

# TIBET DIGEST

FEBRUARY 2025

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- February Tibet Digest

February saw intensified repression in Tibet, with escalated political indoctrination, cultural suppression, and environmental threats. Schools reopened under stricter patriotic education mandates, erasing Tibetan language courses and forcing teachers to prove they do not teach religion. Over 1,000 monks were expelled from Larung Gar Academy as part of China's continued crackdown on Tibetan Buddhist institutions. Meanwhile, Beijing's large-scale infrastructure projects and policies further eroded Tibet's ecology and cultural identity, with hydropower projects linked to increased seismic risks. The University of Bern's decision to shut down its Tibetology courses marked another setback for Tibetan cultural preservation. Amid rising concerns, a Human Rights Watch report exposed the CCP's deepening repression, detailing arbitrary detentions and mass surveillance targeting Tibetans and Uyghurs. The U.S. Secretary of State extended Losar greetings to Tibetans worldwide, reaffirming support for their cultural and religious rights. However, China's suppression extended beyond Tibet, with over two dozen Uyghur teachers imprisoned in Xinjiang as part of a broader purge of intellectuals. Despite these challenges, researchers continued to highlight Tibet's ecological vulnerabilities, warning that climate change threatens to displace native flora and disrupt fragile alpine ecosystems.

# FOUNDATION FOR Non-violent Alternatives

An Initiative for Developing Peace Studies

## CCP'S Tibet Policies

**China Intensifies Patriotic Education in Tibet as Schools Reopen:** Chinese authorities have escalated patriotic education in Tibetan schools, imposing stricter political indoctrination and banning religious practices. Teachers must submit monthly reports proving they do not teach religion, while Tibetan language courses are being systematically eliminated.

**Two Senior Tibetan Officials from Yunnan Expelled from CCP:** Former Dechen governor Qi Jianxin and vice governor Jangchup have been dismissed from the Chinese Communist Party and public office for alleged "serious violations of discipline." Their cases have been referred for prosecution, with indications of broader anti-corruption purges targeting Tibetan officials.

**Wang Junzheng Prepares Party Officials for 60th Anniversary of Tibet's Dismemberment:** Chinese officials are gearing up to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. Communist Party Secretary Wang Junzheng emphasized efforts to enforce Sinicization, increase Mandarin-language instruction, and align Tibetan Buddhism with socialist policies.

**Onerous Requirements Bar Tibetans, Uyghurs from Obtaining Chinese Passports:** A Human Rights Watch report highlights how Chinese authorities impose extreme restrictions on Tibetans and Uyghurs seeking passports, effectively preventing their freedom of movement. This policy disproportionately targets ethnic minorities under the pretext of national security and fraud prevention.

**Chinese Actress Zhao Lusi's Tibet Charity Work Sparks Debate:** Chinese actress Zhao Lusi, known for her roles in popular dramas, has engaged in philanthropy following her recovery from depression. She discreetly organized relief supplies for victims of the Dingri earthquake and participated in a charity program in Tibet. While some admire her efforts, others question whether her charity work is genuine or a publicity stunt.

**Tibetan Boarding Schools Used for Cultural Assimilation:** Sociologist Gyal Lo reveals that China's boarding schools for Tibetan children focus on instilling communist ideology and Mandarin over Tibetan language and culture. The Chinese government claims these schools provide educational opportunities, but critics warn they are erasing Tibetan identity, with around 800,000 Tibetan children affected.

**Secretly Filmed Documentary Exposes Tibet's Harsh Reality:** A UK journalist secretly filmed a documentary revealing China's strict surveillance, forced assimilation, and human rights abuses in Tibet. The documentary,

aired on ITV, showcases footage of police checkpoints, child abuse in boarding schools, and Tibetans imprisoned for possessing images of the Dalai Lama. China attempted to block its release, calling it biased.

**UN Report Highlights China's Forced Labor in Tibet and Xinjiang:** A UN report exposes China's state-led labor programs targeting Tibetans and Uyghurs, forcing rural workers into industries like solar panel production, battery manufacturing, and agriculture. These programs, presented as poverty alleviation, are seen as coercive measures to dismantle traditional livelihoods and control ethnic minorities.

**China Open to Talks on Dalai Lama's Future, but with Conditions:** China has expressed willingness to discuss the future of His Holiness the Dalai Lama but insists he must recognize Tibet and Taiwan as parts of China. The Dalai Lama, who turns 90 in July, has long opposed Chinese interference in Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations. A crucial meeting of Tibetan Buddhist leaders in July 2025 is expected to address the future of the Dalai Lama institution amid China's growing control over the reincarnation process.

**China Intensifies Digital Repression in Tibet, New Report Finds:** A report by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy highlights increasing digital repression in Tibet, including the shutdown of Tibetan-language online platforms and arrests of intellectuals. Internet regulations and censorship have led to severe restrictions on free speech, with Tibetan cultural content frequently removed. The report documents cases of Tibetan writers and activists facing lengthy prison sentences and urges China to align its laws with international human rights standards.

**China Censoring Information on Forest Fires Raging Across Tibet:** China is accused of censoring details on four forest fires burning across Tibet, including in Kyirong near the Nepal border. Despite the fires remaining uncontrolled for over ten days, authorities have limited emergency responses and restricted local residents from sharing information online. Satellite images confirm the extent of the damage, while Tibetans express frustration over the lack of firefighting efforts.

**China Intensifies Crackdown on Tibetan Schools:** The Chinese government is shutting down private educational institutions promoting Tibetan language and culture. Human Rights Watch reported that Jigme Gyaltzen Vocational High School, affiliated with Ragya Monastery in Golok, was closed in July 2024. Authorities also reportedly disappeared senior lama Humkar Dorje Rinpoche and detained another, Khenpo Tenpa Dargye. At least five similar vocational schools have been closed since 2021, forcing Tibetan children into state-run institutions where Chinese is the primary language, and political indoctrination is widespread.

**Chinese Authorities Shutter Schools in Eastern Tibet:** The Chinese government continues its crackdown on Tibetan-run educational institutions, shutting down Jigme Gyaltzen Vocational High School in Golok in July 2024. The school had been a key center for Tibetan language and culture for three decades. In December, high lama Humkar Dorje Rinpoche, who founded a similar school, was reported missing, suspected of being forcibly disappeared. Authorities previously detained another senior lama, Khenpo Tenpa Dargye, and his followers. At least five similar schools have been closed since 2021, with students now required to attend state-run institutions where Chinese is the primary language, political indoctrination is widespread, and reports indicate military training for Tibetan children.

**First Female Pilot in China's Xizang (Tibet) Joins PLA Air Force:** Kelsang Pedron, from Tibet Autonomous Region, has become the first female pilot recruited by the PLA Air Force, marking a milestone for women in China's traditionally male-dominated sectors. The labor force participation rate of Chinese women has risen significantly since 1949, with increasing numbers in fields like aviation, tech, and diplomacy. The Chinese government has introduced policies to support women's employment and career development, aiming to create a more inclusive workforce.

## Buddhism

**University of Bern to Shut Down Tibetan Language and Culture Courses:** The University of Bern, the last Swiss institution offering Tibetology courses, will discontinue its Tibetan culture and classical language classes from the fall semester. The university cited low student enrollment and faculty restructuring as reasons for the closure, sparking concern among scholars and Switzerland's Tibetan community.

**Over 1,000 Monks Expelled from Larung Gar Academy:** Chinese authorities have expelled over 1,000 monks and nuns from the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy, citing a lack of proper residency papers. This move is part of a broader crackdown on Tibetan Buddhist institutions, with further demolitions and restrictions expected.

**China's Fake Buddhist Relics and the Exploitation of Buddhism:** China has been accused of using fabricated Buddhist relics, including a questionable "Buddha Tooth Relic" sent to Thailand, as tools for soft power. The Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama's involvement in religious ceremonies further highlights Beijing's efforts to manipulate Buddhist traditions for political influence.

**China Tightens Control Over Tibetan Buddhism with New Law:** China has introduced new legal measures to strengthen state control over Tibetan Buddhism, enforcing political loyalty and cultural assimilation. The updated *Measures for the Administration of Tibetan Buddhist Temples*, enacted on January 1, 2025, integrates political directives into religious administration. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) reports that these measures undermine constitutional religious protections and pressure Tibetan Buddhists to conform to Han Chinese identity. Authorities have intensified restrictions through patriotic education campaigns, strict monastic controls, and arbitrary detentions.

## State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

**Study Reveals How Climate Change Impacts Tibetan Flora Diversity:** A study analysing satellite data and fossil pollen records highlights how past climate fluctuations have shaped the Tibetan Plateau's endemic flora. The research warns that ongoing climate change could drive tree species to higher altitudes, reducing biodiversity and threatening fragile alpine ecosystems. Conservation strategies, including habitat corridors, are recommended to mitigate these risks.

**China's Repressive Policies Threaten Tibet's Ecological, Cultural Future:** Beijing's large infrastructure projects and policies of cultural suppression are accelerating Tibet's environmental and social crises. Reports link China's hydroelectric projects on the Yarlung Tsangpo River to increased seismic risks, while state-run boarding schools systematically erode Tibetan identity. Experts warn that these policies could have devastating long-term consequences for Tibet's ecology and people.

**China's Disastrous Summer Floods Linked to Unusually Warm Spring in Tibet:** A study finds that record-high spring temperatures in Tibet contributed to severe summer flooding in southern China. The findings suggest a connection between warm Tibetan springs and intensified East Asian monsoons, increasing flood risks in China and Japan. Researchers stress the need for climate adaptation strategies to mitigate future disasters.

**China Launches New Joint Venture to Exploit Qinghai's Rich Salt Lake Resources:** A new state-backed venture aims to expand lithium and potash extraction from Qinghai's salt lakes, which are located in historically Tibetan regions. The project aligns with Beijing's push for resource security but raises concerns over environmental degradation and the exploitation of Tibet's natural wealth for China's industrial needs.

**Forest Fires Across Tibetan Regions: Chinese Authorities Limit Response** Four major forest fires have erupted across Tibet and Sichuan, with the most severe in Kyirong county near Nepal's border, burning 40 square kilometers since Jan. 23. Chinese authorities have deployed minimal firefighters, and local residents face restrictions on sharing information. The fires threaten rich biodiversity, including rare tree species and medicinal plants.

**China's Yarlung Tsangpo Super-Dam Raises Earthquake Risks:** China's construction of the world's largest hydropower dam in Tibet's Metog County, near India's border, has raised concerns over seismic risks and environmental damage. A report from the Institute for Security and Development Policy warns of irreversible landscape changes and increased earthquake risks, with the dam's impact on water flow affecting both Tibetans and downstream nations like India and Bangladesh.

**Dam Construction Threatens Tibet's Environment and Stability:** China's aggressive dam-building projects in Tibet, including the Yarlung Tsangpo super-dam, have drawn criticism for altering natural landscapes and

displacing Tibetan communities. Reports highlight forced relocations, suppression of protests, and concerns over water security in South and Southeast Asia. Despite warnings of potential disasters, Beijing continues its expansion of hydroelectric projects.

## Tibet in Exile

**US Secretary of State Extends Losar Greetings to Tibetans Worldwide:** On the occasion of Losar, the Tibetan New Year, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio extended his warmest wishes to the Tibetan community. Acknowledging Tibetans' strength and perseverance, he reaffirmed the US commitment to protecting their fundamental rights and preserving their cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage. He wished Tibetans worldwide peace and prosperity in the Year of the Wood Snake.

**The Silent Flames of Resistance: Remembering Tapey, the First Tibetan to Self-immolate inside Tibet** Tapey, a monk from Kirti Monastery, became the first Tibetan to self-immolate inside Tibet in 2009 after Chinese authorities cancelled a prayer ceremony. His act ignited a wave of self-immolation protests against China's repression of Tibetan religion and culture. Chinese security forces shot Tapey while he was engulfed in flames, and he was later held incommunicado. Since then, 157 Tibetans have self-immolated, yet China has responded with increased repression rather than addressing Tibetan grievances. International bodies have urged China to respect Tibetan rights, but repression, forced assimilation, and cultural erasure continue.

**Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the 16th Kashag Greet Tibetans on Losar, Tibetan New Year 2152** Sikyong Penpa Tsering extended Losar greetings to Tibetans worldwide, highlighting the challenges Tibetans face under Chinese rule, including restricted freedoms and environmental destruction. He emphasized the importance of collective action, dialogue, and international advocacy in resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict. While acknowledging a small political victory with U.S. legislation supporting Tibet, he stressed the need for continued efforts to safeguard Tibetan identity. He urged Tibetans to remain united, adaptable, and committed to the struggle, especially as the responsibility shifts to the younger generation.

### **Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile Greet Tibetans on Losar, Tibetan New Year 2152**

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel extended Losar greetings, recognizing Tibetans' resilience in preserving their language, culture, and religion despite 66 years in exile. He called for continued efforts in exile with international support and emphasized unity in fulfilling the Dalai Lama's vision. As His Holiness turns 90 this year, he encouraged Tibetans to engage in virtuous acts and meritorious activities to honor his legacy and strengthen the Tibetan cause.

**Parliamentarian Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen to Attend 60th Founding Anniversary of Odisha's Tibetan Settlement:** Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen, a member of the standing committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, will attend the 60th anniversary of the Phuntsokling Tibetan settlement in Odisha from 3 to 4 March 2025 as a special guest.

**NYC Embraces Losar and Tibetan Language, Showing Vitality of Tibetan Communities in the United States:** New York City has officially recognized Losar as a holiday, marking a milestone for Tibetan and Himalayan communities. The city has also launched a Tibetan-language Facebook page for immigrant affairs, reflecting the growing influence of Tibetan-Americans in politics, education, and cultural preservation.

**British Museum Removed 'Xizang' Label from Silk Roads Exhibition About Tibet:** The British Museum revised its labelling of Tibetan artifacts after criticism from Tibetan activists, removing the term "Xizang," which is promoted by Beijing. The museum initially defended its choice but later confirmed it would consult experts on Tibetan history in future exhibitions.

**Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche Confers Amitayus Long Life Empowerment at Delhi Samyeling:** Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche bestowed the long-life empowerment of Buddha Amitayus in Delhi, following a request from local Tibetan organizations. The ceremony included prayers for recent earthquake victims in Tibet and the late Gyalo Thondup, elder brother of the Dalai Lama.

**Tibetan Community Protests in Geneva as 58th UNHRC Session Opens, Highlighting Human Rights Violations in Tibet:** Tibetans in Switzerland protested at the UN headquarters in Geneva, condemning China's human rights abuses in Tibet. UN High Commissioner Volker Türk emphasized the need to uphold human rights. Protesters highlighted forced assimilation, religious persecution, and repression, urging international action against China's policies.

**"No Losar Celebration Until Tibet is Free": Former Tibetan Political Prisoner to Stage Hunger Strike at European Parliament on Losar:** Former Tibetan political prisoner Tenpa Dhargyal will continue his Losar protest, refusing to celebrate until Tibet is free. He will stage a hunger strike and a peace march at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, calling for global support. His protest coincides with the CTA's call for subdued Losar celebrations in solidarity with Tingri earthquake victims.

**Over 350,000 Sign Petition Urging UN to Investigate China's Colonial Boarding Schools in Tibet:** A coalition of over 140 Tibet advocacy groups, backed by more than 350,000 individuals, has urged UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk to investigate China's colonial boarding schools in Tibet. Rights groups warn that nearly one million Tibetan children are forcibly enrolled in these institutions, facing cultural erasure and assimilation into Han Chinese society. The petition was submitted ahead of the UN Human Rights Council session, urging Türk to condemn China's policies and address Tibet's deteriorating human rights situation in his upcoming 'Global Update.' Advocacy groups emphasize that these schools are tools of cultural genocide, calling for urgent UN intervention.

**Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel to Attend Long-Life Prayer Offering to 105th Gaden Tripa:** The Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, will attend a long-life prayer offering for the 105th Gaden Tripa, Jetsun Lobsang Dorjee Pal Sangpo, on 3 March at Sera Mey Monastery in Bylakuppe. His travel itinerary includes stops in Bangalore, Chandigarh, and Delhi before returning to Dharamshala on 6 March.

**Namkyi Concludes European Advocacy Tour with a Powerful Message in Switzerland:** Former Tibetan political prisoner Namkyi concluded her 12-day advocacy tour across Europe with a final address in Zurich, Switzerland. Speaking to over 200 attendees, she detailed her experiences of Chinese imprisonment and the struggle Tibetans face under Beijing's rule. Her speech highlighted the forced assimilation policies targeting Tibetan children, the suppression of Tibetan culture, and the role of exile Tibetans in advocacy and cultural preservation. The event concluded with a Q&A session, where Namkyi urged young Tibetans to remain active in the movement. Her tour amplified Tibet's struggle on international platforms, leaving a strong message of resilience and the need for continued advocacy.

**British Museum Revises "Xizang" Label, Activists Demand Further Change:** The British Museum has changed its labelling from "Xizang Autonomous Region" to "Tibetan Autonomous Region" in response to Tibetan activists' protests. However, critics argue that this still aligns with China's political framing and excludes broader Tibetan regions. Activists continue to push for accurate historical representation.

**Buddhists Demand Full Control of Mahabodhi Temple:** Buddhist monks and followers in Bodh Gaya have entered the 14th day of an indefinite hunger strike, demanding full control of the Mahabodhi Temple. They oppose the 1949 Bodh Gaya Temple Act, which grants Hindus a majority in its management. The protest has gained national and international support, with over 5,000 petition signatures, but the Indian government has yet to respond.

**Sikyong Penpa Tsering Highlights Key CTA Initiatives in Bylakuppe:** During his visit to Bylakuppe settlements, Sikyong Penpa Tsering emphasized the CTA's commitment to governance, education, and digital archiving of records. He highlighted efforts to translate Buddhist texts into multiple languages and reaffirmed the Middle Way Approach. Addressing community concerns, he urged unity, fact-checking in the digital age, and active participation in the Tibetan movement.

**Chinese Liaison Officer Sangay Kyab Joins Protest Against Religious Persecution:** Sangay Kyab, the Chinese Liaison Officer for Europe, participated in a protest in Basel, Switzerland, alongside Chinese Christian groups condemning religious persecution in China. He expressed solidarity with the victims, highlighting Tibet's struggle against Chinese oppression and calling for joint advocacy efforts.



**NYC Recognizes Tibetan New Year with Parking Rule Suspension:** For the first time, New York City will suspend alternate-side parking on Losar, the Tibetan New Year, marking a significant recognition for the city's Tibetan community. The initiative, led by grassroots efforts and city officials, emphasizes inclusion and visibility for Tibetan immigrants.

**Dalai Lama Returns to Dharamshala Amid China's Reincarnation Claims:** The Dalai Lama returned to Dharamshala after six weeks in Karnataka, where he conducted religious teachings and prayer sessions. Meanwhile, China has reiterated its claim over his reincarnation, demanding he renounce Tibetan independence. The Dalai Lama has maintained that only he will determine his succession, with plans to make a final decision at age 90.

**Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche Bestows Teachings in Kollegal:** In response to a request from the Dhondenling Tibetan Settlement Office, Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche conferred teachings on the Eight Verses of Thought Transformation and a long-life empowerment of Buddha Amitayus in Kollegal. Rinpoche also visited the settlement's Old People's Home, Sambhota School, and monastery, offering blessings, guidance, and encouragement before departing for Hunsur Rabgyal Tibetan Settlement.

**Sikyong Urges Unity in Hunsur Address:** During his visit to Hunsur Rabgyaling Tibetan Settlement, Sikyong Penpa Tsering emphasised unity, cultural preservation, and respect for host nations. He praised youth advocacy efforts through V-TAG and highlighted the importance of scholarly research on Tibet's legal status. The address was attended by local Tibetan leaders, monastic representatives, and community members.

**Mysuru's Nexus Centre City Hosts Losar Festival:** Nexus Centre City Mysuru is celebrating Losar from February 19 to 23 with cultural performances, Tibetan cuisine, book exhibitions, and traditional music. The festival offers a chance to experience Tibetan heritage, enjoy handmade crafts, and immerse in the festive atmosphere.

**Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Namkyi Speaks at the 17th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy:** Namkyi, a former Tibetan political prisoner, spoke at the Geneva Summit about her arrest and torture by Chinese authorities following her 2015 protest in Ngaba County. She detailed forced confessions, inhumane prison conditions, and post-release surveillance. Now in exile, she called for international support for Tibet.

**"Cycling for Free Tibet": Activists in Taipei rally for Tibetan freedom:** Activists in Taipei participated in the annual "Cycling for a Free Tibet" event, organized by the Tibet Taiwan Human Rights Alliance. Cyclists rode through key locations to raise awareness of human rights abuses in Tibet and Hong Kong, marking the anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising.

**Dalai Lama concludes weeks-long South India visit:** His Holiness the Dalai Lama returned to Delhi after a month-long visit to Tibetan settlements in Karnataka. He led prayer services, attended monastic debates, and bestowed long-life empowerments to thousands of devotees. His visit included stops at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and Gyumed Tantric College.

**Shelkar Chode Monastery Holds Three-Day Ritual Ceremony and Cham Dance:** The Shelkar Chode Ganden Lekshe Ling Monastery in Nepal conducted a three-day ritual, featuring the opening of the Yamantaka sand mandala and a Cham dance on 16 February. Dignitaries, including Representative Tsepri Lopan Tulku Ngawang Chokdup and members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, attended the event, which upholds a centuries-old tradition established by its early abbots and later developed under the Fifth Dalai Lama.

**Department of Religion and Culture Secretary Attends Torgyak Festival at Gyuto Monastery:** Secretary Dhondul Dorjee attended the annual Torgyak festival at Gyuto Tantric Monastery on 17 February. The ritual, dedicated to Yamantaka, aims to uphold the Buddha's teachings, ensure the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and dispel obstacles. Over a thousand devotees, including representatives from various organizations, participated in the event.

**Tibetan MPs Conclude North India Visitation:** Tibetan Parliamentarians Dhondup Tashi and Tsering Yangchen completed their visit to Tibetan settlements and winter business hubs in North India. Their engagements included public meetings on the Middle Way Approach, discussions with local Indian officials, and advocacy

efforts for Tibetan traders facing market challenges. They also met Indian supporters, secured lease extensions for Tibetan traders in Chandigarh, and concluded their visit in Ludhiana, strengthening ties with long-time Indian business partners.

**Youth Empowerment Support Conducts Two-Day Job Readiness Training at CHTS, Sarah:** The Youth Empowerment Support (YES+) of the Department of Home (CTA) organized a job readiness training at CHTS Sarah on 14-15 February. The session, attended by 30 students, focused on resume building, cover letter writing, and interview etiquette. Participants provided positive feedback, emphasizing the training's value in preparing them for the job market.

**Tibetan Flag Hoisted by Blue Mountains City Council During Tibetan Youth Advocacy Training:** The Australian Tibetan Youth Leadership and Advocacy Training, held at the Karuna Retreat Centre, concluded on 13 February. The program, led by experienced trainers, covered Tibetan human rights, grassroots advocacy, and strategy development. As a show of solidarity, the Blue Mountains City Council supported the raising of three Tibetan flags for three days. Participants also developed regional action plans for 2025-26 and elected new coordinators.

**Tibetan Organizations Condemn China's Use of 'Xizang' for Tibet:** Tibetan organizations, including Students for a Free Tibet-India, criticized China's directive to replace "Tibet" with "Xizang." A panel discussion in Dharamsala highlighted this as an attempt to erase Tibetan identity. Speakers stressed that the term restricts Tibet to the TAR, undermining the unity of its traditional provinces. The discussion concluded with demands urging governments and media to reject the imposed terminology.

**Tibetan Parliamentarians Conclude Visit to West Bengal:** Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen and Wangdue Dorjee completed their visit to Tibetan communities in West Bengal, engaging with settlements in Darjeeling, Sukhia, Pokhribong, and Mirik. They visited monasteries, schools, and community centers, addressing public gatherings and inspecting ongoing projects. The visit emphasized community engagement and preservation of Tibetan identity.

**Tibet Awareness Day Held at Bureau du Tibet, Paris:** The Bureau du Tibet in Paris organized Tibet Awareness Day under Representative Rigzin Choedon Genkhang, bringing together 33 young Tibetans to learn about the Tibetan cause, CTA's structure, and the Sino-Tibet conflict. The event featured a presentation by Thupten Tsering, a documentary screening on Tibet's occupation, and a discussion on the Middle Way Approach led by EU Advocacy Officer Tenzin Phuntsok. Participants appreciated the session and called for more such workshops.

**CTA Urges Tibetans to Observe Solemn Losar in Solidarity with Dingri Earthquake Victims:** In response to the devastating earthquake in Tibet's Dingri region, the CTA has urged Tibetans to observe a solemn Losar, avoiding large gatherings and traditional dances. The Kashag also called for a 49-day mourning period and held a special prayer ceremony in Dharamshala. Tibetan communities, including those in France, have cancelled celebrations in solidarity with the victims.

**Budget Estimate Committee Reviews CTA 2025-2026 Budget:** The Budget Estimate Committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile convened to review the CTA's proposed 2025-2026 budget. Led by Chairperson Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten, the committee assessed department expenditures and will submit a revised budget proposal before March 12.

**Kashag Requests Restraint in Losar Celebrations for Dingri Earthquake Victims:** Following its 175th Cabinet meeting, the Kashag Secretariat reiterated its request for Tibetans to refrain from large gatherings and celebrations during Losar in memory of those affected by the Dingri earthquake.

**Renowned Tibetan Scholar Tsenlha Ngawang Tsultrim Passes Away at 96:** Tibetan historian and scholar Professor Tsenlha Ngawang Tsultrim passed away at 96, prompting tributes from the Tibetan literary and intellectual community. He was a distinguished professor at the Southwest University for Nationalities and contributed extensively to Tibetan linguistics, history, and classical texts.

**DIIR Concludes Six-Day Tibet Museum Exhibition in Minnesota:** The Tibet Museum, under the CTA's Department of Information and International Relations, successfully wrapped up a six-day traveling exhibition in Minnesota

as part of the 'Year of Compassion' initiative. The exhibition engaged Tibetan communities and students at Macalester College, the University of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama Arrives at Gyumé Tantric College in Hunsur:** His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived safely at Gyumé Tantric College in Karnataka, where he was warmly received by Tibetans and monastic representatives. Addressing the gathering, he reflected on his journey, commitment to the Dharma, and ongoing service to Tibet, emphasizing his belief in living another decade or more to continue his work.

**Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland Fear China's Transnational Repression:** A Swiss government-commissioned study reveals that China is intimidating Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland through surveillance, threats, and pressure to return to China. The report highlights how Chinese agents, often disguised as embassy staff, undermine trust within exile communities. While Switzerland acknowledges the violations, it remains vague on countermeasures, drawing criticism from rights groups demanding stronger legal protections and diplomatic responses.

**Sikyong Addresses Students in Bylakuppe, Escorts Dalai Lama to Hunsur:** During his visit to Bylakuppe, Sikyong Penpa Tsering reaffirmed Tibet's historical independence and its geopolitical significance, emphasizing its role in Asia's environmental stability. Addressing students, he urged them to remain committed to their studies, as they represent Tibet's future. His engagements included visits to key Tibetan institutions before accompanying His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Hunsur Rabgyaling.

**Tibetan Delegation Conducts Intensive Lobbying in Geneva:** Ahead of the 58th UNHRC session, Tibetan representatives raised concerns over human rights violations and the Medog Dam in Tibet. They engaged with 16 UN missions, six Special Rapporteurs, and OHCHR officials, urging action on China's policies. A former Tibetan political prisoner, Namkyi, shared her testimony, deeply moving UN representatives. The delegation focused on educating smaller nations about Tibet's history and the CTA's structure, concluding their lobbying efforts on 15 February.

**India Increases Dalai Lama's Security to Z-Category:** The Indian government has upgraded the Dalai Lama's security to Z-category following a threat analysis by the Intelligence Bureau, citing potential risks from China-backed groups. The new security detail includes 30 CRPF commandos, close-protection officers, and an escort team. This move underscores India's concerns over China's objections to the Dalai Lama's activities and geopolitical tensions surrounding Tibet.

**Panel Discusses China's Erasure of Tibetan Identity:** A discussion in Dharamshala on Tibetan Independence Day condemned China's mandate to replace "Tibet" with "Xizang." Experts highlighted China's attempt to rewrite history and weaken Tibetan identity. Speakers called for resisting linguistic manipulation and urged governments, media, and institutions to reject terms like "Xizang" and "China's Tibet." The panel emphasized the need for global recognition of Tibet's distinct cultural and political status.

**China Denies Swiss Allegations of Surveillance on Uyghur, Tibetan Diaspora:** A Swiss government report suggests that China pressures Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland to spy on each other and systematically monitors activists. Based on a study by the University of Basel, the report highlights transnational repression, including cyberattacks and surveillance. China dismissed the claims as "misleading" and an interference in its internal affairs. Researchers noted that affected individuals were followed, photographed, and filmed, creating distrust within diaspora communities. Uyghur and Tibetan activists have reported threats, intimidation, and harassment from Chinese authorities, particularly at U.N. events in Geneva. The report urges Swiss authorities to strengthen measures against such repression while acknowledging similar activities by Russia, Iran, and Turkey.

**Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Namkyi Lobbies in Geneva Ahead of 58th UN Human Rights Council Session:** Former Tibetan political prisoner Namkyi arrived in Geneva to participate in the Geneva Summit 2025 and a five-day advocacy campaign ahead of the 58th UNHRC session. The campaign involved meetings with UN officials, representatives from various countries, and UN Special Rapporteurs to raise awareness of human rights violations in Tibet. While no immediate UN support was secured, Namkyi's testimony conveyed the realities of China's oppression, potentially influencing future policy decisions.

**Australian Tibetan Youth Leadership and Advocacy Training Launches in Blue Mountains, Australia:** A leadership and advocacy training for young Tibetans in Australia began at the Karuna Retreat Centre, bringing together 30 participants and key stakeholders, including CTA representatives and Australian policymakers. The program, organized by the Tibet Information Office, aims to equip Tibetan youth with leadership and strategic skills while fostering connections with supporters of the Tibetan cause.

**His Eminence Kirti Rinpoche's Efforts to Preserve Tibetan Buddhism:** An interview with Konchok Jigme, secretary to Kirti Rinpoche, highlights the Rinpoche's lifelong dedication to the Kirti tradition and Tibetan Buddhism. Born in Amdo in 1942, Kirti Rinpoche fled Tibet in 1959 and later founded the Kirti Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Dharamsala. He has played a key role in preserving Buddhist teachings and strengthening Tibetan identity in exile.

**Swiss Government Confirms China's Transnational Repression of Tibetans and Uyghurs:** A Swiss government report affirms that China pressures Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland to spy on their communities while subjecting dissidents to surveillance and cyberattacks. The study, based on research by the University of Basel, details transnational repression, including intimidation tactics at UN events in Geneva. China denies the allegations, calling them politically motivated.

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama Bestows Long Life Empowerment in Bylakuppe:** The Dalai Lama conferred a Long-Life Empowerment to an estimated 25,000 devotees at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Karnataka. Reflecting on his spiritual journey, he shared visions indicating he may live to 110 years. His Holiness highlighted his contributions to spreading Buddhism worldwide and reaffirmed his commitment to daily meditation and practice.

**London Council Won't Oppose China's 'Super-Embassy' at Key Hearing:** Tower Hamlets Borough Council announced it will not argue against China's proposed "super-embassy" at a crucial planning inquiry, despite previous rejections. The reversal follows the Metropolitan Police withdrawing objections, citing public order concerns. Critics allege political pressure from the highest levels of the UK government, warning the embassy could facilitate espionage and intimidate exiled activists, including Tibetans and Uyghurs.

**Tibetans and Japanese Mark 112th Anniversary of Tibetan Independence Reaffirmation:** Tibetans and Japanese supporters gathered in Tokyo to commemorate the 13th Dalai Lama's 1913 reaffirmation of Tibetan independence. Scholars discussed Tibet's historical sovereignty, countering China's claims. The event highlighted Beijing's colonial boarding schools and its suppression of Tibetan identity. Information booklets on Tibet were distributed to attendees.

**Asanga Vajra Rinpoche Visits London Tibetan Sunday School:** Asanga Vajra Sakya Rinpoche visited London's Tibetan Sunday School, emphasizing the importance of preserving Tibetan language and culture. He praised parents for prioritizing education and encouraged students to study diligently to contribute to the Tibetan cause. The visit included student recitations, discussions on identity, and a luncheon hosted by the Office of Tibet, London.

**Diaspora Tibetans Hold Prayer Services for Late Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup:** Tibetans worldwide held prayer services to honour the late Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup, elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who passed away at 97. Communities in the US, Canada, Ladakh, Bylakuppe, Dharamshala, Nepal, the UK, Switzerland, Belgium, and France gathered to pay respects. Leaders and monks emphasized his contributions to the Tibetan cause, with events attended by local representatives and community members.

**Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Speaker Applauds UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet:** Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel expressed gratitude to UK MP Chris Law for launching the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet, highlighting its role in advocating for Tibetan human rights and cultural preservation. The initiative aims to strengthen Tibet's presence in UK Parliament, with the Tibetan exile community calling for greater efforts to safeguard Tibetan identity.

**Chinese Liaison Officer Joins Protest Against PRC's 'Mega-Embassy' in London:** Sangay Kyab, Chinese Liaison Officer for Europe, joined a major protest against China's planned London embassy at Royal Mint Court. The protest, organized by 16 groups, included Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kong activists, and UK MPs, who warned of

increased surveillance and repression. Estimated at 4,000 participants, the protest underscored concerns over China's influence in the UK.

**Joint Statement on the Fifth Anniversary of the 'Xiamen Gathering' Crackdown:** The International Tibet Network and global civil society organizations call for the release of Chinese rights advocate Xu Zhiyong, who was detained after the 2019 Xiamen Gathering. Xu, known for supporting Tibet and investigating the 2008 Uprisings, was sentenced to 14 years in 2023. The statement condemns China's repression of human rights defenders and urges the government to release detained activists, end civil society crackdowns, and reform national security laws.

**Thousands Protest China's UK 'Super Embassy' Plan:** Tibetans, Hongkongers, Uyghurs, Taiwanese, and Chinese dissidents protested in east London against China's proposed embassy at Royal Mint Court, citing security risks, human rights abuses, and local opposition. MPs from various parties opposed the project, linking it to Beijing's repression. Despite previous rejections by Tower Hamlets Council, the UK government is reconsidering the plan, with a final decision expected after an inquiry.

**Gyalo Thondup's Last Interview: Betrayal in Tibet's Fight for Freedom:** In his final interview before his death on February 8, Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's elder brother, expressed disappointment in the U.S. and Indian governments for failing to genuinely support Tibetan independence. As a key liaison between the CIA and Tibetan resistance fighters, he recalled how the U.S. trained Tibetans at Camp Hale, Colorado, from 1958 to 1964 but provided only limited resources. While some fighters saw the support as valuable, Thondup believed it was insufficient and largely aimed at disrupting China rather than securing Tibetan freedom.

**Chinese Liaison Officer Engages in Dialogue with China Democracy Party Members in London:** Sangay Kyab, Chinese Liaison Officer for European countries, visited London to strengthen ties between Tibetan and Chinese communities. He met with the UK Headquarters of the China Democracy Party to discuss Tibet's situation, CTA's policies, and potential collaborations. A formal meeting at the Office of Tibet, chaired by Representative Tsering Yangkyi, included key Chinese figures and addressed shared concerns. The discussions continued over a dinner gathering, emphasizing joint initiatives.

**Tibetans in Exile Mourn Dalai Lama's Brother, Gyalo Thondup:** Tibetans worldwide mourned the passing of Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who passed away at 97 in Kalimpong. CTA President Penpa Tsering and Tibetan leaders expressed condolences and held memorial services. The Dalai Lama led prayers, wishing for his brother's rebirth to continue serving Tibet. Thondup played a crucial role in Tibetan resistance, diplomacy, and negotiations with China, leaving a lasting legacy.

**Tibet Museum's Travelling Exhibition in New York Concludes with 1,500 Visitors:** As part of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations, the Tibet Museum's travelling exhibition in New York attracted over 1,500 visitors. Held at Phuntsok Deshe Hall, it featured Tibetan history, culture, and the Dalai Lama's commitments. The event received strong engagement from Tibetan youth and Chinese guests. Following the exhibition's success, discussions with art institutions in New York explored future collaborations. The team has now moved to Minnesota for the next exhibition.

**Tibetan Advocacy Group Launches Tribute Campaign for Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday:** V-TAG India has launched the "Global Tribute for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday!" campaign to honor his contributions to peace and compassion. Supporters can submit birthday wishes, which will be compiled into a commemorative book. The CTA has declared 2025-2026 as the "Year of Compassion," organizing global events and a long-life prayer ceremony in July 2025. The Dalai Lama has also indicated that he will discuss his reincarnation at this milestone.

**Kalon Dolma Gyari Attends Buddha Special Sangam Maha Kumbh and Bodh Maha Kumbh Yatra:** Kalon Dolma Gyari participated in the Buddha Special Sangam Maha Kumbh and Bodh Maha Kumbh Yatra in Prayagraj, emphasizing cultural exchange between Tibetan Buddhism and Indian traditions. The event included Sangsol prayers, cultural performances, and a grand procession chanting Buddhist scriptures. Gyari highlighted the historical significance of the gathering in strengthening ties between Buddhism and Sanatan Dharma.

**11-Volume Kangyur Karchag Launched at Nyingma Monlam Chenmo in Bodh Gaya:** The 36th Nyingma Monlam Chenmo saw the launch of the 11-volume Kangyur Karchag Yidzhin Norbu, a comprehensive catalog of Buddha's teachings. Initiated by Tarthang Rinpoche, this seven-year project aims to make the Kangyur more accessible. The encyclopedic work classifies sutras based on various traditions and is a significant step in preserving Tibetan Buddhist scriptures.

**Tibetan Parliamentarians to Visit Darjeeling and Nearby Areas:** As part of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile's program, Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltsen and Wangdue Dorjee will visit Tibetan communities in Darjeeling, Sonada, Mirik, Kurseong, and surrounding areas from 10 to 14 February 2025. The visit aims to engage with local Tibetans under the jurisdiction of the Settlement Offices in West Bengal.

**US Withdrawal from UNHRC Sparks Concerns for Tibet:** The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has criticized the US decision to exit the UN Human Rights Council, warning that it weakens global accountability for human rights violations, particularly in Tibet. Critics, including Amnesty International USA and Representative Jim McGovern, condemned the move, arguing it emboldens authoritarian regimes like China. Observers fear reduced scrutiny could further enable Beijing's suppression of Tibetan rights.

**Tibetan Activists in Taiwan Launch Protest Ahead of Uprising Anniversary:** The Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan (HRNTT) has begun its 15th annual "Cycling for a Free Tibet" campaign in Taipei. Weekly cycling protests will take place until March 10, Tibetan Uprising Day, to raise awareness of Chinese repression in Tibet. Tibetan Youth Congress President Gonpo Dhondup emphasized that Tibetans will continue their struggle for independence.

**Dalai Lama and Buddhist Abbess Release Final Volume of Buddhism Series for Westerners:** Ven. Thubten Chodron, in collaboration with the Dalai Lama, has released the final volume of *The Library of Wisdom and Compassion*, a 10-volume series designed to make Tibetan Buddhist teachings more accessible to Western audiences. The project, initiated in 1993, aimed to clarify fundamental Buddhist concepts for those unfamiliar with them. The Dalai Lama emphasized compassion and kindness in the teachings, making them relevant to modern concerns.

**Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Meets Himachal Pradesh Officials:** Tibetan MPs Dhondup Tashi and Tsering Yangchen visited Shimla, meeting key officials, including the Governor, Vidhan Sabha Speaker, and Revenue Minister. They expressed gratitude for India's support while highlighting Tibet's human rights issues and the Sinicization policies eroding Tibetan culture. Officials assured continued assistance, and discussions included the implementation of Tibetan Rehabilitation Policies. The MPs also held a public gathering at Sambhota Tibetan School to discuss Tibetan issues.

**ITCO Organises Civil Society Outreach Program at Maha Kumbh:** The India-Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO) launched a Civil Society Outreach Program at Maha Kumbh, themed "Tibet: India's Neighbour." The event engaged students, scholars, and locals, distributing books and materials in Hindi and English to raise awareness about Tibet's historical and geopolitical significance to India. The Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association facilitated the program, and Kalon Dolma Gyari visited the ITCO bookstall.

**New Tibet Group Launched in 58th UK Parliament:** A new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet (APPG Tibet) was formed in the UK Parliament, chaired by SNP MP Chris Law. The group aims to pressure the UK government to support negotiations between China and the Tibetan government-in-exile while recognizing Tibet as an occupied country. Members from Labour, Conservative, and SNP parties expressed support. Tibet Action Institute's Dechen Pemba highlighted China's colonial boarding school system in Tibet. The next APPGT meeting is set for May 2025.

**Penpa Tsering: All options open for the selection of the Dalai Lama's successor:** The political leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Penpa Tsering, stated that all options remain open regarding the succession of the 14th Dalai Lama, who turns 90 in July. The Dalai Lama may announce his intentions around this milestone, and possibilities include a female successor or an appointment before his passing. Tsering also emphasized concerns over Chinese repression in Tibet, ongoing informal channels with China, and the need for continued engagement with India, the U.S., and Japan.

**UNPO supports Tibetans and Uyghurs, welcomes UN investigation into China's human rights violations:** The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) has expressed solidarity with Tibetans and Uyghurs, endorsing a UN investigation into China's human rights abuses. A report submitted by UN Special Procedures detailed enforced disappearances, suppression of religious and cultural freedoms, and transnational repression. The investigation highlights cases of disappeared Tibetans and Uyghur detainees subjected to forced labor and harsh conditions.

**China criticizes Rotterdam Film Festival over Tibetan film "Four Rivers, Six Ranges":** The Chinese government launched propaganda attacks against the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam after the screening of "Four Rivers, Six Ranges," a Tibetan film depicting Tibetan resistance against China's invasion in the 1950s. The film, dedicated to the 14th Dalai Lama, was met with online attacks from CCP-backed accounts. Director Shenpenn Khymzar condemned China's efforts to suppress Tibetan history and identity.

**Tibetan Film 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges' Premieres at Rotterdam Film Festival:** The Tibetan film *Four Rivers, Six Ranges*, directed by Shenpenn Khymzar, premiered at the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam. The film explores the history of the Chushi Gangdruk resistance movement against Chinese forces. Its screening drew criticism from Chinese state media, which accused it of distorting history, while the festival also featured *Serfs*, a 1965 Chinese propaganda film justifying Beijing's rule over Tibet.

**Tibetans in Exile Face Uncertainty as USAID Faces Closure:** The U.S. government's decision to shut down USAID, following President Trump's executive order, threatens Tibetan exile programs. USAID has been a major source of financial support, with \$23 million granted last year. A newly announced five-year program for Tibetans in India and Nepal is now at risk. The Central Tibetan Administration is engaging with U.S. officials, while critics in Washington call the move a power grab by billionaire Elon Musk, who led the agency's closure.

**Tibetan Parliamentarians Conclude Chennai Visit:** Tibetan MPs Karma Gelek and Lobsang Thupten Pongsang visited Chennai to engage with Tibetan communities and Indian officials. They discussed Tibet's situation with representatives from Taiwan, BJP, and Congress, seeking support for Tibetans, including resolving issues faced by Tibetan traders in Ooty and Men-Tsee-Khang's financial struggles. Indian officials assured assistance and scheduled meetings to address these concerns.

**Tibetan Communities in Northern Europe Gather in Copenhagen for Strategic Meeting:** The Office of Tibet, London, organized a meeting in Copenhagen with Tibetan community leaders from Britain, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark to strengthen community cohesion, advocate for Tibet, and boost voluntary contributions. The event included sessions on VTAG, Tibetan cultural exchange programs, and youth involvement, with discussions on reviving the Tibetan Scandinavia Summer & Winter Camp.

**Tibetan Leaders Mourn the Passing of Kishan Kapoor:** Senior Tibetan leaders, including President Penpa Tsering, expressed condolences for the passing of Kishan Kapoor, a former MP and strong supporter of Tibet. Kapoor was known for advocating the Bharat Ratna for the Dalai Lama and supporting Tibet's role in the Indo-China dispute. Tibetan representatives attended his cremation in Dharamshala.

**CTA Mourns the Passing of Auditor General Lhakpa Gyaltsen:** The Central Tibetan Administration held a memorial service for Auditor General Lhakpa Gyaltsen, who passed away at age 62. He served in various financial roles within CTA, including as General Manager of TCV Enterprises, before becoming Auditor General in 2024. He is survived by his wife and daughter.

**Tibetan President-in-Exile Concludes Northeast Visit, Criticizes Chinese Policies:** Sikyong Penpa Tsering concluded his visit to Tibetan settlements in West Bengal, where he criticized China's oppressive policies. He highlighted political instability within the CCP, economic challenges, and Xi Jinping's authoritarian control. He also addressed Tibet's worsening situation under Chinese rule and the rise of youth discontent in China.

**Second CSO Meeting in Copenhagen Strengthens Tibet Advocacy Across Europe:** The Second Meeting of Local-based Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) under the Office of Tibet, London, concluded after discussions on Tibet advocacy strategies. Participants from eight countries analysed Tibet's status, shared regional Tibet-related news, and engaged in training sessions on effective advocacy. The meeting ended with a pledge to push for legislative measures similar to the US Tibet Resolve Act in their respective countries.

**DIIR Releases Multi-Lingual E-Book on Dalai Lama's Four Principal Commitments:** The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) has published an e-book featuring insights from over 100 distinguished speakers on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's four principal commitments. Available in Tibetan, English, Hindi, and Chinese, the book originates from a 2020 virtual talk series. The publication aligns with preparations for His Holiness's 90th birthday celebrations under the theme "Year of Compassion."

**Dalai Lama to Attend Three Long-Life Offerings by Monastic Communities:** His Holiness the Dalai Lama, currently residing at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe, will participate in three long-life offering ceremonies by Tibetan Buddhist monastic communities. Scheduled events include offerings by Sera Monastery on Feb 5, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery on Feb 15, and Gyudmed Tantric Monastery at a later date. These ceremonies mark the lead-up to His Holiness's 90th birthday and the CTA's year-long "Year of Compassion" celebrations.

## Protests, Detentions and Other News from the PRC

**Over 2 Dozen Uyghur Teachers Imprisoned in Xinjiang:** Chinese authorities arrested more than two dozen Uyghur teachers from Aksu Education Institute in 2017, and they remain imprisoned. The arrests were part of a broader crackdown on Uyghur intellectuals and cultural figures. A police officer confirmed that 26 teachers were sentenced after secret trials, with many transferred to a detention center run by the Bingtuan paramilitary group. Some were targeted for religious practices, highlighting China's ongoing repression of Uyghur educators and intellectuals.

**Report Highlights CCP's 2024 Human Rights Abuses:** A new report from Human Rights Watch details the CCP's increasing suppression of freedoms in 2024. Authorities targeted critics, detained Tibetan activists, censored economic data, and cracked down on religious groups. Tibetans faced arbitrary detention for online comments and opposing cultural erasure, while Uyghurs continued to suffer under forced labour and mass surveillance. The report calls for international pressure on Beijing to halt its human rights violations.

**China Extends Sentence for Tibetan Environmental Activist:** Tibetan activist Tsongon Tsering, who protested illegal mining in Ngaba, Sichuan, has had his prison sentence extended to 16 months after rejecting charges of "disrupting social order." His parents are under strict surveillance, and authorities have imposed movement restrictions in his region. His case underscores the risks faced by Tibetans who speak out against environmental destruction linked to Chinese state-backed projects.

**Tibetan Singer Lobsang Passes Away Amid Political Suppression:** Popular Tibetan singer Lobsang, known for his patriotic songs critical of Chinese policies, has died at 39 due to liver disease. Despite frequent detentions, he continued to release music reflecting Tibet's struggle. Tibetans inside and outside Tibet mourn his loss, praising his courage and lyrical depth.

**Tibet House Brazil Hosts Lecture on Buddhist Philosophy:** Tibet House Brazil organized a lecture on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy with Geshe Lharampa Gyaltzen Tsering, focusing on impermanence and mindful living. The event, attended by 80 people, was facilitated by Brazilian nun Tenzin Lamdron and honoured the late Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup.

**China Leads in Transnational Repression Cases:** A Freedom House report highlights China as the top perpetrator of transnational repression from 2014-2024, responsible for 22% of documented incidents. The report details how authoritarian governments target dissidents abroad, often with host-state cooperation, undermining human rights and press freedom.

**China's Proposed Internet ID Law to Tighten Online Control:** A new draft law in China, requiring internet users to verify their identity through facial recognition and national ID cards, raises concerns over increased censorship. Rights groups warn that the measure, if enacted, will further suppress dissent and serve as a model for digital authoritarianism worldwide.



## China intensifies patriotic education in Tibet as schools reopen after winter break

27 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Opening ceremony of a school in Ngaba on Feb. 25, 2025 (Photo/RFA)

# CHINA'S TIBET POLICY

As schools across Tibet resume classes following the winter holiday, Chinese authorities have intensified their patriotic education campaign, further suppressing Tibetan language and cultural identity, according to a report by *Radio Free Asia*. The campaign includes stricter political indoctrination measures and heightened restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism within educational institutions.

Since late February, primary and secondary schools, as well as kindergartens, have reopened in most parts of Tibet. Teachers and students are now required to engage in state-mandated political education that reinforces allegiance to the Chinese government. Teachers must submit monthly self-reports to higher authorities confirming they are not imparting religious teachings, while both students and staff are compelled to renounce religious beliefs and practices within school premises. These measures were revealed by two sources inside Tibet who spoke with RFA.

The crackdown extends across multiple Tibetan regions, including Ngaba, Kardze, Malho, Sangchu County, Yak Nga, Dzoge, Kyungchu, Barkham, Dzod, Chabcha County, and Trika County. A source familiar with the situation stated that in primary schools in Kardze and Ngaba, mathematics and science have already transitioned to Chinese-language instruction. The remaining Tibetan language courses in some schools are now being eliminated. Many Tibetan language teachers have reportedly been dismissed under the pretext of failing to meet Chinese language proficiency standards.

Meanwhile, official government announcements confirm that schools in Lhasa and other areas of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region are set to reopen between March 8 and 10, following the Tibetan New Year. Authorities have issued multiple directives concerning security and health inspections in preparation for the reopening.

On February 25, a new directive titled *“Two Absolute Prohibitions and Five Strictly Forbidden Items”* was issued, further reinforcing bans on religious practices within the education system. The directive explicitly forbids any form of religious promotion in schools, prohibits individuals or organizations from incorporating religious elements into curricula, bars teachers and students from engaging in religious activities, and bans religious symbols or attire on school grounds.

Each year, school reopenings in Tibet are accompanied by heightened government surveillance and control. In 2024, schools in Dartsedo implemented new restrictions preventing parents from entering school premises, while authorities continued to modify curricula without informing families.

The latest push to diminish Tibetan-language education follows years of escalating restrictions aimed at erasing Tibet’s linguistic and cultural identity. In the 2023 fall semester, Tibetan language courses were entirely removed from middle schools in the Kardze region, while Ngaba saw a systematic reduction of Tibetan-medium instruction. Similarly, in the 2022 winter semester, all public schools in counties across Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Amdo (Ch. Qinghai) Province transitioned to Chinese-language instruction, leaving only a single Tibetan language course. This shift extended to all subjects, including mathematics, science, arts, and arithmetic, which are now exclusively taught in Chinese.

### **Two senior Tibetan officials from Yunnan dismissed from CCP**

24 February 2025, [ICT](#)

China announced on Feb 23, 2025 that it had expelled two former senior Tibetan officials from Yunnan from the Communist Party after being investigated for “serious violations of discipline and law.” This is the usual vague charge that China levels against everyone subjected to investigations.

The Chinese Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and National Supervisory Commission said the expulsion of Qi Jianxin, a former governor, and Jangchup (Jiang Chu), former vice governor, of Dechen (Diqing) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan “seriously violated the Party’s political discipline”, were “disloyal and dishonest to the Party,” and made “illegal gains”. Their biographies indicated that they are Tibetan.

The Commission used similar wordings for both the individuals indicating that there was a connection between the two. It said, “The nature is serious and the impact is bad” and that they, “should be dealt with seriously.” They were both expelled from the Party and public offices.

The investigations into Qi and Jangchup began in early 2024 with Jangchup turning himself into the anti-corruption agency on Feb 29, 2024.

Jangchup (Jiang Chu) (dismissed on May 19, 2024) executive vice governor of Dechen; and Qi Jianxin (dismissed on April 9, 2024), former governor of Dechen, were both dismissed from their government positions in the prefecture after investigations were launched against them by the anti-corruption agency. The Chinese authorities have hinted at more prosecution against the two as the Commission said their “suspected criminal issues” have been sent to the procuratorate “for review and prosecution in accordance with the law.”



*Former Dechen governor Qi Jianxin (left) and Former Dechen vice governor Jangchup (right).*

In 2024, several senior officials in Dechen have been investigated by China’s anti-graft agency, indicating either high levels of corruption among Chinese officialdom or of political instability. In January this year, the Chinese state media announced that Che Dralha (Qi Zhala), the former governor Dechen, who was born in Gyalthang, was being subjected to investigation as he is “suspected of serious violations of discipline and laws.” He had been posted to Lhasa in 2017 subsequently promoted as chairman of the TAR government.

Among the present-day Tibetan areas, Dechen is less well known internationally. In an attempt to attract Chinese tourists, on December 17, 2001, the authorities in China renamed the prefectural capital Gyalthang as Shangri-La City (Xianggelila) after the fictional land of Shangri-La in the 1933 James Hilton novel *Lost Horizon*.

### **Wang Junzheng prepares party officials for 60th anniversary of Tibet’s dismemberment**

21 February 2025, [ICT](#), Kai Mueller

An important anniversary for the rule of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet is looming. September 1st marks the 60th anniversary of the dismemberment of Tibet under the Chinese occupying forces. This was recently pointed out by Communist Party Secretary Wang Junzheng, the highest-ranking Chinese official in

Tibet's capital, according to Chinese propaganda media reports.

At a meeting of the regional party committee, Wang gave instructions for "political and legal work". On this occasion, Beijing's man in Lhasa repeatedly referred to the upcoming 60th anniversary of the founding of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) on September 1, 1965.



*A Communist Party Secretary awards police officers with Tibetan Khatas.*

This marked the completion of the administrative reorganization of the country by the Chinese rulers. However, the TAR only covered about half the country. The other half of Tibet – and thus also its inhabitants – were largely assigned to the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan as so-called "Tibetan Autonomous" counties and prefectures.

Wang Junzheng called on the assembled Communist Party officials to welcome and support the 60th anniversary of the TAR. As always on such occasions, the Communist Party Secretary did not fail to point out "the important instructions of General Secretary Xi Jinping" at the beginning of his speech. This obviously compulsory exercise is one that no Communist Party representative can miss.

It is also not surprising how often Wang used the term "constitutional state". After all, it has always been good form in a communist dictatorship to describe one's own unjust state with false claims that sound high-minded.

United Labor Front: Instrument of Power of the Communist Party

Recently, Wang Junzheng attended a meeting of the regional united front work department of the Communist Party. This department is responsible for the Communist Party's influence operations at home and abroad. Particularly important in the context of Tibet: The united front is responsible, among other things, for the Chinese Communist Party's religious policy.

At this meeting, Wang Junzheng began his speech by reiterating his praise for the "important ideas of General Secretary Xi Jinping," which should be thoroughly studied and implemented. Wang urged his audience to work towards the establishment of a "new, socialist and modernized Tibet."

An important instrument used by the Chinese rulers to achieve this is the forced assimilation of Tibetans with the aim of eradicating their independent culture, tradition and language. The ideological phraseology of the Communist Party then speaks of "building the Chinese national community as the main line".

The aim is also to promote "the spread of the common national language and writing system" – this means that as far as possible all communication takes place in Chinese and in Chinese script.

Wang's list also includes a reference to the desired "Sinicization" of Tibetan Buddhism. It is important to actively guide Tibetan Buddhism to "be compatible with socialist society," said the Communist Party secretary.

Tibetan blessing scarves from the hand of the Communist Party secretary

A surprising image was included in another report by the Chinese propaganda media. During a visit by Communist Party Secretary Wang Junzheng to a police station in Tibet's capital Lhasa, where he honored police officers and cleaners. Instead of handing out medals or gifts, as is customary in China, the Chinese Communist Party Secretary puts traditional Tibetan scarves known as khatas around the men's necks.

The Tibetan scarves symbolizing auspiciousness, lucky and blessing are deeply rooted in Tibet's spiritual tradition. In the picture we see the highest representative of the Chinese occupying power handing out khatas to police officers – representatives of an institution that has a monopoly on violence in Tibet and thus ensures the forced assimilation of Tibetans.

While the Chinese Communist Party state is openly trying to transform the Tibetans into Chinese, to erase or appropriate their culture by taking an important symbol of their tradition to identify those who, when necessary, will enforce it by force.

This incident is permeated with deep irony and illustrates another facet of China's new cultural revolution in Tibet.

### **Report: Onerous requirements bar Tibetans, Uyghurs from obtaining Chinese passport**

20 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Chinese government has increasingly imposed arbitrary restrictions on people's internationally protected right to leave the country, especially in the case of Tibetans and Uyghurs who have, in fact, been long prohibited from obtaining passports, said New York-based Human Rights Watch in a Feb 17 report.

Apart from those they considered high risks for online fraud, Chinese authorities also require citizens from locales they broadly consider to be high risks for "unlawful" emigration to submit additional paperwork

and obtain approval from multiple government offices during passport application processes. Those not meeting these cumbersome requirements are often denied passports.

Under these onerous restrictions, the Chinese government has long restricted people's access to passports in areas where Tibetans and Uyghurs predominantly live, said the report, *China: Right to Leave Country Further Restricted*.

"The authorities are going beyond existing restrictions on Tibetans and Uyghurs to limit the travel of people throughout China under the guise of anti-crime campaigns."

While China's the Ministry of Public Security's Entry and Exit Administration initiated in late 2002 a new "on demand" system to simplify the passport application process, applicants from Xinjiang, Tibet, and the 13 Tibetan or Hui autonomous prefectures in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces were never granted permission to use this fast-track passport application system, the report said.

In fact, applicants from these areas are required to provide far more extensive documentation in support of their passport applications than elsewhere in China and they face extremely long delays, often lasting several years, before passports are issued, or are routinely denied passports for no valid reason, the report said.

"Chinese authorities should drop these arbitrary and discriminatory practices so that everyone has the equal right to leave the country," Maya Wang, associate China director at Human Rights Watch, has said.

### Chinese actress takes up Tibet charity after recovery from depression, netizens divided on her intention

20 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)



Well-known Chinese actress Zhao Lusi (born Rosy Zhao) who made headlines recently, discussing her battle with depression, has taken up charity work for the victims of the devastating Dingri earthquake which hit Tibet's Mt Everest county on Jan 7 morning,

following her full recovery and return to public life, reported *dimsumdaily.hk* Feb 19. But some are not sure whether she has fully recovered and questions her "charitable" intentions.

