sitting in a very comfortable chair. He wasn't standing like you are. But we spent hours and hours talking, and he's an amazing guy."

Trump's latest Beijing-friendly comments inject more mystery into the approach he will take when he is back in the White House next month, as they send different signals compared with the incoming president's cabinet picks like Florida Senator Marco Rubio – one of Congress' harshest critics of the Chinese government – for secretary of state.

According to Jake Werner, acting East Asia director of the Quincy Institute, a think tank in Washington, Trump's latest comments "signal a real openness to doing some sort of deal" with Xi.

"While many of Trump's national security appointments seemed to promise an immediate, sharp deterioration in US-China relations, Trump's comments, and his decision to extend Xi an invitation to his inauguration, indicates that we have a genuine opportunity to build the relationship on a new foundation," Werner added.

On Sunday, Florida lawmaker Mike Waltz, who will be Trump's national security adviser in the White House, in an interview with CBS downplayed the invitation to Xi, saying the ongoing conversations between Trump and other world leaders were "really nothing beyond congratulatory and niceties".

No Chinese head of state has ever attended a presidential inauguration in the US. Such a move would be a departure from a decades-long tradition whereby the White House includes foreign dignitaries and diplomats at the ceremony, but not world leaders. Some analysts have expressed doubt that Xi would attend the inauguration, pointing out that the diplomatic groundwork for such a visit would likely require more than the five weeks remaining before the president-elect is sworn in.

Denis Simon of the Institute for China-America Studies, another Washington-based think tank, said it has "more or less been determined that Xi is not coming, and the only question will be, 'Who would come?'".

Describing Trump as a "deal maker", Simon reckoned that by inviting Xi, the US president-elect wants to be "seen as some kind of grand statesman" with a knack for personal diplomacy, and added that Beijing might be inclined to send a high-level delegation.

"I really do think Trump wants a Nobel Peace Prize win. I think that's his aim here. So I think that this grand statesman status, if he can work with Xi, and then Xi can work with Putin and all of a sudden we can find peace in several areas, I think that would be Trump's dream," he said.

Earlier this month, Trump had suggested that China could play a key role in brokering peace between Russia and Ukraine.

"Too many lives are being so needlessly wasted, too many families destroyed, and if it keeps going, it can turn into something much bigger, and far worse. I know Vladimir well. This is his time to act. China can help. The World is waiting," Trump said in a social media post on December 9.

In an interview aired later that day Trump told NBC that he "got along very well" with Xi and that the two leaders had "communication as recently as this week". At the time, the Chinese embassy in Washington declined to comment on any recent communication

between Xi and Trump, saying only that Beijing "welcomes and supports all effort conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis".

Werner of the Quincy Institute noted that "China would not be willing to do a one-sided deal".

"Trump would need to begin by offering a stable trade environment and clarity on what realms of exchange are off-limits and enter negotiations on China's core complaints around security and space for economic development," he added.

"Trump would need to begin by offering a stable trade environment and clarity on what realms of exchange are off-limits and enter negotiations on China's core complaints around security and space for economic development," he added.

FBI warns some lawmakers that China aims to create fake stories about them to erode support for Taiwan

17 December 2024, [NBC News](#), Scott Wong and Ken Dilanian

The FBI has held classified briefings warning a handful of U.S. lawmakers that the Chinese Communist Party is working to create fake stories to portray them in a negative light because of their hawkish views of Beijing and support for Taiwan, two U.S. officials familiar with the briefings told NBC News.

The U.S. officials, who asked not to be identified due to the sensitive nature of the briefings, said that one of the false stories being concocted by the CCP, cited by FBI briefers, is that these lawmakers are espousing pro-Taiwan views because they were taking "bribes" from Taiwan.

"The CCP is trying to undermine congressional support for Taiwan's democracy, to paint it as corrupt and not in the American public interest," one of the two U.S. officials told NBC News. "It will not work."

The officials said the briefings occurred in the fall.

A third source, a House lawmaker who specializes in national security matters, said they had been informed about the alleged CCP scheme but had not personally received a briefing.

The FBI had no comment. A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, Liu Pengyu, responded to a detailed list of questions for this story with a statement: "The report is entirely fabricated, and the Chinese government has never had any plan to smear these lawmakers. As for whether they have accepted bribes from Taiwan, it should be investigated by the relevant authorities in the United States and has nothing to do with China."

The classified discussions were described as "defensive" briefings, the U.S. officials said, meaning the alleged CCP scheme had not been carried out yet, but the FBI wanted to share critical information with the intended targets as a way to pre-empt the attacks.

The FBI commonly provides defensive briefings to senior officials when the bureau learns they have been targeted by foreign intelligence operations.

Tensions between Beijing and Washington have escalated in recent years, particularly over the future of the island of Taiwan, a self-ruling democracy and a critical U.S. ally in Asia that China claims as its territory. In 2022, then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., an outspoken critic of China's human rights violations, made an unannounced visit to Taiwan and was awarded the highest civilian honor by its president. She was the highest-ranking U.S. official to set foot in Taiwan since former Speaker Newt Gingrich did it in 1997, and the move infuriated officials in Beijing, which launched military exercises around Taiwan including live-fire drills.

Other lawmakers have made similar trips to Taipei. In February, bipartisan members of the special House committee investigating the CCP traveled to Taiwan to congratulate Lai Ching-te, the pro-independence candidate who had been elected president just weeks earlier. And this past May, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Mike McCaul, R-Texas, led a bipartisan group of six lawmakers on an official congressional visit to Taiwan to meet with Lai.

Several members of the House Intelligence Committee and select House committee on the CCP declined to comment when asked if they had received a classified briefing on the matter. Lawmakers are prohibited from speaking publicly about any such classified briefings. Rep. John Moolenaar, R-Mich., the chairman of the select House committee on the CCP, had no comment about any specific plot by the CCP, but said it was no secret Beijing has been targeting U.S. officials and other Americans.

"The CCP will try to discredit our way of life, our freedoms and will use every means necessary," Moolenaar told NBC News. "So you know, whether it's hacking high-level officials' communications, we can expect all these things."

Starting with the 2022 midterm elections, China has adopted increasingly sophisticated and aggressive tactics to try to aggravate political divisions in American society and undermine congressional candidates that Beijing deems hostile to the regime's interests, especially over the status of Taiwan, according to U.S. intelligence officials and researchers. In the 2024 presidential contest, China did not appear to favor either candidate but instead focused on specific downballot races with covert disinformation campaigns, using artificial intelligence tools and fake accounts mimicking Americans. The candidates targeted included McCaul; Rep. Barry Moore, R-Ala.; and Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., according to an analysis from Microsoft. A Chinese Embassy spokesperson said at the time that the claims were "full of malicious speculations" and that China had "no

intention" to and would "not interfere in the U.S. election."

U.S. intelligence officials and analysts say China's efforts to stoke polarization and undercut Americans' confidence in the democratic process are part of a long-term effort that includes global information operations designed to tarnish America's image abroad.

China's disinformation efforts have coincided with what U.S. officials say is a concerted effort to steal intellectual property and U.S. military secrets through espionage and cyber hacks.

Earlier this month, the White House said that a Chinese hacking campaign targeting the U.S. and other countries was more sweeping and serious than previously known. The CCP had spied on the texts and calls of U.S. citizens by hacking at least eight American telecommunications companies, according to a White House official.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington responded to that allegation in a statement this month: "China firmly opposes the US's smear attacks against China without any factual basis."

Chinese migrants in US illegally uneasy after fourth removal flight

13 December 2024, [VOA](#), Bo Gu

After more than two years of separation, Chinese migrant Duan Chunxia, 51, recently met face to face with her husband and daughter at Stewart Detention Center, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Georgia.

"My wife has lost a lot of weight, and her hair turned gray," her husband, Ni Jinfang, told VOA Mandarin in an emotional video interview. "Our daughter cried so much when she saw her mother. Her tears were all over her face and neck."

That tearful reunion on December 1 was the latest in an emotional roller-coaster ride for the family as they've separately come to the United States seeking political asylum.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a surge in Chinese nationals entering the United States illegally and seeking asylum. Over the past year, those numbers have dwindled, and U.S. authorities are stepping up efforts to send a growing number back to China.

There is also increasing concern among undocumented migrants from China about President-elect Donald Trump's pledge to carry out mass deportations.

Deportation flights

Just days after Duan met with her family, she was scheduled to be sent back to China on a U.S. government-chartered removal flight.

That flight departed Monday, but Duan was not on it. Following a second asylum interview, authorities agreed to give her more time to appeal the deportation order.

The charter flight marked the fourth time in six months that the United States has deported undocumented migrants back to China. Three previous flights in June, October and November carried a total of at least 350 Chinese citizens back to their homeland.

The last previous large-scale repatriation occurred in 2018.

Growing cooperation

In a statement Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said the flight "is yet another example of the department's ongoing cooperation with [China] and other international partners to deter irregular migration."

It added that DHS and its counterparts in China "also continue joint work to counter the human smuggling networks that facilitate irregular migration." DHS did not say [how many migrants were on the flight](#).

Chen Chuangchuang, an immigration lawyer in California, told VOA Mandarin that the Chinese and U.S. governments have cooperated more closely on immigration issues this year than previously.

"In the past, China rarely cooperated with the U.S. government in accepting illegal migrants," Chen told VOA in a December phone interview. "China has recently exchanged prisoners with the U.S. many times and also accepted undocumented people. [Chinese leader] Xi Jinping calls it 'law enforcement cooperation' rather than 'border and immigration issues.'"

How they arrived

Ni, 53, and the couple's 18-year-old daughter entered the U.S. on tourist visas in 2022. After Duan's husband and daughter left China, she applied for a tourist visa the following year, but her application was rejected.

More than one year after that, in late September, she illegally entered the U.S., crossing the southern border with Mexico.

Duan made the hazardous journey through Ecuador and then traveled overland through Colombia, Central America and Mexico to the U.S. border.

Both Duan and Ni are from China's central city of Suzhou, just outside Shanghai. The city is relatively wealthy but human rights violations are not unheard of.

In 2012, Ni lost his house and land following a government-led forced demolition. He tried to sue the local government in 2013 but was not given a chance to file his lawsuit. He continued to petition the government without result. In 2016, Ni was assaulted by local police officers and put in jail for 171 days for the crime of "disturbing public order."

Ni continued to speak against the Chinese government after coming to the United States and participated in a

protest in San Francisco last November, when Xi visited the city for the APEC summit and met with U.S. President Joe Biden.

Panicking

Another Chinese immigrant who entered the United States last year via the same route as Duan and is now living in New York state spoke with VOA on the condition that his name not be used because of his undocumented status.

In a telephone interview, he said that with the recent deportations and Trump's pledges, many in the Chinese immigrant community are a little panicked.

"After he takes office, everyone will be worried about being deported, not just us illegal immigrants," he said. "The ones with green cards, aren't they afraid, too?"

Before entering the United States, this man said he had openly criticized Xi on Chinese social media. He said that if he is deported, he will undoubtedly face a prison sentence in China.

The man, who is in his 30s, has already begun applying for political asylum and is still hopeful.

"Although I don't like this result [Trump's victory], this is the choice of the American people, and there is nothing I can do. We are all entering an uncertain era, and everyone's future is uncertain," he said.

Immigration lawyer Chen said that Chinese immigrants in the U.S. who have not yet obtained legal status do face a "real threat."

"The Republicans have already occupied both houses [of Congress], and conservatives also have a clear advantage in the Supreme Court," he said. "We can say with absolute certainty that the second Trump administration will have way more resources, in terms of manpower, law and finances, to support the implementation of his deportation plan. This is bound to happen."

However, Chen does not think that all Chinese immigrants who apply for asylum will be unsuccessful.

"For those who have a deportation order, if you have a legal reason to apply to stay in the U.S., there is still a chance for review. It's not easy though. The standard will be raised," Chen said, adding that individuals need to prove that they will be persecuted if they return to their home country.

US bans all cotton and tomato products from Xinjiang over slave labor

13 December 2024, [ABC Audio](#)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Wednesday it will detain all cotton and tomato products produced in China's Xinjiang province.

The Withhold Release Order (WRO) issued by CBP is based on information that "reasonably indicates" the use of forced labor within China's so-called "re-

education" camps. CBP also claims China is oppressing its Muslim population in that region.

"The goal isn't just to interdict shipments ... that's actually the fallback plan," Acting DHS Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli told reporters Wednesday. "The goal of the WRO is that they stop and that the shipments never arrive -- the ultimate goal is that China abandons these horrific practices."

This is the fourth WRO that CBP has issued in 2021 and the second on products originating in Xinjiang. China's Xinjiang province accounted for eight of the 13 WROs that CBP issued in 2020 -- all stemming from allegations of forced labor.

CBP officials and human rights experts estimate that somewhere between 1 million to 3 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and others are being detained in what U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has dubbed "internment camps" throughout China's Xinjiang province. There are about 1,300 of these facilities scattered throughout the region and they've allegedly forced detainees to work without compensation in nearby factories, according to those same officials.

Evidence from Chinese government documents and media reports indicate that hundreds of thousands of Uighurs in Xinjiang are forced to pick cotton by hand via state-mandated labor, according to a report by the Center for Global Policy published last month. The Chinese government strongly denies all claims of forced labor in Xinjiang.

"I've said this before and I'll say it again: Made in China does not just indicate a country of origin," said Cuccinelli. "It's a warning label."

Cotton is Xinjiang's largest export; cotton exports from China are approximately a \$9 billion industry. Last month, CBP issued a WRO on Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, which had accounted for 17% of those cotton exports.

CBP has not yet quantified Xinjiang's tomato export output, but China's overall output of tomatoes is a \$10 million industry, according to export data from 2019. CBP officials emphasized on the call Wednesday that most of the onus falls on importers and consumers -- urging them to diligently research their supply chains prior to purchasing items from China in general.

"If you're buying apparel and it's considerably lower than the fair market value everywhere else, there's a reason for that," said CBP Acting Commissioner Mark A. Morgan. "Take a few minutes, understand where it's coming from -- is it coming from this region?"

Human rights coalitions have praised the action taken from the U.S. against Beijing's alleged abuses.

"CBP's action is a high-decibel wakeup call to any apparel brand that continues to deny the prevalence and problem of forced-labor produced cotton from the Uyghur region," said Scott Nova, executive director of the Workers Rights Consortium, a member of the coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labour. "The days

when any major apparel brand can safely profit from Xinjiang cotton are over."

Scrutiny against China's actions in Xinjiang has mounted in recent months over allegations of forced sterilization of their Uighur population that surfaced last summer.

The scrutiny made its way to social media last week, when Twitter removed a controversial tweet by the Chinese Embassy in the U.S. In the tweet, the embassy shared an unsubstantiated report on population growth in Xinjiang and wrote that Muslim women in the province were "no longer baby-making machines," adding that the decrease in population growth had led to a drop in terrorism.

"After further review we have taken action on this tweet for violating our rules against dehumanization," a Twitter spokesperson said.

China Restricts Visas To US Officials Who "Interfered" In Hong Kong Affairs

12 December 2024, [NDTV World](#), Anushree Jonko

Mao stated that China has decided to impose visa restrictions on US officials who have performed poorly on Hong Kong-related issues. The move is based on China's foreign relations law and a law on countering foreign sanctions.

Beijing has announced that it will impose visa restrictions on US officials who have "interfered" in Hong Kong affairs. This move comes after Washington said it would impose visa restrictions on Hong Kong officials last month.

According to Mao Ning, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry, the US has "violently interfered in China's internal affairs" by imposing visa restrictions on Chinese officials over Hong Kong issues.

Mao stated that China has decided to impose visa restrictions on US officials who have performed poorly on Hong Kong-related issues. The move is based on China's foreign relations law and a law on countering foreign sanctions.

Mao emphasised that Hong Kong is a part of China and that Hong Kong affairs are China's internal matters.

"I shall emphasise that Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong, and Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal matters," Mao said. "We urge the US side to genuinely respect China's sovereignty, respect the rule of law in Hong Kong, and stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs in any way."

The US had previously announced that it would impose visa restrictions on Hong Kong officials after 45 pro-democracy advocates were sentenced to prison in November. The sentences ranged from four years and two months to 10 years.

"The 45 defendants sentenced today were aggressively prosecuted, and many now face life-altering imprisonment simply for their peaceful participation in political activities which are protected under the Basic Law of Hong Kong," US Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller said after the sentencing hearing.

Comments

The Hong Kong government condemned the US move, saying that foreign governments and organisations had "turned a blind eye to the facts" and made "exaggerated remarks" about the landmark case.

Trump invites China's Xi Jinping to inauguration

12 December 2024, [CBS News](#), Jennifer Jacobs

President-elect Donald Trump has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping to attend his inauguration next month, multiple sources told CBS News, and inauguration officials are making plans for additional foreign dignitaries to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

Trump invited Xi in early November, shortly after the election, sources said, but it was not clear whether he has accepted the invitation. A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately comment.

Transition spokesperson Karoline Leavitt told CBS News on Thursday that Trump invited Xi to the inauguration. She told Fox News on Thursday that it is an example of Trump "creating an open dialogue with leaders of countries that are not just our allies but our adversaries and our competitors too."

In addition to Xi, the president-elect's team has raised the possibility of hosting other leaders at the Capitol on Jan. 20. Hungary's far-right leader, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has a warm relationship with Trump and visited him at Mar-a-Lago this week, is "still considering" whether to attend, according to a source familiar with Orbán's plans.

"World leaders are lining up to meet with President Trump because they know he will soon return to power and restore peace through American strength around the globe," Trump transition spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said.

Ambassadors and other diplomats are typically invited to inaugurations, but State Department records dating back to 1874 show that a foreign leader has never attended a transfer-of-power ceremony.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Thursday that it's "going to be up to President-elect Trump to decide who's going to sit there with him at the inauguration, who's going to be there."

Members of Trump's inner circle remain sharp critics of Xi's government, including Sen. Marco Rubio, his

pick to be secretary of state, and incoming national security adviser Mike Waltz.

Trump himself has threatened to increase tariffs on goods from China. The U.S. has imposed a deadline of Jan. 19, the eve of the inauguration, for TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance to sell the social media app or face a ban in the U.S. TikTok is fighting the ban in court — it lost a bid last week to block the ban but is appealing the case to the Supreme Court.

But Trump has also long believed that close leader-to-leader relationships are key to international deal-making. Since Election Day, world leaders have trekked to Mar-a-Lago to meet with Trump, including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Argentina's president, Javier Milei, has also been granted private audiences with the president-elect.

Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, was the first world leader to host Trump overseas since he won the 2024 election. Also in attendance at the Paris reopening of the Notre Dame Cathedral were Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Prince William.

Trump was mostly unknown on the world stage at his first inauguration in 2017. This time, world leaders are treating Trump essentially as an incumbent.

US House to vote to provide \$3 billion to remove Chinese telecoms equipment

08 December 2024, [CNBCTV](#)

The 1,800-page text was released late Saturday and includes other provisions aimed at China, including requiring a report on Chinese efforts to evade U.S. national security regulations and an intelligence assessment of the current status of China's biotechnology capabilities.

The U.S. House of Representatives is set to vote next week on an annual defense bill that includes just over \$3 billion for U.S. telecom companies to remove equipment made by Chinese telecoms firms Huawei and ZTE from American wireless networks to address security risks.

The 1,800-page text was released late Saturday and includes other provisions aimed at China, including requiring a report on Chinese efforts to evade U.S. national security regulations and an intelligence assessment of the current status of China's biotechnology capabilities.

The Federal Communications Commission has said removing the insecure equipment is estimated to cost \$4.98 billion but Congress previously only approved \$1.9 billion for the "rip and replace" program. Washington has aggressively urged U.S. allies to purge Huawei and other Chinese gear from their wireless networks.

FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel last week again called on the U.S. Congress to provide urgent additional funding, saying the program to replace equipment in the networks of 126 carriers faces a \$3.08 billion shortfall "putting both our national security and the connectivity of rural consumers who depend on these networks at risk."

She has warned the lack of funding could result in some rural networks shutting down, which "could eliminate the only provider in some regions" and could threaten 911 service.

Competitive Carriers Association CEO Tim Donovan on Saturday praised the announcement, saying "funding is desperately needed to fulfill the mandate to remove and replace covered equipment and services while maintaining connectivity for tens of millions of Americans."

In 2019, Congress told the FCC to require U.S. telecoms carriers that receive federal subsidies to purge their networks of Chinese telecoms equipment. The White House in 2023 asked for \$3.1 billion for the program. Senate Commerce Committee chair Maria Cantwell said funding for the program and up to \$500 million for regional tech hubs will be covered by funds generated from a one-time spectrum auction by the FCC for advanced wireless spectrum in the band known as AWS-3 to help meet rising spectrum demands of wireless consumers.

Trump taps China critic Perdue as next ambassador to Beijing

06 December 2024, [BBC](#), Bernd Debusmann Jr

President-elect Donald Trump has named former Georgia Senator David Perdue to become ambassador to China, a key role for how the US deals with one of its biggest global rivals.

Perdue, who was labelled "anti-China" by a Chinese think tank while in Congress, has advocated for a stronger US navy, partly over China's work to increase its military strength.

He is the latest China "hawk" tapped for foreign policy in Trump's next term, as the world wonders if the incoming president will start a trade war with the country.

Earlier this week, Trump said Peter Navarro - who backs high tariffs and taking a hard line on China - would return to the White House as a trade and manufacturing adviser.

Both men tapped by Trump for cabinet roles on foreign policy - Senator Marco Rubio for secretary of state and Fox News weekend host Pete Hegseth for defence secretary - are also China critics, along with Michael Waltz, who is expected to become national security adviser.

In announcing his choice, Trump said Perdue would be "instrumental" in maintaining peace and a "productive working relationship" with China.

The President-elect has vowed to impose stiff tariffs on products entering the US from Canada, Mexico and China during his first days back in office.

A massive trade imbalance between the two countries has persisted for decades. The US imported more than \$420b worth of goods from China in 2023, and exported less than \$150b, federal data shows.

The Chinese embassy in the US recently warned that both countries would suffer consequences if a trade war were to ensue.

"China-US economic and trade cooperation is mutually beneficial in nature," Chinese embassy spokesman Liu Pengyu posted on X earlier this week. "No will win win a trade war or a tariff war."

On Thursday night - following Perdue's nomination - Mr Liu said China stands "ready to engage in dialogue, expand cooperation, and manage differences with the incoming US government so as to maintain stability in China-US relations to the benefits of the two countries and the world at large".

If confirmed by the Senate, Perdue will take over the ambassadorship in Beijing from Nicholas Burns, a veteran diplomat.

Perdue - who lost his senate seat to Democrat Jon Ossoff in 2020 - ran unsuccessfully to unseat Brian Kemp as the state's governor in 2022.

During his failed gubernatorial bid, Perdue repeated Donald Trump's false claims of electoral fraud in the 2020 election.

Prior to getting involved in politics, he was a high-level executive at Dollar General, Reebok and other firms.

China rejects claims of "forced labor" in Xinjiang's tomato industry, criticizing BBC report for relying on subjective claims, unverified assertions

05 December 2024, [Global Times](#)



Farmers are using machinery to harvest tomatoes in Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture, in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on August 2, 2024. Photo: VCG

A spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday strongly rejected claims of "forced labor" in Xinjiang, following a BBC report that tomato purees sold in several British supermarkets may contain ingredients sourced from the region, purportedly linked to "forced labor".

We have repeatedly emphasized that there is no forced labor in Xinjiang, and the Chinese government has always firmly opposed and severely cracked down on forced labor. Xinjiang's tomatoes, like its cotton, are high-quality products globally recognized, spokesperson Lin Jian said, noting that with over 90 percent of tomato harvesting and 85 percent of cotton harvesting in the region mechanized, how can "forced labor" be plausible?

He criticized the BBC report for relying on subjective and unverified claims, highlighting the lack of factual evidence supporting the allegations of forced labor linked to Xinjiang tomatoes harvesting. "The life of news lies in its truth. Not believing in rumors, not spreading rumors, and not listening to or believing in biased views are the minimum requirements of journalistic ethics and the basic qualities of a fair and objective media," Lin said.

Much of the so-called "evidence" in the BBC report and video was centered on subjective assumptions such as 'claims' and 'feelings,' which lacked verification, Lin said. He also accused the BBC of basing on preconceived notions, taking things out of context and making unfounded claims that forced labor exists in tomato harvesting industry in Xinjiang. Lin further criticized the BBC's investigative approach, noting that while relevant reporters spent months studying various tomato sauces, yet they are unwilling to spend a second to understand the truth about Xinjiang. "This is a typical case of double standards and bias," Lin remarked. "Some individuals with ulterior motives continue to sensationalize forced labor claims to gain attention, with a host of so-called directors and actors as well as a stream of so-called testimonies and reports."

Last week, they hype about Xinjiang cotton, and this week it's about Xinjiang tomatoes. Will next week see the same manipulation targeting Xinjiang's solar energy, carrots, or even its beef and lamb? Lin questioned.

Lin stated that no matter how much these allegations are spread, they cannot change the fact that Xinjiang products are of high-quality, nor can they undermine Xinjiang's economic and social stability and development.

I hope that relevant parties can recognize the sinister intentions behind the lies of "forced labor." I also encourage everyone to visit Xinjiang, take a look

around, taste the local tomatoes, experience life in Xinjiang, and feel the real Xinjiang, Lin said.

Activists tell US Congress of China's far-reaching cultural erasure

05 December 2024, [RFA](#), Alex Willemyns

Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese activists say it's hard to escape Beijing's repressive reach.



Julian Ku, a constitutional law professor at New York's Hofstra University, testifies before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Dec. 5, 2024. (Image from Congressional-Executive Commission on China video)

A campaign by China's government to rewrite the cultural identity and history of the country's minority ethnic groups and political dissidents is increasingly being waged on American shores, activists told a U.S. congressional hearing on Thursday.

The Tibetan, Uyghur, Mongolian and Chinese activists said that while the United States once stood as a bastion of free speech and a redoubt of cultural preservation for groups targeted by the Chinese Communist Party, many now feared Beijing's extensive reach.

Rishat Abbas, the president of the U.S.-based Uyghur Academy, told the hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China that his sister Gulshan had been jailed in China on a 20-year sentence due to his and other family member's anti-government activism abroad.

The U.S. government says China's government is carrying out a "genocide" against the mostly Muslim Uyghur minority in the country's far-west. Many Uyghurs abroad actively campaign to end the genocide and to do what they can to preserve their language and culture.

But many look to the treatment of the family members, still trapped in China, of those Uyghurs who choose to speak out, and decide it's safer not to provoke the Chinese Communist Party, even from abroad.

"My sister's imprisonment is a clear action of retaliation," he said. "Her detention exposes the CCP's aggressive policies that target Uyghurs simply for their identity and for the activism of their relatives abroad." "She has never engaged in any form of advocacy in her life," he said.

Abbas said he was nonetheless not deterred, and hoped to one day bring a Uyghur-language textbook developed in the United States back to China's Xinjiang region, where Uyghurs live under surveillance.

Lawfare

It's not only Uyghur immigrants who have been targeted.

In years gone by, American higher education institutions like Stanford University fearlessly curated U.S.-based historical archives about events censored by the Chinese government, said Julian Ku, a constitutional law professor at New York's Hofstra University.

But things have changed.

Ku pointed to a lawsuit brought in the United States by the Beijing-based widow of the late Li Rui – a former secretary to Mao Zedong and later dissident who donated diaries to Stanford.

Stanford says Li Rui donated the diaries through his daughter, fearing that they would be destroyed by Chinese officials if left in China. But Li Rui's widow says they are rightfully hers and wants them returned.

The widow, Ku explained, was inexplicably being represented by "some of the most expensive law firms in the United States," and had likely already racked up legal fees in the "hundreds of thousands of dollars – and probably more – on a widow's Chinese state pension."

Describing the tactic as "lawfare," he suggested that the widow had powerful backers funding the battle, who may not even care if the litigation is ultimately successful.

The nearly four years of costly legal battles sent a message to other U.S. universities, museums or nonprofits to avoid any contentious documents that might attract the attention of Beijing, Ku said.

"They might think, 'Well, maybe I don't want to acquire that one, because it might subject me to litigation in China and maybe litigation here in the United States,'" he said. "It serves as a deterrent for universities, museums and other institutions in the United States."

Living in fear

Like Uyghurs, many ethnically Han Chinese in America also fear speaking out against Beijing even while in the United States, said Rowena He, a historian of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing who was last year banned from entering Hong Kong.

"It's very difficult to not to be emotional being in this room again because I remember 5-10 years ago, when I was first invited to testify to Congress," He recalled. "I was extremely hesitant, because I was so concerned about my family members, and I was so worried."

"I lived with fear ever since the day I started teaching and researching the topic of Tiananmen," she explained, citing the "taboo" around the topic in

China, where the massacre is not openly acknowledged.

She said increased funding for curriculums with alternate Chinese histories to the one put forward by Beijing could be one way to counter the "monopoly on historiography" held by China's government.

"If you go to Chinatown, many people are still supporting the CCP, even though they're physically in the United States," He said, noting that figures like herself were denigrated as anti-government.

"Sometimes people call us 'underground historians,' but I do not like the term 'underground,'" she said. "We are the historians."

Government funding

Geshe Lobsang Monlam, a Tibetan monk who authored a 223-volume Tibetan dictionary and helps lead efforts to preserve Tibetan language outside of China, said one of the main obstacles for Tibetans outside China outside of pressure from Beijing was finding needed funds.

"Inside Tibet, the young Tibetans have appeared powerless in their ability to preserve and promote their language," the monk said, pointing to concerted efforts to erase use of the Tibetan language as young Tibetans grow proficient in using Mandarin through smartphones.

"If there can be assistance by the United States to help procure technological equipment that can enable those of us in exile to continue our work on preservation of Tibetan culture and language and way of life ... that would be very useful for us," he explained.

Temulun Togochoog, a 17-year-old U.S.-born Southern Mongolian activist, similarly appealed for more funding for cultural preservation.



Temulun Togochoog, 17, U.S.-born Southern Mongolian activist testifies before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Dec. 5, 2024. (Image from Congressional-Executive Commission on China video)

Togochoog said while the decreased global focus on the plight of Mongolians in China had allowed her family in the United States to openly teach her about Mongolian culture and their native language with little fear of reprisal, resources were few and far between.

Mongolians living in China's Inner Mongolia were increasingly facing a similar treatment to Tibetans and Uyghurs, she said, with a "systematic oppression and erasure of Mongolian language" taking place in favor of what is called "patriotic education" lionizing the communist party.

In September 2020, many Southern Mongolians protested the policies through coordinated school boycotts and strikes, but there was little news coverage of the ensuing mass arrests, she explained.

"Approximately 300,000 southern Mongolian students joined the movement," she said. "The Chinese government responded harshly, detaining and placing under house arrest 8-10,000 people."

The young activist called on Congress to fund Mongolian-language programs on Voice of America, which currently do not exist. She said that would help the "minority within a minority" to more actively "preserve their language, culture and identity" from erasure.

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

China creates a new county made up largely of India-claimed Aksai Chin

29 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Even as the two countries struggle, with some amount of success in recent times, to normalize their bilateral relations in the face of longstanding border issues, China has created two new counties in Xinjiang of which one is made up mainly of Indian territory it illegally occupied in Aksai Chin after it annexed Tibet in the middle of the last century.

The People's Government of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region had announced the establishment of two new counties in the region – He'an County and Hekang County – reported the *deccanherald.com* Dec 29, citing China's official *Xinhua* news agency this week.

"The establishment of the counties, both administered by Hotan Prefecture, has been approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council," *Xinhua* was quoted as saying.

Hongliu and Xeyidula townships have been declared as the "county seats" (administrative headquarters) of He'an and Hekang respectively.

The report noted that the He'an county encompasses a large part of the 38000 sq km of areas India accuses China of illegally occupying in Aksai Chin.

The *deccanherald.com* report said that while India has not yet officially reacted to it, sources in New Delhi have remarked that such unilateral moves by China would not have any bearing on the bilateral negotiations to resolve the boundary dispute.



The report said the Chinese move came just 10 days after the Special Representatives of the two nations restarted the boundary negotiation, which had been stalled for almost five years.

The Special Representatives of New Delhi and Beijing for boundary negotiations – India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi – met in the capital of the communist country on Dec 18.

They held the 23rd round of boundary negotiations, thus restarting a process that remained stalled for five years after the Chinese People's Liberation Army's aggressive moves along the Line of Actual Control and the Indian Army's counter-deployment in Apr-May 2020 led to a military stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

Apart from the about 38,000 sq km of India's territory in Aksai Chin, which borders eastern Ladakh, Pakistan ceded to China about 5,180 sq. km of India's territory in Saksgam Valley in 1963.

Beijing, on the other hand, claims the Arunachal Pradesh state of India as part of the territory of China and calls it "Zangnan" (south Tibet), on the basis of its claim of sovereignty over occupied Tibet.

China expresses condolences over death of India's former PM Singh

27 December 2024, [Xinhua](#)

China expresses deep condolences over the passing of former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Friday.

"China expresses sincere sympathies to the Indian government and people as well as to Mr. Singh's family," Mao said during a daily press briefing.

"Mr. Singh was a veteran statesman and renowned economist of India, who contributed significantly to the development of China-India relations," Mao said. During his tenure, China and India announced the establishment of a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity and agreed on the political parameters and guiding principles for the settlement of the boundary question, Mao said.

Singh died at 92 Thursday after a prolonged illness. He served two consecutive terms as prime minister of India from 2004 to 2014.

Recent Sino-India pact being implemented effectively, says China

27 December 2024, [The Shillong Times](#)

China's Defence Ministry on Thursday said that the Chinese and Indian militaries are "comprehensively and effectively" implementing the agreement to end the standoff at eastern Ladakh and "steady progress" has been made. Chinese Defence Spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang made the remarks during a media briefing here while answering a question on the December 18 Special Representatives talks. "At present, the Chinese and Indian militaries are comprehensively and effectively implementing the border-related solutions reached between the two sides, and steady progress has been made," he said. He said that in recent times, based on the important

consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, China and India have maintained close communication on the border situation through diplomatic and military channels and achieved great progress.

Following the October 21 agreement between India and China, Special Representatives for border question NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met here and held a comprehensive dialogue on the implementation of the agreement and restoration of the relations which were frozen since the standoff began in April 2020. In October, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in Kazan, Russia, on the sidelines of the BRICS summit and approved the Oct 21 agreement. Col Zhang said that bringing China-India relations back on the right track serves the fundamental interests of the two countries and the two peoples. "The Chinese military is ready to make concerted efforts with the Indian side to faithfully implement the important consensus of the two leaders, conduct more exchanges and interactions, and promote China-India mil-to-mil relationship, in a bid to jointly safeguard lasting peace and tranquillity in the border areas," he added.

India-China ties in 2024: Military standoff with India ends in Ladakh, long freeze over

25 December 2024, [Deccan Herald](#)

Throughout the over four-year crisis, bilateral trade was not impacted. In fact, it continued to boom.

Beijing: It was a breakthrough year in India-China ties after a near freeze in their ties for over four years – the longest since the 1962 war – with an agreement to end the eastern Ladakh military standoff.

After "amassing of a large number of troops by China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh" in April-May 2020, as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a recent statement in Lok Sabha, resulting in the Galwan valley clash in June 2020, there had been a breakdown in the relations between the two Asian giants.

The post-1962 war chill lasted till the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988.

This time, the two countries held periodic talks between the top commanders and through the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC), resulting in disengagement in stages from four points -- the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Gogra -- in eastern Ladakh by creating buffer zones.

Finally, on October 21, India and China firmed up an agreement on patrolling and disengagement of troops

along the LAC in eastern Ladakh at the remaining friction points of Depsang and Demchok.

The agreement led to the first structured meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS summit at Kazan in Russia soon after, their first in five years.

Subsequently, Jaishankar met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the G20 meeting in Brazil in November where they reached an understanding that the Special Representatives (SRs) and the Foreign Secretary-level mechanisms will be convened soon.

Constituted in 2003 to comprehensively address the vexed dispute of the India-China border spanning to 3,488 kms, the Special Representatives mechanism is headed by NSA Doval and Foreign Minister Wang.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh too met his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' meeting in Vientiane in Laos in November.

After the 23rd SR dialogue between Doval and Wang in December, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the extensive talks focussed on a "positive" direction for cross-border cooperation, including resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and border trade, while the Chinese side said a six-point consensus, including continuing to take measures to maintain peace at borders and promote healthy and stable development of relations, was reached between the two sides.

While there was no clarity from China on why it moved its troops near the LAC in 2020, equally puzzling is the timing for the agreement to bring down the border tensions with India, months ahead of the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relationship.

But Beijing, in recent months, appeared to be mellowing down after its economy struggled to reverse its slowdown, weighed down by issues such as property crisis and rising unemployment.

Throughout the over four-year crisis, bilateral trade was not impacted. In fact, it continued to boom.

The bilateral trade, according to Chinese official figures, totalled USD 138.2 billion in 2023, with Chinese exports climbing to USD 122 billion and Indian exports to China standing at USD 16.2 billion. India's trade deficit with China amounted to USD 105.8 billion last year.

The trade deficit in the first six months of this year climbed to USD 41.89 billion, with Chinese exports totalling USD 50.35 billion against India's exports to China USD 8.46 billion, according to data from the Indian Embassy in Beijing.

In 2025, amid stubborn attempts by the US and EU to restrict Chinese exports with heavy tariffs, China looks to push its exports as well as investments in India, especially electric vehicles.

Experts here see the trade expansion with India, currently the fastest growing economy in the world,

also as a new avenue to partly offset its likely damages in the Trump 2.0 era.

China also recalibrated its foreign, trade and military policies ahead of this year's US Presidential elections, especially after President-elect Donald Trump vowed to enhance tariffs over and above what he imposed against China in his first tenure.

Officials here say there is considerable concern in Beijing that India-US relations under Trump's Presidency will pick up further momentum, especially the Quad grouping comprising the US, India, Australia and Japan, which China perceives as an alliance aimed at containing it.

Besides India, China also sought to recalibrate frayed ties with Australia and Japan.

Meanwhile, as China marked 75 years of communist party rule, a crucial meeting of the ruling Communist Party in July adopted a resolution for comprehensive reforms to lift the sluggish growth by achieving socialist modernisation by 2035.

President Xi, who continued to crack the corruption whip on the ruling Communist Party and the military officials, asked them in January to turn the knife inwards and carry the anti-graft campaign without any mercy.

Xi's anti-graft campaign in the military has drawn global attention, which his critics say enabled him to consolidate his hold on power.

China also announced to raise its retirement age from January 2025 after its population dipped for a second consecutive year. The demographic crisis was further highlighted as China's marriage registrations in the first half of 2024 fell to a record low since 1980, not to mention the reduced number of kindergartens and drop in the number of children enrolled in them.

In June, Chinese spacecraft Chang'e-6 successfully touched down in the South Pole-Aitken Basin - the far side of the Moon, in the first endeavour of its kind in human history to collect samples from the rarely explored terrain and brought back the soil.

Meanwhile, Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh continued to be contentious issues as China celebrated the 65th year of its takeover of Tibet.

In March, the Joe Biden administration recognised Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory. Biden also signed into law the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' in July, triggering a sharp response from Beijing.

India not on same page with China on 'bifurcating' border issue at Special Representatives meeting in Beijing

21 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While not denying it as such, India has distanced itself from China's claim that the two sides reached a six-

point consensus and a commitment to a 'package' deal on the boundary question at the Dec 18 Beijing meeting of their special representatives – India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi.

There was no joint statement after that meeting and China's claim about the two sides having agreed to bifurcate the boundary issue from the "overall development of bilateral relations" is clearly opposed to India's stand.

India's position remains that stabilizing the border situation is the basis for the restoration of normal ties between the two countries.

The Chinese statement, issued Dec 18 night, received wide publicity in the Indian media, which talked about a "six-point consensus" and highlighted the fact that Indians may again be able to undertake the Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage in western Tibet soon.

China stopped the pilgrimage in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but never reopened it after bilateral ties plummeted in the wake of eastern Ladakh Galwan valley clash of the troops from the two sides that year.

The clashes led to the two sides escalating their military presence in the region, with the bilateral relationship severely affected in the process.

While both special representatives gave a "positive direction" towards the resumption of the pilgrimage, they have differed on the issue of prioritizing the normalization of the border situation, according to *theprint.in* Dec 20.

The Indian statement asserted that border ties are the cornerstone for determining the overall ties between the two countries. Furthermore, it makes no mention of a "six-point consensus", the report said.

"We put out the details of issues discussed in our press release. The two sides have reaffirmed their commitment to exploring a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable framework for the settlement of the boundary question in accordance with the political parameters and guiding principles agreed in 2005," the report quoted India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal as saying during a regular media briefing Dec 20.

The meeting between Doval and Wang was the first between the two in the special representatives' format since 2019.

China has been pressing New Delhi to normalize overall bilateral ties, including with the resumption of direct flights between the two countries and the issuance of visas to Chinese nationals — both of which have been affected since the clashes at Galwan.

But Jaiswal has clarified that it is a "step-by-step" process before all parts of the relationship get restored.

The political processes of normalisation between the two Asian neighbours began after an agreement was

reached on Oct 21, 2024 to disengage at the friction points in Eastern and Southern Ladakh.

Subsequently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held a bilateral meeting on the margins of the BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan on Oct 23, 2024, the report noted.

China building ability to 'fight and win wars' post 2020 standoff with India: US report

20 December 2024, [First Post](#)

The US Department of Defence's latest report submitted to the US Congress says China has strengthened its ability to 'fight and win wars' in a huge push after the 2020 military standoff with India



Following the 2020 military standoff with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), China has enhanced its development capabilities and concepts to strengthen its ability to "fight and win war" against a "strong enemy," the US Department of Defence has said in its latest report to the US Congress.

In the report that covered the military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC) through early 2024, the US also revealed that China has not scaled back its military presence along the LAC in eastern Ladakh region. It said there was significant and sustained escalation in military infrastructure in the region.

"The Western Theatre Command's (WTC) primary focus is on securing the People's Republic of China border with India. In recent years, differing perceptions between India and the PRC regarding border demarcations have facilitated multiple clashes, force buildups, and military infrastructure construction," report said, referring to the developments along the LAC since the India-China military standoff.

The report further claimed that China has strengthened its training and infrastructure aimed at long-term sustenance of the troops along the LAC.

The report cited the Galwan clash of June 2020, saying that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "has not drawn down its positions or troop numbers since the 2020 clash and has built infrastructure and support facilities to maintain multiple Brigade deployments along the LAC".

“These engagements coincide with a significant and sustained escalation in military infrastructure to support a long-term presence on the LAC,” the report said, referring to the developments on the LAC since the standoff.

On October 21 this year, the Indian government announced that India and China reached an agreement on disengagement and the resumption of patrolling from Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh, the last two friction points of the 2020 standoff, returning to the status quo of pre-April 2020. The US report also observed that since 1998, China has settled 11 land-based territorial disputes with six of its neighbours. It also said that the PRC, in the last decade, used a “more coercive” approach to deal with disputes over maritime features, rights to potentially rich offshore oil and gas deposits, and border areas. The report said that the PLA has continuously been improving its methods and standards of training combined arms units. “Training encompassed individual to collective soldier events integrating reconnaissance, infantry, artillery, armor, engineers, and signal units,” it said.

It also pointed out that in addition to continued deployments on the Indian border and in Myanmar, the PLA conducted multiple large-scale exercises in training areas throughout the country.

The report also pointed out that in 2020, PLA Special Operations Forces from the Tibet Military Region were deployed on the LAC with India following clashes between Chinese and Indian troops in eastern Ladakh.

‘What if China suddenly releases water?’ Arunachal Chief Minister asks protesters against major dam project

20 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Seeking to reason with those protesting against the proposed hydropower project on the Siang river, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has on Dec 19 said the aim of the project is to counter possible threats posed by China with its 60,000 MW hydropower project in upstream Tibet on the Yarlung Tsangpo river just before it enters Tuting in Upper Siang.

“In case, China releases water from their dams all of a sudden, a trail of unimaginable destruction will sweep through the Siang belt, Assam and Bangladesh.

“It is also inevitable that the volume of water in the Siang river will drastically get reduced during the winters so much (so) that you will be able to cross the mighty Siang on foot. Would you like such a situation? I certainly won’t,” the *deccanherald.com* Dec 19 quoted Khandu as saying, addressing a function at Boleng in Siang district.

“We are optimistic that with the progress being made through bilateral talks with China, relations will improve; but we cannot remain complacent and be prepared for the unseen,” he has added.

He has said China, which is not a signatory to the International Water Conventions, intends to divert the water from the multiple water reservoirs to be created under the project to dry regions of Tibet and elsewhere in the PRC.

The Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, Khandu has said, has been proposed by New Delhi to maintain natural flow of water in the Siang river throughout the year and flood modulation in case of water release by China.

The Yarlung Tsangpo is called the Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and the Brahmaputra in Assam.

Khandu’s comments came amid strong protests led by several civil society organisations against possible adverse impact of the proposed hydro power project on the Siang river. The protesters have refused to allow the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC), a federal Public Sector Undertaking, to carry out a pre-feasibility study for the major project.

Khandu has rejected reports that central forces will be used by the government to forcibly execute the project.

“We are a democratic country. We do not believe in forcing projects on our own people. We believe in taking into confidence the last man in the queue.”

He has also said, according to the *etvbharat.com* Dec 19, “If you don’t want a dam, if you don’t want a hydropower project, there won’t be. Chapter closed”.

“But,” he has added, “The case at hand is not about a hydropower project. It’s about a Multipurpose Project, a project of national importance and envisioned by the Government of India and the Niti Aayog.”

The NITI Aayog (lit. ‘Policy Commission’; abbreviation for National Institution for Transforming India) serves as the apex public policy think tank of the Government of India, and the nodal agency tasked with catalyzing economic development. It was established in 2015 to replace the country’s Planning Commission.

China ready to enhance mutual trust with India at border talks, foreign ministry says

17 December 2024, [Reuters](#)



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian speaks during a press conference in Beijing, China March 20, 2024. REUTERS/Tingshu Wang/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights

China is ready to work with India to enhance mutual trust through dialogue and communication, and manage differences with sincerity and integrity, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Lin Jian, a ministry spokesperson, made the remarks when asked about the upcoming talks between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval this week on border issues. Wang and Doval are set to meet in Beijing on Wednesday in a resumption of talks under their "special representatives dialogue" mechanism since deadly border clashes soured ties four years ago. "China stands ready to work with India to implement the important consensus reached by the two countries' leaders, respect each other's core interests and major concerns... and bring bilateral relations back to a stable and healthy development track at an early date," Lin said at the ministry's regular press briefing.

Chinese President Xi Jinping met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Russia in October just days after the two countries reached a deal on patrolling their disputed frontier to end a four-year military stand-off.

Both leaders agreed to boost communications and resolve conflicts and differences, directing their officials to take further steps to stabilise all aspects of bilateral ties.

Relations between the nuclear-armed neighbours have been strained in recent years, after at least 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops were killed in hand-to-hand combat in the Galwan Valley in 2020.

Ties had remained frozen since, with their trust eroded by repeated border stand-offs.

Wang last met Doval in September in St Petersburg, Russia, with the two agreeing to redouble efforts to ensure complete disengagement on the contested frontier.

India's Spending on Defense To Deter China

18 December 2024, [The Heritage Foundation](#), Wilson Beaver

In a move that signals India's growing commitment to strengthen its own security, the country's Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently approved two new deals that will significantly enhance its defense capabilities.

These deals include the construction of two nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and the acquisition of 31 Predator drones (MQ-9B) from U.S. defense-contractor General Atomics. Both are smart strategic decisions that underscore India's willingness to safeguard its interests, strengthen its capacity, and modernize its defense architecture.

New Delhi has an eye on China, of course. As Beijing continues to assert its influence and military presence across the Indian Ocean and beyond, India's investments in undersea warfare and unmanned aerial systems are timely and necessary. However, the procurement of SSNs and the acquisition of MQ-9Bs are more than just a response to China's rise. They represent India's broader ambition to act as a key player in the Indo-Pacific's security architecture.

China's Ambitions Are Endangering the Pacific Islands

The Indian Navy, already operating nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, has long advocated for the additional procurement of nuclear-powered attack submarines. This project, which is estimated to cost an initial \$5.4 billion, will make the Indian Navy far more capable of defending its interests in the Indian Ocean. Nuclear-powered submarines are the apex predator of undersea warfare and offer a versatile offensive capability for conventional warfare and force projection. Australian defense policymakers entered into the AUKUS agreement with the United States in order to purchase nuclear-powered attack submarines based on a similar analysis.

India has long recognized the importance of indigenous defense manufacturing and self-reliance under the "Make in India" initiative, and the procurement of SSNs represents a new frontier that enhances India's defense capabilities while simultaneously reducing dependency on foreign suppliers such as the [Russian Akula-class SSN](#), which India previously leased until 2021.

Moreover, the SSNs are critical for the Indian Navy to match the growing power of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy, which has 12 nuclear-powered submarines and continues to expand. The nuclear-powered attack submarines will allow India to conduct extended patrols, including around the Strait of Malacca and in the South China Sea.

America's Allies Need To Increase Defense Spending

Also significant is India's decision to purchase 31 Predator Drones from the United States, valued at

approximately \$3.99 billion. The MQ-9B purchase, which includes 16 Sky Guardian and 15 Sea Guardian High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), will enhance intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of India's armed forces.

These advanced MQ-9B drones will also provide India the capacity for precision strikes on strategic targets. Most importantly, this deal reflects India's deepening defense partnership with the United States, which has been growing steadily through bilateral channels and multilateral initiatives such as the Quad.

This acquisition comes at a time when the Indian Ocean is increasingly becoming a theater of strategic competition, particularly with China's expanding naval footprint and its aggressive maritime ambitions. Amid growing concerns over illicit maritime activities and the presence of Chinese surveillance vessels in the Indian Ocean, the MQ-9B drones will give India an ability to monitor and respond swiftly to increased Chinese aggression. These Predator drones will further enable real-time intelligence gathering and targeted operations throughout the vast Indian Ocean.

By enhancing its undersea warfare capabilities and expanding its surveillance and strike potential, India's recent two deals represent concrete steps to safeguard its maritime interests, protect critical sea lanes, and strengthen its role as a key player in the region.

23rd Meeting of the Special Representatives of India and China

18 December 2024, [MEA](#)

The 23rd Meeting of the Special Representatives (SRs) of India and China, respectively Shri Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor of India, and Mr. Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs, was held in Beijing on 18 December 2024.

2. The SRs met in accordance with the decision taken during the recent meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in Kazan for them to meet at an early date to oversee the management of peace & tranquillity in border areas and to explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question.

3. The SRs reiterated the importance of maintaining a political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship while seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable framework for settlement of the boundary question, and resolved to inject more vitality into this process.

4. This was the first meeting of the SRs since frictions had emerged in the Western Sector of the India-China

border areas in 2020. The SRs positively affirmed the implementation of the latest disengagement agreement of October 2024, resulting in patrolling and grazing in relevant areas.

5. Both SRs underlined the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas to promote overall development of the India-China bilateral relationship. They emphasised the need to ensure peaceful conditions on the ground so that issues on the border do not hold back the normal development of bilateral relations. Drawing on the learnings from the events of 2020, they discussed various measures to maintain peace and tranquillity on the border and advance effective border management. They decided to use, coordinate and guide the relevant diplomatic and military mechanisms towards this purpose.

6. The SRs exchanged views on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest. They provided positive directions for cross-border cooperation and exchanges including resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, data sharing on trans-border rivers and border trade. They agreed on the salience of stable, predictable and amicable India-China relations for regional and global peace and prosperity.

7. NSA called on H.E. Mr. Han Zheng, Vice President of the People's Republic of China.

8. NSA invited Mr. Wang Yi to visit India at a mutually convenient date to hold the next round of SR meeting.

Successful Modi-Xi meeting signifies new beginning of India-China ties: senior CPC official

11 December 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The "successful" meeting between Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and President **Xi Jinping** in Russia in October "signified a new beginning" of India-China relations, a senior minister of the ruling CPC has said. Liu Jianchao, Minister of the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party of China (CPC) was referring to the Modi-Jinping meeting at Kazan in Russia on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia while speaking with the Indian envoy to China, Pradeep Kumar Rawat, on Tuesday, official media said on Wednesday.

The restarting of China-India relations meets the fundamental interests of the 2.8 billion people of the two countries, corresponds to the common expectations of the Global South and is also in line with the correct direction of history, he said.

Liu said China is willing to strengthen friendly exchanges with all political parties in India, jointly implement the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, and promote the early return of bilateral relations to a stable and healthy development track.

Modi and Xi met at Kazan on October 24 after the two countries reached an agreement to end the over four-year military standoff at Eastern Ladakh during which the relations between the two countries were virtually frozen.

During their meeting, their first in five years, the two leaders endorsed the agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the LAC in eastern Ladakh and instructed the Special Representatives for the boundary mechanism to meet to discuss further steps. After their meeting, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Brazil followed by the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on China-India Border Affairs (WMCC).

Indian opposition raises doubts over India-China border deal

11 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Biman Mukherji

Despite opposition concerns, analysts expect the deal to proceed driven by economic necessity and a desire to enhance trade between the two Asian giants

India's opposition has raised concerns about potential territorial concessions under the country's recent border agreement with China, increasing political scrutiny of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government as it works to ease tensions with Beijing. The controversy erupted after Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's parliamentary statement on December 4 outlining the disengagement of troops from the border following the deadly 2020 Himalayan border clash.

On Sunday, Jairam Ramesh, a senior leader of the main opposition Congress Party, slammed the agreement in parliament as going against India's national interests. "We want to go back to the status quo of April 2020 ... thereafter we will be looking at disengagement, de-escalation and normal management of the LAC (Line of Actual Control), referring to the India-China border," Ramesh was quoted as saying by the Hindu newspaper, hinting that India may have seceded land in the deal.

However, analysts say opposition pressure is unlikely to derail the thawing of relations between the two Asian giants, who have been pulling back troops since late October after years of being locked virtually eyeball-to-eyeball at two positions on the border.

"I don't really think that any charges, until substantially proven, will have any impact whatsoever on this government," said Yashwant Deshmukh, an independent political commentator. "If the government has decided to go ahead with talks with China, they will go ahead and at this point of time, the opposition is not really in a position to accuse this government of any wrongdoing."

Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) strengthened its mandate by an unexpected victory in state elections in the politically strategic state of Maharashtra last month, he said. The victory followed another surprising win in the northern state of Haryana in October.

The losses have weakened the Congress party, which was gaining momentum after scoring crucial victories in the BJP's heartland Hindi-speaking provinces, resulting in the BJP losing its outright majority in the summer parliamentary elections.

"After the huge loss in Maharashtra, I think the opposition, particularly the Congress, will need a lot of steam together in order to bring any narrative against the BJP NDA government," Deshmukh said.

Sino-Indian relations are on the mend. A reset to pre-pandemic levels is a good start

Uday Chandra, analyst

Sino-Indian relations are on the mend. A reset to pre-pandemic levels is a good start

The border disengagement has raised hopes for improved China-India trade relations, which could have widespread ramifications throughout Asia, especially with incoming US President Donald Trump's threat to raise import tariffs.

India and China have not had direct flights for four years since the border tensions, while New Delhi's increased scrutiny for visa applications from Chinese citizens has hampered cooperation in sectors such as electronics manufacturing.

"Sino-Indian relations are on the mend. A reset to pre-pandemic levels is a good start," said Uday Chandra, an assistant professor of government at Georgetown University.

In May, China appointed senior diplomat Xu Feihong as its new ambassador to India, filling an 18-month vacancy in the backdrop of tense bilateral relations. "The next step should be direct flights resuming. I anticipate that, with business lobbying, this is likely in 2025," Chandra said.

"I doubt the Opposition [in India] will play a significant role in this phase of diplomacy. Opposition unity remains elusive anyway," Chandra said.

Mamata Banerjee, leader of the All Trinamool Congress Party, which holds significant influence in West Bengal, recently staked a claim for the leadership position of the opposition alliance INDIA Bloc, triggering a war of words with the Congress party and raising concerns about opposition unity.

Economic need

Chandra said the economic imperative to strengthen India-China relations will enhance political engagement.

"Economics continues to trump politics. After the US election, India and China are working out how to live and trade peacefully together. It is an alternative

model of international relations as the West sinks into democratic crises,” Chandra said.

Experts say global supply chains could be disrupted and reshaped if the incoming Trump administration implements its campaign pledge of a 60 per cent import tariffs on China and 10 per cent on other nations.

Earlier this month, the US president-elect threatened a 100 per cent tariff on Brics countries, which includes China and India, if the 11-member group were to create a rival currency to the US dollar. Such a [Brics](#) currency has been discussed for over a year without any significant progress.

“There are strong incentives for both [China and India] to trade intensively, even in the absence of any policy developments,” said Jamus Lim, associate professor of economics at ESSEC Business School Asia-Pacific.

The most obvious reason for the two countries to trade is “that they are both large economies, located close to each other,” he said, noting that the two countries specialise in fairly distinct exports.

The main reason for trade between the two countries, he said, is their proximity as large economies that specialise in different exports. India excels in the services sector, particularly information technology, while China focuses on manufacturing.

“Now, with further normalisation of bilateral political relations, and the frictions arising from impediments to trade that are likely to result from the Trump administration, I anticipate a continued, steady expansion of trade between these two emerging market giants,” he said.

Chinese company to set up plant in Punjab to manufacture robotic agricultural tools

09 December 2024, [Dunya News](#)

A Chinese company has agreed to set up robotic agricultural equipment manufacturing plants in Punjab.

An agreement was signed between the Chinese company AI Force Tech and the Punjab government during Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz’s visit to China. She had a meeting with the founder and CEO of the AI Force Tech Dr Han and briefed him on agricultural reforms her government planned to implement in Punjab. She assured the Chinese company of cooperation for setting up robotic agricultural machinery manufacturing plant in Punjab.

Earlier, Chief Minister Maryam inspected the latest agricultural tools and expressed her determination to introduce them in Punjab to revolutionise agriculture sector.

A delegation from AI Force Tech will soon visit Punjab at the invitation of Chief Minister Maryam.

MARYAM’S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO ANY COUNTRY

Earlier, on Sunday, Maryam Nawaz held a meeting with a high-level delegation of the Communist Party of China in Beijing.

On this occasion, she expressed her desire to make Punjab economically sound in collaboration with China.

At the Beijing Airport, she was welcomed by six senior representatives of the Communist Party of China.

She is the first Pakistani woman chief minister to visit China.

Senator Pervez Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari, Minister for Transport Bilal Akbar, Minister for Agriculture Ashiq Hussain Kirmani are part of the delegation.

During her trip, she will visit Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong. The visit will focus on exploring cooperation in the fields of Information Technology (IT), healthcare, and industry.

Maryam Nawaz will also meet prominent Chinese leaders and key government officials during her visit.

China, India vow to learn lessons of deadly 2020 border clash, keep talking to avert rerun

06 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Maple Leung

Calls for openness mark first WMCC talks since both sides withdrew from face-off points along disputed western Himalayan border

India and China have pledged to reflect on the lessons learned from their border stand-off in 2020, while emphasising the need for regular communication to prevent a recurrence.

The resolution came at the first diplomatic talks under a key dialogue mechanism since both sides withdrew from two face-off points along their disputed western Himalayan border.

“The two sides positively affirmed the implementation of the most recent [troop] disengagement agreement which completed the resolution of the issues that emerged in 2020,” a statement from the Indian foreign ministry said after the 32nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China Border Affairs, held in New Delhi on Thursday.

The issues of 2020 refer to a series of stand-offs that summer along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) separating Indian-controlled Ladakh and Chinese-controlled Aksai Chin. Matters came to a head with clashes in the Galwan River valley that left dozens of Indian troops and at least four Chinese soldiers dead, plunging bilateral ties to their lowest point in decades. To prevent such incidents in the future, both sides emphasised the need for “exchanges and contacts at

the diplomatic and military levels through established mechanisms”, according to New Delhi.

The Chinese foreign ministry also highlighted the importance of leveraging the border negotiation mechanism, and maintaining open diplomatic and military channels.

The two sides agreed to take measures to further ease the situation along the border, it said.

The meeting focused on making preparations for the next round of border talks at the “special representative” level, and maintaining communication through diplomatic and military channels for sustainable peace and tranquillity in the border area, according to the Chinese readout.

The Indian statement said the next meeting of the special representatives would be held “in accordance with the decision of the two leaders in their meeting in Kazan” on October 23, when Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on the sidelines of the Brics summit.

The summit came days after India said it had reached a deal with China on patrolling the frontier in eastern Ladakh to end the four-year military stand-off, signalling an easing of tensions.

Thursday’s meeting in the capital was co-chaired by Hong Liang, director general of the Chinese foreign ministry’s Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, and Gourangalal Das, joint secretary for East Asia from the corresponding Indian ministry. The pair also led the 31st round of the WMCC talks held in Beijing in August.

At the 30th round, also held in New Delhi, both sides sought to promote the healthy and stable development of ties and “turn the page” on the border issue at an early date.

On Tuesday, Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that both countries would consider “other aspects” of bilateral ties in a calibrated manner now that troops had pulled back from the last two face-off points on their Himalayan border.

“Recent developments that reflect our continuous diplomatic engagement since then have set our ties in the direction of some improvement,” Jaishankar told lawmakers in New Delhi.

“The conclusion of the disengagement phase now allows us to consider other aspects of our bilateral engagement in a calibrated manner, keeping our national security interests first and foremost.”

As relations improve, Indian foreign minister outlines three principles for engaging with China

05 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

India’s External affairs minister S Jaishankar has on Dec 3 informed the Lok Sabha, the lower house of

parliament, that India-China relations had improved, and emphasized government’s commitment to engaging with the country, according to the [hindustantimes.com](#) Dec 3.

He has also informed the country’s lawmakers that recent military and diplomatic talks had resolved border issues, including the October patrolling agreement for areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

He has also informed the Rajya Sabha, the upper house, on Dec 4 that peace and tranquillity in border areas is a pre-requisite for development of bilateral relationship with China, and the two sides will be discussing de-escalation and effective management of activities in these areas in the coming days, according to the [timesofindia.com](#) Dec 5.

In his Rajya Sabha statement on “Recent Developments in India’s Relations with China”, Jaishankar has said China was in “illegal occupation” of 38,000sqkm of Indian territory in Aksai Chin as a result of the 1962 conflict while Pakistan had “illegally” yielded 5,180sqkm of Indian territory to China, which has been under Chinese occupation since 1948.

He has further explained: “While there is a Line of Actual Control, it doesn’t have a common understanding in some areas. We remain committed to engaging with China through bilateral discussions to arrive at a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable framework for boundary settlement.”

In his identical statement in the Lok Sabha, Jaishankar has further said, “Keeping our national security interests foremost, in my recent meeting with foreign minister Wang Yi, we reached an understanding that the special representatives and the foreign secretary-level mechanism will be convened soon.”

He has outlined three key principles to be upheld in all circumstances for engagement with China: “one: both sides should strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control (LAC); two: neither side should attempt to unilaterally alter the status quo; and three: agreements and understandings reached in the past must be fully abided by in their entirety”.

India's success in capturing 'China-Plus-One strategy' limited: NITI report

04 December 2024, [Business Standard](#)

It said that India is seen as an attractive destination for companies looking to shift their bases out of China and this shift offers the country a chance to enhance its manufacturing capabilities



In recent years, it said, India's share in global trade has fallen for labour-intensive sectors. | Representational Image: Bloomberg

India has seen limited success so far in capturing the 'China Plus One strategy', while Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia have become bigger beneficiaries, according to a report of government think tank Niti Aayog.

It said that factors such as cheaper labour, simplified tax laws, lower tariffs and pro-activeness in signing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have played a critical role in helping these countries expand their export shares.

The US has implemented stricter export controls and higher tariffs on Chinese goods to limit China's growth and expenditure towards technological progress.

This has led to a fragmentation of global supply chains, prompting multinational corporations to seek alternatives to Chinese manufacturing.

It said that India is seen as an attractive destination for companies looking to shift their manufacturing bases out of China and this shift offers the country a chance to enhance its domestic manufacturing capabilities, particularly in high-tech industries.

"However, India has seen limited success so far in capturing the China Plus One strategy so far," said the report - 'Trade Watch Quarterly'.

In recent years, it said, India's share in global trade has fallen for labour-intensive sectors despite significant endowment.

"China is the main competitor in several key product categories highlighting the need for India to enhance competitiveness in these products. India has a solid foothold in developed markets like the USA, UK, and Germany, across top product categories but there are opportunities to explore emerging markets," it said.

It also said that several studies assessing the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) identify African and Asian countries as the "most" vulnerable to its effects.

CBAM (or carbon tax), is aimed at preventing carbon leakage and will apply to high-risk imports such as cement, iron and steel, aluminium, fertilizers, electricity, and hydrogen starting January 2026. It requires the purchase of CBAM certificates, reflecting the carbon emissions linked to these goods.

For India, the iron and steel industry, representing 23.5 per cent of its EU exports, faces the highest exposure under CBAM, it added.

"Indian firms may incur tariffs of 20-35 per cent, leading to higher costs, reduced competitiveness, and lower demand in the EU market. Additionally, compliance costs will rise due to the need for detailed emissions reporting," the report said.

The European Union (EU) is India's second-largest trading partner. In 2023-24, the EU accounted for 17.4 per cent (\$ 76 billion) of the country's total exports.

COMMENTARIES

Indian Tibetan community's struggles in exile: Declining numbers, preservation of art & culture

30 December 2024, [The Print](#), Keshav Padmanabhan

The community, headquartered in Dharamshala, has increasingly faced a number of challenges, especially since 2008. Falling number of Tibetans fleeing China has impacted them severely.

The Tibetan community in Dharamshala is grappling with new problems—drop in enrollment numbers in the schools established by them, preservation of their traditional art and culture, and increased emigration from India to the western world. The challenges faced by the exiled Tibetan community, headquartered in Himachal Pradesh, are largely due to a significant decline in the number of Tibetans fleeing China over the past decade and a half.

From around 3,000 refugees a year, till around 2008, the Tibetan resettlement office in Dharamshala in 2023 had to focus their efforts on resettling just six refugees, said Kunchok Migmar, the Tibetan settlement officer for the district, in an interaction with media persons earlier this month.

The fall in numbers fleeing has been especially acute since 2008—following the unrests witnessed that year in multiple provinces of China, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan, primarily in the months from March till May and then sporadically till the end of the year. The unrest also coincided with Beijing hosting the Summer Olympics for the first time.

According to various Tibetans living in exile, both events led to significant restrictions on the routes used to flee China for India.

According to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in exile, at least 344 protests of [different magnitudes occurred](#) throughout 2008. Nearly 7,000 Tibetans were arrested and around 200 were killed during the protests, according to the CTA, while China maintains that at least 19 people were killed by the protestors, who were predominantly Han Chinese.

“Before 2008, the Tibetan Children’s Villages (TCV)—the schooling system set up by the community in exile—had roughly 17,000 students. Now there are only 5,000 students across all the schools, with around 500 students in the senior classes,” said Kalsang Phuntsok, the General Secretary of TCV in an interaction with media persons.

Phuntsok added, “The 1980s saw an influx of Tibetans coming to India, leading to the opening of new schools. The number of students has started diminishing for a number of reasons. The two primary reasons are the falling number of Tibetans coming from China, and dropping fertility rates.”

The TCV, established in 1960 by the Dalai Lama for orphaned children who were among the early Tibetan refugees fleeing China, was originally managed by

Tsering Dolma, the elder sister of the spiritual leader. However, after she passed away in 1964, its management passed into the hands of Jetsun Pema. From 51 students in 1960, the TCV has seen over 50,000 students pass through its residence halls in 64 years—a third of the total Tibetan population in exile. “By 2030, two or three of our schools will be left with no students. We are already thinking about closing down TCV Lower Dharamshala next year as it has only 74 students on its rolls,” said Phuntsok. “At our homes (dormitories), there were 80 to 100 children living together from ages of 6 to 14 at one point in time. Today there are about 20 to 30 children per home.”

As the number of Tibetans in exile continues to decline, the community has adapted, in a manner, by inviting Trans-Himalayan communities, such as those from Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, to participate in protecting their culture.

Today, around 30 percent of students in TCVs are Indian citizens from these regions and communities with communal links to the Tibetan community.

Earlier this year, the TCV administration extended an invitation to the Tibetan exile community living outside India to send their children to study in its traditional schooling system. This year, around six children from different countries were seen

Over the years, many Tibetans living in India have emigrated, spreading the community across 130 countries, with a significant concentration in the Western world. Approximately half of the Tibetan exile population—around 80,000 people—remains in India.

Impact on Tibetan arts and culture

For Tibetans in exile, the diminishing number of those fleeing China also has an impact on the preservation of its traditional arts and culture. According to the United Nations, at least a million Tibetan children in China have been slowly assimilated into the larger Han Chinese cultural norms through Beijing’s residential schooling system.

This has an impact on their native language and traditions, both of which the community living in exile are doing their best to preserve. One of the earliest institutions that the Dalai Lama setup mere months after arriving in India is the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA).

Founded in Kalimpong, before moving to Dharamshala in 1961, the institute has seen around 550 students pass through its residential programmes in studying various Tibetan art forms, including Lhamo (opera), as well as carpentry, music and other traditional performing arts.

“Our focus is not only on preserving Tibetan culture, but also Trans-Himalayan traditions in Ladakh and Tawang. In recent years, students from these regions have also been given training at TIPA,” said Dhondup Tsering, the director of the institute, in an interaction with media persons.

Around two decades ago, TIPA had about 50-60 students on their rolls going through the full seven-year training programme. Today, the number of students at TIPA is around 35.

“We are looking to collaborate with institutions in India, like the National School of Drama in New Delhi, and other institutes to help promote our culture across the country,” added Dhondup Tsering.

Earlier this year, the institute held an open call in the various schools in the surrounding areas of Dharamshala in order to find more students to train at TIPA. Primarily funded by grants from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), TIPA has continued to promote art forms including the famed snow-lion performances apart from the annual Shoton Festival held in the months of June and July.

Similar to how Tibetan schools have adapted to bring in students from Ladakh and other regions across the Himalayas, TIPA is looking to expand its collaboration and training with new institutes that have slowly been created in these areas.

15th Dalai Lama: Will Tenzin Gyatso name successor on his 90th birthday?

30 December 2024, [Money Control](#)

The Dalai Lama fled to India in early 1959, following a failed uprising against Chinese rule. Since then, he has led the Tibetan government-in-exile and maintained his spiritual leadership for Tibetan Buddhists.

The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso's, recent reassurance regarding his health has added to the growing speculation regarding his continuity as the spiritual leader and the head of the Tibetan Buddhists or his decision to name a successor. The public talk around the appointment of the 15th Dalai Lama has grown ever since Tenzin Gyatso (the incumbent spiritual head) underwent a knee surgery in New York earlier this year.

"According to my dream, I may live 110 years," the Dalai Lama said when asked about his health and how he was feeling. This reply has become familiar to those who have closely followed the Nobel laureate, as he has been offering similar assurances for years.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in early 1959, following a failed uprising against Chinese rule. Since then, he has led the Tibetan government-in-exile and maintained his spiritual leadership for Tibetan Buddhists. Beijing, however, insists it will choose his successor. The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, has maintained that his reincarnation could be found in India, and warned that any successor chosen by China would not be respected by his followers.

Tibetan Buddhists believe that learned monastics are reincarnated after death as newborns. Thus, the question of his successor has remained central to the

community's future. His prediction of living for another two decades is a comfort to his followers, though many still seek clarity on how the transition will unfold.

Dolma Tsering Teykhang, the deputy speaker of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile, which is also based in Dharamshala, noted that more clarity on the Dalai Lama's succession could come when he turns 90 in July. "We are just lay people, we can't fathom his wisdom, so we are waiting for his clear guidance," Teykhang told Reuters in her office, which is located about 2 km (1.5 miles) from the Dalai Lama's residence.

Bracing for a Chinese storm in the Indian Ocean

29 December 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Srikanth Kondapalli

A quiet but steady Tsunami is building in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), qualitatively different from the one that hit 20 years ago but orchestrated by China through its trade, energy dependence, frantic maritime dual-use port construction, unleashing massive surveillance, flooding the region with arms sales, and power projection. In 2012, China's 18th Communist Party Congress passed a resolution for "building a strong maritime nation". Since then, China's maritime footprint is expanding to include trade, energy imports and exploration, fisheries, marine transportation, shipbuilding industry, naval build-up, search for bases abroad, and others. China is currently building its maritime power and making efforts to create an alternative maritime order. At the conceptual level, even though China is not an IOR state, it floated the "China-Indian Ocean Region" initiative for building a "maritime community with a shared future".

China has become a major trading partner for the 38 Indian Ocean states. Since the 2013 launch of the Maritime Silk Road, China has a naval support base at Djibouti, 24 maritime ports under construction of which nine have been completed, and five maritime outposts in the IOR. These include the 99-year lease of the Kyaukphyu port which connects with the oil and gas pipeline to Yunnan and expansion of dual-use infrastructure in Coco Islands in Myanmar, a 99-year lease of Hambantota and Colombo Port Terminal in Sri Lanka, a 45-year lease of Gwadar in Pakistan, Payra and Chittagong in Bangladesh, Darwin in Australia, and others. These agreements come in handy for China to exert pressure to dock its ships. In 2014, for instance, a Chinese submarine docked at Colombo port and surveillance ships at Hambantota.

China is building at a cost of \$29 billion three railway lines to Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, eventually connecting to Laem Chabang Port in the Gulf of

Thailand. Thailand and China are also planning a "land bridge" to connect the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.

China conducted surveillance missions and cyber warfare in the IOR, expanded naval arms exports to Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan, besides signing military aid agreement with Maldives, in March 2024. However, in September 2019, India expelled the Chinese research vessel Shi Yan 1 after it was found operating without permission in India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI).

China's navy is now the world's largest at 370 vessels, aspiring to grow to 435 by 2030. India, in contrast, aspires to acquire 175 ships by 2035 from the current 132. China has sent 46 naval contingents to the Indian Ocean since 2008, some of which conducted amphibious operations and air defence exercises that are not relevant for counter-piracy operations in the Somali coast, thus violating its UN Security Council commitments.

At any given time, China has eight to ten warships deployed in IOR, apart from research or spy vessels and many illegal fishing vessels. It despatches a submarine every month and in 2020, executed the use of unmanned underwater drones to map the ocean floor around the ANI. With three aircraft carriers, with a plan to have 11 in all, China is poised to send carrier task force patrols to the IOR by 2025.

It is estimated that China gets more than 80 million tonnes of fish in the Indo-Pacific through illegal fishing that violates Article 56 of the international maritime laws under the UNCLOS. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has become a major problem. It is in this context that the Quad launched in 2022 Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness to combat IUU fishing and monitor "dark shipping". In July this year, the Quad foreign ministers meeting at Tokyo decided to take concrete measures in this regard.

To protect its maritime interests, India initiated its first joint integrated command, the Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC) in 2001. It protects 600,000 sq km of EEZ in the region that is about 30% of India's 2 million sq km. Yet, the security situation is becoming complicated with China's naval forays. China's leader Mao Zedong once observed: "whatever the enemy has, we should have". The ANC should deploy the most modern equipment and skills to safeguard not only India's national interests but also the "preferred partners" in the region.

India needs to adopt a comprehensive strategy and take steps to protect its maritime interests and the Ten Degree Channel, boost its Act East Policy by leapfrogging from the ANI, build world-class infrastructure (including a transshipment facility at

Great Nicobar), evolve connectivity between ANI and Sabang Port in Indonesia.

India also needs to enhance unmanned underwater drones and long-endurance submarines for deterrence operations, assist in capacity build-up and conduct surveillance, search and rescue operations with South East Asia and enhance conventional and strategic capabilities at the ANC.

On a path to embrace Chinese models

29 December 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#), Ajaya Bhadra Khanal

Nepal's plurality of parties and its ingrained kleptocratic system will undermine Oli's efforts. As the year 2024 ends, it is the time to question, "What next?" With Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli at the helm, the question has become even more interesting.

In the face of increased geopolitical rivalry at the global and regional levels, what kind of foreign policy is Nepal practising, and where will it take the country? What are the prospects for economic development and democratic evolution?

Given the status of political party dynamics, geopolitical tussle and Nepal's weak diplomatic capacity, Nepal's prospects of economic development and democratic evolution look bleak at best. Oli's efforts to emulate China's growth model and political party discipline will also be undermined by the plurality of political parties and an ingrained kleptocratic system.

Geopolitics

In December, Nepal signed a landmark framework agreement with China on the Belt and Road Initiative after intense negotiations between the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML on the one hand and between Nepal and China on the other. Nepal was able to revise and trim down China's proposed "BRI Implementation Plan" according to Nepal's priorities. However, Nepal's proposal to develop the Nepal-China Friendship Park in Damak and consent to insert security and global initiatives in the joint communique, despite India's concern, may have raised red flags.

Nepal's efforts to exercise strategic autonomy in the face of asymmetric power balance and geopolitical rivalry are undermined by several flaws. First, of course, is the political predilection, which heavily favours China. During several negotiations with China, Nepal's bureaucracy and political leadership appear soft on China but hard on India.

A series of events since 2008 shows that China has always favoured communist governments and that grants and aid disbursements tend to peak when leftist coalitions are in power.

The second factor is Nepal's inability to build trusted relations with China and India and ensure national interests. As China's influence grows in Nepal, India has adopted a two-pronged policy of both engaging Nepal and adopting policy measures to limit the Chinese influence.

There is a real possibility that India will continue to harden the border and create safeguards to limit Chinese access to the Indian market through Nepal. This will likely impact Nepal's connectivity and trade with India in the future, which in turn will affect Nepal's economic trajectory and viability of large infrastructure projects.

The third is Nepali elites' gradual alignment with Chinese interests and distancing from India. It has now become a paradox that while Nepal seeks to enjoy the privileges of the special arrangements ensured by the 1950 treaty with India, it wants to disregard India's traditional interests in Nepal.

One example is Pokhara Regional International Airport (PRIA). Two years after its inauguration, it has seen only 10 international flights, all of them chartered or relief efforts. The officials of CAAN do not have any reasonable near term strategy to make the airport financially viable or to service debts. The situation is so dire that an ordinary Airbus 319 flight from Pokhara to Kathmandu last week was highlighted with much fanfare by the Nepali media.

Regional power dynamics, particularly with India, have affected the airport's viability. When the PRIA was being considered, bilateral relations were invoked—the airport was framed as "critical" to Nepal-China relations. During its inauguration, China positioned the airport as part of BRI and the Trans Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network.

Media reports this week widely discussed the worsening relationship between Oli and India. Indian media reported that although Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba was on a private visit to India, she was disappointed not to meet senior leaders. She was hoping to push forward the agenda of Oli's visit to India. As India appears to ignore him, Oli, meanwhile, is cozying up to Pakistan and attempting to revive SAARC.

Politics

Another significant arena is politics and the direction of Nepal's democracy.

It is now well accepted that Nepal is in a "low-growth, high migration trap". With structural and psychological pressures getting worse, political disruption is possible if the current political regime is unable to deliver economic growth and governance reforms.

However, Nepal's politics shows no signs of reforms or the willingness to address underlying factors that have trapped Nepal in a low-growth, high-migration dynamics.

The three primary sources of power in Nepal's political parties are the relative position of party leaders in the national kleptocracy, their bonds with China and India, and their relationship with political competitors.

Membership in the entrenched national kleptocracy ensures that party leaders can extract resources from the state and obtain rent even if they do not hold any official public position.

Nepal's inability to address corruption and money laundering was reflected in the Mutual Evaluation Review of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering. Last week, the Nepal Rastra Bank governor, Maha Prasad Adhikari, gave dire news to the Prime Minister that the APG may be losing patience with Nepal.

According to an expedited follow up report, Nepal has made some progress in addressing technical compliance deficiencies. While Nepal has taken some legislative measures, their effectiveness is questionable and several recommendations remain unsatisfactory.

Internally, Nepal's three major parties have their own problems. While the UML appeared to be on a path to emulate the Communist Party of China, there were signs that the internal power balance of other major parties was transforming, including in the Nepali Congress and the Maoist Centre.

According to a *Naya Patrika* report, Oli is enamoured by China's development model and the Communist Party of China. He wants to introduce tough disciplinary measures to "unify" the party and align every member around the top leadership.

Only last week, the party took disciplinary action against three popular figures who dared to question Oli's authoritarian streak and his hobnobbing with crony capitalists. The action created ripples in the political sphere although UML members kept quiet, indicating that exercising freedom of expression in the party would come at a great cost.

A large chunk of the Nepali electorate is already ideologically aligned with leftist forces. Now, party leaders of the UML will have both threat power and agenda-setting power to control dissent and differences in the party—a fertile environment for leaders with authoritarian streaks.

When he came to power in 2018, Oli took several policy initiatives, though unsuccessful, to enforce his vision on the society, curtailing freedom of expression and constricting the space for civil society. He also centralised regulatory and legal authorities and made selective use of power to weaken his political opponents.

Incidents in the last few months indicate he has not changed. His close ties with China have emboldened him to pursue the Chinese models, both in terms of political power and economic development.

However, unlike China, Nepal has multiple parties, and replicating China's political model would be difficult, especially when voters have multiple choices.

What will China's new mega dam mean for India ties and fragile Tibetan ecosystem?

28 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Shi Jiangtao

Huge hydro project in Tibet could risk geological disasters and irk New Delhi as neighbours try to ease tensions, observers say



Beijing's approval of a controversial mega dam on a river flowing from Tibet autonomous region into India, has raised concerns about the project's environmental impact and its effect on China-India ties, which had been on the mend.

The dam on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo River is expected to be the world's largest hydroelectric project and could generate three times the power of the Three Gorges Dam. Its construction will mark a major step in China's plan to tap the hydropower potential of the Tibetan Plateau.

But it could also intensify a dam-building competition between the Asian neighbours near their disputed Himalayan border, according to diplomatic and environmental experts.

State news agency Xinhua said on Wednesday that the Chinese government had recently approved the massive project, which was included in Beijing's 14th five-year plan from 2021 to 2025.

The report did not specify the exact location of the project on Tibet's longest river, which becomes the Brahmaputra River when it flows into the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, an area viewed by China as part of southern Tibet. The river also flows into Bangladesh, where it is called the Jamuna.

But what is known is that the project will be built on a section referred to as the Grand Canyon, or the "Great Bend", on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo.

According to a 2020 estimate by state-owned Power Construction Corporation of China, the dam, located in one of the most hydropower-rich areas of the world, is expected to produce nearly 300 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity annually.

It would dwarf the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, now the world's biggest dam, which was designed to generate 88.2 billion kWh a year.

Xinhua hailed the proposed dam as a "safe project that prioritises ecological protection" and a "green project aimed at promoting low-carbon development" that would help the country meet its carbon peak and neutrality goals.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Friday that the project had undergone decades of research, including measures to address risks in project security and environmental impact and prevent negative effects downstream.

"China will continue to maintain current exchange channels with downstream nations and step up cooperation on disaster prevention and mitigation," she said.

But most experts were far from convinced, expressing concerns about how the project could affect the fragile ecosystem of the Tibetan Plateau, local communities and downstream countries – in addition to its enormous engineering costs and challenges.

Fan Xiao, a geologist based in Sichuan province, said the dam's location was in a rare "biodiversity hotspot" in a geologically unstable area, which could potentially lead to "irreparable damage" to the environment.

He noted the area is very seismically active, and building a cascade of mega hydropower stations – involving high dams, large reservoirs and giant tunnels – would increase the risk of landslides and other disasters.

"The geological instability and the likelihood of geological disasters in the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon are much higher than those of other rivers in western China, where we've seen plenty of instances of negative impacts as a result of cascaded hydropower development," he said.

"I'm afraid the construction of the proposed hydropower project would incur unprecedented huge costs and face enormous risks."

He added that a dam-building frenzy in southwest China over the past two decades had resulted in the overdevelopment of hydropower in the region and an oversupply of power due to a lack of market demand, both domestically and internationally.

Fan questioned official claims touting hydropower as "green, renewable and zero-carbon electricity", noting that mega dam projects were mainly driven by economic considerations and vested interest groups, without proper scientific feasibility studies or adequate public involvement.

"It remains unclear if the incalculable cost of possible geological disasters, environmental damage, and the social and cultural impact has been included in the assessment and decision-making process, or if the ecological and environmental impact on the downstream Brahmaputra River and the plains of the

South Asian subcontinent has been fully taken into account," he said.

Sayanangshu Modak, a researcher on transboundary rivers and water governance at the University of Arizona, said that for India, a major concern was the risk of dam failure during emergencies caused by unprecedented weather or seismic events.

"This area is highly prone to earthquakes of varying magnitudes due to intense seismic activity from endogenic forces," he said, noting that a massive glacier collapse in March 2021 near the Great Bend area blocked the river and caused water levels to rise by 10 metres (33 feet).

"These cascading effects underscore the fragility of the region and the grave risks associated with large-scale hydropower projects," he said.

The project has long been a source of friction between China and its downstream neighbours, with India and Bangladesh repeatedly raising concerns about China's dam construction plan upstream of the Brahmaputra River, a critical source of fresh water for both countries.

While New Delhi may have limited options to prevent China from building the proposed dam within its territory, Modak said it would cast fresh uncertainty over bilateral ties, which had been on the mend in recent weeks.

Days after a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in October – their first since a deadly border clash in 2020 – the two sides agreed to de-escalate tensions along their disputed Himalayan frontier.

China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, and Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval also met in Beijing earlier this month for their first high-level border talks in five years.

Modak said India's concerns were "both immense and legitimate", although it was still too early to tell if the colossal dam project would escalate into a new flashpoint between the two countries.

He said that for China, the hydropower project would showcase "China's technical prowess and superiority in hydraulic engineering" while "bolstering China's position as a pre-eminent expert in dam construction – a reputation it has actively sought to export through state-owned enterprises and overseas investments".

Modak said it was "only a matter of time" before Beijing moved to tap the hydropower potential of the Yarlung Tsangpo basin, where only 0.3 per cent of the total energy potential has been harnessed so far.

"With the Yarlung Tsangpo River dropping nearly 2,000 metres as it winds around the Namcha Barwa [mountain] and through the Grand Canyon, this area offers one of the world's most favourable hydraulic gradients for hydropower development," he said.

"Its remote location, only connected to the rest of the country by highway in 2013, has delayed such exploitation."

Modak said India increasingly viewed the water issues surrounding the mega dam through the lens of national security, with Delhi accelerating its own dam construction downstream on the same river.

"This move appears to be part of India's strategy to assert its prior appropriation rights, reflecting the competitive and strategic nature of this unfolding scenario," he said.

Reuters reported in July that India planned to spend US\$1 billion to expedite construction of 12 hydropower stations in Arunachal Pradesh in response to China's planned dam project.

A 2022 report published by the United States Institute of Peace said China and India were intensifying their competition over Brahmaputra water and dam projects as "a form of territorial demarcation and control along a contested frontier".

It described the so-called Great Bend Dam as the most ambitious and controversial project on the mainstem of the Brahmaputra, where nearly 20 dams have been identified with satellite imagery.

India has planned as many as 150 dams within Arunachal Pradesh since the early 2000s as part of its strategy aimed at "signalling control of not only water but territory", according to the think tank's report.

Modak also expressed concerns about the "profound ecological and cultural consequences" as a result of the escalation of the dam-building spree, including the displacement of people in both Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh.

"Between India and China, one certainty emerges: the region's unique biodiversity and the heritage of its indigenous peoples will inevitably suffer," he said.

It is ultimately about trust, and it is no secret that China and India still do not trust each other

Liu Zongyi, foreign policy expert

Ni Lexiong, a Shanghai-based security analyst, said the mega dam project was likely to reignite a war of words between the two countries over whether Beijing was trying to control the flow of the Brahmaputra as strategic leverage over Delhi.

"There has been a lot of talk about 'water wars' in the Indian press. The building of a dam within China may not have been a big deal if the two countries had friendlier ties, but when they treat each other increasingly as a rival, anything could be used as a weapon, including water issues," he said.

While Beijing insisted that tapping the potential of the Yarlung Tsangpo River was a matter of sovereignty, Ni said a mega dam at the Great Bend may effectively put China in a favourable position in its dealings with India. "Intentionally or not, it would effectively create geopolitical leverage vis-a-vis India diplomatically, and it's not surprising that India sees it as a threat. But it

may also deal a blow to bilateral ties, which have just begun to show signs of a thaw," he said.

However, Liu Zongyi, a senior fellow with the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies' South Asia and China Centre, said Beijing had taken into account concerns from its downstream neighbours when rolling out the dam project.

Liu said the impact of China's dam-building activities on the flow of the Brahmaputra was "not as significant as commonly perceived".

He rejected suggestions that Beijing was trying to contain India, as the hydropower project was within China's territory.

Liu said India's plan to expedite dam construction in Arunachal Pradesh laid bare its focus on strengthening its control of the area, which China claims as southern Tibet.

"While India and its Western partners are likely to vent their frustration over the project by smearing China, I don't think the dam project will have a lasting impact on Sino-Indian ties," he said.

Liu added it was possible there would be setbacks in restoring the China-India relationship, especially after the return of US president-elect Donald Trump to the White House in January.

"It is ultimately about trust, and it is no secret that China and India still do not trust each other," he said.

The Next Dalai Lama: His Reincarnation And Why It Matters For India

27 December 2024, [StratNewsGlobal](https://www.stratnews.com)

Former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale examines various options before India as the Dalai Lama succession issue moves forward given his advancing years and health

On July 6, 2025 when Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, turns 90, he is expected to lend more clarity on the issue of his succession. Thus far, his pronouncements on the matter have hinted at various outcomes. Sample this, addressed to a group of journalists in Dharmasala in 2019.

"The reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the future of the Dalai Lama, is ultimately in my own hands. At the time of my death, I will write some will. So my rebirth I think will somewhere (be in the) Buddhist community. As early as 1969, I made clear (whether) the institution of Dalai Lama should continue or not (is) up to the Tibetan people. Reincarnation is not important, it's important that Buddha's teachings remain."

China, on the other hand, claims that it alone has the right to decide on the reincarnation and therefore the succession. It already has a Panchen Lama, appointed in 1995 after setting aside the Dalai Lama's anointment of six year old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the Panchen Lama. His whereabouts are unknown.

This throws the door open for a number of scenarios that India needs to prepare for, argues Vijay Gokhale, former foreign secretary and ambassador to China. In a paper for the Carnegie India think tank written in November 2024, Gokhale has articulated those scenarios or options.

Scenarios That Could Play Out

What if the Dalai Lama decides that the reincarnation process could begin in India? By convention and practice the Indian state does not interfere in the selection of any religious leader in the country, Gokhale notes. Practitioners and followers of Tibetan Buddhism are there in some of the north Indian states. All the Government of India can do is to reiterate the constitutional position, that the Tibetan Buddhists are entitled to choose their own leader freely and without interference.

Dialogue: Should India publicly call for a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and China? This is not something the Indian government has ever called for but with the growing international calls for such a dialogue, India could support it given the presence of a large exiled Tibetan community in the country. India can call for such dialogue independently and on the basis of “3 Mutuals — mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests.”

Self-Determination: Should India support the exiled Tibetan community’s demand for self-determination? This has not been the case in the past, writes Gokhale, but points to China calling upon India to resolve Kashmir in accordance with the will of the Kashmiri people. India could use similar or identical language urging China to do the same with Tibet.

“This is different from supporting the demand for self-determination and adequately nuanced to make the point that the principles China claims to espouse in its foreign policy should also be applied to its domestic policy,” Gokhale underscores.

Shrine: Should India agree on a site or shrine for the Dalai Lama? This might be inevitable if he passes away in India. It would make him the first Dalai Lama since 1706 to be buried outside the Potala Palace in Lhasa. India could identify such a location well in advance knowing that it would become a shrine for millions of pilgrims. Hence issues like security and accessibility need to be carefully thought through.

India should also develop a response to China’s likely demand that the Dalai Lama’s remains be sent there since he is a citizen of that country.

Sensitive Interregnum: How will the Indian government handle the interregnum between the passing away of the 14th Dalai Lama and the identification of the 15th? This period could last many months. Since mechanisms already exist, there would be no need for India to formally recognise the Central Tibetan Administration or formalise the interaction through a coordinator, as has been suggested by some.

Should India coordinate with like-minded states on the post Dalai Lama situation? The US Congress is already pushing for a multilateral effort to counter China’s narrative and claims. India will need to closely study suggestions for joint initiatives to create a global coalition on the reincarnation question. The aim should be to ensure such initiatives do not exacerbate tensions between Delhi and Beijing.

Free Country: If the successor to the current Dalai Lama is found in a “free country”, as he has already said, should India recognise him as legitimate, knowing China would demand Delhi not do so. Even if India does not take an explicit position on the issue, should it allow him to enter the country?

What if the 15th Dalai Lama is discovered in India, is an Indian citizen? Will he be publicly acknowledged, if not what will his status be? Would he be permitted access to the residence and possessions of the ritual objects of the 14th Dalai Lama along with the enthronement ceremony. Since he will be a child and will be guided by a regency council, what should guide the government’s relationship and under what guidelines should the council operate?

In India, all religious organisations have the right to determine their own leadership, residence and practices without state interference. China may pressure India on that score but India should only point to the constitutional practice. The same for allowing the successor to live in India. Access to the symbols of office maybe more sensitive as China will claim ownership.

Sanctioned by China, Tibetan activist expresses disappointment over lack of support from Tibetan community, administration

27 December 2024, [The Tibet Express](#)



CTC Executive Director Sherap Therchin(C) flanked by CTC Chair Samphel Lhalungpa and Community Engagement Manager Youngdoug Tenzin.

Canada Tibet Committee’s (CTC) Executive Director Sherap Therchin expressed disappointment and felt let down by the lack of support he and his colleagues received from the Tibetan community and the administration in exile after they were sanctioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese

Communist Government on Sunday, though they received overwhelming support from the Canadian Government and Parliament.

“While we received support and backing from the Canadian Government and Parliament, assuring us that they were behind us, there was a void from the Tibetan community, with not many speaking out or assuring their support,” Sherap Therchin said, visibly let down at Dokham Chushi Gangdruk’s public event in Toronto, Canada on Wednesday.

The Canadian government and MPP Bhutla Karpoche (the first person of Tibetan heritage to be elected to public office in North America) contacted us to assure their support,” Sherap said and added, “This made us sigh with relief. I also received a call from Canada Chushi Gangdruk President Sonam Wangchen, who said ‘Sherab, don’t be scared, we are behind you.’”

“But apart from that, nobody from the community stood up or reached out to us,” he said and questioned, “As we are working for Tibet’s cause, if Tibetans don’t support us, then who will?”

The activist summed up the entire episode, noting first and foremost a sense of pride in taking the Chinese sanction as a badge of honour in recognition of his activism and campaign for Tibet. This, he said, was followed by a climate of fear.

Therchin said that from Sunday, when they were sanctioned, until he took the stage, they lived in fear of what might happen because of China’s might and that Chinese constitute 5 per cent of the Canadian population. He noted the high possibility of China forcing some of the 2 million Chinese Canadians to be state agents, coupled with China’s infiltration within the Tibetan Community.

He added that one of his colleagues on the sanction list had to cancel a planned trip to a European country as many European nations have signed extradition treaties with China.

This, the activist added, made him realize the plight of Tibetans and Uyghurs who suffer daily under Chinese occupation.

The Executive Director of the CTC concluded by saying that a sense of disappointment then overtook his fears owing to the lack of support from the Tibetan community and the administration.

He lamented that though he had been engaged in activism campaigning for Tibet and served the Central Tibetan Administration over the last six years, “nobody dared to open their mouth or cared to ask us how we were doing or what we were experiencing.”

Asking the crowd to excuse him for soiling the atmosphere as they had gathered for a party, he added, “We should know about this because it’s me today, and it could be anyone from the community tomorrow.”

The activist concluded by calling for unity among the small numbers of Tibetans spread across the diaspora,

warning that going the opposite way would aid China at our own undoing.

Therchin, along with the CTC Chair Samphel Lhalungpa, Vice Chair Luisa Durante, Board member Eliza von Baeyer, and Community Engagement Manager Youngdoug Tenzin were among the 20 Canadians sanctioned by the PRC—along with the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project (URAP), led by Mr. Mehmet Tohti (a former WUC Director of the Legal Committee) and 14 of its staff members and experts—were sanctioned by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a “countermeasure.”

While the Canadian government condemned China and expressed solidarity with members of the Canada Tibet Committee and the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project after the Chinese government sanctioned them on Sunday for speaking out about human rights, and MPP Bhutla Karpoche offered her support through a statement declaring, “I join the calls for the government of Canada to ensure that those sanctioned do not come to harm within Canada or other democratic entities,” the support from the Tibetan community remained minimal.

Though the Tibetan NGOs, associations, and the administration are usually quick to issue statements of solidarity over China’s repressive policies and measure in Tibet as well as condemning anyone who vilified the Dalai Lama without follow-up actions, their enthusiasm fell short when China sanctioned three Tibetan activists from the CTC for their campaign for the Tibetan movement.

While collective support from the *Kashag* (the executive wing of the CTA) and all Tibetan NGOs could have lifted the morale of the activists, only the Tibetan parliament in exile came forward with a statement on 25th December, declaring that the house “stands in solidarity with the members of the Canada Tibet Committee and the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, applauding their courage in speaking out against the atrocities and severe human rights violations committed by China.”

Two days after the activist’s remarks, only one Tibetan NGO- the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy condemned “China’s internationalisation of repression and sanctions imposed on Tibetan human rights group.”

Buddha’s birthplace a geopolitical playing field for China?

27 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Lumbini, the birthplace in Nepal of the Buddha Shakyamuni, has become a geopolitical playing field for China despite protests from local citizens who remain anxious to preserve its Buddhist and spiritual

significance above all else, according to an opinion piece in the *indianexpress.com* Dec 26.

This year, China not only prevented the fourth Nobel Laureates conference from being held there but also tried to get its imposed 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaincain Norbu, to participate in a Chinese Buddhist conference organized in the holy place in an attempt to boost his global profile. Besides, it moved to virtually takeover the holy place by pledging \$3 billion to the Asia Pacific Exchange and Cooperation Foundation for its all-round development.

The fourth Nobel Laureates conference planned to be held at Lumbini was called off at the last minute because China expressed strong reservations that it would have a pro-Dalai Lama agenda, despite the organisers denying it. China also suspected that the conference on March 11 and 12 was deliberately chosen close to the Tibetan Uprising Day, Mar 10.

Ten months after that, controversy returned to Lumbini when the city, along with Kathmandu, was chosen as the venue for the Nanhai Buddhism Round Table attended by hundreds of monks from Mainland China. Norbu's first international exposure in the land of the Buddha would have been highly significant. However, there were protests in the area, and the Chinese authorities said the reported news was propaganda, the opinion piece noted.

Lumbini, located around 250 km west of Kathmandu, was envisioned as a global secular pilgrimage by King Mahendra and UN Secretary General U Thant, a Buddhist, in 1967. Japanese architect Kenzo Tange prepared the master plan in 1978. The major part of the plan around an eight-km radius of the Maya Devi Temple — the spot where Buddha was born — was implemented in the first six years with Prince Gyanendra Shah as the founder chairman of the Lumbini Development Authority (LDA).



Lumbini, the birthplace in Nepal of the Buddha Shakyamuni. (Photo courtesy: UNI)

In 2006, the government led by Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal tried to bring Hindu and Buddhist shrines under political control, but did not succeed due to public protests. However, under him, an Asia Pacific Exchange and Cooperation Foundation, apparently an NGO controlled by the Chinese government, pledged \$3 billion for all-round development that included building an international airport, roads, cultural zones,

a Buddhist University, monasteries, bypassing the LDA or the Kenzo Tange plan.

But China's plan did not succeed after widespread protests, the opinion piece said.

However, of late China has shown renewed interest in Lumbini and there has been a flow of Chinese tourists, politicians and government authorities to the city.

While Lumbini's master plan has provision for monasteries from several countries, Nepali authorities were stated to be more interested in mega projects coming from business and private channels, rather than government agencies.

There is anger within Nepal's Buddhist community over what they say attempts to turn their sacred land into a communist and a commercial zone, the opinion piece said. The LDA, which once used to be a bipartisan body, is today packed with politicians affiliated to the ruling party. The decision of the current LDA, chief Lharkyal Lama, a Maoist leader, to give Rambag, a holy site near Buddha's relic, on a long-term commercial lease to a private party fell after an all-party protest three months ago.

Incidentally, it was Lharkyal Lama who was said to have continued to try to bring the Chinese government-appointed Panchen Lama to the Chinese Buddhist conference in Nepal this year despite Kathmandu having already rejected it in absolute terms.

The sentiment of the faithful that the primary responsibility to preserve Lumbini's sanctity lies with the Hindus and Buddhists is being undermined as Lumbini gradually turns into the playground of players who do not understand that Lumbini is respected for peace, compassion and renunciation rather than profit seeking investments and strategic intent, the opinion piece concluded.

How China turns members of its diaspora into spies

26 December 2024, [The Economist](#)

America is on the hunt for these non-traditional agents. But its efforts risk backfiring

AMONG EXILED Chinese dissidents, Tang Yuanjun was well known. He had participated in the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 and landed in prison as a result. He later defected to Taiwan, swimming to one of its outlying islands from a fishing boat. America granted him asylum and he settled in New York, becoming the leader of Chinese pro-democracy groups. But in August 2024 he was arrested by the FBI. He admits to having used his position to collect information for the Chinese government and to report on his fellow activists. He did this so that the government would allow him to return to China to see his ailing parents.

China's hacking of American computer networks and its efforts to steal Western military and trade secrets

have made headlines in recent years. But it has also been pursuing a more subtle campaign, one that involves bribery, blackmail and secret deals, and which uses people such as Mr Tang and other members of the Chinese diaspora to carry out surveillance, information-gathering and influence operations around the world. Britain recently got a taste of all this when the authorities there accused Yang Tengbo, a Chinese businessman, of cultivating ties with Prince Andrew, the king's brother, as part of an influence operation.

America, though, is China's most important target. These types of activities fall under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), an American law that requires those engaging in political projects on behalf of a foreign actor to register and disclose what they are doing. In recent years the Justice Department has ramped up its enforcement of the act. The department conducted 25 FARA inspections in 2023, the most since 1985. This year there have been several high-profile cases involving China. By publicising these investigations, the American government is sending a warning to would-be agents, say experts.

One big case involves Linda Sun, a former aide to the governor of New York who was arrested in September for working as an "undisclosed agent" of China and its Communist Party (CCP). Ms Sun allegedly blocked meetings between Taiwanese officials and state leaders, removed references to Taiwan from state communications and stood in the way of efforts to publicise China's persecution of the Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities. In return, she is said to have received millions of dollars in kickbacks and gifts, including several deliveries of Nanjing-style salted ducks to her parents' house.

The accusations against Ms Sun are straightforward. But China's influence operations often occur in a grey area. Take the diaspora groups called *tongxianghui*, or hometown associations, which bring together immigrants from particular parts of China. They are ubiquitous in American cities—and increasingly under scrutiny by the Justice Department. Association leaders often mobilise voters before elections in America and build relationships with local officials. Some also make trips to China and meet with officials from the United Front Work Department, the Communist Party branch with the job of boosting China's influence abroad. Association leaders organise political activities in America, such as rallies in support of Xi Jinping or protests against visits by Taiwanese officials.

These activities are legal, so long as the organisers are acting independently. But the line between voluntary action and work as an agent is fuzzy. Many overseas Chinese are genuine supporters of the Communist Party or, at least, willing to further its interests because it will help their businesses back home or keep their

families in China safe. It is only when they receive covert funding, instructions or supervision from Chinese officials that they cross the line into being foreign agents. In 2022, for example, the FBI arrested the head of a Shandong hometown association—not because of his frequent trips to China and friendliness with Chinese officials, but because they suspected him of working with Chinese police to forcibly repatriate another immigrant. Similarly, in 2023 two Chinese men were indicted for allegedly working with Chinese police to operate a "clandestine police station" inside a Fujian hometown association in New York. One of them pleaded guilty on December 18th.

American authorities have struggled to combat these efforts without alienating the Chinese diaspora. An anti-espionage programme launched in 2018, called the China Initiative, aimed to stop the country from using "non-traditional collectors", such as academics and scientists, to steal America's trade and technology secrets. Nearly 90% of the defendants charged under the initiative were of Chinese heritage, according to a database compiled by the *MIT Technology Review*. Many of the cases involved questions of "research integrity", with academics accused of failing to fully disclose their Chinese affiliations (whether that was deliberate is highly contested). Only a quarter of all the cases brought under the initiative ended in conviction. America's counterintelligence efforts are meant to make the Chinese diaspora feel safe, says a former official who worked on the China Initiative. "You're signalling to them: we've got your back," he says. "What you don't want to do is over-rotate to a situation where being Chinese equals being a spy." But the initiative left many academics feeling that the government viewed them with suspicion simply because of their Chinese heritage, says Gang Chen of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 2021 he was charged with failing to disclose connections to Chinese educational programmes when submitting a federal grant application. The indictment was heavily criticised (such disclosures were not actually required). A year later the charges were dropped.

According to a survey in 2022, more than 60% of Chinese-American academics have thought about leaving America. More than 70% said they felt unsafe there. "This is not just shooting ourselves in the foot. It's shooting ourselves in the brain," says Mr Chen, who has stopped applying for government grants or working in potentially sensitive areas.

Other members of the Chinese diaspora welcome efforts to stymie Communist Party influence. Zhou Fengsuo of Human Rights in China, an activist group in New York, praises the arrests of people like Ms Sun. But he warns that the heavy-handedness and inconsistency of America's approach has led to distrust of the government in the diaspora. And he complains that exiled Chinese dissidents receive little protection

from the authorities, making them easier targets for Chinese coercion.

In 2022 the Justice Department ended the China Initiative, admitting that it led to a “harmful perception” of racial profiling. But in September the House of Representatives passed a bill to revive it under a new name, the CCP Initiative, with all Republicans voting in favour. Such efforts seem likely to intensify under President-elect Donald Trump, who has given China hawks important jobs. The risk is that in its efforts to counter the Communist Party, America drives more members of the diaspora into its hands.

Why China’s proposed Tibet mega dam has left India worried

26 December 2024, [First Post](#)

China has approved a major hydropower project on Tibet’s Yarlung Zangbo River, which becomes the Brahmaputra River when it enters India. Billed as the world’s largest hydropower dam, it could generate 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually

China has green-lit a mega hydropower project on Tibet’s longest river. Touted as the world’s largest hydropower dam, it would be built in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, which becomes the Brahmaputra River when it flows into the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

India has earlier expressed concerns about the project which could affect millions downstream in the country and its neighbour Bangladesh.

Let’s take a closer look.

China’s mega hydropower project

China’s hydropower dam will come up on the Yarlung Zangbo River, also known as the Yarlung Tsangpo River, in the Tibet autonomous region.

According to China’s state news agency *Xinhua*, the dam will produce three times more energy than the Three Gorges Dam, which generates 88.2 billion kWh of electricity annually.

The proposed dam could produce 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity every year, *Reuters* reported citing the estimate of Power Construction Corp of China in 2020.

As per a *South China Morning Post (SCMP)* report, the hydropower project could cost over 1 trillion yuan (US\$137 billion), higher than any single infrastructure project worldwide.

In comparison, the investment in the Three Gorges Dam was 254.2 billion yuan (\$34.83 billion).

It is not yet known when the construction will start and even the exact location of the dam.

Challenges of the project

China’s huge hydropower project comes with its own technical and engineering challenges.

A part of the Yarlung Zangbo falls 2,000 metres (6,561 feet) within a short span of 50 km, giving a major hydropower potential, *Reuters* reported.

To tap into this potential, nearly six 20 km-long tunnels will have to be carved out from the Namcha Barwa mountain to divert half of the river’s flow at about 2,000 cubic metres per second, as per the *SCMP* report.

The project site is also located along a tectonic plate boundary which is susceptible to earthquakes.

Authorities have also not revealed how many people will be displaced by the Tibet project.

Why China’s hydropower dam is important

As per *Xinhua*, the colossal hydropower project in Tibet would protect the local ecology.

“Through extensive geological explorations and technical advancements, a solid foundation has been laid for the science-based, secure and high-quality development of the project,” the report said.

The project would also fuel the growth of nearby solar and wind energy resources, according to the news agency. “This represents a major move in China’s green and low-carbon energy transition,” the report said.

“It is also of great importance to advancing the country’s strategy for carbon peaking and carbon neutrality and to coping with global climate change.”

India’s concerns about the project

China’s super hydropower dam has raised alarm bells in India.

New Delhi’s concern stems from Beijing’s lack of transparency about the project. It fears the Tibet dam could trigger flash floods or lead to water scarcity downstream.

India worries the project could result in the country depending on China for its water supplies, Genevieve Donnellon-May, a geopolitical and global strategy adviser, wrote for *AsiaGlobal Online* in 2022.

The Yarlung Tsangpo flows across the Tibetan Plateau and then enters India through Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, where it is called the Brahmaputra River.

As she noted in her article, the Brahmaputra is important for India and China’s socioeconomic development. “The river accounts for nearly 30 per cent of India’s freshwater resources and 40 per cent of its total hydropower potential. For China, the Brahmaputra’s role in the country’s total freshwater supply is limited, but the river plays a significant role in Tibet’s agricultural and energy industries as well as civilisation. Yet, growing populations mean water resources are under increasing stress and demand in both countries,” Donnellon-May wrote in her piece.

China being the upper riparian could affect the quantity of water available downstream, increasing New Delhi’s worries.

“India has long speculated about China’s intention of using hydropower dams to control the Brahmaputra.

Many Indian analysts argue that China's water ambitions and the growing competition over water between China and India will inevitably lead to "water wars" between the two nations," Donnellon-May wrote in her piece.

To dent the impact of China's proposed dam on water flows, India is also planning to build 12 hydropower stations in Arunachal Pradesh, as per a *Reuters* report in July. The move has irked China, which claims the Indian state as the "southern part of Tibet".

Bridging Borders

26 December 2024, [Beijing Review](#), Santosh Ghimire



The dam of the Upper Marsyangdi-A Hydropower Project in Lamjung, Nepal, on November 8, 2022. Since it began commercial operation in January 2017, the project has contributed 317 million kilowatt-hours of energy to Nepal's national grid each year (XINHUA)

During the visit of Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to China from December 2 to 5, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to deepening their high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Oli paid the four-day official visit at the invitation of his counterpart Premier Li Qiang. This is Oli's first bilateral visit to a neighboring country since he returned to the prime ministership in July.

The two expressed their commitment to strengthening connectivity in sectors including ports, roads, railways, aviation, power grids and telecommunications, to help Nepal transform from a land-locked to a land-linked country.

Nepal joined the BRI, the China-proposed initiative to increase connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, on May 12, 2017. Since then, Nepal-China practical cooperation has been further enhanced, both in quality and efficiency. Chinese President Xi Jinping envisioned the BRI as a framework connecting countries around the world through trade, infrastructure development, finance and people-to-people exchanges, among others.

As of now, the BRI has achieved far more than physical connectivity. With the spirit of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the BRI has evolved into a global platform on which participating

countries join hands to improve people's livelihoods and drive human development forward, despite the various challenges facing the world.

Over the past decade, the BRI has delivered more than 3,000 of practical projects around the world, bringing tangible benefits to millions of people. The number of BRI partnerships has been growing around the world. So far, more than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed BRI cooperation agreements, with the initiative extending from the Eurasian continent to Africa and Latin America.

Joint railway project

Some projects under the BRI are already operational, while others are expected to take years to complete. The China-Nepal cross-border railway is one of the long-term projects. During Oli's visit, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to pushing forward with the project.

"The two sides expressed willingness to steadily advance the feasibility study of the Jilong/Keyrung-Kathmandu Cross-Border Railway and planned to hold the Ninth Working Meeting on China-Nepal Railway Cooperation. The Chinese side will continue to help Nepal train railway professionals," read the joint statement issued during the visit.

Nepal and China announced the launch of a feasibility study for the cross-border railway when President Xi paid a visit to Nepal in October 2019. The cross-border railway is one of the key projects under the BRI. Since 2022, China has been providing grant assistance to support the feasibility study and sending its railway experts to conduct the field survey work.

There are several advantages for Nepal upon the completion of the railway, which will reduce the time and cost of cross-border transport and increase the volume of bilateral trade and investment. The railway will help bring excellent Nepali goods such as cashmere fabrics, wood products, handicrafts and organic alpine agricultural products to China while transferring China's technological development to Nepal. For this reason, the two peoples have great expectations for the railway.

Surya Raj Acharya, a Nepali infrastructure expert, said she believes that the railway will be a game-changer for Nepal's economic development after its completion. "The construction of Nepal-China railway will also be a boon for Nepal. We have seen in many BRI partnering countries that it has improved infrastructure and connectivity, created tens of thousands of jobs, and helped countries realize their shared vision of peaceful development, win-win cooperation and common prosperity," Acharya said.

More aviation cooperation

During Oli's visit, the two sides also agreed to increase cooperation in civil aviation under the BRI. "The two sides value the development of civil aviation ties

between China and Nepal, and support and encourage air transport enterprises of both sides to open air routes and flights between Chinese cities and Nepali cities such as Pokhara and Lumbini in light of market demand, so as to facilitate bilateral economic and trade ties and two-way travel," read the joint statement.

The inauguration of the China-aided international airport in Nepal's tourist city Pokhara was one of the greatest moments for many Nepali people. The project, an integral part of the China-Nepal Belt and Road cooperation, was inaugurated in December 2022. Envisaged more than 59 years ago, the international airport is now becoming a boost to the local economy.