Zhao, who went on a hiatus late last year due to a relapse of depression, reappeared shortly before the Chinese Lunar New Year, stating that her condition had significantly improved. She called her struggle with depression a journey from "the darkest moments" to a "rebirth," according to China's official *globaltimes.cn* Jan 14.

In January, following a 6.8-magnitude earthquake in Dingri County, Shigatse, Tibet, Zhao demonstrated her commitment to philanthropy by discreetly organising relief supplies for the affected area. Her efforts earned widespread admiration on social media, said the *dimsumdaily.hk* report.

Most recently, Zhao participated in the filming of a charity programme in Tibet, wearing vibrant traditional attire. Notably, she appeared without the need for a walking aid, moving energetically and even assisting friends. Her radiant smile and visibly healthier appearance marked a striking contrast to her frail state during her illness, the report said of the 26-year-old actress.

Zhao has also fully resumed her career, and shared glimpses of her life and work on social media.

Zhao is known for her roles in dramas like *The Romance of Tiger and Rose* (2020), *Dating in the Kitchen* (2020), *The Long Ballad* (2021), *Who Rules The World* (2022), *Love Like the Galaxy*, *Hidden Love* (2023), and *The Story of Pearl Girl* (2024).

She has described her experiences of dedicating herself to philanthropy to support vulnerable people as being "like a ray of sunshine, illuminating and healing my heart."

"You feel a sense of freshness, a sense of power. This method is actually a form of self-rescue... Coupled with medication to control physical symptoms, you need to exercise and engage in social activities. This prevents you from constantly focusing on the negative aspects of your illness. Gradually, you will find solutions and notice yourself improving day by day," the *globaltimes.cn* report quoted Zhao as saying.

However, according to *kdramastars.com* Feb 20, the actress is still battling depression, that doctors recommended that she visit Tibet to relieve emotional stress, and that netizens have been questioning her intentions, claiming that she is engaging in public relations donations rather than actual charitable contributions.

The report said her constant sharing of charity work and social issues has also been perceived as performative rather than kind acts. So far, the public is split on whether Zhao will be able to win them back, it concluded.

## Boarding Schools Teach Tibetans to 'Become More Chinese'

18 February 2025, [PBS](#), Sunny Nagpaul

Tibetan sociologist Gyal Lo remembers receiving a phone call in 2016 about what he describes as “a serious matter.” It was his brother, calling with concerns about his grandchildren, who “had become strangely different.”

The children had “forgotten the Tibetan they knew and could no longer speak it properly,” says Gyal Lo, who lived in a Chinese province at the time, and now lives in exile in Canada. “The parents and the children couldn’t have a proper conversation with each other in Tibetan.”

The video above, drawn from the new FRONTLINE documentary *Battle for Tibet*, chronicles Gyal Lo’s next moves. Deciding to investigate what was happening at schools across Tibet, Gyal Lo visited over 50 kindergarten boarding schools for Tibetan children between 2017 and 2020. He says he found little teaching of Tibetan language and culture contrary to official claims.

Sharing what he saw when he visited the boarding schools, Gyal Lo says, “Listening to them and analyzing, there were two main areas of teaching in the boarding schools for pre-school children. One is to instill the communist ideology and the second is to instill Chinese culture. These two subject areas of teaching are being implemented to change the Tibetan children’s mindset.”

The Chinese government has placed around 800,000 Tibetan children — including ones as young as four — in boarding schools where they are taught in Mandarin. The video above examines this aspect of the Chinese Communist Party’s rule over Tibet. The full documentary, which premieres on Feb. 18 on PBS and online, investigates the struggle over the survival of the Tibetan language, culture and religion, the use of surveillance on the Tibetan population, and China’s branding of the Dalai Lama as an anti-China separatist, despite his repeated statements that he would accept self-rule within China.

The government did not agree to an interview with FRONTLINE, but in written responses said the Tibetan boarding schools are important in a region with a highly scattered population, and are examples of “human rights and cultural heritage protection.”

Victor Gao, an advocate of China’s rule in Tibet, says in the video that without knowing Mandarin, “it will be more difficult for you to find a more meaningful job,” and “you will be more handicapped in communicating with the rest of the country.” In the video above, President Xi Jinping is seen addressing students at a Tibetan boarding school, saying they will have “a lot of opportunities” in life.

“The Xi Jinping mission is to say, ‘we have to start from childhood,’” Robert Barnett, a renowned expert on Tibet, tells FRONTLINE. “So now the policy is to have kindergartens teaching in Chinese language, to get them speaking Chinese, and basically only Chinese when they’re in a kindergarten,” he says. Tibetans would “become more Chinese,” Barnett says.

Gyal Lo, who became outspoken about the need to preserve Tibetan language and culture, says he eventually lost his university teaching job. Worried that he might get arrested, he fled to Canada in 2020. “These boarding pre-schools erase the fundamental mindset of Tibetan children from the age of four and replace it with a new Chinese mindset,” Gyal Lo says. “Over the next 15 to 20 years, if boarding schools continue, Tibetan national culture and identity will be completely destroyed.”

## China edgy as secretly filmed documentary threatened to expose skeletons in its Tibet cupboard

17 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

A reporter working for UK’s *ITV* spent a year secretly filming while avoiding police checkpoints to show the plight of the more than seven million Tibetans trapped under Beijing’s rule, and China demanded that it be cancelled ahead of its airing on *ITV1* on Feb 16 evening.

China’s UK embassy demanded the cancellation of the exposé, claiming documentary *Inside China: The Battle for Tibet* was “filled with bias and false accusations”, without having even seen it.

Embassy officials have insisted the tightly guarded occupied country has seen “continued and sound economic growth, social harmony and stability”, adding “human rights are at their historical best”.

However, telling an entirely different story, the documentary reveals up to a million children have been placed in boarding schools where they are taught in Mandarin and “moulded” into citizens loyal to China and the Communist Party, reported *express.co.uk* Feb 16.

One mother is shown saying her children “don’t speak our language. We can’t teach the kids Tibetan. They don’t listen to us.”

The report said disturbing footage appeared to show widespread child abuse, with a headmaster seen beating a boy around the head in one clip, while another showed a teacher hitting a child on the hands with a stick, attacking him with a chair and throwing him on to a table.

In other aspects of the conditions in Tibet, the documentary reveals how in capital Lhasa, the filmmaker — known simply as Chang to protect his identity — explains that there are police checkpoints with high-tech surveillance “every 500 metres”.

Cyber security expert Greg Walton has said: “Everyday activities, such as language preservation and passing on traditional Tibetan practices, are being criminalised.

“Surveillance is at the heart of this process of subjugating the Tibetan people, of making them Chinese.”

Chang has also interviewed a high-ranking official, who says that government employees are no longer allowed to practice their religion as part of a crackdown on Buddhism.

A young Tibetan woman named Namkyi has told Chang she was arrested, beaten and sentenced to three years in jail at 15 years of age, simply for being in possession of a photo of the Dalai Lama, who turns 90 in July. She now lives in exile and recently testified in Geneva during the ongoing 58<sup>th</sup> UN Human Right Council.

### **China’s forced labour programmes targeting Uyghurs, Tibetans: UN**

16 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

Chinese authorities are transferring a large number of “surplus” rural workers to state-led labour programmes throughout the nation in addition to using “vocational skills training and education centres” for forced labour in Xinjiang and Tibet, Voice of America reported citing a recent report by the United Nations' International Labour Organization.

The ILO report, which was made public on Monday, describes how Chinese officials have stepped up their efforts to look into and track poverty rates, increased the goals for labour transfers among provinces, and put pressure on ethnic smallholder farmers to give over their land to big state-run cooperatives.

Thousands of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet have been coerced into industries like solar panel production, battery manufacturing, seasonal agriculture, and seafood processing under the guise of “liberating” rural workers, VOA stated citing the report.

China has five autonomous areas at the province level, including the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Both are found throughout the western parts of the nation, the VOA reported.

In VSTECs, Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities were arbitrarily detained in large numbers. This practice has subsequently been replaced with long-term incarceration in ordinary jails, a VOA report revealed. According to the research as cited by VOA, the second system entails the mass transfer of “surplus” rural workers into state-led labour programmes, diverting them from traditional means of subsistence and placing them in sectors such as seafood processing,

solar panel manufacturing, battery manufacturing, and seasonal agriculture.

The report further highlighted that human rights groups, governmental entities, and UN agencies have asked for accountability and transparency concerning labour conditions in Tibet and Xinjiang in recent years. They have also urged nations and multinational corporations to reconsider their connections to supply chains associated with these regions.

According to the report, China has been formally asked by the ILO Committee of Experts to give thorough justifications and elucidate the actions it has taken in response to these accusations pertaining to human rights.

To prevent ethnic and religious minorities from being coerced to work under the pretence of employment and deradicalization initiatives, the report urges Beijing to change regional and national policies.

### **China open to talks on Dalai Lama’s future, but with conditions**

12 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

China has expressed willingness to engage in discussions regarding the future of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, provided that certain conditions are met, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

According to a report by *Reuters*, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun stated at a regular press conference that China is open to talks about the Nobel Peace Prize laureate’s future, but only if he abandons what Beijing perceives as a separatist stance. “The Dalai Lama needs to openly recognise that Tibet and Taiwan are inalienable parts of China, whose sole legal government is that of the People’s Republic of China,” Guo asserted.

His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama, who turns 90 this July, fled Tibet in 1959 following China’s invasion and has since lived in exile. In a 2011 statement on reincarnation, the Tibetan spiritual leader asserted that the decision on his rebirth rests solely with him and that external political forces should not interfere.

“The person who reincarnates has sole legitimate authority over where and how he or she takes rebirth and how that reincarnation is to be recognised. It is particularly inappropriate for Chinese communists, who explicitly reject even the idea of past and future lives, to meddle in the system of reincarnation. He also emphasised that if the institution of the Dalai Lama were to continue, its recognition must follow Tibetan Buddhist traditions, rather than political dictates from Beijing. He further stated that, “I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognised through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance

should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China."

The Tibetan spiritual leader has long opposed Chinese state interference in religious matters, arguing that Beijing's involvement in selecting Tibetan spiritual figures contradicts both religious principles and its own secular ideology.

In recent years, Beijing has taken steps to institutionalise control over the recognition of reincarnated Buddhist figures. In September 2024, the Chinese government convened a meeting in Lanzhou to discuss policies and regulations governing the "reincarnation of living Buddhas." The gathering, attended by Chinese officials and high-ranking Tibetan lamas affiliated with the state-controlled Buddhist Association of China, reinforced Beijing's stance that all reincarnations must adhere to government-imposed regulations. The Chinese authorities promoted the use of the "Golden Urn" method, a controversial procedure that grants the Chinese government the final say in selecting reincarnated Buddhist leaders.

The Dalai Lama, however, has repeatedly rejected the legitimacy of the Golden Urn process. In his 2011 statement, he pointed out that while this method was historically imposed by the Qing dynasty in the 18th century when the Qing dynasty helped Tibet expel Gurkhas in the Tibet-Gurkha conflict, Tibetans had never fully accepted it as a spiritually valid practice.

A crucial meeting of the heads of Tibetan Buddhist traditions is scheduled for July 2025, shortly before the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday. Sources indicate that discussions will focus on the future of the Dalai Lama institution and the process for identifying his successor. Given China's growing efforts to control the reincarnation process, this meeting is expected to be pivotal in shaping the future of Tibetan Buddhism and its leadership.

### China intensifies digital repression in Tibet, new report finds

07 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



Tibetan netizens speaking out against the recent ban on Tibetan language online (Photo/TCHRD)

A new report reveals an intensifying campaign of digital repression in Tibet, where Chinese authorities have systematically dismantled Tibetan-language

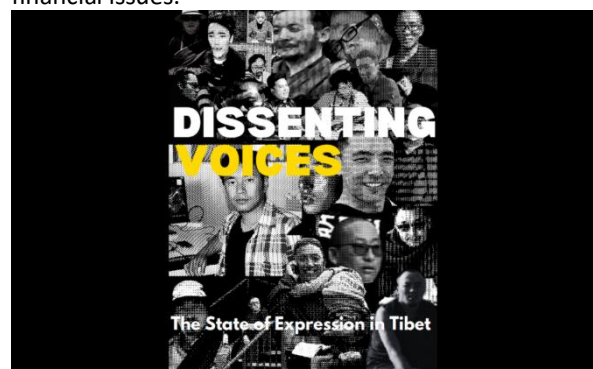
online platforms and targeted writers, intellectuals, and cultural leaders with arrests and lengthy prison sentences.

The report titled "Dissenting Voices: The State of Expression in Tibet," released by the Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), details the critical situation of freedom of expression in Tibet.

The report reveals that under Xi Jinping's rule over the past decade, internet regulations and national security laws have been used to consolidate power and suppress dissenting voices in Tibet. Through mandatory real-name registration systems and extensive collection of personal information, surveillance and monitoring have led to excessive restrictions on freedom of expression. This has put Tibetans at risk of severe punishment for expressing views that differ from the government, effectively not only suppressing free speech but also contributing to policies aimed at destroying cultural activities and forced sinicization.

The report further stated that the suppression of Tibetan language platforms reflects China's broader policy of prioritizing Mandarin and restricting Tibetan language. Tibetan users on apps like Douyin and Kuaishou report frequent censorship, with accounts blocked and Tibetan cultural content removed. In June 2023, activists Rinchen and Sonam protested these discriminatory practices, but their campaign was silenced. Similar censorship continued in 2024, with Tibetan netizens criticizing bans on Tibetan-language content. Platforms like Talkmate and Bilibili also impose restrictions, aligning with China's "Administrative Measures for Internet Religious Information Services," which require state approval for online religious content, further limiting freedom of expression for ethnic minorities.

Similarly, Tibetan-made software like Gangyangs developed by three young Tibetans enabled the use of the Tibetan language in videos was forcibly shut down by the Chinese authorities under the pretext of financial issues.



The crackdown extends beyond online spaces, targeting individuals engaged in literature and intellectual discourse. The report cites the case of

Gangkya Drubpa Kyab, a teacher and author from Serthar County in Kardze. Kyab was first arrested on February 15, 2012, for his writings, including *Tears of the Past* and *Blood Letter of 2008*, which document the suffering of Tibetans during the 2008 protests. He was held incommunicado for 18 months before receiving a 5.5-year prison sentence for alleged “political activities.” Following his release in 2016, he was arrested again in 2022 and sentenced to 14 years for “inciting separatism” and “endangering state security.”

Additionally, Go Sherab Gyatso, a respected Tibetan writer from Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, has been repeatedly detained. He was arrested on October 26, 2020, and sentenced to ten years in November 2021 on charges of “inciting separatism.” This marked his fourth arrest, underscoring the repeated persecution of Tibetan intellectuals.

The report further highlights numerous cases where Tibetan artists, singers, and influential public figures have faced harsh sentences on fabricated charges of threatening state stability and maintaining foreign connections. Under Xi Jinping’s administration, intellectuals and cultural leaders are forced to self-censor, stifling creativity and erasing Tibetan identity from public discourse.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy issued ten recommendations urging China to align its domestic laws with international human rights standards, safeguard fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and privacy, and repeal regulations mandating real-name internet registration, content censorship, and other measures that suppress freedom of expression both online and offline.

### **China stated to be censoring info on four forest fires raging across Tibet**

07 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

China meticulously denied site access and strictly censored information after a devastating earthquake hit Tibet’s Mt Everest county of Dingri on Jan 7 morning. Now it is alleged to be doing the same with four forest fires which were stated to have been raging at different places across Tibet over the past two weeks.

China’s state media has provided only general reports, with no casualty figures. Besides, Chinese authorities have restricted local residents from sharing details about the disasters on social media, reported the Tibetan service of [rfa.org](#) Feb 6.

The forest fires remain to be contained even after 10 days because only few firefighters were dispatched by

the authorities, the report cited an exile Tibetan source with local contacts as saying.

The largest of these was stated to have broken out in Kyirong (Chinese: Jilong, Kerung, etc) county of Shigatse City, near the border with Nepal, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), on Jan 23. It swept through 40 sq km (15 sq m) and still remains out of control, the report said, citing satellite images and sources with knowledge of the ground situation.

Although most of Kyirong county falls under China’s Qomolangma National Natural Reserve project, and is known for its rich biodiversity, the authorities, on Jan 24, initiated only a Level 4 emergency response — the lowest on China’s four-tier system — at 2 pm, the report said, citing an announcement from the county bureau’s Emergency Plan.

Satellite imagery were stated to show that the Kyirong forest fire started near Sale (Seqiong) village, close to the Nepal border, and spread across more than 17 km (11 miles). It is now stated to be blazing in forests close to Kyirong town.

The report said another forest fire was raging in Gangri township of Drachen (Baqing) county in Nagchu City, TAR.

A Tibetan netizen was stated to have written on a Chinese social media site on Feb 5: “Even though it has been days since the first fire outbreak, there’s no help in extinguishing the fire. Who’s going to save us?”

Besides, two other forest fires were stated to have been raging in historically Tibetan areas in Sichuan province: one near Ringpo village in Nyagchu (Yajiang) county of Kardze (Ganzi) Prefecture that broke out on Feb 2 and another near Gamda village in Zamthang (Rangtang) county of Ngawa (Aba) Prefecture on Feb 5.

Nyagchu (or Nyagchuka) had been hit by forest fires before. In Dec 2024, a blaze broke out on the mountains near Chuka town and it took a week to put it out. Another forest fire before that, in Mar 2024, resulted in significant property damage, the report noted.

The county boasts of rich biodiversity and is home to 196 species of large fungi, including 126 edible varieties, as well as an abundance of medicinal plants such as cordyceps, astragalus and fritillaria, the report noted.

Meanwhile, the forest fire in Zamthang county, which occurred around 4 pm, was stated to threaten several surrounding villages as it continued to spread.

China’s state media were cited as saying the Sichuan Provincial Forest Fire Brigade had dispatched 495 people and 93 vehicles to the fire scene.



## China intensifies crackdown on Tibetan schools, forcibly replacing heritage with state-controlled education

06 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

The Chinese government has targeted private-owned educational institutes that support Tibetan language and culture as part of their repression of Tibetans' fundamental rights.

According to a report by Human Rights Watch, the Jigme Gyaltzen Vocational High School, which was connected to Ragya Monastery, in the Golok grasslands of Qinghai province in eastern Tibet was shut down by the government in July 2024.

The report by HRW highlighted that the school has a distinguished three-decade history of teaching Tibetan language and culture in addition to the Chinese national curriculum, giving children the skills they need for modern jobs as well as an understanding of their language and heritage.

Humkar Dorje Rinpoche, a senior lama from the same area who established a comparable vocational school in 2007 with government approval, was reported missing for a month in December 2024 by exile media as cited by HRW. He was presumably forcibly disappeared in police custody.

Local residents were worried for his well-being as the authorities in May had detained another senior lama and educator from the region, Khenpo Tenpa Dargye, along with some 20 followers. After being freed on December 15, community leader Gonpo Namgyal, one of the inmates, passed away three days later, perhaps as a result of abuse while in detention.

In eastern Tibet, at least five comparable vocational schools have been shut down since 2021, ostensibly without providing a cause as reported by HRW. All students are required to attend state schools, according to authorities.

Tibetan children there are now educated exclusively in Chinese from elementary school through high school; pre-primary institutions have even adopted this language policy. Similar to a foreign language, Tibetan is now taught as a separate subject, however, instruction in it is still provided. This goes against both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Chinese Constitution, which both protect the right to receive an education in one's mother tongue, said the HRW report.

According to recent reports as cited by HRW, Tibetan youngsters attending official schools also receive extensive political instruction and military training. Four UN special rapporteurs expressed grave concerns about China's language and educational practices in Tibet in January 2023.

## Chinese Authorities Shutter Schools in Eastern Tibet

05 February 2025, [HRW](#), Maya Wang

Police Detain, Forcibly Disappear, Prominent Tibetan Educators

The Chinese authorities, as part of their suppression of Tibetans' basic rights, have taken aim at privately run educational institutions that promote Tibetan language and culture.

In July 2024, the government closed the Jigme Gyaltzen Vocational High School, affiliated with Ragya Monastery, in the Golok grasslands of Qinghai province in eastern Tibet. This caused consternation among many Tibetans. The school had a prestigious three-decades-long record of teaching Tibetan language and culture, as well as the Chinese national curriculum, equipping students with a knowledge of their own language and heritage as well as skills for modern employment. The school had been operating with official approval.

In December 2024, exile media reported that Humkar Dorje Rinpoche, a high lama from the same region who founded a similar vocational school with official permission in 2007, had been missing for a month, presumably forcibly disappeared in police custody. Local people were especially concerned for his well-being because in May the authorities had detained another senior lama and educator from the region, Khenpo Tenpa Dargye, along with some 20 followers. One of the detainees, community leader Gonpo Namgyal, was released on December 15 and died three days later, apparently due to mistreatment in custody.

At least five similar vocational schools in eastern Tibet have been closed down since 2021, apparently without specific reasons being given.

Authorities have insisted that all students attend state schools. There, Tibetan children are now taught only in Chinese from primary to high school levels; such language policy has even been introduced in pre-primary schools. While Tibetan is still taught, it is now a stand-alone subject, much like a foreign language. This is contrary to the Chinese Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which guarantee the right to mother-tongue education.

Tibetan children in state schools are also subjected to a high degree of political education and, according to recent reports, military training. In January 2023, four United Nations special rapporteurs issued a statement of serious concern over China's language and education policies in Tibet. The Chinese government has yet to provide a meaningful response.

## **First female pilot in China's Xizang (Tibet): Breaking boundaries in a male-dominated sector**

04 February 2025, [The Manila Times](#)

A large number of Chinese women are breaking the glass ceiling to enter professions that were previously dominated by men. The first female pilot recruited by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force in China's Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region has attracted wide attention.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of China, the labor force participation rate of Chinese women has risen from 7.5 percent in 1949 to 61.1 percent in 2023. In recent years, a large number of women have played important roles in manufacturing, service, high-tech, and green industries, etc. They not only promote economic development in traditional fields but are also doing "male jobs", with the number of female pilots, academicians, entrepreneurs, and diplomats on the rise.

Kelsang Pedron, a woman of the post-2000 generation, i.e., youths born from 2000 to 2009 in China, is the first female pilot from Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region recruited by the PLA Air Force. She has had a dream of "flying into the blue sky" since childhood. In Kelsang Pedron's eyes, gender is no longer an obstacle on the road for women to pursue dreams. She went through the same rigorous selection and training as her male classmates before becoming a qualified fighter pilot.

"I had undergone an entire selection process and procedures to get this far, and I was determined to excel and not to be eliminated, so I studied very hard," she said.

Kelsang Pedron has successfully completed a single test flight for a fighter aircraft, delivering excellent results in this stage of training. She said that flying has become a goal from merely a passion at the very beginning.

"I should train hard to become a fighter pilot to protect the blue skies of our motherland," said Kelsang Pedron.

At present, there are more and more female college graduates like Kelsang Pedron. For their diverse employment needs, the Chinese government has also put forward many support measures. In September 2024, the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council unveiled a set of guidelines to promote high-quality and sufficient employment by implementing the employment-first strategy, which proposed to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of women in employment and entrepreneurship, career development, skills training, occupational health, and safety, etc., and build a birth friendly employment environment.

# BUDDHISM

## Buddhist Studies: University of Bern to Shut Down Tibetan Language and Culture Courses

24 February 2025, [BDG](#), Craig C Lweis

The University of Bern, the last academic institution in Switzerland to offer courses in Tibetology, plans to shut down its Tibetan culture and classical language classes from the fall semester of this year, following several decades of instruction, the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps* has reported. The decision has been met with expressions of dismay from scholars and the Tibetan community in Switzerland.

The university explained that the move comes as a professorship reached the end of its term, coupled with a reorganization of the Faculty of History and Philosophy—including the Department of Religious Studies which encompasses Tibetology.

“It was found that the number of students for the specialization in Asian religions, particularly in Mongolia and Tibet, was very low,” the university’s head of communications, Nathalie Matter, was quoted as saying, adding that the difficulty of learning these languages had “a deterrent effect” on prospective students. (*Le Temps*)

Matter explained that the professorship would be reoriented toward “empirical” research in religious studies with “a link to the present and relevance to society,” based on an external evaluation, in order to respond to scientific considerations and interest among students. “We can expect good attendance in the adapted course, which will no longer require compulsory language skills,” she added. (*Le Temps*)

The university noted that the “history of ideas of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism” would remain “an important pillar of the field of religious studies.” (*Le Temps*)

The university’s lecturer in Tibetology, Prof. Yannick Laurent, who spent 10 years living with Tibetan communities in India and Tibet, expressed regret over the decision, observing that Switzerland had, since the 1960s, been the principal host in the West for the Tibetan community in exile. (*Le Temps*)

Prof. Laurent remarked that the number of students had been stable at between five and 10 per year for 8–10 hours of classes per week, which he said was comparable to other European universities.

He also noted that Tibetan and Himalayan studies were “booming” elsewhere in the world, partly because of their interdisciplinary characteristics at the intersection of language learning, religious studies, ethnology, geography, and history. He cited Harvard University as an example, with two professors of Tibetology, and added that the European Research Council financed five projects devoted to Tibetan studies.

Prof. Laurent expressed hope that concerned foundations might be willing to fund a new Tibetology

chair at a Swiss university—something relatively rare in Switzerland.

Members of Switzerland’s Tibetan community also expressed dismay over the decision.

“In view of the large Tibetan community in Switzerland, the end of these study programs is very regrettable,” said the president of the Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Drongpatsang Ngedun Gyatso. He added that the Tibet Institute Rikon—a Tibetan monastery in northern Switzerland’s Töss Valley, inaugurated in 1968 and the only monastery outside of Asia to be founded on behalf of His Holiness the Dalai Lama—only provided religious instruction and could not replace a university education. (*Le Temps*)

Members of the Tibetan diaspora have lived in Switzerland since the 1960s. The community is the largest in Europe, numbering more than 4,000 in 2011 and 8,000 in 2018.

*Le Temps* also highlighted that the university’s decision came amid a broader geopolitical trend that had seen the Chinese authorities ban the use of the term “Tibet” domestically, in favor of the official Chinese name “Xizang.” Some institutions outside of China have also come under pressure to reflect the change. In France, museums such as the Guimet and Quai Branly have replaced “Tibet” with “Xizang Autonomous Region” in their catalogs, while the British Museum followed suit in 2024. “I haven’t seen this happening in Switzerland yet,” said Prof. Laurent. (*Le Temps*)

### **China's brutal assault on Tibetan Buddhism sees over 1,000 monks expelled from Larung Gar Academy**

15 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*Chinese authorities have given a recent blow to the major hub of Tibetan Buddhist learning by expelling more than 1,000 Tibetan monks and nuns from the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy, according to individuals within Tibet.*

Chinese authorities have recently dealt a blow to the major hub of Tibetan Buddhist learning by expelling more than 1,000 Tibetan monks and nuns from the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy, according to individuals within Tibet.

According to the sources cited by Radio Free Asia (RFA), administrators stated that they must reduce the number of Buddhist clergy living at the academy from 6,000 to 5,000 due to a lack of appropriate residency papers. This action is the most recent in a long line of actions by China to dismantle and reduce the size of the academy, which housed roughly 40,000 Buddhist monastics by the early 2000s.

Chinese authorities demolished part of the compound and expelled thousands of nuns and monks in 2016. County officials issued an order outlining the intentions for the forced expulsions and demolitions between 2016 and 2017, RFA reported.

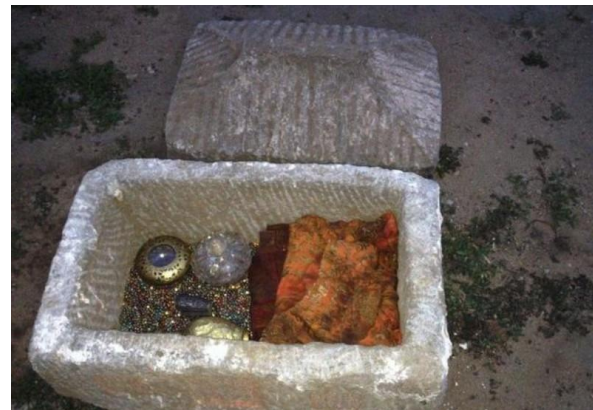
Larung Gar is in Serthar County (Seda in Chinese), part of the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province. According to a report by RFA in December 2024, approximately 400 officials and police were sent there. According to the sources, officials have pressured hundreds of Buddhist religious members to voluntarily depart.

"They are strictly prohibited from taking photos freely and are only allowed to visit designated areas within the monastery." Many of the residences of expelled Buddhist clergy have been marked for demolition, although they have not been destroyed yet, a source said as quoted by RFA.

According to the source, plans are underway to construct a road through the monastery in April, resulting in additional demolitions, RFA quoted. Beijing’s larger plan to diminish the number and power of religious organisations, especially those associated with Tibetan Buddhism, is thought to include the most recent crackdown.

### **China’s Fake Relics and the Exploitation of Buddhism**

16 February 2025, [Tibet Rights Collective](#)



*China’s Fake Buddhist Relics*

China’s use of fabricated Buddhist relics as tools of soft power and geopolitical influence has once again come into the spotlight. The recent controversy surrounding the so-called Sacred Buddha Tooth Relic sent to Thailand highlights the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) deep-rooted strategy of manipulating religious symbols to serve its political interests. This move, rather than being a gesture of spiritual reverence, is an extension of China’s broader campaign to dominate the Buddhist world while erasing the authentic legacy of Tibetan Buddhism and its spiritual leaders.

### **The Buddha Tooth Relic Deception**

From December 5, 2024, to February 14, 2025, China has arranged for a purported Buddha Tooth Relic from Mount Wutai, Shanxi province, to be enshrined at Sanam Luang in Thailand. However, historical and religious scrutiny casts serious doubt on the authenticity of this relic.

Mahayana Buddhist traditions recognize only four genuine Buddha tooth relics, which were recovered from the funeral pyre of Buddha in Kushinagar, India. One of these relics is enshrined in Beijing's Lingguang Temple, a site often questioned for its credibility. Yet, China claims to possess 17 such relics, of which 16 are believed to be nothing more than animal teeth. The tooth relic sent to Thailand is allegedly a cow's lower third molar, a blatant attempt to deceive the Thai Buddhist community. Shockingly, China has also charged Thailand approximately 40 million Thai Baht (1.15 million USD) for this fraudulent relic, exploiting faith for financial and political gain.

#### **The Fake Panchen Lama's Role in the Charade**

Accompanying the relic to Thailand is China's appointed 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu. His presence is a calculated move by Beijing to present him as a legitimate religious figure, despite the fact that the real 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was abducted by Chinese authorities in 1995 and has been missing ever since. Norbu's participation in this event serves as a propaganda tool to whitewash Beijing's human rights abuses in Tibet and bolster its control over Tibetan Buddhism.

#### **China's Strategy: Exploiting Buddhism for Soft Power**

The timing of this enshrinement aligns with the 50th anniversary of Thai-Chinese diplomatic relations, further cementing its political motivations. China aims to counter India's growing influence in the Buddhist world, particularly after India's successful display of authentic Buddha relics in Thailand in February 2024. Unlike China, India did not charge any fee for the veneration of these sacred relics, reflecting its genuine commitment to Buddhism and its followers.

China's attempt to position itself as a Buddhist leader is contradicted by its historical and ongoing repression of Tibetan Buddhism. From the destruction of Tibetan monasteries during the Cultural Revolution to its continued interference in the recognition of reincarnated lamas, the CCP has systematically worked to erase authentic Buddhist traditions. The fabricated relics and the installation of a state-controlled Panchen Lama are merely extensions of this broader strategy.

#### **The Taobao Fake Relic Market**

China's deception extends beyond official state maneuvers to online commercial fraud. Taobao, China's leading e-commerce platform, is notorious for selling fake Buddhist relics. Many of these relics, often originating from Thailand's "relic street," are mass-

produced and marketed with fraudulent authenticity certificates. Reports indicate that 99% of these relics are fake, further highlighting the extent of commercial exploitation in the name of Buddhism.



#### **China's Jibaozhai Museum Closed after Artifacts Discovered to Be Fake**

Fakes are nothing new in China. From fake Apple stores & fake Ikea stores to fake rice made from plastic and even fake cities, almost every day there is something new in China that is being faked, including & especially antiques. So it's no surprise that there are also museums which are filled with fakes as well.

The Jibaozhai Museum, located in Jizhou, a city in the northern province of Hebei, opened in 2010 with its 12 exhibition halls packed with apparently unique cultural gems. But the museum's collection, while extensive, appears ultimately to have been flawed. On Monday, the museum's ticket offices were shut amid claims that many of the exhibits were knock-offs that had been bought for between 100 yuan and 2,000 yuan.

However, this is a more complex story than it seems. Private museums are a sort of "rich man's fad" that has popped up in China over the last ten years or so (with some of them being quite odd like the obscure Chinese businessmen museum). In fact, this trend has been reflected in the market shift in that the main buyers of Chinese antiques are now the Chinese themselves. And the reasons for opening such museums are many, ranging from "gaining face," to tax breaks, national pride, to even money laundering. So it's possible Wang Zonquan (王宗泉) knew the items in his Ji Bao Zhai museum (冀宝斋博物馆) were fake and simply lost face when he was found out (and later died from losing face).

China's long history of counterfeit relics extends beyond private museums and into state-backed religious artifacts. Just as the Jibaozhai Museum was filled with fake antiques meant to impress and deceive, China has long used fabricated Buddhist relics to bolster its political narrative. The exposure of Jibaozhai's fraud echoes a larger pattern in which authenticity is sacrificed for propaganda, whether in museums or religious institutions. This culture of forgery is not merely about financial gain but about

reshaping historical and cultural narratives to fit the Communist Party's agenda.

### The Global Buddhist Community Must Take a Stand

China's manipulation of Buddhist relics and religious figures is an affront to the core values of Buddhism: honesty, compassion, and authenticity. The Thai Buddhist community and the global Buddhist faithful deserve to know the truth behind the relics they revere. Accepting a counterfeit relic not only distorts the sacred traditions of Buddhism but also legitimizes China's broader campaign of religious and cultural erasure.

The global Buddhist community must remain vigilant and reject China's cynical attempts to rewrite Buddhist history for political gain. True reverence for the Buddha lies in upholding the principles of truth and wisdom—not in venerating state-sponsored deceptions.

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China's use of fabricated Buddhist relics as tools of soft power and geopolitical influence has once again come into the spotlight. The recent controversy surrounding the so-called Sacred Buddha Tooth Relic sent to Thailand highlights the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) deep-rooted strategy of manipulating religious symbols to serve its political interests. This move, rather than being a gesture of spiritual reverence, is an extension of China's broader campaign to dominate the Buddhist world while erasing the authentic legacy of Tibetan Buddhism and its spiritual leaders.

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### **China tightens grip on Tibetan Buddhism with new law intensifying state control**

15 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*China has introduced new legal measures tightening its control over Tibetan Buddhism, enforcing political loyalty and intensifying cultural assimilation efforts. The law undermines constitutional religious protections, with critics calling it a severe escalation of suppression.*

The State Administration for Religious Affairs, China's primary body overseeing recognised religions, introduced an updated version of the Measures for the Administration of Tibetan Buddhist Temples on December 1, 2024.

According to a report by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), the new law--adopted in September 2024 and enacted on January 1, 2025--"greatly increased state control over Tibetan religious practice by integrating political directives into Tibetan religious administration."

To further entwine religious practice with state ideology, the amendment "adds explicit political conditions. By making these demands legally binding, the CCP strengthens its hold over monasteries and clergy," the TCHRD report stated.

The report highlighted that to "'create a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation,' Tibetan Buddhists are subtly under pressure to integrate their unique culture and identity into the prevailing Han Chinese framework." This policy aligns with China's broader efforts to assimilate Tibetan culture and "fits in with the CCP's overarching objective of sinicising religion."

The updated Measures for the Administration of Tibetan Buddhist Temples enforce "political loyalty criteria in religious administration, therefore methodically enforcing the Chinese Communist Party's ideological grip over Tibetan Buddhism."

TCHRD outlined how these measures undermine China's legal protections, specifically Article 36 of the Constitution, which "expressly grants citizens the right to freedom of religious belief," and Article 11 of the Regional National Autonomy Law. These actions, it stated, "are a part of the larger state efforts to integrate Tibetan spiritual and cultural identity into the dominant Han identity."

"The Chinese government has significantly escalated its suppression of religious freedom in Tibet in the last decade," said Dawa Tashi, a researcher at TCHRD. "Through coercive 'patriotic education' campaigns designed to instil loyalty, strict control over monastic institutions, and widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions, authorities have tightened their grip. Today, religion in Tibet is not just regulated--it is ruled with an iron fist."



# STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

## Study Reveals How Climate Change Impacts Tibetan Flora Diversity

21 February 2025, [The Pinnacle Gazette](#), Evrim Agaci

### Recent fluctuations in tree range limits affect endemic plant species on the Tibetan Plateau.

New research highlights the dynamic history of the Tibetan Plateau, demonstrating how fluctuations in the upper range limits of tree species have shaped the region's endemic flora diversity over millennia.

The study, integrating satellite-derived tree limit data and fossil pollen records since the Last Glacial Maximum (~22,000 years ago), reveals significant changes during climatic events. During the Holocene Climatic Optimum, trees reached elevations approximately 180 meters higher than present day, causing substantial shifts in endemic alpine species composition across the plateau.

By examining the interplay between historical tree range limits and regional biodiversity, researchers found evidence indicating tree distribution patterns influence local species richness. Notably, areas with greater fluctuations displayed lower beta-diversity, which assesses how species composition varies between different locations.

Researchers of the article indicated, "Temporal fluctuations in paleo-range limits of trees play more important roles than paleoclimate... threatening Tibetan endemic species pool." This suggests the need for greater consideration of anthropogenic climate impacts as tree species move to higher elevations, resulting in habitat loss for fragile alpine ecosystems. The Tibetan Plateau, recognized as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, has been subject to extensive study due to its unique flora, with numerous species endemic to the region. Focusing on the upper tree range limits, the study utilized advanced methodologies to analyze previous climatic patterns and the historic movements of tree lines.

"Both increased paleo-range limit and paleo-temperature fluctuations lead to spatial homogenization of endemic species composition," the authors noted. Understanding how past climate influenced current biodiversity patterns can provide insights for future conservation strategies, particularly as climate change accelerates.

Current projections indicate projected shifts by the end of the century could see upper range limits of trees increase up to 240 meters, depending on emission scenarios. The continuous movement of tree species would not only threaten species diversity but could also homogenize communities across the plateau.

By linking historical data patterns with modern ecological challenges, the researchers stress the importance of preserving endemic flora—a task made more urgent by the challenges of climate change. The

study emphasizes the need to include both past climate change and paleo fluctuations... to understand the current spatial patterns of beta-diversity of alpine flora.

Given the findings, the research team calls for conservation efforts to adapt to the changing dynamics of the Tibetan ecosystem, including potential management strategies such as creating habitat corridors to facilitate species movement.

With biodiversity at risk, the legacy of past climatic conditions offers valuable insights needed to safeguard these unique alpine ecosystems for future generations.

### **China's repressive policies threaten Tibet's ecological, cultural future**

13 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*China's aggressive policies in Tibet continue to deepen concerns over both the region's environmental stability and the repression of its cultural identity, as reported by the Diplomat.*

China's aggressive policies in Tibet continue to deepen concerns over both the region's environmental stability and the repression of its cultural identity, as reported by the Diplomat.

Tibet plays a crucial role as the "Third Pole" with its vast glaciers and major rivers, but Beijing's large infrastructure projects and efforts to suppress Tibetan culture are driving the region toward a major crisis.

The Diplomat emphasised that in early January, a powerful 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck Dingri county in Tibet, highlighting the region's fragile geological stability. The earthquake, which triggered thousands of aftershocks and affected neighbouring countries, came just days after China announced plans to build one of the largest hydroelectric projects in the world on the Yarlung Tsangpo River.

According to the Diplomat, critics have linked such developments to heightened seismic risks, arguing that China's relentless exploitation of Tibet's natural resources not only threatens ecosystems but exacerbates the potential for natural disasters.

The government's pursuit of large-scale infrastructure projects in this ecologically sensitive and seismically active region is viewed by many as reckless, especially as it seems driven by political and economic motives rather than the well-being of the Tibetan people or the environment.

According to the Diplomat, the United Nations and global climate organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have recognized Tibet's vulnerability to climate change, but still, the response has been weak.

The premier international current affairs magazine for the Asia-Pacific region further lamented that the ecological toll of Tibet is compounded by Beijing's increasing repression of Tibetan culture and religion. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has intensified its control over Tibetan Buddhism, seeking to assert dominance over the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, one of Tibet's most revered spiritual leaders.

In a bid to solidify its control, Beijing has used forced approvals to dictate the future of the Dalai Lama's institution, undermining the religious autonomy of Tibetans. This move is part of a broader strategy of sinicization, which includes erasing Tibetan language and history from public discourse. The CCP's insistence on referring to Tibet as "Xizang" rather than its traditional name further diminishes the region's cultural identity.

A report from the New York Times highlighted that Beijing's policies have led to the forced relocation of Tibetan children, placing them in state-run boarding schools in an attempt to sever their ties to their heritage and instil loyalty to the Chinese state. These efforts reflect China's broader plan to eliminate Tibetan cultural practices and replace them with values aligned with the Party's ideology.

The Diplomat further reported that the Dalai Lama, who has long advocated for environmental responsibility and cultural preservation in Tibet, has repeatedly called for global action to safeguard the region.

However, with China's increasing control and the global community's failure to act decisively, Tibet's future remains at risk. The relentless exploitation of its natural resources and the erosion of its cultural identity are threats that, if left unchecked, could have devastating consequences for the region and the billions who depend on its ecological stability.

### **China's Disastrous Summer Floods Linked to Unusually Warm Spring in Tibet**

10 February 2025, [Yale Environment 360](#)



*Flooding in Guangdong Province in June. China News Service*

A new study links devastating summer floods in southern China to unusually warm spring weather over the Tibetan plateau.

Historically, warmer springs in Tibet have led to wetter summers in southern China, while cooler springs led to drier summers. In Tibet, last spring was the warmest since 1980. The modeling study found that unusual May heat in Tibet was connected to heavy June rainfall in southern China, where flooding killed dozens of people and displaced tens of thousands more, largely in Guangdong Province.

The new study, published in *Science Bulletin*, also linked a warm Tibetan spring to heavier rainfall in Japan. The finding builds on prior research showing that a warm spring on the Tibetan plateau is linked with a more powerful East Asian monsoon and greater odds of flooding.

### China launches new joint venture to exploit Qinghai's rich salt lake resources

08 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

China sources much of its lithium resources from salt lakes in Qinghai and the Tibet autonomous region, reported China's official *chinadaily.com.cn* Feb 8. This was cited in the context of the inauguration in Qinghai province on Feb 7 of the China Salt Lake Industrial Group Co, Ltd, a joint venture between China Minmetals Corp and Qinghai province.

The report said the salt lakes of Qinghai province, which is made up of much of the traditional Tibetan province of Amdo (or Domey) and a section of Kham (or Dotoe) province, play a vital role in China's national resource security due to their rich reserves, especially of potash and lithium, the report said.

China Salt Lake, possessing mature potassium chloride processing technologies, leads the world in large-scale potash and lithium extraction technologies from salt lakes, the report noted.

The joint venture is stated to be China's largest production base for potash and lithium salts derived from salt lakes.

Lithium is a key metal used in battery production for the EV industry, as well as power storage facilities used in the wind and solar power sectors.

The report said the joint venture will further boost technological and financial capabilities for developing "China's" abundant salt lake resources, which also aligns with the Beijing's strategic priority of enhancing domestic resource security.

### 4 forest fires erupt across Tibetan areas

06 February 2025, [RFA](#)

### A major blaze near Nepali border is still not contained after 2 weeks.

Four forest fires have erupted in various parts of Tibet over the past two weeks, with a major one in Kyirong county near the border with Nepal raging uncontained after it swept through 40 square kilometers (15 square miles), according to satellite images and sources with knowledge of the situation.



Smoke from active forest fires about 7.4 km southeast of Tibet's Kyirong Community, Feb. 4, 2025. (FIRMS)

Chinese state media has provided only general reports, with no casualty figures. Tibetan sources told Radio Free Asia that Chinese authorities have restricted local residents from sharing details about the disasters on social media.

The largest fire, which broke out Jan. 23, was burning in a heavily forested area of Kyirong county in Shigatse prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region, or TAR, according to the sources, satellite images and a map from the NASA FIRMS, or Fire Information for Resource Management System.

The region supports a diverse range of wildlife, including long-tailed gray leaf monkeys, leopards, musk deer, elk, peacock pheasants, snow chickens and herds of wild donkeys.

It is also home to over 100 tree species, including rare varieties such as Tibetan longleaf pine, longleaf spruce and Himalayan yew.

The region also contains over 200 types of herbal medicines, such as cordyceps, Panax notoginseng and gastrodia elata, many of which are considered nationally valuable.

Another fire was raging in Gangri township of Bachen, or Bagen in Chinese, in the TAR.

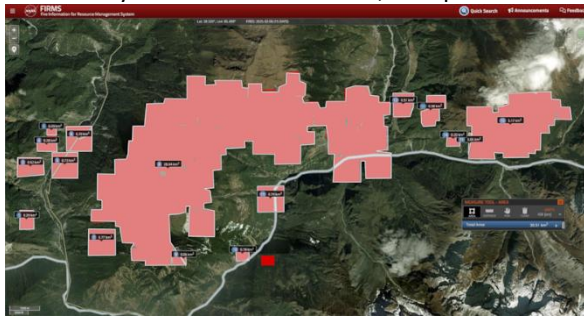
Two other wildfires have been reported in Sichuan province, to the east — one near Ringpo village in Nyagchuka (Yajiang) county that started on Feb. 2 and another near Gamda village in Zamthang (Rangtang) county in Aba Prefecture on Feb. 5.

Local Chinese officials said the cause of the fires was unknown and under investigation.

### Few firefighters dispatched

The fires have continued to spread after two weeks because Chinese authorities dispatched only a few firefighters, according to the source outside Tibet but in contact with residents on the ground.

“Chinese authorities have dispatched only a few firefighters so that the fire was not contained, even over 10 days after it first broke out,” the person said.

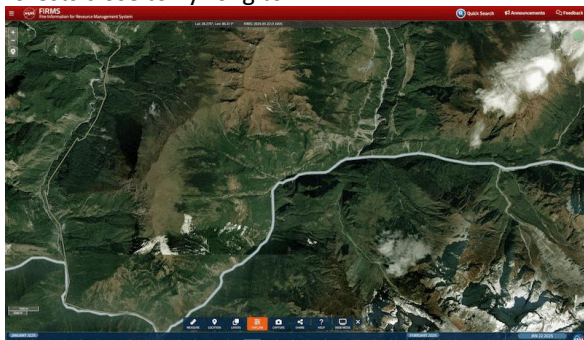


The fire in Kyirong county, Tibet, burned about 40 square kilometers between Jan. 23 and Feb. 26, 2025, as shown in this imagery from NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS). (NASA FIRMS)

Known for its rich vegetation and biodiversity, Kyirong county comprises over 143,000 hectares (353,400 acres), including 128,000 hectares (317,000 acres) of forest land that fall under the Qomolangma National Natural Preserve, according to the Jilong County Forestry and Grassland Bureau. Qomolangma is the local, original name for Mount Everest.

On Jan. 24, authorities initiated a Level 4 emergency response — the lowest on China's four-tier system — at 2 p.m., according an announcement by the county bureau's Emergency Plan.

Satellite imagery of the fire shows it started near Sale (Seqiong) village in Kyirong county close to Tibet's border with Nepal, and has since spread across more than 17 kilometers (11 miles), and is now blazing in forests close to Kyirong town.



Areas affected by the forest fire in Kyirong county, Tibet, are shown between Jan. 23 and Feb. 26, 2025, in this animation using imagery from NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS). (Animation by RFA)

In Gangri township of Bachen County in Nagqu in the TAR, one Tibetan netizen wrote on Chinese social media on Wednesday: “Even though it has been days since the first fire outbreak, there's no help in extinguishing the fire. Who's going to save us?”

#### Past wildfires

Wildfires have erupted in Sichuan's Nyagchu county before.

In December 2024, a blaze broke out on the mountains near Chuka town that took a week to put out. Another

fire in March of that year resulted in significant property damage.

Located in the hilly plateau area of northwest Sichuan, Nyagchuka county boasts a diverse and rich biodiversity due to its varied topography and climate. It is home to 196 species of large fungi, including 126 edible varieties, as well as an abundance of medicinal plants such as cordyceps, astragalus and fritillaria.



Smoke rises from the forest fire in Kyirong county, Tibet, Feb. 3, 2025. (Planet Labs)

The forest fire in Zamthang county, which occurred around 4 p.m. local time on Thursday, reportedly threatened several surrounding villages as it spread.

The Sichuan Provincial Forest Fire Brigade dispatched 495 people and 93 vehicles to the fire scene, official state media said.

#### China's Yarlung Tsangpo super-dam in Tibet worsens earthquake risk

05 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

Not only is China reckless in starting to build the world's largest dam in a seismically active zone in Himalayan Tibet, but the dam itself represents an earthquake risk, the ANI news service Feb 4 cited a paper from The Institute for Security and Development Policy Stockholm as saying.

The new dam, being built in Tibet's Metog County over the Yarlung Tsangpo just before the river enters the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, will have the capacity to generate three times more electric energy than the world's current largest dam, the Three Gorges Dam in China proper. There are fears that already the Three Gorges Dam has caused earthquakes and landslides while also slowing, even if insignificantly, the earth's rotation.

Building river dams and artificial reservoirs causes “irreversible modification of natural landscapes” and “such extensive interference can even increase the risk of earthquakes, the paper was cited a saying of the series of Chinese dams built or being built on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet.

The paper, “Chinese Water Projects in Tibet: A Continental Challenge” written by Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis, is stated to note that despite

China's assurances regarding safety and ecological protection, the project has already generated significant controversy—particularly in India, where, due to engineering challenges, it has also been labelled the “world's riskiest project.”

“While hydroelectricity is generally considered a form of renewable energy, the construction and operation of dams have generated significant controversy. First, building river dams and artificial reservoirs results in an irreversible modification of natural landscapes. Such extensive interference can even increase the risk of earthquakes.”

The report is also stated to refer to the dam projects' severe impact on the local Tibetan population, which is often forced to relocate. Relocation schemes combined with the destruction of historical and religiously significant sites have frequently sparked protests in Tibet. Chinese authorities have been accused of arresting Tibetan protesters and enforcing relocations, which have further impoverished “dam migrants”, the report noted.

Also in Tibet itself, the paper has noted, the creation of reservoirs with much larger surface areas than rivers have resulted in excessive water evaporation. Hydropower projects are not always reliable for energy generation, particularly during droughts. For example, in the summer of 2022, the low water levels in rivers in China proper rendered dams unable to produce sufficient energy. Consequently, power cuts impacted the food industry and factory production.

The paper is also stated to refer to the growing concern regarding China's plans and intentions regarding water-sharing practices among nations of both South and Southeast Asia.

The paper has noted that already the main concern for Southeast Asia seemed to be the normalisation of incidents including lowering of water level on the Mekong River through dam operation. It has recalled a 2021 incident, when China reduced the water flow on the Mekong River by 50% without prior warning, resulting “in a one-metre drop in water level which significantly disrupted fishing, farming, and transportation across Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.”

The paper has said that soon after the reports of the Yarlung Tsangpo super-dam construction emerged in the media, many, including citizens and strategic experts, raised concerns about its impact on the downstream region of India, along with neighbouring Bangladesh.

Despite these concerns, China continues to expand its river dam system, impacting both the local Tibetan population and downstream countries, the paper was stated to note.

## **China's construction of dams sparks controversy as building river dams "results in irreversible modification of natural landscapes": Report**

04 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*China's construction and operation of dams has sparked controversy as building river dams and artificial reservoirs causes 'irreversible modification of natural landscapes' and 'such extensive interference can even increase the risk of earthquakes, according to The Institute for Security and Development Policy Stockholm-paper on dams being built by China and their threat.*

China recently announced plans to build the largest hydropower dam in the world, with a capacity to generate three times more energy than the Three Gorges Dam, the new dam will be located on the transboundary Brahmaputra River.

However, China's construction and operation of dams has sparked controversy as building river dams and artificial reservoirs causes "irreversible modification of natural landscapes" and "such extensive interference can even increase the risk of earthquakes, according to The Institute for Security and Development Policy Stockholm-paper on these dams.

The paper, "Chinese Water Projects in Tibet: A Continental Challenge" written by Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis noted, "In December 2024, Beijing announced plans to build the largest hydropower dam in the world. With a capacity to generate three times more energy than the Three Gorges Dam, the new dam will be located on the transboundary Brahmaputra River (known as the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet). Despite China's assurances regarding safety and ecological protection, the project has already generated significant controversy—particularly in India, where, due to engineering challenges, it has been labeled the "world's riskiest project."

According to the paper, the creation of reservoirs with much larger surface areas than rivers result in excessive water evaporation. Hydropower projects are not always reliable for energy generation, particularly during droughts and recalled the summer of 2022 in China when low water levels in rivers rendered dams unable to produce sufficient energy. Consequently, power cuts impacted the food industry and factory production.

In the paper, the institute said, "While hydroelectricity is generally considered a form of renewable energy, the construction and operation of dams have generated significant controversy. First, building river dams and artificial reservoirs results in an irreversible modification of natural landscapes. Such extensive interference can even increase the risk of earthquakes. Moreover, the creation of reservoirs with much larger

surface areas than rivers leads to excessive water evaporation."

According to the paper, local population is often forced to relocate due to the large scale hydrological projects. Relocation schemes combined with the destruction of historical and religiously significant sites have frequently sparked protests in Tibet. Chinese authorities have been accused of arresting Tibetan protesters and enforcing relocations, which have further impoverished "dam migrants."

Despite these concerns, China continues to expand its river dam system, impacting both its local population and downstream countries. Concerns have been raised that China may manipulate water levels on transboundary rivers by either releasing excessive amounts of water, causing floods beyond China's borders or "turning off" the taps to increase water scarcity downstream.

There is also growing concern regarding China's plans and intentions regarding water-sharing practices among nations of both South and Southeast Asia. For South Asian states, the biggest threat, apart from development of a dam system is a potential diversion of water from the Brahmaputra River if the third phase of China's South-North Water Diversion project is implemented.

In the paper, the author noted that the main concern for Southeast Asia seems to be the normalisation of incidents including lowering of water level on the Mekong River through dam operations and recalled the 2021 incident, when China reduced the water flow on the Mekong River by 50 per cent without prior warning, resulting "in a one-meter drop in water level which significantly disrupted fishing, farming, and transportation across Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam."

On January 3, India urged the Chinese side to ensure that the downstream states of the Brahmaputra river are not harmed by activities in upstream areas. The remarks came close on the heels after reports emerged that the Chinese side is constructing a mega dam upstream of Brahmaputra on Chinese soil.

"The Chinese side has been urged to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters on January 3, at a weekly presser here in the national capital.

Soon after the reports of the Dam construction emerged in the media, many, including citizens and strategic experts, raised concerns about its impact on the downstream region of India, along with neighbouring Bangladesh. Such concerns were also raised earlier from time to time when China indicated the building of hydropower projects on the upstream. Jaiswal said the Indian government has seen the information released by Xinhua on December 25,

2024, regarding a hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.

Addressing the weekly presser, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect its interests.

"As a lower riparian state with established user rights to the waters of the river, we have consistently expressed, through expert-level as well as diplomatic channels, our views and concerns to the Chinese side over mega projects on rivers in their territory," Jaiswal said.

"These have been reiterated, along with the need for transparency and consultation with downstream countries, following the latest report," Jaiswal added.

# TIBET IN EXILE

## Marking Losar, the Tibetan New Year

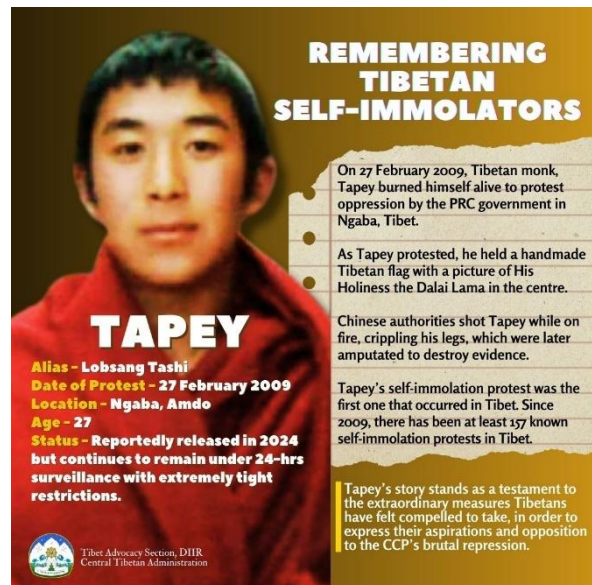
28 February 2025, [US Department of State](#), Marco Rubio, Secretary of State

I extend my warmest wishes to all those celebrating Losar, the Tibetan New Year. On this first day of the Year of the Wood Snake, we celebrate the strength and perseverance of the Tibetan community worldwide. The United States remains committed to protecting the universal, fundamental, and inalienable human rights of Tibetans and promoting their distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage.

I wish Tibetans celebrating all across the world peace and prosperity in the new year. Losar Tashi Delek and Happy New Year!

## The Silent Flames of Resistance: Remembering Tapey, the First Tibetan to Self-immolate inside Tibet

27 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*The Silent Flames of Resistance: Remembering Tapey, the First Tibetan to Self-immolate inside Tibet*

This day in 2009 marks the beginning of the wave of self-immolation protests inside Tibet when Tapey, a 27-year-old monk from Kirti Monastery in Amdo Ngaba, set himself on fire after local authorities cancelled a prayer ceremony at his monastery. This marked the first instance of one of the most extreme forms of non-violent resistance within Tibet proper, reflecting the deep-seated frustrations within the Tibetan community regarding China's oppressive policies affecting their religious and cultural freedoms. Tapey's story stands as a testament to the extraordinary measures some Tibetans have felt compelled to take in expressing their opposition to the escalating tensions and brutal Chinese repression, particularly after the 2008 protests in Ngaba

Prefecture, where the response of authorities resulted in the death of numerous civilians, including pregnant women, children, and teenage students.

Carrying the Tibetan flag and a photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tapey set himself aflame after Chinese authorities cancelled a traditional mourning ceremony during Tibetan New Year. The response to his protest – **being shot by military police while engulfed in flames** – underscores the severe measures employed against such demonstrations. His subsequent disappearance into various hospitals while barred from contact with most of his family and religious figures exemplifies China’s secrecy and inconspicuous handling of such incidents.