The opening of the airport has contributed greatly to Nepal's connectivity and allowed for China-Nepal charter flights, creating new opportunities for cooperation under the BRI. Pokhara International Airport, a 4D-standard facility, was built with loan from the Export-Import Bank of China by China CAMC Engineering Co. Ltd., a company directly affiliated with China National Machinery Industry Corp., a Fortune 500 company. The construction began in July 2017, two months after Nepal became a BRI partner country. The airport demonstrates China's pursuit of quality in project construction and is a source of national pride in Nepal.

Cross-border energy cooperation

Apart from railroad and aviation connectivity, Nepal and China have also been working toward collaboration in the field of energy. Nepal is rich in water and willing to sell its surplus electricity to China in the near future. China has expressed readiness to support Nepal in this regard.

During the official visit, the two sides also reiterated commitment toward this end. "The two sides will continue to leverage the platform of the China-Nepal Energy Joint Implementation Mechanism, deepen cooperation in energy and explore exchanges in new energy. The two sides are ready to expedite the feasibility study of the China-aided Jilong-Rasuwadhi-Chilime 220KV Cross-Border Power Transmission Line. The two sides agreed to continue to support the cooperation between telecommunication operators of the two countries and to carry out maintenance and expansion projects related to cross-border land cables," read the joint statement.

Endless opportunities

Nepal can learn from the experience of Asian countries that have already successfully completed BRI projects and boosted their economies. The Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway is one such example. The railway is a flagship project that dovetails the BRI with Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum initiative. For the past year since the high-speed train went into operation, the project has seen all-round collaboration

by teams from both countries in areas such as high-speed rail operation management, talent development and technology transfer.

The BRI is seen as a great opportunity for Nepal as it aspires to become a "dynamic bridge" between China and India by developing North-South transport corridors. In the words of Kalyan Raj Sharma, Chair of the Nepal-China Friendship Forum, the BRI presents a strategic opportunity for Nepal to advance development projects as there is a lack of vital infrastructure.

Analysts believe the BRI could be a boon for low-income and middle-income countries like Nepal, which are constrained by limited financial resources and looking for foreign investment to meet their development needs.

"For many low- and middle-income countries constrained by limited financial resources, the BRI offers a potential pathway to realize ambitious development goals, paralleling China's rapid growth trajectory of recent decades," Sharma wrote in an article published in Kathmandu Post on December 1. He opined that Nepal can take advantage of China's expertise in rapid economic growth and infrastructure construction by approaching the BRI as a nuanced, multidimensional initiative.

China and India rebuild trust on the path to reconciliation

25 December 2024, [East Asia Forum](#), Ghulam Ali

On 23 October 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a delegate-level meeting — the first in five years — on the sidelines of the BRICS conference in Kazan, Russia. During the meeting, both leaders endorsed an earlier deal to disengage their militaries along the disputed border, restoring the status quo to its pre-2020 position. Within a week, both sides withdrew troops from border face-off areas.

Given the potential impact of the China-India relationship on regional and global affairs, the Xi-Modi meeting drew international headlines. Analysts characterised it as a boon for both countries, a cautionary note and a tactical pause rather than a strategic shift in relations. Some credited the outcome to BRICS and Russia, while others viewed it as a blow to the US Indo-Pacific strategy.

China and India have the world's longest and oldest disputed border — the Line of Actual Control (LAC) — inherited from colonial times. They fought a border war in 1962 and have had periodic escalations over this issue ever since. Both countries hold differing views on the boundary — India considers the LAC to be 3488 kilometres long, while China claims it is 2000

kilometres, arguing its border with Pakistan is already settled.

In the 21st century, China–India relations have come full circle, moving from deeper understanding to heightened tension and back to normalcy. In the mid-2010s, the relationship took a hostile turn after decades of stability. While the disputed border sparked conflict, two new factors proved to be key igniters. Nationalist leaders — President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi — assumed power, setting high goals and pursuing assertive policies. Concurrently, the bifurcation of global politics into a US vs China dynamic fuelled the rivalry. The disputed border, two nationalist leaders and international politics combined in a mutually reinforcing way, escalating the tension.

Nationalistic fervour in China and India extended to soldiers patrolling the disputed border. Troops faced a standoff lasting over 70 days in Doklam in 2017 and a fatal confrontation in Galwan Valley in June 2020, resulting in the deaths of 20 Indians and at least four Chinese soldiers — marking the first fatalities in decades. Following this, the relationship largely remained frozen until the Xi–Modi meeting.

During heightened tensions, both countries viewed each other's policies with concern. New Delhi perceived China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as part of a grand strategy and saw the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) — in which China invested billions of dollars — and China's administrative control of Gwadar Port as a consolidation of a China–Pakistan nexus targeting India.

On the other hand, China regarded India's closeness with the United States, Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Taiwan and other Western countries with suspicion. The Quadrilateral security grouping, which China views as a containment strategy, regained momentum against the backdrop of India's intensifying conflict with China.

India's defence-related agreements with the United States were also concerning for China. These included the agreements to provide reciprocal access to military bases as well as to share geospatial intelligence and enhance the accuracy of military operations. In line with this, the United States rebranded its Asia Pacific strategy to an Indo–Pacific strategy centred on cooperation with India.

It was economic pressures that catalysed China's and India's re-engagement. Following the Galwan fatalities, India's ban on Chinese investment and technology impacted negatively on India's economic growth. This downturn led to unemployment — especially among educated youth, who expressed their frustration in the 2024 general elections — resulting in the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party losing its simple majority. India's annual economic survey for 2024 pinpointed the need to attract investment from

China — causing India's business community to push the Modi administration towards rapprochement.

India's obsession with the BRI as a grand strategy also faded over time. Though New Delhi did not join the BRI, it benefited from its subsidiary, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. CPEC did not take off and Gwadar Port remains far from becoming China's naval hub. In 2019, China also stopped blocking the Pakistani military-backed extremist Masood Azhar from being declared a global terrorist by the United Nations, which abated India's concerns about the so-called China–Pakistan nexus.

Parallel to this, India did not receive the expected US and Western support for its 'Made in India' initiative and industrialisation efforts. The US-led 'India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor', meant to counter the BRI, never materialised. Overall, it became clear to New Delhi that achieving great power status requires cooperation with Beijing, prompting an eagerness for reconciliation.

On the Chinese side, Beijing recognised that the success of the Quad and the United States' Indo–Pacific policies primarily hinged on India's role. It was assuaging for China that despite US incentives, India did not sign any formal military alliance and maintained its traditional position of non-alignment. During its own economic slowdown, China could not ignore the large Indian market next door, where trade thrived and reached US\$118 billion in 2023–24 despite geopolitical tensions.

Over the years, Xi and Modi have tempered their ambitious goals with pragmatism. They have gained global exposure and navigated their countries through challenging waters. Through cycles of stability, heightened tension and a return to equilibrium, China and India have learned that conflict undermines their long-term objectives and complicates the boundary issues.

While a breakthrough in their border dispute may remain elusive, the Xi–Modi meeting has put the relationship back on track and this is likely to be sustained.

Of Diplomacy and Gaffes: Making Sense of Prabowo and Anwar's China Visits

25 December 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Rahul Mishra and Harshit Prajapati

Southeast Asian leaders face considerable challenges in balancing nationalistic positions with the complexities of engaging China at the highest levels. Prabowo Subianto, the newly sworn-in president of Indonesia, is known for his hands-on approach to diplomacy and foreign policy, often departing from the country's established positions and sparking debates.

His recent visit to China, his first official overseas trip since assuming office, ignited fresh controversies. A joint statement issued during the visit called for “joint development in areas of overlapping claims” in the South China Sea (SCS). The statement also announced an agreement to establish an “Inter-Governmental Joint Steering Committee to explore and advance relevant cooperation.” This sharply contrasts with Indonesia’s long-standing position of not recognizing any overlapping claims with China in the SCS and rejecting the legality of the Nine-Dash Line.

While Indonesia is not a direct claimant in the South China Sea dispute, it is increasingly entangled in the conflict due to China’s claims over parts of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surrounding Indonesia’s Natuna Islands. Indonesia asserts sovereign control over the Natuna Islands and upholds its territorial and maritime rights based on legal and historical grounds.

In an attempt to manage the fallout from Prabowo’s diplomatic gaffe, the Indonesian Foreign Ministry clarified that it does not recognize China’s claims over the SCS and reaffirmed that Indonesia’s position remains unchanged. However, critics argue that Indonesia has unwittingly strengthened China’s position by signing the joint statement, which Beijing could reference in future disputes. Such concerns stem from fears that China may leverage the document to legitimize its claims against Indonesia.

While the statement highlights a significant diplomatic error, it does not signify a shift in Indonesia’s stance on the South China Sea dispute. Instead, it underscores the challenges Southeast Asian leaders face in balancing nationalistic positions with the complexities of engaging China at the highest levels.

Prabowo is not the first Southeast Asian leader to face backlash following a visit to Beijing.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim’s March 2023 trip to China also drew criticism after he stated that Malaysia was “open to negotiations” with China over bilateral disputes in the SCS. Like Indonesia, Malaysia has consistently rejected the Nine-Dash Line and maintains there are no overlapping claims with China in the SCS. Following Anwar’s remarks, the Malaysian Foreign Ministry clarified that the country’s policy on the SCS dispute remained unchanged. Malaysia’s position has since remained consistent under Anwar’s leadership, suggesting that Indonesia’s stance is unlikely to waver despite Prabowo’s recent misstep.

Anwar’s visit to Beijing secured investment deals worth \$38.6 billion for Malaysia, while Prabowo’s trip resulted in agreements valued at \$10 billion. These investments are crucial for Prabowo’s administration to fund key welfare programs, including his flagship initiative to provide

free meals for schoolchildren and pregnant women. Prabowo’s electoral success was partly built on such welfare promises, and delivering on them is vital for maintaining domestic legitimacy. As Evan Laksmana argues, for most Southeast Asian leaders, political legitimacy is closely tied to public goods, major investments, and welfare schemes, often financed through strengthened trade ties with China. In this context, the joint statement may have been a transactional maneuver to secure economic gains rather than a strategic policy shift.

Moreover, the diplomatic controversy reflects Prabowo’s personalistic and hands-on approach to foreign policy rather than a calculated change in Indonesia’s SCS strategy. Although he is expected to continue the legacy of his predecessor, Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, Prabowo appears intent on imprinting his personal style on policy decisions. Unlike Jokowi, who delegated much of Indonesia’s foreign engagement to career diplomat Retno Marsudi, Prabowo has adopted a more direct role. His appointment of Sugiono, a close aide and ideological protégé, as foreign minister marks a departure from tradition. Sugiono is the first non-career diplomat to hold the position since 2001.

Historically, Indonesia’s foreign ministry has acted as a buffer against unilateral presidential influence on foreign policy. However, Prabowo’s decision to appoint Sugiono signals his intention to centralize foreign policy decision-making. Reports suggest that the foreign ministry had advised Prabowo’s team on Indonesia’s position regarding the SCS dispute, but this input was allegedly overlooked.

The joint statement with China emphasizes “head-of-state diplomacy” as a political safeguard and strategic guide for China-Indonesia relations, reflecting Prabowo’s preference for a one-man approach to foreign policy. His active engagement on the international stage is evident from the 20 trips he made abroad as defense minister and president-elect between Indonesia’s general election in February 2024 and his inauguration in October. This level of activity suggests that Prabowo’s tenure will feature more frequent presidential diplomacy compared to Jokowi’s two terms.

This is not the first time Prabowo has made a controversial diplomatic move. At the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2023, he proposed a four-point peace plan to resolve the Ukraine conflict. It was promptly dismissed by Ukraine’s defense minister. Jokowi later clarified that the proposal represented Prabowo’s personal views, not the Indonesian government’s stance. Similarly, Prabowo has previously diverged from official policy by expressing a more sympathetic attitude toward the AUKUS agreement.

While Malaysia's foreign ministry, under a more experienced Anwar Ibrahim, appears more adept at managing such controversies, Anwar has also made statements that contradicted Malaysia's official positions, such as his remarks on Myanmar.

In conclusion, the clarification from Indonesia's Foreign Ministry suggests that the joint statement is unlikely to have lasting implications and may become a "dead letter." To further address concerns, Foreign Minister Sugiono stated that Indonesia has not yet decided on any joint development areas with China in the SCS. Ultimately, the joint statement seems to reflect Prabowo's personalistic diplomacy aimed at securing economic concessions rather than signaling a shift in Indonesia's established position on the SCS dispute. While it is crucial for Southeast Asian leaders to avoid such gaffes, considering the overwhelming dependence on China for trade and investments, this trend is likely to continue. The point, however, is how adept Southeast Asian foreign policy bureaucracies could be in managing such unexpected twists and turns.

Guest Opinion: The truth about Xinjiang and its Uygur population

25 December 2024, [Xinhua](#), Meilleur Murindabigwi



This photo taken on November 9, 2024 shows children running in Daliyabuyi Village, Yutian County of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Western governments and media, particularly in the United States, have persisted with a years-long smear campaign targeting China over issues related to Xinjiang.

However, their claims often lack proper context and are based on false information intended to undermine China's growing influence on the global stage.

The reality in Xinjiang is a different story with multiple dimensions. It involves efforts to combat extremism, preserve national unity, and promote economic development.

The 6th World Media Summit recently took place in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. Given the recurring negative coverage of Xinjiang in Western media, it was time for us, media practitioners from around the world, to witness firsthand what life is truly like for the

Uygurs, one of 55 ethnic minorities in China. Our goal was to see for ourselves whether the human rights abuses claimed by Western leaders and media hold any truth.

DERADICALISATION AND WESTERN INTERVENTIONS

From the early 1990s to mid-2010s, Xinjiang faced a surge in radicalisation, leading to deadly terrorist attacks targeting civilians.

Notable incidents include the Urumqi riots in 2009 and Kunming railway station attack in 2014, resulting in hundreds of fatalities and even more injuries. These were the works of radical separatists who sought destabilisation and secession.

In response, the Chinese government launched comprehensive counterterrorism initiatives, ranging from a law-based campaign against terrorists to a vocational training program to deradicalise individuals influenced by extremism. The latter combined vocational training, legal education, and cultural integration to address the underlying causes of radicalisation.

The separatist movement in Xinjiang has not been a purely internal issue. There is growing evidence that Western countries have had a hand in encouraging separatism in Xinjiang as part of a broader strategy to destabilise China.

The United States has long considered China an economic rival, and any attempt to weaken China internally serves its geopolitical interests.

By fabricating and amplifying accusations of human rights abuses, some Western governments aim to tarnish China's international image, hoping to slow its economic ascent.

These actions align with a broader history of Western interventions designed to disrupt political stability in regions critical to their global dominance.

The persistent campaign of disinformation against China, particularly regarding Xinjiang, is part of a larger strategy by Western countries to contain China's rise.

Western countries have become increasingly alarmed by the prospect of losing nearly two centuries of global dominance.

By painting China as a human rights abuser, Western governments and media outlets seek to rally international opinion against China.

However, this narrative often ignores China's work in lifting more than 800 million people out of poverty over the past decades, improving living standards, and maintaining social harmony throughout the country, including in Xinjiang.

PROSPERITY TODAY

Despite these challenges, Xinjiang is a flourishing and multicultural region where Uygurs live peacefully alongside other ethnic groups.

Far from the image painted by some media outlets, Xinjiang has experienced rapid development in recent years. Its gross domestic product has grown

significantly, reaching over 1.9 trillion yuan (approximately 260 billion dollars) in 2023.

Xinjiang is also a crucial part of the Belt and Road Initiative, which has attracted foreign investment and made the region a hub for international trade.

Moreover, the claim that Uyghurs cannot practice their religion is false.

We visited the Xinjiang Islamic Institute in Urumqi, which trains over 1,000 students. Imam Abdurraqib Turmuniyaz greeted us and explained that the school was created to allow Muslim boys in Xinjiang to deepen their knowledge of Islam while preparing them for leadership roles in China's mosques.

Established in the early 1980s, it reflects the Chinese government's efforts to support and regulate Islamic education. Its facilities include a canteen, mosque, library, and gym.

The Xinjiang Islamic Institute also has eight branches across the region, including in Hotan, Aksu, and Kashgar, with about 3,000 students.

Imam Abdurraqib Turmuniyaz emphasized that religious freedom is fully protected in China, especially in Xinjiang. The institute's mission is to educate rather than confine students. This institution is a key part of China's efforts to promote Islamic education in a structured and modern environment.

Xinjiang is a region that once faced serious challenges with extremism and separatism but has overcome these obstacles through development, education, and integration.

The Uyghur people practice religion freely and benefit from the region's rapid economic growth. During our visit to a car manufacturing plant in Xinjiang, we saw Uyghurs working alongside colleagues of other ethnic groups.

Uyghurs are present in all works of life, from restaurants and coffee shops to construction companies, the service sector, and even military service. Some have also gained prominence as models in China's booming fashion industry, showcasing the diverse opportunities available to them across the country.

The broader campaign of disinformation against China, spearheaded by the West, is less about human rights and more about maintaining global hegemony.

As China continues to rise on the world stage, the truth about Xinjiang is clear. It is a region of peace, prosperity, and promise, no matter what the detractors say.

Self-Determination Of Tibet: A Contentious Issue – Analysis

25 December 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)

Negotiations on self-determination of Tibet has been a contentious matter between the Tibetan ethnic

minority and the PRC government. The PRC government has failed to implement in letter and spirit various laws which stipulate the establishment of autonomous regions for the ethnic minorities in China.

A diplomatic spat between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States (US) has ensued, following US President Biden signing the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' on 12 July 2024 into law.¹ Reacting to the Act, China stated that the US is undermining the "basic norms governing international relations" and should recognise Xizang (Tibet) as part of China. It urged the US not to support "Tibet independence" which if it fails to do, "China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests".²

Appraising the Act, along with the affirmation of upholding human rights and direct negotiations "without preconditions" with the Dalai Lama in order to resolve the differences, are some of the fundamental aspects at stake for the 'self-determination' of Tibet. This Brief examines how the principle of self-determination has been contested between the Chinese government and the Tibetan ethnic minority. It begins with a review on how the principles of self-determination have been construed in international law.

Self-Determination in International Law

The principle of self-determination, which can be traced back to the French revolution in 1789 and the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, refers to the legal right of people to choose their own political destiny. In the contemporary period, it has been closely associated with US President Woodrow Wilson, when after the First World War, several new states were created from the losing powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.³ Previously, self-determination was perceived as a 'political concept' but later on, it emerged as a "principle of positive international law" based on the UN Charter as in Article 1(2), it is requisite that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determinations of people".⁴

The principle of self-determination has been addressed in several UN resolutions, declarations and conventions. However, it is an 'elusive concept', mainly due to an unclear definition of 'people', i.e., who are actually entitled to self-determination (for example, indigenous groups, religious groups and other minorities), resulting in various interpretations and significant implications in practice.⁵

One of the foremost legal rights for self-determination is the "Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People" adopted by UN General Assembly (GA) Resolution 1514 in 1960, where Para 1 declares, "the subjugation of people to alien subjugation,

domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights” and is contrary to the UN Charter.⁶ These legal rights were primarily designed or interpreted to foster the decolonisation process and were upheld by the International Court of Justice in the Namibia case.⁷

Additionally, the application of self-determination beyond the anti-colonial dimension was adopted in 1970 by the UNGA, ‘Friendly Relations Declarations’ which entail the right of self-determination to all people freely “without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.⁸ However, this legal document demands that self-determination be exercised cautiously, without disturbing the territorial integrity of the existing state. In other words, these legal rights are in line with ‘internal self-determination’, i.e., autonomy.⁹

In the case of internal self-determination, Article 1 of the two international Covenants of 1966—International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—provides people the right to “freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”. Legal expert Antonio Cassese is of the view that all members of an inhabitant state have the right to express self-determination through “internal-decision making processes”, without disturbing the territorial integrity of sovereign states.¹⁰ Indeed, such rights have been recognised in the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 where Article 4 declares that indigenous people “have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions”.¹¹ Although the core substance of self-determination infers secession or the ability to establish sovereign and independent states, in international laws, unilateral secession is not well received due to the fear of creating instability, when or if the right of self-determination is exercised by all who claim it. Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali thoughtfully said: “if every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limits to fragmentation and peace and security and economic well-being for all would become even more difficult to achieve.”¹²

Nonetheless, there are jurists that emphasise the applicability of self-determination to a particular group of people to secure their territorial sovereignty. Such kinds of self-determination are known as ‘remedial secession’ where self-determination is applied as a last resort or secession is justified, if any aggrieved group is severely persecuted by the state.¹³ Such legal rights are detailed in the UNGA Resolution 2625, which states that the territorial

integrity of the state is protected, if the government is represented by “the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or color”.¹⁴ This clause implies that if any government is unrepresentative or oppressive, it may trigger secession. Meanwhile, some jurists also emphasise, if internal self-determination or say autonomy are flawed in implementation, secession should be seen as a matter of last resort.

Negotiations for Tibetan Self-Determination

On 13 February 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama formally declared the independence of Tibet, following the overthrow of Manchu Qing dynasty by the Chinese nationalist revolution in 1911.¹⁵ The historiography on whether Tibet is a part of China, however, is complicated as both sides have competing narratives.¹⁶ But one major historical event in which Tibet formally came under the control of China is when Chinese troops entered Tibet in 1950 and consequently signed the “Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” (17 Point Agreement) on 23 May 1951.¹⁷

Subsequently, at the UNGA, numerous resolutions were passed calling for the right to self-determination for the Tibetan people but it was met with negligible support from the international community.¹⁸ Additionally, the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a resolution on 23 August 1991 calling on the Government of the People’s Republic of China “fully to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people”.¹⁹ After decades of impasse, dialogue between the two sides commenced with a pre-condition that except for “total independence” all other issues were open for discussion.²⁰ Without substantial outcome, the talks ended in 1985 with the removal of Chinese representative Hu Yao-bang.²¹

Dialogue between the Tibetan and Chinese representatives, however, entered a new chapter following the Dalai Lama’s announcement of the “Middle way approach”, implying not seeking separation or independence of Tibet, but instead securing ‘genuine autonomy’ within the scope of the constitution of the People’s Republic of China.²² In order to achieve a genuine autonomy for Tibetan peoples, the Tibetan administration formulated a ‘Five point peace plan’ in 1987, the Strasbourg proposal in 1998 and the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy in 2008. Dialogue between the two sides continued based on these three core documents, but ended abruptly in 2010 without any substantial outcome.

In the negotiations between Tibetan representatives and the Chinese government, securing genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people has been a key issue, and has led to deadlock and pauses in the negotiation process. Hence, it is necessary and worthwhile to look

into how the PRC government takes into account autonomy in relation to ethnic minorities.

Assessment of 'Autonomy' Implementation in China

Regional ethnic autonomy is supposed to be the core governance mechanism for ethnic minorities in China.²³ Though the 'Common Program' and the 1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC) specify the establishment of regional autonomy, Chinese constitutional expert, Gao Quanxi has argued that the 1982 PRC Constitution as amended in 2018 has been infused with a legal attribute, which is aimed at ending incessant revolution, discarding absolute class struggle, substituted by "dictatorship of the proletariat" with a "people's democratic dictatorship".²⁴

In the 1982 PRC Constitution, the preamble declares, "China is a unified multi-ethnic state founded by the Chinese people of all ethnic groups" and opposes "major ethnic group (Han) chauvinism". Further, Article 4 stipulates the promotion of ethnic equality and unity, where discrimination and oppression of any ethnic groups is prohibited, and allows for the establishment of autonomous regions for self-governance while obliging that "all ethnic groups shall have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own traditions and customs".²⁵ Additionally, based on the 1982 constitution, the National People's Congress in 1984 adopted the "Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy" which was amended in 2001, strengthening and expanding the existing autonomous rights formulated in the 1982 constitution.²⁶

Assessing implementation of the ethnic minorities' policy by the PRC government, it is characterised as one of "gradualism and pluralism" where until the late 1950s, a tolerant and benign attitude was practiced towards ethnic minorities by the PRC government.²⁷ But from the 1960s onwards under the leadership of Mao, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1967–1976), the ethnic minorities experienced the most repressive and assimilative period in the history of PRC.²⁸ Again from the 1970s, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, extreme assimilation of minorities ended and they began to make claims to uphold their rights to national autonomy.

In the case of the Tibetan ethnic minority, though the demand for genuine autonomy by the Tibetan representative emerged more recently, essentially it was already featured way back in 17 Point Agreement in May 1951, as para 3 underlined that, "the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government".²⁹ The PRC government, however, violated the agreement.³⁰

To achieve the aspiration of autonomy for the Tibetan people, its representatives even submitted a "Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People" in 2008 to the PRC government.³¹ The demand for autonomy in the memorandum was drafted in consonance with the PRC constitution and the Law on regional ethnic autonomy, which essentially addresses independently managing the internal affairs of Tibetans including language, culture, religion education, environment protection and utilisation of natural resources.

The evaluation of autonomy implementation in the Tibet Autonomous Region, however, reveals policy swings between "more tolerant and more repressive" by the PRC government.³² Ironically, one of the fundamental reasons why the PRC government rejected the Tibetan proposal of autonomy, and instead adopted a repressive policy towards the Tibetan ethnic minority, is due to "fear of the external forces" of Western countries, especially the United States.³³

The US policy on Tibet can be traced back to the 1940s, when the US government entered an agreement with Tibet to build a supply route through Tibet to China against Japanese attack. US policy on Tibet has been termed "inconsistencies in commitment, interspersed with occasional bursts of sympathy and activism"³⁴ mostly due to the impact of Cold War politics. Until 1970, Tibet was included in the US strategy to counter communist expansion in Asia. But it was weakened following the rapprochement of Sino-US relations in the 1970s.³⁵ And conversely, the Soviet Union, which in the 1950s fully backed the PRC government claim to sovereignty over Tibet, began to condemn Chinese policy in Tibet as a "colonial power".³⁶ Contrary to the Cold War period, however, Russia's policy on Tibet "seems to view the Tibetan issue in the context of Chechenya, unfortunately".³⁷ One major reason for the US leveraging of Tibetan separatism is based on the notion of a growing 'China threat' both in terms of military and economy, which the PRC government considers as a 'containment policy'. Yet, US leveraging of Tibetan secession has consequences, especially for Tibetans in Tibet and also for the resolution of the Tibetan question. Sinologist Barry Sautman cautions that backing secession by great powers "makes it harder for Tibetans in Tibet to seek self-representation without being suspected of pursuing secession" and also "even makes it harder to resolve the Tibetan question".³⁸

Way Forward

The President of the Central Tibetan Administration Penpa Tsering in September 2024 acknowledged that 'back-channel' talks between the two sides have been initiated.³⁹ The PRC government has laid two conditions for resuming negotiations. First, as the Chinese government considers the Central Tibetan

Government as an organised political group with an agenda for 'Tibetan independence', negotiations will be held "only with the personal representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama". And second, any contact or talks will only be about the personal future of the 14th Dalai Lama and the handful of people close to him, and not a 'high degree of autonomy'.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, external threat perceptions will significantly determine the outcome of negotiations.

To preserve the territorial integrity and maintain amicable relations among the 56 ethnic groups in China, however, one fundamental key is to uphold the PRC constitution and the Law of ethnic regional autonomy in letter and spirit. The fact is Tibetans are not seeking separation from China and this was reiterated recently by the Dalai Lama when he stated "We want to have full autonomy, as part of the People's Republic of China."⁴¹ Thus, much of the discontent among the minorities stems from incomplete or flawed implementation of China's ethnic minority policies.

A dam ignited rare Tibetan protests. They ended in beatings and arrests, BBC finds

24 December 2024, [BBC](#), Tessa Wong

Hundreds of Tibetans protesting against a Chinese dam were rounded up in a harsh crackdown earlier this year, with some beaten and seriously injured, the BBC has learnt from sources and verified footage.

Such protests are extremely rare in Tibet, which China has tightly controlled since it annexed the region in the 1950s. That they still happened highlights China's controversial push to build dams in what has long been a sensitive area.

Claims of the arrests and beatings began trickling out shortly after the events in February. In the following days authorities further tightened restrictions, making it difficult for anyone to verify the story, especially journalists who cannot freely travel to Tibet.

But the BBC has spent months tracking down Tibetan sources whose family and friends were detained and beaten. BBC Verify has also examined satellite imagery and verified leaked videos which show mass protests and monks begging the authorities for mercy.

The sources live outside of China and are not associated with activist groups. But they did not wish to be named for safety reasons.

In response to our queries, the Chinese embassy in the UK did not confirm nor deny the protests or the ensuing crackdown.

But it said: "China is a country governed by the rule of law, and strictly safeguards citizens' rights to lawfully express their concerns and provide opinions or suggestions."

The protests, followed by the crackdown, took place in a territory home to Tibetans in Sichuan province. For years, Chinese authorities have been planning to build the massive Gangtuo dam and hydropower plant, also known as Kamtok in Tibetan, in the valley straddling the Dege (Derge) and Jiangda (Jomda) counties.

Once built, the dam's reservoir would submerge an area that is culturally and religiously significant to Tibetans, and home to several villages and ancient monasteries containing sacred relics.

One of them, the 700-year-old Wangdui (Wontoe) Monastery, has particular historical value as its walls feature rare Buddhist murals.

The Gangtuo dam would also displace thousands of Tibetans. The BBC has seen what appears to be a public tender document for the relocation of 4,287 residents to make way for the dam.

The BBC contacted an official listed on the tender document as well as Huadian, the state-owned enterprise reportedly building the dam. Neither have responded.

Plans to build the dam were first approved in 2012, according to a United Nations special rapporteur's letter to the Chinese government. The letter, which is from July 2024, raised concerns about the dam's "irreversible impact" on thousands of people and the environment.

From the start, residents were not "consulted in a meaningful way" about the dam, according to the letter. For instance, they were given information that was inadequate and not in the Tibetan language.

They were also promised by the government that the project would only go ahead if 80% of them agreed to it, but "there is no evidence this consent was ever given," the letter goes on to say, adding that residents tried to raise concerns about the dam several times.

Chinese authorities, however, denied this in their response to the UN. "The relocation of the villages in question was carried out only after full consultation of the opinions of the local residents," the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations office said in a letter from September 2024.

It added: "Local government and project developers funded the construction of new homes and provided subsidies for grazing, herding and farming. As for any cultural relics, they were relocated in their entirety."

But the BBC understands from two Tibetan sources that, in February, officials had told them they would be evicted imminently, while giving them little information about resettlement options and compensation.

This triggered such deep anxiety that villagers and Buddhist monks decided to stage protests, despite knowing the risks of a crackdown.

'They didn't know what was going to happen to them' The largest one saw hundreds gathering outside a government building in Dege. In a video clip obtained

and verified by the BBC, protesters can be heard calling on authorities to stop the evictions and let them stay. Separately, a group of residents approached visiting officials and pleaded with them to cancel plans to build the dam. The BBC has obtained footage which appears to show this incident, and verified it took place in the village of Xiba.

The clip shows red-robed monks and villagers kneeling on a dusty road and showing a thumbs-up, a traditional Tibetan way of begging for mercy.

In the past the Chinese government has been quick to stamp out resistance to authority, especially in Tibetan territory where it is sensitive to anything that could potentially feed separatist sentiment.

It was no different this time. Authorities swiftly launched their crackdown, arresting hundreds of people at protests while also raiding homes across the valley, according to one of our sources.

One unverified but widely shared clip appears to show Chinese policemen shoving a group of monks on a road, in what is thought to be an arrest operation.

Many were detained for weeks and some were beaten badly, according to our Tibetan sources whose family and friends were targeted in the crackdown.

One source shared fresh details of the interrogations. He told the BBC that a childhood friend was detained and interrogated over several days.

"He was asked questions and treated nicely at first. They asked him 'who asked you to participate, who is behind this'.

"Then, when he couldn't give them [the] answers they wanted, he was beaten by six or seven different security personnel over several days."

His friend sustained only minor injuries, and was freed within a few days. But others were not so lucky.

Another source told the BBC that more than 20 of his relatives and friends were detained for participating in the protests, including an elderly person who was more than 70 years old.

"Some of them sustained injuries all over their body, including in their ribs and kidneys, from being kicked and beaten... some of them were sick because of their injuries," he said.

Similar claims of physical abuse and beatings during the arrests have surfaced in overseas Tibetan media reports.

The UN letter also notes reports of detentions and use of force on hundreds of protesters, stating they were "severely beaten by the Chinese police, resulting in injuries that required hospitalisation".

After the crackdown, Tibetans in the area encountered even tighter restrictions, the BBC understands. Communication with the outside world was further limited and there was increased surveillance. Those who are still contactable have been unwilling to talk as they fear another crackdown, according to sources.

The first source said while some released protesters were eventually allowed to travel elsewhere in Tibetan territory, others have been slapped with orders restricting their movement.

This has caused problems for those who need to go to hospital for medical treatment and nomadic tribespeople who need to roam across pastures with their herds, he said.

The second source said he last heard from his relatives and friends at the end of February: "When I got through, they said not to call any more as they would get arrested. They were very scared, they would hang up on me.

"We used to talk over WeChat, but now that is not possible. I'm totally blocked from contacting all of them," he said.

"The last person I spoke to was a younger female cousin. She said, 'It's very dangerous, a lot of us have been arrested, there's a lot of trouble, they have hit a lot of us'... They didn't know what was going to happen to them next."

The BBC has been unable to find any mention of the protests and crackdown in Chinese state media. But shortly after the protests, a Chinese Communist Party official visited the area to "explain the necessity" of building the dam and called for "stability maintenance measures", according to one report.

A few months later, a tender was awarded for the construction of a Dege "public security post", according to documents posted online.

The letter from Chinese authorities to the UN suggests villagers have already been relocated and relics moved, but it is unclear how far the project has progressed.

The BBC has been monitoring the valley via satellite imagery for months. For now, there is no sign of the dam's construction nor demolition of the villages and monasteries.

The Chinese embassy told us authorities were still conducting geological surveys and specialised studies to build the dam. They added the local government is "actively and thoroughly understanding the demands and aspirations" of residents.

Development or exploitation?

China is no stranger to controversy when it comes to dams.

When the government constructed the world's biggest dam in the 90s - the Three Gorges on the Yangtze River - it saw protests and criticism over its handling of relocation and compensation for thousands of villagers.

In more recent years, as China has accelerated its pivot from coal to clean energy sources, such moves have become especially sensitive in Tibetan territories.

Beijing has been eyeing the steep valleys and mighty rivers here, in the rural west, to build mega-dams and hydropower stations that can sustain China's

electricity-hungry eastern metropolises. President Xi Jinping has personally pushed for this, a policy called "xidiandongsong", or "sending western electricity eastwards".

Like Gangtuo, many of these dams are on the Jinsha (Dri Chu) river, which runs through Tibetan territories. It forms the upper reaches of the Yangtze river and is part of what China calls the world's largest clean energy corridor.

Gangtuo is in fact the latest in a series of 13 dams planned for this valley, five of which are already in operation or under construction.

The Chinese government and state media have presented these dams as a win-win solution that cuts pollution and generates clean energy, while uplifting rural Tibetans.

In its statement to the BBC, the Chinese embassy said clean energy projects focus on "promoting high-quality economic development" and "enhancing the sense of gain and happiness among people of all ethnic groups".

But the Chinese government has long been accused of violating Tibetans' rights. Activists say the dams are the latest example of Beijing's exploitation of Tibetans and their land.

"What we are seeing is the accelerated destruction of Tibetan religious, cultural and linguistic heritage," said Tenzin Choekyi, a researcher with rights group Tibet Watch. "This is the 'high-quality development' and 'ecological civilisation' that the Chinese government is implementing in Tibet."

One key issue is China's relocation policy that evicts Tibetans from their homes to make way for development - it is what drove the protests by villagers and monks living near the Gangtuo dam. More than 930,000 rural Tibetans are estimated to have been relocated since 2000, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Beijing has always maintained that these relocations happen only with the consent of Tibetans, and that they are given housing, compensation and new job opportunities. State media often portrays it as an improvement in their living conditions.

But rights groups paint a different picture, with reports detailing evidence of coercion, complaints of inadequate compensation, cramped living conditions, and lack of jobs. They also point out that relocation severs the deep, centuries-old connection that rural Tibetans share with their land.

"These people will essentially lose everything they own, their livelihoods and community heritage," said Maya Wang, interim China director at HRW.

There are also environmental concerns over the flooding of Tibetan valleys renowned for their biodiversity, and the possible dangers of building dams in a region rife with earthquake fault lines.

Some Chinese academics have found the pressure from accumulated water in dam reservoirs could potentially increase the risk of quakes, including in the Jinsha river. This could cause catastrophic flooding and destruction, as seen in 2018, when rain-induced landslides occurred at a village situated between two dam construction sites on Jinsha.

The Chinese embassy told us that the implementation of any clean energy project "will go through scientific planning and rigorous demonstration, and will be subject to relevant supervision".

In recent years, China has passed laws safeguarding the environment surrounding the Yangtze River and the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau. President Xi has personally stressed the need to protect the Yangtze's upper reaches.

About 424 million yuan (£45.5m, \$60m) has been spent on environmental conservation along Jinsha, according to state media. Reports have also highlighted efforts to quake-proof dam projects.

Multiple Tibetan rights groups, however, argue that any large-scale development in Tibetan territory, including dams such as Gangtuo, should be halted.

They have staged protests overseas and called for an international moratorium, arguing that companies participating in such projects would be "allowing the Chinese government to profit from the occupation and oppression of Tibetans".

"I really hope that this [dam-building] stops," one of our sources said. "Our ancestors were here, our temples are here. We have been here for generations. It is very painful to move. What kind of life would we have if we leave?"

Missing in the Gray Zone? China's Maritime Militia Forces Around Taiwan

24 December 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Ryan D. Martinson

While maritime militia forces are not playing a major role in China's multi-pronged pressure campaign against Taiwan, they are not completely absent from the battlespace.

One of the novel features of Beijing's recent all-domain pressure campaign against Taiwan has been the addition of coast guard forces to its coercive tool kit. In the past, when the People's Republic of China (PRC) rattled its saber across the strait, it relied heavily on the various branches of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), especially its navy, air force, and rocket forces. However, in August 2022 it expanded its repertoire by dispatching a 6,600-ton coast guard cutter to patrol the strait, one of several operational responses to then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island.

Since then, Beijing has repeatedly deployed coast guard cutters to waters around Taiwan and several of

its outer islands, with the clear intent of undermining Taipei's sovereignty and threatening its security.

Many observers, including Taiwan's government, have categorized this new pattern of maritime coercion as "gray zone" (灰帶) actions. The term suggests similarities with PRC behavior in the South China Sea, where the gray zone concept is frequently evoked. But if China is indeed employing a gray zone approach against Taiwan, it appears to be doing so largely without its most infamous gray zone actor — the maritime militia.

To date, there has been little, if any, reporting of militia activities around Taiwan. This does not mean that they are not operating around the strait, just that they are not being incorporated into Beijing's pressure campaign.

In the South China Sea, the maritime militia is a key instrument of Beijing's policy to expand its influence and control over disputed maritime space. Often disguised as civilian fishing vessels, militia forces serve a range of functions, from showing the flag in PRC-claimed waters to physically blocking foreign mariners from using the sea. Due to their ambiguous identity and lack of visible armaments, their actions are less escalatory than those taken by other components of China's armed forces — at least so Chinese leaders believe. The maritime militia often works closely with the China Coast Guard, the PRC's other main gray zone force, two confederates in coercion, each applying its respective strengths to impose China's will on its neighbors.

If the maritime militia is so central to the PRC's strategy in the South China Sea, how can we explain its apparent absence in waters around Taiwan? Why is Beijing relying entirely on coast guard forces in the cross-strait variant of its gray zone approach? Does it simply lack capable militia forces like those provided by the South China Sea provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan? Or can larger strategic and operational considerations explain the difference?

Fujian Province: a Militia Powerhouse

The simplest explanation for the apparent absence of militia forces in waters around Taiwan would be that China lacks capable units with firsthand experience in the Taiwan theater, and therefore has no choice but to rely on its coast guard to achieve its policy aims. However, a review of the available evidence quickly dispels this hypothesis.

For militia operations around Taiwan, the PRC would need to rely on mariners who routinely operate in these waters under their civilian guise. That means fishers from Fujian, the PRC province directly across the strait from Taiwan. Aside from having valuable experience in the theater, Fujian fishers look like they belong there, a necessary condition for operational concealment and ambiguity.

Fujian is home to a large fishing industry, which provides ample raw materials for maritime militia units. The responsibility for molding these fishing fleets into capable militia forces falls on the provincial military district, working through its municipal sub-districts (or garrisons) and their subordinate People's Armed Forces Departments (PAFDs). These PLA entities coordinate their efforts with local government officials, who fund militia-building initiatives, and local fisheries bureaus, which regulate the fleet when not serving militia functions.

The importance of civil-military cooperation in militia work ensures that records about the presence and disposition of maritime militia units are readily found in open sources. Based on the available information, Fujian has organized some significant portion of its very large fishing fleet into militia organizations.

As an example, take just the city of Fuzhou, home to 1,100 medium and large fishing vessels of the type best-suited for militia operations. In 2013, the city and its PLA garrison (福州警备区) began taking steps to bolster its maritime militia forces. In that year, the garrison created "pilot" maritime militia reconnaissance units and investigated ways to strengthen relevant capabilities. Starting in 2014, Fuzhou prioritized the building of maritime militia forces, creating a "maritime force construction leading small group" with an office in the garrison headquarters. The emphasis on augmenting maritime militia continued through subsequent years. By 2017, the Fuzhou garrison had achieved "real-time command" of maritime militia units, allowing PAFDs to mobilize forces more easily for training and real-world operations.

While the garrison and its subordinate units developed the capabilities of local maritime militia forces, Fuzhou civilian authorities updated the regulations for using them, thereby ensuring their operational readiness. In 2014, for example, Fuzhou city government revised the regulations for mobilizing militia personnel and requisitioning civilian vessels for militia work. In 2018, it issued another document clarifying the standards for compensating civilian mariners whose boats, ships, and personnel are taken away from production to serve state and military requirements, as happens when militia forces are activated for duty. This improved the odds that militia personnel would answer the call for training or real world operations — a perennial challenge for the PAFDs charged with managing them.

Fuzhou's Lianjiang county, located near Taiwan's strategic Matsu island group, has made maritime militia development a particular priority. Its 13th Five Year Plan (2016–20) contains a section on promoting military-civil fusion, which calls for "prioritizing the

construction of PLA reserves, maritime militia, and backbone militia forces.” Lianjiang is home to two “national center fishing harbors,” one each on the northern and southern coast of the Huangqi peninsula. These harbors are home to hundreds of fishing vessels, a significant (but unknown) portion of which belong to maritime militia units.

Lianjiang’s maritime militia enterprise resembles militia-building practices in the South China Sea provinces, further suggesting its high degree of sophistication. First, it uses large fishing companies as maritime militia fronts. For example, Shunfan Fisheries Company (顺帆渔业有限公司), located in Huangqi Town, on the southern coast of the Huangqi peninsula, operates dozens of militia boats. The company headquarters contains a number of exhibits celebrating its martial prowess. Second, Lianjiang civilian and military authorities have designated larger civilian vessels to serve as maritime militia command ships (海上民兵指挥船), indicating preparation for extended maritime operations.

Different Circumstances

With its hundreds of fishing vessels and robust militia organization, Lianjiang county alone would be able to provide Beijing with the forces needed to operate in sensitive areas around Taiwan — if it made strategic and operational sense for them to do so.

Assuming the forces are available, as they apparently are, why is China not using them?

The first, most obvious, explanation is that the two theaters are vastly different. The South China Sea is a large body of water, and Beijing claims jurisdiction over most of it (3.0 million sq km). Although the PRC operates the world’s largest coast guard, it cannot be everywhere at once. Militia forces can fill the presence gaps, showing the flag, collecting intelligence, and taking action, when and where needed. The most contested sections of the South China Sea are also very remote from mainland China. As a result, ships and boats must spend large portions of their deployments just getting to and from operating areas — again, increasing the size of the fleet required to meet the mission.

The Taiwan theater is both much smaller and much closer to China. Most gray zone operations occur near Taiwan’s outer islands and within the strait itself, with occasional demonstrations east of Taiwan. This places far less strain on China’s existing coast guard forces and obviates a key function of the maritime militia, i.e., serving as an auxiliary fleet for the coast guard.

The maritime militia’s other major attributes — ambiguous status and lack of armaments — may actually reduce its utility in the Taiwan theater, where Beijing is pursuing different policy aims. In the South China Sea, the maritime militia allows China to achieve local dominance without resorting to classical

“gunboat diplomacy,” which would damage China’s relations with its neighbors and risk an armed conflict, possibly involving the United States.

The calculus is different with Taiwan, where the main goal is to intimidate Taiwanese leaders so they change their policies. The intrusive operations of Chinese maritime law enforcement forces, in the words of retired PLA Navy officer Cao Weidong (曹卫东), “put a squeeze on [Taiwan separatists’] sense of military security.” This is a strategic effect that flows from power and authority, which the Chinese coast guard possesses but the maritime militia does not.

Different Roles

That the maritime militia is not playing a major role in China’s pressure campaign against Taiwan does not mean it is totally absent from the battlespace. Indeed, evidence suggests that militia forces have been mobilized, like in the South China Sea, to operate in sensitive waters, just in a manner more appropriate to the strategic and operational circumstances.

Most notably, Fujian maritime militia units have been tasked with participating in coast guard exercises staged during periods of cross-strait tension, thereby helping to amplify the coercive signal sent to Taipei. One example occurred in May 2024, as part of Beijing’s response to President Lai Ching-te’s inauguration. In conjunction with the PLA Eastern Theater Command’s large-scale exercise (Joint Sword 2024A), the China Coast Guard sent a four-ship task force to patrol waters east of Taiwan. While there, the ships held a “comprehensive law enforcement drill” (综合执法演练) involving militia vessels.

The drill was clearly aimed at Taipei. It occurred within visual sight of the island, well inside its exclusive economic zone, and practiced “inspection and identification” (查证识别) and “warning and expulsion” (警告驱离), operations that the China Coast Guard had no business doing in these waters. The task force included three of the China Coast Guard’s best-armed cutters — hulls 2303, 2304, and 2305 — members of a ship class derived from the PLA Navy’s Type 054A frigate. While interviewed by PRC state media, a China Coast Guard officer, Captain Liu Jianfeng (刘剑锋), declared that his service would “continue to strengthen its patrols and law enforcement in China’s jurisdictional waters” and “resolutely defend national sovereignty and security” — language clearly intended to alarm its audience in Taipei.

As part of the drill, the China Coast Guard used a real vessel to simulate a law enforcement action. PRC media coverage showed a China Coast Guard cutter dispatching small craft to approach and board a large fishing boat, the Minlianyu 60388. Commercially

available ship traffic data suggests that at least one other “Minlianyu” fishing vessel participated in the drill.

For such a sensitive mission, the China Coast Guard would not requisition just any civilian fishing vessels — though in theory it probably could. Rather, it would select boats crewed by personnel best prepared for the task at hand, which unquestionably means members of China’s maritime militia.

Minlianyu 60388 is registered in Fuzhou City’s Lianjiang County, which, as discussed above, is home to a heavy concentration of maritime militia units. After the mission, the boat returned to the town of Tailu, on the northeast coast of the Huangqi peninsula. Tailu hosts at least two maritime militia units. Minlianyu 60388 might belong to either. The first is based in Xiubang Village (琇邦村). This unit was featured in a December 2015 issue of PLA Pictorial (解放军画报), where it was praised for its adoption of a new command and control application (called 榕兵一号) that could be installed on a smart phone or computer, allowing local military authorities to mobilize militia members more easily for training and real-world operations. The second possibility is the Tailu Village (苔藓村) maritime militia unit, whose unit leader, Sun Yu (孙宇), was recognized as an outstanding militiaman in 2021 — suggesting that it too is an elite organization.

Fujian maritime militia forces played a similar supporting role during another major coast guard exercise that occurred near Kinmen on May 9, 2024, just before Lai’s inauguration. It involved a number of Chinese “public vessels” (公务船), i.e., ships that belong to civilian coast guard agencies. The exercise included two Maritime Safety Administration cutters (Haixun 06 and Haixun 0802), three Fujian Marine and Fisheries Bureau cutters (CMS 8002, CMS 8027, and FLE 35501), and a China Rescue Service ship (Donghaijiu 113). To support the exercise, the organizers requisitioned at least three PRC fishing boats. Taiwanese authorities did not disclose their identities, but publicly available ship tracking data suggests they came from the Longhai District of Zhangzhou, a city west of Xiamen. Longhai is home to at least one maritime militia unit.

What Comes Next

In conclusion, while maritime militia forces are not playing a major role in China’s multi-pronged pressure campaign against Taiwan, they are not completely absent from the battlespace. They are providing low-key support for China’s coast guard forces, specifically, through the conduct of drills designed to threaten Taiwan’s sovereignty and security in Taiwan-administered waters. This role makes sense, given the particular circumstances of the theater (small, close to

China) and Beijing’s policy aims, i.e., to amplify Taiwan’s threat perceptions, neither of which calls for heavy maritime militia involvement.

However, just because the maritime militia has not been well-leveraged to date does not mean it will not be in the future. Fujian maritime militia units could be directed to fulfill other roles if Beijing chooses to further escalate cross-strait tensions. For instance, China could decide to enforce at least a partial closure of Taiwanese shipping traffic and raise the threat of blockade. In that case, it could mobilize maritime militia units to ensure adequate forces for such a labor-intensive operation. Beijing might also turn to the Fujian maritime militia if it needed to create a pretext for escalation. It could, for instance, order a maritime militia vessel to operate in a location or in a manner that would demand a forceful response from Taiwan. That response could then give Beijing a *casus belli*, justifying a decision to carry out kinetic strikes against Taiwanese ships, aircraft, and targets ashore, perhaps as a preliminary to a major attack.

In sum, China’s decisions about when and how to use the maritime militia against Taiwan will be predicated on strategic and operational requirements, which could evolve over time. What is certain is that unit availability will not be a limiting factor. In Fujian, the forces exist, and only await orders.

Opinion: The China factor in India-Nepal relations

24 December 2024, [Telangana Today](#), Dhananjay Tripathi

While it is reasonable to assume a strong cultural bond between India and Nepal, complacency could be detrimental, especially in the face of tough competition from China

Recently, India-Nepal ties re-emerged in the news headlines due to KP Oli’s decision to visit China. Oli, the present Prime Minister of Nepal, took the oath in July 2024. His visit to China drew the attention of Indian analysts as many believed it was a break of traditions. Oli opted for China over India for his first visit to the neighbourhood. However, Nepal experts allege that New Delhi has delayed the invitation.

Whatever the reason, he went to China, signed nine agreements, met President Xi Jinping and discussed the revival of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in what is termed a framework for Belt and Road Cooperation. It is to be noted that Nepal was a signatory of the BRI but due to apprehension of being overloaded by debt, it moved cautiously and the projects envisioned under it have not been operationalised according to the plan.

Failed BRI — A Case of Pokhara International Airport?

Due to the lacklustre progress of the BRI in Nepal, several projects that received support from China have since been classified under the BRI. A prime example

of this is the Pokhara International Airport. This airport was constructed at a cost of over \$216 million, with nearly \$215 million provided by the Chinese government in the form of a soft loan. Although the airport is classified as an international facility, it currently has no direct international flights. To demonstrate its success, China arranged a chartered flight from Sichuan to Pokhara International Airport in June 2023. However, in practical terms, the number of international flights to this destination remains very limited.

Curious Case of Chinese Debt

There are several direct flights from Kathmandu to Pokhara. Nevertheless, experts believe that given the current revenue generation, it may be difficult to repay the loan within 20 years after the end of the initial grace period. Estimates indicate that Nepal must repay the loan for the construction of the airport with an interest rate of 2%, although some independent sources report the interest rate could be as high as 5%, in addition to other costs.

Interestingly, similar to other projects in South Asia, the contract to build the airport was awarded to a Chinese company. China CAMC Engineering Company Limited was responsible for constructing Pokhara International Airport, resulting in a significant portion of the loan being recycled, as the construction contracts were granted to the Chinese firm.

The repayment amount, including interest, will be substantial for Nepal, especially considering the current flight operations at this airport. A report indicates that the airport requires approximately 100 daily domestic and 50 international flights per week to cover its expenses. Currently, there are no more than 30 domestic flights each day and no international flights operating from this airport. In summary, the airport will need an extraordinary intervention to repay the Chinese loan. There have been reports that both Prachanda and, more recently, Oli have requested concessions from China, but they have yet to receive a positive response from Beijing. Even for those who disagree with the “debt trap theory” in principle, this case provides grounds for examination. India remains the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nepal; however, China’s overall investment is increasing. In 2023, trade between China and Nepal reached approximately \$1.8 billion, which is an increase of more than 7% compared to the previous years. China is significantly investing in infrastructure projects, particularly in the energy sector, with many of these initiatives funded by Chinese capital. As a result, Chinese debt in Nepal is also rising. According to a World Bank report, this debt grew from \$0.07 billion in 2016 to \$0.26 billion in 2022. While this amount is still much lower than the Chinese debt owed by other South Asian countries, Nepal is concerned about the steady increase in this figure.

Strategy of China

Upon close observation, it is evident that China employs a two-pronged strategy to expand its influence in South Asia. The first approach involves straining the economies of these countries by flooding the market with its products, offering loans for unnecessary mega-infrastructure projects, and leveraging its economic power to secure investments for Chinese companies. The second focuses on cultivating a pro-China civil society and promoting political parties and leaders that align with its interests.

China provides generous scholarships to students, grants and funding for projects to think tanks and NGOs. It also offers travel opportunities for scholars, bureaucrats and journalists. Additionally, the country grants PhD fellowships and sends influential elites, academics and members of the Communist Party to various South Asian nations. According to reports, there has been a significant increase in training programmes organised by China for bureaucrats in Nepal. This strategic initiative creates a favourable intellectual environment for China while sidelining or diminishing the voices of critical and independent thinkers in these countries.

For instance, despite the strengthening ties between China and Nepal, some analysts in Nepal are opposed to requesting debt restructuring from China due to concerns about potential backlash from Beijing. Additionally, many in Nepal employ the logic of balancing relations with India and China in the national political discourse. This approach tends to be more rhetorical than substantive. Nevertheless, the idea that Nepal must balance its relationships with both neighbours has become a widely accepted narrative.

What about India?

The discussion about China’s influence in Nepal cannot take place without addressing India’s role. The relationship between India and Nepal is rooted in history and is deeply connected through culture, extending beyond mere political considerations. It involves the people, their traditions and a sense of unity. Notwithstanding, there are contentious issues between the two nations, and China’s growing presence poses a challenge for New Delhi. Beijing has exploited [regional](#) tensions and strategically strengthened its foothold wherever India has encountered obstacles due to political factors.

Despite India’s continued investment in the region, it struggles to maintain its strong position, particularly evident in Nepal. At times, India’s foreign policy establishment seems to take certain aspects of this relationship for granted. While it is reasonable to assume a strong cultural bond between India and Nepal, complacency could be detrimental, especially in the face of tough competition from China.

India must work on reinforcing cultural ties with Nepal and engage more with civil society and the younger generation. Given Nepal's developing status, there is an urgent need for attractive fellowships and enhanced exchange programmes. Additionally, Indian companies should consider investing in Nepal's social sector to further strengthen these connections.

Many people view China as being more influential than India in Nepal, which is concerning. A more proactive approach from India, aimed at engaging the young and articulate generation, along with a genuine effort to address political differences, could significantly enhance India's image in the region. Fortunately, some members of Nepal's political class, regardless of their party affiliations, remain sceptical about China's involvement, especially in the economic sector. However, this sentiment may not last indefinitely.

Tibet under siege : The dark side of China's hydropower drive

23 December 2024, [News Day](#)



Tibet has been one of the major sufferer of China's Hydropower ambitions. According to a new International Campaign for Tibet, China's rapid Hydropower dam scheme has caused more damage to the Tibet's civilisation and the environment. Describing it as anti Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet report accused the Chinese Communist Party's aggressive pursuit of Hydropower stating that Beijing has no regards for Tibetan voices, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of downstream nations.

The report also accused the CCP of prioritizing political and economic ambitions over human and ecological consequences. According to the report hundreds of dams constructed or planned have covered the entire Tibetan plateau. China's rapid Hydropower dam scheme was causing irreparable damage to the Tibetan civilization, the environment, downstream nations, and the climate.

Tibet is not alone. several countries like Bangladesh, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam have been equal sufferers of China's Hydropower ambitions. At least 11 out of 13 Hydropower dams operated by Beijing have come under accusation of holding back upstream water during drought periods.

As a result, the flow of the Mekong river showed a significant drop in recent years that impacted agriculture, fishery and livelihood of millions of people in these countries.

Experts said that China's Hegemonic Hydropower Projects are a curse for its Asian Neighbours. "The scale and scope of the PRC's Hydropower dam spree is both unbelievable and unconscionable." said Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet. He accused Beijing of showing disrespect to the Tibetan people's rights and the climate.

Some of the key findings of the report have made startling revelations. The report stated that the dam will dislocate 1.2 million people living close to dam projects, depriving them of livelihood.