The systematic suppression of information about these events, evidenced by the limited coverage in state media and the restricted access to Tapey during his hospitalization, reflects broader patterns of information control regarding Tibet. Despite initial reports by foreign media, the full context and consequences of his protest remained largely obscured from public view.

As of today, there have been at least 157 known cases of Tibetan self-immolation protests with the most recent in 2022 of Taphun, an 81-year-old Tibetan senior citizen, who succumbed to injuries sustained during the protest. These protests have been carried out by both monastic and lay Tibetans from various walks of life, including students, farmers, teachers, parents, and grandparents.

In response to these protests, the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has increased security measures, criminalized self-immolation, and punished families, monasteries, and communities associated with self-immolators, rather than addressing Tibetans’ legitimate grievances and calls. Despite these measures, self-immolation protests have continued, reflecting the deep-seated grievances of the Tibetan people regarding religious freedom, cultural preservation, and human rights under the Chinese repression.

In the past, international bodies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have called for China to respect Tibetan rights and allow unimpeded access to Tibetan areas for UN officials and foreign media. Multiple national governments have also expressed concern about the situation, calling for multilateral diplomatic intervention to address the crisis in Tibet.

The recognition of Tibetan self-immolators stands as a solemn testament to the ultimate sacrifice made by those who could no longer bear witness to the suffering of their fellow Tibetans. Despite these profound acts of protest—where individuals surrendered their bodies to flames as a final desperate plea for global attention—Tibet’s condition under Chinese authority has only worsened. The systematic

erasure of Tibetan culture, language, and religious freedom continues unabated, with heightened surveillance, forced assimilation policies, and environmental exploitation intensifying rather than diminishing in response to these desperate acts. This tragic reality underscores how even the most extreme forms of nonviolent resistance have failed to move international powers to meaningful action, leaving Tibet’s future increasingly perilous under China’s oppressive rule.

*-Filed by the UN, EU, and the Human Rights Desk, Tibet Advocacy Section, DIIR*

### **Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the 16th Kashag Greetes Tibetans on Losar, Tibetan New Year 2152**

27 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the 16th Kashag Greetes Tibetans on Losar, Tibetan New Year 2152*

On the occasion of the traditional Tibetan New Year, Losar 2152—the year of the Wood Snake—Sikyong Penpa Tsering extends Losar greetings on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administrations to Tibetans around the world.

#### **Sikyong Penpa Tsering’s message for Losar:**

“Today marks the first day of the Tibetan Year 2152, the Wood Snake Year. At the beginning of this year, I offer prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all the senior Buddhist masters and spiritual leaders. I also extend Losar greetings and best wishes to all Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet.

During the past year, our world has witnessed many human-made and natural disasters. In particular, we learned about the earthquake in Tibet that claimed many Tibetan lives and caused extensive damage to property. Initially, the Chinese government released limited information, but later there was complete silence. To this day, we have no information about the earthquake relief efforts. Therefore, this year’s Losar is not an occasion for extensive celebrations. However, it is important that we continue to observe our traditional customs while being mindful of the circumstances.

Regarding our Tibetan movement over the past year, we have seen slightly increased awareness and support worldwide. As I often say, regardless of the



situation, we must work considering the global context and understand how global developments affect cause of Tibet, what challenges we face, and what opportunities arise. Through His Holiness the Dalai Lama's blessings and the protection of our dharma protectors, along with our sincere and transparent efforts, we can achieve results through collective action. As previously mentioned, last year we achieved a small political victory when both houses of the U.S. Congress passed legislation that was signed into law by the President on 12 July.

There is still much work ahead. Following His Holiness the Dalai Lama's guidance and vision, if we all work together, we will surely reach our destined path and fulfil our aspirations. Tibetans inside Tibet face enormous challenges. We continue to monitor the situation as best as we can from outside. Even in the 21st century, it has become difficult for Tibetan family members and friends to speak freely and trust each other without fear. We know that our identity, language, religion, and way of life are being destroyed, and the environment is being severely damaged.

Those of us in exile are working to raise international awareness and resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict. As I often say, based on the reality of the situation, to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict non-violently, we must engage in dialogue with the Chinese government – there is no other way. Until such time comes, we must reach out to the international community and seek support. The international community cannot simply take Tibet's interests and put their own interest aside. We must consider the reality of global political changes. This is a time of significant political transformation in the international arena. Under these changing circumstances, we must identify what opportunities and challenges may arise. If we can seize opportunities at the right time and recognise challenges early to address them now, we hope it will be easier when such situations evolve. This requires both human and financial resources.

Those of us in exile have never lost hope under His Holiness the Dalai Lama's leadership. Tibetans inside Tibet continue to sacrifice themselves to protect Tibetan identity and fight for freedom. We must continue this effort. Even if we cannot resolve these challenges in our generation, as His Holiness advises, we should "hope for the best but prepare for the worst". If our struggle for truth and justice must continue for thirty to fifty years, the responsibility falls on the new generation. Therefore, we continue to focus on nurturing the new generation. Most importantly, at this time, given our small population both inside and outside Tibet, we must think about our broader goals and avoid getting caught up in regional, provincial, or sectarian divisions. If we can think more broadly and remain flexible rather than narrow-minded and rigid, it will surely bring new energy to our

cause, new confidence in our work, and help achieve our objectives. Once again, on behalf of the 16th Kashag and myself personally, I wish everyone a Happy New Year. Thank you."

### **Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile Greets Tibetans on Losar, Tibetan New Year 2152**

27 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Speaker of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, extends Losar greetings to Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet on the occasion of traditional Tibetan New year, Losar 2152, the year of the Wood Snake.

#### **Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel's message for Losar:**

On this auspicious occasion of the Tibetan New Year 2152, the Wood Snake Year, on behalf of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and personally, I extend Losar greetings to all Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, and to all friends of Tibet.

Many positive developments occurred in the past year. It is important that we seize opportunities to accomplish many more good deeds in this new year to make it meaningful. It has been 66 years since we became refugees. For Tibetans inside Tibet, they continue to work in unity with dedication, courage, and determination to preserve and promote the Tibetan language, culture, and religion.

As Tibetans in exile – with the generous support and assistance from the government and people of India, as well as the governments and people of the United States, Europe, and other host countries where Tibetans reside – it is crucial that we must also continue and intensify our efforts in preservation of our language, culture, and our struggle for the just cause of Tibet through dedicated determination and collective efforts.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama turns 90 according to the Gregorian calendar this year, the Central Tibetan Administration and many organisations are preparing to celebrate and commemorate His Holiness' benevolent kindness. Most importantly, it is crucial that all Tibetans unite in harmony to fulfil His Holiness the Dalai Lama's noble visions, and that everyone engages in virtuous actions while abstaining from ill deeds, perform liberation of captive animals, and performs as many other meritorious activities as possible for His Holiness' long life. Such noble actions will greatly benefit both the Tibetan community and individuals, according to our belief. Once again, I wish everyone a Happy New Year.

Finally, I pray for the longevity and fulfilment of noble endeavours of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all the reverent high lamas and upholders of Buddha's teachings. I also offer my prayers for the success of our

pursuit for justice and reunion of Tibetans through quick resolutions of Tibet-China conflict. Thank you. Tashi Delek.

### **Parliamentarian Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen to Attend 60th Founding Anniversary of Odisha's Tibetan Settlement**

27 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen, Parliamentarian and member of the standing committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, will attend the 60th founding anniversary of the Phuntsokling Tibetan settlement in Odisha. The event is scheduled for 3 to 4 March 2025. As a representative of the standing committee, the MP will participate as a special guest.

### **NYC embraces Losar and Tibetan language, showing vitality of Tibetan communities in the United States**

25 February 2025, [ICT](#)

This year, New York City is adding another holiday to the list that determines administrative functions such as parking restrictions: Losar, the Tibetan New Year.

Losar – which is celebrated by Tibetans and other Himalayan communities, such as the Bhutanese – is now in the company of a select number of officially recognized holidays such as Christmas, Yom Kippur, Diwali, and Eid Al-Fitr. This represents a milestone for a community that only began to grow in earnest in the 1990s.

New York City also recently established a Tibetan-language Facebook page for the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

While New York is home to the largest Tibetan community in the United States, many other cities and states now have well-established Tibetan associations and active Tibetan communities. The maturation of these communities can be seen in the construction of Tibetan prayer halls and community centers, arranging Tibetan Sunday schools for children, and increasing political engagement such as securing meetings with elected representatives and sending participants to Tibet Lobby Day.

Tibetans in the United States and other countries enjoy human rights and democratic freedoms that China has denied to their brothers and sisters in Tibet, and they will have a central role in moving the Tibet movement forward in changing political circumstances.

### **British Museum removed 'Xizang' label from Silk Roads exhibition about Tibet**

27 February 2025, [RFA](#)

The British Museum removed the term "Xizang" from its labeling of Tibetan artifacts after rights groups and Tibetans living in the United Kingdom criticized the use of the Beijing-promoted place name.

The London museum's Silk Roads exhibition opened in late September and ran until last Sunday.

The labels were reviewed in January and updated from "Tibet or Xizang Autonomous Region, China" to "Tibet Autonomous Region, China," a British Museum spokesperson said in an email to Radio Free Asia on Tuesday. The email did not state when the labels were changed.

Tibetan activists who visited the museum in February confirmed that the wording had indeed been changed. The term "Xizang" was first used in official Chinese government diplomatic documents in 2023 after Chinese government-backed scholars said would help promote China's legitimate occupation and rule of Tibet.

Use of the term has generated an uproar among Tibetans living outside the country, who see it as another example of Beijing's attempts to assimilate Tibetans into Chinese culture and erase Tibetan identity.

Activists reject museum's initial response

Tibetan groups wrote to the British Museum first on Nov. 25 and again on Dec. 18 citing their concerns over the use of "Xizang."

One of the objects cited by the Tibetan groups -- which are led by the Global Alliance for Tibet and Persecuted Minorities and the Tibetan Community in Britain -- was a silver vase that was gifted by the 7th-century Tibetan Empire to neighboring Tang China.



*People walk in front of the British Museum in London, England, Sept. 28, 2023. (Hollie Adams/Reuters)*

The museum's response in December defended its use of the term Xizang, saying that the labels reflected "the contemporary region."

Tibetan activists rejected that explanation, saying it ignored the political implications of promoting

terminology perpetuated by the Chinese Communist Party.

The Silk Roads exhibition explored the history of the ancient trade route during the key period from 500 to 1000. It featured over 300 objects from the museum's own collection and those loaned from at least 29 other institutions.

The British Museum will consult with experts on Tibetan history and culture in any future Tibet-related exhibitions, the museum spokesperson said in the email to RFA.

"It has not, nor was it the intention, to replace 'Tibet' with the Chinese term 'Xizang,'" the spokesperson said.

Last year, the French museum Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac also faced criticism for using the term "Xizang" in its exhibit. In October, following weeks of protests and petitions from Tibetans, the museum announced that it would reverse the change in its labeling.

### **Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche Confers Amitayus Long Life Empowerment at Delhi Samyeling**

26 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As per the request from Delhi Samyeling Tibetan Settlement and various community organisations, Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche bestowed the long-life empowerment of Buddha Amitayus on 23 February 2025.

Upon Rinpoche's arrival at the venue, he was received by the Jigme Jungney, Representative of the New Delhi-based Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, along with representatives from various local Tibetan organisations and Tibetan students. After Rinpoche entered the teaching pavilion and completed the preliminary empowerment rituals, the Representative presented a mandala offering along with the three jewels, representing Buddha's body, speech, and mind.

During the main empowerment ceremony, Rinpoche offered advice on ethical conduct to the public. He also led prayers and recitations of the Mani mantra for those who lost their lives in the recent severe earthquake that shook some regions in Tibet, as well as for the late elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, former Kalon Tripa Gyalo Thondup, and all other deceased sentient beings, praying for their swift rebirth and ultimate enlightenment.

*-Report filed by Tibetan Settlement Office, Samyeling*

### **Tibetan Community Protests in Geneva as 58th UNHRC Session Opens, Highlighting Human Rights Violations in Tibet**

25 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Tibetan Community of Switzerland and Liechtenstein (TCSL) staged a protest in front of the United Nations headquarters in Geneva on the opening day of the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The demonstration condemned the worsening human rights situation in Tibet under Chinese rule.

UN Human Rights High Commissioner Volker Türk, in his opening address, underscored the critical need to uphold human rights and the rule of law to prevent the recurrence of past atrocities. He warned that unchecked violations—such as the use of unrestrained force, attacks on civilians, and widespread abuses—could reoccur. However, he emphasised that international mechanisms, including the UN Charter, international law, the UNHRC, civil society, and judicial institutions, serve as essential safeguards against such abuses. Türk also reaffirmed his Office's commitment to monitoring and reporting on global human rights violations, with further details to be presented in his forthcoming Global Update.

Phuntsok Topgyal, UN Advocacy Officer at the Tibet Bureau Geneva, addressed the protesters, stressing the severity of the human rights crisis in Tibet. He noted that the 58th UNHRC session, which began on 24 February, will continue until 4 April 2025. Topgyal acknowledged Switzerland's role in human rights advocacy and congratulated Swiss Ambassador **Jürg Lauber** on his election as President of the UN human rights council on 1 January 2025. Additionally, he welcomed the Swiss Federal Council's approval of a report on the situation of Tibetans in Switzerland and the transnational repression they face, a decision finalised on 12 February 2025.

"Today, we unite not only as Tibetans but also with our Chinese Christian brothers and sisters to stand in solidarity against the ongoing oppression under the Chinese regime," Topgyal stated.

He criticised China's recent statements at the 61st Munich Security Conference regarding equality and a multipolar world, arguing that domestic policies in China contradict these claims. He highlighted severe repression in Tibet, referencing the documentary *Inside China: The Battle for Tibet*, which exposes extensive surveillance, cultural erasure, and forced assimilation. Reports indicate that Tibetan children are being placed in state-run boarding schools where Mandarin is the sole language of instruction, posing a grave threat to the survival of Tibetan language and heritage. Monasteries, once centres of Tibetan spiritual and cultural life, are now under strict state

control, and peaceful protests continue to be met with severe crackdowns.

The protest also drew attention to religious persecution in China, particularly against Christians. “Our Christian compatriots in China face similar oppression,” Topgyal said, citing the Chinese government’s crackdown on religious freedoms, including unlawful detentions and forced disappearances of human rights defenders. UN human rights experts have previously raised concerns over ongoing abuses in Tibet and East Turkestan.

Topgyal called on the international community, particularly the European Union, to take a firm stand against these injustices. “China projects a favourable image abroad, but its domestic policies are driven by self-interest and control. If China truly seeks global leadership and equality, it must first grant fundamental rights to its own people, including Tibetans and Christians,” he asserted.

More than 80 people participated in the demonstration, including over 40 Chinese Christians, French-speaking supporters of Tibet, members of Tibetan support groups, the Vice President and executive members of TCSL, the Co-President of the Tibetan Youth Association in Europe (TYAE), and staff from the Tibet Bureau Geneva.

Ahead of the 58th UNHRC session, the Tibet Bureau in Geneva has actively lobbied UN member states, submitted a written statement, and plans to deliver oral statements highlighting China’s human rights violations in Tibet. The session will address key global issues, including the protection of human rights defenders, religious freedom, counter-terrorism policies, and rights to food and housing.

*-Report filed by Tibet Bureau Geneva*

### **“No Losar Celebration Until Tibet is Free”: Former Tibetan Political Prisoner to Stage Hunger Strike at European Parliament on Losar**

25 February 2025, [The Tibet Express](#), Tenzin Chokyi



*“No Losar Celebration Until Tibet is Free”: Former Tibetan Political Prisoner-Activist Tenpa Dhargyal to Continue Annual Losar Protest. Image: Tenpa Dhargyal/Facebook*

Tenpa Dhargyal, a former Tibetan political prisoner and activist, is set to continue his campaign not to celebrate Losar, the Tibetan New Year until Tibetans are free from the Chinese occupation and reunited in Tibet.

Dhargyal will flag off his protest – “Till Tibet is Free and United, I give up celebrating Losar”- by forgoing the upcoming Tibetan Losar starting on 28th February in France.

According to an announcement on his Facebook page, the campaign will begin on Friday- the first day of the Tibetan Lunar Year 2152 with a hunger strike in the morning, followed by a peace march from the European Parliament in Strasbourg to the Chinese embassy in the same city from 14:00 to 15:00 local time.

The campaign in front of the European parliament is aimed at garnering stronger international support for Tibetans living in occupied Tibet under Chinese rule while also spreading information about their situation and the cause of Tibet worldwide.

“By protesting in front of it, we hope to garner stronger international attention and support for the Tibetan cause”.

The announcement has encouraged and requested fellow Tibetans living in Europe and those who are sympathetic to and support the cause of Tibet to join the campaign.

Tenpa started his campaign in the face of growing self-immolations by Tibetans in occupied Tibet against China’s colonial rule. To honour the immeasurable sacrifice of these martyrs and their families, Tenpa, in 2014, started his endeavour to campaign against the Chinese rule during Tibetan Losar.

According to the fact sheet on Tibet.net, there have been a total of 157 self-immolations by Tibetans, mostly from occupied Tibet, from 2009 to 2022.

The Tibetan activist carried his campaign from Dharamshala to various cities across Australia as well as in the US last year.

As Tenpa enters the 11th consecutive campaign forgoing Losar, a day of celebration and joyful occasion, the situation inside Tibet remains dire With unabated human rights violations and a severe lack of freedom under Chinese rule.

According to the 2024 Freedom House report, Tibet received a global freedom score of zero for the first time, marking its worst rating to date.

Meanwhile, while Tenpa has for long been the only Tibetan to protest against the Chinese on Losar, this year, however, Tibetans across the diaspora will observe it with a subdued air of festivity in solidarity with the Tingri earthquake victims, as the Kashag (the Cabinet) of the CTA has requested Tibetans to “refrain from hosting large gatherings, performing Tibetan circle dances (gorshey), or engaging in other exuberant expressions of celebration.”

## British Museum makes partial concession in “Xizang” row

25 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The British Museum in London has revised its terminology from “Xizang Autonomous Region” to “Tibetan Autonomous Region” in its ongoing Silk Road exhibition after sustained pressure from Tibetan activists. However, critics argue that the new label also aligns with China’s official designation and fails to acknowledge Tibet’s broader historical and geographic identity.

The exhibition, which has been on display since September 2024, highlights cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe from 500-1000 CE. The initial labelling of Tibetan artefacts as originating from the “Xizang Autonomous Region” sparked backlash from Tibetan community leaders and human rights organisations in England, who denounced the terminology as misleading and complicit in erasing Tibet’s history.

In a formal letter addressed to the museum’s director, Dr. Nicholas Cullinan OBE, the Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities (GATPM) and members of the British Tibetan community demanded the removal of the term “Xizang Autonomous Region.” They contended that the usage of “Xizang” was a direct endorsement of Beijing’s official narrative, which seeks to diminish Tibet’s distinct historical identity.

Initially, the British Museum defended its choice, arguing that the term “Tibet or Xizang Autonomous Region” reflected the contemporary political reality of the region. However, sustained activism from the Tibetan community led to the recent terminology revision. While some viewed this as a victory, others remained dissatisfied, arguing that “Tibetan Autonomous Region” still adheres to Beijing’s definition of Tibet, which excludes the Tibetan regions of Amdo and Kham.



(Photo/Free Tibet)

Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha, deputy director of the Tibetan Policy Institute (TPI), acknowledged the partial success of the revision but emphasised the need for continued advocacy. “This is definitely a success in the sense that Tibetan activists forced the British Museum to make changes,” he told Phayul. “Unfortunately, it is

not a success in the sense that the change was not what Tibetans are demanding. So, a continued effort is required to make the British Museum make rightful changes instead of tactful changes.”

Historically, Tibet comprises three provinces: U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. Under Chinese rule, Tibet has been fragmented, with Amdo and Kham partially absorbed into Chinese provinces such as Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai, and Gansu. Beijing’s official definition of Tibet, through the “Tibet Autonomous Region” (TAR), only includes U-Tsang and parts of Kham, omitting significant Tibetan areas.

The controversy over the use of “Xizang” in international institutions extends beyond the British Museum. Other museums, such as the Musée du Quai Branly and Musée Guimet in Paris, have similarly adopted terminology that Tibetan activists argue aligns with China’s political agenda. In response to public outcry in September 2024, the Musée du Quai Branly removed “Xizang” from its descriptions, replacing it with “Tibet.” However, the Musée Guimet has resisted similar demands, with its director, Yannick Lintz, refusing to rename its “Himalayan World” exhibit to explicitly acknowledge Tibet.

The adoption of “Xizang” in international institutions reflects broader geopolitical influences, with Beijing increasingly seeking to impose its terminology in global discourse. This strategy mirrors China’s approach in other contested regions, such as the labelling of East Turkestan as “Xinjiang,” reinforcing its territorial claims.

Tibetan activists argue that these terminological choices significantly impact the international perception and preservation of Tibetan identity and history.

## Buddhists demand full control of Mahabodhi temple, stage indefinite hunger strike in Bodh Gaya

25 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Buddhist protestors stage indefinite hunger strike at Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya, India (Photo/X)

A group of Buddhist monks, leaders, and followers, have reportedly entered the 14th day of an indefinite hunger strike at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, in central India demanding full administrative control of the site, considered the most sacred by Buddhists. The protest challenges the existing management structure established under the Bodh Gaya Temple Act of 1949, which grants a majority in the temple's management to Hindu committee members despite its centrality to Buddhism.

The Mahabodhi Temple, revered as the place where Buddha attained enlightenment, has been a point of administrative contention. Originally built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE, the temple suffered destruction following the 12th-century invasions led by Bakhtiyar Khilji of the Ghurid dynasty. It was later rediscovered and revitalized through the efforts of Anagarika Dharmapala, a Sri Lankan Buddhist reformer. Recognized for its historical, religious, and cultural significance, the temple was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002.

Despite its status as one of Buddhism's holiest sites, the 1949 Bodh Gaya Temple Act mandates a nine-member Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC), with five Hindu members—including the District Magistrate as chairman—and only four Buddhist representatives. Protestors argue that this unequal representation denies the Buddhist community rightful autonomy over its holiest site.

In addition to demanding exclusive Buddhist control over the temple, demonstrators are calling for an end to state interference in Buddhist religious affairs. They have also condemned what they describe as systematic distortions of Buddhist history and attempts to diminish the temple's sacred identity under the current administration. The Bihar state government has come under scrutiny for allegedly ignoring their grievances and employing intimidation tactics, such as creating loud noises to disrupt peaceful assemblies and obstructing visibility at the protest site.

Protesters have further accused temple authorities of alleged mismanaging donations and mistreating pilgrims. The ongoing hunger strike, backed by over 500 organizations worldwide including the All India Buddhist Forum and the Ladakh Buddhist Association—has drawn growing national support. According to local reports, supporters from various parts of the country, including Tripura, Ladakh, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra, are arriving to participate in this mass movement and express solidarity.

Since its commencement on February 12, the hunger strike has also garnered international support, with a petition circulating across multiple countries. A petition, "In Solidarity: Demand Buddhist Control Over the Mahabodhi Temple," has already gathered over 5,000 signatures. Buddhist communities from Sri

Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Korea, Japan, the United States, Canada, and Mongolia have voiced their support. Despite the rising pressure, the Indian government has yet to respond to the demands.

### **Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Residents of Bylakuppe Settlements, Highlights Key Initiatives of the 16th Kashag**

25 February 2025, [CTA](#)

After successfully completing his official visits to key institutions and settlement camps in Lugsum Samdupling and Dickey Larsoe Tibetan settlements in Bylakuppe, Sikyong Penpa Tsering gathered with the general public to discuss the administrative priorities and ongoing efforts of the 16th Kashag. He also reaffirmed the Central Tibetan Administration's (CTA) commitment to addressing the evolving needs of the Tibetan exile community.

Present at the event were Settlement Officer Gelek Jungney of Lugsum Samdupling and Settlement Officer Chime Dorjee of Deyki Larsoe. The gathering was also attended by local Tibetan leaders, including representatives of the Local Tibetan Freedom Movement, Tibetan Cooperative Societies, monastery administrators, camp leaders, and representatives from various NGOs.

In his address, Sikyong emphasised the CTA's ongoing efforts to strengthen the Tibetan settlements through enhanced governance, education, and welfare initiatives. He stressed the importance of unity and collective responsibility in safeguarding Tibetan identity and advancing the Tibetan cause.

"We Tibetans are among the most unique refugee communities in India, thanks to the blessings of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and the unwavering support of the Indian government," Sikyong remarked. "Many foreigners and other refugee groups are astounded by the strength, resilience, and well-organised structure of the Tibetan administration and community. We should take immense pride in this and recognise that our unity is our greatest strength."

One of the key initiatives of the 16th Kashag that Sikyong highlighted was the ongoing archiving through digitisation of records. "If the digitisation process is successfully completed, it will stand as one of the major achievements of the 16th Kashag," he stated. "Just as the Kangyur and Tengyur texts are being digitised for global accessibility, the administrative records of the CTA will be preserved and made more efficient through this initiative."

Sikyong also announced plans to make Buddhist teachings, scriptures, and texts available in several languages, including Assamese, Bhojpuri, and Hindi, to ensure that the profound wisdom of Tibetan Buddhism reaches a broader audience.

Additionally, Sikyong emphasised the CTA's ongoing efforts to advocate for the Middle Way Approach as the official policy for seeking a peaceful resolution to the Sino-Tibetan conflict. He also provided updates on CTA's global engagements and its continued advocacy for Tibet. "Tibetans should take pride in their identity only when they have a full understanding of Tibet's history and current situation. Without this knowledge, our struggle for Tibet becomes directionless. We must always remember that we are in exile because of China's illegal occupation of Tibet."

Before concluding, Sikyong Penpa Tsering underscored the significance of unity among Tibetans and warned against the dangers of misinformation in the digital age. "Rather than spreading baseless rumours, Tibetans should focus on fostering truth and unity. In this 21st century, many people believe whatever they see on social media, which is why self-study and fact-checking are crucial before sharing any information," he advised.

In his interaction with the public during Q&A session, Sikyong addressed various concerns, including sustainable livelihood opportunities, education policies, and settlement welfare. He encouraged community members, particularly younger generations, to take active role in preserving Tibetan culture and contributing to the broader Tibet movement. The discussion further covered issues related to youth engagement, employment opportunities, the long-term sustainability of Tibetan settlements, challenges faced by farmers, and strategies for enhancing agricultural productivity. He also addressed concerns about agricultural land disputes among Tibetan settlers, urging for constructive dialogue and resolution.

### **Over 350,000 sign petition urging UN to investigate China's colonial boarding schools in Tibet**

24 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



*Tibetan children in Chinese run schools in Tibet (Photo/Free Tibet))*

A coalition of over 140 Tibet advocacy groups, supported by more than 350,000 individuals has called on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Volker Türk to launch an immediate

investigation into China's colonial boarding school system in Tibet. Rights groups warn that nearly one million Tibetan children are forcibly enrolled in these institutions, where they face cultural erasure and assimilation into Han Chinese society

The coalition submitted a joint letter on February 14, urging Türk to publicly condemn China's policies targeting Tibetan language, culture, and identity. The petition campaign coincides with the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, which opens on February 24, 2025. Advocates are pressing Türk to address Tibet's deteriorating human rights situation in his upcoming 'Global Update' on March 4.

The advocacy groups denounced these boarding schools as "nothing short of cultural genocide targeting Tibet's youngest and most vulnerable," criticizing Türk's continued silence on Tibet despite worsening conditions since he assumed office in 2022. UN human rights experts have previously raised alarms over China's assimilationist policies. UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Fernand de Varennes, warned that Tibetan children are being removed from their homes and placed in distant institutions where their language and cultural ties are deliberately severed. "I don't think so many children have ever been kept away from their communities on this scale before," he said in an interview with DW.

The International Tibet Network (ITN), one of the leading groups behind the petition, emphasized the urgency of UN intervention, arguing that these schools threaten Tibet's unique cultural identity. "The Chinese government is implementing policies that systematically erode Tibetan identity under the guise of education," said Mandie McKeown, the Executive Director of ITN. "These schools are not just about learning; they are part of a state-led effort to assimilate Tibetan children into Han Chinese culture." The Tibet Action Institute (TAI), another key advocacy group, has extensively documented the coercive nature of China's colonial boarding school system. In collaboration with Dr. Gyalo, a Tibetan education expert, TAI released a 2021 report titled *Separated from Their Families, Hidden from the World*, revealing that around 800,000 Tibetan children between the ages of six and 18 are separated from their families and subjected to a politicized curriculum taught primarily in Chinese.

TAI's Executive Director, Lhadon Tethong, called Türk to take decisive action. "As the world's highest human rights official, Volker Türk must use every tool in his diplomatic toolbox to get China to abolish its coercive boarding school policy that has separated three out of every four Tibetan students from their families. Türk needs to break his silence and issue a clear and public call for Chinese authorities to shutter these indoctrination schools and halt their egregious crimes against Tibetan children."

Major international media outlets have reported on the crisis, with the BBC describing China's colonial boarding schools as "jails" for Tibetan children and highlighting them as the latest front in China's efforts to dismantle Tibetan identity. More recently, *The New York Times* published a front-page exposé titled *Erasing a Culture, Child by Child*, detailing the physical, psychological, and cultural harm inflicted upon Tibetan students.

With mounting global pressure, Tibet advocacy groups are urging Türk and the UN Human Rights Council to take meaningful action during the upcoming Human Rights Council before more generations of Tibetan children are lost to China's state-run assimilation programs.

### Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel to Attend Long-Life Prayer Offering To 105th Gaden Tripa

24 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, is scheduled to attend a long-life prayer for the 105th Gaden Tripa, Jetsun Lobsang Dorjee Pal Sangpo, offered by the people of Markham on 3 March 2025 at the Sera Mey Thoesam Norling Monastery in Bylakuppe.

The Speaker will depart for Bangalore via Chandigarh on 25 February 2025 and will continue his journey to Bylakuppe the following day. He will have engagement in Bylakuppe from 27 February to 3 March. On 4 March, the Speaker will return to Bangalore and travel to Delhi the next day. On 6 March, he will depart for Dharamshala from Delhi.

*-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat*

### Namkyi Concludes European Advocacy Tour with a Powerful Message in Switzerland

24 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*Namkyi (right) Concludes European Advocacy Tour with a Powerful Message in Switzerland*

On 21 February 2025, Namkyi, a former Tibetan political prisoner and Tibetan activist, addressed the

Tibetan community members in Zurich, Switzerland. This event, organised by the Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association (GSTF), Tibetan Youth Association in Europe (TYAE), Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), and the Tibetan Community of Switzerland & Liechtenstein (TCSL), marked the conclusion of her 12-day advocacy tour across Europe.

With more than 200 attendees, the gathering began with Tibetan national anthem and observation of a minute mourning, honouring Tibetan martyrs and remembering those who lost their lives in the recent earthquake. This solemn start set the tone for a powerful discussion on the ongoing challenges faced by Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile.

The event opened with a welcome speech by the President of TCSL, followed by remarks from the Vice President of TWA (Swiss), who detailed Namkyi's participation in the Geneva Summit 2025.

Adding to this, Phuntsok Topgyal, UN Advocacy Officer, provided insights into Namkyi's engagements at the United Nations and other international forums between 10 to 21 February 2025. She actively advocated for Tibetan rights, exposing the Chinese government's oppressive policies and human rights abuses during these days."

Namkyi's speech was deeply personal and emotional, drawing the audience into her harrowing experiences. She shared her reasons for protesting against Chinese rule, despite knowing the severe consequences. She recounted her time in Chinese prisons, where she endured psychological and physical torture, and the struggles she continues to face, even in exile, due to Chinese surveillance and pressure. Her words left a profound impact on the audience, many of whom were moved to tears by her resilience and unwavering commitment to the Tibetan cause.

Following her speech, the event included a one-hour question-and-answer session, where attendees sought her insights on various issues, including her experiences in exile and advice for Tibetan youth.

When asked about her first impression upon arriving in exile, Namkyi expressed admiration for the strong educational and cultural infrastructure available to Tibetans outside Tibet. She pointed out that in exile, Tibetans have access to monasteries, schools, and institutions dedicated to preserving Tibetan language and culture. In contrast, inside Tibet, the Chinese government has banned Tibetan private schools and monastic education, forcing children into government-controlled boarding schools where Mandarin is mandatory, and Tibetan identity is systematically erased. She also highlighted the imprisonment of Tibetan artists, scholars, poets, and singers who have tried to preserve their cultural heritage.

When asked for advice to Tibetan youth in exile, she highlighted their crucial role in advocating for Tibet and preserving its cultural identity. "While Tibetans in



Tibet face persecution, those in exile can raise awareness, engage in activism, and pressure international organisations for change. In addition to activism, preserving Tibetan language, traditions, and history is vital to maintaining our identity. By combining advocacy and cultural preservation, young Tibetans can strengthen our movement and ensure our heritage endures.”

As the event concluded, the organisers presented Namkyi with a souvenir as a token of appreciation for her dedication and contributions to the Tibetan cause. The Co-President of GSTF delivered a vote of thanks, commending Namkyi’s courage and the success of her European advocacy tour.

Namkyi’s 12-day visit to Europe made a significant impact, shedding light on Tibet’s ongoing struggle at the United Nations and other international platforms. Her final talk in Switzerland left a lasting message of unity, resilience, and the urgent need for continued advocacy.

Despite the immense challenges Tibetans face under Chinese rule, Namkyi’s journey stands as a testament to the power of resistance and the enduring spirit of the Tibetan people. Her story is a call to action for Tibetans in exile and the international community to continue the fight for justice, freedom, and the preservation of Tibetan identity.

*-Report filed by Tibet Bureau Geneva*

### Chinese Liaison Officer Sangay Kyab Participates in Protest Against Religious Persecution inside China

24 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*European Chinese Liaison Officer Participates in Protest Against Religious Persecution*

On 22 February 2025, Sangay Kyab, the Chinese Liaison Officer for European countries, participated in a protest organised by Chinese Christian groups in Basel, Switzerland.

The protest, organised by The Association for the Defence of Human Rights and Religious Freedom and co-organised by The Church of Almighty God. This event was held at Basel train station in Switzerland. The event was held on February 22 at different locations in Switzerland, Germany and Austria. It was attended by

individuals who had fled China due to religious persecution. The gathering aimed to condemn the arrest of 648 believers in Jilin Province in April 2024 and the reported torture and killing of two individuals. Addressing the protestors, Sangay Kyab expressed solidarity with the victims of persecution in China. He stated, “I came here today because we have all experienced oppression and suffering from the Chinese government. I came to show support for you. The torture and suffering you mentioned happen in Tibet every day, and such oppression has continued for 70 years. One million Tibetan children have been forcibly sent to boarding schools, and they are not allowed to learn the Tibetan language. The Chinese government is implementing a comprehensive Sinicisation policy in Tibet, which has worsened under Xi Jinping’s rule. Tibetans have opposed the Chinese government for 66 years and continue to do so. Those of us abroad must be the voice for those suffering in Tibet and China. We must expose the Chinese government’s misdeeds.” Referring to a song sung by the protestors, he remarked, “As your song said, ‘Satan’s evil deeds must be exposed to the sun,’ we need to make the world aware of the Chinese government’s wrongdoings.”

In his concluding remarks, Sangay Kyab encouraged the protestors to remain resilient in their struggle, stating, “We Tibetans have been in exile for 66 years. We continue to fight. You have only been in exile for a few years. Don’t lose heart. Please stay strong. If we conduct campaigns together, we will have great power. I hope we can collaborate more in the future.” The protest, which lasted from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., saw the participation of over thirty individuals. The demonstrators strongly criticised the Chinese government and raised slogans such as “We need freedom” and “No punishment for religious belief.”

*-Report filed by Tibet Bureau, Geneva*

### Tibetan new year scores an NYC prize: Suspension of alternate side parking rules

23 February 2025, [Gothamist](#), Arun Venugopal

Tenzin Phenthok looks forward each year to Losar, the Tibetan New Year, which she and her family mark with religious observances and a feast of Tibetan delicacies. But this year’s observance will be a bit different, extending beyond the 61,000 Tibetans who live in the five boroughs. On Feb. 28, for the first time, Losar will be observed with a suspension of alternate side parking rules – no small honor in New York City. The designation brings Losar into an elite league of holidays observed by the city’s many ethnic and religious communities, including Three Kings Day (Jan. 6), Purim (with ASP rules suspended this year on

March 14), Eid al-Adha (with the rules suspended June 6-7) and Diwali (with the rules suspended Oct. 20).

"I think there's something really powerful here about feeling seen," Phenthok said.

For Tibetan New Yorkers, many of whom have been displaced from their homeland, the celebration marks "a really special time for connecting Tibetans across the world," said Pema Doma, executive director of Students for a Free Tibet.

Community members said the path to recognition involved considerable grassroots involvement, including outreach to elected representatives. Many also offered testimonials at a City Council hearing led by Queens City Councilmember Julie Won.

Phenthok, who grew up in Queens and now works in philanthropy, also testified.

"By suspending [alternate-side parking] on Losar, New York City would be sending a powerful message to all Himalayan New Yorkers that our city recognizes us," she said in her Sept. 27 testimony.

Some community members noted that the Tibetan government in exile had urged members of the diaspora to mark Losar quietly this year, due to a deadly earthquake that struck Tibet in January.

That spirit marks a Losar event being held at LaGuardia Community College on March 2. The free event, in partnership with the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, features Losar pastries, art-making and a lesson about the significance of this holiday through storytelling and meditation

Doma said Losar is traditionally observed for 15 days in Tibet but most Tibetans "in exile" observe it for either one day or the first three days.

In her family's case, the night before Losar typically involves the preparation of guthuk, a noodle soup made from nine ingredients. A large ball of cooked dough is dropped into each bowl of guthuk, and within each dough ball is a message written on a slip of paper. Some messages are inscribed with positive attributes while others bear negative ones. Doma said that's a playful reminder that all people contain multitudes.

"It's one of my favorite Losar traditions, to be honest," Doma said.

In another Losar observance, Doma and her family say a prayer together, burn juniper "and then everyone throws barley in the air at the same time."

"It marks a celebration of auspicious new beginnings for Tibetans," she said.

Tenzin Dorjee, a lecturer in the department of political science at Columbia University and senior researcher at Tibet Action Institute, said he typically marks Losar by taking his family to a Buddhist temple – typically Dorje Ling Buddhist Center in Dumbo, Brooklyn – where they meet friends "and the kids play while adults pray."

He also sets up a Losar altar at home every year, with bowls of nuts and fresh fruit, bars of Cadbury

chocolate, a picture of the Dalai Lama and various prepared delicacies. In one photo he shared, the altar included a bottle of Veuve Cliquot champagne and Dalwhinnie single-malt scotch.

"I have a very simple Losar altar, but I always offer the best distilled beverage to the Buddhas," he said.

Won, the councilmember who championed the designation, said the timing of the parking designation was especially meaningful.

"At a time when there is so much fear and uncertainty as a result of federal immigration policies, our bill sends a message that we support, recognize, and celebrate immigrants who live in our sanctuary city – including those who have sought refuge from persecution in their home country like the Tibetan community," Won said.

### **As Dalai Lama returns to Dharamshala, China gives new twist to reincarnation tussle**

22 February 2025, [The Newz Radar](#)

The 14th Dalai Lama returned to his residence in Dharamshala on Friday (February 21, 2025) after spending nearly six weeks in Karnataka even as China has reignited tensions over his reincarnation, underscoring the ongoing dispute over Tibet's future.

At Kangra Airport, the Dalai Lama was received by Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, officiating Sikyong Tharlam Dolma Changra, and representatives of Tibetan NGOs based in Dharamshala.

Hundreds of Tibetans lined the motorcade route, waving ceremonial scarves and incense, dressed in traditional attire to catch a glimpse of their revered leader.

#### **Prayers, empowerment and a message of compassion**

Upon his arrival at Tsuglagkhang, his official residence, the Tibetan spiritual leader was greeted by Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Kalon Norzin Dolma, Election Commissioner Lobsang Yeshe and members of the Central Tibetan Administration.

During his stay in Bylakuppe, the Dalai Lama participated in long-life prayers offered by Sera Monasteries, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, and the Gyudmed Tantric Monastery.

He also led a prayer session for the victims of the recent devastating earthquake in Tibet and attended a winter debate session at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery.

As part of his spiritual teachings, he conferred a long-life empowerment based on White Tara, titled "A Stream of Nectar of Immortality", attended by thousands of followers from across the world.

**Beijing's growing unease over the Dalai Lama's future** China has once again voiced concerns over the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, signalling its intent to control

the succession process. On February 10, Beijing's foreign ministry expressed hope that the Tibetan leader would "return to the right path".

In a statement following the demise of the Dalai Lama's elder brother Gyalo Thondup, China suggested that talks on his personal future could be possible — but only if he renounced Tibetan independence and acknowledges Tibet and Taiwan as integral parts of China.

China, which ceased dialogue with the Dalai Lama's envoys in 2010, does not recognise the Tibetan government-in-exile. However, it has maintained that the reincarnation process must be under its control, dismissing any attempt by the Dalai Lama or Tibetan exiles to determine his successor.

### **Long battle over reincarnation**

The Dalai Lama himself has offered conflicting statements on his reincarnation over the years. In 2004, he suggested that the Tibetan people should decide whether they want a 15th Dalai Lama.

A decade later, he humorously remarked that the next Dalai Lama could be a woman — possibly blonde — who must be "attractive" to be useful.

To counter Beijing's interference, the Dalai Lama has repeatedly stated that only he will decide the place and method of his reincarnation. He has indicated that he will make a final decision at age 90, which falls in July 2025.

His Zurich-based Gaden Phodrang Trust is expected to oversee the process, with plans to leave written instructions specifying the location of his rebirth.

Adding another layer to the Tibet-China conflict, the Dalai Lama's upcoming book, set for release in March, is expected to outline his vision for Tibet's future. With Beijing ramping up pressure and Tibetans looking for guidance, the battle over succession is set to intensify in the years ahead.

### **Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche Confers Teachings in Kollegal Tibetan Settlement**

21 February 2025, [CTA](#)

In response to a request from the Dhondenling Tibetan Settlement Office, Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche bestowed teachings on the Eight Verses of Thought Transformation (*lojong*) and conferred the long-life empowerment of Buddha Amitayus in Kollegal on 15 February 2025.

The following day, Rinpoche visited the settlement's Old People's Home, offering blessings and words of encouragement to the elderly residents, bringing them joy and spiritual solace.

Rinpoche then proceeded to the Kollegal Sambhota School, where he interacted with students and teachers, emphasising the importance of education and moral values. He advised the younger generations

to uphold the unique Tibetan cultural and religious heritage while excelling in their studies.

Afterward, Rinpoche visited the settlement's monastery, where he engaged with the monastic community, offering prayers and guidance.

After completing his spiritual engagements, Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche departed for Hunsur Rabgyal Tibetan Settlement, continuing his journey to connect with and bless the Tibetan communities.

*-Report filed by Tibetan Settlement Office, Kollegal*

### **Sikyong Addresses Hunsur Rabgyaling Settlers, Implores the Tibetan Community to Prioritise Unity**

20 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As part of his official engagements in Hunsur, Sikyong Penpa Tsering convened Tibetan residents of the Rabgyaling Tibetan Settlement at community hall on 19 February 2025 and addressed the gathering. It was attended by various local Tibetan leaders and representatives, including Settlement Officer Norbu Tsering, the President of the Local Tibetan Assembly, Abbots of the local monasteries, and representatives from other Tibetan organisations.

During his address, Sikyong emphasised the importance of unity and the preservation of Tibetan culture. He discussed the Central Tibetan Administration's twin goals: resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict through the Middle Way Approach and ensuring the welfare of Tibetans in exile. He commended both the proponents of Middle Way and Rangzen ideologies for their commitment to resolving the long-standing Tibet China conflict while imploring the community to prioritise unity over divisiveness, which he said weakens the Tibetan struggle.

Sikyong also stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with local Indians and reminded the community that, as refugees, they must respect India's laws and values, acknowledging the country's support for Tibetans over the decades. For that matter, he emphasised the importance of adhering to the laws and values of all host nations, as Tibetans are refugees in these countries and must reflect their gratitude through respectful conduct.

Apart from that, Sikyong praised the involvement of Tibetan youth in advocacy efforts, particularly through initiatives like the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG). He noted that many young Tibetans, equipped with multilingual skills, are actively involved in lobbying, awareness campaigns, and grassroots activism. He encouraged them to continue using their energy and skills to advance the Tibetan cause on the global stage.

Sikyong also highlighted the growing importance of scholarly research on Tibet, particularly works such as *Tibet Brief 20/20* by legal experts Michael Van Walt

Van Praag and the works of Professor Lau. He emphasised the role of such studies in strengthening Tibet's case internationally, urging Tibetans to engage with this research to deepen their understanding of Tibet's historical and legal status.

At the conclusion of the event, Dawa Tenzin, President of the Local Tibetan Assembly, delivered closing remarks, expressing gratitude to Sikyong and the community for their active participation.

### **Nexus Centre City Mysuru to host Losar Day**

19 February 2025, [Star of Mysore](#)

#### *A vibrant and joyful Tibetan New Year Festival*

**Mysuru: Nexus Centre City** Mysuru will be hosting 'Losar Day' from Feb. 19 to 23.

This five-day celebration is all about happiness, friendship and getting lost in the majesty of Tibetan culture — a colourful setting filled with vibrant hues, the aroma of freshly steamed momos filling the air and the rhythm of traditional Tibetan music setting the perfect celebratory tone.

Customers with friends and family can walk through the quaint Tibetan gift shops, where each handmade souvenir has a story to share. Savour the warm, comforting butter tea, watch captivating cultural performances and get mesmerised by the rhythm of high-energy dance performances and visit an interesting book exhibition that unfolds the rich history of Tibet, making for a perfect day out with your loved ones.

More than a festival, it's a chance to celebrate diversity, adopt a new culture and make wonderful memories together.

Visit Nexus Centre City Mysuru for an exciting Tibetan New Year Festival (Losar) that promises warmth, fun and an unforgettable experience for all.

### **Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Namkyi Speaks at the 17th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy**

19 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*Namkyi, a Tibetan activist and former political prisoner, during the*

*17th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy. Photo / Geneva Summit*

The 17th Geneva Summit 2025 for Human Rights and Democracy officially commenced yesterday on 18 February 2025 at the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG). This prestigious international platform, dedicated to addressing global human rights violations, began with a welcome speech by Hillel Neuer, Executive Director of United Nations Watch. The opening address was delivered by Garry Kasparov, Vice President of the World Liberty Congress, pro-democracy leader, author, and former world chess champion.

This year's summit features a distinguished lineup of speakers highlighting human rights abuses in Russia, Saudi Arabia, China, Belarus, Hong Kong, the Uyghur region, Vietnam, and Iran. Among the speakers, Namkyi, a Tibetan activist and former political prisoner, shared her harrowing experiences of persecution by Chinese authorities.

Before delivering her speech, a short video clip of her 2015 protest was shown, providing a compelling visual account of her activism and the severe consequences she faced. "I personally witnessed how Chinese military forces were cracking down on Tibetans in my region and on Kirti Monastery. My heart was filled with sadness and suffering, which compelled me to rise up and raise my voice," she stated.

On 21 October 2015, Namkyi and her cousin, Tenzin Dolma, staged a protest at Martyrs' Square in Ngaba County, holding large photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and calling for his return to Tibet and freedom for their homeland. "About 10 minutes into our protest, we heard a loud noise from behind, and a group of police officers rushed at us. They forcefully grabbed the photos from our hands, muffled our voices, pinned us to the ground, and eventually handcuffed us," she recalled.

The two were detained at the Ngaba County detention centre before being transferred to Barkham detention centre at midnight. Namkyi detailed the extreme torture she endured in detention, including

- Sleep deprivation and exposure to extreme heat up to 150–160 degrees.
- Physical abuse, including slapping, kicking, and beatings by male officers.
- Psychological manipulation, with interrogators attempting to extract confessions by offering reduced sentences in exchange for false testimonies.

After over a year in detention, on 23 November 2016, Namkyi and her cousin stood trial at the Trochu County People's Court. Prosecutors urged them to confess regret or accept false charges of murder, theft, or drug dealing in exchange for lighter sentences. They refused. Despite being only 16 years old, Chinese

authorities altered Namkyi's official age to 18, sentencing her to three years in prison for "betraying the country" and engaging in "separatist activities." Namkyi described the harsh conditions at Sichuan Province Women's Prison:

- Mandatory military training and enforced study of Chinese laws and "patriotic education."
- Racial discrimination, with Tibetan prisoners forbidden from speaking to each other.
- Severe malnutrition, lack of proper medical care, and exposure to extreme cold.
- Forced labor, including assembling copper wires under intense artificial light, causing long-term damage to her eyes.

Her cousin, Tenzin Dolma, was assigned to make cigarette cases and later worked on assembling watches. Upon completing their sentences on 21 October 2018, the two were detained for an additional week at the Padma Lhatang Dispatch Center in Ngaba County. Their families were forced to sign guarantee letters, and their names were added to a government blacklist.

"Although my body was released from prison, my mind continued to be imprisoned," Namkyi said, describing the constant surveillance, police interrogations, and restrictions on her movement. "I was frequently summoned to the police station, my phone was confiscated, and I had to report my whereabouts and interactions regularly. Under such hardships, a question kept recurring in my mind: Does the United Nations know about the suffering in Tibet? Is there anyone who will support us?"

Determined to share her story, Namkyi escaped into exile in India on 13 May 2023, seeking refuge in a country where she could speak openly about the plight of Tibetans.

"Thank you for giving me this platform. If anyone, anywhere, provides such a platform, I will share the real situation," she said. She concluded her speech with a powerful message to the international community: "This is not just my life story, but the story of thousands of Tibetans. Millions of Tibetans inside Tibet are living under such suffering even today. Therefore, please continue to support Tibet and the aspirations of the Tibetan people to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet."

The Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy aims to spotlight urgent human rights situations worldwide. Organised by a coalition of over 25 human rights organisations, the 17th annual summit brings together leading dissidents and activists from countries such as Russia, Cuba, Iran, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Tibet, and Eritrea. The primary objective is to provide a platform for these courageous individuals to share their testimonies, raise awareness about

systemic abuses, and advocate for democratic reforms. By amplifying their voices, the summit seeks to mobilise international support and action to address human rights violations globally.

*-Report filed by Tibet Bureau Geneva*

### "Cycling for Free Tibet": Activists in Taipei rally for Tibetan freedom

19 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*The ride started at 228 Peace Park following a group briefing at the park's entrance at 9:30 am (local time). Following a predetermined path, cyclists travelled along Zhongshan South Road, Nanjing West Road, and Chongqing North Road.*

Activists and supporters came together today for the third round of the "Cycling for a Free Tibet" campaign in a display of solidarity for Tibet and Hong Kong.

To draw attention to human rights abuses committed under Chinese control, the Tibet Taiwan Human Rights Alliance organized the event, which saw riders ride around significant Taipei locales.

The ride started at 228 Peace Park following a group briefing at the park's entrance at 9:30 am (local time). Following a predetermined path, cyclists travelled along Zhongshan South Road, Nanjing West Road, and Chongqing North Road. They stopped at Ximen MRT Station Exit 6 and Zhongshan MRT Station Exit 3 for brief talks and the distribution of awareness materials. Participants once more expressed their support for Tibetan freedom as the event came to a close at Liberty Square.

This year's ride commemorates the 310th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising against Chinese control. Tashi Tsering, the current Secretary General of the Tibet-Taiwan Human Rights Network, started "Cycling for a Free Tibet" in 2011. It has been an annual campaign since 2015, raising awareness of the demand for human rights and Tibetan self-determination in the run-up to March 10.

The ride was supported by several human rights organizations, including the Taiwan Human Rights Promotion Association, the International Tibet Network, the Hong Kong Border Town Youth, and the Taiwan Free Tibet Student Union. With flags in hand and slogans of "Free Tibet" and "Tibet Belongs to Tibetans," the participants hoped to raise awareness and rally support for their cause.

Tibet, once an independent nation with a unique cultural, religious, and political identity, was invaded by China in 1949. The Seventeen Articles of Agreement, signed under duress in 1951, led to China's imposition of its rule, which stripped Tibet of its autonomy. On March 10, 1959, a massive protest against Chinese occupation in Tibet was violently

repressed, forcing the Dalai Lama into exile and marking the beginning of Tibet's long journey in exile.

### **Dalai Lama concludes weeks-long South India visit**

18 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama safely arrived in Delhi on Tuesday following the conclusion of his extensive visit spanning over a month to Tibetan settlements in Bylakuppe and Hunsur in South India's Karnataka state.

The revered leader departed from his residence in Dharamshala on January 3 and reached Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the seat of Panchen Lama in exile in Bylakuppe on January 5, making it his first visit to the settlement in seven years. His Holiness stayed at the monastery for approximately one and a half months before travelling to Gyumed Tantric College in Hunsur Rabgayling for a two-day visit on February 16.

During his stay at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, His Holiness presided over numerous spiritual gatherings. On January 9, he led a solemn prayer service in the monastery's courtyard to honour the victims of the earthquake in Dingri and other affected areas of Tibet's Shigatse region. Later, on January 18, he attended the winter debate session of the Gelug Jamchoe and Rigtsog, where monks from various prominent monasteries—Sera, Drepung, Ganden, Tashi Lhunpo, and Ratoe—showcased their debating skills before an audience of 3,000 people.



*H.H. the Dalai Lama departing from Tashi Lhunpo monastery on February 16, 2025 (Photo/OHHDL)*

On February 5, a long-life prayer ceremony was offered to His Holiness by Sera Jey and Sera Mey colleges at Sera Monastery, attended by 8,000 devotees. Similarly, on February 12, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery held a long-life prayer ceremony in its main assembly hall, attracting another 8,000 people. The following day, His Holiness bestowed the White Tara long-life empowerment to 26,000 members of the public at Tashi Lhunpo.

On February 16, the Nobel peace laureate left from Bylakuppe to Gyumed Tantric College in Hunsur Rabgayling Tibetan Settlement, his first visit to the settlement in about a decade. The following day, Gyumed Tantric College honoured him with a long-life prayer ceremony in their main assembly hall, which was attended by 6,000 people. During this ceremony, the college presented His Holiness with a prestigious award recognising him as the master of the teaching and practice lineage of the Lower Tantric College.

Throughout his visit, His Holiness maintained a busy schedule, including conducting Gelong Ordination ceremonies for 303 monks from various monasteries such as Sera Jey, Sera Mey, Drepung Loseling, Drepung Gomang, Gaden Shartse, Gaden Jangtse, Tashi Lhunpo, Ratoe, Zongkar Choedhe, and Gandan Tegchenling, Mongolia.

Additionally, over the course of his one-and-a-half-month stay, His Holiness granted public audiences to 8,021 individuals, including Tibetans from four south Indian Tibetan settlements—Bylakuppe, Mundgod, Hunsur, and Kollegal alongside Indian devotees, foreigners, and people from the Himalayan region. Among the audience were five centenarians, 993 senior citizens over 80, 606 individuals over 70, and 1,322 people over 60. Furthermore, 314 individuals with illnesses or special needs, along with their 609 caretakers, received blessings from the Tibetan spiritual leader.

### **Representative Tsepri Lopan Tulku Attends Three-Day Ritual Ceremony and Sacred Cham Dance at Shelkar Chode Monastery**

18 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Shelkar Chode Ganden Lekshe Ling Monastery, near the Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal, conducted a three-day ritual ceremony and sacred dance performance (Cham), upholding a centuries-old tradition for the benefit of the dharma and society. The event featured the opening of the Yamantaka sand mandala and the Drukchuma Torma offering ritual. On 16 February 2025, the 19th day of the 12th Tibetan month, the traditional Cham dance was performed.

Distinguished guests included the Representative Tsepri Lopan Tulku Ngawang Chokdup of the Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office, Members and former Members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Local Tibetan Settlement Officers, heads of local Tibetan civil societies, a Member of the Nepalese Parliament, officials from two local municipal councils, senior local police officials, and other relevant authorities.

The sacred dances and rituals at Shelkar Monastery have deep historical roots, beginning with its first abbot, Pang Lotsawa, and continuing under the second abbot, Lochen Jangchub Tsemo. The tradition

flourished under the ninth abbot, Khenchen Namkha Dorje—revered as an emanation of Avalokiteshvara—who first established the sacred dances associated with meditation deities and dharma protectors. This legacy expanded significantly during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, when Shelkar Monastery transitioned to the Gelug tradition. Chingkarwa Khenchen Tashi Gyatso, the third abbot after this transition and a direct disciple of the 5th Dalai Lama, further developed the sacred dance traditions, composed dance manuals, and formalised what became known as the “Shelkar Drubchod” (Shelkar Ritual Ceremony). This ceremony gained renown throughout the Shelkar region for its profound blessings and spectacular performances, continuing to attract large audiences both in Tibet and in exile today.

### Department of Religion and Culture Secretary Attends Annual Torgyak Festival at Gyuto Monastery

18 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 17 February 2025, Secretary Dhondul Dorjee of the Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration, attended the annual Torgyak festival at the Gyuto Tantric Monastery to an invitation extended by the latter.

Over a thousand devotees, both monastic and lay, gathered at the Gyuto Monastery for the occasion. The attendees included representatives from both governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as local residents of Dharamshala.

The Torgyak festival, which has been held annually for over six centuries by the Gyuto Monastery, is a highly revered ritual known as the ‘Great Iron Fort Torgyak.’ This practice involves the Yamantaka (Jampal Shinje) deity and is based on the Seven Tantric Realisations. The ritual is performed to promote the flourishing of the Buddha’s teachings in general, and specifically the teachings of the Yellow Hat sect’s great master, Je Tsongkhapa. It is also performed to ensure the long life and the fulfilment of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s noble commitments, to dispel all negative intentions arising from both physical adversaries and formless obstacles that may threaten the religious and political institutions of the Central Tibetan Administration, and to pacify natural disasters like earthquakes and epidemics in these degenerate times.

*-Report filed by Department of Religion and Culture, CTA*

### Parliamentarians Dhondup Tashi and Tsering Yangchen Conclude Visits to Tibetans in North India

18 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*Parliamentarians Dhondup Tashi and Tsering Yangchen Conclude Visits to Tibetans in North India*

As per the program of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, a delegation consisting of parliamentarians Dhondup Tashi and Tsering Yangchen successfully concluded their periodical visit to Tibetan settlements, communities, and winter business traders in Northern Indian states.

Upon their arrival in Poanta Tibetan settlement on 9 February, the MPs were warmly welcomed by Settlement Officer Gelek Jamyang, Chagzoe Tenphel of Shalu Gonpa, Head Master Dorjee Damdul of Sambhota Tibetan School, Head of the Poanta Cholsum Industrial Society, alongside representatives of Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement, Lhamo (opera) Association, Regional Tibetan Women Association, Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, and local leaders.