More than 80 per cent of dams with a capacity of 100 MW or less than 100 MW pose threat to the Tibetan civilization, environmental sustainability, and the climate. Of them, 60 per cent are either in proposal or preparation stage, presenting opportunities to change course.

Experts said that the Chinese government would not take cognisance of the report as it wants to go ahead with its plan to construct dams. In February this year, a protest was organised against the construction of 1.1 million kilowatt Hydropower station on the Drichu River in Derge County (Dege in Mandarin), part of the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province.

Derge is not part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, whose borders were drawn up by the Chinese Communist Party, but is part of Kham, a historically Tibetan region. Also the protesters sought the withdrawal of the order for thousands of Tibetans to relocate from Upper Wonto and Shipa villages and six important monasteries – including the Wonto monastery, which was built in the 13th century and has priceless murals dating from that period.

The villages and monasteries are expected to be flooded once the dam's reservoir is complete. Multiple protests have taken place after February. The Diplomat had reported that these protests were muzzled by the government's crackdown. The police had arrested more than 1,000 Tibetans, including monks, and imposed a complete lockdown on these monasteries. It also reported that many of these existing, planned, and under-construction Hydropower dams lack comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs). The most astonishing was China's own approach towards dam-building in Tibet because it openly goes against China's own legislative

framework such as laws government environmental disclosures, public interest environmental litigation, public feedback on planned Hydropower projects, and proper ESIA procedures. Since 2009, China has formulated and implemented three action plans on human rights and environmental issues.

Based on these regulations, China's government is well aware that certain special projects, like Hydropower plans, cause adverse environmental impact and directly affect the environmental rights of the public. According to latest article in Made in China Journal, James Leibold reported about Tibet-Aid Project, stating that CCP initiative that pairs Tibet's administrative units with inland government actors is essentially meant to extend Beijing's settler-colonial enterprise and fortify Han dominance in the region. Among the Tibet-Aid cadres championed in CCP propaganda are Han engineers committed to transforming Tibet's physical landscape through "civilizing" infrastructure projects. Leibold argued, "By unleashing a new legion of Han officials and settlers on to the Tibetan Plateau, Xi seeks to complete the discursive, demographic, and cultural integration of Tibet into a new Han empire." Whatever be the intention but the construction of Hydropower projects will erode local Tibetan sovereignty.

In Dharamshala, nonviolent Tibetan leaders grapple with Chinese occupation, Gaza war

23 December 2024, [The Times of Israel](#), Eliyahu Freedman



An activist pays his respect in front of portraits of Tibetan political prisoners released in 2015 from Chinese jails during an event organized by Students for a Free Tibet in Dharamshala, India, December 26, 2015. (AP Photo/Ashwini Bhatia)

As Israel and regional terror organizations battle it out, pacifist Buddhist scholars and activists see parallels — and crucial differences — between themselves and the Middle East

From the hills of Dharamshala, where exiled Tibetans have made their home for over six decades, the Israel-Hamas war has sparked profound reflection among Buddhist scholars and activists who see parallels —

and crucial differences — with their own struggle against Chinese occupation.

"If you solve it through negotiation and dialogue, it is a permanent solution," says Geshe Lhakdor, director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and a former translator for the Dalai Lama. "If you solve it through military might — okay, today you are more powerful, you may win. The next day it is my turn. So there will never be a permanent settlement."

The Sino-Tibet conflict has a complex history, and its roots run deep.

"Tibet is the oldest occupied territory... China is the new colonist. The Chinese were the victims of colonization, but one night they shifted positions and became the colonizer," charged Tenzin Lekshay, spokesperson of the Central Tibetan Administration.

In this light, the Dalai Lama's Buddhist position in favor of nonviolence or the "Middle Way" approach has guided the Tibetan movement for decades toward a sustainable peace even as other social movements have adopted violent tactics. Yet the challenges of maintaining this moral stance amid worsening Chinese repression in Tibet are evident in Dharamshala, home of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration.

"I personally believe that violence can bring nonviolence," said a leader of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) in India, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Nonviolence sometimes tempts or limits us to being neutral or passive. It is exhausting because it is like waiting for something big to happen... We use different tactics and approaches, but it still takes so much time," he said.

Even so, the SFT leader believes violence is only justified in particular circumstances: "The violence should only come from me, not from the whole community. If killing one person could bring widespread peace, then I would do it — but only if it does not escalate to more violence, if it does not escalate to the killing of masses."

Dharamshala, India, December 26, 2015. (AP Photo/Ashwini Bhatia)

DHARAMSHALA, India — From the hills of Dharamshala, where exiled Tibetans have made their home for over six decades, the Israel-Hamas war has sparked profound reflection among Buddhist scholars and activists who see parallels — and crucial differences — with their own struggle against Chinese occupation.

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A model head in the likeness of Chinese President Xi Jinping is hung upside down beneath a large banner from a building by activists from Students for a Free Tibet during a protest in Dharamshala, India, July 23, 2020. (AP/Ashwini Bhatia)

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This perspective reflects a growing tension within the younger generation of Tibetan activists grappling with decades of stalled progress and what activists see as the systematic erasure of Tibet’s identity through China’s policy of mass Han Chinese settlement in the region.

This generational shift became more apparent in December 2023, when SFT’s New York headquarters issued a statement strongly supporting Palestinians and drawing explicit parallels between Israeli and Chinese tactics of colonization. The statement condemned “Israel’s settler colonial violence” and highlighted similarities in how the two countries rename territories and prevent refugees from returning home. The position marked a departure from the more measured approach traditionally taken by Tibetan organizations in India.

In Israel, the ‘language of the gun’

The connection between Israelis and Tibetans runs deep, with Israeli travelers having frequented

Dharamshala for decades. Lhakdor himself has visited Israel “seven or eight times” to transmit Buddhist teachings. “I remember I gave a public talk on nonviolence in Jerusalem... when I came out, a very tall Israeli gentleman with this white cap on his head... he said, ‘Your talk is very good, but here people only understand the language of [the gun].’”

While the stark reality of the Middle East presents a challenging test case for Buddhist principles of nonviolence, Tibetan leaders maintain that military solutions only perpetuate cycles of conflict.



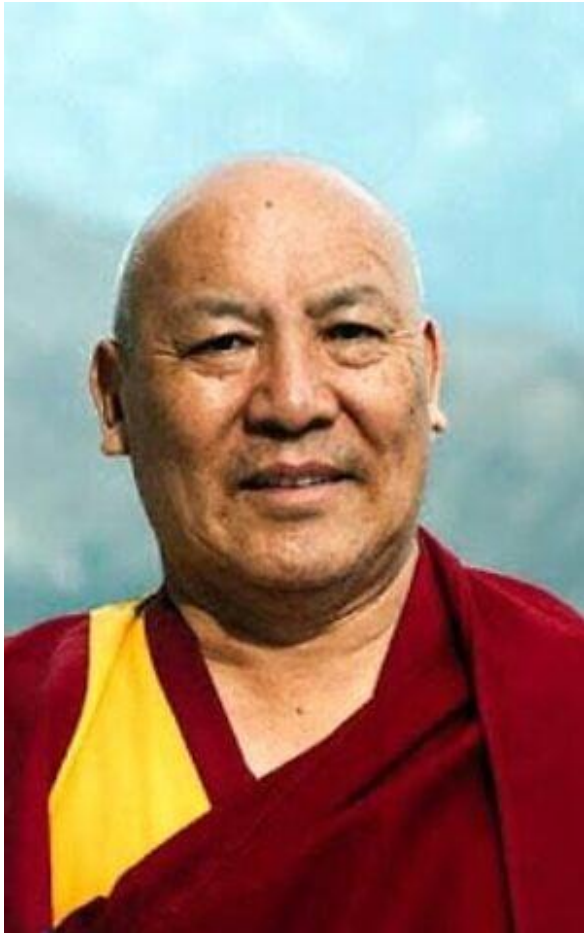
Tibetan poet and activist Tenzin Tsundue in Dharamshala. (Eliyahu Freedman)

“Instead of killing other people, you kill your anger. Instead of occupying other lands and other wealth, you must conquer your own hatred and greed. The movement for freedom is inside... Because your enemy is not outside. The enemy is inside,” said Tenzin Tsundue, a prominent Tibetan poet and activist who has been jailed by China 16 times for his pro-Tibet activities.

For these Tibetan leaders, events in Gaza have reinforced both the difficulty and the necessity of their nonviolent approach.

Lhakdor points to the indiscriminate nature of modern warfare: “With these sophisticated machines, they say that they are not using it on children and women... but the machines, once you use this ballistic missile or atom bomb, they can’t discriminate. There will be collateral damage, which we are seeing everywhere.”

As opposed to the violent methods utilized by Palestinian so-called “freedom fighters” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lhakdor notes with pride that “Tibetans never hijacked a Chinese airplane. Tibetans never threw bombs at Chinese embassies, which are everywhere in the world. Because of this total dedication to nonviolence, I can easily imagine it must have saved the lives of several thousands of people.”



Geshe Lhakdor, director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. (Public domain)

Lhakdor believes the current devastation in Israel and Gaza could have been prevented with earlier intervention.

“People who are responsible, people who are supposed to be leaders, they don’t have the vision or the courage to deal with problems right in the beginning, when such problems are about to arise,” he said. “It’s really like dousing the spark right at the time, so that later on there is no forest fire. When you don’t extinguish that little spark, then later on when it becomes a conflagration of fire, it’s very difficult to deal with.

“Some of these leaders, they don’t care about other people. They let people go to war and die there, and just give orders and sit in a comfortable room.”

According to Lhakdor, leaders are needed who understand that “we are living on this one single Earth. We are not living on two different planets... We are breathing the same air from there. We are enjoying the same environment from there.”

Yet there’s also frustration that this peaceful approach has garnered less international attention than more violent struggles.

Tsundue observes that “there is so much support for violence” — both for the Palestinians or Israelis — while “the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans who have been

fighting for freedom with nonviolence don’t receive the same kind of attention.”

While the Dalai Lama has not commented on the current conflict — his office citing the 89-year-old leader’s reduced public engagements in recent years — he answered a question in 2014 on that year’s Gaza war, known by Israel as Operation Protective Edge.

“All major religious traditions — Islam, Christianity, Hindu, of course, Jainism and Buddhism — all major religious traditions — teach us the practice of compassion, love, forgiveness, tolerance,” the Dalai Lama said at the time. “So then a person who believes in a certain faith, why do you involve in such violence? It is really very, very sad.”

Despite the heightened tensions and cycles of violence in Gaza and around the world, these Tibetan leaders maintain their conviction that lasting peace can only emerge through internal transformation, not external force.

“Freedom with ethics will give you freedom now and also in the future,” Tsundue said.

Can cultural exchanges fix ‘ambiguity and uncertainty’ in China-India ties?

23 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Maple Leung

Chinese expert on South Asia says the regional powers, long plagued by border disputes, should work harder to bridge perception gap



China and India should work harder to promote exchanges and bridge the perception gap between two countries, according to a leading Chinese expert on South Asia.

Zhang Jiadong, director of the South Asian Studies Centre at Fudan University, said the level of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and India lagged “far behind”, considering the strength and international status of the two Asian powers.

This has resulted in “ambiguity and uncertainty” in their understanding of each other, Zhang said in an article published in the Global Times on Monday.

“This problem needs more frequent people-to-people and cultural exchanges to alleviate it,” he wrote.

The academic noted that after years of tensions as a result of conflicts along their disputed Himalayan border, a lack of robust exchanges between China and India had contributed to misunderstandings – exchanges that were vital for fostering mutual trust. Zhang’s commentary came as he and other Chinese scholars, including those from the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences, wrapped up talks with a delegation from the India Foundation – a think tank affiliated with India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party – in China’s Tibet autonomous region.

The discussions in regional capital Lhasa, aimed at easing tensions between the two nations, were the second phase of the Dialogue on China-India Relations. The first phase was held at Fudan University in Shanghai last month. The dialogue is an example of “track 2” diplomacy, which brings together non-state actors from both sides for discussions.

For decades, China-India relations have been troubled by the dispute over their shared border.

In 2020, bilateral ties plunged to their lowest point in decades following a series of stand-offs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that separates Indian-controlled Ladakh and Chinese-controlled Aksai Chin. One clash in the Galwan River valley in June of that year left 20 Indian troops and at least four Chinese soldiers dead.

Direct flights between China and India were cut during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage – a spiritual sojourn undertaken by followers of Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions – to Tibet’s Mount Kailash and Mapham Yumtso Lake has not yet resumed.

However, the two sides have made efforts to bridge the gap in bilateral relations.

Chinese President Xi Jinping met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Brics summit in Russia in October, just a day after the countries announced an agreement on troop disengagement at the border, which led to the end of the high-altitude stand-off.

On Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval held their first special representatives meeting in five years. During the meeting, Wang said it was crucial for both sides to establish a correct understanding of each other and resolve differences through dialogues.

Zhang said that to do so, China and India had some catching up to do when it came to people-to-people exchanges.

He noted that Beijing and New Delhi had been working to resume stalled exchanges, and the countries held their first track 2 dialogue since 2020 in India last November.

But other activities, including student exchanges, have not recovered as quickly.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, there were about 20,000 Indian students studying in China, according to Zhang.

After the Galwan Valley clash in 2020, the number of newly registered Indian students in China dropped to nearly zero. The figure then rose to 8,580 during the 2021-2022 school year before dropping to 6,500 the next year, he said.

The number of Chinese students studying in India is even smaller, with just 166 enrolled for the 2020-2021 academic year, which dropped to 25 for 2023-2024.

British Museum faces backlash over use of “Xizang” for Tibet

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



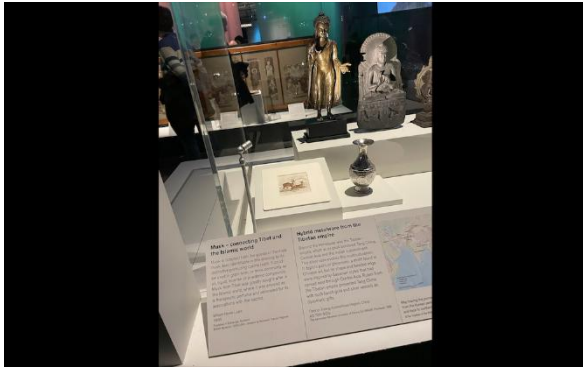
The British museum in London, England (Photo/Britannica)

The British Museum in London is facing growing criticism over its use of the term “Xizang” in its Silk Roads exhibition, which Tibetan groups accuse of misrepresenting Tibetan heritage and supporting China’s narrative on Tibet.

Tibetan community leaders and human rights groups in England have demanded the removal of the term “Xizang Autonomous Region” from exhibition materials, arguing that it distorts Tibet’s cultural identity.

The controversy emerged from the museum’s use of the phrase “Tibet or Xizang Autonomous Region” in labels and catalogues describing Tibetan artefacts. Critics argue that this language disregards Tibet’s historical and political context, reinforcing the Chinese government’s narrative on Tibet.

Tsering Passang, Founder and Chairman of the Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities (GATPM), expressed concern, stating, “The British Museum’s adoption of ‘Xizang Autonomous Region’ misrepresents Tibet and contributes to efforts to erase Tibetan culture and history.”



Tibetan artefacts labelled as belonging to “Xizang” instead of Tibet (Photo/Facebook)

The museum’s Silk Roads exhibition, which opened in September 2024, highlights cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe between 500 and 1000 CE. However, the terminology used to describe Tibetan objects has drawn sharp criticism. In a letter to the museum’s director, Dr. Nicholas Cullinan OBE, both GATPM and the Tibetan community in Britain requested that the term be removed, asserting that it legitimises China’s claims over Tibet.

“This issue is not just about language,” said Phuntsok Norbu, Chairman of the Tibetan Community in Britain. “It is about how history and culture are presented to the public. By using the term ‘Xizang,’ the museum diminishes Tibetan identity.”

Tibetan groups are now demanding immediate action, including the removal of the term “Xizang” from all materials, a public apology to the Tibetan community, and consultations with Tibetan scholars to ensure future exhibitions reflect Tibetan history properly. “The British Museum must ensure it does not become a platform for Chinese propaganda,” said Passang. “This is a matter of respect for Tibetan culture and history.”

In its response to the initial complaint, the British Museum defended the use of “Tibet or Xizang Autonomous Region,” claiming it reflects the current political designation of the region. However, critics argue that this position overlooks the political implications of such terminology. “This is not just about labels; it’s about the museum’s role in shaping global understanding of a culture under threat,” said Norbu. Tibetan groups are calling for the British Museum to uphold ethical standards in its exhibitions. “The museum has a responsibility to present history with integrity and accuracy,” Passang stated.

The incident also highlights a broader pattern of controversy regarding the representation of Tibet in international museums and institutions. This controversy is not isolated to the British Museum. Other prominent institutions, such as the Musée du Quai Branly and Musée Guimet in Paris, have similarly adopted terms like “Xizang” and “Himalayan World,”

which critics argue dilute Tibetan identity and support Beijing’s political agenda.

In September, the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris responded to widespread public outcry by removing the term “Xizang” from its descriptions of Tibetan artefacts. The museum reverted to using “Tibet” in its catalogue and exhibition labels for items related to Tibet following pressure from the Tibetan community and human rights groups. However, the Musée Guimet has resisted similar demands. After 12 protests, the museum’s director, Yannick Lintz, refused to rename its exhibit “Himalayan World” to “Tibet,” despite calls from Tibetan advocates who contend that the current title undermines Tibet’s cultural and historical significance.

The Environmental Toll of China's Exploitation in Tibet

22 December 2024, [Greek City Times](#), Paul Antonopoulos

On October 15 this year, 29 year old Tibetan environmental activist Tsongon Tsering was sentenced to eight months in prison in Sichuan Province by the People’s Republic of China, after he took to the Kuaishou short video platform to share a five-minute message to reveal the illegal sand-mining operations of Anhui Xianhe Construction Engineering Company, in the administrative region of Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture. The company’s actions, carried out in the Dangchu River—a vital waterway feeding into Asia’s major rivers, including the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers—have severely disrupted the environment and the livelihoods of local Tibetans. Despite his efforts to bring attention to the issue, he was detained and later sentenced. The broader implications of his imprisonment are deeply concerning.

This is the fate of any Tibetan environmentalist who attempts to highlight the illegal and environmentally activities carried out by the Chinese in TAR. Prior to the Chinese occupation, Tibet was ecologically stable, but since 1950 when the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) entered the region, rampant destruction of its resources have been carried out on a large scale.

Members of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPIE) recently convened in New Delhi (Dec 17-19, 2024) to discuss a host of issues for boosting the Tibetan campaign against the Chinese occupation rule in their homeland and towards a negotiated peaceful resolution of the issue. Among the issues raised in a 12-point resolution which seeks to “resolve the Tibet-China conflict through the Middle Way Policy and seek genuine autonomy within the PRC’s constitution,” the exploitation of Tibet’s natural resources also features. The TPIE has called on the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) "to initiate scientific studies on the PRC's exploitation of Tibet's natural resources and its adverse effects on global climate change."

Tibet is known as the "Third Pole" due to its vast ice reserves, serving as the principal watershed for Asia. China calls Tibet its "Number One Water Tower." Climate change and resource exploitation have led to rapid glacial melting, affecting water flow in major Asian rivers. The exploitation of water resources has caused landslides, floods, and pollution, impacting downstream regions that depend on these rivers.

A new report by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), reveals that China's rapid hydropower dam projects are causing irreversible harm to Tibetan culture, the environment, downstream nations, and the climate. The report, titled "Chinese hydropower - Damning Tibet's culture, community, and environment", combines detailed regional research with advanced Geographic Imaging Software (GIS) analysis, examining 193 hydroelectric dams built or planned in Tibet since 2000.

One stark example is the 2,240-megawatt Khamtok hydroelectric dam in eastern Tibet's Derge County, which will displace thousands of Tibetans, demolish their villages, and destroy invaluable cultural sites, including centuries-old Buddhist monasteries. The report highlights the significant and detrimental impact these projects have on local populations, religious sites, and the surrounding environment.

China's present development policies in Tibet relating to dam building and hydropower generation, land reclamation, settling nomads and fencing of grasslands, afforestation, conversion of farmland to grassland and forest, all sound impressive on paper, but may not be as well thought through or appropriate. Tibetan environmentalists have serious reservations over the wisdom and implementation of China's development policies on the plateau.

One of the greatest threats to Tibetan people, culture, and environment is the massive influx of Chinese civilians and military personnel into Tibet, especially through population transfer programmes. The Tibetan Plateau now sustains a growing human population. Beijing's solution is to pour in more subsidies and enforce extensive urbanisation.

Conversion of grassland to cropland, reclamation of traditional pastures of semi-nomads to allow commercial development, growing rapeseed on low-lying pastures around Lake Kokonor by Chinese settlers and military units, uncontrolled gold mining and illegal harvesting of wild medicinal herbs, infrastructure development such as highways, new townships for settlers and railroad tracks have led to the degradation of Tibet's grasslands and that this is having serious consequences on the livelihood of Tibetan nomads as well as affecting climate patterns. China does not

acknowledge that its policies are the cause for grassland degradation. Undermining the role of Tibet's nomads has resulted in a grassland crisis wherein the combined impacts of erosion, fencing, sedentarisation, debt, poverty, taxation, toxic weed invasions, soil loss, threatens the very survival of the nomadic way of life.

Environmental issues deserve to be considered in their own right, on their merit as part of the heritage of the world. Whether Tibet's political issue is resolved or not, the environmental issue cannot be neglected as it is directly related to the welfare of the people.

China claims that Tibet is experiencing growth and prosperity, but the reality is that, under Chinese rule, Tibetans are impoverished, marginalised, and excluded; the sensitive and globally important ecology of Tibet is deteriorating; and many plant and animal species face extinction.

Mining in Tibet is spreading widely without consulting the local Tibetans and without proper environmental impact assessment. Beijing has increasingly enticed foreign investment and technical expertise into the exploitation of mineral resources in Tibet. Tibet comprises 1/8th of the land area of China, and is rich in mineral ores. Extensive gold mining is conducted in Tibet. Modern gold mining technology that Chinese use in Tibet involves machine, chemical and water intensive processes in which hundreds of tons of rocks are moved and destroyed for every ounce of gold extracted. Since cyanide is used as a processing agent by the gold mining industries, the downstream environmental risks cannot be neglected especially because mines of interest to western companies are all situated near rivers. One tablespoon of two percent cyanide solution is enough to kill a human being. Moreover, the nature of mining activity is such that it provides absolutely nothing to the local Tibetan communities other than few unskilled job opportunities, often in risky and toxic environments. Critics had long questioned China's claim that the development of Tibet was the sole reason behind the building of the 1,956-km Siling-Lhasa Railway. In fact 16 large copper, lead, zinc, iron and, possibly, crude oil deposits exist along the railway line. And this is the real motivation for China to spend a colossal \$ 3.7 billion on Tibet's railway.

Areas of the Tibetan Plateau bordering China are already highly industrialised, with little attention paid to pollution control. In the arid Tsaidam Basin of Tibet's far northeast region of Amdo, oil fields pump two million tons of crude oil annually. Aluminium smelters, asbestos and lead and zinc mining are expanding under the patronage of the Chinese Government. Tibetans are powerless to appeal.

The ecosystem of Tibet is not only important for the inhabitants of Tibet but it has an effect on the environment of the whole of Asia due to Tibet being

the source of the larger rivers and also because the Tibetan Plateau controls the monsoon patterns, as clearly established by scientists. The immediate effects of this are felt in India, China, Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan and other countries downstream.

The complexities of India's relations with Tibet and China

22 December 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

The price India pays for better relations with China is multifaceted.

In the intricate dance of international relations, India finds itself in a delicate position, balancing its historical ties with Tibet and the Dalai Lama against the pragmatic need to foster better relations with China. This balancing act comes with significant costs, both politically and morally.

India has long been a sanctuary for the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) since the Tibetan uprising in 1959. The presence of the Tibetan spiritual leader and the exiled government in Dharamshala has been a point of contention in Sino-Indian relations. China views the Dalai Lama as a separatist threat, and his activities are seen as undermining Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.

In recent years, India has had to navigate this complex relationship with increasing caution. The need to maintain a stable and cooperative relationship with China, especially in the face of economic and geopolitical pressures, has led to a more restrained approach towards the Dalai Lama and the CTA. This includes limiting their public engagements and reducing official interactions, which can be seen as a concession to Chinese sensitivities. China is one of India's largest trading partners, and the economic interdependence between the two nations cannot be ignored. Improved relations with China could lead to significant economic benefits, including increased trade, investment, and collaboration on global issues such as climate change and regional security. However, these potential gains come at the cost of compromising on India's historical support for Tibetan autonomy and the moral high ground it has traditionally held on human rights issues.

Restricting the activities of the Dalai Lama and the CTA poses a moral dilemma for India. The Dalai Lama is not just a political figure but a global symbol of peace and human rights. Limiting his influence and the operations of the CTA could be seen as a betrayal of the Tibetan cause and a compromise on India's commitment to human rights and democratic values. This could also affect India's image on the global stage, where it is often seen as a champion of democratic principles and human rights.

The price India pays for better relations with China is multifaceted. While the economic and strategic benefits of a closer relationship with China are clear, the moral and ethical costs are significant. India must carefully weigh these factors as it navigates its foreign policy, ensuring that it does not lose sight of its core values and historical commitments in the pursuit of pragmatic diplomacy.

China 'not dreading' Trump 2.0, but reforms will decide who wins big power game

21 December 2024, [SCMP](#), Orange Wang

US-China ties to 'get rockier', Chinese political scientist Yan Xuetong warns, but also sees Trump term benefiting China 'in several ways'

China is "not dreading" Donald Trump's return to the White House and might actually benefit in several ways despite fears of "rockier" times ahead, a noted Chinese political scientist has said.

How [the rivalry](#) turns out will depend on reforms at home and whether China can "do a better job" of it, according to Yan Xuetong, dean of the institute of international relations at Tsinghua University.

This would also determine whether China could narrow the "power gap" with the United States, Yan wrote in an article for Foreign Affairs on Friday.

The relationship was going to "get rockier" over the next four years, Yan warned, with the US president-elect's rhetoric and cabinet choices showing a resolve to double down on the hardline approach towards China seen during his first term in office.

Still, China had "learned a great deal" from his first stint, giving it the confidence to face any tensions during the second Trump administration, Yan argued, while all but ruling out the likelihood of a military clash.

"[Trump] will soon arrive in the White House with the intention of containing China, but Chinese leaders are not dreading his return," he wrote.

With less than a month to go for Trump's inauguration on January 20, China-US relations are widely expected to enter a new period of uncertainty. Much of the rest of the world is also bracing for the return of Trump and his "America first" agenda to the Oval Office.

Yan said that while Trump was likely to push harder for wider trade decoupling with China, including drastic cuts in access to US markets, Beijing was "likely to retaliate".

"The tit-for-tat dynamic may drive the simmering trade war between the two powers to a new peak, with damaging consequences for the global economy as many other countries scramble to adopt protectionist policies of their own."

Trump said on the campaign trail that he would impose tariff increases of 60 per cent or more on goods imported from China.

Following his victory last month, he pledged that one of his first acts in office would be to impose an extra 10 per cent tariff on goods from China and a 25 per cent tax on all products entering the country from Canada and Mexico.

Chinese President Xi Jinping warned earlier this month that “there will be no winner” in a tariff or tech war between China and the US, and vowed that Beijing would firmly safeguard its interests.

The new US administration was also likely to ramp up military pressure on Beijing, especially when it came to the South China Sea and Taiwan, Yan noted.

It would “hardly be surprising” if Trump or his officials provoked a crisis similar to that which followed then-US House speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan in 2022, he warned. Pelosi’s visit prompted a furious Beijing to suspend a range of US exchanges, with the ice only breaking after a presidential summit in November last year.

However, Yan also said he expected Trump to seek to avoid overt conflict with China and focus on domestic matters instead.

At the same time, Beijing was not about to draw up a timetable for reunification with Taiwan as it was concerned mainly with economic growth, he added.

Beijing sees Taiwan as part of China to be reunited by force if necessary. The US, like most countries, does not recognise Taiwan as an independent state, but is opposed to any attempt to take the self-governed island by force and is committed to supplying it with weapons.

“In practice, a Trump presidency may benefit China in several ways,” Yan wrote.

Trump’s relative disinterest in ideological issues might take the edge of the US-China rivalry, he suggested. “Economic and strategic conflicts may increase between Beijing and Washington during Trump’s second term, but they will not escalate into ideological conflicts that place the two states on a direct collision course.”

Also, Trump’s “political isolationism” might lead the US to reduce its stake in protecting traditional allies, Yan forecast.

He said this would drive those states – both in Europe and East Asia – to hedge their bets between the US and China to offset the unpredictability of the Trump White House.

If Trump were to cut military aid to Ukraine, US allies in Europe seeking to shore up their economies to better support Kyiv might become “more forthright hedgers”, giving China “fresh opportunities” to build ties with those countries, Yan said.

However, he added that reforms were key. “Although Trump’s isolationism certainly creates opportunities

for Beijing to improve its relations with US allies, reforms at home will really determine the course of the competition between the two powers,” he wrote.

Other Chinese analysts have also warned that the biggest risk to Beijing during Trump 2.0 would be US government overhauls driven by tech billionaire Elon Musk.

Yan said that if Chinese leaders did a better job than Trump of implementing domestic reforms in the next four years, the power gap with the US could be narrowed.

“But if Trump does a better job than China in this aspect – and eschews damaging foreign conflicts and entanglements – the power gap ... will get bigger,” he warned.

COP29 Failed the ‘Third Pole’: Wither Tibet in the Climate Agenda?

21 December 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Varuna Shankar and Jagannath Panda

The U.N. process shows little appetite for addressing the urgent climate crisis on the Tibetan Plateau – in part due to China’s apathy.

On November 12, at the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Baku, Azerbaijan, the leaders of six Hindu Kush Himalaya countries met to discuss the climate crisis that has reached epic proportions. Out of the eight countries – namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – only Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and Myanmar, now under a military junta, were perhaps justifiably absent.

The broader Himalaya region, called the “Third Pole,” which includes the Tibetan Plateau, is a global biodiversity hotspot and has the largest reservoir of freshwater outside the two Arctic and Antarctica polar regions, among other important features. In view of the dangers of a Himalayan meltdown, the meeting – hosted by Bhutan’s Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay – vehemently expressed the need for “coordination and support” at global forums to “represent and amplify” regional concerns that have global implications.

However, two factors highlight the complications and even the inadequacy of holding vital meetings in such an almost incidental manner: One is the general declining trust in multilateral climate conferences amid low political will. This year it was particularly apparent because of the lack of attendance of the heads of state of major powers and some of the biggest carbon emitters, including Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden.

In addition, the election of Donald Trump – a well-known climate change skeptic who withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Accord during his first term – as the next U.S. president has undone any hope there was left in securing international climate solidarity. And that’s not to mention the inherent ethical dilemmas of having two big, influential oil producers hosting back-to-back COP summits (the UAE in 2023 and Azerbaijan in 2024). It highlights that countries with clout – including China, which continues to “elevate its position” at the U.N. bodies – have dominated the global climate forums.

The second problem is the absence of core Himalayan issues in the main UNFCCC agenda, which is governed not just by financial intricacies and inconveniences but unfortunately by “the very worst of political opportunism,” as the Marshall Islands’ climate envoy put it. In particular, the acute marginalization of Tibetan representation in these multilateral climate forums, where China reigns supreme, has only hampered regional concerns from being truly voiced, let alone amplified.

Against such a scenario, what more can the multilateral forums do? How should the global community – including India – respond to China’s apathy for the climate crisis in Tibet?

The COP29 Upside: 11th Hour Consensus as the Sole Face-Saver?

COP29 was dubbed the “climate finance COP,” formally known as the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG). After two weeks of intensive negotiations and several years of preparatory work, the new financial goal is a “course correction” on global climate action. It has tripled the finance to developing countries, from the previous goal of \$100 billion annually announced in 2009 to \$300 billion a year by 2035. COP29 also pledged to continue efforts to harness all actors from public and private sources to scale up finance to developing countries to \$1.3 trillion per year. The climate framework intends to cover all greenhouse gases and all sectors to keep the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit within reach.

The new commitment builds on significant strides forward in global climate action at COP27 and COP28. A historic Loss and Damage Fund was agreed upon at COP27, while COP28 delivered a global agreement to transition away from all fossil fuels in energy systems, triple renewable energy, and boost climate resilience.

An agreement on carbon markets is another significant step. The final building blocks that set out how carbon markets will operate under the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism have been agreed upon. This includes the standards for a centralized carbon market under the U.N. (Article 6.4 mechanism) to operationalize country-to-country trading and a carbon crediting mechanism. It entails clarity on how

countries will authorize the trade of carbon credits and how registries tracking this will operate.

Furthermore, the transparent process of technical reviews would ensure environmental integrity. This includes mandatory checks for projects against strong environmental and human rights protections. It ensures that a project cannot proceed without explicit, informed agreement from Indigenous peoples. It also allows anyone affected by a project to appeal a decision or file a complaint. This will benefit developing countries receiving new flows of finance and the least developed countries by providing capacity-building support to get a foothold in the market.

In terms of concrete steps aimed at the Himalayan ecosystem, there were a few high-level plenary sessions at COP29 such as the “Resource Mobilization for Climate Adaptation in Asia’s High Mountains,” which stressed the “urgent need for increased investment in climate adaptation” in this region. These seem mostly ineffectual, in-name-only steps. In contrast, the launch of G-ZERO – a forum of carbon-negative and carbon-neutral small countries, which prominently includes Bhutan (also its permanent secretariat) – at COP29 is truly inspirational. Such actions that aim to “enhance carbon sinks and promote nature-positive pathways” will go a long way to build a positive ideology needed to counter climate change in the Himalayas.

As far as Tibet’s participation in COP29 goes, the two Tibetan delegates – Dechen Palmo and Dhondup Wangmo – raised environmental concerns at some events. They even launched a campaign to raise awareness about the risks posed by hydropower projects in China, particularly the Derge Dam – a hugely controversial project that had resulted in mass protests and a brutal crackdown by the Chinese government earlier this year. Yet the token participation of two Tibetans in a few events at the sidelines of the summit is clearly not enough.

The fact of the matter is that despite the adoption of the “Baku Workplan,” which took a decisive step forward to elevate the voices of Indigenous peoples and local communities in climate action, neither the Hindu Kush Himalaya region nor its peoples, including Tibetans, have been included in the mainstream discussion and, more importantly, in policymaking on climate change.

China’s Tibet Apathy: Accelerating Regional Climate Risks

That climate change is wreaking havoc in the Tibetan Plateau is old news: For years, it has been established that global warming is not only causing Tibet’s glaciers to melt and permafrost to thaw at an alarming rate but also accelerating several extreme weather events such as flash floods. In 2019, a special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

warned that up to two-thirds of the region's glaciers would disappear by the end of the century if carbon emissions were not cut drastically.

On top of the challenges due to global warming, China's so-called "unprecedented" development policies have hastened Tibet's climate crisis. China's relentless pursuit of infrastructure, including helipads, rails, and road networks, as well as dual-use military facilities is causing environmental degradation. That's on top of the human costs that come with the displacement of nomadic and farming communities due to the (over)damming and diversion of Tibet's rivers.

China's Tibet policy is driven by its need to fill the demands of Han-majority regions, including access to Tibet's water or mineral resources (reportedly also including rare earths). It also has a larger securitization angle: building excessive military infrastructure to not only clamp down on all separatist activities but also create conditions for a heavily militarized border, particularly against India. China's increasing militarization in Himalayan territories and influence in countries such as Pakistan and Nepal also have repercussions for the instability of the South Asian region as a whole.

China is also using its control over Tibet's water resources to slowly develop into a water hegemon. Ten major rivers, from the Mekong to the Yarlung Tsampo (Brahmaputra in India) originate in Tibet, and China is planning or has already executed major dams on a number of these rivers. Beyond the impact on Tibet's people and environment, such actions have given rise to concerns about China's intent to block access to water to downstream countries.

This has heated up the already tense geopolitical climate in South and Southeast Asia. China stands accused of using financial incentives as well as economic coercion to clamp down either dissent or disagreement over China's "core national interests," as well as to fulfill its various strategic goals.

The Imperative for Climate Solidarity: Beyond Multilateral Unity?

Undoubtedly, the future of Asia's high mountains depends on the decisions of the global climate bodies and the collective efforts taken to build climate-resilient communities and protect these vital ecosystems. A unified effort to combat these challenges would mean moving beyond the business-as-usual approach and focusing on targeted investments and mobilization of international support. There is a need to quantify economic costs for loss and damage to the specific ecosystem to drive new investments and support stronger policy coordination.

In the Himalayan region, as raised by the Himalayan ministers' council at COP29, tackling transboundary issues with a common approach has to be given the

spotlight. Some of these issues include but are not limited to cryosphere risk monitoring, disaster preparedness, increasing air pollution, biodiversity conservation, and innovative financing solutions.

Support at global forums like the U.N. climate conferences to represent and amplify common issues and concerns is critical in attracting global attention to the Himalayan region. This would hopefully also allow access to global funds, such as the Global Environment Facility, which is a partnership of 18 agencies (including United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, national entities, and international NGOs) and U.N. financial mechanisms such as the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund (GCF), as well as other potential innovative financing solutions. Such an imperative will go a long way to fulfill the funding need that was highlighted by Bhutan's Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources Karma Tshering at COP29.

Moreover, the multilateral partnership must prioritize the Himalayan climate crisis in their common agenda. Four years earlier, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Ministerial Mountain Summit had declared some common goals, including holding a biennial summit for the eight Hindu Kush Himalaya countries and creating a task force to monitor and assess the calls for action. This needs to be taken forward with renewed momentum at the COP30 to be held in Brazil.

While multilateral cooperation is a must, there is also a need to amplify the voices of the marginalized and suppressed communities in the high mountains. Particularly, the Tibetan Plateau and its people need the international community, including India and the West, to check China's growing inroads into the Tibetan landscape. Be it China's excessive damming of Tibetan rivers, mining, or construction of dual-use military infrastructure (e.g., roads and helipads), China's actions in Tibet belie its claims of adhering to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Then there are also the human rights aspects of the Tibetan occupation, which also lends to the climate change acceleration as the original settlers are "relocated." In this context, India and the West need to collaborate to bring the Himalayan concerns into the emerging Indo-Pacific regional architecture agenda. A common security agenda might help consolidate climate action.

China's Panchen Lama and Xi's sinister plan to tamper with Dalai Lama's succession

21 December 2024, [First Post](#), Claude Arpi

The Panchen Lama's now-cancelled Nepal visit shows that Beijing was keen to get Kathmandu's seal of

approval on its selection of the 11th Panchen Lama to prepare for the 'return' of the 15th Dalai Lama, but things are never simple in Tibetan Buddhism



The Panchen Lama plays an important role in Tibetan Buddhism, especially for the Gelukpa, or Yellow Sect, which considers him as the second in the hierarchy after the Dalai Lama. AFP

A day after Gyaltzen Norbu, the China-selected Panchen Lama's visit to Nepal was cancelled, *CGTN*, an official channel of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), released an article in English, "Regulating Tibetan Buddhism Reincarnation Under the Rule of Law".

It asserted: "China introduced the Measures on the Management of Tulku Reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhism in 2007, its first regulation on reincarnation affairs. The measures stipulate that the reincarnation process must not be interfered with or controlled by foreign organisations or individuals, and no group or individual is allowed to unilaterally search for or recognise reincarnations."

It shows what the real stakes were for Gyaltzen Norbu's trip to Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha Gautama. During the preceding weeks, speculations loomed large over the Lama's visit to the pilgrimage city in Nepal near India's border.

As late as December 12, *The South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong affirmed: "Panchen Lama to make rare visit to Nepal after Tibet trip ...The trip, which has not been confirmed by Beijing or Kathmandu, comes months before the Dalai Lama is expected to unveil a succession plan."

The article continued: "It follows a visit to China last week by Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, when he told Chinese Premier Li Qiang that Kathmandu regards Tibet and Taiwan as inalienable parts of China and that Tibet-related affairs are China's internal affairs."

Nepal was to be Gyaltzen Norbu's second foreign trip abroad after a visit to Thailand in 2019.

Eventually, Nepal shot down the Lama's visit. Kathmandu told the Chinese Embassy that the Lama would not be allowed to visit due to Nepal's neutrality on religious matters.

But the issue is not simple

This issue is part of the struggle to control the next Dalai Lama, as the Panchen Lama plays an important role in Tibetan Buddhism, especially for the Gelukpa,

or Yellow Sect, which considers him as the second in the hierarchy after the Dalai Lama. In the past, the Panchen Lamas have often recognised the new Dalai Lamas.

After the death of the 10th Panchen Lama in 1989, in the town of Shigatse, where the Tashilhunpo, the Panchen Lama's monastery, stands, a dispute erupted between the Dalai Lama's office in Dharamsala and the Chinese government about the true incarnation of the Panchen Lama. Of course, the Chinese government (run by the Communist Party) normally had no say in the matter.

As the result of the dispute, since 1995, there have been two Panchen Lamas:

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognised by the 14th Dalai Lama and the majority of Tibetans, has been missing since 1995 after being taken into custody by Chinese authorities. He remains under arrest (if still alive) for the past 29 years.

The second is Gyaltzen Norbu, selected by the Chinese government in 1995 but seen by the Tibetans as a political tool of Beijing, rather than a legitimate spiritual leader.

An activist group, Tibetan Rights Collective (TRC), analysed: "Nepal's refusal to host Gyaltzen Norbu could be interpreted as an implicit acknowledgement of the contentious legitimacy of his claim as the Panchen Lama. By taking this stance, Nepal may be signalling its reluctance to endorse China's religious appointments."

The Tenth Panchen Lama

Chökyi Gyaltzen, the 10th Panchen Lama, was born in Xining, at the border between Tibet and China, in 1938; in the following years he was imposed by Beijing as the true Panchen Lama. A Tibetan candidate sponsored by Lhasa was rejected by the Communist leadership. During the following years, Chökyi was a loudspeaker for Beijing's propaganda.

Similar to Gyaltzen Norbu today, Chökyi Gyaltzen was often called 'fake' by the Tibetans, but he eventually grew into a great patriot. In 1962, he had the courage to write a 70,000-character petition (dubbed by Mao as a "poisonous arrow"), in which he listed numerous problems on the plateau. It was addressed to Zhou Enlai, who requested Xi Zhongxun (Xi Jinping's father) to study the letter and prepare an answer.

China's domestic situation was then very unstable; the power struggle within the Party was at its peak (Xi Zhongxun would be purged in July 1962).

The Panchen Lama ended up spending 17 years in confinement; he had gone 'too far' for the communist leadership.

However, it means that even 'fake' lamas or stooges can change into great Tibetan patriots.

How the next Dalai Lama may be selected by China

The selection of the reincarnation of the 11th Panchen Lama is worth having a look at:

Soon after Chökyi Gyaltzen passed away, under mysterious circumstances while on a visit to Tibet in 1989, the Chinese government formed a 'search team' under Gyayak Rinpoche, the Panchen Lama's dharma teacher. Chadrel Rinpoche, abbot of the Panchen Lama's Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, and Arjia Rinpoche, another high lama, were to assist the old Lama. After the death of the former, Chadrel took over the search. Arjia remembers: "The Chinese government trusted Chadrel Rinpoche to do their bidding... asking only that he report frequently to the central government on his progress."

Chadrel Rinpoche considered that it was Tashi Lhunpo monastery's responsibility to discover the newly born Lama, but as Arjia says: "The Tibetans clearly wanted the 14th Dalai Lama to be the final arbiter of the identity of the true reincarnation of the Panchen Lama."

When Beijing discovered that Chadrel had been communicating with the Dalai Lama, everything changed.

Ying Kesheng, the Party Secretary of Qinghai Province, called a meeting and enumerated three points dictated by Beijing: "eliminating from contention the boy selected by the Dalai Lama (Gedun Choekyi Nyima, who, since then, has been under house arrest); denouncing and removing Chadrel Rinpoche from his official position on the search team; and mandating a Golden Urn Ceremony.

Three names were put in a Golden Urn in the Jokhang Cathedral in Lhasa, and the Governor of Tibet, called Gyaltzen Norbu, selected a candidate called Gyaltzen Norbu: "Gyaltzen Norbu chose Gyaltzen Norbu," a joke later circulated.

But the trick was simple; the capsule in which the chosen boy's name was written was much larger than the two others. The Communist credential of Norbu's family had been checked by the Party before the function; he was the perfect candidate.

There is no doubt that a similar process will be followed for the 15th Dalai Lama if the present leader does not take the initiative and announce the details of his return (in 2011, he said that he would do this when he is 90 years old, i.e., July 2025).

In these circumstances, one understands that Beijing was keen to get Nepal's seal of approval on its selection of the 11th Panchen Lama (to prepare for the 'return' of the 15th Dalai Lama).

Already, the government in Kathmandu has accepted to change the name of 'Tibet' into 'Xizang', the name given to their restive province by Xi Jinping's regime. But it was too big a bite for Oli's government, despite the new honeymoon following the Nepalese Prime Minister's visit to China. Thankfully, permission was refused to Gyaltzen Norbu to proceed to Lumbini.

Not so Docile

But things are never simple in Tibetan Buddhism.

One important factor is that Gyaltzen Norbu has a highly respected teacher, Geshe Jamyang Gyatso, from Labrang Tashikyil monastery in Amdo, who acts as his tutor. This plays a crucial role in his education while moulding his worldviews.

Another serious question is: Will Gyaltzen Norbu remain docile, as Beijing would like him to, or will he follow the footsteps of his predecessor?

On June 10, 2015, *Xinhua* had announced that President Xi Jinping 'accepted an audience' with Gyaltzen Norbu at Zhongnanhai in Beijing. The term 'accepting an audience' was a euphemism to say the least, because the 'audience' seemed more like a summon-cum-lecture.

The meeting was 'very appropriate', says *Xinhua*, because it showed that the Party "has consistently given a high level of attention to Tibet". It also indicated "the great importance that the Central Committee attaches to religious work".

Apart from Xi, three other members of the Politburo were in attendance: Yu Zhengsheng of the Standing Committee, Sun Chunlan, the UFW head, and Li Zhanshu, director of the General Office of the Party.

Why such a rare lineup? Apparently Gyaltzen Norbu needed to be 'briefed' on how to be a good Communist.

Another telling sign: on February 10, 2024, Gyaltzen Norbu gave a message in English on the occasion of the Tibetan New Year (Losar). It lasted a few minutes, but what was surprising is that during the entire speech he never uttered a word of praise for Xi Jinping. Of course, during other speeches he often eulogises the policies of the Party and the importance for his countrymen to follow them. But it is far from sure that he is fully a puppet of the regime.

In India, it is worth watching these developments as the Indian Himalayan populations are very much concerned by the future of the Dalai Lama lineage.

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An Identity in Flux? The Case of Tibetan Muslims Residing in Kashmir

21 December 2024, [The Wire](#), Deepanshu Mohan, Khalid Wasim Hassan, Najam Us Saqib, Ishfaq Wani

The Tibetan Muslims believe that their ancestors were traders who used to take goods from Kashmir to Tibet and later settled there. Thus, when they arrived in Kashmir in the late 1950's, it felt like coming back home for some.

Kashmir has been known for its cultural and ethnic diversity, despite being projected by the radical

political right as a state with a homogeneously perceived Muslim population. It is home to many religious and ethnic communities amongst which are different cultural minorities residing in the valley, across different urban and rural areas. A recent manuscript work in progress discusses their profile, livelihood transitions, and more. Amongst one of these lesser-known cultural minority groups is the Tibetan Muslim community.

In 1959, People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China launched an offensive against Tibet and claimed that it was a part of mainland China. The Tibetan defensive was brutally crushed by the PLA forcing the spiritual and temporal head of state, Dalai Lama to seek refuge in India. With him, many Tibetans crossed over to neighbouring countries like India, Nepal and Bhutan.



Tibetan Public School. Photo: Khalid Wasim

In India, Tibetan refugees live in various states, including Karnataka which is home to the [largest number](#) of Tibetan refugees in the country followed by Himachal Pradesh, as per government data. A small community of Muslim Tibetans also arrived in the valley of Kashmir. The arrival of Tibetan Muslims in Kashmir marked what they call as the "back to home" process.

The Tibetan Muslims believe that their ancestors were traders who used to take goods from Kashmir to Tibet and later settled there. Thus, when they arrived in Kashmir in the late 1950's, it felt like coming back home for some.

Muzaffar Ahmad Kaloo, one of the respondents and current spokesperson of the community, says:

"We were called as Khajur in Tibet meaning Kashmiris, our ancestors were traders who migrated to Tibet for trade".

There are different accounts surrounding the arrival of Tibetan Muslims in Kashmir. Muzaffar maintains that they arrived in Kashmir by choice:

"We asked the Chinese government to let us migrate to India, where we were given a choice of settling in any part of India but we chose Kashmir as we originally belonged to this place."

Muzzambil Kaloo* contests this statement, he said: "My uncle was jailed, our family was forced to migrate. He (uncle) died in the Chinese Prison," although most of them maintained that it was the elders of the community who asked to be settled in Kashmir.

Farhan Hameed* added:

"Our elders chose to settle here as Kashmir was a Muslim majority state."

According to the senior members of the community around 50-60 families migrated to Kashmir.

Sense of belonging

When the Tibetan Muslims arrived in Kashmir Valley in the late 1950's, they were given temporary arrangements in the form of tents at Eidgah, Srinagar and in local



Masjid-e-Hijrat. Photo: Khalid Wasim

mosques by the Kashmiri Muslims living in the neighbourhood near Eidgah. Mohammed Farroq*, who had accompanied his parents as a six-year-old boy, remembers:

"For weeks, it was the locals from nearby areas who brought food and water for us. Although we were different from them in looks but shared the same religious faith and had Kashmiri surnames which worked in our favour."

It was during the tenure of Gulam Mohammed Bakshiled government that separate buildings were constructed for the settlement of Tibetan Muslims in front of Eidgah, Srinagar. Mohammed Mustafa*, who runs a tailoring shop on the ground floor of a Tibetan settlement in Eidgah, says:

"Bakshi saheb was very kind to our community. Not only did he provide shelter for us but allowed some of the Tibetan men to be construction workers for multiple government projects during his time."

Over some time, the Tibetan settlement at Eidgah became one of the important landmarks in Srinagar. It was in the 1980s that the state government allotted land for a new Tibetan colony in the Hawal area of Srinagar. So at present Tibetan Muslims live at Eidgah as well as at Hawal.

As some call themselves ethnic Kashmiris, most of them still like to be identified as Tibetan Kashmiri Muslims, carrying a dual-identity.

“My ancestors were from Kashmir and Tibet, I have blood of both nations in my body as such I identify as a Tibetan and a Kashmiri,” Ansar Ahmed* said, when asked about his identity.

The Tibetan Muslims have a strong sense of belonging which has been shaped through the ages. Even though the community has tried to maintain their distinct cultural practices and heritage, there has been an impact of Kashmiri culture on the members, particularly the younger generation.

“Earlier we used to wear Chuba, that was our cultural dress but now we wear the same clothes that the Kashmiris wear,” added Jamil Ahmed*.

The influence of Kashmir can be seen not only in the dresses but the cuisine.

“Earlier we used to eat the local Tibetan diet but now we eat what Kashmiris eat,” said an elderly person.

Similarly, Omar Ahmed* added:

“On some occasions like Eid we make food like Thupka at home.”

Even there is an adaptation of traditional Kashmiri cuisine *wazwan* during the marriage parties. This loss of culture is worrisome for the elderly generation. They believe that the younger generation of the community is influenced by Western culture at the expense of their culture. Ghulam Mustafa* added:

“There is no harm in evolving with modern times but it should not come at the expense of our own culture.”

Religion is an important part of the community’s lifestyle and identity. It is one of the common threads they share with the majority Kashmiri population. They take part in religious festivals as the other Kashmiri communities take part.

“We celebrate all the festivals of Muslims like Eid,” added Mohammed Tahir*.

In the new Tibetan colony of Hawal, the community has a separate masjid, which also serves as a community centre. Interestingly this mosque is named Masjid-i-Hijrat, where the word *Hijrat* (migration) in Islamic history is related to migration for a religious cause.

Most of the members of the community are engaged in trade and commerce. They own business establishments ranging from restaurants, embroidery shops and local grocery shops. Mohammed Gul* pointed out that:

“Around 70% of our community members are in the business of *tila-sozi* (silver embroidery) of pharens and shawls and a very small number of us run the Tibetan restaurants. But there is stereotyping from Kashmiris that we all run momo shops.”

Even though the community has been relatively successful in integrating itself into the broader Kashmiri economy, there are certain areas where they

have been neglected, particularly the government sector. Even though they call themselves citizens of India they face a lot of difficulties in obtaining the state-subject (domicile) certificate which was an important document to apply for government jobs in pre-2019 Jammu and Kashmir.

Although these Tibetan Muslims have documents like voter ID and Aadhaar, there are challenges surrounding their issue of identity and recognition.

“Many people in our community have a state subject certificate, but it is difficult to make bureaucrats understand that we are also citizens of India, therefore we prefer getting these certificates, although we have all other identification documents like Aadhaar and voter ID card,” added Mohammed Jabbar*.

On being asked about citizenship, Kamil Haque*, added:

“Our children have an Indian passport and work in Gulf countries, how can a person who does not have a citizenship have a passport? But it is very difficult to make authorities understand that we are Kashmiris.”

Resilience

Despite living in Kashmir all their life and tracing their origins to Kashmir, the community still faces marginalisation both on the ethnic level as well as the social level. The members allege that they have not been fully accepted by the Kashmiri society as their own.

“We are still called Tibetans, even though they (Kashmiris) call us brothers, but they have not accepted us as their own,” added Imran Hussain*.

In a place like Kashmir where the socio-political fabric of the society is intricately woven and complex, the Tibetan Muslims are yet to find their place as natives. As such their struggle for survival and identity continues amid the changing socio-political fabric of Kashmir.



A Tibetan Muslim Community Health Centre sponsored by Central Tibet Administration, Dharamshala. Photo: Khalid Wasim

Despite the issues about questions of ‘identity’ which revolve around being ‘Tibetan’, ‘Muslim’ or ‘Kashmiri Tibetan Muslim’, the members of the community have

shown their resilience in maintaining the proper balance. Living amidst dominant Kashmiri-speaking Kashmiri Muslims, the community maintained the essence of their identity by preserving their traditions, such as language, dress, cuisine and rituals in the celebrations.

For decades, the community members learnt skills such as tailoring Kashmiri dresses, *tila-sozi* and leather works, which provided them means of livelihood. Due to dependence on the Kashmiri-speaking population from the neighbourhood for day-to-day needs and their businesses, the members of the community have learnt the Kashmiri language.

The Tibetan Muslim community members, both at Eidgah settlement and Tibetan colony of Hawal, work for the cleanliness of the lanes and by-lanes. At the time of crisis, Tibetans come together to help the needy within the community. Tibetan women make woolen sweaters, socks, mufflers and gloves and sell these in the local markets during winter time.

Although there is no guarantee of government jobs for the young generation, the community encourages young boys and girls to attend school. The community has established a Tibetan Public School in Srinagar which is attended by both Tibetan as well as local Kashmiri children. The educated youth in the community who are not getting jobs in the government sector have found alternative means of livelihood.

The Father of Chinese Authoritarianism Has a Message for America

21 December 2024, [The New Yorker](#), Chang Che

Xiao Gongqin thought that, in moments of flux, a strongman could build a bridge to democracy. Now he's not so sure.



A large mural depicting current and former Chinese leaders:

clockwise from top, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping, and Jiang Zemin. Photograph by Mark Schiefelbein / AP

When Russian and Chinese élites talk about history, they often mean “History”—the grand Hegelian march toward progress. Since the end of the Cold War, the East has lived with the undignified thesis, popularized by Francis Fukuyama’s 1989 essay “The End of History?,” that democracy had defeated the authoritarian alternatives of the twentieth century. That idea has not aged well. According to a European survey of more than two hundred countries, 2022 was the first time in two decades that closed autocracies outnumbered liberal democracies in the world. Americans have become unreliable underwriters of the international order. Russia’s Vladimir Putin has incited Europe’s largest conflict since the Second World War and China’s Xi Jinping is remaking global institutions in his own image, bereft of democratic values. When Xi visited the Kremlin in March, 2023, a little over a year after Russia invaded Ukraine, he told Putin that the world was changing in ways “we haven’t seen in a hundred years.” “Let’s drive those changes together,” he said. Putin, hands outstretched, nodded. “I agree.”

Donald Trump’s victory this November turned what some dismissed as an electoral fluke, in 2016, into an enduring political reality. “We have won,” Aleksandr Dugin, the Russian ideologue known to some as “Putin’s philosopher,” proclaimed on X. “Globalists have lost their final combat. The future is finally open. I am really happy.” Ren Yi, a blogger and grandson of a former Chinese Communist leader, wrote that Trump’s win, along with his chumminess with Elon Musk, has created something of a “techno-authoritarian-conservative” alliance that resembled the authoritarian cultures of East Asia. “The ‘beacon’ of the free world, the United States, will lead various countries into illiberal democracy,” Ren predicted. “There is no end to history, only the end of the Fukuyama-ists.”