On 10 February, the MP began their program paying obeisance at the Shalu monastery and visiting Men-Tsee-Khang, offices, settlement, and Sambhota Tibetan school. Thereafter, a public meeting was held where MP Dhondup Tashi discussed how the current Middle Way Approach policy of the Central Tibetan Administration is not only beneficial for quickly resolving the Tibet-China conflict, but also emphasised that the essence of the Middle Way Approach is to unite the three traditional provinces of Tibet and preserve Tibetan language, culture, and traditions. He mentioned that this is crucial for the survival of the Tibetan people and the continuation of their struggle. MP Tsering Yangchen spoke about the 8th World Parliamentarians’ Convention on Tibet held in Washington DC in 2022, where parliamentarians from many countries participated in discussions about Tibet and issued declaration. She also mentioned the recent reconstitution of the All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet, including the election of new

convener and co-convener, indicating strong support and attention.

On 11 February, two Parliament Members departed from Poanta and visited the Tibetan winter market in Jagadhri, the Tibetan traders' market in Ambala, and the new Tibetan Colony in Ambala. During a public meeting, they were joined by Arun Joshi, the President of the Bharat Tibet Sahyog Manch of Haryana state, and member Rawat. Additionally, Ravi Choudhari, the President of the local Gandhi Market, and his associate Arjun Choudhari were also present. The two Parliament Members presented ceremonial scarves (khatas) and expressed gratitude for their support of Tibet. In response, these officials assured their continued support for the Tibetan cause and promised to provide whatever assistance possible to the local Tibetan traders. The news of these meetings with local Indian officials was also reported in Indian media outlets.

On 12 February, they visited the Tibetan markets in Patiala and Chandigarh, where they learned that Tibetan traders in Chandigarh were facing challenges due to poor business and high market rents, with their leases set to expire on 17 February. In response, Kamaljit Singh Panchhi (leader of the minority community) facilitated a meeting with Amit Kumar, IAS, Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh, to address the grievances of the Tibetan traders. The Commissioner agreed to extend the lease for an additional week and reduced the market rent by one lakh rupees. Later that evening, the MPs met with DC Nishant Yadav of Chandigarh to discuss support for Tibetan residents and advocate for the just cause of Tibet. The DC shared his experience of having met His Holiness the Dalai Lama and assured his full assistance and support. They also visited Tibetan market in Mohali.

On 14 February, the MPs visited Delek House, a patient hostel of Delek Hostel in Chandigarh, as well as branch of Men-Tsee-Khang. In the afternoon, they departed to Ludhiana and were welcomed by Tibetan Refugee Trader's Association's executive committee members Lobsang Choezin and Seldon, and its secretary Tenzin Kunsang. The MPs were introduced to their office and to their ongoing project of hotel construction.

On 15 February, the two parliament members met with some long-time Indian merchants in Ludhiana. They thanked the merchants for providing reasonable prices and payment terms to Tibetan winter traders over the past 40-50 years, as well as maintaining mutual trust and friendly relations. The Indian merchants expressed that most Tibetans are honest and kind-hearted people and mentioned how they have a mutually beneficial relationship in terms of trade and cash flow. However, they noted that in the past 5 years or so, there has been an increasing challenge with more people returning unsold goods.

The two parliament members successfully completed their official periodic visitation program and returned to Dharamshala.

### **Youth Empowerment Support Conducts Two-Day Job Readiness Training at CHTS, Sarah**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 14 and 15 February 2025, the Youth Empowerment Support (YES+), Department of Home (CTA), organised a highly impactful two-day Job-Readiness Training at CHTS Sarah, with 30 students actively participating in the sessions. The comprehensive training covered essential topics, including effective cover letter writing, building strong resumes, and mastering interview etiquette—both the dos and don'ts.

The training, which was specifically conducted at CHTS Sarah in response to a notable number of applicants during a previous Job-Readiness Training session, provided valuable insights and practical skills to help students prepare for the job market.

At the conclusion of the training, participants shared positive feedback, expressing satisfaction with the knowledge and skills gained. YES+ is committed to empowering students with the tools they need to succeed in their professional journeys.

*-Report filed by Youth Empowerment Support, Department of Home, CTA*

### **Tibetan Flag Hoisted by Blue Mountains City Council during Tibetan Youth Advocacy Training**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The two-day Australian Tibetan Youth Leadership and Advocacy Training, organised by the Tibet Information Office, concluded successfully on 13 February 2025 at the Karuna Retreat Centre in Katoomba, Blue Mountains.

Focused on key areas such as Tibetan human rights, grassroots advocacy, and the broader Tibetan movement, the workshop was led by esteemed trainers including Tenzin Lekshay, Spokesperson for the Central Tibetan Administration; Tsering Tsomo, former executive director of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy; Kyizom Dhongdue, former Tibetan parliament member; and Dr. Zoe Bedford, executive director of the Australia Tibet Council. The training equipped participants with updated insights on human rights issues and advocacy strategies, empowering them to effectively promote Tibetan causes at local and national levels. Dawa Sangmo, Chinese Liaison Officer also introduced the participants to the CTA's Chinese outreach program.

In conjunction with the event, the Blue Mountains Tibetan Community, with the support of the Blue Mountains City Council, raised three Tibetan flags in



the heart of the Blue Mountains. The flags proudly flew for three days, symbolising local support for the Tibetan cause.

On the second day of the workshop, participants were divided into regional groups to discuss and adopt action plans for 2025 and 2026. These plans are designed to increase youth involvement in the Tibetan cause and enhance their advocacy efforts within their regions, with a renewed focus on raising awareness of Tibetan issues inland. The workshop concluded with the election of new regional and national coordinators. A total of 30 participants from across Australia attended the training session.

*-Report filed by Tibet Information Office, Canberra*

### Chinese Liaison Officer for European Countries Introduces the Middle Way Policy During a Discussion Meeting Held in Geneva

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*Chinese Liaison Officer for European Countries Introduces the Middle Way Policy During a Discussion Meeting Held in Geneva*

Sangay Kyab, the Chinese Liaison Officer for European countries, participated in a discussion meeting held by the Swiss-based regional Centre for Middle Way Initiative in Geneva and introduced Central Tibetan Administration's policy of the Middle Way Approach. During his address at the meeting, the Chinese Liaison Officer provided an overview of the Central Tibetan Administration, highlighting its three democratic pillars and the functions and responsibilities of its various departments. Regarding the Middle Way Policy, he briefly outlined its evolution and responded to questions from the participants. He further assured that the Tibet Bureau would send staff to provide a dedicated introduction whenever invited.

The event was also addressed by Vice President of the Tibetan community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, President of the Europe Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, and President of the Swiss-based regional Centre for Middle Way Initiative. Approximately 30 people attended, representing a diverse audience across different age groups, including former Tibetan parliamentarians as well as students.

*-Report filed by Tibet Bureau, Geneva*

### Tibetan organisations flay use of 'Xizang' for Tibet by China

17 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

Tibetan organisations, including the Students for Free Tibet, flayed the Chinese government's recent directive mandating the use of 'Xizang' instead of Tibet.

In a recent event at Dharamsala, to mark the 112th anniversary of the previous Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso, pro-independence group Students for a Free Tibet-India organised a panel discussion emphasising that "Xizang" was not Tibet's legitimate name and was an attempt to erase Tibetan history and identity.

Earlier, the Tibetan organisations had objected to the use of 'Xizang' instead of Tibet by the Indian Meteorological Department while referring to a recent earthquake in Tibet. The panel discussion was themed "Tibet Must Survive: Tibet in Global Dialogue, Erasure, and Resistance". The discussion brought together key figures from the Tibetan community, including Tsering Dawa, director of the Tibet Policy Institute; Tibetan parliament members Dorjee Tseten and Tenzin Pasang, Sonam Tsering, general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress and National Director of Students for a Free Tibet-India.

Tenzin Pasang said that over the past year, China had not only forcibly changed "Tibet" to "Xizang" but had also pressured foreign governments and international media outlets to adopt the term. She pointed to recent examples of the global media using "Xizang" in their coverage of the Dingri earthquake, stressing the need for Tibetans and their allies to resist this linguistic manipulation.

Tsering Dawa said that this strategy aimed at restricting the term "Tibet" solely to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), thereby undermining the unity of Tibet's three traditional provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. He added that this move was a deliberate effort to rewrite Tibetan history and weaken Tibetan identity on the global stage.

MP Dorjee Tseten said that China's 70-year occupation of Tibet and its current push to change Tibet's name internationally demonstrated its ongoing insecurity and manipulation of historical narratives.

The panel discussion concluded with four key demands directed at governments, media organisations and international institutions. They demanded immediate cessation of terms like "Xizang", "China's Tibet," and "Southern China" while referring to Tibet.

The Tibetan organisations said that "Xizang" was not Tibet's legitimate name and urged the countries and organisations to continue to use "Tibet" in English as

an accurate representation of its distinct identity on the world map to counter China's territorial claim.

### **Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen and Wangdue Dorjee Conclude Visit to West Bengal**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As part of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile's ongoing periodic visitation program, Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen and Wangdue Dorjee have successfully concluded their official visit to Tibetan communities in West Bengal. The visit included stops in Darjeeling, Sukhia, Pokhribong, and Mirik.

On 13 February 2025, the two parliamentarians departed from the Manjushree Center of Tibetan Culture's guesthouse in Darjeeling and paid their respects at Kirti Monastery (Geden Tashi Choling) in Sukhia. They then visited Kyiter Osel Ling Retreat Center, Kyiter, and Tibetan communities in Pokhribong.

The day continued with a visit to Sambhota Tibetan School in Darjeeling, where the MPs attended a meeting in the school's assembly hall, engaging with both the local community and school staff. During the meeting, the Tibetan Settlement Officer presented the office's report, followed by introductions of the two MPs. The parliamentarians addressed the public with speeches and participated in a Q&A session. Following the meeting, they inspected a new construction project at the Darjeeling Settlement Office and visited several key locations, including the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre, the exhibition hall at the Manjushree Center of Tibetan Culture, and the office of the Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement (BRDL).

On 14 February, the MPs departed from the guesthouse in the morning, visiting the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre once more before heading to Bokar Ngedon Chokor Ling Monastery in Mirik, where they paid their respects and gave speeches to the local community. The visit concluded with their arrival at a hotel in Siliguri.

*-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat*

### **Tibet Awareness Day Held at Bureau du Tibet, Paris**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 15 February 2025, Under the guidance of Representative Rigzin Choedon Genkhang, the Bureau du Tibet in Paris successfully organised a Tibet Awareness Day, bringing together some 33 young Tibetans from diverse educational backgrounds. The event aimed to educate and inspire the next generation about the Tibetan cause, history, and the over all Sino-Tibet conflict.

The program commenced with an insightful presentation by Thupten Tsering, the coordinator of

the Bureau du Tibet, Paris. Using a detailed PowerPoint presentation, Tsering introduced the participants to the structure of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), highlighting the roles played by various entities within the administration. He emphasised the significance of understanding the CTA's functioning in preserving Tibetan identity and advocating for Tibet's cause on international platforms.

One of the most impactful moments of the event was the screening of "A Liberation That Never Was: 70 Years of Occupation & Repression in Tibet", a powerful documentary produced by TTV. The film vividly portrayed the harsh realities faced by Tibetans under Chinese occupation, evoking emotional responses from the audience. Many participants expressed feelings of sorrow and renewed determination to contribute to the Tibetan cause.

Adding to the educational experience, Tenzin Phuntsok, the EU Advocacy Officer who traveled to Paris specifically for this event, introduced the Middle Way Approach, the official policy of the CTA aimed at resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict. His presentation sparked considerable interest and led to an engaging discussion among the participants.

The participants expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity to learn about their heritage and political struggle. Many requested that similar workshops be organised in the future, emphasising the importance of staying informed and united in the Tibetan community's quest for justice.

To conclude the event on a warm note, the Office of Tibet served a delicious homemade lunch, fostering an atmosphere of community and cultural pride.

The Tibet Awareness Day was a resounding success, leaving a lasting impact on the young attendees. By empowering Tibetan youth with knowledge and historical context, the Bureau du Tibet, Paris, continues to inspire and strengthen the Tibetan movement for freedom and identity.

*-Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Brussels*

### **CTA urges Tibetans to observe solemn Losar in solidarity with Dingri earthquake victims**

17 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

In response to the devastating earthquake that struck Tibet's Dingri and surrounding areas earlier this month, causing significant loss of life and property, the Kashag (Cabinet) Secretariat of the exile Tibetan government, officially known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has urged Tibetans to observe a solemn Losar (Tibetan New Year) this year.



Following a Cabinet meeting, the Kashag Secretariat called on the Tibetan community to refrain from hosting large gatherings, performing traditional Tibetan circle dances (gorshey), or engaging in exuberant celebrations during the upcoming Losar festivities. This appeal is made in solidarity with the victims and their families, who continue to endure immense hardship due to the disaster.

In a further display of unity and mourning, the CTA on January 29 urged Tibetans in exile and the diaspora to observe a 49-day mourning period to honor those who lost their lives. "A 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Tibet on January 7, 2025, causing significant destruction, particularly in Dingri. In solidarity with survivors and to honor those who perished, Tibetans in exile have decided to suspend the Lhakar dance for seven weeks," read an official CTA statement.

The powerful earthquake, which struck Dingri on January 7 at 9:05 AM, caused severe damage in multiple regions, including Lhatse, Dramtso, Chula, Tsogo, Sakya, Tingkye, and Ngamring, leaving communities devastated and in urgent need of assistance.

Additionally, the CTA organised a special prayer ceremony at the Main Temple in Dharamshala on January 8 to offer prayers for the victims and their families. On January 12, CTA President Penpa Tsering issued a public statement urging China to prioritise the needs and rights of Tibetans in disaster relief efforts. Demonstrating further solidarity, the Tibetan community in France announced on January 12 the cancellation of this year's Losar celebrations as a mark of respect for those affected by the disaster. This collective response highlights the resilience and unity of the Tibetan people in the face of adversity.

### **Budget Estimate Committee Meets to Review CTA 2025-2026 Budget**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 17 February 2025, the Budget Estimate Committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile convened today at the parliamentary secretariat to assess the budget presented by the Department of Finance (DoF) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) for the fiscal year 2025-2026.



*Budget Estimate Committee Meets to Review CTA 2025-2026 Budget*

Pursuant to Article 66 of the Rules and Regulations governing the procedure and conduct of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang appointed committee members tasked with reviewing proposed expenditures on projects and activities across various CTA departments. These allocations will be sanctioned following deliberations during the upcoming budget session of the Tibetan Parliament in March 2025.

The committee composed of Parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten, Tsaneytsang Dhondup Tashi, Karma Gelek, Tsering Yangchen, and Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong met with Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang today to seek the requisite guidance. Followed by the commencement of the execution of their allotted tasks after unanimously appointing Parliamentarian Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten as the Chairperson and Parliamentarian Karma Gelek as the Secretary of the committee.

The Budget Estimate Committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile will submit a revised consolidated budget proposal before the 12 March 2025 to the Tibetan Parliament Secretariat.

*-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat*

### **ANNOUNCEMENT: Kashag Requests Restraint in Losar Celebrations in Solidarity with Dingri Earthquake Victims**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

In solidarity with the victims of the recent earthquake in Dingri and surrounding areas of Tibet, which caused significant loss of life and property, the Kashag Secretariat of the Central Tibetan Administration, following the 175th Cabinet meeting, respectfully requests that, during the upcoming Losar (Tibetan lunar New Year) celebrations, individuals refrain from hosting large gatherings, performing Tibetan circle dances (gorshey), or engaging in other exuberant



from February 3 to 24, 2025, in New York and the Midwest regions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Chicago.

*-Report filled by Tibet Museum, DIIR, CTA*

### **His Holiness the Dalai Lama Arrives Safely at Gyumé Tantric College in Hunsur**

17 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 16 February 2025, His Holiness the Dalai Lama left Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. Tibetans, monastic and lay-people, lined the road to see him off. He then drove almost 40kms from Bylakuppé to Hunsur, still within Karnataka, the location of Gyumé Tantric College. At Hunsur, the road was lined by smiling Tibetans eager to greet His Holiness. He was welcomed on arrival by the Ganden Trisur Rinpoché, the Shartsé Chöjé, the Abbot and Vice-Abbot of Gyumé and the Representative of Hunsur Settlement. The former Ganden Tri Rinpoché then led the way into the Gyumé assembly hall.

Once His Holiness had taken his seat the Abbot of Gyumé Monastery, Geshé Ngawang Sangyé made prostrations and offered a mandala and representations of the body, speech and mind of enlightenment. The Hunsur MLA Harish Gowd also paid his respects.

As His Holiness walked through the assembly hall, the floor strewn with flower petals, the monks were chanting a Praise of Jetsun Sherab Sengé, founder of their monastery. They followed this with a Praise of Six-armed Mahakala by the Mahasiddha Shawaripa and then a Praise of Dharmaraja by Jé Tsongkhapa. Tea and sweet rice were served and the verses for offering and blessing them invoked Jowoje Atisha, Dromtönpa and Tsongkhapa.

His Holiness addressed the gathering:

“Although it was quite a long drive to get here, I don’t feel tired.

“Wherever Tibetans have settled they seem quite pleased to see me. I easily make friends with people and they have regard for me as the person who bears the name Dalai Lama. I was born in Do-mé or Amdo and later moved to Central Tibet where I was able to study Buddhist philosophy, logic and so forth with my tutors. My debate assistants were very kind to me too and with their help I was able to put my brain to good use.

“In Tibet I visited the great monasteries of Sera, Ganden and Drepung to take my exams. Finally, I was fortunate to be able to take the exam for the degree of Geshé Lharampa in the Jokhang in Lhasa. As I stood amidst the congregation of scholars at Sera, Ganden and Drepung Monasteries I might have given an impression of confidence, but inside my heart beat rapidly because I was nervous. On the other hand, I

was also happy. The debates I engaged in and the examinations I took at the Three Great Seats of Learning went very well.

“So, this person named Lhamo Dhondup, who came such a long way from Amdo, and who bears the name Dalail Lama, has been able to serve the teaching and other beings quite well. Not only Tibetans, but also people who are not traditionally Buddhists are friendly towards me and happy to hear what I have to say. I feel this has made my life worthwhile.

“I still expect to live another ten or 15 years and will continue to serve the Buddhadharma and the cause of Tibet. This is a contribution I will continue to make.

“We have worked hard, despite living in exile, and because of my interest in science many people who have no religious faith as such, scientists among them, have become my friends. I feel I have been able to serve the Dharma, particularly the tradition of the great master Tsongkhapa that comprises both sutra and tantra, in my discussions with them. I have also engaged in meditation based on his teachings. Consequently, I have been able to uphold the correct view and share it with others, explaining to them how they can transform their minds. Indeed, I have been able to engage in discussions with people from all walks of life.

“After the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama passed away, I was recognized as the reincarnation, so I bear title Dalai Lama and so far I have done my best to serve the Dharma and beings. As I mentioned before, I have seen indications in my dreams that I may live to be 110 years old or more and I feel that I will be able to continue to serve the Dharma and the cause of Tibet.

“I am happy to have been able to reach here today, and you have all been able to pay your respects. If we were still in Tibet, I would be sitting on a high throne unable to interact with the general public. It would all have been formal. However, coming into exile has been quite refreshing because I have been able to meet and interact with all kinds of people from many different walks of life. I want to be able to help people by dealing with them directly, which is what I have been doing since coming into exile. Talking to people, letting them know what I think, rather than remaining aloof, accords with my own nature.



*Members of the audience listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking at during the welcome ceremony at Gyumé Tantric College*

*in Hunsur, Karnataka, India on 16 February 2025. Photo by Tenzin Choejor*

“At Gyumé Tantric College you are known for chanting in the voice of Yamantaka. Your trust in me has been the basis of a strong, immutable spiritual bond between us—for which I would like to thank you. As Tibetans there may be differences between us depending on where we come from and who our own teachers are, but we share a common way of thinking. We have kept alive the teaching that the Buddha gave more than two thousand five hundred years ago.

“The Buddhadharma came to Tibet during the reigns of the Dharma Kings and we have been able to keep the complete teaching of the Buddha alive since then and we share a determination to continue to do so.

“I am someone who bears the title Dalai Lama and the responsibility of the Dalai Lamas is to preserve the teaching of the Buddha. The extent to which the Buddhadharma has spread during my time seems to have been much greater than under previous Dalai Lamas. I have tried to spread the message of the importance of maintaining a good heart, of being a good person, rather than just being religious. This message has been widely recognized and appreciated. You, monks of the Tantric College, have been serving the Dalai Lamas very well and that’s all I have to say today. Thank you.”

His Holiness then retired to the rooms that had been prepared for him. Tomorrow, the monks of Gyumé Tantric College will offer prayers for his long life.

## **Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland fear long arm of China**

17 February 2025, [SWI](#)

**A study commissioned by the Swiss government shows that China is engaged in intimidating Tibetans and Uyghurs in the Alpine nation. The authorities have yet to announce what measures they will take following these findings.**

It’s a world first: a national government has commissioned a study on the extent to which communities in exile on its territory are subject to surveillance and intimidation by China. The task went to Ralph Weber and his team at the Institute of European Global Studies at the University of Basel.

The study [External link](#) focuses on violations of basic rights and systematic pressure applied by the Chinese Communist regime on the Tibetan and Uyghur communities in Switzerland between the year 2000 and the present. Both attempted violations and those actually carried out were studied.

The report comes to a clear conclusion. Members of the Tibetan and Uyghur diaspora are being monitored, threatened, and even pressured to return to China by

agents of the People’s Republic. This transnational repression, as it is being called, can involve various approaches. Often it takes the form of threatening phone calls from China demanding that the person concerned spy on their own community or making pointed allusions to the safety of family members still living on Chinese territory.

Tibetans in particular also feel that Swiss authorities curtail their basic rights, such as when demonstrations in front of parliament in Bern are restricted or asylum practices become more restrictive. These views were expressed not just by those who are politically exposed. The researchers based their findings in part on interviews conducted with 60 people.

### **Approach used by the study**

“As the person commissioned to do this study, I approached the question with an open mind,” says lead author and China expert Weber. “We just wanted to get to the facts. Looking back, I can only say that what we found was to be expected.”

He and his team began by compiling existing international studies and cases of repression of the two communities. They then investigated the extent to which these subversions of human rights were happening in Switzerland too. Just as elsewhere in Europe, “dozens of agents of the security services” of the People’s Republic of China are active in the Alpine nation. They often disguise themselves as embassy or consulate staff.

The report also gives examples of pressure exerted on Swiss authorities by China. But the authors weren’t able to assess how successful these efforts have been. The study does conclude that local authorities are often less intimidated than their national counterparts.

One consequence of transnational repression by China, Weber points out, is that it undermines trust within exile communities and can lead to division. “We have found that many people in the Tibetan community in Switzerland suspect other members of the diaspora are working for ‘the Chinese,’” says the expert. This mistrust is particularly high towards those who have only recently come to Switzerland, as they still have family in Tibet and are therefore more vulnerable to pressure tactics.

“We don’t want our report to add to this atmosphere of mistrust”, says Weber. The pressure coming from agents of the Chinese regime is already creating a climate of fear among the people exposed to it. It is nevertheless important to recognise, he adds, that the situations are often complex, and there may be different actors involved with all kinds of different motivations. “Contacts with Chinese officials are by no means proof that the person concerned is on the side of China or acting as an informer,” he says.

Weber believes the government, which issued a report [External link](#) on the study findings, should act.

The report condemns violations of the rights of communities in exile and lists planned responses, including greater care in choosing interpreters for asylum hearings. In the past there have been suggestions that some of these interpreters might have been informers. It also calls for awareness-raising among all authorities at federal, cantonal and municipal levels, so they can identify and respond to such activities.

However, the government remains vague on how Switzerland intends to confront China with these findings. It simply refers to the “dialogue on human rights” that Switzerland and China have held since 1991. This dialogue is often criticised as mere tokenism. “Those affected have said again and again that basic rights such as freedom of expression are increasingly being restricted in favour of economic interests,” says Weber. “That should worry us as a liberal democracy.”

#### **Views of campaigners**

The study has a long history. It began with a petition from the Swiss NGO Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) in 2018, which called for a report on whether ethnic groups repressed in China are having their basic rights curtailed in Switzerland as well. The foreign policy committee of the House of Representatives then called on the government to come up with a detailed report on the situation of Tibetans and Uyghurs in the country.

For the STP, the actions proposed by the government are not enough. In a statement, it calls for a clear definition of what constitutes transnational repression and for Switzerland to adopt appropriate legislation to counter it effectively. It also calls for a reporting and advocacy office to be set up, and for those affected to be consulted in political decision-making. The Swiss government, it says, needs to expose the offences publicly and expel the perpetrators.

Switzerland is not the only country with this problem. Transnational repression appears to be on the rise globally. The phenomenon has grown thanks to digitalisation and artificial intelligence. Zumretay Arkin, vice-president of the World Uyghur Congress in Munich, tells SWI swissinfo.ch: “Practically every Uyghur in exile has experienced some kind of repression at the hands of the Chinese government. It can be anything from phone calls from Chinese police and attempts to block international travel, to arrest, imprisonment or even deportation to China.”

One challenge is that those affected are used to these tactics and fail to protest. “For many of us it is part of everyday life to be spied on, so it hardly occurs to anyone to report it,” says Arkin. Police forces in other countries are often not particularly well-informed of the situation and incidents are hard to prove.

David Missal of the German NGO Tibet Initiative Deutschland confirms this. Apart from the diaspora

communities themselves, governments and elected officials must become aware of the issue. “So far there has been no response to this at the political level,” he says. “We would like there to be state-sponsored resources for victims of transnational repression, which would also provide psychological and legal assistance.” Missal would like to see German authorities carry out a similar study to that of the Swiss.

#### **Sensitive diplomatic context**

Weber does give Switzerland some credit: “That the Swiss government, which is known for its understated position in dealing with China, commissioned such a study is worthy of note in itself.”

Admittedly, the government took its time to release the report. The study was completed in April 2024, and publication was postponed a few times. “I can imagine this was a sensitive report, and there were a few questions that officials wanted time to consider,” he says. According to an investigation by Tamedia newspapers, there was disagreement at the top about how to handle the “troubling findings” of the study.

Publication has come at an awkward time for Switzerland. This year the country is marking 75 years of diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. Updating the 2014 free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries is on the agenda. The parliamentary foreign policy committee has called for the findings of the study to be brought to the FTA negotiations. The government does not make mention of this in its report.

Weber believes Switzerland owes it to Tibetans and Uyghurs in the country to follow the study up with action, including opening up a public debate on the issue and speaking out against repression. “Many of the people we spoke to are tired of providing information about their situation, only to find that nothing happens,” says Weber.

#### **Sikyong Addresses Students in Bylakuppe, Accompanies His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Hunsur Rabgyaling**

16 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Sikyong Penpa Tsering concluded his fourth day of engagements in Bylakuppe on 16 February 2025 before departing for Hunsur to escort His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

On 15 February, Sikyong addressed students at Lugsum Nyamdrel Community Hall, where students from Bylakuppe Sambhota Tibetan School (STS), Sambhota CVP School, and SOS TCV School Bylakuppe gathered. The event was attended by Jigmey Tsultrim, Chief Representative Officer (CRO) of the South Zone; Settlement Officers Gelek Jungney of Lugsum Samdupling and Chime Dorjee of Dickey Larsoe; local

Tibetan leaders; representatives of the Local Tibetan Freedom Movement; Tibetan Cooperative Societies; school directors; principals; and camp leaders.

The program commenced with opening remarks by Jamphel Sonam, office secretary at the Lugsum Samdupling settlement office, followed by an introduction by Settlement Officer Gelek Jungney, who provided a brief overview of Sikyong's second visit to Bylakuppe. He also highlighted Sikyong's engagements from the previous day, including visits to major Tibetan monasteries and schools in the settlement.

In his address, Sikyong reaffirmed Tibet's historical independence status, stating, "Tibet has always been an independent country. China's claims over Tibet are baseless, and historical records clearly prove that Tibet was never a part of China since ancient times."

Sikyong further emphasised the global significance of the Tibetan Plateau, highlighting its crucial role in Asia's environmental stability and freshwater resources. He underscored that understanding Tibet is essential for India's security due to its geopolitical significance and called for greater awareness of the region's strategic and environmental importance. He also stressed the need to strengthen relations through cultural understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet's historical context.

Additionally, Sikyong spoke about the geopolitical and environmental significance of the Tibetan Plateau and its relevance to India. He noted that the Tibetan language is one of the most important languages in Buddhism and has been recognised as one of the fifteen most ancient languages with a script.

At the end of the event, Sikyong urged the students to stay dedicated to their studies, stating, "Each of you represents the hope for Tibet's future. As you mature, the responsibility to lead our cause will fall on your shoulders."

Following his public address, Sikyong further visited several key offices and institutions in the settlement, including the Office of the Auditor General, the Tibetan Medical & Astro Institute (Men-Tsee-Khang) Branch and Research Centre, Nalanda Kagyue Monastery, Dickey Larsoe Settlement Office, Tibetan Dickey Larsoe Co-operative Society Ltd., Delar Bod Rangwang Denpai Legul Tsokchung, and TDL (Tibetan Dickey Larsoe) Milk Producer's Co-operative Society LTS. His final stop was the Sports Association football ground. Throughout his engagements, Sikyong was accompanied by Tenzin Kunsang, Joint Secretary of the Department of Home and Section Head of Southern Tibetan Settlements.

Over the course of four days, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, who also serves as the Kalon (Minister) of the Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration, engaged in a series of meetings and visits in Bylakuppe before departing for Hunsur on 16 February 2025 to escort His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to Hunsur

Rabgyaling under Mysore District. According to CRO Jigme Tsultrim of South Zone, this year marks the 17th visit of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to Hunsur.

Tomorrow morning, on 17 February, Sikyong will attend a Long Life Prayer ceremony for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, offered by Gyudmey Tantric Monastery at Gyudmey Assembly Hall. He will continue his engagements with the Tibetan community and visit key institutions in Hunsur Rabgyaling Settlement.

### **Tibetan Delegation Conducts Intensive Lobbying in Geneva, Engages with 16 UN Missions, Six Special Rapporteurs, and OHCHR Officials**

16 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Ahead of the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), scheduled from 24 February to 4 April 2025, Tibetan representatives have submitted a written statement to the United Nations, raising concerns over the construction of the Medog Dam in Tibet and the broader human rights situation in the region.

In addition to the formal submission, the representatives engaged in intensive lobbying efforts, meeting with 16 UN permanent missions, six Special Rapporteurs, and officials from the Asia-Pacific and China Desk at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

During these engagements, several UN missions acknowledged China's economic and military influence and the strong bilateral relations many countries maintain with Beijing. However, officials emphasised that international law and UN norms must be upheld in addressing human rights and fundamental freedoms. While some countries pledged to raise their concerns publicly, others committed to addressing the issue through diplomatic channels.

A particularly emotional moment came when Namkyi, a former Tibetan political prisoner and activist, shared her harrowing testimony of imprisonment in Tibet. Many UN representatives were deeply moved by her story, with some expressing shock over the stark contrast between China's public image and its actions behind closed doors.

The 58th session of the UNHRC is expected to serve as a crucial platform for discussions on China's accountability in Tibet. Tibetan representatives continue to urge the international community to take firm action against policies that violate human rights and environmental standards in the region.

The lobbying delegation included Thinlay Chukki, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; Namkyi; Dukthen Kyi, Advocacy Officer, Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR); and Phuntsok Topgyal, UN Advocacy Officer in Geneva.



This time, the advocacy team focused on engaging smaller nations, some of whom had limited knowledge of Tibet's historical background and the structure of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The delegation provided detailed explanations, ensuring a greater understanding of Tibet's political and human rights situation. The lobbying efforts were deemed highly successful and officially concluded yesterday, 15 February.

Following the UN engagements, Namkyi, Dukthen Kyi, and Phuntsok Topgyal arrived in Munich, Germany, to participate in a Tibetan advocacy program hosted by Tibetan Initiative Deutschland.

*-Report filed by Tibet Bureau, Geneva*

### **China-backed groups' threat alerts MoHA | HH Dalai Lama gets Z-category security**

15 February 2025, [Arunachal Observer](#), Pradeep Kumar

#### ***Is China scared?***

*The global community, particularly India, has been making concerted efforts for China to free Tibet from its illegal occupation for all Tibetans living across the world to return to their native nation to live peacefully with dignity seemingly scared China, known globally as a land grabber.*

*HH Dalai Lama being the protagonist of 'Free Tibet' movement, which gained movement in 1987 in response to the Chinese Govt's violent suppression of protests in Tibet, it is but natural that China-backed groups could go to any extent to cause harm to the spiritual leader.*

*China currently has territorial disputes with Bhutan, India, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and South China Sea though it has solves disputed with nine countries. Including Myanmar.*

*Solution to Tibet row would amount to open a Pandora's box to sake the authority of Chinese Community Party for which it by natural for Beijing mandarins to scared about any Tibet development!*

The central Govt on Thursday upgraded and accorded Z-category security coverage for Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness Dali Lama across India.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs took this decision following a recent threat analysis report by the Intelligence Bureau, which for many years has indicated a potential threat to the spiritual leader's life from various sources, including China-backed groups. Under the Z-category, the Dalai Lama would be protected by a dedicated team of 30 CRPF commandos along with an escort and close-protection officers during his travels within the country.

The move is aimed at ensuring a more coordinated and robust protection plan for the 89-year-old leader who

had so far been provided security by Himachal Pradesh Police and other agencies.

Dalai Lama is a globally respected figure and the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism. Many in the country's intelligence and security establishment believe that given Dalai Lama's status and the complex geopolitical tensions surrounding Tibet, his security has been a key concern for Indian authorities.

The IB has flagged a security threat to the spiritual leader, especially in the wake of Beijing's long-standing objections to his activities.

China is viewing the Dalai Lama's global engagements as a threat to their control over Tibet and his presence in India has been a sensitive issue in the relations between New Delhi and Beijing.

This move also reflects India's proactive approach to securing high-profile individuals who may face security threats.

HH Dalai Lama had escaped from Lhasa on 17.03.1959 and entered Arunachal Pradesh on 30.03.59 after Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers had occupied Tibet, destroying thousands of monasteries and killing Tibetans. Travelling through the trade route from Tibet to Khen-Dze-mani in Zemithang circle of Tawang district, HH Dalai Lama and his entourage sought refuge in India.

On 31.03.59, HH Dalai Lama and a group of his eight aides besides 80 others were officially received at Khen-Dze-Mani by local authorities and Zemithang people and 5 Assam Rifles personnel escorted the team into India.

A landmark along the trail begins with the 'Lhasa Dwar,' a small gate marking the point where HH Dalai Lama entered India. Adjacent to it stands the revered 'Holy Tree,' believed to have sprouted from a staff planted by HH Dalai Lama, now worshipped as a relic symbolising the historic event.

Another notable site in the area is the Gorsam Chorten, one of the largest stupas of Buddhism, located 90-km from Tawang. Founded by Monpa monk Lama Pradhar in 12<sup>th</sup> century; it holds historical importance as a resting place for HH Dalai Lama during his journey.

### **Panel discuss 'Erasure and Resistance' by China on Tibetan Independence Day**

14 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

*The panel during the discussion on China's attempt to erase Tibetan identity and resistance against the onslaught at the TSO hall in McLeod Ganj on February 13, 2025 (Phayul Photo)*

To mark the 112th anniversary of the previous Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso's declaration reaffirming Tibet's complete independence, pro-Independence group Students for a Free Tibet-India organised a panel discussion addressing the Chinese government's

recent directive mandating the use of “Xizang” instead of “Tibet” in Dharamshala. The panel held on Thursday emphasised that “Xizang” is not Tibet’s legitimate name and condemned the attempt to erase Tibetan history and identity.



The discussion themed ‘Tibet Must Survive: Tibet in Global Dialogue, Erasure, and Resistance’ brought together key figures from the Tibetan community. Among the speakers were Dr. Tsering Dawa, Director of the Tibet Policy Institute; Tibetan Parliament Member Dorjee Tseten; and Tenzin Pasang, Sonam Tsering, General Secretary of Tibetan Youth Congress and National Director of Students for a Free Tibet-India. They discussed the critical implications of China’s mandate to replace “Tibet” with “Xizang” in English, highlighting the Chinese government’s broader agenda of historical erasure and Sinicization. Speaking with Phayul, Tenzin Pasang underscored the urgency of the issue, noting that over the past year, China has not only forcibly changed “Tibet” to “Xizang” but has also pressured foreign governments and international media outlets to adopt the term. She pointed to recent examples of global media using “Xizang” in their coverage of the Dingri earthquake, stressing the need for Tibetans and their allies to resist this linguistic manipulation.

Dr. Tsering Dawa elaborated on the political motivations behind China’s push to rename Tibet, explaining that this strategy aims to restrict the term “Tibet” solely to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), thereby undermining the unity of Tibet’s three traditional provinces—U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. He warned that this move is a deliberate effort to rewrite Tibetan history and weaken Tibetan identity on the global stage.

MP Dorjee Tseten drew parallels between China’s actions and historical colonial practices, noting that many colonial powers changed the names of occupied regions to erase indigenous histories. He asserted that despite China’s 70-year occupation of Tibet, its current push to change Tibet’s name internationally demonstrates its ongoing insecurity and manipulation of historical narratives.

The panel discussion concluded with four key demands directed at governments, media organizations, and international institutions: the immediate cessation of terms like “Xizang,” “China’s Tibet,” and “Southern China” when referring to Tibet; recognition that “Xizang” is not Tibet’s legitimate name and the continued use of “Tibet” in English; accurate representation of Tibet’s distinct identity on world maps to counter China’s territorial claims; and increased international pressure on China to end its policies of forced Sinicization, which threaten Tibetan religion, culture, and language.

**China denies Swiss allegations of surveillance on Uyghur, Tibetan diaspora**

14 February 2025, [RFA](#), Alan Lu

**A recent study suggests Tibetans, Uyghurs in Switzerland face surveillance and cyberattacks initiated by Beijing.**

China dismissed a report alleging that it pressures Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland to spy on their communities, calling it “misleading information.”

The Swiss government released a report on Wednesday suggesting that China is pressuring Tibetans and Uyghurs in the European country to spy on each other while systematically monitoring politically active people.

“Transnational repression against people of Tibetan and Uyghur ethnicity is taking place in Switzerland,” the report published in German says. “They are allegedly being put under pressure by actors from the People’s Republic of China and are in some cases being prevented from exercising their fundamental rights.”

China rejected the report, which was based on a study conducted by the University of Basel, saying that Tibet and Xinjiang affairs were “purely China’s internal matters.”

“Political manipulation on issues related to Xizang [Tibet] and Xinjiang and vilification and smears against China that are inconsistent with facts violate the fundamental principle of mutual respect in China-Switzerland relations, and contravene the robust development of bilateral ties,” he said.

The report, based on a study sponsored by Switzerland’s Federal Office of Justice and the State Secretariat for Migration, found that Tibetan and Uyghur dissidents in Switzerland are often subjected to cyberattacks and surveillance of communications. Individuals were often followed, photographed and filmed by fellow members of their communities, the researchers said in the report.

“Such activities may also potentially affect Swiss citizens who are politically engaged in this area,” they added.

Gene Bunin, founder of the Xinjiang Victims Database, told Radio Free Asia that there have been documented cases of Uyghurs working with Chinese security officials in exchange for favors or the safety of their relatives.

“Distrust in the Uyghur diaspora is very common,” he said.

#### **China’s tactics**

Separately, Shane Yi, a researcher with the nongovernmental organization Chinese Human Rights Defenders, said when it comes to transnational repression, China has deployed a range of tactics.

“They often intersect with other forms of repression, including enforced disappearances and collective punishment, creating a climate of fear, even for those who have sought refuge abroad,” she told RFA.

Andili Karahan, former president of the Swiss Uyghur Association and a victim of China’s transnational repression who contributed to the report, told Radio Free Asia that the Swiss government’s recognition of the threats Uyghurs face under China’s transnational repression revealed Beijing’s “true colors.”

The Chinese government has threatened Uyghurs when they hold events at U.N. offices in Geneva, intimidating them via phone, photographing them during protests, and trying to deter them from advocating for Uyghur rights, he said.

“These incidents are far too common,” Karahan said. “We have reported these threats to the relevant authorities in the Swiss government and shared our concerns, along with recommendations on how to prevent such intimidation in the future.”

#### **Politically sensitive regions**

Tibet and Xinjiang are politically sensitive regions under Chinese control, with long-running disputes over human rights and autonomy.

China says it has modernized and stabilized these areas, while critics accuse it of suppressing Tibetan culture and committing human rights abuses against members of the mostly Muslim Uyghur community in Xinjiang.

Allegations of forced labor, religious repression, and mass detentions have led to international condemnation, but Beijing denies wrongdoing, framing its actions as efforts to combat extremism and promote development.

Kelsang Gyaltzen Bawa, a representative of the Tibet Office in Taiwan, welcomed the report, saying that it was a positive thing that China’s transnational repression of pro-democracy activists abroad has drawn attention from democratic nations worldwide. “Transnational repression has deeply infiltrated Tibetan organizations, as many still have family members in Tibet,” he said. “These families face arrests, detention, and even harassment by Chinese authorities, which discourages participation in activism.”

“As a result, the number of attendees at such events has dwindled, with some now resorting to wearing hats to conceal their identities.”

#### **Issue is now ‘on the table’**

Anna Leiseng, director of the Swiss branch of the Society for Threatened Peoples, said her human rights organization was pleased that the issue of transnational repression was “finally on the table,” but disappointed with the Swiss government’s handling of it so far.

“All in all, the reaction of the Federal Council to the report gives the impression that Switzerland tries to keep the problem as technical and harmless as possible in order not to upset the Chinese government.”

The Swiss report also pointed out that China was not the only country monitoring overseas diaspora communities. According to its findings, Russia, Iran and Turkey were also among the perpetrators.

The report’s authors stressed the need to clarify responsibilities, enhance communication and assess the effectiveness of tools and resources for addressing transnational repression.

“All federal, cantonal and municipal offices that may encounter transnational repression should be made aware of these activities so they can identify and respond to them appropriately,” they said.

#### **Swiss Government Acknowledges Transnational Repression Against Tibetans and Uyghur**

14 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Office of Tibe in Geneva has been raising concern about China’s growing influence and interference since 2019. Additionally, during Sikyong Penpa Tsering’s official visits to Switzerland, multiple appeals were made to the Swiss Federal government to address these issues. On 12 February 2025, the Swiss Federal Government formally affirmed that both Tibetans and Uyghurs are facing transnational repression from China. Swiss Representative Thinlay Chukki, expressed her appreciation and gratitude for this report from the Swiss government.

The Federal Council report in fulfilment of the postulate 20.4333 APK-N report comprises 10 Chapters with 36 pages, titled “Situation of Tibetan and Uyghur in Switzerland” by the Swiss Parliament. The main topic concerns the situation of Tibetans in Switzerland, particularly regarding freedom of speech and its connection to Surveillance. This official report was produced in response to a resolution passed by the parliament on 15 March 2021.

Chapter 3 analyses Switzerland’s refugee policies for Tibetans and Uyghurs, including refugee recognition, deportation procedures, and the legal status of Tibetans in Switzerland. Chapter 4 details China’s

extensive surveillance operations targeting Tibetan and Uyghur exile communities abroad. Chapter 5 examines how transnational repression restricts the fundamental rights of Tibetans and Uyghurs, particularly in relation to freedom of expression. Chapter 6 explores existing foreign and international legal measures to protect against transnational repression. Chapter 9 outlines measure taken by the Swiss Federal Government to address and prevent transnational repression.

The report is an official government document based on research conducted by the University of Basel. Regarding future protection of Tibetans and Uyghurs, the report indicates that Switzerland will respond diplomatically at the international level to China and all countries that facilitate transnational repressive actions. Furthermore, it states that Switzerland will not tolerate China's current actions and will take domestic measures, including raising awareness among authorities and providing support to victims. To read the Original German Version of the report, [click here](#).

-Report filed by Tibet Bureau, Geneva

### His Holiness the Dalai Lama Bestows Long Life Empowerment in Bylakuppe to an Estimated 25,000 Devotees

13 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Today, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was to give a Long-Life Empowerment based on White Tara, the Wish-fulfilling Wheel entitled 'A Stream of Nectar of Immortality' in the debate yard of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. The ritual was composed by Takdak Rinpoché, Ngawang Sungrab Thutop, who was His Holiness's Regent and Tutor.

Monks and nuns filled the temple, while more monks, nuns and lay-people sat in the debate yard under a huge awning. An estimated 25000 people gathered to receive the empowerment, with many Tibetans coming from other settlements in Karnataka. His Holiness rode in a golf cart down from the temple and walked to the throne. Once he was seated, the prayer of the 'Three Continuums' was recited, tea, bread and ceremonial sweet rice were distributed, and verses to offer and bless them were said. Addressing the assembly His Holiness recalled that Palden Lhamo had told him in a dream that he could live to be 110 years old. He also recounted an occasion not long ago when he was taking part in a meeting at the Thai Temple in Bodhgaya. His Holiness said that he had a clear vision of the Buddha before him and that the Buddha seemed to be pleased with him.

"The Buddha Dharma has spread around the world, reaching places that historically had no previous connection with Buddhism. I feel I have made some

contribution to this. In the early part of my life, I was able to study with my Tutors and as a result I have been equipped to make my life meaningful.

"In due course, the situation in Tibet prompted me to escape and come into exile in India. Since then, the name Dalai Lama has become well-known around the world. I feel happy to have been able to practise the Vinaya, a monk's discipline, as well as having been able to engage in the study of both Sutra and Tantra.

"As soon as I wake up in the morning, I meditate on the awakening mind of bodhichitta and the view of emptiness. I've done this every day, trying to live the life of a spiritual person. I have made many friends among people who were not necessarily interested in Buddhism.



Members of the audience listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the Long Life Empowerment at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, India on 13 February 2025. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

"So, I spent my younger years in Tibet and then came into exile, which is where I have lived most of my life. As I've already said, indications in my dreams suggest that I will live to be 110 or so." Applause rippled through the audience.

"I came from Siling in Amdo, where people are quite sharp. I have befriended the teaching of the Buddha which has made my life worthwhile.

"Today, I'm going to give the White Tara Long Life Empowerment. First of all, I need to undertake certain preparatory practices. While I do that, please recite Tara's mantra together."

Resuming his address to the crowd, His Holiness advised:

"Having found this precious human life, we have to make it meaningful. To do so, we require the complete teaching of the Buddha and to be able to engage in the Three Trainings—ethics, concentration and wisdom. If we are to do that well, we need to have a long life. And we can prolong our lives by relying on a deity like Arya Tara, who has vowed to take care of those who follow the Kadam Tradition.



Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, India on 13 February 2025. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

“All the four tantras are to be practised in the context of bodhichitta, so first of all you have to take the Bodhisattva vow. Without a bodhichitta motivation tantric practice could be misdirected. Whatever tantric practice you do, it must be founded on bodhichitta, the altruistic wish to be of benefit to others. This is the approach I take. Right from the moment I wake up, I generate bodhichitta. Even at the end of the day, I never forget bodhichitta. I go to sleep with mindfulness of bodhichitta. You think to yourself that you will engage in whatever practices you do for the benefit of all sentient beings. In this way you live your life in the service of others.”

His Holiness led the assembly through the verses for generating bodhichitta and taking the Bodhisattva vows. He then proceeded to go through the stages of the empowerment, advising the disciples to imagine themselves dissolving into emptiness. From that, they imagined arising in the form of White Tara.

“As I’ve already mentioned, every morning when I wake I meditate on bodhichitta and the view of emptiness. In my daily life I try to direct my mind towards these two practices that are also known as method and wisdom. Imbued with these two practices on a daily basis, through the days, weeks, months and years of my life I familiarise my mind with bodhichitta and emptiness. It’s not just a matter of reciting verses and prayers, but of making these principals the very core of my practice. In this way we can make our lives meaningful.”



His Holiness the Dalai Lama bestowing the Long Life Empowerment at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, India on 13 February 2025. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

When the empowerment was complete, His Holiness encouraged the disciples to feel delighted. He advised them from now on to take White Tara, the Wish-fulfilling Wheel to be their tutelary deity.

The congregation offered a thanksgiving mandala and the occasion was brought to an end with a recitation of the ‘Prayer of the Words of Truth’ and a series of dedication prayers. Smiling and waving to members of the congregation as he rode in a golf-cart through the debate yard and up to the temple veranda, His Holiness returned to his rooms.

### Tibet House Brazil Hosts Lecture on Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy

13 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 11 February 2025, Tibet House Brazil, São Paulo, hosted a lecture on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, welcoming Geshe Lharampa Gyaltsen Tsering alongside Brazilian nun Tenzin Lamdron as interpreter. The event gathered about 80 attendees eager to explore Buddhist perspectives on impermanence and mindful living.

Before the talk, Jigme Tsering, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Latin America, requested everyone to observe a minute of silence, followed by a prayer led by Geshe Lharampa Gyaltsen Tsering, in honour of Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a key figure in Tibetan diaspora who dedicated his life to the Tibetan freedom struggle.

Geshe Lharampa Gyaltsen Tsering, a Tibetan scholar and teacher, shared his insights on how understanding the transient nature of life can lead to a more meaningful and regret-free existence. His engaging approach resonated deeply with participants.

Tenzin Lamdron, a Buddhist nun and scholar, facilitated the discussion, making the teachings accessible to the Brazilian audience. Her experience as a translator and bridge between Tibetan scholars and international learners enriched the session.

—Report filed by Office of Tibet, Brazil

### Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Namkyi Lobbies in Geneva Ahead of 58th UN Human Rights Council Session

13 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 9 February 2025, former Tibetan political prisoner Namkyi arrived in Geneva, Switzerland, to participate in the Geneva Summit 2025. Ahead of the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), a five-day advocacy campaign began from 10 to 14 February 2025 to raise awareness about human rights in Tibet and share Namkyi’s testimony as a former political prisoner.

The advocacy campaign was structured into three phases: first, meetings with officials from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) China desk; second, meetings with members of UN Permanent Missions; and third, meetings with UN Special Rapporteurs. These efforts are still ongoing.

Advocacy efforts during this period involved engaging both smaller UN member states unfamiliar with the Tibet issue and larger nations with longstanding connections. Many ambassadors voiced strong support for the Tibet cause. Representatives from smaller nations explained that while they must take a diplomatic approach to supporting Tibet due to their economic, military, and strategic dependence on larger nations, they agreed to providing direct support when the time is appropriate for raising Tibet-related issues through diplomatic channels. Although this advocacy may not have secured immediate UN support, it successfully conveyed the reality of China's oppression in Tibet through Namkyi's personal story. This could encourage UN member states to reassess their policies and future relations with China.

The closed-door meetings were attended by Swiss Representative Thinlay Chukki, Joint Secretary Dukthen Kyi, Head of the Advocacy Section at the Department of Information and International Relations, Geneva-based UN Advocacy Officer Phuntsok Topgyal, and former Tibetan political prisoner Namkyi. During the five-day campaign, they completed advocacy meetings with representatives from six different countries, with meetings scheduled with seven more countries. Additional meetings are scheduled with the OHCHR China desk officials and UN Special Rapporteurs.

### **Australian Tibetan Youth Leadership and Advocacy Training Launches in Blue Mountains, Australia**

12 February 2025, [CTA](#)



On 12 February 2025, the Australian Tibetan Youth Leadership and Advocacy Training officially commenced at the Karuna Retreat Centre in the Blue Mountains, Australia. The event brought together 30 young Tibetan participants from six regions across

Australia, along with distinguished Australian speakers and trainers.

The leadership workshop, organized by the Tibet Information Office, is designed to empower Tibetan youth in Australia with leadership and strategic skills. It also provides a platform for connecting with key stakeholders such as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Tibet Support Groups, and local policymakers.

The inaugural ceremony began at 9:00 AM, with Yangkyi Sangpo, Regional Coordinator for V-TAG Newcastle, serving as the Master of Ceremony. She introduced the distinguished guests before Dawa Sangmo, the Chinese liaison officer from the Tibet Information Office, delivered the welcome speech. Sangmo provided a brief introduction to V-TAG Australia and expressed gratitude to the chief guest, Councillor Suzie Van Opdorp of the Blue Mountains City Council, as well as Dr Zoe Bedford, Executive Director of the Australia Tibet Council, for their continued support of the Tibetan cause.

Yarlo Ngawang, President of the Blue Mountains Tibetan Community, also addressed the gathering, followed by a short speech from Mrs. Helen Patrin, Former National Coordinator of FPMT Australia. Patrin emphasised the importance of unity in taking meaningful action.

Tenzin Lekshay delivered the keynote address, the Official Spokesperson for the Central Tibetan Administration, who encouraged young Tibetans to stay motivated and contribute to the Tibetan cause. On behalf of the CTA, he also extended appreciation to the chief guests for their steadfast support.

Chief guest Councillor Suzie Van Opdorp concluded the inaugural session by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the Dharug and Gundungurra lands. She highlighted the shared experiences of Tibetans and Aboriginal communities and urged young Tibetans to actively engage in both the Tibetan movement and local councils to strengthen support networks.

Following the opening session, participants took part in training sessions and group discussions, marking the beginning of an enriching and empowering program.

*-Report filed by OoT, Canberra*

### **His Eminence Kirti Rinpoche's Tireless Efforts to Preserve the Kirti Tradition and Tibetan Buddhism: An Interview with Konchok Jigme, Secretary to Kirti Rinpoche**

12 February 2025, [BDG](#), Lyudmila Klasanova

In his foreword to the book *Three Lives in One Lifetime: An Interview with Kirti Rinpoche Lobsang Tenzin Jigme Yeshe Gyatso* (2020), His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes:

When I meet Tibetan elders living in exile, I often encourage them to write down their life stories. Their experiences are all a part of the Tibetan people's fate, and writing them down gives us and our future generations a deeper understanding of our people's history.



*Kirti Rinpoche during a long-life ceremony at Kirti Jepa Dratsang in Dharamsala, 2016. Image courtesy of Kirti Getsa Tsokpa*

The book was written by Jianglin Li (1956–2024),\* an independent scholar and renowned writer specializing in post-1950 Tibetan history and the Tibetan diaspora. It was published in Chinese by Ganjong Publication under the Office of Tibet, Taiwan, as well as in English and Tibetan by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. The translator from Tibetan to English and editor of the book is Matthew Akester, an independent researcher and translator specializing in Tibetan history.

Three Lives in One Lifetime recounts the extraordinary life story of His Eminence Kirti Rinpoche, the head lama of Kirti Monastery (Tib: ཀེརྟི་དགོན་པ།), in what is now China's Sichuan Province, and its 40 affiliated monasteries in Tibet and India. Kirti Rinpoche has devoted his life to the revival and flourishing of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as serving the Central Tibetan Administration (Tib: རྗེ་མེད་སྐྱེལ་འཇུག་པ།), the Tibetan government-in-exile based in Dharamsala, India. An esteemed scholar and prolific writer, Kirti Rinpoche serves as the root guru, or tsawei lama (Tib: རྩ་བའི་ལྷན་པ།), to countless Tibetans within Tibet and in the diaspora.

In his foreword to the book, the Dalai Lama reflects on the extraordinary journey of Kirti Rinpoche's life as a distinguished Tibetan elder living in exile:

Kirti Rinpoche not only has a good understanding of religion, culture and everyday life in Tibet before the arrival of the Chinese Communists, he witnessed the Communist invasion, “democratic reform”, the suppression of the Tibetan people, and the flight into exile. He has not only seen Tibetans in exile nurture their religion and culture in a foreign country, maintain their national identity, and develop a democratic political system and society, but participated in it himself.

I had the privilege of meeting Kirti Rinpoche at his monastery in Dharamsala in 2017 and again in Bodhi Gaya during the Great Prayer Festival (Tib: མཚན་ལམ་ཚེན་མོ།, Monlam Chenmo), dedicated to the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The festival was held at Kirtighar Samyeling (Tib: ཀེརྟི་མཚན་ལམ་ཡམ་གླིང་།) from 7–11 January 2025.\*\* I had the opportunity to interview Konchok Jigme, secretary (Tib: རྩལ་ཡིག) to Kirti Rinpoche, who, despite the demanding schedule during the Monlam Chenmo, kindly shared his insights exclusively for BDG on the noble work of one of the most revered lamas of the Gelug tradition, and his efforts to preserve the rich heritage of the Kirti tradition and Tibetan Buddhism.

BDG: Could you briefly introduce His Eminence Kirti Rinpoche?

Konchok Jigme: The First Kirti Rinpoche, Rongchen Gendun Gyeltsen (1374–1450), was born in Zhaksho, in the Tibetan region of Amdo. He traveled to Lhasa and became the principal disciple of Tsongkhapa Lobsang Drakpa (1357–1419), the founder of the Gelug tradition. Since then, he has reincarnated 10 times, with the current 11th Kirti Rinpoche being Lobsang Tenzin Jigme Yeshe Gyatso.

Born in Thewo Takmoe Gang in Amdo in 1942, the 11th Kirti Rinpoche moved to Lhasa in 1958 to study at Drepung Loseling Monastery (Tib: འབྲས་ལུང་སྐོར་གསལ་གླིང་གྲྭ་ཚང་།). Following the Chinese invasion of Tibet, he fled into exile in India in 1959. While in exile, he pursued advanced studies in Buddhist philosophy and completed nine years of training at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi.

In 1992, Kirti Rinpoche founded the Kirti Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, known as Kirti Jepa Dratsang (Tib: ཀེརྟི་མཚན་ལམ་གྲྭ་ཚང་།), in Dharamsala. Later, in 1997, he was elected as a minister or kalon (Tib: བཀའ་རྒྱུན།) in the Department of Religion and Culture under the Central Tibetan Administration. This ministry oversees the religious and cultural affairs of the Tibetan exile community, ensuring the preservation of their rich heritage.

BDG: What are Kirti Rinpoche's most significant achievements?

KJ: The achievements of Kirti Rinpoche can be categorized into religious and political spheres. In terms of religious accomplishments, he completed his advanced Buddhist studies in India and established a branch of Kirti Monastery in Dharamsala. Rinpoche nurtured numerous graduated monks, as well as geshe (Tib: དགེ་བཤེས།), who completed Buddhist studies and rigney ramjampa (Tib: རིག་གནས་རབ་འབྲུམ་པ།), and completed Tibetan cultural studies from Kirti Jepa Dratsang in India.



*Kirti Rinpoche appointed as a head of Meu Palace in Ngawa, Amdo, 1950. Image courtesy of Kirti Getsa Tsokpa*

Kirti Rinpoche has authored and published more than 100 books on Tibetan religion, making significant contributions to the preservation and dissemination of the monastic education system, as well as monastic rules and regulations. He is also responsible for overseeing many monasteries in Tibet, where numerous young children have taken ordination as monks. For their education, Rinpoche took responsibility as editor for the textbook for the monastic school Losel Gulgyen (Tib: ལོསལོག་གུལ་གྱི་སྒྲིག་འཛུགས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིག་འཛུགས་), aiming to publish textbooks in India and send them to the monasteries in Tibet. Unfortunately, we were unable to implement the plan due to the influence of the Chinese government. However, we successfully implemented it for monasteries in India and Nepal.

Additionally, Kirti Rinpoche established rules and regulations for monastic discipline and study in India. These guidelines were sent to the Kirti monasteries in Tibet, where most continue to follow Rinpoche's guidance despite the influence of the Chinese government.

In terms of Kirti Rinpoche's political achievements, after completing his education in Varanasi, he returned to Dharamsala and worked for 5–6 years with the Dalai Lama Trust (Tib: དྲ་ལོ་ལྷ་མོ་འཇོག་སྒྲིག་འཛུགས་). He then served six years at the Public Service Commission (Tib: གཞན་ལས་འདེམས་འཛུགས་ཀྱི་མཛུགས་ཀྱི་མཛུགས་) of the Central Tibetan Administration. Following that, Kirti Rinpoche became an executive member of the Constitutional Amendment Drafting Committee. He was later elected

as a minister in the Department of Religion and Culture.

BDG: What contributions has Kirti Rinpoche made to preserving the Kirti tradition?

KJ: Kirti Rinpoche's primary goal is to preserve the purity and authenticity of his tradition, keeping it separate from modern influences. This has been his way of thinking. From a very young age, he grew up in a traditional environment, receiving his education in Tibet before moving to India for further studies.

Kirti Rinpoche has always sought to follow the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, emphasizing that the goal of achieving freedom from China is to preserve Tibet's religion and traditions.

BDG: What does a day in the life of Kirti Rinpoche look like?

KJ: On a regular basis, Kirti Rinpoche begins his day with prayers as soon as he wakes up. After breakfast, around 8 a.m., several dignitaries from Kirti Monastery and the Kirti Getsa Charitable Society (Tib: ཀེརྟི་གེ་སྒྲུབ་ལྷན་ཚུགས་ལུགས་), along with Rinpoche's personal secretary, visit him one by one at his office to receive his instructions and report on the daily work, the situation of monastic studies, and other matters.

After lunch, there may be audiences and he meets with visitors. Following that, he continues his work, signing documents. Later in the day, Rinpoche provides guidance to the computer specialists on various aspects of publishing, book design, and making corrections as needed in his office.

BDG: What is Kirti Rinpoche's vision for the newly built Kirtighar Samyeling Monastery in Bodh Gaya?

We published a book about the construction of Kirtighar Samyeling and the future plans for the monastic complex. The book was launched at the conclusion of the Monlam Chenmo at Kirtighar Samyeling.

The primary purpose of building Kirtighar Samyeling is the study of Nalanda philosophy. His Holiness the Dalai Lama consistently emphasizes the importance of studying Nalanda philosophy, and Kirti Rinpoche follows this guidance. Rinpoche's main goal is to establish a primary school alongside an institute for higher Buddhist studies, as well as to create a Samye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Nalanda Academy in Bodh Gaya. This academy will be open to anyone interested in studying Nalanda philosophy. The monastic complex will not only serve Tibetans but also people from the Himalayan region, India, and the West.

In the winter, Kirti Rinpoche will stay at Kirtighar Samyeling in Bodh Gaya, while in the summer, he will reside at the Kirti Jopa Dratsang in Dharamsala.

BDG: In 2001, Kirti Rinpoche wrote the book *The Sixty-Year-Old Man's Hope* (Tib: སྐྱོད་ལོ་ལྔ་བཅུ་གྲོགས་པོའི་མཇུག་ལུགས་) as a guide for Kirti Monastery in Tibet. Through this book, he introduced reforms in the monastic education system



and regulations. Could you tell us more about these reforms?

KJ: Among the reforms outlined in the book, the most significant concerns the system of khenpo.\*\*\* Traditionally in Tibet, only reincarnated lamas or tulku (Tib: ལྷནས་ཀྱི་ལུང་།) were appointed as khenpo. Kirti Rinpoche introduced a reform allowing anyone who has completed higher Buddhist studies and received the geshe degree to become khenpo. Another key reform concerns the administration of the monasteries. The Chinese authorities have appointed some monks to oversee the administration of the monastery, but Kirti Rinpoche has instructed them on how to cooperate with the Chinese government while managing the entire monastery system. There was also a reform in the monastery kitchen. Previously, sponsors could choose the food and order meat if they wished. However, Kirti Rinpoche advised that the kitchen should serve only vegetarian food, prohibiting the serving of meat. All of these guidelines are repeatedly mentioned in this book.

BDG: The book of Kirti Rinpoche's life story is titled Three Lives in One Lifetime. Why is that?

KJ: The book discusses three major changes in Kirti Rinpoche's life. The title of the book is not written in a traditional Tibetan style; it was written by Jianglin Li and reflects her point of view. The first change occurred in his early years. Rinpoche was born into a poor farmer's family in a remote village. Suddenly, in 1945, he was recognized as the reincarnation of the 10th Kirti Rinpoche, Ngawang Lobsang Tenpa Tsering (1921–41). From being a farmer's child, he became a highly revered lama, and his life changed completely. The second change happened in 1958 when he moved to Lhasa to study at Drepung Monastery. In his native Amdo region, he was Kirti Rinpoche and a high lama, but on arriving in Lhasa, he had to undergo the full process of Buddhist studies as an ordinary monk, studying alongside others. Despite being a regular monk at Drepung, the Tibetan government still recognized him as a high lama and granted him a high lama position.

The third change was his journey to India as a refugee. In Dharamsala, where all Tibetans were considered equal, it no longer mattered whether he was a high lama. He had to go to school, work in the kitchen, and cook like everyone else, up to the point of joining the Tibetan government-in-exile. These are the three main changes in his lifetime.

BDG: What needs to be done to preserve Tibetan Buddhism in general, and the Kirti tradition in particular?

KJ: Kirti Rinpoche wants to preserve Tibetan religion and culture as a whole, but he has a specific approach to achieving this goal. He believes that if he can successfully preserve Kirti Monastery and its

disciplines, he will be contributing to the preservation of Tibetan tradition as a whole.

I think that preserving Tibetan culture depends on political relations between China and Tibet. In that regard, whenever Western people meet the Chinese authorities, they can engage in a dialogue about preservation of Tibetan identity.

BDG: Thank you very much for sharing your time with us. We wish both Kirti Rinpoche and you good health and great success in your endeavors.

### **London council won't argue against China's 'super-embassy' at key hearing**

12 February 2025, [RFA](#), Matthew Leung

#### **Critics allege the project is being greenlit under British government political pressure.**

Days after thousands of people rallied in London to protest plans for a new Chinese "super-embassy," the local council has said it won't argue against the project at a key government hearing, sparking allegations of political pressure from the highest levels of government.

The Chinese government purchased the historic Royal Mint in 2018 -- near the Tower of London -- with plans to build what would become Beijing's largest diplomatic facility globally. Rights groups and protesters warned that the facility would facilitate espionage and Beijing's "long-arm" law enforcement. On the first day of a 12-day planning inquiry, Morag Ellis KC, a lawyer acting on behalf of Tower Hamlets Borough Council, said the council wouldn't be offering any evidence opposing the plan, despite having previously rejected the Chinese government's planning application on two occasions.

She said the main reason was the withdrawal by the city's Metropolitan Police of its objections to the project.

"In the light of the Metropolitan Police services' changed position and the external transport advice, which mirrored that of the statutory highway authorities, it would have been irresponsible to seek to pursue the putative reason for refusal," Ellis told the hearing on Tuesday.

The hearing was packed with observers in the public gallery, with groups of people speaking Mandarin lining up early to get a seat. At least a dozen would-be observers were turned away after the venue reached capacity.



*The planning inquiry into China's application to build a "super-embassy" on the former site of the Royal Mint in London, Feb. 11, 2025. (RFA)*

Ellis also cited advice by transportation consultants iTransport, and that of government highway authorities.

"On the 12th of January this year, the Borough issued its revised statement of case, explaining why it was no longer in a position to present evidence in support of the putative reason for refusal," Ellis said.

#### **Safety and security concerns**

China resubmitted its application to build the massive new facility in London despite being rejected in 2022 amid a vocal campaign by rights groups.

The Metropolitan Police had earlier spoken against the planned embassy due to safety and security concerns, particularly relating to expected large-scale protests outside the facility, which includes plans for offices, residential quarters and cultural venues.

"The Metropolitan Police Service's Public Order Command are content that, on balance, there is sufficient space for future protests to be accommodated without significantly impacting the adjacent road network," the force said in a Jan. 17 letter confirming its change of position, which it said was based on a three-year-old council document.

The U-turn sparked allegations that the plan is being pushed through by strong political pressure from the highest levels of government.

Simon Bell, a lawyer speaking on behalf of the neighboring Royal Mint Court Residents Association, which opposes the plan, said it was "clear that there has been a political pre-determination of these applications at some of the highest levels of central government."

He said a three-year-old assessment by the council couldn't predict the size of future demonstrations, and cited the Met Police's failure to contain Saturday's protest at the proposed site.

"Roads were blocked and considerable police presence confirmed the residents' fear for their safety and security," Bell told the hearing. "If this is a taste of what is to come in respect of a proposed embassy, one can only imagine how the adverse effect of protests will impact on the residents' safety and security,

during any construction period, let alone after the embassy has come forward."

Luke de Pulford, executive director of the cross-party Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, said the police appeared to have been "influenced by forces other than the merits of the application."



*Simon Cheng, co-founder of the advocacy group Hong Kongers in Britain, speaks at a planning inquiry into China's application to build a "super-embassy" on the former site of the Royal Mint in London, Feb. 11, 2025. (Tower Hamlets Borough Council)*

"The public understanding is that the police are operationally independent and that their decisions regarding public safety ought to brook no interference," he said.

#### **Infiltration and attacks**

The planning application comes amid growing concerns over Chinese Communist Party infiltration of all aspects of British life, and warnings from Hong Kongers in exile over growing acts of violence by Beijing supporters and officials alike.

Overseas activists frequently report being targeted by agents and supporters of the Chinese state, including secret Chinese police stations in a number of countries.

Simon Cheng, co-founder of the advocacy group Hongkongers in Britain, said the proposed embassy posed a "serious risk to public safety, local infrastructures, and fundamental democratic freedoms," and warned that it would become a "flashpoint of large-scale protests against Chinese Communist Party human rights abuses."

"This embassy will ... be an extension of Chinese Communist Party's authoritarian reach into Britain," Cheng said. "We have already seen the evidence of Chinese diplomatic outposts being used for, for example, monitoring and intimidating exile activists like Hong Kongers, Tibetans, Chinese dissidents in the UK [and] Uyghurs."

"This embassy will make it even easier for Chinese authorities to track, intimidate, and suppress critics of such a regime."

Cheng said the embassy could also empower efforts to suppress free speech on British soil.

"The Chinese government has a history of pressuring businesses, universities, and local institutions to align

with its interests,” he said. “It is about whether Britain is willing to host and legitimise an embassy that will serve as a hub for authoritarian influence.”

### **Tibetans and Japanese Observe the 112th Anniversary of Reaffirmation of Tibetan Independence Day**

12 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 11 February 2025, Tibetans and Japanese supporters gathered at the Shinjuku Historical Museum Hall in Tokyo to observe the 112th anniversary of the 13th Dalai Lama’s reaffirmation of Tibetan Independence Day in 1913. The Students for Free Tibet (SFT) and the Tibetan Community in Japan (TCJ) organised the event to enlighten the public about the importance of this historical day and refute the Chinese claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times.

Tsering Dorjee, President of the SFT, and Dorjee Shiota, President of the TCJ, welcomed the participants and briefed them about the importance of the event. The Tibetan and Japanese national anthems were sung, and a minute of silence was observed for the victims of the earthquake in Tibet and for the late Kasur Gyalo Thondup, who died recently at the age of 97.

The organisers have invited Prof. Ishihama Yumiko of Waseda University and Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya of the Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia as the two guest speakers.

Professor Ishihama Yumiko made a presentation on Tibetan history, the Dalai Lamas, and Japanese visitors to Tibet in the early 20th century. She also discussed the Great Games played by the British India, Russia, and China. She commented that the talk event coincides the Japanese National Day, the day when the first Japanese Emperor Jimmu ascended the throne in 660 BC.

Representative Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya talked about how Tibet has been an independent nation since ancient times and how the CCP is distorting history to assert its claim on Tibet. He informed them that the both Yuan and Qing dynasties were foreign dynasties that conquered China and that the CCP’s claim of inheriting Tibet from these two dynasties was baseless and a historical faux pas. He briefed the audience about the Chinese colonial boarding schools and how the CCP is trying to deprive the Tibetan children of their mother tongue, identity, and culture.

The talk event was attended by Tibetans and Japanese supporters, intellectuals, and the general public. Fujita Yoko of the SFT moderated the event. Information booklets on Tibet and Chinese colonial boarding schools were distributed during the event.

*-Report filled by OoT, Tokyo*

### **Asanga Vajra Rinpoche Visits London Sunday School for Tibetan Language and Culture**

11 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Asanga Vajra Sakya Rinpoche visited the Sunday School for Tibetan Language and Culture in London on 9 February 2025, at the request of the Office of Tibet. The weekend school, affiliated with the Tibet House Trust of the Office of Tibet, organised a gathering in honour of Rinpoche’s visit. The event began with the singing of the Tibetan national anthem, followed by a brief prayer service to mourn the passing of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s elder brother, Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup.

During the morning session, a short clip of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s teachings was shown to the students, followed by the recital of Tibetan verses by three students, each representing a class, to showcase their proficiency in the Tibetan language.

Under Secretary Tenzin Zeydhan, secretary of the Tibet House Trust and the Sunday School’s administrator, welcomed Rinpoche and provided a brief introduction to his life. She also presented an overview of the school and its faculty in her introductory remarks.

Following that, Representative Tsering Yangkyi spoke to the students, sharing insights on the significance of preserving the unique Tibetan identity and the vital role that Sunday schools play in maintaining Tibetan religion and culture abroad. She emphasised the responsibility of parents and families to speak Tibetan at home.

In his keynote address, Asanga Vajra Rinpoche commended the parents for bringing their children to school on weekends, a time typically reserved for rest and recreation. Rinpoche stressed the importance of both education and moral conduct in leading a meaningful life. Quoting from the Sakya Legshe, he stated, “When one possesses good qualities, all people naturally gather around, just as bees swarm like clouds around sweet-smelling flowers, even from afar.” Rinpoche encouraged the students to study diligently, emphasising that education enables them to contribute meaningfully to the broader Tibetan cause. After Rinpoche’s profound address, teacher Kunsang delivered a vote of thanks on behalf of the parents’ committee. Rinpoche then visited each of the three classes, engaging with the students. The program concluded with a lunch reception hosted by the Office of Tibet, London.

*-Report filled by Office of Tibet, London*

## Diaspora Tibetan Community Holds Prayer Services to Mourn the Passing of Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup

11 February 2025, [CTA](#)



*Diaspora Tibetan Community Holds Prayer Services to Mourn the Passing of Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup*

In a heartfelt expression of respect and solidarity with the bereaved family members of the late Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup, Tibetans in the diaspora held prayer services at various community centres worldwide. Gyalo Thondup, who passed away on 8 February 2025 at the age of 97 in Kalimpong, was the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and has dedicated much of his life to the Tibetan cause and played a key role in the political movements of the exile community.

Following his passing, the news was widely covered by major outlets, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, highlighting his significant contributions to the Tibetan cause.

On 9 February, Tibetan communities in **New York & New Jersey, Portland, Vancouver BC, Chicago, Boston, Minnesota, Washington DC, Vermont, Ithaca, North California, Connecticut, Wisconsin**, and **Gangjong Choden Ling** gathered at their respective community centres to hold prayer ceremonies in his honour.

On the western edge of the Himalayan belt, in **Ladakh**, Tibetan communities from the **Sonamling Tibetan settlement**, as well as nomadic groups from the **Jangthang** region, held prayer services at their respective community halls.

Meanwhile, in **Bylakuppe**, local Tibetan leaders from the **Lugsung Samdupling** and **Dekyi Larso** Tibetan

settlements, along with staff members from the settlement offices and auditors from the Bylakuppe branch, came together to observe a prayer ceremony. An hour's ride away from Bylakuppe, residents of the **Hunsur Rabgyaling** Tibetan Settlement also gathered at their community hall to mourn and pray. On the northern side of the Indian subcontinent, Tibetans in **Dharamshala, Shimla, Kamrao, Kham Kathok (Satuan), and Miao, Tezu, and Tenzingang** to the east also held prayer services. The prayer gatherings were attended by CTA officials, representatives of local Tibetan NGOs, and Tibetan settlers, including students, to express their collective grief and honour the contributions of Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup.

In **Nepal**, Representative Tsepri Lopan Tulku Ngawang Chokdup convened Tibetan settlement officers and representatives of local civil societies and institutions at the open ground before the Choejor Tibetan Settlement's community hall to observe a prayer ceremony for the demise of Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup. In total, more than 800 Tibetans, including monks and nuns from every Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the region, participated in the prayer service.

In **London**, the Tibetan community of Britain (TCB) gathered at Tibet House in the evening of 12 February to offer prayers for Kalon Trisur Gyalo Thondup.

The prayer gathering, organised jointly with the Office of Tibet, at Tibet House began with a speech by Representative Tsering Yangkey, who paid tribute to Trisur Gyalo Thondup's lifelong service to Tibet. She highlighted his contributions to the Tibetan cause and urged those present to reflect on his enduring legacy. "His dedication to the fatherland was unwavering. Let us sincerely pray for his noble rebirth," she said.

Tibetan community members filled the conference room, coming straight from work to pay their respects. The prayer session was led by senior community member Kunsang Chodon, and the room reverberated with the sounds of prayer chants, creating an atmosphere of solemn reverence and spiritual unity.

The passing of Trisur Gyalo Thondup marks the end of an era, but his contributions to the Tibetan cause will remain an enduring source of inspiration for generations to come.

In **Geneva**, the Tibetan Community of Switzerland & Liechtenstein organised a memorial service for former Kasur Gyalo Thondup at Rikon Monastery on 16 February 2025.

The ceremony was attended by the Abbot and monks of Rikon Monastery, former Special Representative of His Holiness Kalsang Gyaltsen, former Tibetan Parliamentarians in the region, representatives of local Cholka Sum (traditional three Tibetan Provinces) groups, Tibetan Community leaders, and the general public. Vice President Ngeden Gyatso presented a

brief biography of the late Gyalo Thondup, while the Abbot of Rikon Monastery spoke about his contributions and encouraged prayers.

Nearly 300 Tibetans from the three traditional provinces participated in the service.

In **Belgium**, prayer service was organised to honour late Kasur Gyalo Thondup's remarkable contributions to Tibet's religion, politics, and people following his passing away on 8 February. The service, held on 16 February 2025, at the Nalanda Institute in Brussels, was jointly hosted by multiple Tibetan associations and organisations from the Belgian Tibetan community. It aimed to offer prayers for his swift attainment of higher spiritual realisations and to commemorate his lifelong dedication.

The event, attended by a diverse group of local governmental and non-governmental representatives, as well as over 200 Tibetan community members from six major Belgian cities, included speeches that highlighted the deceased's biography and achievements. During the service, several families generously sponsored the expenses for the venue, refreshments, and tea.

Similarly, the **France** Tibetan Association organised a prayer gathering and offering ceremony on 16 February 2025, to honour the memory of the late Gyalo Thondup. Approximately 250 attendees, came together in Paris to express their deep condolences and pay respects.

### **Tibetan politician applauds UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet**

11 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*In the letter written to Chris Law, Speaker Tenphel characterized the initiative as a significant step forward, guaranteeing a powerful and prominent voice for Tibet within the UK Parliament.*

Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel expressed his gratitude to Chris Law, MP for the Scottish National Party and chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet, for the group's official introduction in the UK Parliament on behalf of the Tibetan people and the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

In the letter written to Chris Law, Speaker Tenphel characterized the initiative as a significant step forward, guaranteeing a powerful and prominent voice for Tibet within the UK Parliament. He underlined how important the group is in promoting human rights, peace, and the conservation of Tibet's distinctive cultural legacy.

All of the distinguished members of the organization were recognized for their services in the letter posted on X. Khenpo Sonam Tenphel conveyed his heartfelt

gratitude and congratulated them for their support. He said that their work highlighted the significance of group efforts to create a more equitable and respectable world and conveyed a strong message of optimism to the Tibetan people.

While sharing the letter written to Law on X, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile stated, "Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, in a letter written to MP Chris Law - Scottish National Party's MP and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet, extended his heartfelt gratitude on the formal launch of the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet."

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, in a letter written to MP Chris Law - Scottish National Party's MP and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet, extended his heartfelt gratitude on the formal launch of the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet. [pic.twitter.com/RkkuKqDetj](https://pic.twitter.com/RkkuKqDetj) - Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (@Tibparliament) February 10, 2025

The Tibetan population in exile has demanded more robust measures to preserve and advance the Tibetan language, religion, and culture, according to Central Tibetan Administration statement. The community called on all Tibetans residing in free nations to step up their efforts, stressing that maintaining Tibetan identity is crucial for the sake of Tibetans as well as for protecting a priceless and distinctive global legacy.

Tibet, once an independent nation with a unique cultural, religious, and political identity, was invaded by China in 1949. The 17 Articles of Agreement, signed under duress in 1951, led to China's imposition of its rule, which stripped Tibet of its autonomy. On March 10, 1959, a massive protest against Chinese occupation in Tibet was violently repressed, forcing the Dalai Lama into exile and marking the beginning of Tibet's long journey in exile.

Despite China's ongoing occupation, Tibetans remain deeply committed to their cultural identity, religion, and their fight for freedom. Steps like the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet serve as powerful reminders of their enduring spirit and the continuing struggle for justice.

### **Chinese Liaison Officer Sangay Kyab Participates in Protests Against PRC's 'Mega-embassy' in London**

10 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Chinese Liaison Officer for European countries, Sangay Kyab, who arrived in the UK for outreach efforts with Chinese, Hong Kong, and Uyghur communities, continues his engagements, including participation in a major protest against the Chinese government.

On 7 February 2025, the Chinese Liaison Officer traveled from London to Oxford, where he met with

relevant individuals and students in the area. During the discussions, he addressed their inquiries and engaged in in-depth conversations regarding the profiles of key Tibetan figures in exile.

Following his engagements in Oxford, the Chinese Liaison Officer returned to London on the morning of 8 February. He then participated in a large-scale protest against China's proposed construction of its embassy in the UK. The PRC has purchased the former Royal Mint Court in London for this purpose, raising serious concerns among Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kong activists, Taiwanese activists, mainland Chinese dissidents, human rights organisations and local residents. Organised by 16 groups, the protest drew an estimated 4,000 participants, according to the organising groups.

The protest was held from 2 p.m., to 4 p.m, on 8 February and saw the participation of four UK Members of Parliament—Tom Tugendhat, Blair McDougall, Robert Jenrick and Iain Duncan Smith, who delivered strong statements against the planned embassy. In their remarks, they emphasised that if the Chinese government succeeds in constructing this embassy, it would serve as a major surveillance centre, intensifying cross-border repression and endangering the security of exiled communities, particularly Tibetans living in the UK.

*-Report filled by OoT, London*

### **Joint Statement on the Fifth Anniversary of the 'Xiamen Gathering' Crackdown**

10 February 2024, [ICT](#)

#### **Joint Statement on the Fifth Anniversary of the 'Xiamen Gathering' Crackdown** *Standing in solidarity with Human Rights Defenders in China*

International Tibet Network joins global civil society organisations to call for the release of Xu Zhiyong, a Chinese rights advocate and scholar who has worked tirelessly to change China's legal system and has been outspoken in support of the Tibetan people.

Xu Zhiyong was among dozens of lawyers and activists who attended an informal gathering held in Xiamen, a city on China's southeast coast, in December 2019, where they discussed the situation of civil society and current affairs in China. On 15 February 2020, Xu was detained and sentenced to 14 years in April 2023.

Xu's commitment to the Tibetan cause is evident in his powerful Opinion piece, "Tibet Is Burning," published in the New York Times in 2012. [1] which described his attempts to visit the family of a Tibetan self-immolation protestor named Nangdrol, in order to pay his respects. The piece concluded, "*I am sorry we Han Chinese have been silent as Nangdrol and his fellow Tibetans are dying for freedom. We are victims*

*ourselves, living in estrangement, infighting, hatred and destruction. We share this land. It's our shared home, our shared responsibility, our shared dream — and it will be our shared deliverance."*

Xu Zhiyong was also a founder of the Beijing-based think tank, "Gongmeng" or Open Constitution Initiative, which conducted an independent investigation into the 2008 Uprisings on the Tibetan plateau. The resulting report [2] challenged the Chinese Government's position that the Dalai Lama incited the protests and presented evidence that the protests resulted from failures in Chinese policy.

Read the full joint statement calling for his and others, immediate and unconditional release below.

#### **10 February 2025**

26 December 2024 marked the fifth anniversary of the crackdown on the "Xiamen gathering", a private gathering that about 20 Chinese human rights defenders and lawyers convened in Xiamen, China in December 2019 to discuss the situation of human rights and civil society in China. In the weeks after, Chinese authorities interrogated, harassed, detained and imprisoned every participant who was not able to leave China then and subjected almost all of them, including some families and friends, to travel bans, up to the present day, under the pretext of national security.

Among those detained were legal scholar Xu Zhiyong and human rights lawyer Ding Jiayi. Both are leading human rights defenders who spearheaded the "New Citizens' Movement", empowering citizens as rights-bearers to advocate for a more equal, rights-respecting and free society, and to combat corruption, wealth inequality and discrimination in access to education. In 2014, Xu and Ding were both sentenced to four years and three and a half years in prison, respectively, for participating in the New Citizens' Movement and charged with "gathering a crowd to disturb public order".

From 26 December 2019, and over the weeks that followed, the Chinese authorities forcibly disappeared both under Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location (RSDL), a criminal procedure allowing secret detention for up to six months without access to legal counsel or family. RSDL is considered by UN Special Procedures experts to constitute secret detention and a form of enforced disappearance, and may amount to torture or other ill-treatment. While held under RSDL, both men were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, before being charged with the national security crime of "subversion of State power". They were subsequently convicted in a secret trial and handed severe prison sentences of 14 and 12 years, respectively, in April 2023. Despite multiple calls from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and from UN Special Procedures' experts as

recently as November 2024, China has failed to address these grave violations.

These cases are emblematic of a broader and alarming trend of persecution of human rights defenders and lawyers in China. Authorities systematically employ RSDL, harsh national security charges, torture and other ill-treatment, prolonged detention, travel bans and harassment to silence dissent and dismantle independent civil society. The use of vague charges such as “subversion of State power” or “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” has become a routine tactic to criminalise human rights work, despite UN human rights experts’ repeated call for them to be repealed. Victims often face prolonged pre-trial detention, lack of due process, restricted access to lawyer and adequate healthcare, and torture or other ill-treatment aimed at extracting forced ‘confessions’. This systematic repression is further reflected in the cases of human rights lawyers Xie Yang and Lu Siwei, feminist activist Huang Xueqin, labour activist Wang Jianbing, and citizen journalist Zhang Zhan, all of whom are currently subjected to arbitrary detention or imprisonment. UN Special Procedures’ experts have recently described these cases as part of “recurring patterns of repression, including incommunicado detention and enforced disappearance aimed at [...] silencing human rights defenders and dissenting or opposing views critical of the Government”.

As we commemorate the fifth anniversary of the crackdown, we, organisations and activists from all over the world, continue to stand in solidarity with all human rights defenders and lawyers in China who courageously advocate for justice despite knowing the risks of doing so.

We urge the Chinese government to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders and lawyers arbitrarily detained or imprisoned for their human rights work, including Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi;
2. End the systematic crackdown on civil society, including harassment, unjustified detention, enforced disappearance, and imprisonment of human rights defenders and lawyers;
3. Amend laws and regulations, including national security legislation, the Criminal Law and the Criminal Procedure Law, to bring them fully in line with international human rights standards;
4. Rescind the travel bans imposed on the gathering participants as well as their friends and families immediately

## Thousands turn out to protest China’s UK super embassy

10 February 2025, [Free Tibet](#)

The UK government is due to make the final decision on whether China can relocate to the Royal Mint building in east London

Tibetans, Hongkongers, Uyghurs, Taiwanese and Chinese nationals joined other protesters on Saturday in east London to oppose the proposed “super embassy” in the borough of Tower Hamlets.

Along with local residents and a cross-party group of MPs, they sounded the alarm that the embassy could be a threat to national security and would reward the Chinese government at a time when it is carrying out a range of human rights abuses, threatening Taiwan and has put a bounty on the head of UK-based critics of its rule.

Local residents have also spoken out against the disruption that the embassy, which would be China’s largest in Europe, would cause to their daily lives and to traffic. The address, Royal Mint Court, is opposite the Tower of London and close to Tower Bridge, both popular tourist sites attracting millions of visitors per year. It is also located on a busy road running from east to central London.

Speakers during the event told the crowd of several thousand people that were the 700,000 square-foot embassy to go ahead, it would contravene the wishes of local residents, Tower Hamlets Council and the Metropolitan Police, who have all previously warned against the project.

Blair McDougall, a Labour MP, told the crowd: “We have to have red lines in our relations with Beijing. Currently Jimmy Lai, a British citizen, is in prison for exercising the rights that are guaranteed under the agreement between the UK and China. We should not be doing any favours for Beijing while they are in breach of past deals.” Other MPs present included Iain Duncan Smith and Tom Tugendhat.

MPs Iain Duncan Smith, Tom Tugendhat and Blair McDougall spoke out against the super embassy plan. Representatives from the Hong Kong, Uyghur, Taiwanese and Tibetan communities also addressed the crowd, tying their opposition to the super embassy to the threats to their countries and peoples. Namgyal, Youth Coordinator of Tibetan Community in Britain and President of Students for a Free Tibet London, recalled China’s colonial boarding school programme, its attempts to undermine the succession of the Dalai Lama and the continued absence of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the kidnapped Panchen Lama.



As the protest grew, roads around Royal Mint Court, the site of the proposed embassy, were closed by police. This appeared to bear out concerns raised by two members of the Metropolitan Police at the Strategic Development Committee meeting in December 2024, when the plan was rejected for a second time. At the time, the police noted that anything more than a small protest would most likely spill out into the road.

China purchased the former Royal Mint in 2018, but has twice seen planning permission for an embassy rejected by Tower Hamlets council, first in December 2022, and again in 2024 when it submitted the same application. Both times, the council cited a range of concerns including the lack of capacity for large protests on the site.

Although the Conservative government did not intervene when the proposal was rejected in 2022, the new Labour government called the application in following a call between General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Keir Starmer last year. Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Angela Rayner is due to make a final decision. A week-long inquiry is due to commence on 11 February.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper and Foreign Secretary David Lammy have both expressed their support for the proposal, and after initially opposing the plan, the Metropolitan Police dropped their objections, claiming to have seen new evidence about the area's capacity for protesters. The Metropolitan Police stated it was convinced by a report drawn up for the Chinese government in 2022, saying that up to 4,500 people

could fit safely on the streets surrounding the proposed embassy. It is unclear why the 2022 report convinced the Metropolitan Police to change its stance in January 2025 after it had twice opposed to embassy plan.



Members of the Tibetan community protest the embassy

Tower Hamlets Council also was reported as dropping its objections but on Friday, on the eve of the inquiry, issued a statement appearing to renege on this and restating their opposition to the proposal. In its communication, the council said:

“The Council has been notified by the Metropolitan Police that it has formally removed its objection to the planning application as it feels there is sufficient space for future protests to be accommodated without significantly impacting the adjacent road network. [T]he Council is not able to formally submit additional evidence about the removal of the Metropolitan Police’s objection. However, the Committee’s decision and its substantive reason stands.”

Before dispersing, protesters vowed that there would be further gatherings to ensure that the embassy plan would be rejected by the UK government. A final decision is expected in the coming months.

### **Tibetan-Chinese Alliance Conference Held in Canberra, Urges Australian Government to Pressure PRC in Bilateral and Multilateral Talks**

10 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Tibetan-Chinese Alliance Conference was held at the Ann Harding Conference Centre, Canberra University, from 8-9 February 2025. It was organised by the Tibet Information Office in collaboration with the Australia and New Zealand Alliance of Victims of the Chinese Communist Regime, the Chinese Alliance for Democracy, the Federation for a Democratic China, the Chinese-Tibetan Friendship Associations in Australia and New Zealand, and the Non-governmental Communication Council for the Chinese and Tibetan.



The conference was attended by around 50 participants consisting of human rights defenders and victims of the Chinese Communist government, such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, Falun Gong practitioners, Chinese pro-democracy activists, and individuals from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The purpose of the conference was to foster common ground and mutual understanding by advancing Tibet's Middle Way Approach, promoting transformation toward constitutional democracy in China, discussing the current human rights situation in regions under the control of Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and to share experiences and strategies for advancing common goals.

The participants issued a statement after the conference making following appeals:

- Condemn the ongoing systematic and gross violations of human rights by the CCP and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in regions under its control, particularly in Tibet, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and Hong Kong;
- Extend full support to the Middle Way Approach of the Central Tibetan Administration as a pragmatic solution to the Sino-Tibetan conflict and call upon the PRC to initiate meaningful negotiations to resolve the longstanding issue without pre-conditions;
- Reiterate that the Tibetan people have the exclusive right to manage their religious affairs. Only His Holiness the Dalai Lama has the sole authority to determine the process of recognising His reincarnation. The PRC government and CCP officials have no right to interfere in Tibetan Buddhist religious traditions;
- Express immense gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his lifelong contributions to non-violence, compassion, religious harmony, human values, environmental preservation, and conflict resolution through dialogue. Recognising the milestones in His legacy, we commit to hosting a larger conference later this year in celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday;
- Committed to work together to strengthen our alliance, share our perspectives, and explore effective strategies in accomplishing our shared objectives;
- Call on the Australian government to implement Magnitsky-style sanctions against Chinese officials involved in human rights abuses;
- Urge the Australian government and its officials to press China during bilateral and

multilateral talks to respect human rights, religious freedom, and release all prisoners of conscience.

*-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Canberra*

### **Tibetan-Chinese Alliance conference calls for dialogue, human rights, and reform**

10 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



*Tibetan-Chinese Alliance conference in Canberra, appealed the Australian government to press China during bilateral and multilateral talks (Photo/Kunchok Gyaltzen)*

A two-day conference brought together Chinese dissidents, Tibetan representatives, and human rights advocates at the Ann Harding Conference Centre in Canberra, Australia. Titled "The Tibetan-Chinese Alliance Conference," the event, held on February 8-9, focused on promoting dialogue, human rights, and democratic reform within China and Tibet.

Organised by the Tibet Information Office, Canberra, in collaboration with multiple advocacy groups, including the Australia and New Zealand Alliance of Victims of the CCP, the Chinese Alliance for Democracy, the Federation for a Democratic China, and the Chinese-Tibetan Civil Exchange Promotion Association. The conference sought to foster mutual understanding and discuss shared strategies for advocacy and reform.

Participants included a diverse group of Chinese dissidents, victims of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) government, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Falun Gong practitioners, Chinese pro-democracy activists, scholars, and representatives from Hong Kong. The discussions centred on pressing human rights violations, religious freedom, and political reform within the People's Republic of China (PRC).

In his keynote address, CTA Spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay highlighted the importance of the Middle Way Approach as a practical solution to the Sino-Tibetan conflict. He underscored the need for dialogue and mutual understanding over coercion and propaganda, drawing parallels with global conflicts. "By fostering trust and mutual interests," he stated, "Tibetans can work toward a just and sustainable future for both

Tibet and China.” He described the Middle Way Approach as a universal ‘win-win’ solution, benefiting not only Tibetans but also China and the world.

Following the conference, participants issued a joint statement making several key appeals. They strongly condemned the ongoing systematic human rights violations by the CCP and PRC in Tibet, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia, and Hong Kong. They also extended full support to the Middle Way Approach and called on the PRC to initiate meaningful negotiations without preconditions to resolve the longstanding Sino-Tibetan issue.

Additionally, the statement reaffirmed the Tibetan people’s exclusive right to manage their religious affairs, emphasising that only His Holiness the Dalai Lama has the authority to determine the process of recognising his reincarnation. Participants rejected any interference by the PRC government or CCP officials in Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

The conference also served as a platform to express gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his lifelong contributions to non-violence, compassion, religious harmony, human values, environmental preservation, and conflict resolution through dialogue. In recognition of his legacy, the participants committed to hosting a larger conference later this year in celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s 90th birthday.

### **EXCLUSIVE: In RFA interview, Gyalo Thondup recalled betrayals of fight for Tibet**

10 February 2025, [RFA](#), Lobsang Gelek and Passang Tsering in Kalimpong, India, Boer Deng in Washington, Dorjee Damdul and Passang Dhonden in New Jersey for RFA

### **In his last media interview before his Feb. 8 death, the Dalai Lama’s brother assessed his involvement in the CIA-backed campaign.**

Though his eyes had lost their focus and his ears strained to catch words, when he spoke in his slow, measured English, the Dalai Lama’s elder brother was clear in the sentiments he wished to convey.

Gyalo Thondup, who died Saturday aged 97, evinced no doubt in his sense of the disappointment and betrayal he felt in failure of a U.S. intelligence operation that once promised to support Tibetan fighters in their battle for independence against occupation by Communist Chinese rule.

Speaking to RFA late last year from his hilltop home in Kalimpong, India, he dispensed with any pretense of diplomacy on the matter. “I don’t consider that the United States genuinely helped the Tibetan resistance force to gain independence,” he said. “If the United States and the Indian government had genuinely

helped Tibet, the current situation of Tibet could be quite different,” he added.

Not all who participated in the nearly decade-long guerrilla campaign against China’s Communist forces agree with Thondup’s dark assessment of the foreign powers involved in the movement. Before his death in 1999, the late Lhamo Tsering, Gyalo Thondup’s right-hand man, told a documentary interviewer: “Whether America genuinely helped us or used us, it still supported our goal. I wasn’t sad when the funding stopped.... Whether we won or not, we confronted the Chinese.”

Over the past year, RFA has spoken with leaders and fighters of the Chushi Gangdruk, or “Four Rivers, Six Ranges,” guerrilla movement, including Thondup, who died aged 97 on Feb 8, 2025.

Some of these men, who are now in their 70s, 80s and 90s, also disagreed with Thondup’s sentiments.

But for all, the fight brought together the disparate traditional regions of Tibet to form, for the first time, a shared sense of unity that has ramifications for Tibetans many decades later.

That concept of Tibetanness forged by men from Amdo, Kham and U-Tsang fighting alongside one another is struggling to reach into modern Tibetan politics in exile today. Former fighters and analysts say the history is under threat of being forgotten, lost to the fissures of bickering factions, or never fully told.

### **Thondup, the CIA and Tibetan freedom**

When he recalled the days of the campaign, which began in earnest in 1959 and continued to 1974, Thondup was always somewhat cautious in describing the details of his involvement.

“I didn’t approach the CIA on my part,” he told RFA in November.

“The CIA asked my elder brother [Thubten Jigme Norbu] from Tokyo to come in to help him,” he said. “So the CIA brought my brother Norbu from Tokyo to India, and introduced the CIA to me, and the CIA came to India, and also asked me to introduce them to the Tibetan resistance fighters.”

“They said, they want to help for the independence of Tibet, they want to help us. So I have introduced the Tibetan resistance leader, Gompo Tashi.”

A more complete retelling of his involvement in his 2015 memoir “The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong” recounts painful recollections of the Chinese invasion, the doomed bravery of the Chushi Gangdruk and the political difficulties that beset the resistance.

In his book, Thondup freely admitted that Tibet in the mid-twentieth century was a society ripe for reform, but, at the same time, indisputably its own sovereignty where the authority of the Dalai Lama was deeply respected by all.

As a toddler, Thondup’s brother had been identified as the 14th incarnation of the Dalai Lama. The young leader was only in his teens when the People’s

Liberation Army, or PLA, began its deployments into Kham, a traditional region of Tibet on the southeast of the plateau that covers modern-day Chinese province of Sichuan.

At the time, Thondup was abroad. He moved to India to live in semi-exile in 1952 following stints in Taiwan, the U.S., and China, where he was sent to study as a teenager so that he might one day return to advise the Dalai Lama when he came of age. Instead, Thondup said, internal Tibetan politics kept him away. He was in India when the turmoil and resistance first began.

### **Inside Camp Hale: The Secret CIA Training for Tibetan Fighters**

By 1954, the CIA began floating offers of assistance and Thondup came to serve as a chief interlocutor in the planning.

It took two more years for the offer of aid to turn into a solid plan. Beginning in the mid- 1950s, the CIA actively trained over 200 Tibetans involved with the resistance in various secret locations.

In 1958, the operation shifted to Camp Hale, Colorado, a backcountry wilderness in the southern Rocky Mountains that had previously been used as training grounds for U.S. soldiers. The secret site ran until 1964 and its precise location was only rediscovered in 2024, by an academic, a hiker and the last remaining CIA trainer who worked there. Sonam Wangchuk was just a teenager when he was summoned by the Dalai Lama's family to study in India in 1958. He didn't know it at the time, but it was part of a secret mission.

They traveled by horseback and on foot for hundreds of miles, crossing through mountains and plains before finally reaching Kalimpong.

Once they arrived, Thondup arranged for Wangchuk and others to learn English privately.

Wangchuk had previously had no formal schooling. Before then, "we were farmers, busy working in the fields and grazing domestic animals," he told RFA. "Our lives revolved around farming and taking care of animals."

But the language lessons would soon give his young life a new purpose — one that, Wangchuk said, forged his sense of a united Tibet.

"Our spirit of Tibetanness was incredibly strong," he recalled. "We had fighters from all three traditional regions of Tibet, and there was no sense of factionalism or regionalism as we see today. We were united as one Tibetan community, ready to sacrifice." Wangchuk arrived for training in the U.S. in 1961 and stayed for nine months. "At that time, I was quite young and immature," he said, recalling how he rather enjoyed the training, despite its hardships. At one point, unaware of basic survival skills, he and others became sickened by eating wild mushrooms that ended with a trip to the hospital and a temporary pause in training.

"We were ready to sacrifice our life at any time and anywhere. No doubt," Wangchuk said. "I'm not just joking or exaggerating. Sometimes when I think about those days, [I even wonder] 'how did someone have that type of mentality?' One hundred percent patriotic."

At the same time, such unity was also solidifying back in Tibet. In 1958, the disparate grassroots resistance that had begun simmering in Kham nearly a decade earlier coalesced into the Chushi Gangdruk.

Tsering Dorjee, another veteran who was 23 when he arrived at Camp Hale in 1962, said he was approached by Gompo Tashi, the leader of the resistance fighters, when he was a young man just out of school in India. Like Wangchuk, he was recruited to serve as one of the nine Tibetan interpreters.

Now living in California, Dorjee recalled the secret trip that delivered him to Colorado all those years ago. "We flew to Thailand, then Okinawa, where we received U.S. Army clothing, leaving our own clothes behind," he said. From there, they traveled to Denver, and finally rode to Camp Hale hidden in the back of a truck.

"Even my family didn't know where I was going," Dorjee said. "When I left Darjeeling for Delhi, I was on a public train with many others, but once we boarded the plane in Delhi, everything became highly classified."

Like Wangchuk, he remembered how the trainees became "a united group, representing people from all across Tibet — Kham, Amdo, Utsang. Despite our different backgrounds, we were all determined to learn and serve our cause."

Dorjee worked as an interpreter at Camp Hale for two years. Others were dropped into Nepal or India. Forty-nine fighters from the camp were directly dropped into Tibet over the course of the six years the training program went on. The plan was to have the fighters recruit and train locals on the ground, as well as to distribute guns, radios and other weapons the CIA dropped with them.

That plan had little success. Of the four dozen fighters who landed back in Tibet, only 12 reportedly survived. Two were captured by the Chinese, while others disappeared, with Tibetans believing they may have escaped to India.

### **Legacy and Regret**

Looking from across the decades, there seems to be no small measure of bitterness when Thondup assessed the project. In both his memoir and his interview, he deemed the idea doomed from the start. "There were tens of thousands of Tibetan resistance fighters in different regions in Tibet, but the CIA's weapons and arms were very limited," he told RFA.

By Thondup's estimates, some 40,000 fighters joined the cause, but the total material support only amounted to a few hundred units of equipment.

At times in the past, he has seemed remorseful of his role. In a previously unpublished interview with RFA in 2022, he reflected more broadly about the arc of his life and his legacy. Asked whether he regretted the operation, he took a long pause before replying: “Thousands of Tibetans have lost their lives ...I have often felt like I couldn’t help, which saddens me.”

Western historians, too, seem to largely agree that the aid was never intended to mount a true independence fight but rather to disrupt the Chinese.

John Kenneth Knaus, a former CIA trainer, disclosed that U.S. support for the Tibetan resistance movement “...arose in the context of American policy during the Cold War seeking to contain communism, often times through CIA covert operations.”

“Aiding Tibetans in their fight against communist China fit into this strategy,” he wrote in his book “Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival.”

All that, however, changed when American policy towards China started to take a turn in the early 1960s, eventually leading to the close of the Camp Hale training facility in 1964. Bruce Walker, the lone surviving CIA case officer at Camp Hale, told RFA in June 2024, that when “President Nixon went to China to meet Chairman Mao, one of the stipulations, I understand, was that the Chairman insisted that we terminate our [American] relationship with the Dalai Lama [Tibetan resistance].” Subsequently, the CIA cut off all support to the Tibetan resistance in 1973.

### **Tibetan Identity in Exile**

To be sure, the first blow came when Gompo Tashi, the charismatic Khampa trader who led the Chushi Gangdruk, died from wounds sustained during a battle with the PLA in 1964.

“It was a national tragedy,” said Wangchuk, who was in India when Tashi died. “He was a symbol of unity among the resistance fighters. There’s no doubt about that. All the resistance fighters from different groups respect him and follow[ed] his command. When he was no longer there, everybody turned into many groups with their own leaders. They did whatever they wanted to do.”

That fracturing has reached into the Tibetan community in exile’s politics and identity today, which makes reexamining and truly understanding the history and pan-national nature of the Tibetan resistance movement crucial, Carole McGranahan, an anthropologist who has studied and written extensively on the Tibetan resistance, told RFA.

“In terms of what it means to be united in exile, sometimes it’s hard for regional identities to coexist with a national identity,” McGranahan said.

“To understand that the resistance was something Tibetans from throughout Tibet participated in together – not without difficulties... but worked together – I think knowing that history can allow [the

Tibetan] people to both appreciate it and get a new direction forward together in exile that allows for regional identities, regional histories, regional cultures to thrive alongside a pan-national culture,” McGranahan added.

Thondup, for his part, told RFA: “My hope is that Tibetans work together in unity and harmony and make Tibet’s culture, Tibet’s situation known to the whole world, and without losing heart continue to find ways to overcome difficulties. So everyone, please work hard.”

### **Chinese Liaison Officer for European Countries Engages in Dialogue with Members of UK Headquarters of China Democracy Party in London**

10 February 2025, [CTA](#)

On 5 February 2025, the Chinese Liaison Officer for European countries, Sangay Kyab, from the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, arrived London with the primary objective of strengthening dialogue and cooperation between Tibetans and Chinese communities.

Sangay Kyab held a private meeting with the Secretary of the UK Headquarters of China Democracy Party, discussing a range of critical issues, including the current situation inside Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s noble visions, the policies of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and the challenges faced by Tibetans in exile. Both parties also deliberated on potential collaborative initiatives between Tibetans and Chinese in the future.

Later in the afternoon, a formal meeting was convened at the Office of Tibet in London under the chairmanship of the Representative Tsering Yangkyi. The meeting was attended by Chinese Liaison Officer Sangay Kyab, Chinese Democratic Party advisor Huang Hua, along with He Zhiwei, Dai Chao, Cheng Xiaodan, Cheng Yali, Yong Zhou, Huang Tian, Xiao Zhu, Xiao Wei, Fan Kewei, Cheng Min, and renowned Chinese writer Ma Jian.

The meeting began with an introduction of the Representative, followed by her address. In her speech, Representative Tsering Yangkyi welcomed the Chinese participants and elaborated on His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s noble commitments, CTA’s policies, and the worsening situation inside Tibet. She underscored the shared aspirations between Tibetans and Chinese, highlighting the importance of collaboration in the face of common challenges.

Following this, Chinese Democratic Party advisor Hua Huang introduced their organisation’s objectives. Participants took turns sharing their perspectives and inquiries. Chinese Liaison Officer Sangay Kyab detailed the purpose of his visit, discussed avenues for future cooperation, and addressed Tibet-related questions from the attendees.

In the evening, at the invitation of the UK Headquarters of China Democracy Party, Representative Tsering Yangkyi and Chinese Liaison Officer Sangay Kyab attended a dinner gathering. The President of UK Headquarters of China Democracy Party welcomed the Representative and the Chinese Liaison Officer, extending discussions on the concerns raised during the meeting and further exploring joint initiatives.

-Report filled by Tibet Bureau Geneva

### **Tibetans in exile mourn, hold prayers for Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup**

10 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Tibetans in exile mourned the passing of Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a pivotal figure in modern Tibetan history. He passed away on February 8, at the age of 97 at his residence, Taktser House, in Kalimpong, India.

Following the news of his demise, Tibetan leaders and communities worldwide have expressed condolences and organized prayer services to honor his lifelong contributions. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), based in Dharamshala, held a memorial service, recognizing his dedication to the Tibetan cause.

CTA President Penpa Tsering personally visited Gyalo Thondup's residence alongside Security Minister Gyari Dolma and members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile to pay their respects. Expressing deep sorrow, he praised Thondup's role in shaping Tibetan political affairs. "It is with deep sorrow that we, CTA and the Tibetan people, mourn the passing of Gyalo Thondup la, the elder brother of @DalaiLama. A towering figure in Tibet's history, he lived a meaningful life defined by his unparalleled contributions to the Tibetan cause. His legacy will continue to inspire generations to come. May he attain a swift rebirth and continue his virtuous legacy," President Tsering wrote on social media x (formerly Twitter).

Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, also expressed his grief, stating, "With a heavy heart, we mourn the demise of Gyalo Thondup, esteemed elder brother of @DalaiLama. His lifelong dedication to the Tibetan cause & his remarkable contributions will be remembered with deep gratitude, inspiring our unwavering pursuit of justice & freedom for #Tibet."

Tibetan Buddhist monasteries across India, including Tsuglagkhang (the Dalai Lama's main temple in Dharamshala), Sera Jey Monastery, and Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in South India, held prayer ceremonies in his memory. During a service at Tashi Lhunpo on February 9, presided over by the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader made a heartfelt appeal for

prayers to fulfill his brother's wish for rebirth as a Tibetan to continue serving the Dalai Lama.

"My elder brother Gyalo Thondup has passed away. He had worked conscientiously, was amazingly perseverant, and greatly courageous. Today, this prayer service is so that eventually my elder brother Gyalo Thondup has a good rebirth. It has also been his prayer that he be reborn as a Tibetan so that he can continue his service for Tibet's religion and politics. I, too, am praying. He had the aspiration to be alongside and serve the Dalai Lama for several lifetimes. I would like to request everyone to pray so that such a powerful aspiration can be fulfilled," the Dalai Lama said at the prayer ceremony.

Born in 1928 in Taktser, eastern Tibet, Gyalo Thondup played a crucial role in the Tibetan resistance movement. Educated in Nanjing, China, he later moved to Kalimpong, India, where he became a key figure in securing international support for Tibet. In the 1950s, he facilitated Tibetan resistance efforts that led to CIA-backed covert operations against Chinese occupation. His diplomatic outreach also helped His Holiness the Dalai Lama escape to India in 1959. He played a role in securing three UN resolutions on Tibet and later detailed his experiences in his memoir, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong*.

In 1979, Thondup initiated direct political talks with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, laying the groundwork for future negotiations. He also served as the Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) from 1991 to 1993 and as Kalon (Minister) of the Department of Security in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

### **The Tibet Museum's Travelling Exhibitions in New York Successfully Wrap Up with Over 1,500 Turnout**

08 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As part of the Tibet Museum's ongoing travelling exhibitions in the United States honouring the onset of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's year-long 90th birthday celebration, Additional Secretary Namgyal Tsewang and Museum Director Tenzin Topdhen from the Department of Information and International Relations (CTA) successfully concluded exhibitions in the New York on 6 February 2025.

Prior to the start of the three-week-long exhibition, scheduled from 3 to 24 February, Additional Secretary Namgyal Tsewang and Director Tenzin Topdhen met with Nico Simoni, Executive Director of the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, and Ganden Thurman, Executive Director of the Tibet House, to discuss the ongoing exhibition initiative. On 6 February, the duo also met with representatives of the Rubin Museum, to exchange insights and discuss future collaborations.

On 4 February, a three-day exhibition in New York officially began at the Phuntsok Deshe Hall of the New York and New Jersey Tibetan Community. The travelling exhibition was inaugurated by Ven Chokhor Rinpoche, the Abbot of Sera Jey Buddhist Culture Center in New York, to whom Tibetan Liaison Officer of the Office of Tibet, Washington DC, Kunga Tashi, introduced the details of this travelling exhibition. Additional Secretary Namgyal Tsewang and Director Tenzin Topdhen then briefed Rinpoche on various photographs and nearly a hundred exhibition items, including Tibetan tam-ka (coins) and paper currency. In response, Rinpoche commended the exhibition's rich content and, through a video message, encouraged Tibetan youth in the region to visit the exhibition as there was much to learn.

The exhibition also displayed His Holiness the Dalai Lama's virtuous endeavours related to His four noble commitments, Tibetan monetary history, the Tibetan Plateau's natural environment, and documentaries related to His Holiness and the Tibet cause.

"Over the course of three days, approximately 1,500 visitors attended the exhibition, including former CTA civil servants, Tibetans of all generations, and Mongolian and Chinese guests. It was especially touching to witness the strong interest displayed by young people and students from the Danang and Losel Ketsel Tibetan Weekend Language and Culture classes," expressed the Additional Secretary and Tibet Museum Director. They further added, "Based on the visitors' age groups, we screened documentaries covering the four Fact-finding Delegations to Tibet (1979-85), *In Search of Jewel*, which explores His Holiness's reincarnation, and *Mission Joy*, which were well-received with great interest by many. Overall, the three-day exhibition in New York, along with the engaging discussions held with staff from the art gallery and exhibition departments, successfully fulfilled our intended goals."

On the evening of 6 February, as the exhibition concluded, the executive members of the New York and New Jersey Tibetan Association held a dinner reception for the visiting teams from the Department of Information and International Relations. The Tibetan Liaison Officer, Additional Secretary Namgyal Tsewang, and the Association's President each gave brief closing remarks and exchanged thank you messages.

On the morning of the following day, Additional Secretary Namgyal Tsewang and Museum Director Tenzin Topdhen flew from New Jersey to Minnesota, where they will hold a six-day exhibition starting from 8 February.

*-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Washington DC*

## Tibetan advocacy group launches tribute campaign to honour Dalai Lama's 90th birthday

08 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



*Members of the Voluntary Tibetan Advocacy Group during the announcement at the Tibetan Settlement Office in Dharamshala on February 8, 2025 (Phayul photo)*

The Voluntary Tibetan Advocacy Group India (V-TAG India), an initiative under the exile Tibetan government, officially launched a global tribute campaign on Saturday to celebrate the upcoming 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in July 2025. The campaign, titled "*Global Tribute for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday!*", was inaugurated at the Tibetan Settlement Office in Dharamshala, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

The campaign aims to honour the Dalai Lama's lifelong contributions to global peace, compassion, and wisdom. "This milestone is an opportunity to honour His Holiness' profound impact on the world and to continue spreading his message of kindness and unity," said Tenzin Dhenden, the V-TAG Dharamshala's Co-ordinator, during the launch event.

One of the key elements of the initiative is a worldwide message and letter campaign, encouraging individuals to submit birthday wishes for His Holiness. Participants can deliver their messages to the nearest V-TAG Coordinator, while those in India may drop off or mail their letters to Hope Cafe and Stories on Jogiwara Road, Dharamshala. The campaign will continue until May 15, 2025, and supporters are encouraged to participate on social media using the hashtag #WishesForHisHoliness90thBirthday.

The campaign will culminate in a commemorative book filled with birthday wishes from well-wishers worldwide, which will be presented on the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday on July 6, 2025. "This is an opportunity for everyone to express their gratitude, admiration, and well-wishes for His Holiness. Your creativity and heartfelt words will be a part of this historic tribute," the advocacy group stated.

In addition to V-TAG's efforts, the CTA announced in December 2024 that it would facilitate contributions and donations to mark the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday.

The Central Organising Committee outlined plans for year-long celebrations, officially designating July 2025 to July 2026 as the “*Year of Compassion*.” In a statement released on December 2, the CTA noted that these contributions would support various events and initiatives honouring the Dalai Lama’s extraordinary legacy.

The celebrations will commence with a special long-life prayer ceremony based on the *Amitayus Extracting the Pure Ambrosia* practice, scheduled for July 5, 2025, in Dharamshala, on the eve of his birthday. The official birthday celebration on July 6 will mark the beginning of a series of global commemorative events throughout the year.

In recognition of this milestone, CTA President Penpa Tsering announced on July 6, 2024, that 2025 would be formally observed as the *Year of Compassion*. The year-long commemoration will highlight the Dalai Lama’s four principal commitments, with the CTA organising four major events, each focusing on one commitment. Individual CTA departments will manage activities within their respective jurisdictions, while Offices of Tibet worldwide will coordinate national and institutional programs. To enhance participation, the CTA will launch an online portal providing access to documentaries, exhibition content, and event details, allowing organisers to share their initiatives.

The 90th birthday holds particular significance, as the Dalai Lama has previously indicated that he would convene a meeting with senior Buddhist leaders upon reaching this age to discuss the future of his reincarnation. The issue of his reincarnation remains a matter of great importance for Tibetans and his followers, especially given China’s ongoing attempts to exert influence over the process for political gains.

### **Kalon Dolma Gyari Attends Historic Buddha Special Sangam Maha Kumbh and Bodh Maha Kumbh Yatra in Prayagraj**

07 February 2025, [CTA](#)

Honourable Kalon (Minister) Dolma Gyari, along with Under Secretary Tsering Topgyal from the Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and Chime Tashi from the Department of Security attended the Buddha Special Sangam Maha Kumbh and Bodh Maha Kumbh Yatra in Prayagraj this week.

On the first day of the event, the Security Kalon played a pivotal role in facilitating the Bodh Maha Kumbh Yatra program, a spiritual gathering that saw hundreds of pilgrims and devotees come together to celebrate shared Buddhist values. In the evening, the Kalon held an interaction with participants from the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies and monks from Sikkim.