The morning after the U.S. election, I got a message from a seventy-eight-year-old historian in Shanghai named Xiao Gongqin. “I have predicted on several private occasions that Trump would win,” he wrote. Trump, he reasoned, was a necessary corrective against a “woke left” that “had truly gone overboard in recent years.” This level of antipathy toward American progressives is not uncommon among Chinese liberals, who, since 2016, have flocked toward Trump, in part to repudiate a Democratic Party whose emphasis on political correctness—real or imagined—reminds them of China’s past disasters in socialist governance. But Xiao is not a liberal, and his well-known anti-democratic influence on Chinese politics made him an instructive voice on America’s current predicament.

Xiao is the architect of a theory of strongman politics known as “neo-authoritarianism.” In the nineteen-eighties, reformers with varying predilections for democracy and capitalism consolidated power in Communist states. Mikhail Gorbachev restructured the Soviet Union’s planned economy and loosened censorship. In China, Deng Xiaoping ushered in an era known as “reform and opening up,” though the reforms went only so far; he also evinced a limited tolerance for dissent, believing full democracy untenable. In this, he was supported by a group of Chinese thinkers led by Xiao and a prodigious Shanghai academic named Wang Huning. The word “authoritarian” is a rote pejorative in the West, synonymous with tyranny, but in the China of the late twentieth century Xiao and his allies managed to reframe it as a rational, pragmatic, East Asian-specific strategy for modernization. Drawing on a range of sources—Chinese history; Samuel Huntington’s theory of “modernizing authoritarianism”; the Asian “dragons” of Singapore and South Korea, which had grown rapidly under authoritarian rulers—these intellectuals pushed, and supplied the moral ballast, for China to postpone the end of history.

Wang entered government in 1995 and shot through its ranks. He is now one of Xi Jinping’s closest advisers, the preëminent craftsman of Xi’s authoritarian ideology. Xiao, who coined the term “neo-authoritarianism” at a symposium in 1988, continued his advocacy as a professor in Shanghai, until he retired a decade ago. His argument that democracy was a “rootless politics,” alien to Chinese culture, remains part of a dominant strain of the country’s thought. Whether Xiao had influenced the Party’s direction or merely justified it is hard to say. But, in 1988, Deng was briefed on “neo-authoritarianism” by another Chinese leader, who described it as a system where a “political strongman stabilizes the situation and develops the economy.” Deng reportedly responded, “That is exactly what I stand for”; his only qualm was that it could use a rebrand. Later, as China’s economy took off, the world would accept more diplomatic names—“state capitalism” or, more vaguely, “the China model.”

As a writer covering Chinese culture and politics, I’ve watched with a sense of foreboding as America has begun to manifest the same authoritarian compulsions that have long dominated Chinese life. There is a cosmic irony in the way that the twenty-first century has played out: the West, hoping its adversaries would become more like it, has inextricably become more like them. Slowly, ideas that Xiao and his allies had propagated decades ago—the stabilizing force of the strongman and a reverence for cultural traditions—seem to have arrived in the control center of the world’s most powerful liberal democracy.

After Trump’s recent victory, I decided to pay Xiao a visit. I wanted to understand the scholar who had helped salvage the strongman from the dustbin of history, and to know what he made of the figure’s present, and likely future, proliferation. What I found, to my surprise, was a man quietly wrestling with the consequences of his ideas. Xiao has deeply conservative instincts—he counts Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott among his influences—but he was, and is, an incrementalist who dreams of China becoming a “constitutional democracy.” His was a theory of enlightened rule, wherein a dictatorship would vanquish the “radicals,” steward an economic miracle, and then, ideally, relinquish power to the people. He had ready-made examples in places such as Taiwan, whose leader Chiang Ching-Kuo dismantled his own autocracy before his death, in 1988. Xiao has not disavowed authoritarianism, and he even seemed to support America’s New Right. But as the immediate prospects for democracy have all but vanished from China, his politics have shifted from reaction to reflection. Authoritarianism, Xiao told me, “has its own problems.”

When Xi Jinping came to power, in 2012, he used his newfound authority to launch an anti-corruption drive, which Xiao endorsed. Since then, though, Xi has abolished Presidential term limits, decimated civil society, and intensified clampdowns on free expression. As a mainland Chinese scholar, Xiao was careful not to betray his views about the regime. He instead spoke to what he now sees as an unsolvable “dilemma” in his theory. A democrat risks welcoming dangerous ideas into a culture—ideas that, legitimate or not, could hasten a nation’s demise. Xiao turned to authoritarianism partly because he believed that China was careening in that direction. And yet “a neo-authoritarian leader must be wise,” Xiao told me, with a hint of exasperation. “And he may not be.” Once you pin your hopes on a justice-delivering strongman, in other words, he may take the righteous path, or he may not. The only certainty is that he has control.

On an overcast Monday evening, I arrived at a low-rise apartment tower in Shanghai, where Xiao lives with his wife. He is a sprightly man, with salt-and-pepper hair and wispy bangs that he brushes to one side. Every day, for twenty years, he has kept to an intense exercise routine—a hundred and fifty squats and more than three hundred volleys of a squash or tennis ball outside. During that time, he has been hard at work on a hefty three-volume history of China from antiquity to Deng’s “reform and opening up.” (He hopes to complete it by 2030.) Xiao has an obsession with classical music. He often leads guests into a spartan living room, where he shows off an oversized speaker system on which he spent tens of thousands of dollars. (“My entire life savings,” he told me.) On my visit, we listened to the German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter’s

rendition of the “Carmen Fantasy,” at a volume suited to the hard of hearing.

In the days after the U.S. election, Xiao wrote an essay on his blog in which he opined about the result’s geopolitical ramifications. He feared that Trump’s isolationist bluster would lead some Chinese to underestimate U.S. commitments to Taiwan, raising the “probability of direct conflict between the U.S. and China.” During our meeting, however, he also expounded on how the countries were similar. China’s neo-authoritarianism in the eighties, he told me, shared a common enemy with today’s Republican Party: the “romanticism” espoused by the “radical liberals.”

Xiao used the term romanticism to describe the belief, inspired by the Enlightenment, that humanity can design ideal societies through reason. He criticized this view for disregarding history and experience—or, to riff on an old adage, for “making the perfect the enemy of the feasible.” Xiao, who was born in 1946 and grew up under Maoism, witnessed the worst excesses of this kind of armchair statecraft. When Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, in 1966, Xiao had recently graduated high school and was working in a factory. He hadn’t been able to enter university, likely for harboring “bourgeois” sympathies—including his passion for Western philosophy—and he allied himself with the Red Guards as a leader of a “rebel worker faction” at his machinery plant. But, as the revolution wore on, he himself was denounced as a “revisionist,” and he spent the next several years consigned to gruelling work at the factory.

Shortly after Mao died, in 1976, the reckoning began. Crowds gathered around a Democracy Wall near Beijing’s Tiananmen Square to post demands for freedom and accountability. Intellectuals called for a “New Enlightenment,” and an iconoclastic 1988 documentary, “River Elegy,” compared Chinese civilization to a muddied Yellow River that was in need of a “good scrubbing.” In the frenzy to repudiate the past, Xiao saw history repeating itself. The Cultural Revolution had cemented his faith in a liberal modernity, but it also, paradoxically, instilled a visceral fear of that modernity’s real-life accelerants. In the spirit of William F. Buckley, Jr., the architect of modern American conservatism, Xiao stood “athwart history yelling Stop.”

The seeds of “neo-authoritarianism” came to Xiao around 1983, when he was researching republican China, the country’s first major attempt at democracy. The experiment followed the overthrow of China’s last imperial dynasty, in 1911, and was seen by many of Xiao’s coevals as a fount of inspiration. But what Xiao found was complete and utter chaos. “The National Assembly couldn’t do anything except mess things up,” Xiao told me. “The parties would just go at each other with total disregard for the nation’s interests.” China,

Xiao concluded, lacked the “software system” for democracy: a civil society, a rule of law, a culture of political bargaining and compromise. “I do not mean to say that I am fundamentally opposed to Western democracy,” Xiao told me. “I personally feel very envious of the United States and the West.” But, he went on, moving the system over is implausible because China “lacks so many of the conditions.” What China needed was something like a *final* emperor, the breaker of the despotic chain who would summon modernity by fiat. Xiao reverse-engineered democracy back to the strongman: “In order to have democracy, there must be civil society,” he told me. A civil society requires economic prosperity; economic prosperity requires political stability; and political stability “requires a strongman.”

In 1988, Xiao introduced his theory at an academic symposium, and “neo-authoritarianism” officially entered the public discourse. The idea was reviled by liberal intellectuals, who accused Xiao of rationalizing the status quo—or, worse, tilting China back toward the system that it had just escaped. But his theory seemed to mirror the temperament of Deng, who, for all his reformist tendencies, was a ruthless apparatchik. Throughout his reign, the man hailed as a pragmatic liberalizer jailed Democracy Wall activists and denounced unwelcome foreign ideas as “spiritual pollution.” In the spring of 1989, students gathered in Tiananmen Square to protest for greater political freedoms. Intellectuals led by the literary critic Liu Xiaobo joined a hunger strike in solidarity. Deng imposed martial law and approved the final order to clear the square.

Xiao told me that Liu and the demonstrators held “considerable responsibility” for the carnage on June 4th that year. The hunger strikers, it seemed, had contracted the same romantic virus that plagued the turn-of-century reformers, the Red Guards, and Gorbachev. “Neo-authoritarianism’s No. 1 enemy,” Xiao told me, “is the radical liberals.” Only once they were “marginalized,” he continued, could Chinese society stabilize and experiment with political freedoms. (Liu Xiaobo died of untreated liver cancer in 2017, after spending nearly a decade in prison.)

If reformers like Liu had, in Xiao’s view, pushed China beyond its immediate capacities, American progressives were now doing the same to the United States. For Xiao, the Democratic Party, elite universities, and Western corporate boards were the new epicenters of romanticism. Open borders ignored the real difficulties of cultural assimilation—it was, as he put it, like “mixing Type B blood with a Type A body.” Transgender identity was just pseudoscience: “The belief that everyone can decide their gender—it disregards human experience,” Xiao told me. (Xiao did not seem to be familiar with “radicalism” on the American right, from white nationalism to QAnon.)

The implication was clear: in 1989, the man who repelled the radicals was Deng Xiaoping. In 2024, it was Donald Trump.

Perhaps one reason why authoritarianism has returned to America is that the country's fundamental political questions are beginning to resemble those of the East. For most of American history, politics revolved around how to limit government. But, in the Communist world, the question was often about how to rebuild it—and save it from bad actors. The stakes felt higher. There are many probable causes of our eastward drift: the failures of globalization, the betrayals of technological progress, cultural anomie, the provocateurs who profit from the sense that the world is about to burn. Whatever the origin, America's inner conflict now feels comparable to the pivotal decade when Xiao and his liberal adversaries fought over China's future.

Following what many Americans considered the most consequential election of a lifetime, Elon Musk has vowed to “delete” a bloated government. Trump promises to eradicate an army of deep-state conspirators, whom he calls “the enemy within.” Democratic norms and the rule of law are mere windshield ornaments on the road to American redemption. In its emphasis on results, this approach is familiar to Chinese authoritarians. “The people didn't want romanticism, they wanted performance,” Xiao told me when I asked him why he thought Trump had won. The Democrats didn't perform, he added: they didn't secure the border, and they didn't improve the economy.

For all of Xiao's attention to the psyche of “radical liberals,” I was most struck by his own. In the Liu Xiaobos of the eighties, Xiao had glimpsed a romanticism redolent of the Red Guards. In this light, an advocate for peaceful democratic change, who kept vigil in Tiananmen Square to protect students from oncoming tanks, had been similar to violent revolutionaries. Xiao, of course, had been a revolutionary himself—and who better to recognize a radical than a recovering radical? The current generation of Communist Party leaders is not so different in their perspective. “The Politburo is a Red Guard Politburo,” Geremie Barmé, a prominent Australian sinologist, told me. China, he continued, “lives with a completely unresolved, profound historical trauma . . . and is now led by people who are all the product of trauma. All of this is why it is so repressive.”

One is not born but becomes an authoritarian. Carl Schmitt, the twentieth century's giant of illiberal thought, drew his theories from his personal experience living in the Weimar Republic. Xiao was inspired by Yan Fu, the reformist intellectual and translator of Adam Smith who, after living through China's own republican experiment, decided that his

people were “not capable of self-government.” And, in the U.S., one finds examples like Peter Thiel, the billionaire venture capitalist who declared, in a 2009 essay, that “I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible.” Thiel traced his anti-democratic conversion to earlier defeats: his “trench warfare” against progressive students in college; the post-financial-crisis marginalization of libertarian dogma. Over the years, Thiel's shift toward the authoritarian right has coincided with the growing acceptance of his ideas in the mainstream. He is now one of the biggest funders of the conservative nationalist movement, a mentor to Vice-President-elect J. D. Vance, and a supporter of “neo-reactionary” figures like Curtis Yarvin, who admires the state-capitalist societies of Singapore and Deng Xiaoping's China.

Thiel and Xiao are vastly different thinkers, but this only makes their commonalities more striking. In believing that democracy was either premature or past its prime, they turned to the strongman as an antidote. “The problem with Xiao,” Joseph Fewsmith, a professor of Chinese politics at Boston University, told me, “is that he tackles the question of how countries get from autocracy to democracy, but he never explored how not to get stuck. Which is what happened.” When I asked Xiao what a democracy in China might look like, he said that he hadn't really thought about it. The proponent of a so-called “soft landing” for democracy did not, ultimately, spend much time designing a parachute.

For most of his life, Xiao has claimed that the central danger to Chinese society was not the dictator but his liberal opponents. Whether Xiao was right we will never know. We cannot peer into the universe where Liu and his reformers won, where they are alive and well, rather than silenced or dead. Ours is the world of strongmen, where decisions increasingly turn on the whims of a vanishing few. In China, the risk of Xiao's theory has come to pass—the strongman changed tack. At his trial for “subversion of state power,” in 2009, Liu Xiaobo prepared a statement of warning to his political opponents. It remains just as relevant today as it was then. “An enemy mentality will poison the spirit of a nation,” Liu wrote. It will “destroy a society's tolerance and humanity, and hinder a country's advance toward freedom and democracy.”

India starts resembling China in unflattering ways

20 December 2024, [Reuters](#), Una Galani

There are some startling similarities developing between India and China. How many and how concerned investors should be will rank among the big questions in 2025.

Western policymakers, CEOs and investors have for years debated the potential of the South Asian country to follow the path of its \$18 trillion neighbour in terms of GDP per capita and global manufacturing might. Such comparisons are now taking on new meaning in Mumbai financial circles and beyond.

For a start, the world's view of China has dramatically deteriorated. Growth in the world's second-largest economy is slowing, and Beijing's relationship with Washington has soured. These two trends have increased India's opportunity to shine as an investment destination on the global stage since the Covid-19 pandemic.

China's current chapter also expands the scope of what it means for a country to emulate the People's Republic. This now includes some less flattering aspects, and it is here where observers may conclude, rightly or wrongly, India is starting to check a few too many boxes.

The first problematic likeness is the trajectory of India's \$4 trillion economy. It is suddenly underperforming expectations: GDP growth fell to 5.4% in the three months to the end of September, the slowest pace in seven quarters, only 80 basis points faster than China's print for the comparable period.

That points to a big potential weakness in the belief within Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government that India will deliver a sustained 6%-8% annual GDP growth over the next decade. As in China, domestic problems underpinning weak private consumption – including, in India's case, anaemic salary growth – appear deep-seated and hard to fix.

What's more, both economies face serious external headwinds. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump is threatening trade tariffs against the South Asian nation as large as he has threatened against the People's Republic. Meanwhile, India's richest man, Gautam Adani, is likely to curb his growth ambitions following his U.S. indictment for securities fraud, which he denies.

The tycoon's problems put a spotlight on India's approach to courting foreign investment. Global companies are entering the country in partnership with local firms helmed by a small number of powerful Indian families. That sets up the potential for at least some of the new alliances to sour, just as several Chinese joint ventures did.

, the company at the centre of the U.S. legal case. Ultimately, while China was more forceful than India in coercing joint ventures, officials in Beijing and New Delhi want the same thing from foreign multinationals: know-how. That desire to acquire intellectual property may ultimately put India in the West's crosshairs.

Finally, there is the issue of perceived interference. The U.S. is trying to contain China's rise, partly because of concerns the Asian behemoth is seeking to

influence lawmakers in Washington. Politicians on both sides of the aisle also disapprove of what they view as China's predatory business practices, cyber intrusions and territorial claims.

Unhelpfully, a somewhat similar label of meddling is starting to stick to India. Canada, a member of the Group of Seven rich countries, slapped a "foreign interference" tag on India in June, opens new tab, unseating Russia as the North American country's biggest threat after China per its assessment in 2019.

Tensions between Canada and India escalated after Ottawa said Indian diplomats were linked to plots to target Sikh separatists in Canada. India denies the claims, and even if these were true, it would hardly be the first country to seek to assassinate its enemies on foreign soil. The diplomatic brouhaha does not, though, help a capital-hungry country attract investment. Many ordinary Indians view their country as a victim of Canada's domestic politics in this saga.

Nearer to home, too, there's a debate about whether India is emerging as a bully to its smaller neighbours including Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal; the billions of dollars of aid New Delhi provides these countries in times of crisis does provide leverage, though Modi prefers to describe India as a friend of the world, opens new tab.

Whatever the nuances, global decision-makers are paying attention because disruptions between rich and developing countries can be costly. The deterioration of Sino-American ties has led to a conscious decoupling, accelerating both a crash in Chinese stocks and re-routing of supply chains by U.S. firms beyond the People's Republic. How India reacts to some of its emerging challenges will set the tone. Burnt by one large emerging market, global investors may prove far less willing to give another the benefit of the doubt.

Editorial: Nepal in China's strategic embrace

20 December 2024, Telangana Today

Kathmandu's thrust on greater economic cooperation with Beijing — the BRI is part of this endeavour — will whittle down India's influence over Nepal

India has every reason to be alarmed over the developments in Nepal in the light of its steadily tightening embrace of China. Known for his ideological affiliation with China, Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is unabashedly aligning his country to serve Beijing's strategic interests. The latest indicator of China's growing sway over the tiny Himalayan nation came with the signing of a framework for cooperation on the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Nepal. The agreement was signed during Oli's visit to Beijing early this month, apart from nine other pacts. This is a big setback to India which is strongly opposed

to the BRI on grounds of sovereignty as it passes through the parts of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). This deal will enable China to increase its already considerable inroads into Nepal. Kathmandu's thrust on greater economic cooperation with Beijing — the BRI is part of this endeavour — would also whittle down India's influence over Nepal. The BRI framework agreement, incidentally, also envisages the opening of branches of Chinese banks and financial institutions in Nepal. India has traditionally had deep economic linkages with Nepal, nurtured due to geography — the two neighbours share a porous 1,751-km-long border. This, along with the landlocked nature of Nepal, has helped India become its largest trading partner. During the 2022-23 fiscal, bilateral trade was pegged at \$8.85 billion. This included \$8 billion of exports from India to Nepal. As per the Nepal Rastra Bank, India's share in Nepal's trade accounted for 64.1% in 2022-23. The latest Beijing-Kathmandu tango has the potential to cause unease not just in India but also in the United States. While America had managed to get Nepal on board its own Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact to fund Kathmandu's power and transport infrastructure, the BRI seems far broader. With the latest deal with Beijing, Nepal would be hoping that the 10 initial projects, including those meant to boost regional connectivity, will now see the light of day. The Oli government's encouragement of Beijing's concerted moves to claim Buddhism as a shared heritage is another cause for concern for India, which has been making efforts to build on its shared Buddhist heritage with Nepal. Ever since his dramatic comeback to power in July this year, under the watchful eyes of China which brokered a peace deal among the Communist parties, Oli, Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), has been warming up to Beijing. In his tenure as Prime Minister in the past, he was known for his pro-China views and this was evident from the foreign policy outlook of his leadership of the CPN-UML too. Oli has served as the Prime Minister of Nepal on two occasions, from 2015-2016 and 2018-2021, before being ousted by the country's Supreme Court in a controversial ruling.

United Front: China's 'magic weapon' caught in a spy controversy

19 December 2024, [BBC](#), Koh Ewe Laura Bicker

The People's Republic of China has a "magic weapon", according to its founding leader Mao Zedong and its current president Xi Jinping.

It is called the United Front Work Department - and it is raising as much alarm in the West as Beijing's growing military arsenal.

Yang Tengbo, a prominent businessman who has been linked to Prince Andrew, is the latest overseas Chinese citizen to be scrutinised - and sanctioned - for his links to the UFWD.

The existence of the department is far from a secret. A decades-old and well-documented arm of the Chinese Communist Party, it has been mired in controversy before. Investigators from the US to Australia have cited the UFWD in multiple espionage cases, often accusing Beijing of using it for foreign interference. Beijing has denied all espionage allegations, calling them ludicrous.

So what is the UFWD and what does it do?

'Controlling China's message'

The United Front - originally referring to a broad communist alliance - was once hailed by Mao as the key to the Communist Party's triumph in the decades-long Chinese Civil War.

After the war ended in 1949 and the party began ruling China, United Front activities took a backseat to other priorities. But in the last decade under Xi, the United Front has seen a renaissance of sorts.

Xi's version of the United Front is broadly consistent with earlier incarnations: to "build the broadest possible coalition with all social forces that are relevant", according to Mareike Ohlberg, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund.

On the face of it, the UFWD is not shadowy - it even has a website and reports many of its activities on it. But the extent of its work - and its reach - is less clear. While a large part of that work is domestic, Dr Ohlberg said, "a key target that has been defined for United Front work is overseas Chinese".

Today, the UFWD seeks to influence public discussions about sensitive issues ranging from Taiwan - which China claims as its territory - to the suppression of ethnic minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang.

It also tries to shape narratives about China in foreign media, target Chinese government critics abroad and co-opt influential overseas Chinese figures.

"United Front work can include espionage but [it] is broader than espionage," Audrye Wong, assistant professor of politics at the University of Southern California, tells the BBC.

"Beyond the act of acquiring covert information from a foreign government, United Front activities centre on the broader mobilisation of overseas Chinese," she said, adding that China is "unique in the scale and scope" of such influence activities.

China has always had the ambition for such influence, but its rise in recent decades has given Beijing the ability to exercise it.

Since Xi became president in 2012, he has been especially proactive in crafting China's message to the world, encouraging a confrontational "wolf warrior" approach to diplomacy and urging his country's diaspora to "tell China's story well".

The UFWD operates through various overseas Chinese community organisations, which have vigorously defended the Communist Party beyond its shores. They have censored anti-CCP artwork and protested at the activities of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. The UFWD has also been linked to threats against members of persecuted minorities abroad, such as Tibetans and Uyghurs.

But much of the UFWD's work overlaps with other party agencies, operating under what observers have described as "plausible deniability".

It is this murkiness that is causing so much suspicion and apprehension about the UFWD.

When Yang appealed against his ban, judges agreed with the then secretary of state's report that Yang "represented a risk to national security" - citing the fact that he downplayed his ties with the UFWD as one of the reasons that led them to that conclusion.

Yang, however, maintains that he has not done anything unlawful and that the spy allegations are "entirely untrue".

Cases like Yang's are becoming increasingly common. In 2022, British Chinese lawyer Christine Lee was accused by the MI5 of acting through the UFWD to cultivate relationships with influential people in the UK. The following year, Liang Litang, a US citizen who ran a Chinese restaurant in Boston, was indicted for providing information about Chinese dissidents in the area to his contacts in the UFWD.

And in September, Linda Sun, a former aide in the New York governor's office, was charged with using her position to serve Chinese government interests - receiving benefits, including travel, in return. According to Chinese state media reports, she had met a top UFWD official in 2017, who told her to "be an ambassador of Sino-American friendship".

It is not uncommon for prominent and successful Chinese people to be associated with the party, whose approval they often need, especially in the business world.

But where is the line between peddling influence and espionage?

"The boundary between influence and espionage is blurry" when it comes to Beijing's operations, said Ho-fung Hung, a politics professor at Johns Hopkins University.

This ambiguity has intensified after China passed a law in 2017 mandating Chinese nationals and companies to co-operate with intelligence probes, including sharing information with the Chinese government - a move that Dr Hung said "effectively turns everyone into potential spies".

The Ministry of State Security has released dramatic propaganda videos warning the public that foreign spies are everywhere and "they are cunning and sneaky".

Some students who were sent on special trips abroad were told by their universities to limit contact with foreigners and were asked for a report of their activities on their return.

And yet Xi is keen to promote China to the world. So he has tasked a trusted arm of the party to project strength abroad.

And that is becoming a challenge for Western powers - how do they balance doing business with the world's second-largest economy alongside serious security concerns?

Wrestling with the long arm of Beijing

Genuine fears over China's overseas influence are playing into more hawkish sentiments in the West, often leaving governments in a dilemma.

Some, like Australia, have tried to protect themselves with fresh foreign interference laws that criminalise individuals deemed to be meddling in domestic affairs. In 2020, the US imposed visa restrictions on people seen as active in UFWD activities.

An irked Beijing has warned that such laws - and the prosecutions they have spurred - hinder bilateral relations.

"The so-called allegations of Chinese espionage are utterly absurd," a foreign ministry spokesperson told reporters on Tuesday in response to a question about Yang. "The development of China-UK relations serves the common interests of both countries."

Some experts say that the long arm of China's United Front is indeed concerning.

"Western governments now need to be less naive about China's United Front work and take it as a serious threat not only to national security but also to the safety and freedom of many ethnic Chinese citizens," Dr Hung says.

But, he adds, "governments also need to be vigilant against anti-Chinese racism and work hard to build trust and co-operation with ethnic Chinese communities in countering the threat together."

Last December, Di Sanh Duong, a Vietnam-born ethnic Chinese community leader in Australia, was convicted of planning foreign interference for trying to cosy up to an Australian minister. Prosecutors argued that he was an "ideal target" for the UFWD because he had run for office in the 1990s and boasted ties with Chinese officials.

Duong's trial had centred around what he meant when he said the inclusion of the minister at a charity event would be beneficial to "us Chinese" - did he mean the Chinese community in Australia, or mainland China?

In the end, Duong's conviction - and a prison sentence - raised serious concerns that such broad anti-espionage laws and prosecutions can easily become weapons for targeting ethnic Chinese people. "It's important to remember that not everyone who is ethnically Chinese is a supporter of the Chinese Communist Party. And not everyone who is involved in

these diaspora organisations is driven by fervent loyalty to China," Dr Wong says.

"Overly aggressive policies based on racial profiling will only legitimise the Chinese government's propaganda that ethnic Chinese are not welcome and end up pushing diaspora communities further into Beijing's arms."

2024, the year India defeated China's salami-slicing strategy

19 December 2024, [The Economic Times](#), Sarahbeth George

For decades, China's strategy of "salami slicing"—incrementally encroaching on territory to solidify its claims — has reshaped borders and silenced resistance across Asia. From the South [China](#) Sea to Himalayan frontiers, Beijing's methodical approach has left neighbouring countries scrambling to respond. China shares its border with more than a dozen countries and it has had border disputes with at least six of them over the past few years. On its border disputes with its neighbors, China has mostly gone unchallenged, gradually pushing its salami-slicing strategy forward. But 2024 was a turning point: [India](#) was the first country in past few decades to decisively stop China in its tracks and refuse to yield to its tried-and-tested game. India's resistance proved to be a firm message that China's expansionist ambitions can't always go unchecked.

China's Unchecked March: A History of Dominance

China's history of border disputes is a study in opportunism. China has locked horns with no fewer than six of its neighbours, from Japan over islands in the East China Sea, down to Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines in the South China Sea. From the construction of artificial islands to weaponizing of trade, leveraging economic dependence, it has often found a way to dominate.

Land borders have been no exception. Bhutan, Nepal and even Russia have experienced China's salami-slicing techniques, where small, seemingly inconsequential incursions are used to cement broader territorial claims. Most nations either lack the resources or political will to counter these moves effectively. But where others hesitated, India chose to fight back.

The Turning Point: India's Bold Stand

India's watershed moment came in 2024 with a landmark agreement over the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This wasn't just another border negotiation; it marked the culmination of years of tension following the deadly 2020 Galwan clash that left 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese troops dead. While China likely expected India to fall in line,

as many of its neighbors had, it faced a resolute adversary instead.

India refused to let China dictate terms. The strategic deployment of troops, modernising infrastructure on the LAC, and an unambiguous message through diplomatic channels made it amply clear that China's salami slicing was not going to work this time. This multi-pronged approach forced Beijing to agree to a phased disengagement and a novel patrolling mechanism — a first in decades of border disputes. The turning point came when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping sat down for their first face-to-face meeting in years at the BRICS Summit in Kazan. For the first time since 2019, the two leaders had directly engaged each other, and the meeting marked a shift toward breaking the deadlock in their strained relationship. Both leaders agreed that stability in bilateral ties needed to be rebuilt, with a focus on respect for each other's sensitivities and concerns. This rare exchange injected a sense of cautious optimism into an otherwise tense chapter in India-China relations.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri confirmed that both nations had reached a resolution to address the issues stemming from the 2020 border clashes, a significant step towards stabilising bilateral ties. Following high-level talks between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in St Petersburg, both countries agreed to expedite efforts to resolve the remaining border disputes and improve bilateral relations.

A month before the border breakthrough, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that 75 per cent of the disengagement issues had been sorted out. The disengagement agreement in the remaining areas, Depsang and Demchok, in October had paved the way for a bilateral meeting between PM Modi and President Xi on the margins of the BRICS summit in Kazan in which the leaders endorsed the agreement and agreed to resume exchanges between the special representatives on the boundary question and the foreign ministers.

During the talks, both sides highlighted the importance of regular exchanges and contacts at diplomatic and military level through established mechanisms. "They agreed on the need for effective border management and maintenance of peace & tranquillity in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements, protocols and understandings reached between the two governments," said the Indian gov't, adding that the Chinese delegation also called on foreign secretary Vikram Misri.

According to the Indian side, the two countries reviewed the situation in border areas, and reflected on the lessons learnt from the events of 2020, which included the deadly Galwan clashes, in order to prevent their recurrence.

Confirming that the disengagement process has been completed in eastern Ladakh, foreign minister S Jaishankar had said in **Parliament** this week that India will now focus on de-escalation and on effective management of border activities. He had also said that ties with China, which went into a tailspin after the 2020 Galwan military clashes, are now improving. In the latest round of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on **India-China Border Affairs (WMCC)** talks on Thursday, both sides "positively affirmed the implementation of the most recent disengagement agreement which completed the resolution of the issues that emerged in 2020, said the Indian govt.

"They also prepared for the next meeting of the special representatives, which is to be held in accordance with the decision of the two leaders in their meeting in Kazan on Oct 23, 2024," added the Indian readout. The agreement includes rights related to patrolling and grazing in traditional areas. He added, Based on this consensus, the disengagement process is nearly complete. We will strive to move beyond just disengagement, but for that, we will need to wait a little longer. This came after both India and China confirmed that an agreement had been reached between the two nations regarding patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas.

Speaking at a press briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that India and China had finalised the last phase of disengagement in these regions. "On October 21, 2024, the final phase of disengagement was agreed upon between India and China. As a result, verification patrolling has commenced on mutually agreed terms in Demchok and Depsang. We will keep you updated," he said. Earlier in the day, the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India announced on the social media platform, X that the Chinese and Indian troops are implementing the resolutions that the two sides reached on issues concerning the border area, which is going smoothly at the moment. Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong had also earlier said that he hoped the bilateral ties would move forward smoothly and ties between both countries would not be restricted or interrupted by specific disagreements.

How India Did It

India's success in halting China wasn't accidental. It was the result of deliberate actions on multiple fronts:

Strategic Military Presence

India's military strategy underwent a significant transformation to counter the challenges posed by China. Unlike other nations that found themselves blindsided by Beijing's gradual territorial encroachments, New Delhi adopted a proactive stance. Over the years, India invested heavily in upgrading its border infrastructure in remote, high-

altitude regions such as Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, ensuring year-round access for its forces. Advanced weaponry and specialised units were deployed to enhance readiness, leaving little room for complacency. As one senior military official put it, "India's capability to deploy swiftly and respond robustly has completely shifted the dynamics along the LAC."

Economic Counter-measures

Despite bilateral trade with China having reached a record level of \$115.82 billion in 2023, India made deliberate moves to reduce its dependency on Chinese imports. The country's "Atmanirbhar Bharat" or Self-Reliant India initiative gave a significant impetus to local industries, and supply chains diversified with trusted global partners. Indian authorities also banned over 300 Chinese apps, including the popular social media platform TikTok, over concerns of national security following the Galwan Valley clash. A government spokesperson commented, "These measures are not just about economics but a signal that India will not compromise on its sovereignty."

Domestic Pressures: Economic Dependencies and Trade Realities

Domestically, it was Indian businesses, especially those that relied on Chinese imports, that had been pressuring the government to calm things down. Even with the restrictions that followed after the Galwan incident, the trade between India and China continued to boom. In fact, during 2023-24, China reclaimed its position as India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$118.4 billion. However, this trade boom has been accompanied by a significant downside: a widening trade deficit that continues to concern Indian policymakers.

Sectors which are highly dependent on Chinese raw materials have borne the brunt of strained ties. For example, India imports around 70 percent of its active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) from China -- an import dependency that was starkly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, industries reliant on Chinese technicians have faced operational delays. The Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) and the All-India Association of Industries (AIAI) have been vociferous, demanding the ease of visa restrictions on Chinese professionals. They argue that in their absence, manufacturing schedules and supply chains have been upset.

Acknowledging these bottlenecks, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, MeitY, had allowed limited entry for Chinese technicians to alleviate the bottleneck. Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran, through the Annual Economic Report, also urged the government to invest more in investment-led policies to curtail the growing trade deficit.

India's attitude towards China is cautious with experience. Under the previous tenure of Trump, when the US policies towards China swayed between containment and strategic ambiguity, India had to look after its border tensions unilaterally. Even if the ties between India and the US intensified during the tenure of Joe Biden, New Delhi is vigilant against overdependence on one particular partner, as it wants to maintain strategic autonomy.

Stiff Negotiations

Breaking from past approaches that often yielded temporary solutions, India's negotiators took a firmer stance. Talks with China became uncompromising, linking broader diplomatic relations to peace along the LAC. By insisting that de-escalation was a prerequisite for any meaningful engagement, India reset the terms of negotiation. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasized, "There can be no normalization of ties without peace and tranquillity in border areas. That is the baseline."

Why India's Stand Matters

This move by India carries great importance beyond its borders. The firm stand against China has made New Delhi a shining example for other countries that have been facing similar pressures while navigating them. It shows how strategic blending of military preparedness, economic resilience and robust international alliances can counterbalance the dominance of an adversary.

More importantly, India's approach has derailed the narrative of China's unchecked border aggression. It proved that even the most ambitious expansionist plans of China can be restrained through determined resistance.

While India has achieved some notable success, major issues remain. The border dispute is far from fully resolved, and disputed areas like **Depsang and Arunachal Pradesh** are still unresolved. Restoration of trust will demand persistent dialogue and strict adherence to disengagement agreements -- no small feat given Beijing's spotty track record. 2024 wasn't just another year in India-China relations. It was the year India proved that China's salami-slicing strategy has limits. While many others have capitulated, India resisted, setting a precedent for how neighbours can counterbalance Beijing's growing assertiveness.

Dalai Lama: Succession and beyond

18 December 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Bhashyam Kasturi

The uncertainty around his successor is significant because Tibet is central to India-China ties.

The 14th Dalai Lama realises that he is not getting any younger and yet when asked about his successor, he says he will live beyond 100 and a decision on the

matter will be taken then. While one wishes the Dalai Lama a long life, that his institution and persona go beyond Tibetan Buddhism into the realm of geopolitics and more pertinently to India-China relations merits a relook at what India's plans to safeguard its interests.

The lack of clarity over his succession creates challenges because China has already made plans. The Chinese set the precedent in the case of the Panchen Lama. The Dalai Lama had, in 2011, outlined his plans on how his successor would be chosen. But even today, he holds his cards close to his chest on this strategic issue. Furthermore, the lack of clarity within India on how this issue will be dealt with is disquieting as Tibet is central to India-China relations.

Recently, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, argued in an interview that the Dalai Lama has taken different stances on the issue of succession, as "China cannot handle unpredictability". He notes that the Dalai Lama talks about emanation, which means choosing somebody before one's demise, and also about reincarnation. The Government of India has also been noncommittal about its take on the succession.

There is no doubt, as Sikyong states, "India is concerned" and "India has a stake in this". This is because the Dalai Lama stays in India and his presence here irks the Chinese. Flowing from China's increasing efforts to control religious life in Tibet, in 2007, Order No. 5 on "Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism" was issued. Articles 5 and 9 of Order No. 5 make it clear that living Buddhas of high order will only be approved at the very top of the Communist Party of China.

In the case of the Dalai Lama, China has argued that the Golden Urn will decide his successor. Pertinently, this method was used only in the case of the 11th and 12th Dalai Lama. In Tibetan Buddhism, the process involves either emanation or reincarnation. China also has in place an aggressive global campaign via the World Buddhist Forum to claim its hold over Buddhism. Tagged to this is the strategy to use China's economic heft to warn nations not to host the 14th Dalai Lama on their soil and follow Beijing's lead on his successor.

Even if the next Dalai Lama is 'born' in China, India will still have a stake in the matter. Locating India's Tibet policy is thus important. The existing policy is episodic and lacks consistency. Overcoming this lacuna will require high-level contact between the Dalai Lama and the Government of India, as well as with the Sikyong. The best course of action would be to have the External Affairs Minister on the job.

A policy review

Resetting India's policy on China from the Tibet angle, however, has its challenges. For instance, there is a

suggestion to rename India's border with China, as the India-Tibet Border. This would certainly be in line with the 1914 Shimla Agreement. But post-1951 when China occupied Tibet and after the 1962 border war, a Line of Actual Control divides India and China. Thus, an entire review of India's policy towards China must occur.

That a political will to move forward on ties with China exists was demonstrated with the October agreement on Demchok and Depsang. As the EAM noted in his speech in the Lok Sabha on December 3, non-alteration of the *status quo* unilaterally, respect and adherence of the LAC by both the sides, and the need to respect and adhere to the agreements that were arrived at earlier remain the key principles for India. The boundary question is, therefore, at the forefront of the bilateral relationship between India and China. Other aspects that demand equal attention include the growing trade deficit and Chinese investments in India. While most of these are covered by different stakeholders in the government, the presence of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in India has remained mostly the domain of the intelligence agencies, MHA and MEA. While the China Study Group and the Tibet Study Group regularly discuss policy options, it is time for a thorough political review at the highest level of the government on India's stand on the Dalai Lama's succession.

A Tibetan writer reflects on the fight for his motherland while living in 'exile' in India

17 December 2024, [Scroll](#), Tsering Namgyal Khortsa

An excerpt from 'Little Lhasa: Reflections in Exiled Tibet', by Tsering Namgyal Khortsa.

Winter sunshine warmed the corrugated roofs of the Tibetan houses, as if compensating for the cold of the night before. A horn of an occasional car echoed within the valley. After a long writing streak the previous night, I had woken slightly late and was sitting outside, enjoying the view of the snow-clad mountains and flipping through the newspaper. I heard the sound of people marching and shouting slogans. The noise grew louder as the crowd marched closer, the sound of protests already filling the area. They were, as expected, anti-Chinese slogans. But I could not immediately figure out the purpose of the gathering. Curiosity led me to step out of the house, to see what grievances they were vocalising that morning.

Coming down the steep road from the Dalai Lama's main temple, often called Tsuglagkhang after its splendid seventh century namesake in Lhasa, were a group of Tibetans. In the first row were mostly nuns, followed by female students both young and old, wearing the Tibetan chuba, the traditional dress. The men folk brought up the rear. They were carrying

anti-Chinese placards, some of which had the usual slogans: "China Get Out of Tibet", "China Release Political Prisoners in Tibet", as well as pictures of someone who seemed to be a bespectacled monk.

The rally had apparently started at McLeodganj, about three kilometres away, and was headed in the direction of Gangchen Kyishong, where the secretariats of the government-in-exile were located. I soon realised they were protesting China's announcement that it was going to execute, without trial, Tenzing Delek Rinpoche, a high-ranking Tibetan lama from Eastern Tibet, and Lobsang Dhondup, a layperson. They were accused of allegedly masterminding a bombing incident in the Sichuan Province. The pictures on the placards held aloft by the protesters were those of Tenzing Delek Rinpoche. Looking at the pictures, however, he seemed more like a high school teacher than a terrorist bomber.

Quite unwittingly, I became part of the crowd and walked with them. I did not know the destination nor did I ask: the power of the crowd was bewitching as it forced me – not usually a joiner of crowds – to suddenly become party to the morning gathering. The rally was huge.

Group leaders first shouted slogans into their microphones, in Hindi and English, followed by the rest of the demonstrators. While many of the Tibetan elders could not speak English, it did not seem to impede their ability to articulate the slogans with amazing fluency in a language they had never formally learned. Some of them were carrying little Tibetan flags: it was a symbol of Tibetan sovereignty. To me they seemed relatively calm and quite at peace, despite the gravity of the issue at stake: the lives of two prisoners of conscience, languishing by now in some Chinese prison. Perhaps this is the reason why the participants were mostly monks and nuns.

The ease with which they were protesting showed that they were used to this ritual of peaceful dissent. As we neared the bazaar in lower Dharamsala, Indian shopkeepers and onlookers watched silently – some quite pensive, some just indifferent – as the crowd gradually moved past the fruit sellers, through the streets, and towards Kacheri, where they stopped and gathered together. As I looked behind me, I could see the number of demonstrators growing larger, filling the narrow, hilly road leading up to Gangchen Kyishong.

Every year, pilgrims and tourists from all over the world travel to this picturesque north Indian hill station to catch a glimpse of the Dalai Lama. For weary travellers, the rock-strewn roads, heavy traffic jams and choking exhaust fumes are far from spiritually uplifting: they are a reminder of the rugged realities of life in the Indian Himalayas. The poor infrastructure is hardly befitting of the international repute of this hill station where India's colonial rulers escaped the

scorching heat of the plains and sought respite in the shadows of the mountains. But the town has come a long way since 1959 when Tibet's exiled leader set up his government-in-exile after fleeing Tibet as the Chinese Army moved into the region.

When the Tibetans first came to live here, they did not know that the location had Buddhist roots dating back 1700 years. The Kangra Valley is rich in unexplored archaeological sites of great importance to Indian Buddhism. In 635 AD, the Chinese monk pilgrim, Hsuan Tsang, recorded fifty monasteries with around 2,000 monks in this fertile region. But a century later, Buddhism and all its sites were eliminated from the valley during an upsurge of Brahminical revivalism. In 1849, the British posted a regiment in Dharamsala, but the place was not to remain a military cantonment for long. By 1855, it was a small but flourishing hill station and the administrative headquarters of Kangra District, which had been annexed by the British in 1848. The two main areas at the time were McLeodganj, named after the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, David McLeod, and Forsyth Ganj, named after a divisional commissioner.

Lord Elgin, Viceroy of British India and a former Governor-General of Canada, reportedly loved the forests of Dharamsala so much that before dying there in 1863, he asked to be buried in the graveyard of St John's Church, located deep in the wilderness. Had he lived longer, Dharamsala might have become the summer capital of British India. And the great Frances Younghusband, leader of British India's fateful incursion to Lhasa in 1904, also had Dharamsala connections. Both his parents, Clara Shaw and John Younghusband, lived there in a pine forest above St John's Church and later bought land in Kangra Valley to pioneer a tea plantation. Clara's brother, Robert Shaw, was a renowned explorer of Central Asia and an early Kangra tea planter.

In 1905, a severe earthquake changed the face of Dharamsala. Many buildings collapsed and the whole settlement, once ravaged, was never re-occupied. The earthquake measured 7.8 on the surface wave magnitude scale and killed more than 20,000 people. McLeodganj then became a sleepy village until the Dalai Lama made it his home in exile and moved the headquarters of his exiled government from Mussoorie, another north Indian hill station now in the state of Uttarakhand, in 1960. Located in the lap of the breathtaking Dhauladhar Range, which stands 5,200 m above sea level, McLeodganj, at nearly 1,800 m, has all the attributes of a great hill station. And over the years, the place, with its pine-clad hillsides, charming villages, snow-clad peaks, and the wide expanse of fertile Kangra Valley below has attracted tourists from all over the world.

Now, Dharamsala has become the beating heart of exiled Tibet. If you stand long enough in McLeodganj,

the whole world, it seems, would eventually pass by you. High-profile visitors have included the Duke of Gloucester and the Duchess of York, the first ladies of France and Peru, supermodel Christy Turlington, actors Pierce Brosnan, Richard Gere, Steven Seagal, Goldie Hawn, Jet Lee, Harrison Ford and Sunil Dutt, not to mention the scores of writers and scientists who come to the town. Notwithstanding the glamour of the tourists and celebrity visitors, the place continues to be the capital of Tibetan dislocation. This is where they have seen their imaginary and real homes merge subconsciously to give birth to an entirely unique entity called "Exiled Tibet"; just as writers see their vivid imagination intersect with hard facts to produce works of creative non-fiction.

A Tibetan Christmas

17 December 2024, [JSTOR Daily](#), Livia Gershon

The story of Cizhong's Catholic holiday festival began when French missionaries arrived in northwest Yunnan with plans to spread their faith across Tibet.



A priest holds a christening for a baby of Tibetan ethnic minority group attends a mass at a church of Cizhong Village on December 25, 2006, in Deqin County of Yunnan Province, China

In 2014, anthropologist Brendan A. Galipeau **attended a Christmas celebration in the village of Cizhong**, just outside the **Tibetan border** in China's Yunnan Province. The holiday represents the village's biggest festival of the year, enjoyed by the area's unique Catholic community and the Buddhist minority. The event bears the influences of European missionaries, Chinese government policies, and cultural and economic interplay between villagers and outsiders. During the two-day celebration, Galipeau writes, villagers decorated their local church with strings of lights, an elaborate nativity scene, and branches of a local evergreen tree with red berries known as "Christmas tree." During the Christmas Eve and Christmas morning masses, the congregation chanted in Tibetan and the priest spoke in Mandarin Chinese. The festival included a procession of children in traditional Tibetan clothing topped with Santa hats and a feast with Tibetan singing and dancing attended

by local Buddhists as well as the Catholics. It also drew many Chinese and international tourists and academics fascinated by the unique event.

Galipeau writes that the story of Cizhong's Catholicism began in the mid-nineteenth century when French Catholic missionaries arrived in northwest Yunnan with plans to spread their faith across Tibet. Difficulties, including resistance from Buddhist lamas, limited their geographical reach, but they successfully established churches and converted Tibetans in the local area.

In the 1930s, a group of Swiss priests from the Grand Saint Bernard Hospice in the Alps arrived to supplement the French contingent, deploying their expertise in mountain living.

After a violent campaign in which Buddhists killed a number of priests and destroyed churches, in 1909, locals built the church that Galipeau visited in Cizhong. In the 1930s, a group of Swiss priests from the Grand Saint Bernard Hospice in the Alps arrived to supplement the French contingent, deploying their expertise in mountain living. And then, in 1952, the Chinese government expelled the French and Swiss Catholics. This meant there were no priests to lead mass until 2008, when the Catholic Association of China sent the Han priest who led the masses Galipeau witnessed. However, villagers quietly kept to their religious traditions.

In 2001, as part of a **broader change** in its approach to local cultures, the Chinese government began promoting tourism in the region focused on the scenic countryside and Tibetan traditions. Among other things, it renamed Zhongdian County—located near Cizhong—as Shangri-La City, a nod to English author James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizons*, which described a fictional community where Tibetan Buddhists and Catholics live together peacefully.

Galipeau writes that the Catholic Cizhong community recognized an opportunity to capitalize on their unique mixture of cultures. Some opened guesthouses where tourists could drink wine made from grapes first introduced to the area by the French and Swiss.

Local tourism benefited from both international interest and a growing fascination inside China with Tibetan culture as a source of mystical, nature-based inspiration—a phenomenon that some scholars have called “internal orientalism.” But, Galipeau writes, the depiction of their traditions as exotic generally doesn't seem to bother local people, who appreciate the interest in their culture and the economic benefits of the tourist industry.

Uyghur separatist threat could reach beyond China's Xinjiang

17 December 2024, [Asia Times](#), Andrew Korybko

Central Asia, Pakistan and Russia could soon be in terrorists' crosshairs.



Turkistan Islamic Party fighters at an unknown location said to be in Syria. Photo: Turkistan Islamic Party website

The rapid collapse of the Syrian Arab Army in the face of the advance of Turkish-backed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which the UN Security Council has identified as a terrorist group, has drawn attention to the foreign fighters within their ranks.

First and foremost among those foreign fighters are the Uyghurs from China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. They used to fight China as part of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement but rebranded as the Turkistan Islamic Party some years back.

Regardless of whichever name they go by, the group has been involved in Idlib since 2017, when reports began circulating about its colonies in that corner of Syria. The organization has a history of collaborating with terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in support of the quest to carve out a Uyghur state from China. That's why it was designated as a terrorist group by the UN Security Council. The United States removed its own such designation in late 2020 giving the reason that the group had become inactive, but now it's known that this wasn't true.

Members of the group just released a video from Syria calling for militant jihad against China. Yang Xiaotong contributed a detailed *Asia Times* piece on this subject under the title “China has cause to be terrified of rebel-run Syria.” Two of the most important points are that the Turkistan Islamic Party is recruiting members from Central Asia and that it could reestablish itself in Afghanistan to carry out attacks against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

The corridor is considered to be the Belt and Road Initiative's flagship project, and for years it's been the target of attacks by the Balochistan Liberation Army, which Pakistan, China and even the US have designated as a terrorist organization. The BLA has ramped up its attacks since the Afghan Taliban reconquered Afghanistan and gave sanctuary to the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.

The Balochistan Liberation Army and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan are now considered to be informal

allies. Both seek to damage the Pakistani state: BLA wants to carve out an independent Balochistan while the TTP wants to impose a radical Islamic dictatorship. Some also suspect that the Afghan Taliban would demand the cession of Pakistan's TTP-run, Pashtun-majority Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as the Northwest Frontier Province) as compensation for support in bringing the TTP to power, since there is no Afghan Taliban recognition of the Durand Line.

The Afghan Taliban have positive relations with China, so they might not welcome the Turkistan Islamic Party to Afghanistan. The problem, though, is that the Afghan Taliban don't have full control over their territory – as is proven by the continued existence of ISIS-K cells there. They also previously hosted the Turkistan Islamic Party in accord with the principle of providing sanctuary to all like-minded Muslim groups with the request that the groups don't threaten others.

It's therefore possible that the Turkistan Islamic Party could re-establish itself in Afghanistan with or without the Afghan Taliban. From there, it could attack the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor just as the partially Afghan-based Balochistan Liberation Army has been doing.

Whereas the Balochistan Liberation Army attacks the corridor for ultra-nationalist reasons, claiming that the megaproject exploits the native Baloch by depriving them of the riches derived from their region's natural resource wealth, it can't be ruled out that the Turkistan Islamic Party might opportunistically want to hit China's soft spot, simply in order to raise the organization's profile.

Beyond attacking Pakistani-based Belt and Road projects, such opportunistic motivation could also find relevance in Central Asia. From there, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham also has sourced some of its foreign fighters – namely Uzbeks, who are the region's most populous people.

There are Uyghur communities in Kazakhstan and in perennially unstable Kyrgyzstan from which the Turkistan Islamist Party could find recruits – whether to carry out attacks against Belt and Road projects there or in Pakistan, attacks across the border in Xinjiang or training in Afghanistan or Syria.

These credible possibilities show that the Turkistan Islamist Party threatens more than just China's Xinjiang, and they raise questions about Turkiye's indirect sponsorship of the party via Ankara's tacit acceptance of the Turkistan Islamists' alliance with the Turkish-backed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (commonly abbreviated HTS), the group that just conquered Syria. Turkiye considers itself to be the leader of the Organization of Turkish States, which includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, yet those countries' nationals – especially Uzbeks – have now received training from HTS and obtained relevant

battlefield experience in Syria under HTS supervision. It will be difficult for Turkiye to present itself as a reliable partner for those 'stans when it has allowed some of their citizens to metastasize into potential terrorist threats without lifting a finger to stop them.

Another factor for observers to keep in mind is the role of Ukraine's GUR military intelligence agency. The Washington Post reported that GUR played a role in HTS's blitz across Syria. Kyiv had earlier supported Tuareg militants against Wagner in Mali and had supported the Sudanese Armed Forces against the allegedly Wagner-backed Rapid Support Forces in Sudan before that, so its backing of HTS isn't surprising. Nevertheless, the contemporary GUR is also a CIA project, as the Washington Post reported in late 2023.

The possibility thus arises of the CIA using GUR as a plausibly deniable proxy for managing or at least encouraging the Turkistan Islamist Party's expansion to the geostrategic Central Asian region between Russia and China. This could occur even if Turkiye is against it. Ankara could preemptively avert that scenario by using its influence over HTS to crack down on the Turkistan Islamist Party inside Syria by demilitarizing and demobilizing its armed formations. Some Uyghurs could also be deported to China.

Of course, that would require tremendous political will, which Turkiye might not have at present. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has presented himself as a champion of the Uyghurs' political cause in times past, but he's toned down such rhetoric in recent years out of pragmatism to improve ties with China. He might thus be accused of betrayal by some of the Islamists from his domestic base, not to mention those abroad who support his Islamist-driven foreign policy – hence his possible reluctance.

If he doesn't take decisive action now, even if only to the extent of containing the Turkistan Islamist Party within Syria and not allowing other Uyghurs, Central Asians or Chechens to travel there via Turkiye for training with that group or HTS, then he might soon find himself with a major problem on his hands that could harm his foreign policy. After all, those people traveled to Syria for training and battlefield experience with the tacit support of his country, so Erdogan is ultimately to blame in part for whatever future attacks they might carry out.

Pakistan is one of Turkiye's close partners. Thus it will be extremely scandalous if Syrian-based Uyghurs eventually make their way to Afghanistan to wage hybrid war on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is also envisaged as the foundation for Pakistan's future economic development.

Whether the Turkistan Islamists do so on their own or in collusion with the CIA-sponsored GUR is beside the point since Turkiye will still be partially responsible. Russia, China, the Central Asian republics, and Pakistan

are therefore watching very closely to see what Erdogan will do.

Falling enrolment in Tibetan schools a community challenge

16 December 2024, [The Tribune](#), Lalit Mohan

The Tibetan government-in-exile has been highlighting the challenges posed by the Chinese government, which has been attempting to erase Tibetan culture in Tibet by prohibiting enrolment in Buddhist monasteries. However, the Tibetan community in India is facing its own set...

The Tibetan government-in-exile has been highlighting the challenges posed by the Chinese government, which has been attempting to erase Tibetan culture in Tibet by prohibiting enrolment in Buddhist monasteries. However, the Tibetan community in India is facing its own set of challenges, including a decline in the number of students enrolling in Tibetan schools, as well as a decrease in the number of Tibetans becoming monks in monasteries across India. The Tibetan schools and monasteries, set up in India since the Dalai Lama fled into exile from Tibet in 1959, have played a crucial role in preserving the Tibetan language and culture. These institutions have helped spread the Tibetan culture across the world and in maintaining the Tibetan struggle against China.

The issue of declining student enrolment in Tibetan schools in India was highlighted during a symposium organised by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) on Tibetan education. The Education Minister of the Tibetan government in exile, Tharlam Dolma, expressed concern over the declining student numbers, revealing that the student population in Tibetan schools had dropped from 23,684 in 2012 to 13,035 in 2024 — a decline of more than 10,000 students.

She attributed this decline to three primary factors — the cessation of regular Tibetan arrivals from Tibet since 2008, an increase in Tibetans emigrating to Western countries from Tibetan settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan, and a declining birth rate within the Tibetan community in exile.

The Tibetan government in exile operates 62 schools across India and Nepal, falling under four different systems — Tibetan Children's Village, Central School for Tibetans (CST), Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society and The Snow Lion Foundation. These schools focus on preserving Tibetan language and culture in exile. Earlier, children from Tibet and north-eastern states of India would attend these schools, with many foreign agencies providing financial support for their education. However, the number of students in these schools is now on the decline.

Additionally, the president of the Tibetan government in exile, Penpa Tsering, recently raised concerns about the decreasing number of monks joining Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in exile. Speaking to Tibetan exiles in Lingsang settlement, Dehradun, Tsering highlighted that, according to records from the Department of Religion and Culture of the Tibetan government in exile, the number of monks has been steadily decreasing over the past three years. According to him, most of the current monks come from Himalayan communities.