On the second day, 5 February 2025, Honourable Kalon graced the Buddha Special Sangam Maha Kumbh, a unique event organised by the Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association. The program featured the celebration of Lhakhar, a significant Tibetan cultural practice, accompanied by Sangsol prayers and cultural performances (Tashi Shopa) that highlighted the rich traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

This spiritual gathering underscores the growing cultural exchange between Tibetan Buddhism and Indian religious practices, providing a platform for dialogue and strengthening ties among diverse communities.

Honourable Kalon also inspected the India-Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO) bookstall and interacted with volunteers and visitors.

Afternoon program continued with Shobha Yatra, collaboratively organised by committee of Bodh Maha Kumbh Yatra and Buddha Special Sangam Maha Kumbh. The Buddhist monks led a grand procession chanting “Buddham Sharanam Gacchami, Dhammam Sharanam Gacchami, Sangham Sharanam Gacchami”, aiming to spread the essence of Buddhism among the masses. The procession culminated at the Prabhu Premi camp of Juna Akhara’s Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdhesanand Giri, where the monks were warmly welcomed.

Honourable Kalon Dolma Gyari, called the event historic, noting that it marked a significant step toward fostering closeness between Sanatan Dharma and Buddhism. She expressed her joy at seeing the monks and lamas walking side by side, affirming that Buddhists and Sanatanis have always been united and will continue to move forward together.

The Mahakumbh in Prayagraj is recognised as the world’s largest public gathering, drawing several millions of devotees and pilgrims from across the globe. This sacred event, which occurs once every 144 years, is a significant pilgrimage for people of various faiths. This extraordinary occasion offers a unique opportunity for spiritual renewal and reflection at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Sarasvati rivers at the Triveni Sangam.

*-Report filled by Department of Security, CTA*

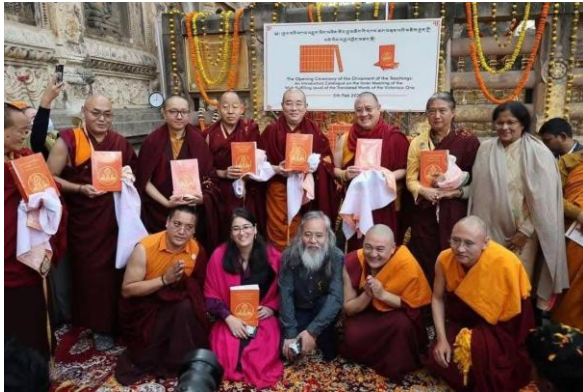
### **11-Volume Kangyur Karchag Launched During the 36th Nyingma Monlam Chenmo in Bodhgaya**

07 February 2025, [CTA](#)

*11-Volume Kangyur Karchag Launched During the 36th Nyingma Monlam Chenmo in Bodhgaya*

During the 36th Nyingma Monlam Chenmo ceremony in Bodh Gaya, a 11-volume Kangyur Karchag cataloging the Buddha’s teachings was launched and presented to the presiding lamas marking the culmination of an

unprecedented seven-year scholarly collaboration on 5 February 2025.



This comprehensive work, known as the *Kangyur Karchag Yidzhin Norbu*, was initiated by Tarthang Rinpoche and consists of a 10-volume encyclopaedia along with a single-volume summary, representing one of the most extensive catalogs of the Kangyur—the collected teachings of the Buddha—ever created. Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, who is currently participating in the Nyingma Monlam Chenmo in Gaya, also took part in the book launch.

For over 55 years, Tarthang Rinpoche has supported the production and distribution of millions of sacred Dharma texts, including over 14,000 sets of historically important versions of the Kangyur. Distributed over the years at the annual Nyingma Monlam Chenmo at Bodhgaya, these sacred texts have been carried away by devoted Buddhist pilgrims.

Tarthang Rinpoche arrived in India in 1958, following his revered master Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro into exile. In 1962, Kyabje Dujdom Rinpoche asked Tarthang Rinpoche to teach at Sanskrit University in Varanasi. Rinpoche quickly established one of Tibet's first printing houses in exile, Dharma Mudranalaya, which later would be re-established in the USA as Dharma Publishing and Yeshe De.

In 2018, some 60 years later, Rinpoche requested the khenpos and students at the Sarnath International Nyingma Institute (SINI), which he had founded in 2007, to start a close reading of the Kangyur, in preparation for a major research and publication project that became known as the *Kangyur Yidzhin Norbu Karchag*.

This grand, non-sectarian project aims to provide a more systematic presentation of the scriptural treasures contained within the Kangyur. By summarising, clarifying, and connecting the streams of knowledge passed down from the Buddha, in the form of a reader-friendly encyclopaedia.

The formation of this encyclopaedia will provide a gateway into the study of the Kangyur. The Kangyur encyclopaedia project has already proven in its research process to be an excellent opportunity for wide-scale collaboration.

Each summary includes a detailed table of contents, and an explanatory key covering various aspects such as the Tibetan, Chinese, Sanskrit, English, and alternate title information. It provides the classification of the sutra according to the vehicles, the designation of teachings as provisional or definitive, and the identification of which turning of the wheel of Dharma a text belongs to. It also defines structural elements such as chapters, *bampos*, and pages and discusses methods for determining if the text belongs to the earlier or later translation period. It outlines the process of searching for commentaries, exploring the purpose of the text, and provides a concise meaning.

The summary further examines the five perfect conditions for teaching (place, teacher, retinue, time, and teaching itself), known in Tibetan as the *pun sum tshog pa nga*, explains key terms and the concept of impetus in text, and includes a section on addressing potential objections and refutations. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough understanding and analysis of the sutras, their context, and their significance within the tradition. Each sutra summary also includes an area on “special notes” with additional information about the sutra available in other versions of the Kangyur, commentaries, or even the editors' notes.

In the ecumenical spirit of this project, several key considerations have been at the center of our hearts: how to help encourage the study of the Buddha's teachings, how to make them more accessible, and how to help prepare Kangyur study materials that will lead to the creation of Buddhist textbooks for schools in the Himalayas, India, and beyond.

In the words of Tarthang Rinpoche, the summaries of the Kangyur reveal “an exceptional array of circumstances and a long line of extraordinary masters dedicated to ensuring the longevity of the light of knowledge these texts radiate.”

*-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Speaker's Office*

**Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen and Wangdue Dorjee to Visit Darjeeling and Nearby Areas**  
07 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As part of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile's program, Parliamentarians Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen and Wangdue Dorjee are scheduled to visit Tibetans living under the jurisdiction of the Settlement Offices in Darjeeling and Sonada, West Bengal. This includes visits to Darjeeling, Sonada, Mirik, Kurseong, Sukhia, Ghoom, Chitrey, and Maney Bhanjyang from 10 to 14 February 2025.

The parliamentarians are set to depart from their respective locations for Delhi on 10 February, and then travel to Siliguri on 11 February. On the same day, they will visit Kurseong. On 12 February, their itinerary



includes visits to Sonada, Ghoom, and Darjeeling. On 13 February, the MPs will visit Sukhia and other areas within Darjeeling. Their final stop on 14 February will be Mirik, Chitrey, and Maney Bhanjyang, before departing for Siliguri later that day.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

### Rights group and critics denounce US withdrawal from UNHRC, warns of repercussions for Tibet

06 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Washington based rights group *International Campaign for Tibet* (ICT) has expressed deep regret over the United States' withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), warning that the move weakens global efforts to hold human rights violators accountable, particularly in Tibet.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday, formalising the U.S. exit from the UNHRC. "I've always felt that the U.N. has tremendous potential," Trump said. "It's not living up to that potential right now. They've got to get their act together." The United States currently contributes 22% of the UN's regular operating budget.

In a statement, ICT highlighted the United States' crucial role in the UNHRC, noting its consistent advocacy against human rights abuses in Tibet. The organization warned that Washington's departure would embolden autocratic regimes, particularly China, which has long sought to suppress discussions on its repressive policies in Tibet.

The Tibetan advocacy group urged UNHRC member states, observer states, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to intensify their commitment to upholding human rights standards. It cautioned that if China succeeds in stifling criticism of its policies in Tibet, it would significantly undermine the broader UN human rights system.

Critics argue that the latest withdrawal signals a disregard for human rights and international cooperation. Amnesty International USA condemned the decision, calling it a "complete and blatant disregard for human rights and international cooperation." Representative Jim McGovern, a longtime Tibet advocate, labeled the move "reckless and shameful," asserting that it undermines US leadership in confronting human rights abuses.

Established in 2006, the UNHRC is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. The United States has had a fluctuating relationship with the Council, previously withdrawing in 2018 under the Trump administration due to concerns over perceived anti-Israel bias and the inclusion of states with poor human rights records. It later rejoined in 2021 under President Joe Biden.

Observers fear that the absence of strong international scrutiny could embolden Beijing, the UN's second-largest financial contributor, to escalate its suppression of Tibetans' fundamental freedoms without accountability.

### Tibetan activists launch campaign in Taipei ahead of Tibetan Uprising Day anniversary

06 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



Members of Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan hold a news conference in front of the Legislative Yuan building in Taipei yesterday (Photo/Wang Yi-sung, Taipei Times)

A series of weekly cycling protests began in Taipei, Taiwan as Tibetan activists and supporters launched the 15th "Cycling for a Free Tibet" campaign on Wednesday, commemorating the upcoming 66th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day against Chinese rule.

The Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan (HRNTT) announced that riders will cycle through Taipei's streets every Wednesday until March 10, which marks Tibetan Uprising Day. After the first ride, similar rides are to be held in Taipei on Wednesday next week, Feb. 19, Feb. 26, and March 5, as well as in Kaohsiung on March 1, the group said.

This year's campaign marked the 15th anniversary of the 'Cycling for a Free Tibet' initiative, which has been held annually since its inception in 2011.

HRNTT Secretary-General Tashi Tsering led yesterday's inaugural ride outside Taiwan's Legislative Yuan. Tsering stated, "Many of my friends say, 'Your slogans have remained the same from the beginning until now.'" He attributed this consistency to the Chinese Communist Party's continued suppression of Tibetans since 1959. The campaign precedes two major commemorative events: a march organised by the Taiwan Tibetan Welfare Association on March 9 in Taipei, followed by a candlelight vigil at Liberty Square on March 10.

Tibetan Youth Congress president Gonpo Dhondup, who travelled from India, noted that over 160 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009 in protest for "freedom and independence." He said that the cycling

event is aimed at sending a message to the Chinese government that “the Tibetan people will continue to fight until our rightful independence is restored.”

The campaigns mark the 1959 uprising in Lhasa, where approximately 10,000 Tibetans protested against Chinese control, and the subsequent crackdown led to the Dalai Lama’s exile to India and forced more than 150,000 Tibetans to flee Tibet into exile.

### **Dalai Lama and Buddhist abbess release final volume of Buddhism series written for Westerners**

06 February 2025, [FAVS News](#), Mia Gallegos

Ven. Thubten Chodron of the [Srivastī Abbey](#) just released the 10th and final volume in her series: The Library of Wisdom and Compassion. This series was a collaborative effort between Chodron and the Dalai Lama, the highest spiritual leader of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

The process of curating this series began back in 1993, when Chodron realized that Tibetan Buddhism among other forms of the religion may not have been articulated in a way that those from Western countries like the U.S. would be able to fully understand.

“The teachings often started presupposing that people understood who the Buddha Dharma Sangha were or what karma is. But Westerners don’t,” Chodron said.

#### **Buddhist Nun explains how book came about**

Chodron explained how she decided to send a request to the Dalai Lama to ask if he would consider writing a short text that would explain various Tibetan Buddhist points from the past catered toward questions that Westerners attempting to begin their own practice may have.

The Dalai Lama said yes, however, that a short text likely wouldn’t suffice. An expanded version of this originally proposed “short text” was what he suggested. Chodron got to work on the text, asking the Dalai Lama questions periodically throughout the years it took her to compile the information and teachings he sent her.

“At one point, he said he wanted us to be co-authors. I said ‘no, no, no, I’m just the editor.’ And he said ‘no, it’s good if a fully-ordained nun is the co-author,’” Chodron said.



Ven. Thubten Chodron of Srivastī Abbey speaks with fellow monastics / Photo courtesy of Srivastī Abbey

There are various kinds of Buddhism touched on throughout the various volumes of “The Library of Wisdom and Compassion, including Theravada and Chinese Buddhism.” All of these are pulled together and discussed in terms of questions that those coming from other, more Western-affiliated religions, would be able to grasp.

Ven. Sangye Khadro, a long-time friend of Chodron, explained how prolific of a writer she is and how her works with the Dalai Lama prove that. Khadro also explained how his perspective offered within the “Library of Wisdom and Compassion” may have come in part from the ways in which the Dalai Lama inserts himself among people and sees the contemporaneous issues that may be present in their lives.

“He often meets with scientists and everyday people and listens and learns from them so he can bring things to the way he’s teaching these traditional teachings and explain it in ways that people can make more sense of,” Khadro said.

#### **The Buddhist journey**

Khadro and Chodron expressed similar feelings they both experienced in the process of becoming venerables. These were ones of struggle when it came to grasping the traditional Tibetan Buddhist texts that were necessary within their formation.

“Some of the teachings felt like ‘how do we relate to this’. We had to do a lot of mental work,” Khadro said. Chodron shared a similar sentiment, which is what led to the Buddhist series being written in the way that they were.

“We wanted to address the questions that Westerners have that Tibetans don’t have,” Chodron said. “Some things are not explained in the Tibetan Scriptures in so much detail because they’re written for people of their own culture. There’s certain points that we need to unpack further and that need to be explained from the beginning.”

Khadro said that a lot of the mystification that these texts can cause have been alleviated with the way that Chodron and the Dalai Lama have worked to make them more approachable and understandable to a wide variety of people who have an interest in learning more about the religion.

Khadro said that she feels that the first book within the Library of Wisdom and Compassion can serve as an introduction to anyone interested in learning about some of the concepts of Buddhism. However, as you move through each volume, the content will get deeper and written in a way that those studying the religion may grasp easier than someone with less knowledge on it.

Guy Newland, a scholar of Tibetan Buddhism and professor of religion at Central Michigan University, agreed with this point made by Khadro. He discussed how the 10th volume is the Dalai Lama and Chodron’s

depiction of the ways in which the various branches of Tibetan Buddhism are intertwined and related.

"It's not the place to start, because it assumes the kind of stuff that they explain in the previous nine volumes," Newland said. "It's super clearly written, brilliant and comprehensive and has this quality of speaking right to the heart of those interested in taking it up."

Chodron discussed the meetings she and the Dalai Lama would have once every few years where she would be able to sit down with him and several Buddhist monks and ask questions that would aid her within the writing process. She explained the comfort she felt in being able to ask any kind of question without judgment.

"When I put forth some of these questions that Westerners ask, some Tibetan lamas, I'm sure, would laugh like 'who would ask that kind of question?'" Chodron said. "But his holiness really listens, and then he addresses where that person is stuck. He always does it with compassion and humility."

Newland explained the emphasis on kindness that he has observed the Dalai Lama exhibiting for all the years he's studied his teachings.

"The Dalai Lama repeatedly says 'I'm a staunch Buddhist, my real religion is kindness.' This is really important," Newland said.

This kindness and compassion coupled with wisdom on Tibetan Buddhist theology are what brought the 10 volume series to life after years of dedication and collaboration between these renowned individuals within the Tibetan Buddhist community.

### **Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Calls Upon Himachal Pradesh's Governor, Speaker, Minister**

06 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As per the program of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, a delegation consisting of MP Dhondup Tashi and MP Tsering Yangchen successfully concluded their periodical visit to Tibetans in Shimla from 2 to 4 February 2025. During their visit, the MPs met with several key officials, including the Honorable Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla; the Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha, Shri Kuldeep Singh Pathania and the Revenue Minister, Shri Jagat Singh Negi, among others.

Upon their arrival at Shimla Airport on 2 February, the MPs were warmly received by Shimla's Chief Representative Officer, Tsewang Phuntsok, and local Tibetan Assembly member, Pema Dorjee. They were further welcomed at their hotel by representatives from the Jonang Takten Phuntsokling monastery, the president of the Regional Tibetan Women's Association, the Doctor of Shimla Men-Tsee-Khang and other local Tibetan leaders.

In the afternoon, the MPs paid their respects at Jonang Takten Phuntsokling Monastery and Dorje Drak Monastery. They also visited the Jonang Takten Old Age Home, the residents of Yangchen Gatseling and the Chief Representative Office of Shimla.

On 3 February, the MPs met with Shri Kuldeep Singh Pathania, the Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha and presented him with a Tibetan parliament souvenir and publications. During the meeting, the MPs expressed their heartfelt gratitude to India and its people, particularly to Himachal Pradesh and its citizens, for their unwavering support and assistance to the Tibetan community and cause. They also briefed the Speaker on the ongoing human rights violations, religious restrictions, and the destruction of basic freedoms in Tibet. Additionally, they highlighted the policies aimed at the Sinicization of Tibet and Tibetans, which have led to the erosion of Tibetan religion, culture, environment, and nationality.

Speaker Pathania assured the Tibetan MPs of the state government's continued support to the Tibetan community, emphasising that Tibetans in the state are an integral part of Himachal Pradesh. He expressed his concern over the critical situation in Tibet and its potential impact on India. The Speaker also conveyed his desire to visit Dharamshala in the future. Following the meeting, the Tibetan MPs were given a tour of the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha hall.

In the evening, the Tibetan MPs paid a courtesy call on Himachal Pradesh's Hon'ble Governor, Shri Shiv Pratap Singh Shukla. During their meeting, the MPs expressed their gratitude to the Governor for hosting His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamshala and 14 Tibetan settlements across the state for many decades. They thanked the government and the people of Himachal Pradesh for their continued support and assistance to the Tibetan community. The MPs also raised concerns about some of the challenges faced by Tibetans in the state, particularly regarding documentation issues in Shimla. The Governor assured them of his best efforts in addressing the issue and reiterated his unwavering support for the Tibetan cause.

This was followed by a courtesy call on Shri Jagat Singh Negi, the Revenue Minister of Himachal Pradesh, where the importance of properly implementing two key policies was discussed: the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014, established by the Government of India and the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy, Himachal Pradesh 2015, introduced by the Himachal Pradesh State Government. The Minister listened attentively to the concerns and assured that assistance would be provided to Tibetan refugees.

On 4 February, the Members of Parliament (MPs) held a public gathering at the hall of Sambhota Tibetan School (STS) in Shimla. The event was attended by the Principal, teachers and staff of STS, heads of the Local

Tibetan Assembly and Tibetan NGOs, local Tibetan leaders from Yangchen Gatseling Tibetan Settlement and the general public. During their addresses, MP Tsering Yangchen discussed the global status of the Tibetan issue and the role of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, while MP Dhondup Tashi spoke about the current situation in Tibet and the policy of the Central Tibetan Administration. The public talk was followed by a Q&A session.

After the public meeting, the MPs conducted an inspection of Sambhota Tibetan School (STS) and successfully concluded their periodic visit to Shimla. Their program will continue in Solan and Dolanji in the following days.

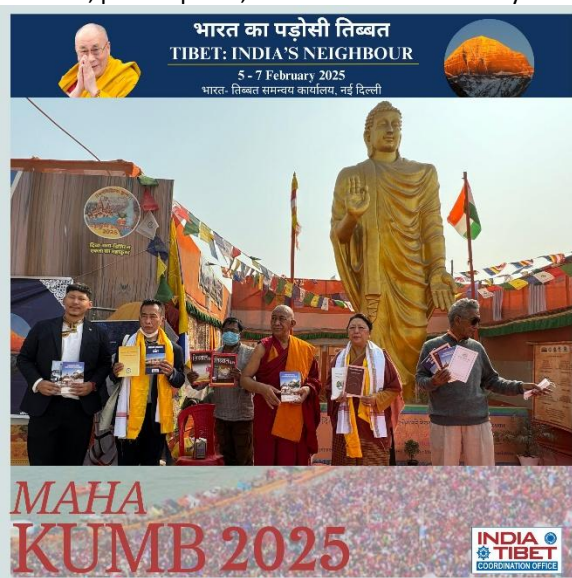
*-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat*

### ITCO Organises Civil Society Outreach Program at Maha Kumbh, Promoting Tibet Awareness

06 February 2025, [CTA](#)

*ITCO Organises Civil Society Outreach Program at Maha Kumbh, Promoting Tibet Awareness*

The India-Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO) successfully launched its Civil Society Outreach Program during the Maha Kumbh with the theme “Tibet: India’s Neighbour.” The program attracted a diverse audience, including students from Hanuman Prasad Satyanarayan Podder Inter School, UPSC aspirants, scholars, philosophers, and the local community.



A key highlight of the outreach was the free distribution of books and informative materials on Tibet to thousands of visitors. The materials, available in both Hindi and English, aimed at raising awareness about the historical, cultural, and linguistic relationship between India and Tibet, as well as the geopolitical significance of Tibet to India.

Prominent publications distributed included *Indian Leaders on Tibet* (Hindi and English), *Bharat-Tibbat*

*Sambandh* (Hindi), *Bharat aur Tibet – Thank You India* (Hindi), *A Pictorial Book on His Holiness the Dalai Lama* (English), *Tibet Was Never a Part of China* (Hindi), *M.L. Sondhi’s Book on Tibet as the fulcrum of an Asian Peace Order* (English), *Handbook on Tibet* (English and Hindi), *Tibet: The Facts* (Leaflet, Hindi), *Tibbat Mukti Sadhana* (Hindi), *Bharat-Chin Sambadh* (Hindi), *Harnessing the Dragon’s Fume* (English), and *The Legal Status of Tibet* (English).

The outreach program, facilitated by the Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association, served as a platform to engage with thousands of pilgrims and participants at the Maha Kumbh. On the same day, Kalon (Minister) Dolma Gyari, Department of Security, Central Tibetan Administration, attended the *Lhakar* Ceremony organised by the Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association. During her visit, she also inspected the ITCO bookstall and interacted with volunteers and visitors.

The ITCO Civil Society Outreach Program continues its mission to connect with residential youth, scholars, and the general public from various parts of India, promoting Tibet’s history and the close relationship between India and Tibet.

*-Report filed by India-Tibet Coordination Office*

### New Tibet group launched in 58th UK parliament

05 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

A new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet (APPG Tibet) was launched in the 58<sup>th</sup> Parliament of the United Kingdom on Feb 4, following the general election held on Jul 4, 2024 last year, won by the Labour Party. Chris Law, Scottish National Party (SNP) MP, was elected as its Chair at the group’s inaugural meeting, which was held in the parliament’s Portcullis House, said the Office of Tibet, London, in a statement posted on the *Tibet.net* website of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Feb 5.

The purpose of the group is “to put pressure on His Majesty’s Government to encourage negotiations between the Chinese Government and representatives of the Tibetan Government in exile, whilst recognising that Tibet is an occupied country which had independent ties with Britain.”

The new group currently has members that includes a Crossbench Peer (House of Lords member) and others belonging to the ruling Labour Party, Conservative Party, and Scottish National Party, representing cross-party support for Tibet.

Those who attended the inaugural meeting have been named, apart from Chris Law, MP for Dundee Central, as Lord (David) Alton of Liverpool, Crossbench Peer; Luke Akehurst, Labour MP for North Durham; Blair McDougall, Labour MP for East Renfrewshire; Jessica Morden, Labour MP for Newport East; Seamus Logan,

SNP MP for Aberdeenshire North and Moray East; and Danny Kruger, Conservative MP for East Wiltshire. They expressed solidarity with Tibet and approved the election of the group's Chair and other Officers as mandated by the new rules governing the establishment of APPGs.

Following Law's inaugural statement, CTA's recently appointed Representative at the Office of Tibet, Ms Tsering Yangkey, expressed hope and optimism that through the work of the APPGT, the issue of Tibet will gain higher political visibility.

She was followed by John Jones, Head of Campaigns, Policy and Research at the London-based campaign group Free Tibet, whose office also serves as the Secretariat for the APPG Tibet, provided a brief overview of the current situation in Tibet with special focus on a host of issues concerned with the ever-worsening environmental situation there.

Tibet Action Institute's Dechen Pemba, who also spoke, has drawn attention to China's mandatory colonial boarding school system in Tibet, where almost 80% of school-age children – amounting to nearly a million Tibetan children, some as young as four – are assimilated into the majority Han culture.

Law has drawn the MPs' attention to the Early Day Motion titled "Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to the UK and Northern Europe" (EDM No. 719) that he had tabled and encouraged them to sign it.

Others who attended the inaugural function were stated to include a representative of the International Tibet Network, the Chairperson and council members of the Tibetan Community in Britain, Jane Rasch of Tashi Lhunpo Trust UK, and Tibet supporter Giles Ford. Law has announced that the next meeting of the APPGT will be held in early May 2025.

### **INTERVIEW/ Penpa Tsering: All options open for selection of successor of 14th Dalai Lama**

05 February 2025, [The Asahi Shimbun](#)

Speculation is focusing on who will succeed the 14th Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, who turns 90 in July.

The head of Tibetan Buddhism, who is in exile in the northern Indian city of Dharamshala, has said he will disclose his intention about his successor around the time he reaches that milestone age.

In a recent interview with The Asahi Shimbun, Penpa Tsering, the political leader of the Tibetan government in exile, said all options remain on the table about the succession.

In a break from the past, a woman may succeed the incumbent Dalai Lama, or the successor may be designated even before his death, Tsering said.

The following are edited excerpts from the interview conducted in New Delhi on Jan. 21.

**Question:** In Tibet, 126 people were killed and many injured in a powerful earthquake in January.

**Tsering:** The actual situation is unclear because information about Tibet is limited. There have been no reports about damage from aftershocks.

Reconstruction of collapsed housing will be a challenge.

China has called Tibet a socialist paradise. But we know that 157 Tibetans self-immolated between 2009 and 2022, most of them between the ages of 17 and 34.

I have told the international community that people don't burn themselves to death in a real paradise.

Chinese authorities have been strengthening controls over Tibet, making it extremely difficult to pass on Tibetan culture and language.

Tibet is being deprived of freedom and their identity as Tibetans is being destroyed.

Many people have moved to the United States and European countries. We are visiting countries to maintain contact with those people.

**Q:** Are you continuing dialogue with the Chinese authorities?

**A:** Even after dialogue was halted in 2010, we have had informal channels of contact. But there has been nothing particularly worth mentioning.

We have kept the back channels open from a long-term perspective. If a more sensible leadership appears in China, we have to take that opportunity.

**Q:** What is the policy about selecting the Dalai Lama's successor?

**A:** His Holiness (the 14th Dalai Lama) recently said he had a dream in which he will live to be 110 years old and beyond. We all believe that this Dalai Lama will live long.

We intend to celebrate his 90th birthday with exhibitions, film screenings and other programs around the world.

All the options are open about the selection of his successor. There is a possibility of issuing a statement on his birthday, but His Holiness said it is too early at the moment.

When he was asked whether it could be a female Dalai Lama, he said, "Why not?" There is also a possibility that somebody will be appointed before his demise.

We are also reaching out to governments of countries as well as Buddhist organizations to confirm what they think about the issue.

**Q:** How do you plan to deal with the United States under the second Trump administration?

**A:** It took time for the first Trump administration to appoint the special coordinator for Tibet. The budget related to Tibetan issues was also reduced.

It is difficult to predict what will happen in the second administration, but we have to keep working with the

White House, the Congress and the State Department to receive continued support.

We need to discuss a broad range of issues such as politics, security and human rights.

**Q:** How do you see relationships with India, where the Tibetan government in exile is located, and Japan?

**A:** We would not exist without the benevolence of the Indian government and the Indian people. India, which shares deep historical relationships, has been a great patron of the Tibetans.

But countries including India and the United States will not set aside their national interests for the sake of Tibet.

We have to understand these realities and our expectations have to be realistic.

In Tokyo, an international conference to discuss measures to support Tibetans will be held around early June, and I am visiting with other officials.

His Holiness has visited Japan many times and helped build good relations with many individuals and organizations. We expect that the relationship will become more institutionalized.

### **UNPO Stands in Solidarity with Tibetans and Uyghurs, Welcomes UN Investigation into China's Human Rights Violations**

04 February 2025, [UNPO](#)

#### **The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation expresses their solidarity with the people of Tibet and the Uyghur peoples, welcoming an investigation by nine United Nations Special Procedures on human rights violations committed by the People's Republic of China.**

On 14 November 2024, made public on 14 January 2025, six United Nations Special Rapporteurs and the members of three United Nations Working Groups submitted a report to the People's Republic of China following reports of recurring repression, including incommunicado detention and enforced disappearance. The letter raised the concern that this repression was "aimed at restricting artistic, cultural and religious expressions, and silencing human rights defenders and dissenting or opposing views critical of the Government". Since 2020, UN Special Procedures have sent nine communications raising concern over these human rights violations in the PRC.

The letter to the People's Republic of China includes information on the curtailment of the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the crackdown on freedom of religion or belief and ethnic minorities, and the increase in transnational repression, which includes the targeting of Uyghur refugees.

The UNPO welcomes the letters' particular attention paid to multiple Uyghur individuals, such as scholar

Mr. Ilham Tohti and Dr. Gulshan Abbas, and to nine Tibetans who have been disappeared by the PRC. The Tibetans named in the letter were arrested in August 2022 for the religious practice of burning incense and reciting prayer. The names provided in the letter are Mr. Chugdar, Mr. Gelo, Mr. Tsedo, Mr. Bhamo and Mr. Kori. Mr. Chugdar passed away while in custody, where he was allegedly subjected to severe beatings, torture, and ill-treatment. The UNPO offers their heartfelt condolences to his family, and the families of all the victims disappeared by the PRC. Many families are unable to access information about their loved ones once disappeared. However, they receive reports of the concerning health and well-being of those in detention, with some Uyghur detainees being forced to work for up to 11 hours per day in Turpan Daheyang prison, and others.

The UN's independent experts argue that these cases contribute towards a pattern of repression that silences those who are "simply exercising their fundamental freedoms". Additionally, they express alarm at the enforced disappearances of citizens and the subsequent traumatic impact on victims and their families. The letter recalls previous UN mechanisms which have submitted reports on the PRC's practice of enforced disappearance, as well as rulings of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which issued in 2014, 2021 and 2022 (twice) that China had violated the Universal Declaration on Human Rights through arbitrary detention.

This submission by the UN's independent experts highlights that the global community must remain aware, vigilant and proactive in the face of extensive evidence of severe human rights abuses committed by the People's Republic of China. The PRC works to erode the culture of Tibetans, the Uyghurs and Southern Mongolians, the latter receiving a disproportionate lack of international recognition. States bound to democracy, rule of law and human rights must continue to prioritize these values in their international dealings.

### **China attacks International Film Festival Rotterdam over Tibetan film *Four Rivers, Six Ranges***

05 February 2025, [The Tibet Post](#), Tenzin Lhadon

Chinese government published propaganda articles and videos about Tibet after the Tibetan film "*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*" premiered at the 54th International Film Festival in Rotterdam on February 1, 2025. Chinese social media accounts also attacked the Festival and the social media account of the director of the Tibetan film. The film is about Tibetan freedom fighters fought against Chinese armies in the 1950s, to protect Tibet from Chinese invasion.

"*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*", a film about Tibetan resistance against China, premiered at the 54th International Film Festival in Rotterdam on February 1 and 4, 2025, the tickets were sold out within few days. The director Shenpenn Skymisar of the Tibetan film "*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*" (Chushi Gangdruk) wrote on February 4, 2025, that Chinese people paid by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) created fake social media accounts and attacked the Rotterdam International Film Festival and his social media. In addition, the Chinese government uploaded a propaganda video, a day after the world premiere of "*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*" in Rotterdam on February 1, 2025.

Shenpenn Khymisar wrote on his social media that 'the movie "*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*" is dedicated to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on his 90th birthday and Tibet has never been and will never be part of China'. The Chinese authorities then published a propaganda article about Tibet on the Chinese state media website, after the "*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*" showed in the Rotterdam. The Chinese government responded that "His claim is utterly groundless and distorts historical reality", as the Chinese authorities usually do with those who say something about Tibet.

Director Shenpenn Khymisar wrote, "How pathetic can the CCP be?, It renaming my ancestral and sacred land of Tibet to "Xizang", such cowards and bullies. As one of my dialogues in the film says "As long as there is a single Tibetan alive, this fight will go on".

According to Director Shenpenn Khymisar, this film is about how Chushi Gangdruk was founded and how the Tibetan armies fought against the Chinese armies when they invaded Tibet. How the Tibetan armies of Chushi Gangdruk protected and helped His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama escape into exile in India.

The "*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*" based on the Book "*Flight at the cuckoo's behest: The Life and Times of a Tibetan Freedom Fighter*" by Kunga Samten Dewatshang. The Film was shot in the Himalayan Mountains of Mustang, Nepal. Produced by Dorjee Wangdi Dewatshang and written, produced, music and directed by Shenpenn Khymisar. Main actors Tenzin Dhondup and Thupten Chukhatsang and other actors including Tenzin Rigzin, Tashi Kalden, TEn B. Jigmey, Palden Dikhang, Madon Nyima, Pema Tsamchoe, Tenzein Choden, Namjaytsang Abukarma, Sherap Gyaltzen and Tadming Arts etc.

Chushi Gangdruk (*Four Rivers, Six Ranges*) was officially founded on June 16, 1958 on the initiative of Andrug Gompo Tashi and Tibetans who were determined to fight against the Chinese armies when they invaded Tibet. The Chushi Gangdruk fought the People's Liberation Army from 1956 to 1974, until the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) stopped its support for the guerrilla group.

## Tibetan film 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges' premieres at the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam

05 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The Tibetan film 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges' premiered at the 54th Rotterdam International Film Festival (IFFR) on Saturday in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Produced by Dorjee Wangdi Dewatshang, the film is based on his book 'Flight at the Cuckoo's behest' about his father. The film written, directed and also produced by Tibetan filmmaker Shenpenn Khymisar, delves into the history of the 'Chushi Gangdruk', which translates to 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges' recounting the story of a Tibetan resistance movement that was established on June 10, 1958. The armed resistance was founded by Commander Andruk Gonpo Tashi to oppose the invading Chinese forces employing guerrilla war tactics, supported by the CIA, an intelligence wing of the US.

The Rotterdam International Film Festival, underway from January 30 to February 9, features approximately 500 films from around the world. *Four Rivers, Six Ranges* is scheduled for a second screening on Tuesday, continuing its festival run.

The film's subject matter quickly sparked criticism from China's state-controlled media, with China Global Television Network (CGTN) condemning the film for allegedly "rewriting Tibetan history."

In a report posted on Sunday, the Chinese state media stated, "His claim is utterly groundless and distorts historical reality. Khymisar's attempt to use his film as a platform for separatism is nothing more than an unfounded and ill-conceived narrative. Xizang's place within China is a fact supported by history, law, and international consensus. It is time for such baseless claims to be called out for what they are—a fictitious rewrite of Xizang's history."

CGTN is an international branch of China Central Television (CCTV) and part of the state-run China Media Group, operating under the direct control of the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The outlet is known for its aggressive stance against narratives that challenge Beijing's official position on Tibet.



A poster of the Chinese propaganda film, *Serfs* (Photo/IFFR)

Four Rivers, Six Ranges is not the only Tibetan-related film showcased at the festival. The 1965 Chinese propaganda film “[Serfs](#)” is also being screened. The film, which aligns with the CCP’s official narrative, portrays the Chinese military’s intervention in Tibet as an act of liberation for Tibetan serfs. The screening of Serfs coincides with Beijing’s long-standing efforts to justify its rule over Tibet, including the designation of March 28 as “Serf Liberation Day” since 2009.

### **Tibetans in Exile face uncertainty as USAID faces closure**

04 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The Tibetan exile community faces growing uncertainty following the recent announcement that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is planned to be shut down on Monday, by tech billionaire and Chief of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Elon Musk.

This decision follows President Donald Trump’s executive order to ban all foreign aid globally, leading to the immediate layoff of nearly 400 USAID contract workers and the suspension of all foreign assistance programs for 90 days. “With regards to the USAID stuff, I went over it with (the president) in detail, and he agreed that we should shut it down,” Musk stated on Monday. He added that he had confirmed this decision with Trump multiple times.

The decision to halt USAID operations has raised serious concerns within the Tibetan exile community, as U.S. foreign assistance has been a major source of finance in sustaining various Tibetan programs through the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and other NGOs. Last year the United States granted \$23 million to support Tibetan programs.

Two months ago, on November 25, 2024, the USAID in collaboration with The Tibet Fund and CTA, announced a new program to support Tibetan communities in India and Nepal. This five-year initiative, titled “Strengthening Economic, Social, and Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia”, was designed to enhance self-reliance and cultural preservation.

With USAID’s closure imminent, this program, along with other longstanding initiatives aimed at supporting Tibetan refugees, is now in jeopardy. Many Tibetans, especially those dependent on U.S. assistance for education, healthcare, and cultural preservation, are left in limbo.

Penpa Tsering, the President of the Central Tibetan Administration, while speaking at STS Darjeeling during his Northeast visit last week, acknowledged the dire situation. “The U.S. has frozen all foreign aid for 90 days, which includes aid for Tibetans. They are

reviewing the funding. We cannot always expect support from other countries, including India, as policies can change,” he stated. He assured that the CTA is engaging with U.S. officials to address the issue. The decision to dismantle USAID has sparked widespread controversy in Washington, D.C., where critics argue that it represents a constitutional crisis. U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, condemned the move, stating, “This reflects an attempt by Musk and the billionaire elite to take control of U.S. foreign policy for self-interest.” Murphy’s remarks came during a press conference outside the shuttered USAID headquarters, where Trump administration officials have locked out workers for the second consecutive day.

Furthermore, USAID’s website reportedly went offline on Saturday, and two senior security officials at the agency were reportedly dismissed for attempting to block DOGE’s access to classified materials. With USAID now under the control of the State Department, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been appointed as its acting administrator.

For decades, USAID has served as a critical component of U.S. foreign policy, providing assistance to vulnerable communities and countering geopolitical adversaries like China. The agency’s support for Tibetans in exile has been a major part of American efforts to bolster Tibetan identity and self-determination against Beijing’s influence.

### **Parliamentarians Karma Gelek and Lobsang Thupten Pongsang Conclude Visit to Chennai**

03 February 2025, [CTA](#)

As part of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile’s program, a parliamentary delegation consisting of MPs Karma Gelek and Lobsang Thupten Pongsang successfully completed their official visit to Chennai from 30 January to 1 February 2025.

During their visit, the MPs engaged with the local Tibetan community as well as key dignitaries, including the Director-General and General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chennai, an Advocate at the Madras High Court, the State Vice President of the BJP in Tamil Nadu and the State President and Vice President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Party, among others.

During their official visit, the two Parliament Members arrived at Chennai airport at 3:30 p.m., on 30 January. They were welcomed by Tenzin Tsepel, the staff of the Chief Representative Office, South Zone.

When the MPs arrived at the Men-Tsee-Khang (Tibetan Medical & Astro Institute) in Chennai, they were welcomed by Dr. Tenzin Tseten, along with staff and students. The two Parliament Members shared



the purpose of their visit, exchanged views, and answered various questions.

On 31 January 2025, they arrived at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chennai and met with Director General Richard C.L. Chen and Director Dennis M.S Tsai. At the beginning of the meeting, they presented ceremonial scarves (khatas) and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's autobiography 'My Land and My People' as a token of appreciation.

The two Parliament Members then discussed the current critical situation inside Tibet, relations between Taiwan and the Central Tibetan Administration, as well as the development and structure of Tibetan democracy in exile. The Director-General expressed concern about the Chinese Communist government's policies aimed at eliminating Tibetan identity, language, and culture inside Tibet.

They met with K. Arvind, an Advocate at the Madras High Court. He is someone who regularly shows interest in the Tibet issue, and had previously helped arrange meetings with local officials during Parliament Members' visits. He stated that Tibet and India are two nations with a long historical connection. Now that Tibet is facing difficulties under Chinese occupation, he emphasised that the Indian government should help Tibetan refugees in all aspects including economy and education. He assured that he would do whatever he could to help.

On 1 February 2025, they met with Shri Chakravarthy, state vice president of BJP in Tamil Nadu, at the BJP state headquarters. They presented him with a ceremonial scarf (khata) and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's autobiography 'My Land and My People' as a token of appreciation. The party expressed their support for the Tibet cause and asked what help was needed for Tibetans in the state.

The two Members explained that while Tibetans are generally very grateful to the Indian government and people for their support, the Chinese government continues to implement harsh policies inside Tibet. Specifically regarding state matters, they requested help in resolving the market space issues faced by Tibetan traders in Ooty. They also mentioned that while the Men-Tsee-Khang (Tibetan Medical Institute) in Chennai is beneficial to local patients, they are facing difficulties due to the landlord significantly increasing the rent, and requested state government assistance with this matter.

In response, he said he would discuss the Men-Tsee-Khang issue with the state government. Regarding Ooty, he said he would directly instruct the Chief Engineer to address and resolve the difficulties.

They then visited the Tamil Nadu Congress office and met with Shri K. Selvaperunthagai, State President of Tamil Nadu Congress party, and Shri Swarnah Sethuraman, State Vice President of Tamil Nadu

Congress party. They presented them with ceremonial scarves and gifts.

The two Members expressed gratitude for the overall support from the Indian government and people towards Tibetans, particularly mentioning the late Prime Minister Nehru's assistance when Tibetan refugees first arrived in India. They requested help regarding the market space issues faced by Tibetan vendors in Ooty and the Men-Tsee-Khang building situation. In response, they were asked to submit these concerns in writing and were informed that there would be a meeting with the State Health Minister next Monday where these issues would be discussed. They also promised to personally visit the Men-Tsee-Khang. The Men-Tsee-Khang has been informed accordingly about this.

The Party President appeared to be well-informed about the Tibet issue and expressed his continued support for the Tibetan cause. The meeting lasted about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

*-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat*

### **Northern Europe's Tibetan Communities Gather in Copenhagen for Strategic Meeting**

03 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Office of Tibet, London, convened a gathering of the Chairpersons of the Tibetan Communities under their work jurisdiction in Copenhagen as part of the Second Meeting of the Local-based Civil Society Organisations on 1 February 2025. The meeting was held to discuss and compare work done by the different communities to help strengthen the cohesiveness of the Tibetan society, plan purposeful activities for the upcoming Year of Compassion, better advocate for Tibet in the corridors of power and ascertain ways for increasing the Tibetan voluntary contribution collections in their respective countries.

The day-long meeting was held inside the Gefion Gymnasium, Øster Voldgade 10, 1350 København K, a venue organised by local co-hosts, the Tibetan Community in Denmark.

The Chairpersons of the Tibetan Communities in Britain (TCB), Sweden (TCS), Norway (TCN) and local co-hosts Denmark, along with the UK Coordinator for Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group, attended the meeting. 24 Tibetans living locally in Copenhagen, including many young Tibetans, participated in the meeting.

In her opening remarks at the start of the meeting, Representative Tsering Yangkey welcomed all the participants and underlined the significance of the meeting. She expressed her happiness at seeing so many young participants and urged the community leaders to encourage and support the youth in taking initiatives for the Tibetan cause and community.

Representative urged the Tibetan parents to create a favourable environment for their children to understand and stay connected with Tibetan identity and cultural heritage by making the effort to always speak in Tibetan language at home.

Tenzin Zeydhan, Under Secretary and Accountant at the Office of Tibet, London, led a session about the importance and workings of the Tibetan Voluntary Contribution book (Green Book) and provided explanations and clarifications to the many questions raised by the participants.

Dr Tara Urquhart, UK National Coordinator for Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group, held two separate sessions with the youth participants, during which she introduced them to the VTAG and gave a basic introduction to the structure and functioning of the Central Tibetan Administration. Following the presentation and discussions, the youth better understood their role as advocates for Tibet, some of whom promised to initiate events to create more awareness about Tibet in Denmark.

The Office of Tibet, London, encouraged more participation from Tibetan students in Northern Europe in Tibetan cultural exchange programs in India and the Young Tibetan Educational Club (Y-TEC) in the UK to help the youth connect more with their Tibetan roots. The representatives of Denmark, Norway and Sweden considered reviving the Tibetan Scandinavia Summer & Winter Camp, which if implemented, would be a good outcome from the meeting, as this helps in bonding and community cohesion.

This meeting was a follow-up to a similar meeting convened in Stockholm, Sweden, in June 2023.

At the end of the meeting, the Tibetan Community in Denmark hosted a Tibetan dinner for all the meeting participants, providing yet another platform for further informal discussions and networking.

“We discussed many matters relating to the Tibetan diaspora in Northern Europe and creative ways to elevate Tibet to the top of the agenda. I am encouraged by the enthusiasm and potential among the Tibetan community, especially the youth.” Representative Tsering Yangkey concluded.

*-Report filed by Office of Tibet, London*

### **Tibetan leaders mourn the passing of former MP and supporter Kishan Kapoor**

03 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

Senior Tibetan leaders have expressed their condolences for the death of Shri Kishan Kapoor, who was a former Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) and a steadfast supporter of Tibet. He breathed his last at the age of 73 on February 1, 2025.

President Penpa Tsering, the head of the Central Tibetan Administration, and Deputy Speaker Dolma

Tsering Teykhang of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile both conveyed their heartfelt sympathies to Kapoor's widow, Smt. Rekha Kapoor.



In his letter, President Tsering remembered Kapoor as “a true friend of Tibet” who demonstrated unwavering support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause. He highlighted Kapoor's persistent advocacy for awarding His Holiness the Dalai Lama with India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna. He also noted Kapoor's significant role in advocating for a peaceful resolution to the Indo-China border dispute, emphasising Tibet's crucial position in the matter.

“As a steadfast advocate, he stood in solidarity with the Tibetan cause. Today, we mourn the loss of a genuine friend and ally whose unwavering support for Tibet will always be cherished with deep gratitude,” the head of the Tibetan polity wrote.

Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, who had personally met with Kapoor on several occasions as part of Tibetan parliamentary delegations, praised his dedication to Tibet's cause. “His unwavering support for the just cause of Tibet was commendable,” she stated in her condolence message. “We pay our homage to the departed soul and would treasure his contribution towards truth and justice.”

Several representatives from the Tibetan community including members of the Tibetan Youth Congress attended his cremation in Dharamshala.

Mr. Kishan Kapoor, who served as a member of the Lower House of Indian Parliament from 2019 to 2024, was born in 1951 in Kangra district, where Dharamshala, the headquarters of the Tibetan exile community, is based. He served as a member of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly and held various ministerial positions in the state government, including Minister of Transport and Rural Development, Law Minister, and Minister of Industries and Urban Development.

## Obituary: Central Tibetan Administration Mourns the Demise of Auditor General Lhakpa Gyaltsen

03 February 2025, [CTA](#)



Obituary: Central Tibetan Administration Mourns the Demise of Auditor General Lhakpa Gyaltsen

The leadership and staff of the Central Tibetan Administration held a memorial service today to mourn the demise of Lhakpa Gyaltsen, the late Auditor General of the Office of the Auditor General. Lhakpa Gyaltsen passed away on Sunday morning 2 February 2025.

After presenting a brief biography of the deceased by Cabinet Secretary Tsegyal Chukya Dranyi, he conveyed his sadness at the painful news. He asked everyone to offer prayers for the departed staff.

The prayer service was attended by Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Kalon (Minister) Tharlam Dolma Changra of the Department of Education, Election Commissioner Lobsang Yeshe, Public Service Commissioner Karma Yeshe, members of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, along with secretaries and civil servants of the Central Tibetan Administration.

**Brief Bio:** Lhakpa Gyaltsen was born on 8 July 1962, to the late Dawa Dhondup. He completed his schooling at the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) and graduated from the College of Accounting in 1985.

On 20 August 1985, he was appointed as Senior Clerk of the Office of Auditor General and later on 1 August 1992, he was appointed as the Under Secretary within the same department. From 1996 to 2000, he served as a Director at the Nepal Branch of the Office of Auditor General, CTA on a contractual basis. From May to November 2000, he held the position of Chief Accountant at the Norbulingka Institute of Tibetan Culture.

From November 2001, with the directive from the Office of Auditor General, CTA, he audited the accounts at Miao Choephelling, Tezu Dhargye Ling and Tenzingang, Schools under the Department of Education and TCV Branches.

Between February 2002 to February 2004, he worked as a Chief Accountant at the Department of Home, CTA, on a contractual basis. In August 2014, he took on the role of the General Manager of TCV Enterprises

Limited. On 26 August 2024, he was appointed as the new Auditor General of CTA.

Lhakpa Gyaltsen had been on medical leave from 30 December 2024 to 28 February 2025, and on the morning of 2 February 2025 around 5 a.m., he passed away.

He is survived by his wife and a daughter.

## Tibetan President-in exile concludes Northeast visit, slams Chinese oppressive policies

02 February 2025, [Organiser](#)

Tibetan President-in-Exile Sikyong Penpa Tsering concluded his official visit to Tibetan settlements in West Bengal, where he slammed China's oppressive policies. Addressing the public, he discussed the political instability in China and the growing challenges faced by Tibet under Chinese rule

On the final day of his official visit to Tibetan settlements in West Bengal, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the President of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, visited various Tibetan monasteries, addressing the oppressive policies of China.

According to Tibet.net, Sikyong explored key government and non-governmental offices at the Sonada Tashiling Tibetan settlement. He also toured a four-acre vacant plot of land owned by the settlement office before addressing the public.

During his speech, Sikyong provided a detailed analysis of the ongoing political instability within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), its negative impact on global stability, and the rising threats posed by China's large-scale projects in the Tibetan region, Tibet.net reported.

He noted that under Xi Jinping's leadership, the CCP has created a climate of fear, where insecurity is pervasive both within the leadership and among party officials. Xi's power consolidation through his anti-corruption campaign has led to purges of potential rivals, leaving officials constantly worried about being accused of disloyalty or errors. He stated that loyalty to Xi is now the key to survival, and any deviation from his views could result in imprisonment or public disgrace, Tibet.net reported.

Sikyong also discussed China's struggling economy, highlighting challenges such as a sharp drop in consumer demand, a shrinking workforce caused by demographic changes, and the lasting impact of the zero-COVID policies.

According to Tibet.net, these issues have led to the rise of "ghost towns," once-promising urban developments that are now abandoned. The economic difficulties have sparked a growing youth movement called "lay-flat," where young people are increasingly opting out of traditional career paths. Some even choose to work for their parents in

exchange for payment, reflecting the instability in the job market and the lack of opportunities for upward mobility.

In addition, Sikyong emphasised that the “One China” policy, which claims the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legitimate government of all Chinese territories, does not apply to Tibet. He further explained how China’s One-Child Policy has led to significant demographic changes, including a declining birth rate and an ageing population, with fewer young people to support the elderly. This has resulted in gender imbalances due to a cultural preference for sons, creating long-term economic challenges, including a shrinking workforce and greater pressure on the social welfare system, as reported by Tibet.net.

### **Second CSO Meeting in Copenhagen Strengthens Tibet Advocacy Across Europe**

01 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Second Meeting of Local-based Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) under the Office of Tibet, London, successfully concluded today after a day-long session of intensive discussions and strategic planning on 31 January 2025. The gathering brought together 25 participants from eight countries, including the UK, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, reinforcing cross-border collaboration for Tibet advocacy.

Wangpo Tethong, Executive Director of ICT Europe, facilitated two key group exercises centered on the meeting’s core theme. Participants examined how their respective countries refer to ‘Tibet’ and analysed Tibet’s status through a structured Naming/Status Exercise. They also assessed their national positions on a scale of 1-10 in relation to the US Tibet Resolve Act’s provisions, fostering insightful discussions on diplomatic strategies. Additionally, delegates shared impactful Tibet-related news stories from their regions, unearthing previously undiscovered narratives that could further bolster advocacy efforts. The afternoon session featured an intensive two-hour training led by Mandie McKeown of ITN and Gloria Montgomery of TAC. Mandie guided participants in refining their Tibet advocacy strategies, distinguishing between short-term and long-term objectives. Gloria conducted an interactive session on conducting effective advocacy meetings with politicians and influencers, equipping attendees with practical skills for meaningful engagement.

Despite a rigorous schedule, participants actively contributed to discussions, making the sessions both interactive and thought-provoking. The meeting concluded with a speech by Representative Tsering Yangkey, who expressed gratitude to Wangpo Tethong, Mandie McKeown and Gloria Montgomery for their

invaluable contributions. She commended the participants for their sustained enthusiasm and encouraged them to apply their learnings in advancing Tibet advocacy within their respective countries. Representative Yangkey also extended appreciation to the local hosts, Anders H. Andersen, Chair of the Tibet Support Committee in Denmark and the Tibetan Community in Denmark, for their instrumental role in organising the successful event.

With renewed commitment, the CSO representatives pledged to work strategically towards securing legislative measures akin to the US Tibet Resolve Act within their national parliaments. The meeting’s success marks another step forward in strengthening Tibet advocacy efforts across Europe

*-Report filed by Office of Tibet, London*

### **The Department of Information and International Relations Releases Multi-Lingual E-Book on Four Principal Commitments of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama**

01 February 2025, [CTA](#)

The Central Tibetan Administration’s Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) has released a comprehensive e-book documenting insights from distinguished speakers on the four principal commitments of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama: the promotion of human values, promotion of religious harmony, preservation of Tibetan culture and environment, and revival of ancient Indian values.

This digital publication, available in four languages, comes as the Tibetan administration and community prepare for a year-long celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s 90th birthday as a “Year of Compassion”. Published in Tibetan, English, Hindi, and Chinese languages, this E-book features a compilation from the December 2020 virtual talk series on the four commitments of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that brought together over 100 distinguished speakers in 15 different languages. The series was held as part of marking the year 2020 as the “Year of Gratitude” to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, an initiative of the 15th Kashag.

The concept for the book emerged following the successful talk series, with many suggesting compiling the speeches into a book. The final publication represents a meticulous process of transcribing, editing and proofreading the talks delivered in four languages by different stakeholders, with the final suggestions and approval obtained from the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The publication showcases distinguished speakers sharing their observations and understanding of His Holiness’ four commitments, drawing from years of personal experience working with and learning from

Him. Additionally, it seeks to deepen public understanding of these commitments and their role in shaping His Holiness' profound legacy.

Through this e-book, which stems from the 15th Kashag's initiative "Year of Gratitude" and brought to fruition during the 16th Kashag as it prepares for the "Year of Compassion", the DIIR aims to make these valuable insights accessible to a broader audience, to all who seek to learn and engage with His Holiness's profound commitments in meaningful ways.

The e-book is now available on Tibet.net, the official website of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Click here for the [English version](#)

Click here for the [Tibetan version](#).

Click here for the [Chinese version](#)

Click here for the [Hindi version](#)

The complete talk series can be accessed from Tibet TV's [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

### **Dalai Lama to attend three monastic-community long-life offerings**

01 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

Since arriving at the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in South India's Karnataka-state town of Bylakuppe, home to the largest community of exile Tibetans, on Jan 5 for an extended winter sojourn, the Dalai Lama has maintained a fairly busy schedule, meeting guests, attending events, and giving blessings to streams of devotees.

Ahead of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Jul 6, the Dalai Lama is to attend three long-life ceremonial offerings being made by Tibetan Buddhist monastic communities during this month.

The first of these ceremonial offerings will be made by the Sera Monastery located in the Tibetan settlement in the town on Feb 5. The event is scheduled to be held in the Sera Lachi Assembly Hall.

This will be followed by long-life offering to be made by the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery on Feb 15, with the venue being the monastery's assembly hall.

And the third scheduled long-life offering is to be made by the Gyudmed Tantric Monastery at the monastery's assembly hall. This monastery is located in a Tibetan settlement in the same state's Hunsur city, some 52 km away from Bylakuppe.

While Hunsur is home to the Rabgayling Tibetan Settlement, Bylakuppe hosts the Tibetan settlements of Lugsung Samdupling and Dickyi Larsoe. Karnataka is home to two other Tibetan settlements as well, namely Dhondeling in Kollegal and Doeguling in Mundgod.

The long-life ceremonies will be held in the morning and they typically attract large crowds of devotees.

The Dalai Lama has assured devotees at numerous long-life offering events over the past several years

that he expects to live to be more than 110 years of age.

The Central Tibetan Administration is to hold a globe-wide, year-long series of events to mark the Dalai Lama's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday from Jul 6 under the theme of "Year of Compassion"

The above dates are subject to change, said a notice on the *Dalailama.com* website seen today.

## CHINA POLITICS

### China reaffirms commitment to international cooperation in human rights

25 February 2025, [Xinhua](#)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered a video address at the high-level meeting of the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on Monday, emphasizing China's willingness to work with all countries to uphold the correct view of human rights and push for the reform and improvement of global human rights governance.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said it is essential to remember the original mission of human rights governance, which is people-centered. He stressed that China firmly rejects actions that interfere in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights and disregard national sovereignty, security and the safety of people's lives.

"Fairness and justice must be upheld, and the right to subsistence and development should be prioritized as fundamental human rights," Wang said, adding that double standards or even multiple standards in human rights issues must be firmly rejected.

"We must insist on exchanges and mutual learning. We must also firmly reject any actions or rhetoric that seek to impose one's own models and preferences on others, or politicize, exploit and weaponize human rights," Wang added.

Wang said China is willing to work with other countries to realize a modern world characterized by peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation, and shared prosperity.

China is committed to the future and well-being of humanity and all nations. It will promote international cooperation and civilizational exchange and be a builder of a community with a shared future for humankind, while more actively engaging in international human rights cooperation to create a brighter future for human rights worldwide, Wang added.

### INTERVIEW: A former China correspondent examines identity and control under Xi

22 February 2025, [RFA](#), Jane Tang and Jeff Wang

#### **NPR's Emily Feng reflects on a decade in China in her new book, 'Where Only Red Flowers Bloom.'**

*After nearly a decade covering China as an NPR correspondent, Emily Feng returned to Washington, D.C. Her reporting spanned a period of profound social and economic change : Xi Jinping's consolidation of power; the Xinjiang detention camps; Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement and the crackdown against it;*

*China's strict zero-COVID policy; and the country's transformation into a surveillance state.*

*Ultimately, Feng was caught in the crossfire of the U.S.-China rivalry — her visa was unexpectedly rejected, forcing her to relocate to Taiwan for the final years of her reporting.*

*Her new book, "Let Only Red Flowers Bloom," is a reflection on the search for identity and belonging under Xi Jinping's rule. It will be published March 18. The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.*



Emily Feng, former China correspondent for National Public Radio. (An Rong Xu/NPR)

**RFA: You moved to China in 2015 at the age of 22. What was the biggest question you had, and did you find the answer?**

Emily Feng: I wanted to see China for myself. I had visited family in the south a few times, but I was curious about how the country was changing, especially under Xi Jinping, who was then in his third year as leader. I wondered if China would continue opening up — economically, politically and culturally. I had just started consuming more Chinese-language culture, and I was interested in how cultural production would evolve.

The day I arrived was about a week after the July 9 crackdown on human rights lawyers. I didn't realize it at the time, but that was a watershed moment in Chinese politics. It shaped the China I would experience over the next several years.

**RFA: The July 9 crackdown shocked many. What were its lasting effects?**

Emily Feng: It had systemic impacts. Many influential lawyers lost their licenses — people who had been shaping ideas about China's legal and political future. It wasn't just about individuals; it rippled across corporations, organizations and society as a whole.

**RFA: Your book's title, 'Let Only Red Flowers Bloom,' is a twist on Mao's famous slogan, 'Let a hundred flowers bloom.' You write that a source told you, 'That's the state now.' What did they mean, and why did it stay with you?**

Emily Feng: The title reflects a duality. On one hand, it's about celebrating the diversity that exists in China — different voices, perspectives and identities, along

with varying views on the role of private business, ethnicity and languages beyond Mandarin Chinese. On the other hand, it reflects how the state is increasingly trying to constrain that diversity.

One of the people I interviewed told me, 'At this point, the state only lets one color of flower bloom—red flowers.' That quote captured the theme of my book: the tension between the natural diversity within Chinese society and the state's efforts to control it.

**RFA: You spent nearly a decade covering China. What's the biggest shift you've seen?**

Emily Feng: The Communist Party is much more present in everyday life. When I first moved there, political control felt more distant for many people. But over the years, the government became more involved — even in the small details of daily life. COVID-19 made that even more visible, with strict movement controls and surveillance.

I felt it in my reporting as well. When I first got there, there was concern that talking to people could get them in trouble. People needed to be anonymous for their safety. But as my years in China continued, the level of surveillance, particularly online, really intensified.

That said, I want people to know that there are still many voices in China. Despite the tightening restrictions, there are still compelling stories to tell, and I hope more journalists can continue working there.

**RFA: Were there any key moments during this period when you felt that social control was tightening?**

Emily Feng: I started thinking about this issue because of what was happening in Xinjiang. In 2017, I began reporting on Xinjiang, and at first, I had only heard about the existence of some camps.

But as I continued following the story, I realized that the Xinjiang issue and the situation of the Uyghurs had much broader significance for the entire country. It wasn't just a problem in the western region — it was connected to policies on ethnicity, identity, language and culture at the time. It also tied into a larger question of what kind of nation China and the Communist Party were trying to create. So, starting from Xinjiang as an entry point, I began to ask: Why does identity play such a central role in contemporary Chinese politics?

**RFA: How did you build trust with the people you interviewed, and how did you weigh the risks, both for yourself and for them?**

Emily Feng: It's a daily conversation — with editors, with yourself, and, most importantly, with your sources. Many of my stories weren't about government leaks; they were about personal experiences. Earning trust meant showing that I was willing to listen and making the effort to be there.

Sometimes, it took years for people to open up. One Uyghur family I interviewed, for example, only felt

comfortable sharing their full story after they had processed what had happened to them. In China, I might have to spend a lot of time exploring 10 different stories, but there's only a 20% or even just a 10% chance of success.

**RFA: Did you ever face danger yourself?**

Emily Feng: Yes. I was investigated for my work, and my news organization was audited as part of the U.S.-China media tensions. Many reporting trips were cut short, and interviewees were sometimes detained while I was speaking with them. People I talked to risked losing jobs or public benefits. It's not a black-and-white situation, but it's something I had to be aware of when reporting in China.

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**China's homegrown tech boosts global surveillance, social controls: report**

20 February 2025, [RFA](#), Lin Yueyang

**The ruling Chinese Communist Party is using AI and big data to monitor citizens at home and abroad, and is exporting its technology for use overseas.**

Homegrown AI and other cutting-edge technology is boosting internal surveillance by the ruling Chinese Communist Party and expanding its overseas influence and infiltration operations, and is already in use far beyond its borders, according to a recent report.

China's recent advances in AI and big data, including its recently launched DeepSeek AI model, will boost the government's surveillance capabilities, including overseas, according to Feb. 11 report from the Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy.

"The People's Republic of China stands out for its quest to collect and leverage unprecedented types and volumes of data, from public and private sources and from within and beyond its borders, for social control," according to the report.

China's increasingly powerful AI surveillance systems use facial recognition and combine data streams to create sophisticated "city brains" that can track events in real time, wrote report author Valentin Weber.

"These tools create a pervasive surveillance dragnet and may be used by state authorities to quell protests before they start," it said.



Visitors walk past a stand with AI security cameras using facial recognition technology at the 14th China International Exhibition on Public Safety and Security, in Beijing on Oct. 24, 2018. (Nicolas Asfour/AFP)

China is also developing virtual reality tools and brain-computer interfaces that could potentially allow the authorities to influence people's mental states, affecting their privacy and agency, according to the report.

Under Chinese law, any data harvested from such processes must be handed over to the government, even if it was gathered by a private company.

**'Fine-tuned control'**



The country's advances in quantum computing suggest it could one day render present-day encryption obsolete, the report found, endangering anyone who dares to criticize Beijing.

And its ongoing investment in the digital yuan paves the way for further controls over citizens by enabling the government to track what people are buying or spending.

Zhou Fengsuo, executive director of Human Rights in China, said technology has made the Chinese government far more effective at controlling people than it ever was in the past.

"In the past, totalitarian countries such as the former Soviet Union would always show a certain amount of inefficiency," Zhou said. "But the current Chinese government leads the way in these technologies, which can indeed make fine-tuned control of population a reality that could never have been achieved by traditional methods."

"This is very worrying," Zhou said.

U.S.-based political commentator Wang Juntao said that while facial recognition technology isn't unique to China, the authorities there deploy it in a way that no other government has.

"It has to do with the camera lens and the sampling of individual citizen [data]," Wang said. "Other countries can't do that yet, but [China] can."

Wang said there is currently high-precision surveillance equipment installed in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, site of former mass protests against the government, that can monitor the blood pressure and emotional state of passers-by to assess whether they were a security threat.

Zhou said police routinely use cell phones to track the movements of anyone they are watching, including peaceful critics of the regime.

#### **Exporting surveillance systems**

The report, titled "Data-Centric Authoritarianism: How China's Development of Frontier Technologies Could Globalize Repression," warned that Beijing will also be at the forefront of exporting its tech-enabled authoritarian surveillance systems.

The Chinese techno-authoritarian state can be traced back to the 1998 "Golden Shield" project, a nationwide plan for integrated digital surveillance, also encompassing the censorship system that came to be known as the "Great Firewall," the report said.

By the mid-2000s, China had reportedly exported the first radio jammers to the government of Zimbabwe, which used them to intercept citizens' communications.

The report said China's digital authoritarian exports have become "smarter," including, for example, network filtering equipment able to recognize and block specific keywords.

Chinese vendors have also claimed a leading role in the booming global market for surveillance tools that

monitor physical spaces, offering CCTV systems and eventually "smart" cameras linked to license plate readers or facial recognition technologies, it said.

These emerging technologies make it possible to refine sophisticated and targeted propaganda campaigns; carry out mass algorithmic repression and movement controls of the kind that have been implemented against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, the report said.

Reports have already emerged of Chinese government surveillance of Uyghurs far beyond China's borders.

Algorithms are used in biometric surveillance, where they lock onto distinctive characteristics like the shape of a person's nose, eyes, and eyebrows, the way they walk, or the sound of their voice, enabling them to be recognized in video, audio or images.

While they can be used for traditional law enforcement, they also enable "much more pervasive forms of monitoring," the report said.

#### **China has always advocated for dialogue, negotiation, political settlement, FM on China's role in resolving Ukraine crisis**

18 February 2025, [Global Times](#)

In response to a question regarding China's hope or potential role in a peace agreement to resolve the Ukraine crisis, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Tuesday that regarding any dispute or conflict in the world, China has always advocated for dialogue, negotiation and political settlement.

Our position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict remains consistent. China is neither the creator nor a direct party to the Ukraine crisis, but we have not stood idly by or sought to profit from it, Guo said.

The spokesperson noted that from the outset of the crisis, China has expressed the hope that it would be resolved through dialogue and negotiation. Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed four principles to prevent the Ukraine crisis from spiraling out of control and to restore peace at an early date. We have followed the principles to actively conduct diplomatic mediation, including initiating the "Friends for Peace" Group on the Ukraine Crisis with countries in the Global South such as Brazil.

Developments have proven that China's proposals are objective, fair, rational and pragmatic, reflecting a broad consensus within the international community, Guo said.

## China: Right to Leave Country Further Restricted

17 February 2025, [HRW](#)

### Campaign Against Online Fraud Latest Justification to Limit Passport Access

The Chinese government has increasingly imposed arbitrary restrictions on people's internationally protected right to leave the country, Human Rights Watch said today.

Chinese authorities are requiring citizens from locales they broadly consider to be high risks for online fraud or "unlawful" emigration to submit additional paperwork and obtain approval from multiple government offices during passport application processes. Those not meeting these cumbersome requirements are often denied passports. The government has long restricted people's access to passports in areas where Tibetans and Uyghurs predominantly live.

"While many Chinese citizens enjoy international travel, the right to leave China appears to be restricted for growing categories of people throughout the country," said Maya Wang, associate China director at Human Rights Watch. "The authorities are going beyond existing restrictions on Tibetans and Uyghurs to limit the travel of people throughout China under the guise of anti-crime campaigns."

All Chinese citizens can apply for "ordinary passports" (因私普通护照) with an identity card. However, in recent years, police agencies responsible for issuing passports have increasingly subjected applicants from dozens of locales to a more cumbersome process. This conclusion is based on official complaints filed by those affected as well as social media posts by residents, travel agents, and overseas employment agencies in those locales.

In these locales, people have to submit more extensive documentation, which may include providing documentation that they do not have a criminal record, evidence of social security contributions, bank statements showing regular income and savings, and employment contracts. They may also be required to obtain the approval of multiple police and Chinese Communist Party offices. While many succeed after weeks or months of traveling back and forth to offices to fulfill these requirements, some people reported simply giving up.

These locales also often place additional restrictions on travel, such as requiring applicants to apply in their hometowns where their household registration ("hukou") documents are registered. These restrictions appear to apply even years after people have moved their hukous to another province.

There is no published list of affected locales. Difficulties have been reported by people with hukous

in Fujian province, such as Fuqing, Longyan, Anxi counties; Shenyang City's Sujiatun district and Tieling City in Liaoning province; Donghai county in Jiangsu province; Shangcai and Yiyang counties in Henan province; and the cities of Changde and Shaoyang in Hunan province. Human Rights Watch was able to confirm reports of restrictions with individuals from Fujian Province.

The authorities in some of these cases have informed the applicants that their home base is "sensitive" due to "prevalence of certain town [residents] exiting the country to engage in online fraud and transnational crime and gambling." A few of these locales appear on lists of "targeted locales" in a joint departmental effort to crack down on online fraud formed in 2015, though this list has not been updated. Residents in other locales appear to be penalized solely because fellow residents emigrated to other countries "illegally." The Chinese government has not responded to Human Rights Watch's emailed query about these restrictions.

These time-consuming passport requirements recall those in place before 2002, when applicants for ordinary passports were required to compile a significant volume of documentary material in support of their applications and undergo a protracted procedure that included a "political examination."

In late 2002, the Ministry of Public Security's Entry and Exit Administration, the agency responsible for issuing passports, initiated a new "on demand" system to simplify the passport application process. This has since been extended to the vast majority of areas in China, though Xinjiang, Tibet, and the 13 Tibetan or Hui autonomous prefectures in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces were never granted permission to use the fast-track passport application system.

Applicants from these areas are required to provide far more extensive documentation in support of their passport applications than elsewhere in China and they face extremely long delays, often lasting several years, before passports are issued, or are routinely denied passports for no valid reason.

In addition, in 2016, Xinjiang authorities further confiscated all passports previously issued, as part of its abusive crackdown in the region.

The authorities have also increasingly required government employees to hand in their passports for "safekeeping," which requires official approval for their return. While such practices have long been common among high-level officials, they have since been expanded to include lower-level employees, including those at schools, universities, and hospitals. The authorities claim that these measures are to prevent graft and to avoid leaking state secrets.

China's Exit and Entry Administration Law in article 12(5) broadly states that citizens who "may endanger

national security or interests” can be prohibited from leaving the country. Similarly, the Passport Law in article 13 allows the authorities to deny passports to those whose departure is broadly considered to “cause harm to national security or cause significant losses to national interests.” The new Law on Countering Telecommunications Network Fraud in article 36 directs the police to bar people from exiting the country if they have “a major suspicion that such travel is related to telecommunications fraud.”

The right to freedom of movement is recognized under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is considered reflective of customary international law, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which China is a signatory. Under article 12 of the ICCPR, “[e]veryone shall be free to leave any country, including his own.”

The United Nations Human Rights Committee, in its General Comment on the Right to Freedom of Movement, stated that “Since international travel usually requires appropriate documents, in necessary travel documents.” Governments may only limit freedom of movement where “provided by law” and where necessary “to protect national security, public order, public health or morals, or the rights and freedoms of others.”

Such restrictions must be nondiscriminatory, be necessary to achieve one or more legitimate aims, proportionate in relation to the aim sought, and must be the least restrictive measure possible to achieve such aims. Restrictions invoking lawful aims must be specific about how, for example, national security would be threatened if the people prohibited from leaving were allowed to leave.

Chinese legislation that allows the authorities to broadly restrict people’s right to exit the country under vague claims of national security do not meet these standards, Human Rights Watch said.

“Growing restrictions on the right to obtain passports have raised anxiety that Xi Jinping’s government is restoring practices from when few people could travel abroad,” Wang said. “Chinese authorities should drop these arbitrary and discriminatory practices so that everyone has the equal right to leave the country.”

### **Chinese FM calls for positive, responsible policy from NATO toward China**

16 February 2025, [Global Times](#)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has expressed hope that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would adopt a rational and pragmatic approach, develop an objective and accurate perception of China, and pursue a positive and responsible policy toward China.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte here on Friday on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

Wang said that China is a force for maintaining peace and stability. It's the largest contributor of peacekeeping personnel among the permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, and the second-largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. On issues of peace and security, China has the best track record among major countries, he added.

Amid ongoing escalating geopolitical conflicts, Wang urged NATO to remain committed to its role as a regional defensive organization and contribute constructively to global and regional peace.

Rutte acknowledged China as a great nation with remarkable development achievements. He said that NATO, as a regional defensive organization, has no intention of expanding into Asia and will not do so. Rutte added that NATO is willing to enhance dialogue and communication with China to deepen mutual understanding and trust.

The two sides exchanged views on the Ukraine crisis. Rutte said that NATO highly values China's influence and role, and hopes that China will play a significant role in pushing forward a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict as soon as possible. Wang elaborated on China's principles and stance, reaffirming China's commitment to continue working with all parties to play a constructive role in promoting a political settlement of the crisis and building a balanced, effective, and sustainable security framework in Europe.

### **China cracks down on ‘illegal’ investigations targeting private business**

13 February 2025, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

Supreme People’s Procuratorate report cites 6,500 ‘correct law enforcement’ directives and withdrawal of 400 ‘improperly filed’ cases last year

Prosecutors in China issued thousands of directives last year on “correct law enforcement” and oversaw the retraction of more than 400 “improperly filed” criminal cases related to private business, as Beijing seeks to limit acts that “harm the business environment”.

According to a report released by the Supreme People’s Procuratorate on Thursday, more than 6,500 corrective instructions were issued between January and November last year targeting “illegal investigative actions that jeopardised the socialist market economy”.

Du Xueyi, head of economic crime prosecution, said that addressing corrupt and harmful practices such as profit-driven law enforcement was a “pivotal responsibility”.

The actions taken last year were part of a systematic effort to “rectify opportunistic law enforcement practices that ... run counter to fair justice, severely undermine the credibility and authority of the judiciary, disrupt the rule of law, and harm the business environment”, the report quoted Du as saying.

China has intensified efforts to stabilise its post-pandemic economy and restore confidence in the business environment as it grapples with high youth joblessness, weak domestic consumption and a renewed trade war with the United States.

Beijing has also vowed to establish a fair and just legal framework that respects and protects the integrity of private enterprises – seen as crucial to economic vitality, innovation and job creation.

According to Du, the top prosecutorial body identified 31 key cases requiring further investigation. By December, 21 of those had been concluded and substantial progress made on two others.

In one case, involving the unauthorised collection of personal information in central Hubei province, charges had been dropped against 128 individuals and over 25 million yuan (US\$3.42 million) in improperly seized funds were returned, Du said.

This year, he said, prosecutors would wage special campaigns to regulate law enforcement involving enterprises. These would “target key issues” including the misuse of criminal law in civil disputes, illegal seizure or freezing of corporate assets, unlawful cross-regional enforcement, as well as profit-driven law enforcement.

Prosecutors would also seek better collaboration with police, courts and administrative agencies to tackle these issues more effectively, Du said.

Beijing has officially recognised that arbitrary inspections and excessive fines from local authorities hinder business operations and cause widespread distrust among entrepreneurs.

The State Council, China’s cabinet, issued directives last month to regulate the inspection of private companies, which have complained about frequent administrative inspections and rent-seeking.

Beijing has also pledged to increase transparency regarding which departments possess enforcement powers and ensure that businesses are no longer subjected to arbitrary and profit-driven inspections.

## China’s PLA targets top brass in campaign touting political loyalty to Xi Jinping

08 February 2025, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

China’s top military command has rolled out a major education campaign to instil political loyalty to President Xi Jinping – an initiative aimed primarily at the top ranks of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).

In a notice on Tuesday to all personnel in the world’s second largest military force, the political work department of the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC) said the campaign should focus on the “key few” – a term the ruling Communist Party uses to describe senior officials with decision-making power on critical matters.

The CMC, the top decision-making and command body for the Chinese armed forces, is chaired by Xi.

“[We should] focus on the ‘key few’, to strengthen [their] learning and ideological transformation, to ... truly achieve greater actual results in learning, understanding, believing and application [of Xi’s military thought],” the notice issued on the final day of China’s Lunar New Year break said.

The notice said the PLA must continue to use Xi’s political thought to “unite hearts and forge souls”, and study his thoughts on strengthening the military “deeply and persistently” by reading his original works repeatedly.

It also advised the PLA to stay focused on its centenary goals, put lessons into practice and action, and carry out special education focused on the beliefs and values of officials and soldiers, while ensuring combat readiness.

The party unveiled its new military modernisation goals in October 2020. But the lack of detail triggered speculation by US defence officials that Beijing was preparing to take Taiwan by force by 2027, the PLA’s 100th anniversary.

In past announcements about its military development plans, China has vowed to “basically complete national defence and military modernisation by 2035”, and achieve a “world-class military by mid-century”.

Hong Kong-based military expert Liang Guoliang said that – besides advancements in weapons and equipment – ideology and political education had been the major focus of the CMC since a considerable reorganisation of its command structure, “to ensure the PLA’s morale remained high”.

“Political work has long been regarded as the ‘magic weapon’ of the PLA,” he said. “The lessons of the Russia-Ukraine war have further illustrated the importance of this, as we can see soldiers will not have the fighting spirit if they do not know what they are fighting for.”

“The PLA has been implementing smaller tactical units that can fight on their own. In the past, the smallest

was the combined battalion, but now it is down to platoon level,” Liang said. “That means the soldiers will have fewer comrades to fight alongside [them] ... everyone in the squad must have stronger belief in the cause.”

The latest ideological campaign follows the CMC’s political work conference last June, where Xi vowed to root out disloyal elements in the military.

“We must make it clear that the barrels of the guns must always be in the hands of those who are loyal and reliable to the party ... And we must make it clear that there is no place for corrupt elements in the military,” Xi said in an address to key military officials and political commissars at the conference.

A Beijing-based military observer said the downfall of the PLA’s political and ideological chief, Miao Hua, could be one of the factors behind the delay in launching the follow-up education campaign since that conference.



China said in November that top military official Miao Hua had been removed from office and was suspected of “serious violations of discipline”. Photo: AFP

Miao, the top Chinese general at the CMC in charge of ideology and personnel changes within the military, was suspended from duty and placed under investigation for suspected “serious violations of discipline”, the defence ministry said in November.

“Miao appeared in the CMC’s top political works conference promoting loyalty and integrity in June. He was certainly the man designated to roll out the follow-up loyalty campaign then. But his disciplinary investigation must have disrupted everything,” said the observer, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Miao was the second CMC member to be removed from his post since the current line-up took office in 2022. The first was former defence minister Li Shangfu, who was fired last October. Li and his predecessor, Wei Fenghe, were both expelled from the party in June for “serious violations of discipline”.

The removal of Miao and Li has left the seven-member CMC with a rare double vacancy and only two serving members, apart from Xi and the two vice-chairmen – a circumstance not seen in decades.

“According to past practices, the two CMC deputy chairmen – Zhang Youxia and He Weidong – were likely to share the workload on ideological work in Miao’s absence,” he added, noting that they took over China’s military diplomacy duties after Li was placed under investigation.

Besides the CMC purges, nine senior generals – including past or current top commanders of the PLA Rocket Force, the former air force commander, and a few CMC officials in charge of equipment development and procurement – were removed from their posts during the National People’s Congress in December 2023, signalling a sweeping anti-corruption drive.

There were also signs that several senior managers with state-owned arms suppliers could be implicated in the campaign, as they did not follow the custom of sending seasonal greetings to their colleagues during the Lunar New Year holiday.

Yu Jianfeng, chairman of China National Nuclear Corporation; Zhou Xinmin, chairman of China Aviation Industry Corporation; Xu Xianping, chairman of China Ordnance Equipment Group; and Liu Dashan, general manager of China Ordnance Industry Group, were all no-shows at their company’s seasonal celebrations, according to searches of their official reports.

In January, the profiles of Hao Zhaoping, general manager of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, and Yang Wei, a deputy general manager at AVIC and lead engineer of China’s J-20 stealth fighter, were taken down from the company website without explanation.

The moves came after former AVIC chairman Tan Ruisong was placed under investigation for corruption in August, having been removed from his post in 2023. None of these defence industry leaders have been seen in public for months.

“How to restore the belief and values among the soldiers and low-ranking officials after so many top generals fell will be very challenging for the new ideological campaign,” the Beijing-based observer said.

### How not to get seduced by foreign spies: China’s spy agency

07 February 2025, [RFA](#), Qian Lang

#### Over WeChat, state security ministry warns people not to gossip or fall for ‘tall, beautiful people.’

Since China’s secretive spy agency -- the Ministry of State Security -- got itself a WeChat account, it has been churning out cautionary tales about spies as warnings to an unsuspecting public.

The account, set up in July 2023, was quiet at first, only publishing four warnings in all of last year. But it has stepped up activity in recent weeks, cranking out five

warnings in January alone under the slogan “National Security is Everyone’s Responsibility.”

Recently, it warned people:

- not to get seduced by “tall, beautiful people”
- not to gossip carelessly when they travel home for Lunar New Year
- be aware that “foreign spies” could be reading their online comments and lurking on social media

“Foreign espionage agencies may actively connect with key target groups by disguising themselves as rich and beautiful, or tall, rich and handsome individuals,” the agency warned in a Jan. 16 post to its official WeChat account.

“Once a relationship is established, they may use the emotional connection to trick their targets into providing confidential information,” it said in a post titled, “Keep your eyes open, and build a Great Wall of Steel against espionage.”

### **Spooking foreign investors**

The insistence that foreign spies are everywhere has spooked foreign investors in the wake of raids of foreign-owned firms and recent changes to national security legislation.

Commentators say the warnings likely have more to do with political turf wars in Beijing and encouraging people to spy on each other than with any concerted public action against a possible threat from overseas. Officials, scientists and college teachers and students are likely targets for seduction, brainwashing, bribery and coercion, especially anyone with access to confidential information, it said.

Foreign spies may “disguise themselves as considerate, caring and open-minded confidants,” or “lurk in chat rooms, online forums and other online platforms” to recruit people.



*A security guard patrols Beijing West Railway Station on Jan. 24, 2025. (Aaron Favila/AP)*

Anyone going overseas on vacation has been warned that foreign intelligence agencies “may take the opportunity to infiltrate, and personnel in confidential positions need to be vigilant, not trust strangers, and not disclose work secrets.”

“If there is a language barrier, they should seek interpreting assistance and never answer casually; if the questions involve state secrets, they should ...

refuse to answer,” according to a Jan. 25 post to the feared Ministry’s WeChat account.

### **Cautionary tale**

On Friday, the agency published the tale of a man surnamed Han who was lured into selling confidential documents by his desire for a life of “extravagance and luxury.”

“Once the idea of selling secrets came into his mind, it quickly dragged Han towards the abyss of crime like the claws of a demon,” the post said.

Han stored secrets on private hard drives, then contacted foreign agencies anonymously in the hope of selling them.

When the state security police caught up with Han, he was on his computer bargaining with foreign espionage agencies to sell more confidential information. He collapsed to the ground, saying “I didn’t expect you to be that fast!” according to the post.

The penalty for “espionage” as defined by the authorities can range from five or 10 years to life imprisonment, or even death in cases deemed “particularly serious,” the agency said, adding that Han would be “severely punished.”

### **‘Not real counter-espionage’**

The agency has also warned people against “connecting to unfamiliar Wi-Fi networks” and ordered them to store confidential documents securely, as well as keeping online security defenses up to date

“The Ministry of State Security used to operate as part of the ‘secret front,’” former police station deputy director Guo Min told RFA Mandarin in a recent interview. “Now they’re kicking up a big propaganda fuss, but it’s not real counter-espionage or national security.”

“Counter-espionage work doesn’t usually require ordinary people to come forward.”

Chinese authorities have typically employed a highly elastic definition of what constitutes a state secret, and national security charges are frequently leveled at journalists, rights lawyers and activists, often based on material they post online.

Article 14 of China’s Law on Safeguarding State Secrets, which was amended last year, divides state secrets into three categories: top secret; confidential and secret.

Which information falls into which category is left to the authorities to decide, according to Article 15.

The lack of definition makes “endangering state security” an easy crime to pin on anyone sharing information the government doesn’t like, according to critics.

Guo said anyone working in sensitive areas with access to confidential information or state secrets will already have received extensive security training, as he did while a serving police officer.

“What they’re actually doing is mobilizing the general public to keep an eye on each other,” he said.

**Political jostling**

The move is also highly political, according to some analysts.

A legal professional from the southern province of Guangdong who gave only the surname Mou for fear of reprisals said the spy agency is jostling with its key rival for government funding, the Ministry of Public Security, which presides over China’s police force.

“The Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Public Security have been competing over their remits,” Mou said.

“State security would normally have jurisdiction over cases with a foreign connection, and doesn’t wield as much [domestic] power as public security does,” he said.

“There may be a power struggle going on but there may also be other reasons that we don’t understand.”

# PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

## Over 2 dozen teachers at Aksu school sentenced to prison in Xinjiang

24 February 2025, [RFA](#), Shohret Hoshur

*Their arrests occurred at a time when authorities began rounding up educators.*



*Police officers stand at the entrance of the Urumqi No. 3 Detention Center in Dabancheng in northwestern China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, April 23, 2021. (Mark Schiefelbein/AP)*

More than two dozen Uyghur teachers at a college in Xinjiang were arrested by Chinese authorities in 2017 and are currently still serving jail sentences, Radio Free Asia was able to confirm with officials at the school.

Their arrests eight years ago occurred at a time when authorities in the northwestern region began rounding up Uyghur intellectuals, educators, businesspeople and cultural figures en masse and incarcerating them in re-education camps to prevent what China said was terrorism and religious extremism.

Last week, RFA Uyghur reported that prominent historian Ghojaniyaz Yollugh Tekin, 59, who taught the Aksu Education Institute in the city of Aksu, had been arrested in 2017 and sentenced to 17 years in prison in late 2018 for his research, writings and views that Uyghurs are part of the Turkic world — and not Chinese.

Upon further investigation, RFA learned that authorities also arrested and detained 25 other educators from the same school in 2017. But RFA could not determine the reasons for their arrests or the lengths of their sentences.

Established in 1985, the college currently has about 220 staff members — more than half of whom are Uyghurs — and 3,000 students.

During the early 2000s, there were 100-150 Uyghur teachers, according to Uyghur activist Tuyghun Abduweli, who hails from Aksu but now lives in Canada.

A person who works at the institute but who requested anonymity for safety reasons, said more than 20 teachers from the school were taken away in several groups in 2017.

Their cases were filed by Aksu prefecture security agents, and the institute's political affairs department



and police station collaborated with them during the arrests and interrogations, the person said.

### **Held in a Bingtuan prison**

A police officer who works at the institute told RFA that 26 teachers — mostly men — were arrested and are serving jail sentences.

He said he was involved in the cases of three of the teachers arrested — Mutellip Mamut, Eli Qasim and Eziz Memet, the last of whom was about 47 years old at the time.

Another police officer named two other imprisoned teachers — Abdusalam Eziz and Abdurahman Rozi — and said he assisted in their arrests as well as the arrest of Mutellip Mamut.

Those arrested were initially taken to Aksu Prison, but were later transferred to a detention center run by the Bingtuan at its headquarters in Shihezi in northern Xinjiang, the police officer said.

The Bingtuan is a state-run economic and paramilitary organization of mostly Han Chinese who develop land, secure borders and maintain stability in Xinjiang.

“Mutellip Mamut is currently at the Shihezi prison,” the police officer told RFA.

Authorities held secret trials for the teachers, and institute leaders and staffers who collaborated on the cases were not allowed to attend, he added.

### **Interrogated because of religious practices**

According to a person familiar with the situation in Aksu, a literature teacher named Abdusalam had been interrogated by authorities many times because of his religious practices and was eventually suspended from work.

“His wife wore a hijab, and he himself prayed every Friday at home,” the person said. “He was frequently called out by the school because of this, and his wife was also suspended from her job.” Abdusalam was among those detained and jailed in 2017.

A security officer from the school’s legal department confirmed the arrests and detentions of the teachers, but said he could not disclose their identities because of confidentiality requirements.

About 10% of the institute’s teachers had been arrested, said another staffer.

“They’re all in prison now,” said Tuyghun Abduweli.

## **Report exposes CCP human rights abuses throughout 2024**

23 February 2025, [IPD Defense Forum](#)

A prominent Chinese economist disappeared after privately criticizing the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) weakening economy, The Wall Street Journal newspaper reported in September 2024.

In mid-December, a Tibetan village chief died three days after his release from prison on charges of “endangering state security.” His crime, according to

the Central Tibetan Administration, was championing preservation of the Tibetan language.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) broadened its campaign to suppress freedom and human rights throughout the past year, the New York-based advocacy and research group Human Rights Watch said in its World Report 2025.

“From freedom of expression to religious freedoms, the Chinese government has kept a chokehold over the country throughout 2024,” Maya Wang, the organization’s associate China director, stated. “The Chinese government has further tightened abusive laws and imprisoned critics and rights defenders, while making it increasingly difficult to report on government abuses throughout the country.”

The international community continues to condemn Beijing’s disregard for human rights. Nations have strengthened sanctions and legislation, such as the United States’ Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Meanwhile, rights advocates are working to expose CCP abuses and encourage like-minded nations to stand against the mistreatment.

Previously tolerated topics are increasingly criminalized across the PRC, Human Rights Watch reported. The CCP has censored economic analysis and stopped releasing data such as its growing youth unemployment rate.

Authorities in the PRC routinely harass and arrest leaders of religious groups deemed illegal, including congregations that refuse to join CCP-approved churches, according to the rights group. One such “house church” leader was accused of inciting subversion and sentenced in 2024 to five years in prison.

Since CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping called for Sinicizing religions in 2016, “authorities have sought to reshape religions to promote allegiance to the party and to Xi,” the report stated.

Tibetans face arbitrary detention for posting unfavorable online comments or contacting Tibetans outside the PRC, according to media reports. As the CCP tries to suppress Tibet’s culture, officials have closed schools that taught the native language and heritage, and detained educators and religious leaders who resisted, rights advocates said. Hundreds of Tibetan monks and villagers also were detained in 2024 for peacefully protesting construction of a hydroelectric dam that will submerge monasteries and villages.

The PRC continues to dismiss international demands to cease abuses of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in the Xinjiang region. Among the crimes against humanity documented by rights groups, researchers and internal CCP documents: mass arbitrary detention, torture, mass surveillance, forced labor, cultural and religious persecution, and family separation.

In September 2024, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the U.S. renewed calls for the PRC to release unjustly imprisoned people in Xinjiang, clarify the fate of missing people and engage with United Nations rights advocates to address abuses. Increasingly draconian laws in Hong Kong led to activists and protesters being imprisoned for commemorating the CCP's 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, drawing pro-democracy graffiti, wearing a "Liberate Hong Kong" T-shirt and other acts the party deems seditious. Journalists also faced prison sentences for publishing uncensored news. The U.N. human rights chief called the legislation "a regressive step."

Human Rights Watch urged the CCP to immediately release wrongfully imprisoned Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, free human rights defenders, revoke Hong Kong's so-called national security laws, and allow independent observers access to Tibet and Xinjiang.

### China extends prison term for Tibetan environmental activist after he rejects charges

21 February 2025, [RFA](#)

#### Tsongon Tsering had posted rare protest on social media about



Tibetan environmental activist Tsongon Tsering displays his government identity card in a social media video, Oct. 15, 2024. (Tsongon Tsering/Citizen Video via WeChat)

Chinese authorities have extended the prison sentence of a Tibetan environmental activist from Sichuan province by an additional eight months after he rejected charges of "disrupting social order," two sources from inside Tibet told Radio Free Asia.

In a video clip posted in October on the Chinese social media platform WeChat, Tsongon Tsering, 29, spoke out against the illegal extraction of sand and gravel mining activity along the Tsaruma River in his village in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture.

"The large-scale and indiscriminate extraction of sand from the river has led to serious soil erosion in the surrounding area and is posing a threat to the

foundations of residents' homes," he said in the video, in which he holds up his government ID card.

After posting that, Tsering was arrested. He was initially sentenced to eight months by the Kyungchu County People's Court on Oct. 27 on charges of "disturbing social order" and "provoking trouble and picking quarrels" after he made the rare public appeal online to authorities.

In January, the Kyungchu County People's Court extended Tsering's prison sentence by eight more months, increasing his total prison sentence to 16 months.

#### Strict surveillance

Tsering's case illustrates 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.

Tsering's parents have been kept under virtual house arrest with strict surveillance, sources said, adding that his mother's health has been impacted due to anxiety and concerns over her son.

Chinese authorities have also placed tight restrictions on movement in the historic Amdo region of Tibet, specifically in the Atsoknb Tsenyi Gon Monastery in Ngaba county, Sichuan province, sources said.

Tsering has since been transferred from Kyungchu county to a prison in Barkham, the prefectural capital of Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, said Tenzin Dawa, director of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, which first reported the news on Thursday.

"The Chinese authorities told Tsongon Tsering that he would be relieved of his prison sentence if he made a statement admitting to the charges that he posted the video online to incite social disorder, but Tsongon and his family rejected this," the first source said.

"They stood by their concerns, stating that the Chinese government is causing major environmental damage in the region," he said. "The authorities are now trying to make Tsongon Tsering's situation more difficult for him."

In December 2024, sources told RFA that Tsering had been held in Kyungchu County Prison since October and that he faced "continued investigation and threats of extended sentencing."

At the time, sources said authorities had indicated to Tsering's family that the eight-month prison sentence was "not final" and said they would "continue to investigate the matter completely before making a conclusive ruling."

#### 'Respect Tibetans' rights'

On Thursday, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, reported that authorities have forbidden Tsering's family from participating in any religious activities during the Tibetan New Year, or Losar, which begins on Feb. 28.

Authorities also have warned Tsering's relatives against speaking out about his case, the center said. The rights group also called on Chinese authorities to "immediately overturn" the conviction and sentence of Tsering and "uphold and respect the fundamental rights of all Tibetans, including human rights defenders and activists, allowing them to freely express their opinions without fear of persecution." 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.

### Tibetan netizens mourn death of 'patriotic singer' Lobsang

20 February 2025, [RFA](#)

**He was frequently detained by authorities for songs that were critical of Chinese policies, sources say.**



*Tibetan singer Lobsang in an undated photo. (Citizen photo)*

Popular Tibetan singer Lobsang, who was frequently detained and interrogated by Chinese authorities for music that was patriotic and critical of Chinese policies, has died following a prolonged illness, according to two sources, one in Tibet and one in exile. He was 39.

Lobsang, who became famous at a young age and produced eight albums, died on Feb. 18 of a liver disease at a hospital in the city of Chengdu in southwest China's Sichuan province, the source in Tibet said, speaking on condition of anonymity for safety reasons.

"Due to political content in some of his lyrics, he was repeatedly summoned for questioning and detained by Chinese authorities," the source said.

Hailing from Kyungchu county in Sichuan province, Lobsang dedicated his life to music, releasing numerous albums, and was suspected of activism by the Chinese government because of the political content in his works, a source in exile told RFA.

Authorities restricted the singer from traveling to Lhasa, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and other regions, he said.

"Though he wasn't imprisoned for extended periods, he was frequently questioned and detained," the source said.

Social media tributes

Following Lobsang's passing, Tibetans inside Tibet, in exile and across China expressed their grief on social media.

"I grew up listening to his songs since childhood," one Tibetan wrote. "I am deeply saddened by the passing of this singer who cared so deeply for the Tibetan people."

On his eight albums and in numerous other recordings, Lobsang sang songs that resonated deeply with Tibetans, such as "Three Camps of Sun and Moon," which referenced the Dalai Lama with the lyrics, "The King of Snow Land, Tenzin Gyatso, coming to Tibet, may his lotus feet remain stable."

His music often touched on Tibet's struggle, such as "Suffering and Happiness of the Snow Land," "World Peace," "Future of Tibet's Children," "Protector," and "Fate of Tibetans."

Due to his powerful lyrics, Tibetans inside Tibet referred to him as "patriotic singer Lobsang."

Another netizen wrote: "His singing was as warm and familiar as a teacher, accompanying us through countless unforgettable times."

A Tibetan inside Tibet, speaking in a WeChat voice chat group, said Lobsang's health fluctuated, sometimes appearing stable, while at other times deteriorating, until he died.

Kunchok Tsering, a Tibetan living in India who collects and archives songs and writings by Tibetan artists in Tibet, said he considers Lobsang to be one of the region's best singers.

"His songs often praise His Holiness the Dalai Lama and reflect love for his country, Tibet, so his courage and lack of fear in creating such music were commendable," Tsering said.

Tsering cited Lobsang's song "Nyi-Dha-Kar Sum," meaning "Sun-Star-Moon," paying homage to Tibet's three spiritual leaders — the sun representing His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Moon symbolizing the Panchen Lama, and the star representing the Karmapa, head of the 900-year-old Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism and one of Tibet's highest-ranking religious figures.

"His lyrics are deeply powerful," he said.

## China is top perpetrator of transnational repression in past one decade

12 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

China accounted for the most number of transnational repression incidents documented by Washington DC-based non-profit organisation Freedom House over 2014-2024, being responsible for fully 22% of them, according to the group's new report released Feb 6. The group said a quarter of the world's countries had engaged in transnational repression – targeting political exiles abroad to silence dissent – in the past decade.

The group said transnational repression—the tactics used by governments to stifle dissent among political exiles in other countries—is a global threat to national sovereignty, security, and human rights. It has documented 1,219 incidents carried out by 48 governments across 103 countries during the period. China has been found to be the most frequent offender, being responsible for 272 recorded incidents, followed by Turkey (157), Tajikistan (92), Russia (86), Egypt (57), Cambodia (55), Turkmenistan (53), Uzbekistan and Iran (47 each), and Belarus (42). They have been highlighted as the 10 most repressive regimes when it comes to carrying out transnational repression.

The report – Ten Years of Data on Transnational Repression – said the worst perpetrators targeted not only individuals but also groups. Governments of countries both democratic and autocratic where dissidents had sought refuge were stated to have collaborated with perpetrator states to facilitate 780 incidents since 2014.

The group said host governments had acted on politically motivated Interpol notices, granted questionable extradition requests, and allowed perpetrators to kidnap and remove individuals from their territories.

The most frequent type of transnational repression incidents was stated to be detention, accounting for 503 instances in the database, while unlawful deportations had occurred 241 times. When perpetrator governments manipulate host-country officials to apprehend and return targeted individuals, the rule of law in host states—including democracies—is degraded, the report said.

The group accused perpetrator governments of weaponizing terrorism allegations, preying on the fears of terrorism in host states to legitimize their cross-border intimidation campaigns. Over 46% of cases since 2014 had involved accusations of terrorism or extremism based on religious affiliation or separatist movements.

The group said transnational repression directly interferes with fundamental freedoms, including the

rights to free speech, assembly, and association while making international travel risky.

Journalists were stated to be prime targets, with the perpetrator governments regularly reaching beyond their borders to intimidate journalists and suppress truthful reporting. The report said authoritarian leaders view independent media and whistleblowers, both at home and abroad, as activists who threaten their power.

The report said some democracies, such as the USA, the UK and Canada had responded to transnational repression by prosecuting or sanctioning perpetrators, and assisting diaspora communities and otherwise adopting new legislation to combat the practice.

The UN Human Rights Council and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) have taken up the issue of protecting exiled dissidents while the G7 will focus on transnational repression as a central issue to address through multilateral action in 2025, the report noted.

Freedom House released its first transnational repression report in 2021.

## China: Draft internet ID measure threatens to tighten online censorship

05 February 2025, [Article 19](#)

**Today, 5 February 2025, Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) and ARTICLE 19 issued an analysis of the proposed Internet ID Measure in China. Although not yet adopted, if enacted, the measure will further restrict online freedom of expression and access to information, hinder the work of human rights defenders, breach international human rights standards, and risk adding to increasingly repressive internet governance norms internationally.**

On 26 July, 2024, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) jointly released a [draft provision](#), the *Management Measure on National Network Identity Authentication Public Service* ('Internet ID Measure'). The Internet ID measures would require internet users to register through the MPS-developed *National Network Identity Authentication Pilot Edition App* ('Internet ID App') using their national identification card and facial recognition. Over 80 apps began trialing the new authentication system within days of the draft's release, including 10 public service platforms and 71 commercial applications. Major platforms such as WeChat, Xiaohongshu (RedNote), Taobao, and Zhaopin were among the early adopters.

'Just like a frog in slowly heating water, citizens in China – including human rights defenders – face gradually tightening restrictions in the online space. The proposed Internet ID Measure represents another

turn of the heat, expanding state control over user identity and making it easier than ever to silence dissent. UN bodies and civil society must act now and urge Beijing to abandon this and other rights-eroding internet laws,' said Shane Yi, researcher for CHRD.

'We have already witnessed how China's Cybersecurity Law has influenced rising digital authoritarianism around the world, in the creeping adoption of cyber sovereignty data regulations and pro-surveillance real name registration requirements, among others. The adoption of this centralised approach to identity verification risks further emulation of repressive digital norms as China pushes to remold internet governance in its own repressive image,' said Michael Caster, ARTICLE 19's Head of Global China Programme.

The Internet ID Measure consists of 16 articles, which the MPS and CAC claim are designed to strengthen the implementation of China's 2017 Cybersecurity Law, among other provisions, including provisions from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), which all require varying forms of identity verification.

The new Internet ID Measure extends centralised control over the digital spaces from the point of internet connection. When users register on the Internet ID App and use the web number and certificate to access other apps and services, they grant the government access to their entire digital trail. This centralised identity verification system effectively provides the MPS and CAC with enhanced capability to monitor China's 1.1 billion internet users, as well as people from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and other foreign nationals once they register on the Internet ID App.

If adopted, the measure would increase state surveillance and reduce anonymity, putting already at-risk human rights defenders at even greater threat of reprisal. It will centralise control to further aid censorship of unwanted dissenting voices online. It provides for no accountability to address myriad privacy concerns, and risks extraterritorial applications. The proposed Internet ID Measure is at odds with international human rights norms.

CHRD and ARTICLE 19 call on China to revise the laws and regulations on internet governance and cybersecurity to align with international human rights standards.

## MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

### China drills 'ultra-deep' oil well to help shore up energy needs

22 February 2025, [SCMP](#), Kandy Wong

The Shenditake 1 well, in Xinjiang's Tarim oilfield, reaches a depth of 10,910 metres

China is producing oil and gas from a 10,910-metre well – the second-deepest hole ever drilled on Earth – China National Petroleum Corporation has announced.

The Shenditake 1 well, in the Tarim oilfield in western China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, is the first "ultra-deep" well in Asia, Xinhua reported on Thursday.

"We took 270 days to drill down to around 10,000 metres, but then it took more than 300 days to open up the last 900 metres," well manager Wang Chunsheng told the state news agency.

Wang said challenges faced by the team when the drill reached 10,000 metres included instability of the well wall, damage to drilling tools, and underground leaks. Chinese oil giants have stepped up domestic oil and gas exploration efforts due to national energy security concerns.

The world's second-largest economy imports most of its crude oil, mainly from Russia and Saudi Arabia. Last year, it imported 553 million tonnes, down 1.9 per cent year on year. Domestic production totalled 212.8 million tonnes, up 1.8 per cent.

The Tarim exploration, which started in May 2023, revealed deep reserves of oil and gas, as well as China's technological advancement.

Researchers will produce a sectional view of the area's geology based on core samples, debris and data from the drilling to aid further exploration and oil and gas extraction.

Xinhua said the team working on the well has developed drilling machines and equipment capable of reaching a depth of 12,000 metres, with its home-grown techniques helping to enhance China's energy autonomy and security.

"With the support of these tools and gadgets, China National Petroleum Corporation has drilled through 12 layers of rock, finally ending at a rock formation from 500 million years ago," it said.

Russia's 12,262-metre Kola Superdeep Borehole SG-3, drilled for scientific research purposes and completed in 1989, is the deepest human-made hole on Earth.

## China introduces stricter rules on military information dissemination on Internet

13 February 2025, [ANI](#)

China introduces stricter rules on military information dissemination on Internet

China has introduced new regulations aimed at tightening control over the dissemination of military information online, a move that could limit access to key sources for monitoring the country's rapidly growing military, CNN reported. The regulations, set to take effect on March 1, are part of China's ongoing efforts to modernise and strengthen its People's Liberation Army (PLA) to rival the military power of the United States. The new rules, outlined by China's National Administration of State Secrets Protection, will govern internet military information activities, requiring strict supervision and management to ensure alignment with national defence priorities and security.

The National Administration of State Secrets Protections, in a notice on 'Administrative Measures for the Dissemination of Military Information on the Internet,' said, "These measures apply to those who engage in Internet military information dissemination activities within the territory of the People's Republic of China, establish Internet military website platforms, website platform military columns, military accounts, etc., and implement supervision and management of Internet military information dissemination." It added, "The management of the dissemination of military information on the Internet should adhere to the correct political direction, public opinion orientation, and value orientation, and adhere to legal norms, comprehensive management, military-civilian coordination, and security and confidentiality, serve national defence and military construction, serve to strengthen the military and win battles, maintain the good image of the people's army, and safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests."

National Administration of State Secrets Protection further said that the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission, the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Central Military Commission, the Cyberspace Administration of China, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the State Administration of Radio and Television, the State Administration of Science,

Technology and Industry for National Defence, and the State Bureau of Secrets Protection are responsible for relevant work on the management of the dissemination of military information on the Internet in accordance with their respective responsibilities.

## China-East Turkestan

### Uyghur activist Dolkun Isa raises alarm over China's growing influence on UNHRC

27 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



*Dolkun Isa speaking at a conference in Japan (Photo/Reuters)*

## China in the Region

As the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) entered its third day, prominent Uyghur activist Dolkun Isa issued a warning about China's growing influence within the international body charged with promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.

Isa, a former president of the World Uyghur Congress, claims Beijing is leveraging its economic and diplomatic power to shield itself from accountability for human rights violations, particularly against the Uyghurs in East Turkistan. "Authoritarian regimes like China have severely undermined the UNHRC, using it as a platform to present a completely misleading picture of the human rights situation in their countries," Isa stated, according to Asian News International (ANI).

The activist highlighted a 2022 incident as evidence of China's influence, when a resolution addressing the Uyghur crisis failed despite support from 17 nations. The resolution was defeated by 19 countries, many of which receive substantial economic assistance from China.

Isa expressed particular disappointment in Muslim-majority nations that have remained silent on China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims. "China's discriminatory and genocidal practices against Uyghur Muslims are allowed to go unchallenged," he remarked.

The credibility of the UNHRC has suffered in recent years, according to Isa, partly due to the U.S. withdrawal from the Council, which created a power vacuum that China and other authoritarian governments have exploited. He warned that "a new 'human rights' framework shaped under China's



leadership will endanger countries that uphold democratic principles.”

In a call to action, Isa urged democratic nations to counter Beijing’s influence and work to restore integrity to global human rights mechanisms. “It is vital for every enlightened government to contribute to reshaping the global human rights landscape and reinstating its credibility,” he concluded.

Meanwhile, the opening day of the UNHRC session on February 24 saw the Tibetan Community of Switzerland and Liechtenstein (TCSL) stage a protest outside UN headquarters in Geneva. More than 80 demonstrators, including Chinese Christians and members of various Tibetan support groups, gathered to condemn the human rights situation in Tibet under Chinese rule.

Phuntsok Topgyal, UN Advocacy Officer at the Tibet Bureau Geneva, addressed protesters and acknowledged Switzerland’s role in human rights advocacy. He congratulated Swiss Ambassador Jürg Lauber on his January 2025 election as President of the UN Human Rights Council and welcomed the Swiss Federal Council’s recent approval of a report examining the situation of Tibetans in Switzerland and the transnational repression they face.

The 58th session of the UNHRC, which began on February 24, will continue until April 4, 2025.

### Thailand: ‘Deportation’ of Uyghurs to China ‘unimaginably cruel’

27 February 2025, [Amnesty International](#)

Responding to reports that a group of about 40 Uyghurs who have been detained in Thailand since 2014 were today deported to China, Amnesty International’s China Director Sarah Brooks said:

“The forcible return of these men, or indeed any Uyghurs, to China would place them at risk of serious human rights violations. We urge the government of Thailand to clarify their status.

“Their ordeal is already chilling: they fled repression in China, only to find themselves arbitrarily detained in Thailand for more than a decade. The fact that they now may be forcibly returned to a country where Uyghur and other non-Han ethnic groups in Xinjiang have faced torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance is unimaginably cruel.

“The Thai government should have protected these men, but instead it has wilfully exposed them to these grave risks. In doing so it has ignored [pleas from Amnesty International](#) and United Nations (UN) experts who urged it not to violate the internationally and domestically recognized principle of non-refoulement. And this just as Thailand has been elected to the UN Human Rights Council.

“We now call on the governments of Thailand and China to disclose the whereabouts of these individuals, and – if they continue to be in custody – to ensure that the full spectrum of their rights is respected, including their right to be free from torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

“Many of these men are in extremely poor health after enduring years in detention. They must have access to appropriate and adequate medical care. We call for an end to their ordeal, and urge authorities to uphold their right to freedom of movement. It is past time that they are allowed to safely rejoin their families.”

### Background

The men deported today are among about 300 Uyghurs who were apprehended by the Thai authorities on 13 March 2014 after they had fled persecution and discrimination in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. A total of 109 people from the group were deported to China in July 2015.

Amnesty International has documented massive and systematic abuses by the Chinese government against Uyghurs in Xinjiang – including in internment camps, where over a million people have been arbitrarily detained.

In a **2021 report**, Amnesty found that the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture and persecution against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

In a **letter to the Thai government** in January 2025, a group of UN experts said 23 of 48 men remaining in detention were reportedly suffering from serious health conditions including “diabetes, kidney dysfunction, paralysis of the lower body, skin diseases, gastrointestinal illnesses and heart and lung conditions”.

Thailand is bound by the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the transfer of persons to any country or jurisdiction where they would face a real risk of serious human rights violations.

### China says certain political forces ‘spreading lies’ about Xinjiang to disrupt order

27 February 2025, [Reuters](#)

Certain political forces have been “spreading lies” concerning the Chinese northwestern region of Xinjiang to disrupt order, China’s foreign ministry said on Thursday.

People of all ethnic groups including Uyghurs enjoy socio-economic and political rights and interest as citizens, ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said when asked about 48 Uyghur activists believed were deported from Thailand to China.

Lin instead referred to 40 repatriated Chinese that state news agency Xinhua said had been "bewitched by criminal organisations" and were stranded in Thailand.

He did not confirm if the 40 Chinese citizens were Uyghurs.

### Uyghur historian sentenced to 17 years in China for research on Turkic identity

22 February 2025, [ANI](#)

Ghojaniyaz Yollugh Tekin, a well-known historian specializing in Uyghur studies and place names is facing a 17-year prison sentence due to his writings, according to a report by Radio Free Asia (RFA). Ghojaniyaz Yollugh Tekin, 59, worked as an educator at the Aksu Education Institute located in Aksu city in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, China. His academic work concentrated on Uyghur toponymy, exploring the linguistic development of place names and the historical and geographical contexts behind them, RFA reported.

Tekin was arrested in 2017 as part of the Chinese government's sweeping campaign against Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang, according to the data of detained Uyghur intellectuals by researcher Abduweli Ayup based in Norway, cited RFA report.

In late 2018, he received his prison sentence due to his research, writings, and beliefs asserting that Uyghurs belong to the Turkic world rather than being part of the Chinese identity, as indicated by Ayup's findings, stated RFA report. RFA report highlighted that he was among an estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs, including scholars, educators, cultural leaders, and notable business figures, who were compelled to enter re-education camps.

Chinese state security agents frequently harassed Tekin after he gained prominence for his writings on sensitive historical matters regarding the Uyghurs' ties to the Turkic world, according to his accounts, RFA reported.

RFA report revealed that his professional peers often referred to him as "Aksu's Turghun Almas," alluding to one of the most significant Uyghur historians of the 20th century who disputed China's assertion that the Uyghur homeland has been part of Chinese territory since ancient times in his book, "The Uyghurs."

Following the book's release in the late 1980s, it was banned by China, and Almas was prohibited from publishing any further works for the remainder of his life, RFA report noted. The oppression of Uyghurs in China, particularly in the Xinjiang region, is marked by widespread human rights

violations, such as mass detentions in "re-education camps," forced labour, and extensive surveillance. The Chinese government has been accused of suppressing religious freedoms, destroying cultural heritage, and enforcing assimilation policies that restrict the use of the Uyghur language, religious practices, and cultural traditions. Reports have emerged detailing family separations, coerced indoctrination, and the destruction of Uyghur heritage sites. International organisations and human rights advocates have described these actions as genocide and crimes against humanity.

### UN abruptly cancels Uyghur scholar's speech at Paris language forum

25 February 2025, [RFA](#), Alim Seytoff

#### Organizers gave no reason for the decision, which they said was 'beyond our control.'

The United Nations on Monday abruptly cancelled a speech by a prominent exiled Uyghur scholar and linguist barely 24 hours before he was to address a Paris conference on language technologies, he told Radio Free Asia.

In an email to Norway-based researcher Abduweli Ayup shown to RFA Uyghur, organizers provided no reason for rescinding the invitation to speak at the Language Technologies for All, or LT4ALL, conference, under the umbrella of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO.

But Ayup said the reason was likely because he questioned an earlier presenter about protections for the Uyghur language in China, where some 12 million Uyghurs live in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

He and other Uyghur activists say Beijing is trying to eradicate their mother tongue. They say it is but one aspect of Chinese efforts to "Sinicize" Uyghurs — a Turkic people who are distinct from Han Chinese — through a process of cultural assimilation.

On Feb. 12, the LT4ALL organizing committee sent Ayup a letter inviting him to serve as a chair/rapporteur for an afternoon session scheduled for Feb. 25 entitled "Education, Inclusion, Innovation" at U.N. Headquarters in Paris, France. He accepted and was added to the program.

But on Monday, Feb. 24, organizers sent him an email saying they had been "unable to secure approval" to include his presentation in the program, and that they were "informed at the last minute, and this decision is beyond our control."

"We had hoped to find a better solution, but unfortunately, we have no other option at this time," the letter said. "As a result, we will not be able to include your presentation in the published file or program."

#### 'Threatened and disgusted'

Afterwards, in posts to the social media platform X, Ayup called the decision “disgusting.”

He suggested it was made in response to his questioning a day earlier of a presenter, who he described as “a Chinese language activist ... [that] is a gov official [who] works for [state media outlet] Hunan TV.”

Ayup said the presenter had discussed a language museum in China during his session, after which Ayup asked him whether it contained information about the Uyghur language and whether Uyghur language activists are safe in China.

“After those two questions, I was questioned by the Chinese delegation,” he said. “I felt threatened, I felt disgusted and disappointed. I believe my presentation was cancelled because of the questions I had asked from the Chinese speaker.”

Ayup did not provide evidence in support of his claims. But he noted that the panel he was listening to included a representative of iFLYTEK — a partially state-owned Chinese information technology company that the U.S. sanctioned in October 2019 for its alleged role in mass surveillance and human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

Ayup elaborated further in a post to X, accusing UNESCO of having “welcomed the criminal [and] kicked human rights defenders out” of the conference. “iFLYTEK is the company [that] helped [the] Chinese regime to arrest over [1] million Uyghurs,” he wrote in the post.

#### **Family suffering**

Ayup is the founder of Uyghur Hjelp, a Norway-based Uyghur advocacy and aid organization which maintains a list of detained Uyghur intellectuals.

In May 2021, RFA learned that Chinese authorities had sentenced Ayup’s brother and sister to several years in jail in Xinjiang, allegedly for failing to demonstrate loyalty to authorities as expected. Sources with knowledge of the situation, however, said that they were arrested because of his activities in exile.

The confirmation of the sentence came on the heels of an RFA report confirming that Ayup’s niece, Mihray Erkin, had died at the Yanbulaq internment camp while being investigated by state security police in Kashgar prefecture.

Ayup’s case is not the first time the U.N. has blocked a Uyghur activist from speaking at an event it organized. In April 2017, Dolkun Isa, a founder of the exile World Uyghur Congress and member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, was forced from a forum at U.N. premises in New York by security guards without explanation.

Isa’s removal prompted a coalition of human rights groups and organizations representing minority peoples around the world to condemn the act, calling it an expression of “domination” by an unnamed U.N. member state — an apparent reference to China.

Attempts by RFA to contact UNESCO for comment on its decision to rescind Ayup’s invitation to the LT4ALL conference went unanswered by the time of publication.

But on Thursday, UNESCO’s senior press officer, Clare O’Hagan said in an email that the organization regretted that no space had been available to accommodate Ayup’s “scientific poster,” though it was possible on the following day.

“This logistical setback did not prevent him from participating in the Conference as such from Monday (23rd) to Wednesday (25th),” the statement said.

The statement also noted that Ayup was given the floor whenever he requested it to ask questions directed at Chinese speakers during round tables on Monday and Wednesday when a range of topics, including the Uyghur language, were discussed.

#### **The deepest well in Asia drilled in Xinjiang**

21 February 2025, [PIME Asia News](#)

**China announces that drilling reached a depth of 10,910 metres in the Tarim Basin, opening a new frontier for hydrocarbons and deep Earth research. The project epitomises the impressive growth of China’s oil industry in the traditional Uyghur homeland undergoing forced sinicisation.**

The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) yesterday announced that it has completed the drilling of the deepest vertical well in Asia.