Hong Kong redefines its economic DNA for China's new era

16 December 2024, [Dimsum Daily Hong Kong](#)

As Financial Secretary Paul Chan begins public consultations for the 2025/26 Budget, the city faces the challenging task of maintaining its capitalist character under "One Country, Two Systems" while navigating increasingly turbulent international waters. The imminent return of Donald Trump to the American presidency in January 2025 presents both challenges and opportunities for Hong Kong's strategic positioning. Trump's anticipated confrontational stance toward China — including potential tariffs and technology restrictions — requires Hong Kong to develop more sophisticated responses that leverage its unique status as a bridge between East and West. However, this challenge also presents an opportunity for Hong Kong to redefine its role within China's economic ecosystem. The city's traditional strengths — its common law system, free flow of information, and transparent governance — become even more valuable as China seeks to maintain international economic engagement while developing alternative channels to Western markets.

Hong Kong's evolution must be understood within the context of China's broader economic strategy. Beijing's recent Politburo meetings have emphasised the financial sector's crucial role in economic development, particularly in funding technological advancement. This reaffirmation of Hong Kong's position as China's international financial centre represents a strategic cornerstone for the city's future development.

The establishment of an Economic Development Board, as proposed by various stakeholders, could serve as a crucial mechanism for implementing long-term strategic planning. This would mark a significant departure from the current annual budget-focused approach, allowing Hong Kong to develop more comprehensive strategies aligned with China's five-year plans while maintaining its distinctive economic character.

Three key initiatives emerge as priorities for Hong Kong's transformation:

Initially, enhancing English-language broadcasting capacities via RTHK and other English media platforms to address waning global perceptions. This goes beyond mere public relations; it concerns upholding Hong Kong's position as a respected international voice capable of adeptly conveying the perspectives of both Hong Kong and China to the worldwide audience. Second, the establishment of a Northern Metropolis Future Centre represents a concrete step toward better integration with mainland markets while preserving Hong Kong's unique advantages. This closed-door platform for stakeholder engagement could help resolve complex issues arising from increased economic integration while maintaining Hong Kong's distinct identity.

Third, the proposed Economic Development Board could coordinate these efforts while ensuring Hong Kong's development aligns with both local needs and national objectives. This wouldn't require significant bureaucratic expansion but rather a strategic reorganisation of existing resources.

The challenge lies not in choosing between integration with mainland China and maintaining Hong Kong's unique character – but in achieving both simultaneously. Hong Kong must leverage its distinctive features – common law, human rights protections, press freedom, and transparent governance – while playing a more active role in China's economic development.

This balancing act requires sophisticated policy coordination. The budget must address immediate operational concerns while laying the groundwork for longer-term strategic objectives. It must satisfy three distinct constituencies: mainland authorities, international investors, and local residents. Success requires demonstrating both the will and capability to evolve while maintaining Hong Kong's essential character.

Hong Kong's role as China's international financial centre will likely become even more crucial as global economic power continues shifting eastward. The city's experience in managing international capital flows, combined with its understanding of both Western and Chinese business practices, positions it uniquely to facilitate China's growing economic influence. The upcoming budget represents more than just an annual fiscal exercise – it's an opportunity to articulate a vision for Hong Kong's future that embraces both continuity and change. By maintaining its distinctive advantages while adapting to new realities, Hong Kong can strengthen its position as an indispensable link between China and the global economy.

Xi brought down powerful rivals in the military. Now he's going after his own men

15 December 2024, [CNN World](#), Nectar Gan

In the early years of Xi Jinping's war on corruption, the Chinese leader consolidated control over the world's largest military by taking down powerful generals from rival factions and replacing them with allies and proteges loyal to himself.

A decade on, having given the People's Liberation Army (PLA) a structural overhaul and stacked its top ranks with his own men, the supreme leader is still knee-deep in his seemingly endless struggle against graft and disloyalty.

And, like many strongman leaders in history, he is increasingly turning against his own handpicked loyalists.

Late last month, Xi purged one of his closest proteges in the military – a decades-old associate entrusted with instilling political loyalty in the PLA and vetting senior promotions.

Adm. Miao Hua, who sits on the Central Military Commission (CMC), the top command body chaired by Xi, has been suspended under investigation for "serious violations of discipline," the Defense Ministry announced, using a common euphemism for corruption and disloyalty.

As the head of the CMC's political work department, which oversees political indoctrination and personnel appointments, Miao is the most senior scalp in Xi's latest military purge. Since last summer, more than a dozen high-ranking figures in China's defense establishment have been ousted, including the last two defense ministers promoted to the CMC by Xi.

But none of them boast the kind of long-standing relationship Miao shared with the top leader, dating back decades to Xi's early political career in the coastal province of Fujian.

The probe into Miao opens a new front in a widening purge that has raised questions over Xi's ability to end systematic corruption in the military and enhance its combat readiness at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions.

Over the past decade, Xi has overseen an ambitious transformation of the PLA into a "world class" fighting force that can rival the US military. A key goal of that modernization drive is to ensure China is ready to fight and win a war over Taiwan, the self-governing democratic island Beijing claims as its own.

But Miao's downfall renews questions – raised during last summer's purges – about how much confidence Xi has in his top generals who would be responsible for leading a war, said Joel Wuthnow, a senior research fellow at the Pentagon-funded National Defense University.

“If he fears that he has brought in people who are not unquestionably loyal to him or his agenda, that would be a huge problem.”

Experts say Xi’s purge of a longtime acolyte points to a familiar dilemma for autocrats, including his predecessor Mao Zedong: after eliminating political rivals, the supreme leader never stops looking for new threats to their absolute hold on power – including from their own close circle.

‘Obscene extent of corruption’

Miao’s history with Xi goes back three decades. The Fujian native served as a political officer in the former 31st Group Army from the 1980s to the early 2000s, when Xi was rising through the ranks as a local official to become the provincial governor of Fujian.

“According to credible sources, Xi regularly visited the 31st Group Army at the time” and is known to have had personal contacts with Miao, said James Char, a longtime PLA-watcher and assistant professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

Miao’s military career took off soon after Xi came to power. In 2014, he received a major promotion to become the political commissar of the PLA Navy, making an unusual switch from a career in the Ground Force. Three years later, he was promoted again into the CMC, the apex of military power.

“We cannot find a more apodictic acolyte of Xi than Miao,” Char said. “If Miao is eventually indicted of graft, clearly Xi himself had not anticipated the obscene extent of corruption that exists among PLA elites.”

For the past 18 months, Xi’s cleanup had largely targeted officials connected to the procurement of weapons and the Rocket Force, which oversees China’s nuclear and conventional missiles. But Miao’s downfall signals a broadening of that crackdown into new sectors, such as political work – which Xi has described as the “lifeline” of the military – and the Navy.

“Wherever they look, I’m sure they will find issues and cases. It’s just a matter of which sector they pick,” Char said.

‘Loss of confidence’

The Defense Ministry has offered no details about the allegations against Miao.

As the chief political commissar of the PLA, Miao is tasked with ensuring its loyalty to the ruling Communist Party. He oversees promotions in the military, vetting key candidates for their political loyalty – a role he also held in the Navy.

In the past, such roles have offered fertile ground for graft, especially bribes for promotions. Miao’s predecessor, Gen. Zhang Yang, killed himself while under disciplinary investigation for bribery.

As the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China heats up, the PLA Navy has also seen a drastic increase in the procurement of warships and

other weapons, providing ample opportunities for corruption, said Victor Shih, a political science professor at the University of San Diego.

But there could be another potential reason behind Miao’s downfall, Shih said, for “being too obvious in his attempt to foster a faction in the military.”

Xi has repeatedly warned against the forming of factions in both the party and the military. “Of course, the only person who is allowed to do that is Xi himself,” Shih added.

Miao is seen by some analysts as having recommended multiple associates in the Navy for promotions to key positions, including Rocket Force Commander Wang Houbin and Defense Minister Dong Jun.

The announcement of Miao’s investigation came a day after the Financial Times reported that Dong had been placed under investigation for corruption, citing current and former US officials. The Defense Ministry dismissed the report as “sheer fabrication,” and days later, Dong made a public appearance at a security forum.

Wuthnow, the expert at the National Defense University, said what led to Miao’s downfall was a “loss of confidence,” but the reasons for that remain elusive.

In one scenario, Wuthnow said, Xi might have viewed Miao as becoming too powerful and independent, and wanted to uproot what he saw as a bastion of influence that he could not fully control.

“I don’t think this is how leaders who are confident in their own power and ability to corral the bureaucracy behaves. It actually strikes me as a sign of weakness, if not paranoia, that he feels he needs to constantly overturn the apple cart,” he said.

‘This happens over and over again’

Miao’s downfall comes less than a year after former defense minister Li Shangfu was removed from the CMC.

The powerful body had six members – all deemed as Xi’s loyalists – serving under the top leader when he began his unprecedented third term two years ago. If Miao is also removed, it would leave two vacant seats. Shih, the expert on Chinese elite politics, said many dictators, from former Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to Mao, have eventually turned against their own proteges.

“Once all of their real competitors are gone, a dictator can never think to themselves: ‘Oh well, all the threats are gone. I can just relax.’ Because they always think that new threats could emerge, including from people who once were very close to them. This happens over and over again,” he said.

As a result, the dictator is always looking for increasingly subtle signs that someone is plotting against them, said Shih, the author of “Coalitions of

the Weak,” which examines Mao’s hold on power in the late stage of his life.

During Mao’s last years, he turned against Lin Biao, his longtime protege, former defense minister and heir apparent, accusing him of plotting a coup.

“This kind of dynamic will become increasingly severe as Xi Jinping gets older, as his health is not as robust as previously. His sensitivity to signs of potential challenge to his power will also become keener over time,” Shih said.

For now, the top leader appears determined to carry on his crusade against corruption and disloyalty.

Earlier this month, Xi inspected the PLA’s Information Support Force with his four remaining loyalists on the CMC.

“We must ensure the troops remain absolutely loyal, absolutely pure and absolutely reliable,” Xi told an audience of note-taking officers.

Communist China: Weaponizing Buddhism and Erasing Tibet

14 December 2024, [Tibetan Review](#), Tenzin Dorjee

Communist China has accelerated the weaponizing of Buddhism and erasing of Tibet. Organizing the 9th Nanhai (South China Sea) Buddhism Roundtable Conference in Lumbini over December 12-17, 2024 – as reported in the *Tibetan Review* and other news outlets – and persuading Nepal to allow China’s Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu is an unfolding of China’s action plans to fulfill this goal. Historically, China was a major Buddhist country; but since becoming communist, it has had no business organizing and participating in Buddhist conferences. Communist China is an enemy of all religions. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and its State Department’s Annual reports have rated China as a “Country of Particular Concern” for systematically, egregiously, and continuously violating the freedom of religion or belief. Late Chairman Mao has famously said, “Religion is an opium.”

Ample evidences indicate how Communist China has weaponized Buddhism to advance its political and social influence agenda. Two of its main activities today for this purpose are Sinicizing of all religions, especially calling for Buddhism with a socialist outlook, and controlling the reincarnation system of Tibetan Buddhism. China uses state-of-the-art technology to monitor religious freedom, religious ordination, religious administration, religious education, and religious activities in Tibet. Monks are required to undergo political education and Sinicize Buddhism as a means to accomplish Communist ends for both domestic purpose and with geo-political goals. China unashamedly uses Buddhism as a weapon and soft

power tool to counteract India’s power and expand its social influence on China-dependent, debt-ridden countries and beyond.

Buddhism originated in India and spread all over Asia. Tibetan Buddhism follows the systematic study, contemplation, and practice of the Nalanda Tradition and the sixteen Maha Pandits or preeminent Buddhist professors such as Arya Nagarjuna, Arya Asanga, Acharya Shantarakshita, Acharya Chandrakirti, Acharya Shantideva, and Great Atisha. Last year, the Government of India collaborated with the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) to hold the first Asian Buddhist Summit in Delhi. But China stayed away because the Summit’s goals did not fulfill its geopolitical ends. Prime Minister Modi-Ji and His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressed the summit on different days. Last November, the second Asian Buddhist Summit in Delhi focused on “the Role of Buddha Dharma Strengthening Asia.” Again, China had no show.

China has also weaponized the Tibetan reincarnation system. Starting with the first Karmapa, Tibetan Buddhism’s reincarnation system is unique. The two most prominent ones are the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. China formulated in 2007 the State Religious Affairs Bureau’s Order No. 5 to regulate the reincarnation system in Tibetan Buddhism. Under it China keeps a registry of so-called “Living Buddhas” that excluded the Dalai Lama and the real Panchen Lama.

When I chaired the USCIRF, I strongly advocated for the release of the Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. China abducted him and his family, and no one has heard about or seen in person the real Panchen Lama, who is now in his 30s. In his place, China’s politically appointed Panchen Gyaincain Norbu and parades him across Tibet and abroad to gain legitimacy. China’s latest attempt is to showcase him as the leader of Tibetan Buddhism and a symbol of religious freedom at the ongoing roundtable Buddhist conference in Nepal. China hates and despises the Dalai Lama, a global Buddhist icon, as a “wolf in monk’s robes,” while India hosts him as its honored guest.

China’s game plan is to politically appoint a Tibetan boy as the 15th Dalai Lama in future. The Dalai Lama will only feel compassion for Chinese leaders for their ignorance, for only he can decide on his next reincarnation. In recent years, the Dalai Lama assured Tibetans and the world, at many long-life puja ceremonies offered to him, that he is healthy and plans to live over 100 and possibly 113, and there is no rush to discuss his reincarnation. He will leave no room for China or anybody else to play their agenda game with his reincarnation. When the time is right, he will speak unequivocally. The world will believe his words,

not China's claim. Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhists firmly believe in him. They must stay united, follow his precise instructions, and do what is necessary.

Relatedly, China has been embarking on erasing Tibet and Tibetan identity. Tibet and Buddhism are metaphorically the two sides of the same coin, symbolizing Tibetans globally. Buddhism is the heartbeat and soul of Tibet as a nation. Tibet is stored in the memory of the world. Many United Nations experts have objected to China forcibly removing a million Tibetan children from their homes and confining them to boarding schools. China strategically plans to erase its Tibetan identity, language, culture, and faith. Across Tibet, China forbids Tibetan families from teaching their children about faith, worship, and practice.

Domestically, China has systematically, egregiously, and continuously used power, latest technology, and resources in its campaign to erase Tibetan identity. Globally, China wants to erase Tibet from peoples' minds and literature, forcibly introducing the Chinese label 'Xizang.' China officially mandated the use of Xizang for Tibet in their diplomatic relations and communication, both written and oral.

Professor Tsering Shakya wrote an insightful article entitled "Tibet Must Stand" on renaming Tibet as Xizang. According to the December 11 post on the SOAS's China Institute website (University of London), China has launched a two-year social influence campaign to coax "foreign businesses, publishers, and mapmakers to adopt the name "Xizang" in place of "Tibet." In the 1990s, China took to calling Tibet "China's Tibet", which paradoxically suggests Tibet is not China's. Incidentally, why doesn't China call Beijing "China's Beijing"?

Sinicizing Tibetan names does not grant the legitimacy of ownership. Professor Shakya rightly put it, "Internationally, the word "Tibet" has become a symbol of a unique identity with significant cultural "soft power," one which is now seen in China as evoking a sense of separateness that undermines Beijing's claim to the region. The Chinese campaign to enforce "Xizang" on foreign individuals and institutions invokes the moral high ground of decolonization while seeking to make the international community complicit in China's claims to sovereignty and its practices of cultural erasure. But the fact remains that the name "Tibet" is not a Western imposition but a term rooted in indigenous usage, dating from interactions between Tibetans and their neighbors over a millennium ago."

China is weaponizing Buddhism for geopolitical influence and a communist domination endgame. I hope Prime Minister Oli does not kowtow to China and turn Nepal into China's Nepal. China aims to reprogram the minds of people around the globe, erasing Tibet and accepting Xizang instead. China

needs to develop and install chips into people's brains to succeed in erasing Tibet and replacing it with Xizang.

Tibet Under Pressure: China's Geopolitical Ambitions And Cultural Repression

14 December 2024, [Bharat Shakti](#), Anukriti K

The human rights situation in Tibet is closely tied to broader political issues. The Chinese government views any expression of Tibetan nationalism or support for the Dalai Lama as threatening national unity and stability.

Editor's Note

China perceived the importance of Tibet and annexed it in the early 1050s. However, the Western world has yet to focus on Tibet and evolve a cohesive strategy to pursue the fruition of Tibetan aspirations. Tibet is critically important for the Chinese BRI project and its offshoot, the CPEC. Tibetans continue to battle Chinese pressures in multiple areas, including their cultural and religious identity and violation of human rights. The article examines multiple facets of Chinese repression and relates these to its belligerence in the region.

The relationship between China and Tibet is marked by deep and multifaceted complexities shaped by a rich interplay of historical, political, and cultural forces. These complexities have not only defined the region's demographic landscape but continue to influence Tibetans' lives and global geopolitics significantly. At the heart of this ongoing conflict are key literal and metaphorical fault lines centred around territorial disputes, forced cultural assimilation, human rights issues, and the quest for Tibetan autonomy.

Tibet And China

Tibet has a long history of autonomy, with a unique culture and Buddhist identity. Before the 20th century, it was a theocracy governed by the Dalai Lama, influenced by Buddhist principles. Tibet's relationship with China is complex, marked by periods of trade, diplomacy, and conflict, but Tibet often maintained independence, especially when China was weak.

During the Yuan (1271–1368) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, China had some influence, but Tibet largely managed its affairs and preserved its identity. Historians debate the extent of Tibetan autonomy during these periods, with some viewing Tibet as independent and others as under Chinese suzerainty. Following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, Tibet declared independence in 1913 under the 13th Dalai Lama. Tibet operated as a de facto independent state for several decades, establishing diplomatic relations, issuing passports, and managing its government. However, China did not recognize Tibet's independence, continuing to assert its claim over the region and setting the stage for future tensions.

The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was officially incorporated into the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the 1950s after a military invasion by Chinese forces. Since then, Tibet has been under Chinese rule, but the question of Tibet's autonomy remains a thorn in Sino-Tibetan relations. Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, fled into exile in India in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese authority. The situation has since been characterized by resistance movements, both peaceful and violent, from Tibetans who seek greater independence or autonomy.

At the heart of the conflict lies the territorial dispute. Tibet, a vast plateau on the northern edge of the Indian subcontinent, is rich in natural resources such as water, minerals, and geo-strategic importance. For China, Tibet's integration is a driver for its national unity and economic and military security. The region's role as the headwaters of several major rivers, including the Yangtze and the Mekong, further complicates the issue as downstream countries like India, Vietnam, and Laos rely heavily on water flow from Tibetan glaciers and rivers.

Cultural Assimilation And Identity Struggles

China has long propounded "ethnic harmony" and integration, but Tibetans argue these policies undermine their distinct cultural and religious identity. The Chinese government's push for cultural and political integration, known as 'Sinicization,' has led to the destruction of Tibetan Buddhist institutions, restrictions on religious practices, and an influx of Han Chinese settlers. Tibetans fear that their traditional way of life, religion, and language are under threat.

Tibetan Buddhism, a core part of Tibetan identity, has been a significant point of tension. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has implemented policies to limit religious influence, resulting in the destruction of monasteries, imprisonment of monks and nuns, and tight control over religious practices.

A key issue is the Chinese government's interference in selecting Tibetan religious leaders. In 1995, when the Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, China rejected this choice and installed its candidate. Nyima has been missing since then, with his whereabouts unknown, drawing international criticism of China's policies in Tibet.

Self-immolation protests by Tibetans, especially monks and nuns, have become a powerful tool of resistance against cultural and religious repression. These acts have drawn global attention, though China cruelly dismisses them as acts of terrorism and blames "anti-China" forces for escalating tensions.

The imposition of Mandarin in schools and the economic marginalization of Tibetans contribute to growing alienation. Tibetan culture, deeply connected to Buddhism and its traditions, faces increasing pressure under Chinese policies. Many Tibetans see it

as an attempt to erase their identity and integrate them into a Han-dominated society. The Chinese government defends these policies as essential for development, modernization, and national unity.

The Question Of Autonomy

The Chinese government claims that Tibet enjoys a high degree of autonomy under the "one country, two systems" model, which is also applied to regions like Hong Kong and Macau. However, in practice, Tibetans argue that their autonomy is severely limited. The Chinese government maintains tight control over political appointments, the economy, and security in Tibet. Policies are dictated by the central government in Beijing, with little input from local Tibetan leaders.

The lack of genuine political autonomy is a major source of frustration for Tibetans, who feel that the Chinese government does not adequately represent their interests. Beijing's emphasis on economic development in Tibet, including large-scale infrastructure projects like the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, is often portrayed as a solution to Tibet's grievances. However, many Tibetans feel that these projects primarily benefit Han Chinese migrants and contribute to the erosion of Tibetan culture and the environment.

Human Rights Concerns

Human rights organizations and governments globally have regularly criticized China's policies in Tibet as well as in Xinjiang. Allegations of forced labour, arbitrary detention, torture, and the suppression of free speech are widespread. Tibetans, particularly those in rural areas, face strict surveillance, and the Chinese government monitors their religious practices. The ongoing crackdowns on Tibetan protests, including the 2008 riots in Lhasa, serve as stark reminders of the extent to which China is willing to go to maintain control.

The human rights situation in Tibet is closely tied to broader political issues. The Chinese government views any expression of Tibetan nationalism or support for the Dalai Lama as threatening national unity and stability. As a result, dissent is met with harsh repression, and even peaceful protests are often labelled as acts of separatism. The use of invasive surveillance, including the deployment of advanced technologies like facial recognition, has further restricted Tibetans' ability to express their political and cultural identity.

The Dalai Lama Issue

The Dalai Lama remains a powerful symbol of Tibetan resistance and identity despite living in exile since 1959. He has long advocated for the "Middle Way" approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese state rather than outright independence. However, the Chinese government has consistently rejected negotiations with the Dalai Lama, labelling him a separatist.

The Tibetan diaspora, particularly in India, strongly advocates Tibetan autonomy and human rights through organizations like the Tibetan Youth Congress and the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which calls for Tibet's return to autonomy within China while preserving its cultural and political rights.

Many younger Tibetans, who have grown up in exile and experienced the limitations of their political status, are more inclined to demand full independence rather than compromise on autonomy. This generational divide adds another layer of complexity to the already fraught Tibet-China relationship.

International Implications and Global Response

The Tibet issue is not confined to Sino-Tibetan relations; it has significant international dimensions. Tibet's political and environmental stability directly impacts countries like India, Nepal, and Bhutan. India, which shares a long border with Tibet, has a large Tibetan exile community and has been a consistent critic of China's policies in Tibet. The U.S., European Union, and human rights organizations have repeatedly called for improved human rights conditions in Tibet and the resumption of dialogue between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives.

Another aspect of the tension in Tibet and China is the geopolitical rivalry between China and India. India has hosted the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exile community since 1959, which has long been a source of tension between the two countries, as Beijing views India's support as interference in its internal affairs. Meanwhile, India sees China's actions in Tibet as part of a broader assertiveness in the region. The border dispute between the two countries, particularly over Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as part of Tibet, further complicates the relationship, with Tibet serving as a key leverage point in their ongoing geopolitical competition.

China's growing economic and geopolitical power has created a challenging environment for international actors to engage in Tibet-related issues. The Chinese government has been adept at suppressing international support for Tibetan autonomy by exerting economic and political pressure on countries and international institutions.

China's growing presence and expansion in the South China Sea have irked the neighbouring Southeast Asian countries concerned about territorial disputes and maritime security. This stance has further complicated diplomatic ties with European and American nations, who see China's action as challenging international laws and regional stability. Hence, the situation has heightened geopolitical tensions and triggered a global backlash against China. While the Chinese government continues to assert its authority over Tibet, calling it a 'core interest' in its territorial integrity, Tibetans continue to seek greater

autonomy and recognition of their cultural identity. As these fault lines persist, the international community remains divided on how best to approach the Tibet issue, balancing respect for China's sovereignty with the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people. Until these underlying tensions are addressed, the China-Tibet fault lines will likely remain a key feature of the region's complex and contested history.

Jaishankar: Finding balance with China complex as both nations evolve

16 December 2024, [The Indian Express](#), Divya A

At magazine launch, External Affairs Minister discusses India's changing relationships with major powers. Accepting that equation is "very complex", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said it is in the interest of both India and China to find an equilibrium, and emphasised that India's economic trajectory will put a premium on its ties with countries like Russia and Canada.

During a discussion with C Raja Mohan, Contributing Editor, The Indian Express, at the launch of foreign policy magazine 'India's World', in New Delhi, which was attended by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, Jaishankar said, "Eventually, it's in the interest of both India and China to reach an equilibrium. Conceptually, it's difficult to do because both are changing in absolute terms and vis-a-vis the world."

"The world is changing, they (India and China) are changing, their relationship with the world is changing and their relationship with each other is also changing. In all these changes, how do you find equilibrium? It's not going to be easy," he said, responding to a question on India's relationship with China and how the two big Asian neighbours can co-exist peacefully.

Referring to the issues along the LAC, he said, "We are still grappling with the short term (issue), which is to focus on de-escalation. While disengagement has been worked out, there are other issues which confront us." In October this year, India and China reached an agreement on patrolling arrangements.

On India's ties with Russia, despite pushback from the West in the wake of the [Ukraine](#) war, he said Russia is a very unique aspect of India's foreign policy and a "major power globally, and certainly in Eurasia, it is something more than that". He stressed that "in International Relations 101, your neighbour's neighbour has an enormous value."

"Today, India is finding new convergences and intersections. A country like India at this stage of its growth, the resource powers of the world have to be our major partners," he said.

"India's economic trajectory will put some premium on (its ties with) countries like Russia, Indonesia, Australia, or even Canada," he said, adding, "It's a new

compulsion and new rationalisation of who our partners would be.”

Though he didn't mention how India aims to navigate its ties with the US under President-elect [Donald Trump](#), he said, “As part of our relationship with the US, we have very honest conversations on where we agree and where we don't”, adding that the India-US ties is “large and important”.

Jaishankar underlined that Europe is an important partner in terms of many of the key concerns — supply chains, AI, semiconductors and digital exchanges. “There is a broad intersection which needs to be built upon,” he said.

How India's soft power led to a border deal with China

15 December 2024, [The Japan Times](#), Dalbir Ahlawat

The template set by New Delhi balances diplomacy, dialogue and deterrence



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese leader Xi Jinping meet at the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, in October. India and China reached a border deal for Chinese forces to retreat from disputed territory and for India to resume border patrols. | China Daily / via REUTERS

Recent events reveal India's success in securing concessions from China.

Ending a four-year hiatus, Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi resumed a structured dialogue at the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, in October — after having held only unscheduled interactions since the 2020 Galwan Valley incident in which the Chinese and Indian armies clashed over the disputed border that divides them.

This seems to have been an opportune moment for the Chinese leadership to disengage its forces from territorial friction points and for India to resume border patrols, with both returning to pre-Galwan Valley incident positions.

Several strategic factors put pressure on China to change its stance. These included the holding of the BRICS summit with the possibility that Xi and Modi

would not agree on some of the key points, the prospect that the American election would usher in a new administration with an unpredictable foreign policy and growing challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

In Kazan, Xi even stressed that India and China should work together as partners and not competitors and see the relationship as an opportunity for development, rather than a threat.

This contrasts sharply with Beijing's assertive stance in the South China Sea, where it continues to reiterate its claim over Taiwan and adopt an aggressive posture toward the Philippines and other states. Notably, Xi has repeatedly urged China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to prepare for war.

On the contrary, India's emphasis on diplomacy and dialogue led to conciliation with Beijing, creating a useful template for other countries embroiled in territorial disputes with China.

For decades, India and China have been locked in a confrontation centered on the 3,488 km-long border they share, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Despite India's repeated efforts to resolve the issue, the dispute remains, creating a volatile situation often marked by displays of military force, face-offs and even casualties.

The genesis of the disagreement can be traced back to postcolonial times. After India gained independence from the British in 1947 and the Communists won control of China in 1949, both nations initially sought cooperation. However, the 1962 war, initiated by Beijing, severely damaged bilateral relations, which remained strained for decades.

In 1989, following the Tiananmen Square crackdown, China faced global isolation. To repair its international image and avoid further estrangement, Beijing engaged with India and signed several confidence-building agreements in the decade starting from 1993 to maintain peace along the LAC and with the ultimate goal of resolving the border dispute.

However, Xi's rise to power marked a decided shift. With the launch of the Belt and Road initiative (BRI) in 2013, Beijing sought to position itself as the leader of a China-centric order in Asia, encouraging India to align with its vision while sidelining the United States. New Delhi rejected this, particularly due to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship BRI project passing through Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which India regards as its territory. In response, China adopted a more aggressive posture along the LAC, attempting to dissuade India from supporting U.S.-led initiatives such as the construction of the Indo-Pacific as a geostrategic region and the “Quad” security dialogue comprising India, the U.S., Japan and Australia.

A turning point occurred in 2017, when China began constructing a road in Doklam, a disputed territory between China and Bhutan overlooking India's

strategic Siliguri Corridor, a stretch of land in West Bengal state.

Indian troops crossed the LAC for the first time to prevent the construction, resulting in a 73-day standoff with the PLA. Under Modi, India demonstrated its resolve to counter Chinese pressure and its unwillingness to compromise on territorial integrity. This display of strength enhanced India's reputation as a credible regional counterbalance to China, encouraging other countries engaged in disputes with Beijing to view New Delhi as a reliable partner.

These dynamics did not augur well for the Chinese leadership, which escalated tensions and skirmishes along different sectors of the LAC, ultimately culminating in the June 2020 Galwan Valley clash.

New Delhi accused Beijing of building bunkers and obstructing the Indian army's movements over the territory it claims. The confrontation resulted in the death of 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers — killings that hardened India's stance, with Modi asserting that the Indian soldiers' sacrifice would not go in vain and that the government would give a befitting reply, if provoked.

The two countries signed an agreement in February 2021 for complete troop disengagement and verification. However, a deep trust deficit persisted as they were unable to resolve all friction points and Chinese forces blocked Indian troops at key strategic nodes, thus limiting India's patrolling abilities and access, for example to its Daulat Beg Oldi air base.

Rather than acquiescing to China's aggressive overtures and reacting to Xi's call for the PLA to prepare for war, India opted for a soft power approach. As well as engaging China through dialogue and diplomacy, New Delhi deepened its ties with Quad members to support a rules-based order leading to free and open Indo-Pacific — one that China intends to alter, even resorting to force. India's joint military exercises with Japan and Australia are a case in point. In addition, India strengthened its historic partnership with Russia, China's key ally, by continuing its trade with Moscow despite Western sanctions, creating a scenario in which Russia would not be inclined to support China at the cost of compromising its ties to India.

In parallel, New Delhi also deepened relations with Washington, China's key adversary, by signing four foundational security agreements and another for priority delivery of defense items, boosting military interoperability between the two countries. India also reaffirmed its commitment to the central role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Taken together, all these measures boosted India's strategic heft and reinforced its position as a formidable peer competitor, allowing it to negotiate with China from a position of strength.

Simultaneously, China has faced mounting challenges, including growing tensions over Taiwan, ASEAN's pushback in the South China Sea, the AUKUS security agreement between Australia, the U.S. and the United Kingdom, and Japan's shift to collective defense. Coupled with an economic slowdown, these pressures have left Beijing in a precarious position in recalibrating its approach to India.

Pushing India too hard would risk driving it closer to the U.S. and Quad. Witnessing India's economy grow faster than China's and New Delhi's increasing influence in the region, the Chinese leadership opted for addressing the border dispute and recognizing India as a peer competitor, rather than an adversary.

A major achievement for India was to make China withdraw from disputed territory — China's occupation of this land was exposed to the wider world and the retreat suggests that the territory occupied by the PLA does not belong to China.

Securing these concessions without resorting to military action marked a moral victory for New Delhi and implies that other territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific can be resolved through a soft power approach. India has created a template based on dialogue and diplomacy while carving itself a credible position of regional deterrence.

Guest Opinion: The truth about Xinjiang and its Uygur population

13 December 2024, [Big News Network](#), Meilleur Murindabigwi



This photo taken on Nov. 9, 2024 shows children running in Daliyabuyi Village, Yutian County of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Hu Huhu)

The reality in Xinjiang is a different story with multiple dimensions. It involves efforts to combat extremism, preserve national unity, and promote economic development.

Western governments and media, particularly in the United States, have persisted with a years-long smear campaign targeting China over issues related to Xinjiang.

However, their claims often lack proper context and are based on false information intended to undermine China's growing influence on the global stage.

The reality in Xinjiang is a different story with multiple dimensions. It involves efforts to combat extremism, preserve national unity, and promote economic development.

The 6th World Media Summit recently took place in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. Given the recurring negative coverage of Xinjiang in Western media, it was time for us, media practitioners from around the world, to witness firsthand what life is truly like for the Uyghurs, one of 55 ethnic minorities in China. Our goal was to see for ourselves whether the human rights abuses claimed by Western leaders and media hold any truth.

DERADICALIZATION AND WESTERN INTERVENTIONS

From the early 1990s to mid-2010s, Xinjiang faced a surge in radicalization, leading to deadly terrorist attacks targeting civilians.

Notable incidents include the Urumqi riots in 2009 and Kunming railway station attack in 2014, resulting in hundreds of fatalities and even more injuries. These were the works of radical separatists who sought destabilization and secession.

In response, the Chinese government launched comprehensive counterterrorism initiatives, ranging from a law-based campaign against terrorists to a vocational training program to deradicalize individuals influenced by extremism. The latter combined vocational training, legal education, and cultural integration to address the underlying causes of radicalization.

The separatist movement in Xinjiang has not been a purely internal issue. There is growing evidence that Western countries have had a hand in encouraging separatism in Xinjiang as part of a broader strategy to destabilize China.

The United States has long considered China an economic rival, and any attempt to weaken China internally serves its geopolitical interests.

By fabricating and amplifying accusations of human rights abuses, some Western governments aim to tarnish China's international image, hoping to slow its economic ascent.

These actions align with a broader history of Western interventions designed to disrupt political stability in regions critical to their global dominance.

The persistent campaign of disinformation against China, particularly regarding Xinjiang, is part of a larger strategy by Western countries to contain China's rise. Western countries have become increasingly alarmed by the prospect of losing nearly two centuries of global dominance.

By painting China as a human rights abuser, Western governments and media outlets seek to rally international opinion against China.

However, this narrative often ignores China's work in lifting more than 800 million people out of poverty over the past decades, improving living standards, and maintaining social harmony throughout the country, including in Xinjiang.

PROSPERITY TODAY

Despite these challenges, Xinjiang is a flourishing and multicultural region where Uyghurs live peacefully alongside other ethnic groups.

Far from the image painted by some media outlets, Xinjiang has experienced rapid development in recent years. Its gross domestic product has grown significantly, reaching over 1.9 trillion yuan (approximately 260 billion dollars) in 2023.

Xinjiang is also a crucial part of the Belt and Road Initiative, which has attracted foreign investment and made the region a hub for international trade.

Moreover, the claim that Uyghurs cannot practice their religion is false.



© Provided by XinhuaForeign journalists visit the Xinjiang Islamic Institute in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, June 21, 2024. (Xinhua/Gu Yu)

We visited the Xinjiang Islamic Institute in Urumqi, which trains over 1,000 students. Imam Abdurraqib Turmuniyaz greeted us and explained that the school was created to allow Muslim boys in Xinjiang to deepen their knowledge of Islam while preparing them for leadership roles in China's mosques.

Established in the early 1980s, it reflects the Chinese government's efforts to support and regulate Islamic education. Its facilities include a canteen, mosque, library, and gym.

The Xinjiang Islamic Institute also has eight branches across the region, including in Hotan, Aksu, and Kashgar, with about 3,000 students.

Imam Abdurraqib Turmuniyaz emphasized that religious freedom is fully protected in China, especially in Xinjiang. The institute's mission is to educate rather than confine students. This institution is a key part of China's efforts to promote Islamic education in a structured and modern environment.

Xinjiang is a region that once faced serious challenges with extremism and separatism but has overcome these obstacles through development, education, and integration.

The Uygur people practice religion freely and benefit from the region's rapid economic growth. During our visit to a car manufacturing plant in Xinjiang, we saw Uygurs working alongside colleagues of other ethnic groups.

Uygurs are present in all works of life, from restaurants and coffee shops to construction companies, the service sector, and even military service. Some have also gained prominence as models in China's booming fashion industry, showcasing the diverse opportunities available to them across the country.

The broader campaign of disinformation against China, spearheaded by the West, is less about human rights and more about maintaining global hegemony. As China continues to rise on the world stage, the truth about Xinjiang is clear. It is a region of peace, prosperity, and promise, no matter what the detractors say.

Why Nepal's 'one China' stand matters to PRC

13 December 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Rishi Gupta

Nepalese Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's first foreign visit to China from Monday to Thursday last week made major headlines in the media. It is seen as a break from tradition, as Oli chose China over India, signaling a significant shift in Nepal's diplomatic outlook. As a landlocked nation, Nepal's geopolitics has always been shaped by the dominant influence of its southern neighbor, India, and the rising power to its north, China, but by choosing Beijing, is Oli charting a new course or walking into a well-laid trap?

The visit carried immense symbolic weight, mainly because Oli was known for his pro-China stance, which largely defined his politics. By signing deals like the Belt and Road Initiative, Oli wants to redefine Nepal's reliance on India and balance it with China.

However, Nepal's lack of bargaining with China led to Beijing dominating the outcomes and securing greater security cooperation. At the same time, Nepal sidestepped thornier issues, such as Beijing's alleged encroachments on Nepalese territory.

The joint statement issued after Oli's meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平), Chinese Premier Li Qiang (李强) and Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairman Zhao Leji (赵乐际) was a classic case of Chinese insecurities vis-a-vis Nepal. It mainly sought Kathmandu's reaffirmation of the "one China principle."

"Nepal reaffirmed its firm commitment to the one China principle, recognizing that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China and

Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. Nepal firmly supports China's efforts to achieve its national reunification and opposes Taiwan independence," the statement said.

Besides Taiwan, Nepal also reiterated that "Xizang [Tibetan] affairs are internal affairs of China and that it will never allow any separatist activities against China on Nepal's soil."

Beijing's focus on Nepal's assurances regarding Tibet remains central to its Nepal policy, given their shared historical border and Nepal's role as a key transit point for Tibetans seeking refuge with the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India.

For China, Tibetan refugees in Nepal pose a threat to stability in Tibet, particularly as third countries such as the US continue to criticize Beijing's human rights record. In the 1950s and 1960s, Nepal was at the heart of CIA operations to train Tibetans fighting against the communist regime in Lhasa.

So why is Nepal's commitment to the so-called "one China principle" so critical for Beijing?

Simply put, Nepal's strategic position makes it indispensable. Beijing fears that Tibetan refugees in Nepal, already resisting Chinese oppression, could also align with Taiwan's cause, amplifying dissent against its territorial claims. Beijing also fears that third countries might use Nepal against its interests.

While Oli's visit was a success for China, it was more symbolic for Nepal. Oli signed a Belt and Road Initiative framework agreement in which China agreed to fund projects under "aid assistance financing" — a mutually agreed-upon term.

However, this is not an outcome that Oli's coalition partner in the government, the Nepali Congress, expected. Oli was supposed to press China to be more generous in carrying out development works by offering more aid and assistance than loans, but the devil lies in the details. With the specifics of the framework agreement veiled in secrecy, particularly regarding "aid assistance financing" and other terms, Nepal must tread cautiously. China's stance is clear — no funds leave Beijing without strings attached.

However, what stands out is the contrast with the US' Millennium Challenge Corp, which is offering a US\$500 million grant to Nepal for infrastructure development. Beijing has called Millennium Challenge Corp a "trojan horse" that is against Chinese interests. However, unlike the Belt and Road Initiative, its financial and contractual details are easily accessible to the public — a transparency that bolsters its credibility.

At the same time, Beijing finds ways to promote a shared vision of sovereignty and strategic independence, aiming to counterbalance India's traditional influence, but this narrative often falls short when reports of Beijing's "salami-slicing" tactics make headlines.

The New York Times in October in a report titled “China’s ‘New Great Wall’ Casts a Shadow on Nepal” revealed how China’s infrastructure projects encroach on Nepalese land near the border.

In conclusion, smaller South Asian nations, including Nepal, face the challenge of navigating China’s strategic ambitions, often serving Beijing’s interests more than their own. Political parties with a pro-China stance must prioritize national interests and remain vigilant about China’s broader strategic goals to avoid long-term compromises.

Dam Construction in Tibet Threatens Local Communities and Environment

13 December 2024, [China Digital Times](#), Arthur Kaufman

Infrastructure projects in [Tibet](#) have often drawn controversy for failing to balance development, human rights, and environmental protection. As CDT has covered this year, state-sponsored hydropower projects have forcibly displaced local communities and led to violent reprisals against protesters. A series of recent reports expand on this topic to highlight the social and environmental perils of these projects. Last week, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) published a report titled, “Chinese Hydropower: Damning Tibet’s Culture, Community, and Environment.” The report includes an interactive map showing the location of 193 hydropower dams constructed or proposed in Tibet since 2000, along with their areas of impact and proximity to locations of cultural importance, protected areas, and land cover. The report reveals that these dam projects are **causing “irreparable damage” to Tibetan communities, downstream countries, and the environment:**

If completed, 1.2 million residents living nearby dam projects could be dislocated from their homes, communities, and livelihoods. Religious and sacred sites serving communities will also be destroyed.

Almost 80 per cent of dams studied are large or mega dams (>100MW), which carry the most significant risk to the Tibetan civilization, environmental sustainability, and the climate. However, over half the dams (60%) are either in proposal or preparation stage, presenting opportunities to change course.

A truly sustainable pathway for the energy plan must account for the climate, social, environment, and geopolitical costs of hydropower and change course. No plan is sustainable without the consent, participation and co-management of local communities.

Tibetans, who remain among the most politically marginalized in China, should not bear the highest cost to power China’s industrial centers. Any long-term

solution must involve a political solution where Tibetan people enjoy the right to freely decide how their natural resources are used. This begins with the PRC entering into a meaningful dialogue with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. **[Source]**

Speaking to French newspaper Libération about the report, ICT researcher and advocacy officer Tenzin Palmo stated, “We wanted to show what was happening in this inaccessible border area in the west of the country, but also to reveal the projects of the Chinese authorities who are trying by all means to hide information, to harass civil society, all while engaging in a greenwashing operation around these dams.” Other groups have provided related evidence. Last month, Turquoise Roof and Tibet Watch published a report titled, “**The risks of China’s dangerous dam-building in Tibet: the impacts of China’s move upstream on the Machu/Yellow River,**” which highlighted the threat of geological disasters and environmental problems:

For the first time, China’s construction of hydropower dams is reaching upstream to the sources of Asia’s great wild rivers in Tibet, with at least three major new dams on the upper Machu (Chinese: Huang He) river. Chinese scientists have warned of the risks of heavy infrastructure construction in a seismically unstable region where river systems are increasingly unpredictable due to climate change.

[...] While China can point to its solar and hydro projects in Tibet to signal a green transition, the smart grid is currently orientated to fossil fuels, which may reveal a slower, less substantial shift than these projects imply. Although hydroelectric power is technically renewable, the large-scale hydropower projects underway in Tibet have complex environmental and social impacts, including ecosystem disruption and displacement of communities.

The first major dam to be built upriver on the Machu, the Yangkhil (Yangqu) hydropower station, has devastated an entire community. Accounts and images from eyewitnesses in this report documents how Tibetans have been compelled to dismantle their own homes and an important monastery has been emptied and destroyed. China removed the monastery from a protected heritage list before beginning demolition to make way for a dam that Chinese engineers boast is constructed by AI-driven robots. **[Source]**

In the Made in China Journal last month, James Leibold wrote about the Tibet-Aid Project, which he describes as a CCP initiative that pairs Tibet’s administrative units with inland government actors in order to extend Beijing’s settler-colonial enterprise and fortify Han dominance in the region. Among the Tibet-Aid cadres championed in CCP propaganda are Han engineers committed to transforming Tibet’s physical landscape

through “civilizing” infrastructure projects. Leibold argued, “By unleashing a new legion of Han officials and settlers on to the Tibetan Plateau, Xi seeks to complete the discursive, demographic, and cultural integration of Tibet into a new Han empire.” In this excerpt, he describes how **Han migration and infrastructure-building erode local Tibetan sovereignty**:

Most of the Han people living and working in Tibet today are descendants of former Tibet-Aid cadres. In a recent survey of 300-plus Han retirees who had worked in Tibet, 49 per cent had a parent who had previously worked in Tibet, with one-quarter of those born in Tibet (Zhou and Du 2023: 83). They are called ‘second’ or ‘third-generation Tibetans’ (藏二代 or 藏三代) in Chinese and now make up the backbone of the party-state’s governing and economic apparatuses in the region. According to officials, they are the ‘strongest source of strength’ for forging what Xi Jinping has called the ‘collective consciousness’ (集体意识) of the Han-centric nation/race (Thondup and Tsring 2023). By claiming Tibetan identity, albeit an altered one, Han migrants are engaging in a common settler-colonial strategy—what Lorenzo Veracini (2010: 46) calls the discursive erasure of ‘indigenous specific alterity’.

Han colonists live a highly fluid existence in the TAR and their roots are impermanent. Due to health concerns, they split their time between apartments in lower-elevation cities, chiefly in Sichuan, and their posts on the plateau. China’s mega-infrastructure building in the TAR—roads, airports, railways, power and telecommunication lines, etcetera—serves as conduits for Han mobility, allowing colonial subjects to move more comfortably and smoothly through ‘harsh’ Tibetan spaces while imprinting the landscape with Han norms that ultimately efface Tibetan sovereignty. The 1,629-kilometre Chengdu-to-Lhasa high-speed railway is of ‘immense strategic value’, a 2018 blog post asserts, as it will not only facilitate military logistics, but also allow the vibrant economy and Han-dominated population of the Sichuan Basin to ‘more easily spread and radiate into the Tibet region’ when it is completed in 2030 (Sohu 2018). [Source]

Similar dynamics are playing out in other borderland regions, such as Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. In an article for Atmos, Nithin Coca and Patrick Wack described how state-affiliated energy companies have built massive solar plants in Xinjiang that greenwash rights abuses against local Uyghur communities. Uyghur activists argue that these projects are part of longstanding efforts to Sinicize the region and exploit its resources while further colonizing their homeland through Han migration. This also plays out in the realm of Tibetan language politics, as the Chinese government has imposed Sinicization policies to force

Tibetans to use Mandarin instead of their local languages. For more on this topic, see CDT’s recent interview with Gerald Roche about the erasure of Tibet’s minority languages, which face unique challenges in the face of both Mandarin and Standard Tibetan. Other interviews can be found in CDT’s series on Tibet.

Pakistan Ditches ‘Iron Brother’ China, Reaches Out to US for Financial Rescue

13 December 2024, [Republic World](#), Yuvraj Tyagi

The phrase “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me” perfectly encapsulates China’s predicament with its so-called “Iron Brother,” Pakistan. The phrase “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me” perfectly encapsulates China’s predicament with its so-called “Iron Brother,” Pakistan. Despite Beijing’s heavy financial investments exceeding \$67.2 billion since 2000, Pakistan has chosen to pursue its age-old flirtation with the United States, discarding China like a used pawn in the global chessboard of geopolitics.

Pakistan’s thankless attitude towards China is no secret. Whether it was the blatant preference for US-made weapons expressed by former COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa in April 2022 or the unapologetic remarks of current CJCS General Sahir Shamshad Mirza claiming Pak-China ties were borne of “compulsion,” Pakistan has made its disdain for Chinese dominance quite clear. Adding insult to injury, the country has been brazenly vocal about its desire to rekindle ties with the US, conveniently forgetting China’s lifeline in the form of loans and infrastructural projects.

The Decline of a Pawn

Pakistan, once a proud US ally during the Cold War, has found itself teetering on the edge of irrelevance. Decades of milking Western military aid to counter India under the guise of crisis diplomacy worked only until China’s rise. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), touted as a “game-changer,” has left Pakistan with mounting debts and dwindling autonomy. Over 72% of Pakistan’s external debt is owed to China, rendering it a vassal state to Beijing’s expansionist ambitions.

Unsurprisingly, Pakistan is now desperate to curry favour with the US once again. In a telling display of loyalty, US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu remarked in July 2024, “China is the past investment; we (the US) are the future.” True to its character, Pakistan offered no clarification, leaving Beijing to stew in its humiliation. This is the same Pakistan that stayed silent during Nancy Pelosi’s provocative visit to Taiwan in 2022 and leaked sensitive memos in 2023

advising PM Shehbaz Sharif to avoid appeasing the West.

Pakistan's Lust for the West is rooted in history and economic logic:

1. It was a loyal member of US-led anti-Communist alliances like SEATO and CENTO.
2. It enjoys a trade surplus of \$5.4 billion with the US while suffering a \$15 billion deficit with China.
3. The English-speaking middle class, raised in Western media, identifies more with the US culturally than with China.
4. Pakistan's population is increasingly wary of China's expansionist tendencies and exploitation of its resources.



Pakistan Army personnel with a VT-4 tank in the background. | Credit- OSINT

Pakistan's duplicity reached new heights in August 2023 when it revived a Communications Interoperability and Security Memo of Agreement (CIS-MOA) with the US, effectively opening doors for American military hardware. Pakistan also embarrassed China by reducing orders for Chinese military equipment, including the VT-4 tanks and SH-15 artillery guns, right after the CIS-MOA agreement. Even more damning, Pakistan hosted US officials at Gwadar Port in September 2023, a move that could result in the strategic port being handed to the US—an act of treachery for a country that owes its survival to Chinese investments.

Chinese Frustration and Growing Assertiveness

China, on the other hand, finds itself in a lose-lose situation. Increasing attacks on CPEC projects, like the March 2024 assault on a Chinese convoy at Besham, have pushed Beijing to consider deploying its security forces in Pakistan—a move that would strip the Pakistani Army of its “macho” image. Resentment against the Chinese presence is palpable among Pakistan's elites, with even Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz openly criticizing Chinese security protocols.

True to its duplicitous nature, Pakistan has now launched “Operation Azam-e-Istehkam,” a repackaged counter-terrorism operation aimed at placating China. The ulterior motive, however, is clear: keep the internal security situation volatile to extract financial aid from both China and the US, all while hoping to rebuild its military to match India's growing might.

The Joke's on China

While Pakistan continues to juggle its loyalties, Beijing is left to wonder why its billions have failed to buy gratitude. The so-called “Iron Brother” has turned into a rusted liability, and as Pakistan places its eggs back in the US basket, it's evident that China's dream of a compliant ally is nothing more than a pipe dream.

In the end, Pakistan's double-dealing may win it temporary rewards, but its long-term trajectory remains that of a parasitic state, surviving by selling out its sovereignty to the highest bidder. If China thought it could tame Pakistan, it was sorely mistaken.

Nepal blocking China's Panchen Lama visit is rare resistance. It's not enough

13 December 2024, [The Print](#), Rishi Gupta

Beijing has been pushing to introduce a Chinese version of Buddhism in Nepal, the same way it is reshaping Tibetan identity through State-controlled narratives.



Representative Image | Thousands of Buddhists, monks celebrate Gautam Buddha's 2568th birth anniversary in Lumbini | ANI

In a rare display of unified resistance, Nepal's government agencies have reportedly united to block the China-appointed Panchen Lama, Gyaincain Norbu's entry. Widely seen as Beijing's puppet to undermine Tibetan spiritual traditions, this move could mark China's most significant diplomatic setbacks in influencing the Tibetan diaspora. How did Nepal pull off this act, and why is it so crucial for China to send Norbu in the first place?

Reports of the controversial Panchen Lama, handpicked by the Communist Party of China to become the so-called spiritual successor of the 14th Dalai Lama living in exile in India, was expected to visit Nepal to attend the ongoing Nanhai Buddhism Roundtable in Lumbini. It's the birthplace of Lord Buddha—located closer to the Nepal-India border. Because of the sensitivities involved, including that of India, Nepal has reportedly conveyed to the Chinese Embassy that the Panchen Lama would not be welcomed due to “Nepal's neutrality on religious matters”—reported the *Kathmandu Post*.

Norbu was reportedly expected to travel from China's Chengdu city to Lumbini on a chartered flight, alerting

the country's security establishment. Nepalese agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, and the Lumbini Development Trust, have reportedly disclosed details of the Panchen Lama's visit to the media. This act highlights China's enduring effort to promote a Sinicised version of Tibetan Buddhism and supplant the 14th Dalai Lama.

Crucial timing

Beijing's attempt to send Norbu to Nepal comes in the backdrop of Prime Minister KP Oli's recently concluded four-day visit to China, where he signed a Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Framework Agreement. The latter has been in storage since it was first signed in May 2017 due to its controversial financial modality, which remains a State secret. Although the two sides are reported to have mutually agreed to an "aid financing modality" for BRI projects, the devil lies in the details hidden from the public view. With Nepal wanting 100 per cent aid from China for the BRI projects and China giving no freebies to anyone as high-interest loans enable it to manage greater influence, the future of BRI is uncertain in Nepal.

However, during this trip, Nepal reiterated, "Xizang [Tibetan] affairs are internal affairs of China and that it will never allow any separatist activities against China on Nepal's soil." This was the first time that China referred to Tibet as Xizang, indicating a Communist quest to wipe out Tibet's socio-cultural, traditional and territorial identity. While Nepal has acknowledged "China as the sole authority in Tibet" since the foundation of bilateral ties in 1955, Kathmandu has largely avoided Beijing's attempts to export its version of Tibetan Buddhism.

Dalai Lama's Legacy

Why would China seek to introduce its Panchen Lama in Nepal? Simply to gain external validation for its agenda to reshape Tibetan Buddhism under Chinese influence. By presenting the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama on an international platform, Beijing aims to legitimise his authority, despite rejection by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan administration-in-exile.

This strategy not only seeks to undermine the standing of the Dalai Lama and the traditional Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy but also to tackle global support for the exiled Tibetan community and leadership. Additionally, it serves to tighten control over the Tibetan diaspora, curbing their cultural and spiritual ties to the Dalai Lama's lineage.

With Tibet at the heart of China's Nepal policy, Beijing has been trying to break the unity and support for the 'Free Tibet' movement among Tibetans in Nepal. Such movements have more than often triggered instability in Tibet, posing a security challenge to the PLA. For example, the seeds of the 2008 Tibetan Uprising in Lhasa found a strong echo in Nepal, where Tibetan

refugees stood up against the Chinese brutalities in Tibet. Even the most powerful resistance movements, such as the CIA-backed Khampa Rebellion were planned and executed from the Nepal border with Tibet in the late 1960s. Since then, China has pressured Nepal to curtail the freedom of Tibetan exiles, but international support and human rights organisations have managed to defy this pressure, standing in solidarity with the Tibetan cause.

Since Nepal became a democracy in 2008, Communist China has tried to build ideological and political ties with the country's Left forces, including PM Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist). The Left-led governments of Nepal have been pushed by China to go after Tibetan refugees. During the tenure of former PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda, heavy forces were deployed against Tibetans who were protesting against China. Prachanda had drawn global criticism for his actions.

Chinese Buddhism in Nepal

Beijing has been pushing to introduce a Chinese version of Buddhism in Nepal, the same way it is reshaping Tibetan identity through State-controlled narratives. In Tibet, this strategy includes so-called "training camps" aimed at instilling "work discipline, Chinese language, and work ethics" among Tibetan youth as part of a broader agenda to undermine their cultural and spiritual heritage. International human rights organisations have raised concerns over these systematic efforts, including the renaming of Tibet as Xizang. By promoting its controversial, State-appointed Panchen Lama in Nepal, Beijing aims to legitimise this version of Buddhism and extend its influence beyond Tibet's borders.

In any case, China misses no opportunity to take a potshot at the Dalai Lama. In 2017, the Dalai Lama's alleged statement that Buddha was born in India caused political havoc in Nepal, and Beijing added fuel to the fire. Many nationalist Buddhists in Nepal were reported to have removed the Dalai Lama's portraits from their houses.

The controversy subsided with the statement, but China is eagerly waiting for such incidents. And not to forget, Beijing hopes that someday Nepal will sign an Extradition Treaty with China, which could not materialise during President Xi Jinping's Nepal visit in 2019. If signed, it will jeopardise the future of several thousand Tibetan refugees living in Nepal, especially the ones who arrived after 1990 and still don't have refugee cards.

While the government of Nepal may have refused entry to the Panchen Lama this time—potentially influenced by coalition partners like the Nepali Congress—this decision is far from a permanent safeguard. Should leaders like Oli return to power with a strong majority, the likelihood of China exerting its influence to advance its agenda in Nepal would

dramatically increase, paving the way for deeper cultural and political incursions. The risk of Nepal becoming a staging ground for Beijing's Sinicisation efforts remains alarmingly real.

Interview: Gerald Roche on the Erasure of Tibet's Minority Languages

12 December 2024, [China Digital Times](#), Sophie Beach

As the Chinese Communist Party has intensified its policy of assimilation for cultural and ethnic minority groups in recent decades, language has been a key part of that effort. Standard Tibetan is recognized as the official language of the Tibetans, who live throughout the Tibet Autonomous Region as well as in Tibetan areas in current Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces. Yet [government practice has made it increasingly difficult for Tibetans to live, work, and study in their own language](#); Mandarin is now the primary language of instruction in many schools, official communications and education have been Sinicized, and hundreds of thousands of Tibetan children are forced to attend boarding schools where they are cut off from their families, cultures, communities, and language. (Read more about the impact of the boarding schools in [our interview with activist Lhadon Tethong](#).) Activist Tashi Wangchuk [has been repeatedly detained](#) for his efforts to advocate for the protection of the Tibetan language.

But within the Tibetan population exist smaller communities who speak their own languages, which are not widely understood or acknowledged by the Chinese government, the Han Chinese population, global scholars, or even by many fellow Tibetans. These languages are facing extinction as they are forced to assimilate both to Tibetan and to Chinese. According to researcher Gerald Roche, "The Chinese state policy about those languages is essentially that they don't exist." As a result, speakers of these languages receive neither the respect from society nor the resources needed to continue using and teaching their languages to younger generations.

[Roche](#) is an anthropologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Politics, Media, and Philosophy at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. His work focuses on issues of power, the state, colonialism, and race in Asia, particularly the transnational Himalayan region. Much of his research explores how these issues manifest in the language politics of this linguistically diverse area, through state-sponsored language oppression and the social movements and community practices which seek to resist it. He lived in Qinghai for several years in the 2010s, working as an anthropologist and studying the communities who speak Manegacha and other minority languages. His new book, [The Politics of Language Oppression in](#)

[Tibet](#), examines the ways these languages are being erased amid forced assimilation. In the latest installment in [our interview series focusing on Tibet](#), we spoke to Roche about the Tibetan communities that speak minority languages and the threats their languages face. This interview has been lightly edited for clarity and length.

China Digital Times: When most people think about language in Tibet, they generally think about the standard Tibetan language, but as you've researched and written about, there are, I believe, about 30 languages spoken in the Tibetan region. Today, how many people living in Tibet still speak those minority languages?

Gerald Roche: As a disclaimer, a lot of the statistical estimates that I'm giving, they're just estimates, because the Chinese state is committed to denying the existence of these languages and is also committed to denying the people who speak these languages the kind of basic political rights that would enable them to exert their own existence in public forums. So all of the numbers that I'm going to give you are just best guesses, and I think that they're reasonable guesses, but they're not watertight demographic statistics. So the best guess that I have is that around a quarter of a million Tibetans speak these minority languages. That's around four percent of the Tibetan population. As to the number of languages themselves, there are at least two sources of complexity and confusion. One source is that academic research on these languages is still ongoing. A lot of the languages are still being described by linguists, and that's in part because the Chinese state doesn't encourage research on these languages and also because some of the regions where these languages are spoken are closed to outsiders, not just foreigners, but also they are sometimes restricted to Han Chinese people. So, for example, there have been a number of languages described in the last five years that are spoken in some villages around the city of Chamdo in the eastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and it's very difficult for outsiders to access those areas, and it's very difficult for people from those areas to access research institutions. So it's hard for these languages to be put on record for those reasons.

The second footnote on that number of 30 is that counting languages is not like measuring temperature with a thermometer or looking for radiation with a Geiger counter. It's not a scientific endeavor. It's a social and political endeavor, and the answers that you get when you count languages will depend on aspects such as local culture, but also the extent to which those people are politically empowered to engage in public processes around the production of knowledge. Tibetan understandings of what constitutes a language are different from your understanding or my understanding, and the Chinese state also completely

excludes the people who speak those languages from any political processes that would give them a voice in making that decision. The literature is the best thing that we have to go off because of that, and the literature suggests that there's about 30 of these minority languages which are spoken by Tibetans, and if you add up all the numbers that exist in the different literature about how many people speak those languages, a quarter of a million people, four percent of Tibetans. But we don't know for sure.

CDT: Linguistically, how do these languages relate to standard Tibetan?

Roche: They are very different. That's why I separate them off from the Tibetan language. To give a parallel, we can think of the European case. You have a group of languages in Europe, like French, Castilian or Spanish, Catalan, Italian, et cetera, which all have a historical relationship to Latin, and so they form a language family of connected languages called the Romance languages. But we recognize that those are separate and distinct languages. There is a similar situation in Tibet, where you have the Tibetic languages, which all have a historical relationship with the written Tibetan language, and on the level of intelligibility, so whether people can understand each other in conversation or not, those different Tibetic languages are different. They're distinct languages in the same way that French is not Spanish. And that doesn't include the minority languages. There is another distinct group of languages which have absolutely no historical relationship with the written Tibetan language. So if we go back to the case that I introduced before in Europe, those Romance languages and their connection to Latin, you have languages in the region which don't have any connection. Basque is the perfect example. Basque is not just a different language; it exists in a different language family and it's completely distinct from those Romance languages. The minority languages' relationship to Tibetan is more like that. These languages are in a couple of different language families. And as a non-linguist, I'm less interested in that. What is important is that these languages are recognized by Tibetans themselves as being extremely distinct from other Tibetan languages, so that linguistic difference, that historical difference, maps onto local understandings, and it also maps onto the understandings of the Chinese state policy as well. The Chinese state policy about those languages is essentially that they don't exist.

CDT: You focus your research primarily on one of the languages, Manegacha, which you write is spoken by about 8,000 people currently. Where in the Tibetan region do they live primarily?

Roche: Just a point of clarification: Manegacha is spoken by 8,000 Tibetan people. There's actually another group of people who speak the same

language, a couple of hundred kilometres away in Gansu province, but they are a different minority group. They are called the *Bao'anzu* and there's no connection between the two populations. Even though they share the same language, they have completely different identities. The *Bao'anzu* in Gansu province are Muslims. And the Manegacha speakers in Qinghai province consider themselves Tibetan and are Buddhists. So it's the same language but different populations. The 8,000 [Tibetan] Manegacha speakers live in about four villages on the northeast Tibetan plateau. It traditionally was known as the Tibetan region Amdo, which covers the northern part of the Tibetan plateau, and it's a specific cultural region within Amdo, known as Rebgong, which is basically a valley and its hinterland on the northeast Tibetan plateau in today's Qinghai province. So you have this long, wide, beautiful river valley running through the mountains of the Tibetan plateau and villages scattered along the river and up in the hills. The Manegacha-speaking villages are four villages spread along the river from north to south, and the majority of other people in the region are all Tibetans that speak a more standard form of Tibetan.

CDT: How much has the population of Manegacha speakers declined? What was it when it was at its peak?

Roche: This is tricky because we don't have any of these statistics, but I would say that 8,000 is probably the peak, because you have this complicated situation where historically, the population of Manegacha speakers has increased as living conditions have improved. But at the same time, the transmission of the language across generations has decreased. So even though objectively, there's a higher number of speakers, the language is not being passed down at the same rate that it used to be. It used to be that there were only a couple of thousand speakers, but all of them passed the language on. So the population was sustainable. Now you have 8,000 speakers, which is probably more than in the past, but about a third of the families that speak Manegacha are not passing it onto their children. That means that even if the population keeps increasing, the number of speakers is going to decline from now on.

CDT: So you expect a rapid decline in speakers in the coming generations?

Roche: Yeah. I expect the decline will be really rapid because the pressures on the language have been mounting over the last 75 years. Since the area was incorporated into the People's Republic of China, there's been assimilatory pressures. Those pressures really intensified in the 21st century. When you had the Develop the West program, big infrastructural development, big investment in institution building in Tibet and other parts of what is today western China—those are the things that are really starting to drive

people away from the Manegacha language and towards Tibetan. And then you have these collective decision-making processes. Of those four villages, in one of the villages, the entire population has decided to stop using the language at home. So with the collective, communal decision, there's a few families who [say] "No, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to keep teaching [our children] Manegacha." But the majority of families in that village decided collectively to do that. And so if another village does that, and another village does that, that decision only has to happen four times and then there are no Tibetans that speak Manegacha.

CDT: Do you know about efforts that people are making to try to change that, to try to preserve it for the future generations, and how are they doing that?

Roche: I did surveys of Manegacha-speaking households, asking their views on the language and views on Chinese and Tibetan languages, and the different related issues. And the response was always that they want to keep the Manegacha language, that they value it. However, those decisions that they are making are working against those interests to maintain the language. And that's because of how local understanding of language works. People locally think if they don't speak Manegacha to the kids, the kids are still going to learn it because it's their language. They'll just figure it out and pick it up. And this just doesn't happen. We know from those survey responses, people want their children to have the language, and they want the language to survive. We can see that from other actions that they engage in. In the villages where Manegacha is spoken, everyone is bilingual or trilingual. They know Manegacha, Tibetan, and Mandarin. But when two Manegacha speakers meet, they still speak in their language. They don't speak in Tibetan. If Manegacha speakers wanted to, they could just stop speaking the language entirely tomorrow. But they don't do that, and that's an active choice. It's important to recognize that, because there are these huge pressures that are coercing Manegacha speakers into giving up the language and to stop using it. In some sense, just to use the language, even in private, is an act of resistance against those assimilatory pressures. People also do things like push the language into new areas of life when they have the opportunity. When I was there, smartphones and social media started to spread. When I was living in Qinghai, I saw this happen over the course of years, and when it happened, people started making memes in Manegacha recording fun, little dialogues, doing movies and stuff. That's indicative of people's desire to put the language into these new situations. Normally, for other languages, they would be supported by the state policies to do that, because the languages would be taught in school, there would be money to fund the media, to develop publications, and things like that.

But Manegacha speakers just have to do it on their own. Despite the fact that this comes at the cost to them, they do it themselves anyway. So those are some of the things that Manegacha speakers do today.

CDT: In addition to these pressures that you're talking about, you also say that the Manegacha speakers face more explicit discrimination, specifically they face what you call "banal violence." Could you explain what you mean by that and what you saw when you were there?

Roche: Banal in one sense just means everyday, like taken for granted and accepted, and this was very much the nature of the violence against Manegacha speakers. I did interviews with Manegacha speakers about the discrimination that they face, and I also worked with a research assistant who went and spoke to Tibetan speakers about the discrimination that they enact against Manegacha speakers. And I thought those second interviews would be kind of difficult, and people would not want to say very much about it, but local Tibetans were just like, "yeah, this is what we do. We think that they are not really Tibetan. We think that they need to use Tibetan better. We think that they are maybe traitors to the Tibetan cause," and so on. So people were just very unashamed of the way in which they discriminate against Manegacha speakers. So if you're a Manegacha speaker in Rebgong, the main problem that you face in relation to language is that everyday discrimination from other Tibetans. Other Tibetans will dehumanize Manegacha speakers—they will compare them to animals or say that they are not really human in the same way as Tibetan speakers. They will describe Manegacha [language] by comparing it to animal noises, so that they will call it bird talk or compare it to the sound of frying beans—it's not really language. It's just noise. And then you have another form of discrimination called disparagement humor. You can think of, for example, sexist or racist jokes. We also have these kind of jokes about languages in the context of Rebgong. We know from other studies that these jokes are never harmless, that they do incite people to further violence, to entrench their negative views further and to normalize discrimination against those populations. That happens all the time for Manegacha speakers; people make jokes about them, make jokes about their language. It's just a constant thing that they face. There's also a label in the local language that Tibetans use to refer to Manegacha speakers. I had to think long and hard about whether to include this term in the book, because it's kind of normalized in local life. People use it every day, including Manegacha speakers, but I think if you sit down and think about it and compare it to other situations, it's correct to refer to that term as a slur, because what that slur does is that it triggers a bunch of negative associations about those people. The word itself doesn't mean anything.

It's more about the negative associations that it contains. And so when people use that slur, it triggers all those negative connotations that they're not really human, their language is just noise, that they are funny, that they should assimilate, and things like this. So all of those things I'm talking about, I would consider violence because they aim to subordinate a particular population. But there are also examples of what people will more classically consider violence—of insults, of hate speech, and of physical violence of people getting into fist fights over language issues. So there is that sort of real violence as well. In the lives of Manegacha speakers, their exposure to that violence correlates with their exposure to Tibetan-speaking Tibetans. Whenever they are around other Tibetans, they're subjected to this violence—jokes, slurs, insults, etc—and so this comes back to this label I use of banal violence.

Banal has a second meaning, beyond everyday, which goes back to the Latin etymology and the origin of the term in Roman law, where banality is tied up with words like “abandonment” and “bandits” and so on. And banal was something that existed outside of the law, something that existed outside the protection of the state. To be banished was to be pushed outside the state's protection. And the violence against Manegacha is banal in that second sense in that the Chinese state lets it happen all the time. We know that the Chinese state can be highly punitive when it wants to. For example, it can crack down on Tibetans who have a picture of the Dalai Lama in their home. It can be very invasive, very punitive, very controlling when it wants to. And when the Chinese state chooses not to be punitive and controlling, I think we have to assume that that has some kind of significance. That you have this situation where a specific population is just subject to this constant, everyday discrimination by someone else, and the state just says, “That's fine. We are happy to let that continue.” I would make the same argument about a lot of racist violence in Western countries that the state just steps back and is basically like, “well this looks too difficult. We can't really define whether this is technically and legally discrimination or not. So we're just going to let it happen” and maybe express some regret. But they do not legally enforce their own rules relating to particular populations. So the violence against Manegacha speakers is banal in that second sense. And I think that this is one of the most challenging and confronting aspects of the book, because essentially what I'm arguing is that there is violence between Tibetans that is structured and allowed to continue by the Chinese state. So we have to look at the way that the Chinese state implements its policies against Tibetans through other Tibetans.

CDT: Do Manegacha speakers face this kind of discrimination from the Han population or from other

populations? Or are they just viewed as Tibetan by the Han, so they're not differentiated from other Tibetan groups?

Roche: Yeah, they tend to just be viewed as Tibetans. So for Manegacha speakers, their encounters with Han Chinese people are fairly limited. In Rebgong, there is a local Han Chinese population and there are Hui, Muslim Chinese people, in the local area. And Manegachas interact with them and in those contexts, they are just viewed like other Tibetans. There's no specific discrimination that comes to them from that. The main contact that Manegacha speakers have with Han Chinese comes in two situations. One is when people migrate to large Han Chinese cities to go to university, because there are no universities in Tibetan areas, except for Lhasa. So if you're a Tibetan in Qinghai, for example, and you want to go to university, you have to go to Xining, which is a Han-dominated city. It's like that for a lot of Tibetans, that's their first exposure to a Han majority environment when they go to university. I spoke to Manegacha speakers about this, they were just like, “yeah, when I go there, I'm just Tibetan, and they just consider me another Tibetan and they discriminate against me on that basis.” But that's it, it's nothing to do specifically with being a Manegacha speaker. The other situation when Manegacha speakers might meet Han Chinese is when they do migrant labor. They go to other places to do work; Manegacha speakers have a preference for doing migrant labor in other Tibetan towns and cities. So it's kind of rarer for them to go to spend long times in Han Chinese cities. But when they do, they face discrimination as a Tibetan, not as a Manegacha speaker.

CDT: Can you explain how standard Tibetan became the language that's acknowledged by the Chinese government and most widely spoken in the Tibetan areas, and the process that that took?

Roche: It's kind of like a covert and ad hoc process. There's never been a real explicit policy to advance this, and there are even some on-the-ground practices that work against standard Tibetan language, so it's pretty messy. But one thing that the Chinese government has done consistently since invading Tibet is to promote the written Tibetan language a bit. Not much, but a bit. So the Chinese state promotes the written Tibetan language enough that they can show that they're doing something, enough that they can demonstrate to external observers: “Look, we respect minority rights. We put Tibetan on the sign. We let them learn Tibetan in **one** school. We have a publishing house for Tibetans.” The Chinese state has always done this kind of limited support of the written Tibetan language to wow external stakeholders, but also as a way of getting legitimacy amongst Tibetan people. The Chinese state is concerned about perceptions of legitimacy among

Tibetan people, and the two main ways that it has tried to get that legitimacy is through economic development—improving people’s standards of living and cash incomes. And secondly, by having a shallow, superficial program of cultural preservation, which includes language and performing arts, but essentially not very much else. And so through those two things, it attempts to gain legitimacy for the Party-state rule in Tibet. The language is an important element of that. So that’s led to this ad hoc emergence of a standard form of Tibetan across Tibet in the written language. When it comes to the spoken language, on some level, the Chinese state recognizes that Tibetans can’t understand each other when they speak to one another. But the Chinese state wants to use spoken Tibetan for propaganda purposes [and] Tibetan is technically only one language for the Chinese government. So what it does is it says that there are dialects, and we use the dialects in broadcast media. So for example, there is an Amdo Tibetan TV, which uses a kind of standardized form of Tibetan that’s spoken in the north. There is Kham Tibetan TV, which uses a form of standardized Tibetan, which is spoken in the east and southeast. And then there’s another one for Central Tibetan spoken around Lhasa. So there’s this tension in the state’s own aims and goals. The root of the standardization practice for Tibetan is the Chinese ethnic classification project. The Chinese state formally recognizes 56 ethnic groups or nationalities in China, including the Han Chinese and 55 minorities. The theory behind that is that each of those ethnic groups only speaks one language. That’s the assumption. And I think nowhere is that empirically true. It’s not true for the Han, for Tibetans, for the Yi, or for Mongolians. There might be some smaller *minzu* [ethnic groups] that only have one language, but they would be the exception rather than the rule. The Chinese government set the system up like that deliberately so that there would be a gap between linguistic diversity and ethnic diversity, and that that gap is a policy that’s designed to assimilate languages. So you take all of those 300 languages and you give a constitutional freedom for each minority to use one language. And you outsource the assimilation to the minority groups. And then once you’ve gotten rid of most of those 300 languages, you have 55 minorities each with one language, and a Han majority with one language, and then you assimilate the minorities into the Han majority. This was the plan that was laid out back when China was a Marxist-Leninist state, which it absolutely no longer is. Because those structures, those categories, and those processes are still in place, we see linguistic minorities assimilating to a dominant language of ethnic minorities. And that’s what’s happening with Manegacha speakers and other Tibetans that speak minority languages. Not all

of them, some of them are assimilating to Chinese, but some of them are assimilating towards Tibetan.

CDT: You described the protests that erupted across Tibetan regions in 2008 as a kind of a turning point for awareness of many Tibetan people’s sense of identity and nationality. Can you describe that and how that’s impacted the potential survival of languages like Manegacha?

Roche: The 2008 protests were the first Tibetan protests against Chinese rule which transcended locality. There had been lots of isolated protests before, but they were typically in one place and they didn’t spread to other locations. But in 2008, the protests started in Lhasa and then they spread all across the Tibetan plateau, so there were also protests in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and less so in Yunnan—throughout the Tibet Autonomous Region and including Tibetans living in Beijing. So you had these very widespread ongoing protests among Tibetans explicitly against Chinese rule. It was a very significant event in those terms, and for many Tibetans, it was a kind of profound awakening to their own political situation. Many Tibetans began viewing themselves through the lens of a shared Tibetan identity for the first time. Tibetans have these very strong regional attachments to the valley that they grew up in, the village that they grew up in, the province that they grew up in. And there has always been a sense of Tibetanness, in the background of those things because it’s printed on your ID card and you’re reminded of your *minzu* every day. But those 2008 protests, from the evidence we see in Tibetan essays, poetry, pop music, from the evidence I saw in everyday conversations while I was living in Qinghai through this stuff, is suddenly that Tibetan identity becomes the most important identity for people in a way that it hadn’t been before.

An important part of that Tibetan identity that emerged from those protests, or that consolidated through those protests, was the role of Tibetan language in Tibetan identity—this idea that to be Tibetan means to speak Tibetan, to know Tibetan, to use Tibetan. And in particular, in the years following the 2008 protests, this idea emerged that Tibetan should be of a particular form and it should be pure Tibetan. This was the way that it was phrased by Tibetan activists and everyday people. Pure Tibetan in this context means Tibetan that doesn’t use any loan words from Chinese. Tibetan, like every language, is full of words from other languages. Tibetan is full of loan words from dozens of languages, but it has been extremely heavily influenced by Mandarin and other local Sinitic languages over the past 50 years. People started expressing this concern that if Tibetan language is the core of Tibetan identity, but Tibetan language is mixed with Chinese, then maybe our identity is also mixed with Chinese. And we need to

defend that boundary. We need to defend our Tibetanness by defending the Tibetan language. So at that time, you saw this spread of pure Tibetan language associations in the villages, in schools, in universities, online through social media, where people were encouraging each other to speak pure Tibetan and to stop using Chinese loan words when they spoke Tibetan. So they would do things like print dictionaries to make sure that people knew the correct Tibetan words for it. They would hold spelling competitions. It would enter into people's lives in contexts like restaurants and taxis where you would get a discount if you spoke pure Tibetan, and you would get charged double the price if you spoke in mixed Tibetan. So it became this really pervasive aspect of Tibetan everyday life, I would say from the year 2008, maybe almost for the next decade, but not quite.

Languages like Manegacha got caught up in this dynamic, because in local understandings of language, Manegacha and other Tibetan minority languages were seen as mixed languages. The idea was that they had once been pure Tibetan, but they had now become mixed with Chinese to the extent that they were no longer recognizable as any kind of Tibetan language any more. And this is based partly on the truth and partly on a fallacy. The true part of it is that like Manegacha, for example, has been influenced by Tibetan and it has lots of Tibetan loan words in it. So the name of the language, Manegacha, "Mane" is a Mongolic word from an old Mongolian language. "Gacha" is local Tibetan for language. Manegacha means "our language," but it includes elements of two different languages. People who speak minority languages use a lot of Tibetan loan words, because they're constantly in contact with Tibetan people, speaking Tibetan, and they practice Tibetan culture and follow Buddhism and so on. During this historical moment, Tibetans would hear those loan words and take that as evidence that these languages used to be Tibetan. So they would say, "you need to speak pure Tibetan," and what that essentially means is those people need to assimilate to speaking Tibetan and stop speaking their languages. Tibetans were putting pressure on these people to speak Tibetan and seeing it as a kind of a defense of Tibetan national unity, rather than a project of assimilation. However, from the perspective of Manegacha speakers and other Tibetans that speak minority languages, it was a project of assimilation. They were essentially being told, "don't speak your language, speak our language, your language is bad, our language is good." There has always been some element of hierarchy between Tibetan speakers and minority language speakers. There's always been some mild pressure to assimilate. But after 2008, that just really intensified because Tibetan identity was coming under this new threat.

The Chinese state just reacted with an extremely overwhelming disproportionate response to those 2008 protests—mass arrests, mass incarceration, torture, martial law, checkpoints, the securitization of everyday life, and so on. So Tibetans felt and were under threat, and one of the ways that they responded to this was trying to build national unity by assimilating their linguistic minorities. So it's this really tragic dynamic that emerges from Chinese colonialism in Tibet.

CDT: You describe a similar situation globally when international organizations and advocacy groups that work on Tibet are discussing language in Tibet, they really only focus on the survival of that standard Tibetan language. Are there any groups or individuals, researchers (besides you, of course) who are raising issues related to minority languages?

Roche: I think it's starting to change a little bit, but the recognition of diversity is still not the majority opinion amongst academics who study Tibet or advocates who work for Tibet. Most of the academics that acknowledge this linguistic diversity are linguists who are interested in this specific language and that specific language. They are less interested in putting those languages in their social and cultural context. When it comes to academic studies of Tibetan, [they] tend to overlook the linguistics literature, so they don't acknowledge that diversity. It tends to be based on competence in the written Tibetan language, so people who formally train as Tibetologists, that training essentially is learning to read Tibetan and reading lots of Tibetan texts. You don't have to necessarily interact with Tibetan people to be an academic Tibetologist. And that's why there was this lack of awareness regarding Tibetan linguistic diversity. But beyond that lack of awareness, I would say that there is also a limited acceptance, or a refusal to accept, that linguistic diversity exists, both by Tibetan studies academics and the international Tibet movement. So the international Tibet movement is essentially promoting Tibet nationalism, which is the ideology that the Tibetan people have a territory, they have a language, they have a national identity, and they were invaded by the Chinese. A lot of Tibetan international organizations that are essentially advocating for Tibetan nationalism, the existence of linguistic minorities counters that narrative, so that acknowledgment threatens their core business, if you like.

Nonetheless, there has been some increasing acknowledgment. For example, I worked with Free Tibet, which is a UK-based organization, and they have [updated their website text](#) to acknowledge linguistic diversity in Tibet. I was recently [invited by the International Campaign for Tibet to provide a talk](#) about my research and about the unique challenges faced by Tibet's minority languages, so they

at least don't view the concept with hostility. They are not totally rejecting the idea. But I think the future survival of these languages depends on something more than acknowledgment that these languages exist. There has to be organized activism and advocacy that explicitly aims to confront the unique forms of oppression that those languages face, because it's different from other Tibetans. It's simply a different form of oppression, and it needs unique strategies and, I would say, distinct funding and things like this. It's great to see broader acknowledgement, but that acknowledgement is not going to mean anything until it's backed up with tactics, strategy, and funding.

CDT: You lived in Qinghai for several years. And then you were not allowed to stay—forced might be too strong, but you had to leave China. When's the last time you were in the Tibetan regions?

Roche: When I say Tibet I'm talking about all Tibetan areas, not just the Tibet Autonomous Region, because that's how Tibetans view Tibet as well. I lived in Qinghai and worked with Tibetans from 2005 to 2013. I couldn't stay there because of [new regulations that were brought in placing restrictions on international NGOs](#) and international civil society organizations, essentially. It just became impossible for me to get a visa and a salary. So I couldn't live there anymore. For the next five years, I was able to return there intermittently, but then my really critical publications that critique Chinese state policy in Tibet started coming out around 2014, ten years ago now. The last time I was able to go back to Rebgong was 2017. The last time I was back in China was 2018, so I was in Chengdu, where there's a big Tibetan population where I was hanging out and seeing people. When I tried to go back in 2019, my visa was not denied, but just delayed continuously to the point where it no longer became meaningful to continue applying. I knew from my time in China that this was going to happen eventually if I published on these things. I knew how it was going to happen because I'd seen other examples. It's very rare for them to explicitly ban anyone. They have done it but it creates bad publicity. So normally they just create friction where it's harder for you to go. And I knew about this because this is exactly the same tactic that they use to prevent Tibetans from leaving China. When Tibetans are trying to apply for a passport, they'll just send people back to the office over and over again, fill out new forms, new regulations, pay new fees, get new documents, over and over again, and people just give up because it's too expensive and it takes too much time.

So I can't go back to China anymore. I'm not surprised by that at all. It's disappointing for me to be cut off from a place that I lived for so long, where I had connections with people that I care about. I would like to be able to go back for personal reasons related to that. I would like to be able to go back for academic

reasons as well because the kind of research that I think is valuable can only be done on the ground in specific places by talking to people. The way that the Chinese state gets away with what it does is it's very good at covering up stuff and and you can find lots of evidence in Tibetan language news reports from the Chinese state and so on, but you will never see them writing about Manegacha. You'll never see them talking about these languages in Chinese propaganda in Tibetan. So for that on-the-ground perspective, to be able to see what the Chinese state covers up, you have to be in China. So I just have kind of given up on my research on Tibet, because I just don't think that I can make a meaningful contribution to it anymore. I can access the same documents that everyone outside China can, but I think the real work has to be done from on the ground with people.

CDT: So what are you working on now? How have you shifted your focus?

Roche: I've shifted focus in a couple of different ways. I've shifted to look more regionally and comparatively. I've started doing a couple of comparative studies, looking at the relationship between human rights and language politics. In one study published [in a journal called State Crime Journal](#), I worked with some coauthors, and we compared China, India, and Indonesia, looking at how the human rights record in each country impacts the space for language activism within those countries. It's currently the United Nations decade of Indigenous languages, and the United Nations is saying everyone should do indigenous language activism on a human rights basis, and in China, you cannot do that. In India, the human rights situation has been declining very rapidly under Modi. If you just look at the political systems, you have democracy and authoritarianism—it would seem that there would be vast differences. If you look at the human rights records, China and India are rapidly converging. So I think it's important to be aware of those developments. And China is a good base comparison for understanding what a terrible human rights situation looks like. So I've been working comparatively on that basis a bit. The other thing I've been doing is just looking practically at issues of language rights advocacy and activism. I think that there's a lot of work to be done there academically just to think about what are the theories that we need to support communities in places like China to retain their language? How can we advocate from outside? But practically there's also lots of work to be done. I've been involved with different organizations. I've worked for two years with an organization called the [Global Coalition for Language Rights](#), which I think does great work building a community of language rights activists around the world and bringing them together. More recently, I've been involved with efforts to set up a registered non-profit organization in

the United States called the Linguistic Justice Foundation, trying to create a permanent, financially sustainable base from which to organize for language rights. I'm interested in continuing that work to look practically at these issues because I think it's nice to have theories, but I think it's more important to have suggestions for practical things that we can do to make a difference in a world which is very often unjust.

Tibetans Coming To India Reduced To A Trickle – OpEd
12 December 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Subir Bhaumik

The annual flow of ethnic Tibetans entering India has dropped sharply due to strong border controls by the Chinese and stiff surveillance in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) bolstered by modern technology.

Experts say this may even have an adverse bearing on the future of the Tibetan government-in-exile based in Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh.

Only 15 Tibetans arrived in Dharamsala in 2023 and exile government officials say the number would be around the same this year.

Central Tibetan Administration

(CTA) officials say the arrival of Tibetans has dropped sharply since 2008. According to CTA officials, in 2021, only four Tibetans arrived in Dharamsala while five had arrived a year ago. The numbers went up slightly with 10 arrivals in 2022 and 15 in 2023.

In the 1980-90s, between 2,500 to 3,500 Tibetans used to cross into India via Nepal. But that changed after 2008, the year Beijing hosted the Olympic Games and Tibet erupted in furious protests as angry citizens sought to draw international attention to 'Chinese repression'.

Chinese authorities suspected that the protests in TAR during the 2008 Beijing Olympics were inspired by some Tibetans who returned from India and were close to the exile government.

The Chinese border guards heavily tightened the Tibet-Nepal borders and started paying Nepalese border guards to stop Tibetans escaping Tibet. Since 2010, the number of Tibetans escaping Tibet drastically fell from 3,500 a year before the uprising to just 20 to 30," says Tibetan writer-activist Tenzim Tsundue, who has been frequently arrested in India for anti-China activism that Delhi seeks to curb. He says since the Maoist government took charge in Nepal, it has become very difficult for Tibetans to cross into that country.

Other CTA officials say the Chinese have intensified checks on all Tibetans, making it mandatory for now for them to report departure and arrival every time they travel anywhere outside their regular place of residence in Tibet or neighbouring Chinese provinces. "Many passports have been revoked, ID cards, including ration cards, mobile numbers, and bank

accounts, are rolled into one number with DNA details. With such a sophisticated mechanism of control, China has turned Tibet into a police state," says writer Tsundue.

The Chinese started intensifying their border controls since 2005. In October 2006, Chinese border guards opened fire on a group of 70 Tibetan refugees climbing the snow-covered Nangpa Pass en route to Nepal. Beijing claimed the border guards were acting in self-defense, but a video filmed by a Romanian mountaineer showed the Tibetans were unarmed and running away when they were fired upon by the Chinese border guards.

A 17-year-old nun, Kelsang Namtso, died in the snow, while 23-year-old Kunsang Namgyal, hit by two bullets, died later,

For those seeking to escape Tibet have found it ever more perilous in the post-2008 era, when Beijing intensified its mass surveillance programs and placed severe restrictions on Tibetans' internal mobility, says Ruby Mukherjee, convenor of the "Save Tibet" campaign in India and an advocate in the Kolkata high court.

China's increased controls over Tibetans' movement within the country and over the Tibet-Nepal border has made it almost impossible for Tibetans to reach India. The number of new arrivals dropped to around 400 per year between 2010-14 but now with tougher restrictions since President Xi Jinping took charge, the Tibetan arrivals into India are at an all-time low, never going past 20 annually.

CTA spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay claims that after the massive Tibetan uprising in 2008, China has successfully imposed a news blockade to prevent information about Tibet from reaching the outside world. "They use paid Western Youtubers to paint a rosy all-is-well picture about Tibet but reality is severe visa restrictions on foreigners trying to visit Tibet," he said. "China has much to hide."

China denies all charges of repression in Tibet and blames the "separatist and splittist clique of Dalai Lama" for the false global propaganda. Chinese officials say Tibet has developed enormously since the Chinese Communist Party liberated Tibetans from "feudal servitude". Unlike Tibetan hardliners who seek independence, the Dalai Lama has sought negotiations with China to secure extensive provincial autonomy, unsuccessfully so far.

Besides China's tightening of Tibet's southwestern borders since the mid-2000s to stem the flow of Tibetan refugees into Nepal and India, the emigration of Tibetan refugees from the Indian subcontinent to the West beginning in the 1990s, and a general decline in the birth rates of exiled Tibetans has brought down the number of Tibetans in India.

From a peak of 1.5 lakhs in the 1990s, the number has dropped to below 90,000. Experts say this has long-term implications.

A study by Tenzim Dorjee and Tsewang Rinzim in the journal www.migrationpolicy.org observes:

“The demographic decline of South Asia’s Tibetan community poses a threat to the future viability of the government-in-exile—the sole democratic voice representing the Tibetan people both inside and outside Tibet—as well as its institutions and civil-society organizations.

“If this trend continues, it could imperil the Tibetan monastic universities in South India dedicated to safeguarding Indo-Tibetan knowledge systems as well as hundreds of health and education facilities serving tens of thousands of Tibetans and others across India.”

With the 14th Dalai Lama already 89 and his succession still caught up in huge uncertainties amidst reports that Beijing may like to put up its own choice, the very distinct Tibetan identity stands imperiled.

Nepal “Snubs” Dalai Lama For China-Appointed Panchen Lama; Is Beijing Weaponizing Buddhism?

11 December 2024, [The Eurasian Times](https://www.eurasiantimes.com), Ritu Sharma

After the brief and bloody war with India ended in 1962, China segregated the Prisoners of War into Indians and Gorkhas. The 700 Gorkha soldiers were given better treatment as Beijing wanted to highlight that Chinese and Nepalis are ‘brothers.’ China even made a direct offer to Nepal to take back Gorkha POWs, an offer Kathmandu declined.

Cut to 2024, and it seems the message is finding some resonance with the Himalayan Nation. Even as the country, the birthplace of Buddha, remains out of bounds for its most famous disciple—the Dalai Lama—Nepal is preparing to welcome the 11th Panchen Lama, appointed by the Chinese government.

Not only is the Nepal government giving him a red-carpet welcome, but Kathmandu is also hosting the South China Sea Buddhism Roundtable Conference.

Amish Mulmi, the author of “All Roads Lead North: Nepal’s Turn to China” wrote: “Didn’t know our geography had changed overnight and Nepal was now a South China sea facing nation. Why else would we host a South China Sea Buddhism Roundtable Conference in Lumbini!”

Lumbini, located in southern Nepal, is the birthplace of the Buddha and one of the most venerated sites for Buddhists. The Dalai Lama lives just one hour’s flight away from Lumbini, but Nepal has not been keen to host the Tibetan leader for fear of angering China. For some time, Kathmandu tried to maintain its geopolitical neutrality as the two Asian giants jostled for influence in the region.

However, it is changing as Nepal’s Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli broke with tradition in his fourth term by heading to Beijing before New Delhi.

During his visit, Prime Minister Oli met Chinese President Xi Jinping. Nepal and China inked the much-awaited framework agreement on the multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), paving the way for enhanced economic cooperation on the projects.

This will be the first visit of the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, and it will help him gain recognition among Buddhist followers worldwide. The South China Buddhism Round Table will be held from December 12 to December 15 and will include government officials and monks from around 20 countries.

The Nepal government has kept the arrival of the Chinese religious leader Panchen Lama a secret. “He is coming for religious harmony,” a local Nepali media quoted an official from the Lumbini Development Trust.

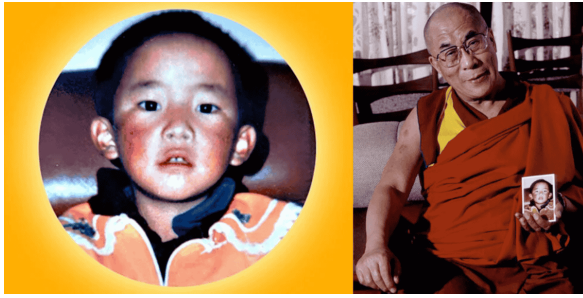
The Indian government will closely watch this move as the country hosts the largest population of Tibetan refugees.

According to the latest data from the government in exile, more than 128,000 Tibetans live outside of their homeland. Of those, 94,000 live in India, around three-quarters of the total. Another 10.6% live in Nepal, and the remaining have resettled in more than 30 countries worldwide.

The Panchen Lama is one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism. In 1995, the Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, a 6-year-old boy in Tibet, as the reincarnated Panchen Lama. But just three days later, Chinese authorities kidnapped the child and his parents. The Panchen Lama has not been seen in public ever since. His followers all over the world continue to demand his release from Chinese authorities.

The Chinese government instead named Gyaincain Norbu as the 11th Panchen Lama. China has gradually exposed its Panchen Lama in public roles in the hope that it will achieve the respect commanded by the Dalai Lama among Tibetans and globally. He made his first trip outside mainland China in 2012 when he visited Hong Kong.

Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama’s upcoming visit to Nepal has created a furor amongst journalists and scholars in Nepal.



The Dalai Lama with a picture of 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Credits Central Tibetan Administration.

Mahesh Kushwaha questioned the Oli government's move on X by asking: "What is the Oli government trying to do by welcoming Panchen Lama for a "South China Sea Buddhism Roundtable Conference" in Lumbini when Nepal cannot even muster the courage to host Dalai Lama?" He works with the Centre for Social Innovation and Foreign Policy.

Weaponizing Buddhism

Of all the South Asian countries, China's military ties with Nepal have been among the weakest, owing to decades-old ties between Nepalese and Indian Armies.

Since 1950, both armies have conferred the honorary rank of General of their respective Armies on each other's Chief of Staff. This bond is further reinforced by the substantial presence of approximately 36,000 Gorkha personnel within the Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army. Also, a sizable population of about 140,000 retired Gorkha personnel from the Indian Army receive pensions totaling around US\$600 million from India.

This has changed since 2022, as the Indian Army enacted a new recruitment scheme, and the Nepalese government forbade its citizens from joining the Indian Army.

This has prompted China to balance its military cooperation with soft diplomacy and Buddhism is an important part of that.

"One shouldn't lose sight of the strategic dimension of Buddhism. China sees a great advantage in employing Buddhism alongside its hard power pursuits, especially to seek political and economic leverage. Cultural tools also seem embedded into China's latest One Belt One Road initiative in Asia," P. Stobdan, a former ambassador and a scholar of Asian affairs, [wrote](#) earlier.

The Dalai Lama has been in the eye of the storm between India and China as the 89-year-old spiritual leader, who leads Tibetan Buddhism, fled Tibet in 1959 following annexation by Beijing. He has been living in exile in India ever since.

Beijing accuses the Dalai Lama of being a separatist. It asserts that the Communist Party China, itself an atheist organization, has the sole right to name the

next incarnation of the Dalai Lama and has enshrined it into the country's law.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan parliament in exile, with its seat in Dharamshala, have rejected the Chinese claim. Penpa Tsering, the president of the parliament-in-exile, has stated earlier: "A non-believer, atheist government like China interfering in Tibetan spiritual matters is a complete no-no. It cannot be accepted. The world has turned against China. We firmly believe no one will trust their choice."

China hopes to repress the Tibetan separatist movement by controlling the religious leadership of Tibetan Buddhists. The Dalai Lama's increasing age has further heightened tension over his successor. The Dalai Lama has insisted that speculations of his death are premature, as, according to his visions, he will live to 113.

A living god-like figure for millions of Buddhists, India officially calls him "the most esteemed and honored guest of India." China accuses him of being a "wolf in monk's robes," engaged in "anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion to break Tibet away from China."

Since 1974, the Dalai Lama has said he does not seek independence from China for Tibet but a "meaningful autonomy" that would allow Tibet to preserve its culture and heritage.

In 2011, in a move to democratize the system of government, the Dalai Lama gave up his political and administrative powers and chose to remain as just a spiritual leader. However, he is still the community's most influential figure.

When the current Dalai Lama dies, Tibetans will be in a state of disarray.

Experts on the tensions between the two countries believe that when the 14th Dalai Lama dies, there will be two successors – one nominated by China and the other left behind by the Tibetan spiritual leader.

Beijing is making its move to fortify the reputation of its Panchen Lama till then to be able to control the Tibetans religiously.

View: India shouldn't let its data turn Chinese

10 December 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

India's institutional strength used to be reflected in the reliability of its national accounts. Unlike in China, few questioned the government's figures for growth in gross domestic product, and investors rarely needed to supplement official numbers with other data sources.

That has, quietly, changed. While few believe Indian statisticians are actively working to make growth numbers look better than they are, less and less data is publicly available, methods are less transparent, and

the GDP figures in particular sometimes diverge puzzlingly from independent data.

The minister in charge of statistics recently told Parliament that the government planned to ask a new committee to recommend how it should update its national accounts. Official statisticians should seize this opportunity to overhaul how India's GDP is calculated in order to win back trust. The government's justification for the update is that India's data is still based on prices dating back to the financial year that ended in March 2012. Such "rebasing" is a chance for wholesale reform — particularly because the last time the GDP series was revised was exactly when questions first began to be asked about its reliability.

Statisticians have a much harder task in India than in the West or even in China. For one, the economy is dominated by services, rather than by manufacturing. It can be easier to value aggregate output in industrial sectors that produce a defined output with a clear price.

A bigger problem is that, unlike in more advanced economies, a large part of activity in India happens in the informal sector. That is, by definition, invisible to the government; official tax records, for example, are not going to tell you much about small businesses that traditionally haven't paid taxes.

The micro-sized enterprises where most Indians work are also very hard to survey. They go out of business quickly; they change their names and locations frequently.

Official numbers get around this problem by looking at a sample of larger companies and extrapolating from that. If the performance of smaller enterprises is linked closely with how bigger ones are doing, such an estimate can work well.

But, if the formal and informal sectors are growing at very different rates, the calculation might lead to biased estimates of GDP. Some think that's exactly what has happened in recent years.

The figures for value-added contributed by the private sector have been particularly worrisome. They are often out of sync with other macroeconomic indicators — corporate earnings, credit growth, the central bank's estimates for capacity utilization in industry. Many India-watchers now supplement the official GDP numbers with other data points, such as sales of two-wheelers or the revenue reports of consumer-goods companies.

About a decade ago, when the "base year" for GDP calculations was last revised, statisticians also changed the data source they used to estimate private-sector output. That may have introduced unintended problems.

What really angered many economists, however, is that it seemed the "new series" of GDP behaved completely differently from the one they had been

using for decades. Comparisons between macroeconomic performance in the 2010s and the 2000s, already politically controversial, became impossible.

The new series also seemed to be overly sensitive to how statisticians calculated price changes between one year and the next. Normally, such questions might be answered by official papers detailing the statisticians' sources and methods. But those have stopped appearing as well. If authorities are serious about fixing India's problem statistics, they can do two things. First, better mine the enormous amount of available digital data, including the 500 million transactions a day recorded on state-supported payments infrastructure. If they don't do so, some future AI bot will. Second, they need to be much more open about what they are doing and why. Statistics are useless if they aren't trusted. And only transparency builds trust. India has wound up with official statistics that are unpredictable, don't match up with other figures, aren't robust to how price shifts are calculated, and provide limited comparability over time. That's sub-optimal, to say the least. To promote growth, the government first needs to know how the economy is really doing.

Breaking the Circle: Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Infrastructure Rapidly Expands

10 December 2024, [Recorded Future](#), Insikt Group

Summary

China is rapidly advancing its global propaganda strategies through international communication centers (ICCs), with over 100 centers established since 2018 — most since 2023. These centers aim to amplify the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) voice on the international stage, targeting specific audiences with tailored messaging (a strategy known as "precise communication"). ICCs coordinate local, national, and international resources to build China's image, share political narratives, and promote economic partnerships.

By leveraging inauthentic social media amplification, foreign influencers, and collaborations with overseas media, ICCs advance China's multi-layered propaganda approach. For instance, Fujian's ICC reportedly manages TikTok accounts targeting Taiwanese audiences, likely including a covert account that is highly critical of the Taiwan government called Two Tea Eggs. On YouTube, the same ICC promotes videos of Taiwanese individuals praising China. These centers are strategically positioned to promote China's interests during geopolitical crises, despite challenges like limited credibility and resource constraints.

Breaking the Circle: Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Infrastructure Rapidly Expands

China's efforts to reshape global narratives about its policies, culture, and geopolitical aims have reached new heights with the rapid proliferation of international communication centers (ICCs). Established to amplify the voice of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), these centers are integral to China's global propaganda apparatus and seek to propel the CCP's "precise communication" strategy for targeting distinct audiences. Here's a closer look at their functions, strategies, and implications.

What Are ICCs?

ICCs are propaganda hubs designed to bring new resources to the CCP's efforts to "tell China's story" by centralizing and streamlining the capabilities of provinces, cities, and smaller jurisdictions. These centers focus on building China's global image by sharing positive narratives about its culture, economy, and development. Simultaneously, they act as a conduit for political narratives aimed at countering negative perceptions and promoting China's geopolitical agenda.

Over 100 ICCs have been established across China, primarily since 2023, under provincial and sub-provincial propaganda departments and state media organizations. These centers aim to "break the circle" to penetrate foreign audiences and tailoring content for specific regions and demographics.

Key Objectives of ICCs

ICCs primarily aim to promote positive narratives about China. They create content that highlights the country's cultural heritage, technological innovations, and economic progress, fostering goodwill among international audiences. Additionally, ICCs counter negative narratives by responding to perceived anti-China sentiments and disseminating content to influence public opinion on geopolitical topics. By tailoring their approaches to specific regions and demographics, ICCs strive to ensure their narratives resonate more effectively. For example, Fujian's ICC specifically targets Taiwanese audiences using TikTok accounts that blend cultural themes with critical political messaging.

Tactics and Strategies

ICCs employ various tactics to achieve their objectives. Social media operations form a core component of their strategy, with thousands of accounts active across platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. Many of these accounts lack transparency about their state affiliations, enabling covert influence campaigns. Additionally, ICCs leverage foreign influencers and "communication officers" to amplify China's narratives through user-generated content, vlogs, and experiential propaganda.

Collaboration with overseas media organizations further enhances ICCs' reach and legitimacy. Through actions like organizing foreign journalist visits to China, ICCs create an impression of organic coverage and offer an alternative to Western narratives. These partnerships — reportedly established in Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, France, Japan, Russia, the United States, and elsewhere — are complemented by localized propaganda activities that align with China's economic and geopolitical interests. 5

Challenges to Success

Despite ambitious goals, ICCs face significant challenges that hinder their effectiveness. These include a lack of professional and foreign talent, insufficient discourse power, inadequate data for precise communication, and inconsistent funding. ICCs often struggle to translate local developments into effective narratives for foreign audiences and lack focus on target demographics. Many rely heavily on central state media infrastructure, as seen with the Nanning International Communication Center outsourcing key operations to Xinhua News Agency. These limitations echo long-standing issues within China's state media sector.

Implications

ICCs represent a sophisticated evolution in China's propaganda efforts. While they are unlikely to become trusted sources of information in the near term, their ability to amplify preferred narratives during geopolitical crises is likely significant. These centers likely have the potential to influence foreign opinion of China by offering regular engagement, providing alternatives to Western sources, and focusing on topics like quality of life in China rather than political values, especially among Global South and Western periphery audiences.

Outlook

The expansion of international communication centers (ICCs) reflects China's ongoing efforts to innovate its media strategy, centralize resources, and project global narratives favoring its interests under Xi Jinping's leadership. Despite challenges, ICCs likely strengthen China's ability to influence global discourse by leveraging thousands of overt and covert social media accounts and fostering collaborations with foreign media. These centers could amplify assertive messaging during crises and suppress negative coverage of China.

China's long-term goal is almost certainly to establish ICC-affiliated platforms as trusted sources of information. While this remains unlikely in the near term due to credibility challenges, ICCs represent a strategic step toward improving China's external propaganda system. Researchers and governments should prioritize tracking ICC activities and advocating for transparent labeling of their state affiliations on social media platforms.

To read the entire analysis, [click here](#) to download the report as a PDF.

What Lies Ahead for India-China Relations

09 December 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Elizabeth Roche

A high-level meeting between Indian and Chinese officials in Beijing is scheduled for later this month.

Senior officials of India and China are expected to meet in Beijing later this month as the two neighbors look to reset relations that have been in a state of deep freeze since June 2020 when their soldiers engaged in a bloody clash and a prolonged eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation along their disputed border in Ladakh. The upcoming meeting in Beijing follows the agreement on patrolling arrangements along the disputed border in Eastern Ladakh. India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told journalists in New Delhi on October 21 that "Agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas, leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020."

The Beijing meeting is therefore significant.

The Indian and Chinese national security advisors have to begin the process of repairing bilateral strategic trust. They also have to chart a fresh blueprint for stabilizing their tense border and ensuring equilibrium, badly shattered by the deadly Galwan clash in June 2020 in the Himalayan region of Eastern Ladakh. This will be their first meeting to discuss unsettled boundary issues in five years.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands at a meeting on the

sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, October 23, 2024.

The Sino-Indian face-off at Galwan on the night of June 14-15, 2020, was the deadliest between the two countries in decades. Both sides suffered casualties. Relations frayed thereafter. There was a sharp downside in people-to-people ties with a decline in air links and travel between the two countries. India banned dozens of Chinese companies, including ByteDance, the firm behind the popular short-video app TikTok, from operating in India.

India and China share a 4,000-kilometer-long undemarcated border that has been a source of friction for decades. It led to a brief but bloody war in 1962 and several face-offs since. However, a series of pacts signed between 1993 and 2013 resulted in largely peaceful ties. This truce was broken when China moved tens of thousands of troops and weaponry to the border in Eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020, catching New Delhi by surprise. While caught off guard, India quickly mobilized forces to match the numbers deployed by China.

Following the October 2024 announcement, India and China disengaged their troops, i.e. they were withdrawn from their eyeball-to-eyeball positions. A meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping followed on the sidelines of the BRICS summit at Kazan. This was their first bilateral dialogue since 2019.

"The two sides agreed on holding talks between their foreign ministers and officials at various levels to bring the relationship back to sound and steady development at an early date," a Chinese readout of the talks said. The foreign and defense ministers of the two countries also met subsequently.

Briefing reporters in Kazan on October 23, Misri said that Modi and Xi had agreed that by showing "mutual respect for each other's sensitivities, interests, concerns and aspirations, the two countries can have a peaceful, stable and beneficial bilateral relationship." The first clue that a possible thaw was in the offing came in an interview by Prime Minister Modi with Newsweek in April this year. The posting of a new Chinese Ambassador Xu Feihong in New Delhi in May 2024, 18 months after his predecessor left the Indian capital was also seen as a step toward unfreezing of ties.

Since he assumed official duties, Xu has used his X account, formerly Twitter, to reach out to the Indian public whose opinion had turned sharply against China after the Galwan clash. Xu and the Chinese embassy in New Delhi have also posted information regarding the travel of small groups of Indians to China, sponsored by the embassy.

Another hint of India and China being close to working out a solution came in August when the Indian foreign

ministry statement said after talks between diplomats that the dialogue had been “forward looking.” This came amid a toning down of aggressive rhetoric from the Chinese media, largely viewed as government-backed and reflecting official views.

Analysts have described the breakthrough as a “tactical achievement.”

However, the reasons behind the breakthrough are as unclear as the causes for the sudden Chinese mobilization in 2020.

Some speculate that India’s growing proximity to the U.S. in recent years and its development of deeper linkages with like-minded countries like the members of Quad to balance China could have been the trigger. Another reason for China’s aggression is its ambition to head the global order, which it cannot do unless it dominates Asia. In this context, Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar has pointed out that with both India and China harboring ambitions to make their presence felt in the world, and rising together, it has led to a complex situation.

Why did the breakthrough in relations happen now?

One reason is that Indian industry has been quietly pushing for the normalization of ties given that many critical components and products are imported from China. Earlier this year, India’s Economic Survey 2023-24, which is a government document laying out the state of the economy, spoke of the economic imperative for getting Sino-Indian ties back on track.

Another reason being put forth by analysts is that China has understood that it cannot force India to make choices or capitulate under duress. Added to this are the uncertainties prevailing in the world, including the reelection of Donald Trump in the United States and his threats to place punitive tariffs across imports into the U.S. This could be another plausible explanation for why India and China are looking to end their tensions.

Now that the two countries have taken the first step toward normalization of ties, the question is what’s next?

In his statement to the Indian parliament last week, Jaishankar said that with the completion of disengagement, India and China got the space to look at other elements of their relationship keeping “national security interests first and foremost.” This could mean that economic interests will be predicated on security-related matters.

In the immediate future, the two countries will need to carry out two more steps — de-escalation and de-induction of troops. The first refers to moving troops back (perhaps by 3 to 7 kilometers) to minimize the possibility of conflict. De-induction refers to an agreement between the two sides to pull the amassed personnel and heavy weaponry back by some 100 kilometers. This is expected to take several rounds of

talks by senior army commanders backed, of course, by political direction.

Once these are accomplished, the two countries will need to work out a fresh set of confidence building measures, given that the ones in place prior to the Galwan clash were summarily disregarded by China in 2020. These measures will have to be strictly implemented, backed by verification methods as India cannot afford to be caught napping again.

These measures could take years to draw up, which means India will have to continue to closely monitor its China border.

The two sides have agreed to coordinated patrols to avoid tensions. China has also sought patrolling rights in Arunachal Pradesh in the east. This is something that India will need to consider cautiously given China’s claim over all of Arunachal Pradesh which it calls “South Tibet.” The particular area in question is Yangste, which has seen consistent attempts of transgression by the Chinese and was also the scene of a scuffle in 2022. Just as China claims all of Arunachal Pradesh that India administers, New Delhi says the Aksai Chin area in Kashmir that China has occupied since 1962 is part of its territory. India doesn’t have any patrolling rights in this area.

On the economic side, India will need to quickly scale up efforts to de-risk its economy from its current levels of exposure to China. That is a tough ask as India’s trade in 2023 touched \$115.82 billion with a trade deficit of almost \$100 billion, in Beijing’s favor.

India can be expected to speedily tie up plans to boost trade and supply chain initiatives with Quad partners Australia and Japan. There are some free trade pacts in the offing that need to be concluded quickly. Indian industry should also look to source products and components from within the country and set up and promote domestic supply chains. An economically strong India will be attractive for investors looking at the China+1 alternative. It will give India resources and the confidence to build up its national capacities vis a vis China.

K P Oli’s China gamble

09 December 2024, [The Indian Express](#), Yubaraj Ghimire

The Nepal PM did not wait indefinitely for an invitation from Delhi. Instead, he gave out the message that Beijing is no less important.

Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli’s China visit from December 2 to 5 had triggered a loud response even before it began. The Chinese media, including Global Times, called it “tradition breaking” while some in Indian media called it a surrender to the north. Nepal’s political spectrum, including the two major constituents in the ruling coalition — Oli-led

Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Nepali Congress – were divided on whether Nepal should sign the Belt and Road Initiative framework that may involve having to take loans from China as it goes into implementation phase.

Before he flew back home, Oli said on social media platform X, “Today, we signed the Framework for Belt & Roads Cooperation. As my official visit to China concludes, I am honoured to reflect on the bilateral talks with Premier Li Qiang, discussions with NPC Chairman Zhang Leji, and the highly fruitful meeting with President Xi Jinping.”

Advertisement

Seemingly, Oli defied NC’s strict condition that cooperation from China under the BRI should only be grant based. The BRI framework agreement has not offered any special concessions for Nepal. Oli may face the wrath of the Nepali Congress, and even face a crisis of survival, but he found the risk worth it. As with his previous two visits as PM, he has been able to create an impression this time too that Nepal can trust China more and enhance strategic cooperation. In 2016, close on the heels of an economic blockade by India, Oli had signed the treaty of Trade and Transit with China, securing alternative access to the sea.

Oli did not wait indefinitely for an invitation from Delhi this time, generally the first port of call for a Nepali PM, giving a message that Beijing is no less important. In fact, it is more welcoming.

On November 25, the Nepali Congress and its leader Arzu Rana Deuba had rushed to Chengdu and told her counterpart Wang Yi that her government and party would only welcome grants, not loans in any form under the BRI. Yi, understandably, gave her the cold shoulder, and responded by asking her to convey it to Beijing.

That was not without reason. Deuba had played an active role successfully lobbying for parliamentary endorsement of the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s (MCC) Nepal compact worth \$500 million grant in 2022, five years after the two sides had signed an understanding. That delay was largely because of fear and division within the communist parties that the MCC was part of an Indo-Pacific strategy with security components. But a hawkish warning by the US that Nepal’s failure to ratify by the February deadline will lead to a review of the entire gamut of US cooperation had its desired impact.

Second, the Nepali Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party have now become “fraternal parties”. Foreign Minister Deuba may not have gone down well with China, but Oli’s 20 minutes one-on-one meeting with President Xi on Tuesday seems to have done the magic. President Xi may not have given a deadline on the BRI Framework like the Americans did on the MCC ratification, but China’s interest next door being undermined vis-a-vis the US was not acceptable to it.

For Oli, overruling Xi’s concern was far more difficult, if not impossible.

Xi, who had visited Nepal in October 2019, reiterated his preparedness to do anything to safeguard Nepal’s independence and its right to choose its developmental path. Enhancing strategic cooperation, transforming the once India-locked Nepal into a prosperous country by linking the two sides by rivers and mountains, developing Himalayan railway and road connectivity, investing in energy, trade and investment and hospitality, promoting Chinese tourism in Nepal, especially next year when the two countries will be celebrating their 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties, and dispatching volunteers to teach Mandarin across Nepal were the other agendas the two sides agreed upon.

For Oli, consolidating the proximity with China seems crucial with all the risks it may contain. Not trusting the assurances coming from Xi was difficult, if not impossible. In his speech at Peking University on Tuesday, Oli spoke at length about Nepal’s domestic politics, the history of movements for democracy in the country, hailing the current alliance between UML and NC, and denouncing both the monarchy and the Maoists. In a way, he was making a case that China has a trustworthy ally only in UML. He gave no credit to any one in the past for developing ties with China, but praised himself for his sacrifice and suffering in Nepal for the struggle for democracy.

He praised BRI as a visionary initiative of President Xi in the spirit of shared prosperity and win-win cooperation, hoping “together, Nepal and China can envision a future of shared prosperity and enduring friendship, inspired by mutual respect and the pursuit of a better world for all.”

Despite Oli’s totalitarian character, political actors other than the Nepali Congress may not be unhappy over what he achieved on the Beijing trip. But how the two sides would move to execute the BRI projects in near future is something that would require time to assess. What fate awaits Oli politically would largely be decided by the NC response at home over it being overruled in China. But Oli, even if he loses his chair, will try to emerge as a “martyr” for the nation’s cause.

Self-Determination of Tibet: A Contentious Issue

09 December 2024, [IDSA](#)

Summary

Negotiations on self-determination of Tibet has been a contentious matter between the Tibetan ethnic minority and the PRC government. The PRC government has failed to implement in letter and spirit various laws which stipulate the establishment of autonomous regions for the ethnic minorities in China.

A diplomatic spat between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States (US) has ensued, following US President Biden signing the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' on 12 July 2024 into law.¹ Reacting to the Act, China stated that the US is undermining the "basic norms governing international relations" and should recognise Xizang (Tibet) as part of China. It urged the US not to support "Tibet independence" which if it fails to do, "China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests".² Appraising the Act, along with the affirmation of upholding human rights and direct negotiations "without preconditions" with the Dalai Lama in order to resolve the differences, are some of the fundamental aspects at stake for the 'self-determination' of Tibet. This Brief examines how the principle of self-determination has been contested between the Chinese government and the Tibetan ethnic minority. It begins with a review on how the principles of self-determination have been construed in international law.

Self-Determination in International Law

The principle of self-determination, which can be traced back to the French revolution in 1789 and the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, refers to the legal right of people to choose their own political destiny. In the contemporary period, it has been closely associated with US President Woodrow Wilson, when after the First World War, several new states were created from the losing powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Previously, self-determination was perceived as a 'political concept' but later on, it emerged as a "principle of positive international law" based on the UN Charter as in Article 1(2), it is requisite that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determinations of people".⁴

The principle of self-determination has been addressed in several UN resolutions, declarations and conventions. However, it is an 'elusive concept', mainly due to an unclear definition of 'people', i.e., who are actually entitled to self-determination (for example, indigenous groups, religious groups and other minorities), resulting in various interpretations and significant implications in practice.⁵

One of the foremost legal rights for self-determination is the "Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People" adopted by UN General Assembly (GA) Resolution 1514 in 1960, where Para 1 declares, "the subjugation of people to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights" and is contrary to the UN Charter.⁶ These legal rights were primarily designed or interpreted to foster the decolonisation process and

were upheld by the International Court of Justice in the Namibia case.⁷

Additionally, the application of self-determination beyond the anti-colonial dimension was adopted in 1970 by the UNGA, 'Friendly Relations Declarations' which entail the right of self-determination to all people freely "without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development".⁸ However, this legal document demands that self-determination be exercised cautiously, without disturbing the territorial integrity of the existing state. In other words, these legal rights are in line with 'internal self-determination', i.e., autonomy.⁹

In the case of internal self-determination, Article 1 of the two international Covenants of 1966—International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—provides people the right to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development". Legal expert Antonio Cassese is of the view that all members of an inhabitant state have the right to express self-determination through "internal-decision making processes", without disturbing the territorial integrity of sovereign states.¹⁰ Indeed, such rights have been recognised in the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 where Article 4 declares that indigenous people "have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions".¹¹ Although the core substance of self-determination infers secession or the ability to establish sovereign and independent states, in international laws, unilateral secession is not well received due to the fear of creating instability, when or if the right of self-determination is exercised by all who claim it. Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali thoughtfully said: "if every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limits to fragmentation and peace and security and economic well-being for all would become even more difficult to achieve."¹²

Nonetheless, there are jurists that emphasise the applicability of self-determination to a particular group of people to secure their territorial sovereignty. Such kinds of self-determination are known as 'remedial secession' where self-determination is applied as a last resort or secession is justified, if any aggrieved group is severely persecuted by the state.¹³ Such legal rights are detailed in the UNGA Resolution 2625, which states that the territorial integrity of the state is protected, if the government is represented by "the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or color".¹⁴ This clause implies that if any government is

unrepresentative or oppressive, it may trigger secession. Meanwhile, some jurists also emphasise, if internal self-determination or say autonomy are flawed in implementation, secession should be seen as a matter of last resort.

Negotiations for Tibetan Self-Determination

On 13 February 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama formally declared the independence of Tibet, following the overthrow of Manchu Qing dynasty by the Chinese nationalist revolution in 1911.¹⁵ The historiography on whether Tibet is a part of China, however, is complicated as both sides have competing narratives.¹⁶ But one major historical event in which Tibet formally came under the control of China is when Chinese troops entered Tibet in 1950 and consequently signed the “Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” (17 Point Agreement) on 23 May 1951.¹⁷

Subsequently, at the UNGA, numerous resolutions were passed calling for the right to self-determination for the Tibetan people but it was met with negligible support from the international community.¹⁸ Additionally, the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a resolution on 23 August 1991 calling on the Government of the People’s Republic of China “fully to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people”.¹⁹ After decades of impasse, dialogue between the two sides commenced with a pre-condition that except for “total independence” all other issues were open for discussion.²⁰ Without substantial outcome, the talks ended in 1985 with the removal of Chinese representative Hu Yao-bang.²¹

Dialogue between the Tibetan and Chinese representatives, however, entered a new chapter following the Dalai Lama’s announcement of the “Middle way approach”, implying not seeking separation or independence of Tibet, but instead securing ‘genuine autonomy’ within the scope of the constitution of the People’s Republic of China.²² In order to achieve a genuine autonomy for Tibetan peoples, the Tibetan administration formulated a ‘Five point peace plan’ in 1987, the Strasbourg proposal in 1998 and the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy in 2008. Dialogue between the two sides continued based on these three core documents, but ended abruptly in 2010 without any substantial outcome.

In the negotiations between Tibetan representatives and the Chinese government, securing genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people has been a key issue, and has led to deadlock and pauses in the negotiation process. Hence, it is necessary and worthwhile to look into how the PRC government takes into account autonomy in relation to ethnic minorities.

Assessment of ‘Autonomy’ Implementation in China

Regional ethnic autonomy is supposed to be the core governance mechanism for ethnic minorities in China.²³ Though the ‘Common Program’ and the 1954 Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) specify the establishment of regional autonomy, Chinese constitutional expert, Gao Quanxi has argued that the 1982 PRC Constitution as amended in 2018 has been infused with a legal attribute, which is aimed at ending incessant revolution, discarding absolute class struggle, substituted by “dictatorship of the proletariat” with a “people’s democratic dictatorship”.²⁴

In the 1982 PRC Constitution, the preamble declares, “China is a unified multi-ethnic state founded by the Chinese people of all ethnic groups” and opposes “major ethnic group (Han) chauvinism”. Further, Article 4 stipulates the promotion of ethnic equality and unity, where discrimination and oppression of any ethnic groups is prohibited, and allows for the establishment of autonomous regions for self-governance while obliging that “all ethnic groups shall have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own traditions and customs”.²⁵ Additionally, based on the 1982 constitution, the National People’s Congress in 1984 adopted the “Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy” which was amended in 2001, strengthening and expanding the existing autonomous rights formulated in the 1982 constitution.²⁶

Assessing implementation of the ethnic minorities’ policy by the PRC government, it is characterised as one of “gradualism and pluralism” where until the late 1950s, a tolerant and benign attitude was practiced towards ethnic minorities by the PRC government.²⁷ But from the 1960s onwards under the leadership of Mao, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1967–1976), the ethnic minorities experienced the most repressive and assimilative period in the history of PRC.²⁸ Again from the 1970s, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, extreme assimilation of minorities ended and they began to make claims to uphold their rights to national autonomy.

In the case of the Tibetan ethnic minority, though the demand for genuine autonomy by the Tibetan representative emerged more recently, essentially it was already featured way back in 17 Point Agreement in May 1951, as para 3 underlined that, “the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government”.²⁹ The PRC government, however, violated the agreement.³⁰

To achieve the aspiration of autonomy for the Tibetan people, its representatives even submitted a “Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People” in 2008 to the PRC government.³¹ The

demand for autonomy in the memorandum was drafted in consonance with the PRC constitution and the Law on regional ethnic autonomy, which essentially addresses independently managing the internal affairs of Tibetans including language, culture, religion education, environment protection and utilisation of natural resources.

The evaluation of autonomy implementation in the Tibet Autonomous Region, however, reveals policy swings between “more tolerant and more repressive” by the PRC government.³² Ironically, one of the fundamental reasons why the PRC government rejected the Tibetan proposal of autonomy, and instead adopted a repressive policy towards the Tibetan ethnic minority, is due to “fear of the external forces” of Western countries, especially the United States.³³

The US policy on Tibet can be traced back to the 1940s, when the US government entered an agreement with Tibet to build a supply route through Tibet to China against Japanese attack. US policy on Tibet has been termed “inconsistencies in commitment, interspersed with occasional bursts of sympathy and activism”³⁴ mostly due to the impact of Cold War politics. Until 1970, Tibet was included in the US strategy to counter communist expansion in Asia. But it was weakened following the rapprochement of Sino-US relations in the 1970s.³⁵ And conversely, the Soviet Union, which in the 1950s fully backed the PRC government claim to sovereignty over Tibet, began to condemn Chinese policy in Tibet as a “colonial power”.³⁶ Contrary to the Cold War period, however, Russia’s policy on Tibet “seems to view the Tibetan issue in the context of Chechenya, unfortunately”.³⁷ One major reason for the US leveraging of Tibetan separatism is based on the notion of a growing ‘China threat’ both in terms of military and economy, which the PRC government considers as a ‘containment policy’. Yet, US leveraging of Tibetan secession has consequences, especially for Tibetans in Tibet and also for the resolution of the Tibetan question. Sinologist Barry Sautman cautions that backing secession by great powers “makes it harder for Tibetans in Tibet to seek self-representation without being suspected of pursuing secession” and also “even makes it harder to resolve the Tibetan question”.³⁸

Way Forward

The President of the Central Tibetan Administration Penpa Tsering in September 2024 acknowledged that ‘back-channel’ talks between the two sides have been initiated.³⁹ The PRC government has laid two conditions for resuming negotiations. First, as the Chinese government considers the Central Tibetan Government as an organised political group with an agenda for ‘Tibetan independence’, negotiations will be held “only with the personal representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama”. And second, any contact or talks will

only be about the personal future of the 14th Dalai Lama and the handful of people close to him, and not a ‘high degree of autonomy’.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, external threat perceptions will significantly determine the outcome of negotiations.

To preserve the territorial integrity and maintain amicable relations among the 56 ethnic groups in China, however, one fundamental key is to uphold the PRC constitution and the Law of ethnic regional autonomy in letter and spirit. The fact is Tibetans are not seeking separation from China and this was reiterated recently by the Dalai Lama when he stated “We want to have full autonomy, as part of the People’s Republic of China.”⁴¹ Thus, much of the discontent among the minorities stems from incomplete or flawed implementation of China’s ethnic minority policies.

India must support the Dalai Lama’s right to rebirth

08 December 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

Respecting the Dalai Lama’s right to choose his place of rebirth is a testament to India’s commitment to human rights and spiritual freedom.

The Dalai Lama, a symbol of peace and spiritual leadership, has long been a beacon of hope for millions around the world. His teachings transcend borders, promoting compassion, non-violence, and understanding. As the current Dalai Lama ages, the question of his reincarnation becomes increasingly pertinent. It is crucial for India, a nation that has historically provided refuge to the Dalai Lama and his followers, to respect and support his right to choose his place of rebirth, even if it is outside the confines of communist China.

The Dalai Lama’s lineage is deeply rooted in Tibetan Buddhism, where the process of reincarnation is a fundamental belief. The selection of the next Dalai Lama is not merely a political decision but a spiritual one, guided by centuries-old traditions. Historically, the Dalai Lama has been a unifying figure for Tibetans, embodying their cultural and religious identity. The Chinese government’s attempts to control the reincarnation process are seen by many as an effort to undermine Tibetan autonomy and spiritual freedom. India has been a sanctuary for the Dalai Lama since 1959, when he fled Tibet following a failed uprising against Chinese rule. This act of asylum was not just a political gesture but a commitment to uphold human rights and religious freedom. By supporting the Dalai Lama’s right to be reborn outside China, India would reaffirm its dedication to these principles. It would

also send a powerful message to the international community about the importance of spiritual autonomy and the right to self-determination. Supporting the Dalai Lama's right to choose his place of rebirth could have significant geopolitical implications. It would likely strain India's already complex relationship with China. However, it is essential to weigh these potential diplomatic tensions against the broader ethical and moral considerations. Upholding the Dalai Lama's spiritual rights aligns with India's democratic values and its long-standing tradition of religious tolerance. India's support for the Dalai Lama's right to be reborn outside communist China is not just about respecting an individual's spiritual journey. It is about standing up for the principles of freedom, human rights, and cultural preservation. As global citizens, we must advocate for a world where spiritual leaders can practise their beliefs without fear of political interference. India's leadership in this matter could inspire other nations to take a stand, fostering a global environment of respect and understanding. In conclusion, respecting the Dalai Lama's right to choose his place of rebirth is a testament to India's commitment to human rights and spiritual freedom. It is a call for India to continue its legacy of compassion and support for those who seek refuge from oppression. By doing so, India will not only honour the Dalai Lama's spiritual journey but also uphold the values that define its own identity.

Xi unlikely to attempt Taiwan invasion during Trump second term, experts say

08 December 2024, [Taipei Times](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) is unlikely to attempt an invasion of Taiwan during US president-elect Donald Trump's time in office, Taiwanese and foreign academics said on Friday.

Trump is set to begin his second term early next year. Xi's ambition to establish China as a "true world power" has intensified over the years, but he would not initiate an invasion of Taiwan "in the near future," as his top priority is to maintain the regime and his power, not unification, Tokyo Woman's Christian University distinguished visiting professor and contemporary Chinese politics expert Akio Takahara said.



Chinese and US flags are pictured in an arranged photograph taken on Jan. 30 last year.

Photo: Reuters

Takahara made the comment at a symposium in Taipei by National Chengchi University's Institute of International Relations to discuss the potential impact of Trump's return to the White House on Indo-Pacific countries, including Taiwan.

He highlighted Xi's shift from telling former US president Barack Obama that the Pacific Ocean is big enough for the US and China, to telling US President Joe Biden last year that the world can accommodate the two countries.

Viewing the Pacific Ocean from China's perspective, Xi sees unifying Taiwan as essential, not only as a "very nationalistic target," but also as a way to break through the first island chain and secure an advantage in the strategic competition with the US, Takahara said.

"When Xi Jinping finds that it is better to attack Taiwan to maintain power, then I think he will attack — but that is not tomorrow, that is not next year, that is not 2027," he said, adding that the Chinese president is likely to continue his current strategy of "winning without fighting," which relies on economic and cultural infiltration in Taiwan.

If Trump does not change the US-Taiwan policy "in a big way," then Xi would most likely refrain from using military force against Taiwan during his second term, Takahara said.

"Attacking Taiwan is too risky," as such action would severely damage China's economy and "certainly undermine the source of his [Xi's] legitimacy to rule," he said.

In the event of a "no-reason invasion" by China, the US is likely to intervene with support from Japan, provided its Taiwan policy remains unchanged, he added.

Echoing Takahara, Sam Houston State University Department of Political Science associate professor Dennis Weng (翁履中) said that under the Trump administration, there would be no war or military conflicts between Taiwan and China, as Trump strongly opposes military confrontation.

“He will utilize all kinds of bargaining or all kinds of negotiations” to prevent a Taiwan-China war from happening,” Weng said.

Although China is unlikely to initiate an invasion of Taiwan in the next four years, Beijing would utilize “some other tools in their toolbox,” such as cutting off trade deals with Taiwan and further isolating it by “taking away” its remaining diplomatic allies, he said.

What Do the Latest Purges Mean for China’s Military?

07 December 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Duncan Bartlett

The dismissal of senior commanders creates a sense of “chaos and disarray,” says a leading defense expert.

Xi Jinping holds the founding father of the People’s Republic of China, Mao Zedong, in high esteem. He sometimes copies Mao’s style of dress and displays similar mannerisms. He has even found ways to use Mao’s slogans for his own purposes.

In 1938, Mao said: “Every communist must grasp the truth; political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”

In modern China, that militant idea serves as a reminder that the authority of the supreme leader rests upon his control over the military.

In what appears to be a deliberate echo of Mao, Xi told senior ranking officers of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army in June 2024: “We must make it clear that the barrels of guns must always be in the hands of those who are loyal and dependable to the [Chinese Communist] Party ... And we must make it clear that there is no place for any corrupt elements in the military.”

Since then, a strident campaign to eradicate corruption has continued, leading to the removal of senior officers and political commissars.

Information that has reached the public domain suggests a systematic purge. But much remains hidden, and apparently the obfuscation is deliberate. People accused of corruption tend to disappear; their names redacted from official news sources and social media.

One concrete piece of information was announced by China’s Ministry of Defense in November. It said that a senior admiral named Miao Hua has been removed from his post and placed under investigation for a “serious violation of discipline.”

A purge reminds everyone in the People’s Liberation Army that they must show absolute loyalty to the Communist Party, according to William Matthews, a senior research fellow on the Asia-Pacific Program at Chatham House in London.

Matthews noted in a recent article for Chatham House that Miao was a significant figure within the Central Military Commission (CMC), of which Xi is chair. As director of the CMC’s Political Work

Department, Miao was responsible for choosing who would fill senior positions. He was also expected to ensure ideological conformity.

“By suspending Miao, Xi has further demonstrated a willingness to remove a perceived loyalist at the highest levels of China’s military to ensure compliance with his political agenda, set an example, and ensure the PLA develops in the direction he intends,” wrote Matthews.

On November 27, the Financial Times also claimed that China’s Defense Minister Dong Jun was being investigated on corruption charges. FT cited “current and former U.S. officials familiar with the situation” in its report. If true, it would mean that three consecutive defense ministers in China have been ensnared in corruption investigations.

At a press briefing in Beijing, however, Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian responded by insisting that the FT report was pure fabrication.

“The rumor-mongers are ill-intentioned. China expresses its strong dissatisfaction with such slanderous behavior,” Wu said.

On December 5, Dong appeared in public in Shanghai, attending a security forum on the Gulf of Guinea. According to Chinese state media, he met with heads of foreign delegations and conveyed China’s willingness to work with the armed forces of other countries.

Helena Legarda, lead analyst of China’s defense and foreign policy at the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) in Berlin said that it is unusual for party members who are placed under investigation for corruption to later return to their old posts.

“While the investigation might still be ongoing internally, it looks as if Dong Jun will stay on as defense minister for the time being,” she told The Diplomat.

In October 2023, another Central Military Commission member, General Li Shangfu, lost his position as defense minister. In June of this year, Li and his predecessor, Wei Fenghe were dismissed from the CCP and the military on corruption charges.

In Legarda’s view, these developments, along with the official confirmation that Miao Hua – who, as a member of the CMC, outranked Dong – has been suspended, indicate that the anti-corruption campaign within the PLA is ongoing and broadening.

“More officers may be removed as this continues,” she told The Diplomat.

Legarda believes the military has a long-standing and severe corruption problem.

“It is no secret that the PLA has suffered from corruption for a long time. Officers were notorious for taking bribes in exchange for offering soldiers promotions up the ranks. Also, some officers have been involved in shady activities to support their private commercial activities,” she explained. “That is why the initial anti-corruption campaign, which goes

all the way back to 2012, initially had a fair amount of support among the public.”

Such purges are a characteristic of a one-party state. However, Legarda said it is hard to tell the extent to which the anti-corruption drive is being used as cover to oust members of the PLA who are perceived as potential rivals to Xi Jinping.

Dong and Miao were both appointed to their positions by Xi himself.

Matthews from Chatham House argued that although the move against his protégés may cause Xi to lose face, loyalty and control of the military is more important to him than anything else.

Nevertheless, purges carry risks.

“In addition to the reputational costs to Xi himself as CCP and CMC chairman, whose personal appointments suggest a pattern of misjudgment, there are consequences for how the PLA is seen by potential adversaries,” Matthews wrote.

Since last year, Chinese authorities have launched disciplinary proceedings against numerous senior military officials, including a former air force chief, senior commanders at the PLA’s strategic missile force, as well as officers who had worked in procurement.

Several executives at major defense contractors have also been abruptly removed as government advisers, stirring speculation over their fate.

Xi’s critics say that the anti-corruption campaign fails to address core issues. By focusing on individual purges, rather than institutional reform, it has created a cycle of high-profile dismissals that have undermined trust between the military and government.

At an international level, questions are being asked about how this struggle will affect the PLA’s combat capability.

“These purges signal chaos and disarray,” said Legarda. “That can have an impact on the image of the PLA and the perception of China’s willingness to use force. If Xi Jinping keeps having to replace top leaders because they are corrupt, how is he or other party leaders going to trust generals when they say they are ready to run a successful military campaign against Taiwan, or engage in conflict in the South China Sea?”

In Legarda’s view, troubles within the military could reduce the appetite for conflict – at least in the short term. Xi’s urgent mission now is to fill the top ranks of the PLA with officers whom he trusts to “fight and win wars” upon his command.

CWhat China’s critical mineral ban means for the US

06 December 2024, [Technology Review](#), James Temple

The nation has signaled it’s prepared to hit back harder still, in ways that could inflict serious economic pain on its biggest economic rival.

This week, China banned exports of several critical minerals to the US, marking the latest move in an escalating series of tit-for-tat trade restrictions between the world’s two largest economies.

In explicitly cutting off, rather than merely restricting, materials of strategic importance to the semiconductor, defense, and electric vehicle sectors, China has clearly crossed a new line in the long-simmering trade war.

At the same time, it selected minerals that won’t cripple any industries—which leaves China plenty of ammunition to inflict greater economic pain in response to any further trade restrictions that the incoming Trump administration may impose.

The president-elect recently pledged to impose an additional 10% tariff on all Chinese goods, and he floated tariff rates as high as 60% to 100% during his campaign. But China, which dominates the supply chains for numerous critical minerals essential to high-tech sectors, seems to be telegraphing that it’s prepared to hit back hard.

“It’s a sign of what China is capable of,” says Gracelin Baskaran, director of the Critical Minerals Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a bipartisan research nonprofit in Washington, DC. “Shots have been fired.”

What drove the decision?

China’s announcement directly followed the Biden administration’s decision to further restrict exports of chips and other technologies that could help China develop advanced semiconductors used in cutting-edge weapon systems, artificial intelligence, and other applications.

Throughout his presidency, Biden has enacted a series of increasingly aggressive export controls aimed at curbing China’s military strength, technological development, and growing economic power. But the latest clampdown crossed a “clear line in the sand for China,” by threatening its ability to protect national security or shift toward production of more advanced technologies, says Cory Combs, associate director at Trivium China, a research firm.

“It is very much indicative of where Beijing feels its interests lie,” he says.

What exactly did China ban?

In response to the US’s new chip export restrictions, China immediately banned exports of gallium, germanium, antimony, and so called “superhard materials” used heavily in manufacturing, arguing that they have both military and civilian applications, according to the *New York Times*. China had already placed limits on the sale of most of these goods to the US.

The nation said it may also further restrict sales of graphite, which makes up most of the material in the lithium-ion battery anodes used in electric vehicles, grid storage plants, and consumer electronics.

What will the bans do?

Experts say, for the most part, the bans won't have major economic impacts. This is in part because China already restricted exports of these minerals months ago, and also because they are mostly used for niche categories within the semiconductor industry. US imports of these materials from China have already fallen as US companies figured out new sources or substitutes for the materials.

But a recent US Geological Survey study found that outright bans on gallium and germanium by China could cut US gross domestic product by \$3.4 billion. In addition, these are materials that US politicians will certainly take note of, because they "touch on many forms of security: economic, energy, and defense," Baskaran says.

Antimony, for example, is used in "armor-piercing ammunition, night-vision goggles, infrared sensors, bullets, and precision optics," Baskaran and a colleague noted in a recent essay.

Companies rely on gallium to produce a variety of military and electronics components, including satellite systems, power converters, LEDs, and the high-powered chips used in electric vehicles. Germanium is used in fiber optics, infrared optics, and solar cells.

Before it restricted the flow of these materials, China accounted for more than half of US imports of gallium and germanium, according to the US Geological Survey. Together, China and Russia control 50% of the worldwide reserves of antimony.

How does it affect climate tech?

Any tightened restrictions on graphite could have a pronounced economic impact on US battery and EV makers, in part because there are so few other sources for it. China controls about 80% of graphite output from mines and processes around 70% of the material, according to the International Energy Agency.

"It would be very significant for batteries," says Seaver Wang, co-director of the climate and energy team at the Breakthrough Institute, where his research is focused on minerals and manufacturing supply chains. "By weight, you need way more graphite per terawatt hour than nickel, cobalt, or lithium. And the US has essentially no operating production."

Advertisement

Anything that pushes up the costs of EVs threatens to slow the shift away from gas-guzzlers in the US, as their lofty price tags remain one of the biggest hurdles for many consumers.

How does this impact China's economy?

There are real economic risks in China's decision to cut off the sale of materials it dominates, as it creates incentives for US companies to seek out new sources around the world, switch to substitute materials, and work to develop more domestic supplies where geology allows.

"The challenge China faces is that most of its techniques to increase pain by disrupting supply chains would also impact China, which itself is connected to these supply chains," says Chris Miller, a professor at Tufts University and author of *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology*.

Notably, the latest announcement could compel US companies to develop their own sources of gallium and germanium, which can be extracted as by-products of zinc and aluminum mining. There are a number of zinc mines in Alaska and Tennessee, and limited extraction of bauxite, which produces aluminum, in Arkansas, Alabama, and Georgia.

Gallium can also be recycled from numerous electronics, providing another potential domestic path for US companies, Combs notes.

The US has already taken steps to counter China's dominance over the raw ingredients of essential industries, including by issuing a \$150 million loan to an Australian company, Syrah Resources, to accelerate the development of graphite mining in Mozambique.

In addition, the mining company Perpetua Resources has proposed reopening a gold mine near Yellow Pine, Idaho, in part to extract antimony trisulfide for use in military applications. The US Department of Defense has provided tens of millions of dollars to help the company conduct environmental studies, though it will still take years for the mine to come online, noted Baskaran and her colleague.

Wang says that China's ban might prove "shortsighted," as any success in diversifying these global supply chains will weaken the nation's grip in the areas it now dominates.

What happens next?

The US is also likely to pay very high economic costs in an escalating trade war with China.

Should the nation decide to enact even stricter trade restrictions, Combs says China could opt to inflict greater economic pain on the US through a variety of means. These could include further restricting or fully banning graphite, as well other crucial battery materials like lithium; cutting off supplies of tungsten, which is used heavily in the aerospace, military, and nuclear power sectors; and halting the sale of copper, which is used in power transmission lines, solar panels, wind turbines, EVs, and many other products. China may also decide to take further steps to prevent US firms from selling their goods into the massive market of Chinese consumers and industries, Miller adds. Or it might respond to stricter export restrictions by turning to the US's economic rivals for advanced technologies.

In the end, it's not clear either nation wins in a protracted and increasingly combative trade war. But it's also not apparent that mutually assured economic damage will prove to be an effective deterrent. Indeed, China may well feel the need to impose

stricter measures in the coming months or years, as there are few signs that President-elect Trump intends to tone down his hawkish stance toward China. "It's hard to see a Trump 2.0 de-escalating with China," Baskaran says. "We're on a one-way trajectory toward continued escalation; the question is the pace and the form. It's not really an 'if' question."

China's Rules through Ideologically Indoctrinating the Youth

06 December 2024, [RTV](#)

Education is often viewed as the bedrock of critical thinking and intellectual freedom. Yet, in China, schools and universities serve a different purpose: indoctrination into the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). From the earliest stages of education to the halls of higher learning, the Chinese education system has been understood to systematically mould students to align with state narratives, enabling compliance and discouraging dissent.

In China, the education system is weaponized by the CCP to inculcate unwavering loyalty to its ideology. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Party's narratives about Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan. Through manipulating curriculums and state-controlled pedagogy, Chinese schools and universities have transformed classrooms into arenas of political indoctrination, aiming to distort histories and suppress alternative perspectives.

This systematic indoctrination has not only entrenched authoritarian control but has also perpetuated harmful stereotypes and fuelled divisions that has hindered China's relationship with the international community.

The CCP's Narratives: A Manufactured Reality

From the earliest stages of education, Chinese students are taught that Tibet and Xinjiang are 'inseparable parts' of China and that Taiwan's sovereignty is non-negotiable. School textbooks have known to whitewash histories of these regions, portraying them as historically Chinese territories and erasing the cultural and political autonomy they once held.

The CCP's narrative on Tibet emphasizes its "peaceful liberation" in 1951, a euphemism for military invasion. Students are taught that Tibet continues to be backward, yet a feudal society rescued by Chinese intervention. The realities of Tibetan resistance, the destruction of monasteries, and the suppression of Tibetan Buddhism are unsurprisingly absent from these discourses. By presenting Tibet as a grateful beneficiary of Chinese governance, the CCP's projection has attempted to reinforce its legitimacy

while silencing the Tibetan struggle for self-determination.

Similarly, in the case of Xinjiang, elementary school textbooks have emphasized economic development and ethnic harmony, downplaying the harsh realities of mass detentions, cultural erosion, and systemic repression faced by the Uyghur population. These curriculums have projected narratives emphasising how Uyghurs have benefited benefit from Beijing's policies, glossing over their lived experiences of surveillance and forced assimilation. Students are conditioned to see the CCP's actions in Xinjiang as necessary measures to combat 'extremism', showcasing a nationalistic justification for human rights abuses.

The Limits of a Controlled Narrative

The CCP's propaganda on Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan, however also does more than distort history. It has for decades bred prejudice and suppressed critical inquiry, especially when it comes to the human rights abuses the Party has conducted in these regions. By teaching students to view these regions through the lens of state ideology, the education system has entrenched harmful stereotypes and perpetuates systemic inequality.

For instance, Chinese students are been conditioned to see Tibetans and Uyghurs as 'ungrateful' or 'backward' for resisting assimilation, reinforcing societal discrimination against these groups. Similarly, the vilification of Taiwan has bred undeniable hostility that has severely undermined the possibility of peaceful cross-strait dialogue.

However, perhaps the most concerning aspect of the CCP's educational indoctrination is its suppression of dissent. Schools and universities have been equipped with surveillance systems to monitor student behaviour, and classmates are encouraged to report those who express 'unpatriotic' views, similar to practices that were exercised during the fateful 'Cultural Revolution'. This has thus created an atmosphere of fear and conformity, where self-censorship has unfortunately become the norm.

The recent crackdown on students involved in labour movements and human rights advocacy illustrates the lengths to which the Party is prepared to go to silence dissent. These students, who dared to apply the Marxist principles they were taught to contemporary labour struggles, were met with arrests and expulsions, demonstrating the CCP's hypocrisy in promoting ideology only when it serves its own interests.

The indoctrination of Chinese students has far-reaching consequences beyond China's borders. As these individuals enter global academic and professional spaces, they will carry with them a worldview shaped by CCP propaganda and Party indoctrination of views. This complicates international

dialogue on human rights, as many are unwilling, or unable, to critically engage with the realities of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan.

Moreover, the CCP's education model serves as a blueprint for authoritarian regimes worldwide, demonstrating how control over education can be weaponized to sustain power and suppress dissent. The global community must recognize this and push for academic freedom and truthful education as fundamental human rights, for if not, then it must prepare to decimate the state-propaganda machinery run by the Party and its Supremo, Xi Jinping.

India's North East & Indo-Pacific Partnerships

05 December 2024, [The Shillong Times](#)

Within a short span of time there have been two engagements on the Indo-Pacific strategic alliance in Meghalaya. The first was initiated by the American Consulate Kolkata in collaboration with Observer Research Foundation. This week the UK High Commissioner to India, Lindy Cameron and her colleague Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner, Kolkata. It may be mentioned that the Indo-Pacific strategic alliance is led by the US and includes Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. While the newly elected US President Donald Trump and outgoing President Joe Biden disagree on most issues, one area of consensus is the Indo-Pacific. During Trump's first term in office, in 2019 he and his team published the Indo-Pacific Strategy, which sought to maintain a "free and open" region primarily through strengthening alliances and partnerships to counter China. When Biden entered office in 2021, he doubled down on his predecessor's approach. President Trump is known to be unpredictable with his international relations and is known to be transactional more than pragmatic and far-sighted. There were times he praised the Indo-Pacific allies and times when he tried strong-arm tactics with them but as far as the Indo-Pacific alliance is concerned he was consistent in his approach of treading with enhanced diplomatic sensitivities. Kamala Harris, the Democrat candidate who lost to Donald Trump in the just concluded US elections during her campaign emphasized continuity with the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy. It was Late Abe Shinzo the former prime minister of Japan who probably convinced Trump to shift from an Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific focus, which would include India and the Indian Ocean Region as part of a collective strategy to counter China. Japan was also an advocate for reviving the Quad, a diplomatic partnership between Australia, India, Japan and the United States with the commitment to support an open, stable, prosperous, inclusive and resilient Indo-

Pacific. Japan made these moves because, during Trump's tenure, it worried about its years-long standoff over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea (also claimed by China, which calls them the Diaoyu Islands). Japan was also concerned about North Korea, which in 2017 fired ballistic missiles over its territory. Since Biden came to office, Japan has shifted its attention farther south to the Taiwan Strait. Japan believes that a conflict there could impact the security of its southwestern Ryukyu Island chain. The Indo-Pacific Strategic Alliance much like the Quad is seen as a mechanism for balancing China's influence in the region, although its members have stressed that it is not a military alliance and is open to other countries who share their values and interests. It is interesting why India's North East has become the focal point here. True the North East shares 1395 kilometres with China in the North and the latter has had an abiding interest in Arunachal Pradesh by refusing to issue visas to residents of that state because it claims Arunachal Pradesh is part of South Tibet. In fact China's overarching influence in the Indo-Pacific region and in recent times its attempts to woo countries inimical to India are what makes the Indo-Pacific Strategic Alliance an important diplomatic initiative.

China's assimilationist tactic towards Tibetan children (IANS Analysis)

04 December 2024, [CTA](#)

Tibet has been under Chinese control since 1951, a situation often described by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as "liberation". This annexation has not only involved territorial claims but has also encompassed significant social, economic, and cultural dimensions.

The CCP's approach to Tibet serves as a revealing example of its broader governance strategies towards officially recognised ethnic and religious minorities within China. For over seven decades, the treatment of Tibetans reflects the complexities of China's deep state and its assimilationist policies, which have profoundly affected Tibetan identity and autonomy.

Tibetans, who represent approximately 90.48 per cent of the population in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), are distinguished by their unique cultural and religious practices. Since the annexation, China has consistently asserted that Tibet is an "integral part" of its territory and has implemented various policies aimed at assimilating the Tibetan population. [Click here](#) to read more.

Xi's "China Dream" Proves a Hard Sell

04 December 2024, [Asia Society Policy Institute](#)

Xi's "China Dream" Proves a Hard Sell



Greg Baker/AFP via Getty Images
December 4th, 2024

Key Findings

- Over the past two years, growing evidence suggests that increasing numbers of Chinese people are not buying Xi Jinping's "China Dream" and are seeking brighter futures elsewhere.
- The number of people emigrating or seeking asylum overseas has spiked under Xi, as has the amount of private capital leaving China.
- Concerns about a lack of opportunities in a time of economic decline, restrictions on political expression, the party's more aggressive attempts at coercion, erosion of trust in the party, and pessimism about the future have contributed to the exodus of people and capital.
- More Chinese people now feel that the country is moving in the wrong direction and the potential for a course change is slim and are "voting with their feet."

When Xi Jinping first assumed leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) a decade ago, he tried selling the "China Dream" — a vision of the country reclaiming its rightful place in history as the world's greatest power — but today, an increasing number of Chinese people no longer buy it. Since the end of strict zero-COVID policies in late 2022, the number of Chinese people leaving the country has rapidly climbed, as has the amount of private capital exiting through both legal and illegal means. A new social discourse is now in vogue: "*runxue*" — which is code for "to run away."

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of Chinese citizens seeking political asylum overseas climbed to 120,000 in 2023, a more than twelvefold increase since the time of Xi's predecessor, Hu Jintao. In 2023, the U.S. Border Patrol registered 24,314 Chinese citizens illegally entering through southern California and Texas, a number that

climbed to 35,399 in the first seven months of 2024. These illegal immigrants took the "walking route": first entering Ecuador visa-free (until the privilege was recently rescinded), then navigating treacherous paths, including the notorious Darien Gap, through half a dozen Central American countries before entering the United States through Mexico. These numbers represent a substantial increase from the meager 1,500 illegal entries during the Hu era.

Likewise, studies suggest that since the pandemic, the amount of private capital leaving China through legal and illegal means has risen significantly, to a staggering \$738 billion in the third quarter of 2022. Despite strict capital controls, Chinese money has purchased luxury properties in Singapore, Vancouver, and London. Some of these financial outflows are facilitated by Chinese underground bankers and intermediated through criminal syndicates in the United States that control large sums of cash.

What explains the exodus of people and capital from China? What does it mean for Xi Jinping's regime? In general, citizens of autocratic countries, such as Iran and Russia, have little faith in their government's ability to protect their personal safety or private property. China has proven an exception to this rule since the economic reforms of the late 1970s. But things are changing.

Despite growing income inequality, many Chinese citizens have experienced rising prosperity since the early 1980s. The transformative changes in the post-Mao era enabled them to enjoy personal freedoms and economic opportunities unimaginable a generation prior. Growth-minded local officials became complicit in rule evasions that allowed private businesses to flourish in spite of the lack of protection for private property rights. Deng Xiaoping's dictum "to get rich is glorious" removed the stigma associated with private wealth accumulation. CCP cadres were incentivized to prioritize GDP growth above all else. Party officials and government bureaucrats were given a stake in economic growth and benefited professionally — and often personally — from rising prosperity. Corruption was rife, and distribution could be unequal, but everyone, from rural migrants to the urban middle class to privileged elites, got a slice of the growing economic pie.

Prior to Xi's reign, Chinese citizens may not have enjoyed political liberty, but the system allowed them to express their economic grievances, even if they were not always satisfactorily addressed. Protests about livelihood issues — wage arrears, land grabs, housing demolitions, and homeowners' complaints — were commonplace and largely tolerated as long as they were small in scale and geographically isolated. Until Xi tightened online censorship, netizens enjoyed a measure of freedom to roam within the Great

Firewall and express their views on a wide range of social issues.

However, much has changed since Xi's ascent to power in 2013, and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. As I argue in the concluding chapter of my 2022 book, *Outsourcing Repression*, the government regularly engaged, since Mao's era, nonstate actors such as trusted local community members to enforce compliance and mobilize citizens for state objectives. This has now given way to direct coercion under Xi. The past decade has seen widespread crackdowns on civil society organizations, activists apprehended, and tighter security measures introduced not only in Hong Kong and Xinjiang but broadly across Chinese society. Accordingly, the social compliance to everyday repression exercised by trusted nonstate actors has been replaced by various forms of resistance.

These dynamics played out during the two-year zero-COVID lockdown and its aftermath. As I wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in January 2023, though stringent, the lockdown policies executed by trusted community leaders and neighborhood committees yielded widespread compliance and societal acceptance in the first eighteen months. When the virus mutated to the rapidly transmissible Delta variant, the grassroots community could no longer cope with delivering essential items to residents, and food shortages occurred in Shanghai and elsewhere. In summer 2022, some people began to vent their anger online. The resistance spread to retail owners whose incomes were affected by the lockdown. The Urumqi fire that killed scores of people further ignited the "White Paper" protests on elite campuses and in major cities. These protests, together with the erosion of government income from lockdown measures, quickly led to the abrupt abandonment of the zero-COVID policy.

After the pandemic, economic decline and diminishing political space resulted in changes to the social contract. The implicit pact between the party-state and its people has long demanded political acquiescence and tolerance of income inequality in exchange for economic prosperity. As long as family incomes grew, demands for political rights were circumscribed, and tolerance for inequality remained high. However, once income growth stagnated, people began to question the system and, in particular, why certain groups were getting ahead and claiming a disproportionately larger share of the pie. In a system where people cannot effectively voice their grievances without inviting trouble, those who have the means have decided to "vote with their feet." Post-pandemic, those who lack the means to leave have opted to "lie flat" (*tangping*). Urbanites quit stressful jobs to move to the countryside, and increasing numbers of young people seek secure government posts and an "iron rice

bowl" — a term indicating a career with guaranteed job security.

Critically, more people in China are pessimistic about the future. The current economic decline does not appear cyclical, and altering the Chinese economy's trajectory will require fundamental changes that better allocate resources and reward effort. The abolition of presidential term limits in 2018 signaled to many Chinese people that the country was moving in the wrong direction. Worse still, the protracted zero-COVID lockdown, as well as the excess and preventable deaths from the policy's abrupt abandonment, convinced many that they could no longer trust the CCP to protect their lives and private property. Consequently, more people have given up on the China Dream, and many of them are heading for the exits.

To defend Taiwan tomorrow, we must prepare to sanction China today

03 December 2024, [The Hill](#), Max Meizlish and Elaine Dezenski

Taiwan is reportedly considering a \$15 billion military package as an overture to President-elect Donald Trump. This comes just as the island nation agreed to spend over \$2 billion in American weapons purchases next year. While such agreements may serve to warm relations with an incoming Trump administration and strengthen Taiwan's military against an increasingly belligerent China, they will do little to address Beijing's biggest vulnerability in a potential conflict with Taiwan — its "soft economic underbelly." This provides Trump a historic opportunity to not just support Taiwan militarily, but to capitalize on the deepening cracks in China's economy that make it vulnerable to powerful, proactively developed American economic statecraft.

Slow growth, an unraveling real estate market, significant youth unemployment and plummeting foreign direct investment reveal deep vulnerabilities that threaten the Chinese Communist Party. These economic fissures give the United States and its allies a strategic opportunity: by publicly outlining the severe sanctions, export controls and investment restrictions China would face if it invades Taiwan, we can slow the pace of Chinese hostilities toward Taiwan — or even prevent them altogether. However, to ensure this approach succeeds, we must learn from recent history and act before it's too late.

The war in Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of the costs of delayed action. In the aftermath of Russia's invasion more than two-and-a-half years ago, the United States and a coalition of allied governments united to impose significant sanctions on Moscow.

Since then, the United States, European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Japan and others have collectively imposed nearly 20,000 sanctions on Russia. Yet, these measures were — and continue to be — too late to deter aggression.

It didn't have to unfold this way.

Following Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, the international community could have publicly committed to impose significantly more drastic economic measures on Russia if it made further incursions into Ukrainian territory. By clearly outlining the severe economic consequences of further aggression, the deterrent effect might have altered the Kremlin's calculus.

Deterrence relies on the credible threat of significant repercussions, and pre-announced sanctions could have increased the perceived costs of invasion beyond acceptable levels for Russia. Nearly a decade later, approximately 1 million people have been killed or injured in the Russia-Ukraine war — and the conflict rages on. We must learn from that grave oversight and proactively plan to sanction key sectors of the Chinese economy if China invades Taiwan.

To the detriment of our national security, targets of economic statecraft are often identified only after a conflict has erupted. This reactive approach places incredible pressure on already under-resourced federal agencies responsible for executing this critical function. Planning for these eventualities must be done as early as possible. Our military forces regularly wargame scenarios for potential conflict and identify targets of attack; our economic security apparatus should do the same.

Some of these targets should be publicly identified to exert pressure on Beijing. Specific industries and major firms central to the Chinese Communist Party's control can be spotlighted now, overtly increasing the potential cost of any action China may take against Taiwan. Third-country firms operating in China will also take note. The threat of possible secondary sanctions may compel them to reconsider doing business as usual if the United States communicates such intentions before a conflict arises. This proactive approach would represent a profound shift in our application of economic statecraft.

Legislation like the Sanctions Targeting Aggressors of Neighboring Democracies (STAND) with Taiwan Act is a significant step in the right direction. By proposing substantial sanctions on China in the event of a military invasion of Taiwan, the STAND Act sends a clear and credible message. It lays the groundwork for a deterrent strategy that could dissuade Beijing from taking aggressive actions by making the consequences unmistakably clear.

Historically, we have lacked a coherent strategy for deploying the disparate set of economic tools at our disposal. More critically, our government has not fully

embraced economic statecraft as an effective deterrent. Many question the effectiveness of sanctions, but few consider how they could be more impactful if target states and market actors understood the conditions under which sanctions would be imposed before a conflict begins. Publicly stating these conditions and, importantly, preparing for the possibility that they are met should at the very least demonstrate a credible threat to our adversaries and prompt considerable market derisking from the private sector.

For an adversary like China, which faces significant economic headwinds, this is precisely the path the United States should pursue. While imposing severe sanctions on China would have substantial repercussions for the United States and its allies given the deep interconnections in global supply chains and trade, these costs may be a necessary price to prevent a catastrophic conflict over Taiwan. Such a conflict could destabilize the entire Indo-Pacific region and disrupt global markets far more severely than any sanctions regime.

We must also anticipate and prepare for potential countermeasures from China, such as restricting access to critical rare earth minerals or disrupting global supply chains. By investing in alternative sources, building strategic reserves, and ally-shoring with international partners to enhance economic resilience, we can reduce our vulnerability and demonstrate our readiness to withstand retaliatory actions.

While it's true that sanctions alone may not always compel an aggressor to change course, they can strain a nation's economy and limit its ability to sustain prolonged conflict. In China's case, where economic stability is paramount for the regime's domestic legitimacy, the threat of substantial sanctions could serve as a powerful deterrent and increase the likelihood that cooler heads will prevail within the Chinese Communist Party leadership.

Alongside economic sanctions, the United States should continue to increase economic support for Taiwan, enhance our military presence in the region, and engage in diplomatic efforts to create a multifaceted deterrent. By taking these proactive steps, we can send an unequivocal message to Beijing: Aggression against Taiwan will come at an unbearable cost.

Trump's tariff war 2.0 looms. And China isn't just watching

01 December 2024, [Deccan Herald](#)

President-elect Donald Trump's announcement last week to impose tariffs on Mexico, Canada, and China has rattled the countries concerned as well as the

global markets. Mexico has already spoken about retaliatory tariffs. However, China's response is going to be more concerted: defy and increase costs for the US, divide Trump's camp, diversify trade towards the Global South, build a "united front" with like-minded countries, make tactical concessions to neighbours on core interests, or even tempt a grand bargain with Trump.

On November 25, Trump stated that he will impose 25% taxes on products from Mexico and Canada, and an additional 10% tariffs on goods from China as his first measure after taking over as the President in January. This is in addition to the 60% tariffs on all goods from China that Trump mentioned in his election campaign.

This is a significant development as these three countries are the largest exporters to the US with Mexican exports to the US in 2023 touching \$480 billion, Canadian \$440 billion while that of the Chinese more than \$500 billion. Trump also linked this issue to any progress on curbing the smuggling of fentanyl drug from China, and immigrants. Fentanyl kills over 100,000 Americans every year.

One of the friction points is trade surpluses. The US had trade surpluses against China only in 1979, when a trade agreement was signed between the two countries, till 1981, with a balance of nearly \$4 billion. However, since 1982, when the third communique was signed between the two countries, China had an uninterrupted surplus posted against the US – cumulatively to a whopping figure of nearly \$7 trillion. China's trade surpluses with the US turned from double figures to triple figures consistently since China joined the World Trade Organisation after the then Clinton Administration extended support. China consistently denied access to many of its domestic segments not only to the US and European Union members but also to Indian pharma and software sectors.

China is no stranger to tariff increases on its exports. Trump, during his first term, imposed tariffs ranging up to 25% since 2018 on Chinese goods worth \$360 billion. The Biden Administration continued tariffs on China, in addition to announcing 100% tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles. China retaliated by imposing tariffs on US goods like soya bean, pork, and other products. However, according to a study conducted by Fudan University researchers at Shanghai, it damaged China's economy more than that of the US. China's manufacturing export profits will be drastically curtailed. Its economic growth forecasts have been lowered to nearly 3%. The country is already facing headwinds due to growing unemployment, sluggish domestic consumption, local debt, real estate bust, and low manufacturing output.

While China's immediate response to the tariff hike has been mild and defensive, it is likely to adopt a

multi-pronged approach to address the looming trade war. President Xi Jinping issued "red lines" to President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the 31st Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting at Lima on November 16, emphasising on China's path of development. China's commerce ministry released a slew of measures five days before the new tariff announcement to help the country's export sector including credit insurance coverage, financial support, and enhanced cross-border e-trade.

China is likely to diversify trade towards the Global South. In September, China organised the Forum on China Africa Cooperation by inviting leaders from 51 countries. Today, it is Africa's largest trading partner (\$282 billion). At the meeting, China also signed deals to export EVs and solar panels to Africa. While China is pitching Africa against the US, Beijing is also aware that 22 African countries are in debt to China. Likewise, China's trade with South America increased to \$489 billion.

Expecting a hardline posture from Trump, China is making tactical adjustments with major powers in Asia, notably India, Japan, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Even before the US elections, on October 23, Xi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. Two days earlier, China agreed to disengage troops at Depsang Plains and Demchok. Xi also met Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on November 15 on the margins of the APEC meeting in Lima. On October 22, China promised to withdraw the drifting buoys at Japanese-administered Senkaku islands.

Apart from these softening approaches, a pragmatic faction in the Communist Party of China may also make a grand bargain with Trump. They suggest that entering into business deals with Trump can help overcome trade frictions, as China did in his first term with \$250 billion in offers. Meanwhile, there are others who believe that Premier Li Qiang's closeness to Elon Musk and Musk's businesses in Shanghai can be leveraged.

Will Tibetans be led by a Reincarnated Dalai Lama, or One Picked by China?

01 December 2024, [Economy Next](#)

Chemi Lhamo, Campaign Director of Free Tibet would like to see more international support for preserving the Tibetan way of life and Dharma.

Citing The Resolve Tibet Act, which US President Joe Biden signed into law in June this year, Ms Lhamo added that she was optimistic that European countries that constantly speak on human rights would not hesitate to pass similar legislation in support of Tibet. Tibet has been under the control of China since 1951, with a government in exile, also known as the Central

Tibetan Administration being set up in neighbouring India, by the 14th Dalai Lama following the Lhasa uprising of 1959.

Though he divested himself of all political authority in 2011, the Dalai Lama, who turned 89 this year, continues to be the spiritual head of Tibetans, who consider him the living incarnation of the Buddha. The search for a new Dalai Lama begins when he passes away, by senior disciples who look for visions and signs to identify the successor.

China meanwhile, insists it has the right to pick the next Dalai Lama.

Apart from that, there is the contentious issue of what's referred to as 'residential schools' and described by the UN as a "compulsory education curriculum in the Mandarin Chinese language, or Putonghua, with no access to traditional or culturally-relevant learning." But China disagrees. They claim it is preparing Tibetan children for a future where the language of communication will be Mandarin.

Speaking at a web talk organised by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation South Asia, on November 20, 2024, Ms Lhamo pointed out that reincarnation and religion are personal issues and 'no other external entity, China in this case, has the right or in fact to interfere with the process.' Even as refugees, Tibetans enjoy 'democracy without borders' and she is confident that their culture and Dharma will stand the test of time.

The web talk 'The Future of Tibetan Leadership' was moderated by Dr Anna Sawerthal, Editor of Der Standard, Austria and included the Ven Geshe Lakhdor, Director, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, Professor Anand Kumar, President of the India- Tibet Friendship Society and Tenzin Desal, Senior Research Fellow at the Tibet Policy Institute as panellists.

Reincarnation, says Ven Geshe Lakhdor, is the root of Buddhist teaching, it is not blind faith. The China policy is 'short-sighted,' he adds, alleging that it is an attempt to destroy Tibet's identity.

When the Dalai Lama divested himself of the political aspect of things, it was to prepare Tibetans to function as though he was already gone, explained Ven Geshe Lakhdor, adding it was the Dalai Lama's wish that Tibet should not be led by a religious figure. The Dalai Lama also believes that reposing too much power in one individual is risky. In that context, Ven Geshe Lakhdor hopes for better political awareness among Tibetans. If they are to unite against Chinese influence, they must also shed their regional and tribal differences, Ven Geshe Lakhdor opines. In a digital world it is not difficult to bring people together, he says, pointing out that staying united is the key to outlasting dictatorial systems built on oppression.

Indians, says Anand Kumar, are generally supportive of Tibetans, but there are concerns about a post-Dalai

Lama scenario. Would India, which has taken a middle path continue in the same vein? Could India successfully facilitate a smooth transition, he asks.

He also points to the possibility of differences of opinions among Tibetans themselves; those living in Tibet may have different aspirations from those in exile, and again, Tibetans residing in India might think differently to those in Europe and the USA. A 'plurality of perspectives and clear lines of communication among Tibetans in exile,' is important, he says.

Meanwhile, Tenzin Desal explains that China is markedly visible in the everyday lives of Tibetans through infrastructure projects and promoting the idea that Tibet is a part of China.

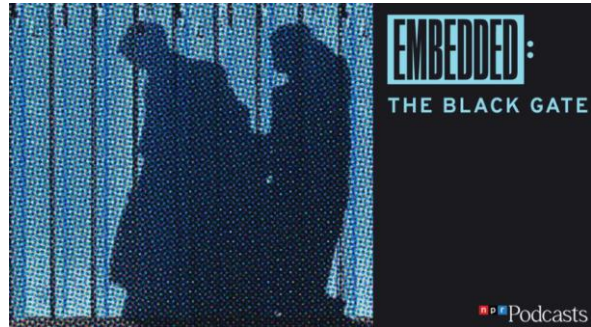
However, the Dalai Lama has created the institutional framework for open discussion both within and outside Tibet on the devolution of power and the future of Tibet. An important feature is that those within and outside Tibet converse with each other, and the integrity of purpose of those in exile has never been questioned by Tibetans living in Tibet.

Addressing the web talk, the current political leader of the executive branch (Kashag) of the CTA, Sikyong Penpa Tsering said reincarnation is unique to Tibetan Buddhism and religious activities are observed as enshrined by the Dalai Lama. While encouraged by the support of the USA, they were hopeful that more countries would endorse their cause. The Dalai Lama, had, in September 2011 been emphatic that no government or individual could interfere in Tibetan affairs.

In a video message, Sandra Weeser, Member of the Bundestag reiterated that while the international community advocates for the rights of Tibetans, it must also be vigilant that the process of transition is free from external forces.

The Black Gate: Vanished in the Night

05 December 2024, NPR, Emily Feng



Luke Medina for NPR

Publications

In the Xinjiang region of western China, the government has rounded up and detained hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups. Many haven't been heard from in years, and more still are desperately searching for their families. Western governments have called this crackdown a cultural genocide and a possible crime against humanity.

In this episode, the first of a three-part series, NPR correspondent Emily Feng tells the story of one of those people. For years, a Uyghur man named Abdullatif Kucar had no idea what has happened to his wife and young children after they were detained by Chinese authorities. Emily follows Kucar as he desperately searches for his family.

But this story is bigger than one family. In this series, Emily also travels across Asia and dives into decades of history to uncover the massive Chinese surveillance of Uyghurs, getting exclusive interviews with the people suffering from that surveillance and the people upholding it – who sometimes are one and the same.