Located in the Tarim Basin, a desert area in Xinjiang province, it reached a depth of 10,910 metres, becoming the second deepest in the world on land, after the Kola Superdeep Borehole made by the Soviet Union on the border with Norway, which reached 12,226 metres, far from its target of 15,000 metres.

Located in the heart of the Taklimakan Desert, the well is known as “Shenditake 1”. Notwithstanding the quest for oil and gas resources, the well is a scientific exploration project designed to advance the study of the Earth’s evolution and deep-Earth geology.

After work began on 30 May 2023, it took more than 580 days to reach 10,910 metres, with more than half of the time (about 300 days) spent on the last 910 metres.

The well went through 12 geological formations, reaching layers of rock that date back more than 500 million years.

Chinese scientists are also working on the first complete deep stratigraphic profile of the country through the systematic analysis of core samples at the level of 10,000 metres below ground level.

“This marks the first discovery of oil and gas beneath 10,000 metres on land globally, significantly expanding the scope of ultra-deep oil and gas exploration,” said

Wang Chunsheng, chief expert of the Tarim Oilfield of China National Petroleum Co.

More than 300 wells deeper than 8,000 metres have already been drilled in the Tarim Basin, indicating the importance of this oil field in advancing technologies for ultra-deep oil and gas exploration.

It is also important to underline that all this is taking place in Xinjiang province, the homeland of Muslim Uyghurs, who are the victims of Chinese repression.

China's oil industry, which is developing extensively in the area, is in fact one of the most powerful tools of the region's sinicisation.

State-owned mining companies have in fact been accused of using forced Uyghur labour, disguised behind slogans about "poverty alleviation".

### DeepSeek and other AI applications to revive millennia-old Xinjiang murals

18 February 2025, [Global Times](#), Chen Xi and Xu Liuliu

A new era for cultural heritage

*Editor's Note: With the rapid development of AI tools such as DeepSeek, ChatGPT, and Doubao, these cutting-edge technologies are integrating with and influencing the protection, inheritance, and innovation of traditional Chinese culture in an unprecedented manner. These AI tools are not only capable of digitally processing a vast quantity of traditional cultural resources, but they also leverage 3D reconstruction technology to virtually repair and restore damaged cultural relics. This enables precious historical artifacts to be presented to the world in their complete form.*

*In this new series, the Global Times delves into the latest and most advanced AI tool applications in China, with an aim to explore how these tools can more effectively promote and preserve China's traditional culture and present it to the world.*

*An expert conducts restoration work on the murals at the Kizil caves in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Photo: Courtesy of the Kizil Caves Research Institute*

A groundbreaking initiative is underway to restore and revitalize the ancient murals of the Kizil Thousand-Buddha Caves in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. On Friday, the project was officially launched in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang, aiming to use advanced technologies like AI to address the long-standing challenges of preserving these invaluable cultural relics.



"The significance of these efforts extends beyond mere restoration. The murals of the Kizil caves are a vivid record of the ancient Silk Road's prosperity and cultural diversity, making them an invaluable resource for studying the history, religion, and art of ancient Xinjiang," Li Qingming, director of the Kizil Caves Research Institute, told the Global Times.

#### Hi-tech empowered relics

The Kizil caves, dating back to the late 3rd century, are among China's earliest and most extensive Buddhist cave complexes. These caves, with their richly detailed murals depicting the life of Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, are not only a testament to ancient artistic brilliance, but are also a crucial link to the cultural exchanges along the ancient Silk Road.

However, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Western expeditions plundered a large number of exquisite murals from the Kizil caves, resulting in the damage and loss of many mural sections.

Meanwhile, centuries of natural erosion and human intervention have left many of these murals in a precarious state, with smoke damage and missing sections compromising their integrity, the Guangming Daily reported.

Zhao Li, a research fellow at the institute, who has dedicated over 30 years to mural conservation, highlighted the key challenges: Identifying and digitally restoring smoke-covered murals and accurately recognizing and completing missing sections using AI.

She told the Global Times that, to tackle these issues, the project employs a combination of cutting-edge

technologies. One team from the School of Art and Archaeology of Zhejiang University will use terahertz time-domain spectroscopy to non-invasively detect and identify the color layers of smoke-covered murals in Cave 161, enabling virtual restoration.

Meanwhile, a digital group will leverage AI models and thought-chain strategies to complete the restoration of damaged murals in Cave 38. The whole project is scheduled to conclude in late May.

Zhao noted that while AI models excel at recognizing geometric patterns and architectural designs, they still require further training to accurately identify curved lines and human figures in the murals. However, the newly developed DeepSeek model, with its enhanced capabilities, offers hope for more precise and efficient restoration.

Wang Chaoyang, the chief architect of the digital culture laboratory for the project, told the Global Times that the project will follow a three-step approach: From technological breakthroughs to refining the tools and finally to cultivating a model for the restoration of damaged murals and the identification of smoke-stained murals.

He said that as the project progresses, the hope is that the tools and techniques developed will not only benefit Xinjiang, but also be applicable globally, showcasing a "Xinjiang model" in cultural heritage preservation.

#### **Way forward**

The restoration of the Kizil caves is just one example of how technology, particularly AI, is revolutionizing the field of archaeology. Across the globe, archaeologists are leveraging AI to unlock the secrets of the past in ways that were once unimaginable.

For instance, AI-driven image recognition and data analysis are being used to identify and classify artifacts, predict archaeological sites, and even decipher ancient scripts, including the oracle bone script unearthed in the well-known Yinxu Ruins in Central China's Henan Province.

In China, students are now taking courses like "AI Archaeology," where they learn to use AI to identify mold on paper relics or determine the age of bronze artifacts.

The potential is vast. Ruan Yongbin, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences once pointed out, noting that among the vast number of materials collected by archaeologists, less than 10 percent are actually used for research. While AI can change this by efficiently processing and analyzing these underutilized resources.

Moreover, the trend toward interdisciplinary collaboration is gaining momentum. Universities in China are offering courses that combine archaeology with AI, preparing the next generation of scholars to bridge the gap between technology and cultural heritage.

As experts continue to explore the potential of AI in archaeology, the hope is that these technologies will not only restore ancient relics but also deepen our understanding of human history. As Li puts it, "the integration of technology and culture is not just about preserving the past; it's about ensuring that our cultural heritage continues to thrive in the future."

#### **Uyghur, Hong Kong diaspora urges Irish govt to prioritise human rights in talks with Chinese Foreign Minister**

17 February 2025, [ANI](#)

Uyghurs and Hong Kongers living in Ireland issued an open letter to the Irish government on Monday, urging them to adopt a human-rights-based approach during their discussions with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Irish journalist Finbarr Bermingham shared the letter on social media platform X. The letter highlighted concerns about transnational repression, genocide, and politically-motivated imprisonment by the Chinese government, particularly regarding the Uyghur and Hong Kong diaspora communities in Ireland.

They emphasised the increasing surveillance and harassment by Chinese state actors against individuals critical of the regime, citing the fear that many dissidents felt, even in Ireland. It said that the fear of retribution affected their ability to openly protest or express dissent without concern for the safety of their families, both in Ireland and abroad. It also underscored the Irish Government's responsibility to protect its citizens and residents from such threats, noting that transnational repression was becoming a growing concern across the EU.

In their letter, the diaspora communities reminded the Irish Government of its historical commitment to human rights. They called on the government to challenge Chinese policies that were leading to the ongoing atrocities in Xinjiang, including the mass detention and forced assimilation of Uyghurs, as well as the suppression of freedoms in Hong Kong. They also demanded the release of political prisoners such as Jimmy Lai, the publisher of Apple Daily, and Professor Rahile Dawut, an Uyghur academic jailed for their activism. Furthermore, they urged the Irish Government to call for the release of Swedish citizen Gui Minhai, who had been detained in China for nearly a decade.

The letter also expressed concern over Ireland's China policy, especially regarding trade relations. It criticised the prioritisation of economic interests over human rights, urging the government to make clear that diplomatic ties with China should not come at the expense of supporting oppressed

communities.

It specifically pointed to Hong Kong's role in facilitating the Chinese regime's transshipment of goods that violated EU sanctions on Russia. The letter concluded by appealing to the Irish Government to stand firm on its commitment to human rights, reminding leaders that Ireland had a proud tradition of advocating for justice on the global stage. It called for the Irish government to demonstrate moral leadership in ensuring that human rights were prioritised over financial gain during Minister Wang Yi's visit.

### China's new AI app DeepSeek is trying to erase our genocide from history, Uyghurs war

13 February 2025, [Yahoo News](#), Alexander Bulter

DeepSeek has had a meteoric rise in the growing world of AI, becoming a strong competitor to US rival ChatGPT.

But for Xinjiang's Uyghurs, who are facing an alleged genocide, the rollout of China's newest chatbot was just another way to remove their 12 million people from history.

"The Chinese government is trying to erase the Uyghur people by employing AI to mislead the public," Rahima Mahmut, who fled China in 2000, told *The Independent*.

Ms Mahmut, who has not heard from her family for eight years, and learnt her brother was locked up in a mass-internment camp for two of those, had reason for concern.

The "world-leading AI assistant", as it describes itself, was designed to give "helpful and harmless responses" and has been downloaded over three million times worldwide.

But when asked "are the Uyghurs facing a genocide", the chatbot asserted the claim was a "severe slander of China's domestic affairs" and "completely unfounded".

"We firmly oppose any country, organisation, or individual using so-called human rights issues to interfere in China's internal affairs," it said.

For Ms Mahmut, "so-called human rights issues" meant fleeing her hometown of Ghulia after seeing her neighbours and friends locked up en masse in 1997.

She was escaping Beijing's "strike hard" campaign which saw thousands of arrests, as well as executions, in response to a growing separatist movement across Xinjiang.

Since then, the US, UK, Canada and Netherlands have accused China of committing genocide in the region, where millions of Uyghurs, mostly Muslim, live.

The declarations followed several reports that found evidence of China sterilising women, interning people in camps, and separating children from their families.

In 2018, a UN human rights committee claimed China was holding up to a million people in "counterextremism centres" in the northwestern province.

Dr Adrian Zenz, a leading expert in Beijing's Xinjiang policies, said China was doing this to "eradicate" the Uyghurs as an ethnic group and extinguish their dream of independence.

"They are culturally and religiously very different to the rest of China, they are a Turkic people, not Chinese, which is a problem for Beijing," Dr Zenz told *The Independent*.

In the 1990s, Uyghurs saw their Turkic neighbours like Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan gain independence from Moscow after the fall of the Soviet Union.

This inspired a wave of nationalism across Xinjiang, and Uyghurs began talking about greater autonomy from Beijing, Dr Zenz said.

"This spooked the Chinese authorities, so they started to crack down on Uyghur society," he said.

The crackdown initially included shutting down mosques, arresting religious leaders and flooding Xinjiang with migrant Han-Chinese workers.

These policies led to a vicious cycle of violence and today's policies which have seen China accused of genocide, Dr Zenz explained.

China has claimed the campaign, and ongoing crackdown, was needed to prevent terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.

DeepSeek said China was committed to the "social harmony" and "sustained development" of Xinjiang.

Zumretary Arkin, 31, has not heard from her family since 2017, and like many Uyghurs, is aware her relatives are frequently detained and interrogated.

So to see DeepSeek rewrite her homeland's history was "deeply worrying" to her and, like Ms Mahmut, she said it represented a new way for China to erase Uyghur history.

"This sort of technology is replacing Google. It is where people go for research and information. This is deeply worrying," Ms Arkin told *The Independent*.

"We have to remember DeepSeek is controlled by the Chinese government, and they are using it as another way to erase the Uyghur people," she said.

Dr William Matthews, who researches China's technological rise, said Beijing's censorship of DeepSeek should be "extremely concerning" to us all.

"This app adds to China's ability to spread censorship around the world. It should be concerning to us all as it becomes a popular platform," he told *The Independent*.

"It is directly linked to the interests of the Chinese state. There is an inherent danger in something like this.

"These apps are extremely powerful and influential and will become the way we find out information."

Ms Mahmut, who now spends her time in London making Uyghur music while reflecting on the slow strangulation of her culture, said: “The assertion that the claim of Uyghur genocide is ‘completely unfounded’ is not only false. It is an insult to the hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities who have been subjected to horrific atrocities.”

### “Lonely Uyghur” and Friends Protest China’s Vice-Premier’s Visit to the Netherlands

12 February 2025, [Bitter Winter](#), Abdurehim Gheni Uyghur



[Uyghurs](#) and others protesting the visit of Vice Premier Ding.

“Bitter Winter” readers are familiar with the “Lonely Uyghur” protesting in The Hague. He tells the story of his new protest initiative—and of an old one.

On the evening of January 20th, while I was watching TV at home, I received a call from a Dutch friend, who supports my activism against the Chinese government. He informed me that Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang would be making a two-day state visit to the Netherlands on January 22nd and 23rd. He then sent me a related news article from a government website via WhatsApp. I immediately visited the website to review the details of Ding Xuexiang’s visit.

King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands was scheduled to receive Ding Xuexiang at his palace in The Hague on the evening of Wednesday, January 22nd. On Thursday, January 23rd, Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof was to host Ding Xuexiang for a dinner reception at the government building. Their discussions would cover geopolitical developments, including the war in Ukraine, climate change, trade, healthcare, energy, and other issues.

With only two days left until Ding Xuexiang’s arrival in the Netherlands, I immediately contacted Tsering Jampa, the president of the Dutch Tibet Support Organization, and we began urgent preparations for a demonstration. Although we applied to the Dutch Prime Minister’s Office to hold a protest in front of the building where Ding Xuexiang was to be received, our request was denied. Instead, we were permitted to

demonstrate at Church Square, 500 meters away, directly opposite the Chinese embassy in The Hague.

On the afternoon of January 23rd, from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM, we held our demonstration against Ding Xuexiang’s visit to the Netherlands. Despite the cold, rainy, and windy weather, we stood firm. The demonstrators carried the blue flag of East Turkestan with the crescent moon and star, as well as the flags of Tibet, Southern Mongolia, Hong Kong, and Canton. We shouted slogans such as “Chinese government, stop the genocide in East Turkestan!”, “Independence for East Turkestan!”, “Independence for Tibet!”, and “Stop the Chinese government’s infiltration of the Netherlands!”

During the protest, we issued statements condemning the Chinese government’s human rights violations. I, Abdurehim Gheni, called on Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof to raise the case of my 19 missing family members during his meeting with Ding Xuexiang. I also warned against the political and moral failure of prioritizing trade over human rights in a democratic country like the Netherlands. I urged the Dutch government to take a stronger stance against China’s atrocities in East Turkestan.

The Dutch Parliament was the first in Europe to recognize China’s crimes in East Turkestan as “genocide and crimes against humanity” on February 25, 2021. Given this recognition, I argued that it was wrong for King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Dick Schoof to meet with Chinese leaders, as doing so would send the wrong message both to the world and to China.

Half an hour before the demonstration ended, angry protesters gathered near the government building. Then, Tibetan activists staged a short theatrical performance titled “The Confrontation Between Dick Schoof and Xi Jinping.” In the scene, a young Tibetan man, wearing a headscarf resembling Xi Jinping, shook hands with another young Tibetan wearing a Dick Schoof mask—his hands covered in blood. Three Tibetan women sat before them, crying and holding their children, who lay lifeless in pools of blood. The emotional performance deeply moved the protesters, bystanders, and even the police officers who were maintaining order.

Xi Jinping’s likeness in the performance was so realistic that, even though I knew it was just a mask, I couldn’t contain my rage—I punched and spat at that cursed figure’s ominous face. Though it was symbolic, this act expressed my deep anger against that character. The raw intensity of my anger electrified the protest, stirring excitement among demonstrators and passersby alike. For the first time in a long while, I felt a small sense of relief from my anguish.

Four years earlier, while protesting in front of the Chinese embassy in the Netherlands and demanding answers about my 19 missing family members, I

hung Xi Jinping's picture—the killer of Uyghurs and mastermind of the Uyghur genocide—next to the “Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Netherlands” sign on the embassy fence. Using a microphone, I shouted at the Chinese embassy: “Hey Xi Jinping, you executioner! Why do you kill millions of Uyghurs? Why do you commit genocide in East Turkestan? Come here, arrest me, and put me in a concentration camp—torture me too! I am here today to hold you accountable!”



Four years ago, the author protesting in front of the Chinese Embassy.

As I struck Xi Jinping's picture with a stick and spat on it, I vented my unbearable pain. At that exact moment, the Chinese Consul General's car was waiting for the embassy gate to open. Without hesitation, I ran in front of the ambassador's car and stood my ground. “Hey Chinese officials, why do you commit genocide in East Turkestan? Where are my 19 missing family members? Why can't I talk to them on the phone? Answer me!”

I blocked the car, demanding answers. No one dared to step out. In my rage, I even tried to open the door to pull the ambassador out, but he quickly reversed and fled. When I attempted to enter the Chinese embassy while shouting my demands, security guards stopped me. Dutch police then arrived and arrested me, releasing me two hours later with a €1,000 fine. Even during my brief detention, I felt no regret—only satisfaction. I had managed to create fear in Xi's subordinates.

Sixteen years ago, on July 6, 2009—the second day of the Urumqi massacre—we protested in front of the Chinese embassy in the Netherlands to express our fury at the Chinese government. Enraged Uyghurs hurled stones at the embassy walls. I, too, threw a stone, and with a perfect strike, I knocked down the Chinese state emblem hanging above the entrance. At that moment, I felt an indescribable joy. Though I was among the Uyghurs detained by police for 24 hours, the punishment was worth it—I was elated. To this day, I have never forgotten that feeling.

It may seem absurd that I punched and spat at the image of Xi Jinping during the protest on January 23, 2025. No one physically attacks a statue or a picture.

However, the sinister face of Xi Jinping reminded me of other notorious Chinese executioners—Sheng Shicai, Wang Zhen, and Mao Zedong. My boundless anger surged uncontrollably.

If the real Xi Jinping stood before me, I know I would explode with rage. I believe that those who, like me, have suffered under his tyranny understand this feeling all too well.

## Uyghurs mark 28 years since Ghulja violence, condemn ongoing repression

08 February 2025, [VOA](#), Kasim Kashgar

The first week of February is marked by grief for Zubayra Shamseden not only because she lost loved ones nearly three decades ago, she says, but because China's repressive policies toward Uyghurs continue.

"I have been commemorating this day and protesting for the past 28 years, every Feb. 5," Shamseden told VOA. "The Ghulja massacre in 1997 was the beginning of today's ongoing genocide of Uyghurs."

Many protesters were killed by the Chinese armed forces that day in what Shamseden describes as a violent Chinese government crackdown on a peaceful Uyghur protest in Ghulja, a city in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang. During subsequent crackdowns, she also lost her brother, Sadirdin, and her nephew, Hemmat Muhammet.

In the aftermath, another brother was sentenced to life in prison.

"The Chinese government should release all prisoners, including my brother, who were unjustly imprisoned," she told VOA.

### Outset of violence

In recent years, China's policy toward Uyghurs in Xinjiang has drawn global attention, with the U.S. officially labeling China's actions as genocide. The United Nations has raised alarms, warning that China's conduct may constitute crimes against humanity, including mass detentions, forced labor and other abuses. Beijing, which refers to the 1997 crackdown as "the Yining incident" — a measured police response to an unfolding "riot" — has dismissed these claims as "sheer falsehoods" driven by U.S.-led anti-China forces.

Now Chinese outreach coordinator for the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project, Shamseden led a demonstration Wednesday outside the Chinese Embassy in Washington. Joined by a dozen activists, she marked the anniversary of what she and many others refer to as the Ghulja Massacre.

Recalling the violence of that day, Shamseden said a few hundred unarmed Uyghur youths marched through Ghulja, calling for basic rights.

"They took to the streets peacefully and unarmed, asking the government to respect their Islamic



religious freedom and Uyghur cultural practices," said Shamseden, a former vice president of the World Uyghur Congress.

The youths also called for the release of previously "arrested leaders of their gatherings, because the Chinese authorities didn't allow them to gather for Meshrep," she said.

Meshrep, a traditional Uyghur community gathering, has been recognized by UNESCO as part of Uyghur intangible cultural heritage since 2010.

Some Meshrep organizers, Shamseden said, had previously been arrested despite initial government approval to hold Meshrep gatherings.

Speaking out about a drug crisis among fellow youths in the region had been the purpose of their gatherings.

"The Uyghur youth in Ghulja sought to address the growing heroin addiction crisis that spread in the early 1990s," Shamseden said. "They turned to Meshrep — traditional gatherings that included sports, music, performances, and other forms of entertainment — to help young Uyghurs struggling with addiction and alcohol."

Officials in Beijing, however, soon deemed the gatherings a threat. In August 1995, key organizers were arrested, prompting protests in Ghulja. Authorities responded by banning Meshrep and cracking down on other Uyghur-led initiatives.

Uyghurs were later barred from holding events of any kind.

#### Different perspective

Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, described the protest as "not a so-called massacre, but a serious incident of beating, smashing, and looting" carried out by a burgeoning terrorist group.

"Xinjiang was once a major area where extremist groups infiltrated and carried out violent terrorist activities," Liu said, adding that China's measures in the region have been aimed at countering terror-based insurgency within the framework of Chinese law.

A 1997 Human Rights Watch report, however, linked the crackdown to a secret Chinese government directive known as "Document No. 7." Issued in March 1996 by the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the document laid out measures to strengthen control over Xinjiang, including restrictions on religious and cultural activities, increased military presence and tighter security enforcement.

The Washington-based Campaign for Uyghurs described the Chinese government crackdown on protesters as a massacre, stating that the policies behind that bloodshed have evolved into the genocide unfolding today.

The Ghulja Massacre was "a pivotal moment when the world had an opportunity to recognize China's

trajectory towards mass atrocities — and failed to act," said Rushan Abbas, the group's executive director, in a statement issued Wednesday.

"That failure emboldened the [Chinese Communist Party]," said Abbas, who is also chairperson of the executive committee at World Uyghur Congress.

"Today, as Uyghurs endure genocide, history repeats itself. The price of inaction is paid in human lives, and every day without accountability reinforces the Chinese regime's belief that it can commit atrocities without consequence."

According to Shamseden, who had been in Australia since 1993, visiting Ghulja only in the aftermath of the crackdown in 1998, mass arrests and collective punishment had by then become routine.

This crackdown led to the arrest, torture and release of her sister for allegedly helping a Ghulja protester, the killing of her brother Sadirdin in Kazakhstan under mysterious circumstances, and the killing of her nephew Hemmat Muhammet by Chinese police in Ghulja. Shamseden's nephew and brother were leading members of earlier Meshrep gatherings.

In 1999, Shamseden said another younger brother, Abdurazzak was sentenced by the Chinese officials for being a separatist, receiving a sentence of life in prison.

To this day, she said, she has been unable to learn any details about her brother's current fate, including whether he is alive.

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Abdurazzak's sentence was commuted by the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region High People's Court in August 2016. He had reportedly been serving time at Urumqi No.1 Prison, and is expected to be released in 2036, but his exact whereabouts remain unknown.

#### Campaign for Uyghurs, 'Teacher Li' nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

07 February 2025, [RFA](#), Roseanne Gerin

#### 2 US congressmen cited the nominees' 'unwavering commitment' to justice and human rights.



The X account @whyoutouzhele, also known as 'Teacher Li is not your teacher.' (whyoutouzhele via X)

The rights group Campaign for Uyghurs and freedom of expression advocate Li Ying, known as “Teacher Li” on social media, were nominated for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize by two U.S. congressmen who are members of a China panel.

John Moolenaar, a Michigan Republican and chairman of the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, and fellow member Raja Krishnamoorthi, an Illinois Democrat, made the announcement on Feb. 5.

They praised the nominees in a statement for their “unwavering commitment to justice, human rights, and the protection of the Uyghur people against genocide and repression.”

“Teacher Li” and the Campaign for Uyghurs nominated for Nobel Prize

About 12 million mostly Muslim Uyghurs live in northwestern China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region where they face repression by the Chinese government, which includes mass arbitrary detentions, forced labor, family separations, religious persecution and the erasure of Uyghur identity and culture.

“In the face of one of the most pressing human rights crises of our time, Campaign for Uyghurs and Teacher Li continue to shine a light in the face of adversity, while challenging injustices and amplifying the voices of those too often silenced,” Krishnamoorthi said.

Moolenaar noted the CFU’s “tireless advocacy and bold testimony” in ensuing that the world can’t ignore the truth about the Uyghur genocide in Xinjiang, and in amplifying victim’s voices to pierce the Chinese Communist Party’s wall of silence.



U.S. Reps. Raja Krishnamoorthi (left) and John Moolenaar (right) of the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party have nominated Campaign for Uyghurs and freedom of expression advocate Li Ying, known on social media as ‘Teacher Li,’ for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize. (AP)

He also said Teacher Li had become “a vital lifeline for free expression, courageously breaking through China’s Great Firewall to shed light on citizens’ protests despite grave personal risk.”

**‘Long overdue attention to the Uyghur plight’**

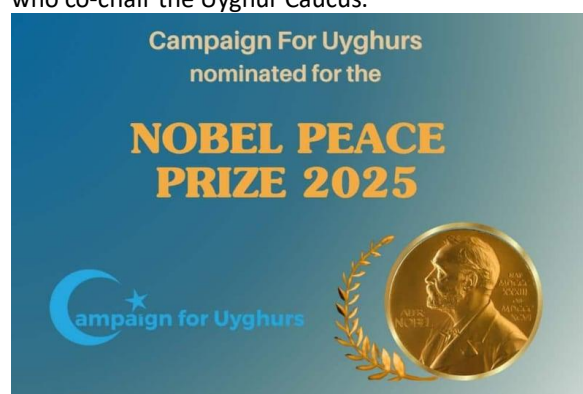
Established in 2017 by its executive director, Rushan Abbas, the CFU champions human rights and democratic freedoms for Uyghurs while urging the global community to take action against human rights abuses in East Turkistan, Uyghurs’ preferred name for Xinjiang.

Rushan said the nomination acknowledges her organization’s dedication to advocating for Uyghur rights and acts as a powerful symbol of the resilience of a people resisting oppression.

“We hope this recognition brings overdue attention to the Uyghur plight,” she said in a statement. “The Chinese government’s crimes are not just a regional issue; they constitute a global human rights crisis that demands immediate action.”

“The world must unite — governments, institutions, and civil society alike — to defend fundamental human rights for all, no matter the perpetrator,” Abbas said.

In February 2022, the CFU was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize by U.S. Reps. Tom Suozzi, a New York Democrat, and Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican, who co-chair the Uyghur Caucus.



A Campaign for Uyghurs press release announces that the Uyghur rights organization has been nominated for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize. (Campaign for Uyghurs)

In the past, other Uyghur advocacy groups and individual activists, including the World Uyghur Congress, Uyghur Human Rights Project, prominent Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, and former World Uyghur Congress president Rebiya Kadeer, were nominated for the Nobel Prize.

#### **‘White Paper’ movement**

Li Ying, a social media influencer who now lives in exile in Italy, rose to prominence during the “White Paper” movement of November 2022, when thousands of people gathered in the streets of cities across China to protest lockdowns and mass quarantines President Xi Jinping’s zero-COVID policy.

The protests, in which people held up blank sheets of paper to show they felt authorities had robbed them of their voices, were also triggered by an apartment fire in Urumqi, Xinjiang’s capital, where dozens died, apparently because they were locked in their building. Li took to social media to tell the world in videos and texts about the White Paper protests on his X account

“Teacher Li is not your teacher”. While X is banned in China and news of the protests was heavily suppressed by the authorities, young people who supported the movement still found ways to send Li footage, photos and news of the protests.

Li, whose audience has grown to 1.8 million followers, continues to post news censored by the Chinese Communist Party in China, despite Beijing’s targeting of him, his family and online followers.

When Li woke up in Milan, Italy, on Feb. 6, his mobile phone was flooded with text messages congratulating him on the nomination, he told Radio Free Asia.

“I never thought that this would happen to me, because there are many human rights lawyers and activists who are currently locked up in China’s detention centers and prisons,” he said, adding that they were more deserving of the nomination.

“At the very least, this nomination demonstrates to the world, and to my family, that their son is not a traitor, and that he is really doing something to help the Chinese people,” said Li, who has been called a “traitor to the Chinese people” by Communist Party supporters.

“So, in that sense it is a recognition of what I do,” he said.

### **Mongolian rights**

Ethnic Mongolian Hada, an ailing dissident and political prisoner from China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region who goes by only one name, has also been nominated for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize. In January, four Japanese lawmakers nominated Hada for his continuing advocacy on behalf of ethnic Mongolians living under Chinese Communist Party rule, despite years of persecution.

Hada has been imprisoned or placed under house arrest in China since 1995 because of his activities. He is a co-founder of the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance, a campaign group that advocates for the self-determination of Inner Mongolia, a northern region of China.

The 2025 Nobel Peace Prize will be announced in October by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo, and awarded on Dec. 10, 2025.

## **China-Hong Kong**

### **Hong Kong’s Democratic Party plans to disband amid ‘political environment’**

21 February 2025, [RFA](#), Kwong Wing, Wang Yun, Hsia Hsiao-hwa

### **The move sounds a death knell for formal political opposition amid an ongoing crackdown on dissent.**

Once Hong Kong’s biggest opposition party, the Democratic Party has announced plans to disband

amid a political crackdown in the city under two security laws.

“It is a decision that we made based on our understanding of the overall political environment,” Chairman Lo Kin-hei told journalists following a meeting of the party’s central committee on Thursday. “Developing democracy in Hong Kong is always difficult, and it’s been especially difficult in the past few years,” Lo told reporters in the party’s headquarters, adding: “This is not what we wanted to see.”

Lo said he hoped that Hong Kong would return to the values of “diversity, tolerance and democracy” that were the cornerstones of the city’s past success.

The move is widely seen as the symbolic end of any formal political opposition in Hong Kong, where critics of the authorities can face prosecution under security legislation brought in to quell dissent in the wake of the 2019 protests.

It follows repeated calls for the party’s dissolution in Chinese Communist Party-backed media like the *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*.

The news came just weeks after a court in Hong Kong sentenced 45 democratic politicians and activists to jail terms of up to 10 years for “subversion” after they took part in a democratic primary in the summer of 2020.

The ongoing political crackdown has already seen the dissolution of the Civic Party, which disbanded in May 2023 after its lawmakers were barred from running for re-election in the wake of the 2020 National Security Law.

The pro-democracy youth activist party Demosisto disbanded in June 2020.

### **‘That light has faded’**

Lo said the disbandment couldn’t go ahead without a vote from a general meeting attended by 75% of the party’s members.

He said he will chair a three-person working group to handle the process following what he called a “collective decision” by the Central Committee.

Lo declined to comment on reports that party members had been harassed or threatened by people acting as messengers for the Chinese government. He said the party wasn’t in financial difficulty.

Founding party member Fred Li said the Democratic Party had “done its duty and shone its light on Hong Kong.”

“But we can see today that that light has faded,” Li said in comments reported by the Hong Kong Free Press. Taiwan-based bookseller Lam Wing-kei, who was detained in mainland China for selling banned political books from Hong Kong, said there was “no point in pretending” that there is still any room for political opposition under Chinese rule.

“This is the total end of party politics in Hong Kong,” Lam told RFA Mandarin in an interview on Friday.

“There’s no way the Communist Party is going to allow an opposition party to carry on existing. Under their rule, nobody else is allowed a voice.”

He said he worries that Beijing’s attention may now focus on moves to destroy democracy in Taiwan, which has never been ruled by the Chinese Communist Party, nor formed part of the People’s Republic of China.

“The pace could accelerate in the next few years,” he said of Chinese infiltration in Taiwan.

Taiwan-based Hong Kong artist Kacey Wong said the party had played a hugely important role in the development of Hong Kong’s democracy before the current crackdown.

“Its founder Martin Lee and the kind of values he represented embodied the attitudes of many Hong Kong people towards freedom and democracy -- they were pretty moderate,” Wong said.

He said its death would mark the end of democratic party politics in Hong Kong.

“The Democratic Party was once the most important party when it came to gauging public opinion, so its death actually represents the ultimate death of public opinion [as a political force] in Hong Kong,” Wong said.

#### **‘We must be vigilant’**

He said fears that Hong Kong would become a base for opposition to Chinese Communist Party rule had led Beijing to break its promise that the city could keep its freedoms for 50 years after the 1997 handover.

He warned that Beijing was trying to undermine Taiwan’s democracy by placing its supporters in positions of power, much as it did in Hong Kong.

“Taiwanese people must be vigilant and must not believe the Chinese Communist Party’s promises to Taiwan that it can keep its freedoms if it submits to Beijing’s rule,” Wong said. “We must be vigilant, and we must resist.”

Political commentator Sang Pu said the Democratic Party would never be allowed to field candidates under the current system in Hong Kong.

“A political party that doesn’t run for election has no way to raise funds,” Sang said. “They get rejected [by venues] even when they try to hold party events ... for spurious reasons like chefs getting into a fight or broken water meters.”

“They are being badly suppressed, so at this point it’s probably better to give up,” he said.

Recent electoral reforms now ensure that almost nobody in the city’s once-vibrant opposition camp will stand for election again, amid the jailing of dozens of pro-democracy figures and rule changes requiring political vetting.

The last directly elected District Council, which saw a landslide victory for pro-democracy candidates amid record turnout that was widely seen as a ringing public endorsement of the 2019 protest movement.

The first Legislative Council election after the rule change saw plummeting turnout, while Chief

Executive John Lee was given the top job after an “election” in which he was the only candidate.

Since Beijing imposed the two national security laws banning public opposition and dissent in the city and blamed “hostile foreign forces” for the resulting protests, hundreds of thousands have voted with their feet amid plummeting human rights rankings, shrinking press freedom and widespread government propaganda in schools.

The government has blamed several waves of pro-democracy protests in recent years on “foreign forces” trying to instigate a democratic revolution in Hong Kong.

## China- Nepal

### Nepali and Chinese officials discuss ways to facilitate trade

24 February 2025, [The Rising Nepal](#)

Director General of Commerce Department of Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China, Chen Jung, and Consul General of Nepal in Lhasa, Laxmi Prasad Niraula, held a meeting today at latter's office.

During the meeting, they discussed various issues including relations between the two countries as well as business, commerce, transit, trade fair and trade facilitation committee meeting, according to the Consulate General of Nepal, in Lhasa.

Stating that the two countries have historic relations, Consul General Niraula extended gratitude for China's continuous support to Nepal.

He expressed the belief that Nepal will get such type of support in the days to come as well.

Lauding the role played by the Consulate General of Nepal to strengthen relations between the two countries, Director General Chen said China was always ready to support in strengthening relations between the two countries and in Nepal's development.

In the meeting, both sides agreed to further strengthen Nepal-China trade, commerce and transit sector as well as to take initiatives to export Nepal's agro products to China.

Similarly, commitments were made to take initiatives to resolve problems seen in check points, developing physical infrastructures there, exchanging visits, participating trade fairs and festivals to be organized in both countries and moving ahead in a coordinative manner for people's welfare, added the Consulate General of Nepal.

## Students in Nepal protest-burn China-donated bicycles found to be substandard

24 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

A student group in the southern plains of Nepal torched on Feb 22 a pile of bicycles distributed as assistance by China last month, protesting that they were previously used, substandard goods, reported the ANI news service Feb 23.

Members of the National Students' Council staged a demonstrating at Laxmanawa Chowk in Parsa district in central Terai region of Madhesh Province, during which the bicycle burning protest was held amid shouting of slogans.

The protestors have raised slogans such as "China's cunning no longer works", "Madhesh needs respect", and "Old bicycles, deception", "China doesn't fool us now!"

"China sent substandard materials as an aid to humiliate Madhesh students. Providing substandard materials to Madhesh in the name of grants is unacceptable. If this continues, it would be the humiliation of Madheshi and we will resort to it with strong protest," Binod Yadav, President of the student council has said.

Amid publicity work, China delivered a donation of two hundred bicycles to the students of Shri Narsingh Secondary School in Pipara, Birgunj Metropolitan City, last month. They were distributed by China Foundation in the first week of the Nepali month of Magh during a programme organized by the International Love Cycle Nepal Campaign, the report said.

Those bicycles were apparently among the first batch of 1,000 Bicycles donated by China, which initially covered 504 students from five schools in Bara district and 496 students from four schools in Parsa district.

Nepal became the third country after Cambodia and Laos to receive the bikes provided by bike-sharing service provider Hello Inc., with the China Foundation for Rural Development bearing the transport costs, reported China's official *globaltimes.cn* Jan 21, citing Zou Zhiqiang, director of the foundation's Nepal Office.

"We hope that this donation becomes the first step in helping solve the problem of going to school for children living in remote areas of Nepal," Zou was quoted as saying at the inauguration ceremony held at a school in the city of Birgunj, the provincial capital.

The report cited Wang Xin, a counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, as saying Beijing had launched a series of poverty-reduction demonstration projects in the country, including "Vibrant Village," "Happy Community," "Safe Drinking Water" and "Lighting the Future."

China has seen mountains of discarded or confiscated electric bicycles, mostly belonging to bike-sharing service companies, lying abandoned at junkyards in cities in recent years. Are these being used to run an international bike-donating campaign in a move to earn goodwill for Beijing?

## Experts emphasize economic diplomacy with China to make Nepal prosperous

22 February 2025, [The Rising Nepal](#)

Experts have suggested learning the lesson from China to achieve the target of making Nepal prosperous. Participants of 'Nepal-China Partnership: Advancing Nepal's Financial Growth' organized by Friends on the Cloud: Platform of Influencers Nepal, in Kathmandu on Saturday put their views in the regard.

Speaking at the programme, a Faculty Member of the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, TU, Dr Keshab Basyal said that stakeholders should learn without prior judging from China by maintaining economic diplomacy.

"Ideological judgments before taking benefits or support from China is our key problem, to gain economic prosperity economic diplomacy is needed by negotiation with China." Dr Basyal said. He also suggested stakeholders form evidence-based plans and policies to achieve long-term targets.

National Planning Commission member of Lumbini province Dr Sudan Kumar Oli viewed that component-wise comparison and learning from China are needed to achieve the goal of making a prosperous Nepal.

"We are seeing China now capitalise on Artificial Intelligence (AI) which was planned since the 1990s. On the other hand, we have only been discussing the same topic for more than 70 years." Lumbini NPC member Dr Oli added, "So our generalization approach should be changed and activities should be centred for prosperous Nepal."

He also mentioned that tourism, human capital development, technology transfer and high-level technology use are key sectors in Nepal to become prosperous.

Infrastructure expert Lal Krishna KC put his view that Infrastructure development is a must for economic development. "A fragile economy suffers from any global changes like war so we should utilize our local resources and by developing infrastructure."

Mentioning it as an opportunity and challenge both for Nepal being attached to giant economic nations, Information Technology expert Basanta Ban said that Nepal should catch the pace of IT development for which Nepal can learn a lot from China for the development.

Speaking at the programme Chairperson of Friends on the Cloud: Platform of Influencers, Nepal, Sovit Upreti

said that to develop the country Nepal should learn from China in various sectors.

### **Nepal PM Urges Students to Choose Chinese Universities Amid KIIT Incident Controversy**

21 February 2025, [The Philox](#), Aditya Sharma

Following a sad event at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar, India, where Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal was discovered dead under upsetting conditions, Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has urged his fellow countrymen to think about going to China for further study. This advice emphasizes China's better educational system, highly educated teachers, safer surroundings free from much of discrimination, and strong employment possibilities. This change marks a strategic turn in Nepal's diplomatic and educational connections, from conventional dependence on Indian institutions toward building closer ties with China.

According to reports, Lamsal had before complained about harassment by another student, supposedly ignored by the university management.

Protests following her murder turned into reported forceful removal of more than 500 Nepali students from the university.

Prime Minister Oli intervened diplomatically in response to this episode sending personnel to assist the impacted students and starting conversations with Indian authorities to guarantee their safety and welfare.

Reacting to these incidents, Prime Minister Oli has urged Nepali students to investigate educational prospects in China, stressing various benefits that Chinese universities provide over their Indian counterparts.

Modern infrastructure and powerful technology tools are well-known features of Chinese institutions.

Reflecting their dedication to provide world-class educational settings, institutions such Tsinghua University and Peking University routinely rank among the top universities worldwide.

Modern classrooms, well-equipped labs, large libraries, and innovative research institutes these colleges offer help to create an environment fit for academic performance.

Many Indian institutions, on the other hand, deal with issues with overpopulation and antiquated infrastructure.

Often outpaced by the growth of infrastructure, fast rising student populations cause stretched resources and reduced educational opportunities. While top colleges like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) uphold high standards, many others fight to give their students sufficient facilities.

### **Highly Competent Teachers**

The experience of the teachers greatly affects the caliber of instruction. Chinese colleges draw highly competent teachers, many of whom have advanced degrees from prestigious foreign universities and training.

Their worldwide exposure helps them to bring to the classroom different points of view and creative teaching strategies, therefore enhancing the learning process for the pupils.

On the other hand, Indian universities have very different faculty quality. Although elite colleges have eminent faculty, many others struggle to attract and keep skilled staff members.

This discrepancy is caused in part by restricted resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and inadequate professional development chances, thereby perhaps affecting the quality of the supplied education.

### **Environment Safer with Low Discrimination**

Students studying overseas give top priority for safety and inclusiveness. Chinese colleges are well-known for offering safe campuses with rigorous policies prohibiting discrimination.

The Chinese government implements laws meant to uphold equality and defend the rights of overseas students, therefore creating an atmosphere in which occurrences of harassment and bigotry are rare.

On some Indian colleges, on the other hand, there have been claims of Nepali students suffering prejudice and safety issues.

One striking example of this is the KIIT episode, in which claims of harassment and insufficient institutional support followed from the murder of a Nepali student.

Such events call into doubt the efficiency of grievance redressal systems as well as the general safety of overseas students attending some Indian colleges.

### **Improved Employment Prospects in a Rising Nation**

China's explosive economic development presents graduates with bright professional opportunities.

The growing sectors of the nation and technological developments generate great need for qualified experts, so offering lots of employment prospects for overseas pupils.

Furthermore appealing for professional growth is the Chinese government's supportive policies for international talent, including work permits and resident incentives.

India's work market, on the other hand, is quite competitive and many graduates fight for few job possibilities.

For overseas students, this saturation can make it difficult to find jobs fit for their credentials and career goals.

Moreover, bureaucratic complications regarding employment rules and work permits could provide more challenges for foreigners looking for job in India.

### Considering Nepal's growing ties to China

The advice of Prime Minister Oli also reflects Nepal's changing diplomatic and intellectual relationships.

Historically, because of their geographical proximity and cultural similarities, Nepali students have mainly opted for India for higher study. Still, new events point to a calculated turn toward China.

Signing a memorandum of understanding to support cultural interaction, language instruction, and research cooperation in December 2024,

Lumbini Buddhist University in Nepal and Beijing Language and Culture University in China Underlining a growing intellectual link between the two countries, this cooperation includes the founding of a China Institute in Lumbini and a Nepal Institute in Beijing.

Furthermore prominent in providing scholarships to Nepali students is the Chinese government. 71 Nepali students received Chinese government scholarships to pursue different courses at Chinese institutions in the 2023/2024 academic year.

This program not only lessens student financial load but also improves educational relations between Nepal and China.

### Future Implications for Nepal

The growing number of Nepali students choosing Chinese universities is likely to have major effects on the course of development for Nepal.

These students expose themselves to cutting-edge technologies, creative research, and varied cultural experiences, therefore arming them with skills and knowledge that could be quite helpful in advancing Nepal upon their return.

But this trend also demands reflection inside Nepal's own educational system. Emphasizing the need of domestic colleges raising their quality to keep students who might otherwise pursue education outside, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Nepal might aim to become a center for higher education by enhancing facilities, faculty quality, and research prospects.

### US foreign aid freeze has paved way for revival of China's BRI in Nepal

21 February 2025, [The Print](#), Rishi Gupta

Beijing may have felt relief after the MCC funds for Nepal were suspended. After all, through its media and press responses, it led a strong anti-MCC and anti-US campaign.

The US has suspended its development assistance to Nepal under the Millennium Challenge Corporation. This comes in the backdrop of President Donald Trump's executive order, 'Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid', on 20 January 2025—the first day of his second term in office.

Under the MCC programmes, the US had agreed to provide aid for constructing "approximately 300

kilometres of high voltage power lines, equivalent to one-third the length of Nepal, including a link to the Indian border to facilitate electricity trade", and improving road infrastructure in the Himalayan nation.

While Nepal's Ministry of Finance—the nodal agency that manages funds received under the MCC—has reportedly confirmed that funds from the US have been halted, the US Embassy in Nepal is also reported to have said that "as part of this compliance, MCC-related activities, including disbursements, have been temporarily paused in accordance with the executive order issued by President Trump on January 20, 2025, and are under review."

In 2017, the US government's MCC signed a \$500 million compact with Nepal. From the beginning, the deal had run into political hiccups, delaying its ratification in the Nepali Parliament by five years. The compact was finally ratified in 2022 after a political upheaval within the ruling alliance—the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC)—and opposition from other parties sitting on the other side of the aisle. But there was equal pressure from the country's northern neighbour, China, which advised Nepal against it.

In its most provocative words, the Chinese state media, *Global Times*, carried the headline "The US' MCC pact with Nepal threatens peace and development in South Asia", tagging the pact as a threat to Nepal's "sovereignty". But with the MCC funding frozen now, will China see it as a golden chance to make inroads into Nepal?

### China's opposition to the MCC

In a sharply worded op-ed in *Global Times*, Li Tao, a professor at China's Sichuan University, wrote that the MCC pact is a "Trojan horse disguised by Washington as 'aid' to Nepal".

She suggested that by approving the compact, Nepal has changed "neutrality" in the region, and questioned, "Why is the US, along with India, so eager to promote MCC compact in Nepal?"

This was part of the Chinese narrative focusing on the MCC since Nepal agreed to it in September 2017. China's panic over the MCC clearly emanated from its own insecurities because Beijing saw it as a direct threat to its ambitious multi-billion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which Nepal agreed to join in May 2017—a few months before the US agreed to offer MCC funds to Nepal.

For China, Nepal agreeing to the BRI was a diplomatic victory as Nepal seemed to have defied pressure from India. It was also projected as a celestial weapon shaking India's traditional influential presence on its next-door neighbour, Nepal. But then came the MCC. Chinese media was all up in arms, warning Nepal of the dangers of the MCC pact as it would place the US

as an influencing actor in Nepal. It might pose dangers to peace and tranquillity at the Nepal-Tibet border, especially when the US has in past supported the 'Free Tibet' voices in the 1960s and 70s.

The Tibetan Khampas received training and support from the US in Nepal to fight the Communists in Tibet. While the Khampa Rebellion could not sustain and succeed in overthrowing the Communists from Tibet, the presence of the Tibetan refugee population in Nepal continues to cause anxiety in Beijing, as any external support to them may pose a security challenge to China.

However, with BRI, China saw a chance to engage with the 'New Nepal', which was politically divided. Parties like the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), whose nationalism often emanates from their strong anti-India stance, could help Beijing.

Chinese anxieties were further exacerbated after India silently approved the MCC pact. New Delhi had even seen an opportunity in the MCC, as it offered to facilitate cross-border electricity trade between Nepal and India. Also, since the MCC had enough to counter BRI, New Delhi seemed okay with it.

On the other hand, the BRI ran into controversies in Nepal due to its complex financial module—secretive and opaque, which had proven to be troubling examples of a 'debt trap' in countries like Sri Lanka.

The BRI is still struggling to move forward in Nepal. During his first official visit to China in December 2024 after beginning his fourth term as Nepal's Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli signed an MoU on BRI, agreeing to financial modules and identifying fewer projects. On the contrary, grants worth \$43,342,150 under the MCC pact, which is 8.67 per cent of the total sanctioned \$500 million, have already been spent on several projects as of September 2024. Most of the money invested in building and installing electricity transmission lines.

The lack of trust in Chinese assistance has been especially unfavourable to China regarding BRI in Nepal, which often comes with stronger and unclear strings attached. Nepal has repeatedly requested that China provide more grants than loans, but Beijing seems unwilling to offer any freebies.

A panicked China had suggested that MCC was part of the American "coercive diplomacy" and that the US had "smeared China as an attempt to achieve its own geostrategic goals by sowing discord and creating a rift between China and Nepal." On the contrary, the MCC pact, despite initial resistance from the public and political parties in Nepal, was ratified in the Nepali Parliament because the pact deal was made public. The US was quick and comfortable in answering tough questions, like whether the MCC pact was part of the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy or not—something that China failed to do.

### **An opportunity for China?**

Beijing may have felt relief after the MCC funds for Nepal were suspended. After all, through its media and press responses, it led a strong anti-MCC and anti-US campaign. However, the "trust deficit" remains a major challenge for Beijing. For many China watchers, the overall implication of Trump pausing and reviewing the US aid and assistance programmes would provide an opportunity for Beijing to fill the strategic vacuum by being the new guarantee of assistance and development partnership to those nations.

Meanwhile, in the case of Nepal, to expand its economic and infrastructure influence, China may make initial concessions to at least infuse some life into a stalled BRI in the Himalayan nation. While Kathmandu has key development partners like New Delhi, Tokyo, and London, and multilateral agencies like the UN, WTO, and the European Union, China may aggressively offer funding. It can include large-scale infrastructure investments, including highways, hydropower, and connectivity projects, and deepening Chinese economic influence. Second, China has historically opposed US influence in Nepal and has cultivated strong ties with different political factions aligning with its interests. With MCC's suspension, Beijing may work to consolidate its relationships with Nepal's ruling elite—as it did when Nepal's ties with India went sour—to ensure policies that may favour Beijing while countering any future US-led initiatives. This may see a push to speed up the execution of the BRI in Nepal.

Third, there is the possibility that Beijing will capitalise on the anti-US sentiment that may come from the freezing of the MCC funding in Nepal. China may increase cultural exchanges, educational scholarships, and media influence to position itself as Nepal's most reliable partner while shaping public opinion in favour of its long-term strategic goals.

While China can still fill the vacuum left behind by the US on the development partnership front, it will also be crucial for India to redefine its role and reconfigure its strategic goals to align with Nepal's development requirements.

### **Trump aid cut leaves Nepal power plan in limbo, a window China was looking for**

20 February 2025, First Post

*Nepal's ambitious infrastructure project, backed by a \$500 million US grant, is now in jeopardy. The Trump administration has suspended the foreign aid, raising concerns about Nepal's geopolitical alignment, offering China a potential opening to expand its influence*

Nepal's ambitious project to enhance its power grid and roads, bolstered by a \$500 million grant from the



United States, is now in jeopardy following the suspension of foreign aid under the Trump administration, the New York Times has reported. The project, which had already faced challenges due to Nepal's balancing act between China and the US, has left the country in a precarious position.

Nepal had agreed to accept the US funding in 2022, following years of divisive debate, despite strong opposition within the country. Now, as US foreign aid is halted for at least 90 days, Nepal's future plans are clouded by uncertainty.

The original US offer, intended to bolster Nepal's electricity grid by building a 200-mile transmission line to link it with India, promised significant infrastructure upgrades. With an average income of about \$1,400 annually, the \$500 million represented a significant investment for Nepal. However, this grant came with geopolitical undercurrents, particularly in Nepal's delicate relationship with China.

China, which shares a border with Nepal, has long been a key economic partner for the Himalayan nation and would undoubtedly seize any opening left by the suspension of US aid.

**Doubts grow over Nepal's geopolitical alignment**

Rajendra Bajgain, a lawmaker from Nepal's governing Nepali Congress party, voiced his frustration with the recent developments. "This is quite shocking," Bajgain told NYT, reflecting the concerns of those who had supported the agreement with the US.

Bajgain saw the Nepal-US agreement as a means of securing much-needed infrastructure funding despite critics mocking supporters of the deal as "US puppets". Now, as the Trump administration halts its aid, Nepal faces a prospect of giving China an opportunity to expand its influence in the country.

It is, however, not yet clear whether China has directly approached Nepal following the US aid freeze, the situation has undoubtedly presented an opening for Beijing. "They are making it easier for our neighbouring countries, especially the Chinese, who are enjoying themselves," Bajgain warned.

Ironically, Nepal had resisted Chinese influence to accept the US grant. But Nepal may now have to face the repercussions of shifting US policy under the Trump administration as it gets increasingly embroiled in a growing friction with Washington DC's international partners.

**Potential consequences for Nepal's energy and road development**

The suspension of the US grant could lead to significant setbacks for Nepal's infrastructure development, particularly the vital power transmission line. The \$500 million grant was designed not only to modernise the country's electricity grid but also to support crucial road maintenance projects across Nepal's difficult terrain.

Without these funds, Nepal risks the possibility of failing to meet its commitments to India regarding electricity transmission. Large hydropower projects critical to Nepal's long-term energy strategy will be at risk if the transmission line cannot be completed.

Concerns have also been raised about several unfinished projects that could undermine Nepal's energy sector, with serious long-term consequences for its economy. If the aid freeze continues, Nepal could also incur liabilities, particularly if it is forced to cancel contracts with international partners.

**The geopolitical tug-of-war: US versus China in Nepal**  
The challenge of balancing US and Chinese interests has long been a delicate matter for Nepal, and the suspension of US aid further complicates this. While the US saw the infrastructure grant as an opportunity to counter Chinese influence in South Asia, Nepal's communist-leaning government has ties to China that have remained strong.

Critics of the US grant had long warned that accepting such assistance would compromise Nepal's sovereignty, echoing concerns stoked by Beijing during the debate. "Is it a gift or Pandora's box," asked Hua Chunying, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, reflecting the scepticism that accompanied Nepal's decision to engage with the US.

Supporters of the grant had vigorously defended the agreement, emphasising that the US funding came without the burden of Chinese-style loans, which often require the use of Chinese contractors, potentially straining a nation's finances.

Despite these assurances, Nepal has since encountered difficulties with Chinese loans, including a problematic \$200 million loan for an international airport project, which now faces financial challenges due to low passenger traffic.

As Nepal grapples with the consequences of the Trump administration's foreign aid cuts, it tries to find a difficult balance between the US and China amid a fast-changing global order. Many around the world will be keenly watching whether Trump's aid cuts would force Nepal back into China's embrace, or will it be able to find a way to chart out a new diplomatic way out.

### **Performances held in Nepal to mark Chinese New Year, anniversary of diplomatic ties**

15 February 2025, [Xinhua](#)

*Chinese artists perform Sichuan Opera in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Feb. 14, 2025. (Photo by Hari Maharjan/Xinhua)*

Artists from China's Sichuan Province performed twice in the Nepali capital on Friday to mark the Chinese New Year and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal.



The performance on Friday evening was dedicated to Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government departments. A rich variety of shows were staged by artists from the acrobatic troupe and Sichuan Opera Troupe in Suining City, including acrobatics, long-spout teapot art, guzheng solo, dances and magic tricks.

In a hand shadow puppet, the vivid mimic of a dog, a duck and birds sparked outbursts of laughter and applause from the audience.

Sichuan Opera pieces like face-changing, spitting fire, long silk ribbon dance and water sleeve dance also resonated with the spectators.

The shows were "carefully selected and prepared to showcase the beauty of artistic expressions," noted Chen Song, Chinese ambassador to Nepal.

"They also represent the vibrant spirit and creativity that define Chinese culture," Chen said at the performance. "We hope that the performance will not only leave you a great impression, but could also serve as a bridge to enhance cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between the two peoples."

The performance was part of a series of celebrations scheduled and held in Nepal to mark the Chinese New Year as well as the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal.

Nepal's Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai expressed his appreciation for these events, stressing that such initiatives will surely consolidate cultural ties and people-to-people exchanges between the two friendly nations.

"Cultural exchanges through arts, music, dances and festivals significantly enhance a deeper connection between the two countries," Rai said at the performance.

### Beijing 'ready' to fill the void left by US in Nepal

04 February 2025, [The Annapurna Express](#)

The Communist Party of China (CPC) has conveyed that Beijing is prepared to provide support if critical areas in Nepal are affected by US President Donald

Trump's executive order, which has halted all humanitarian assistance for the next 90 days.

At least two leaders from Nepal's major communist parties stated that CPC representatives have informally assured them that China is ready to step in, particularly in countries of the Global South. A senior leader of CPN(Maoist Center) requesting anonymity said: "A CPC representative told me that China is willing to provide assistance if Nepal faces challenges in key sectors such as humanitarian aid, health, and education."

However, the Chinese side has emphasized that any formal action would require an official request from the Nepal government. While CPC leaders have conveyed their position informally, there has been no direct government-to-government communication on the matter. The Chinese side also highlighted that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework agreement, signed during Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's visit to China last year, has laid the foundation for expanded cooperation across multiple sectors.

According to Nepal's communist party leaders, China is closely monitoring the potential impact of Trump's policy on Nepal. China has already expanded its assistance in key areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, disaster relief, and poverty alleviation. In the health sector, China provides support to several major hospitals in Nepal, including BP Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital, Civil Hospital, and Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital. Last year, Nepal and China renewed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on traditional medicine cooperation, agreeing to establish the China-Nepal Traditional Medicine Cooperation Commission. Additionally, Chinese medical teams have been visiting Nepal regularly to provide healthcare services in rural areas, conduct personnel training, and strengthen medical services.

The China Foundation for Rural Development (CFRD), a government-supported non-governmental organization, has been active in Nepal since 2015, expanding its support in health, education, agriculture, and other socio-economic sectors. Through CFRD, China has been assisting Nepali farmers, healthcare workers, local schools, and municipal officials. In agriculture, China has significantly increased its involvement.

Additionally, China has proposed establishing a fertilizer plant in Nepal, but Beijing believes Nepal's bureaucratic hurdles are delaying progress. Chinese universities have also been deepening their engagement with Nepali institutions. Overall, China has significantly increased its support in areas where the US previously played a major role.

On the global stage, China has expressed its readiness to support international organizations where the Trump administration has withdrawn funding. At a press conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry

Spokesperson Guo Jiakun reaffirmed China's commitment to supporting the World Health Organization (WHO), enhancing international cooperation in public health, and advancing global health governance. Geopolitical analysts suggest that China, as the US's political rival, is strategically positioning itself to fill the void left by Washington, particularly in the Global South.

### Chinese expertise helps restore damaged monument in Nepal

02 February 2025, [China Daily](#)

Conservationists from Hebei spend years in Kathmandu to rebuild iconic structures damaged by earthquake

Nearly 10 years after it was severely damaged in a massive earthquake, Nepal's iconic Basantapur Tower is once again welcoming visitors from all over the world as it stands tall in all its majesty, thanks to joint efforts by Chinese and Nepalese conservationists in restoring the World Heritage Site to its former glory.

Sun Rongfen, 56, from North China's Hebei province, was one of the key members of the team that worked on the restoration project. Over eight years, she and her colleagues spent a lot of time in Nepal, working diligently and in close cooperation with Nepalese counterparts to complete a challenging yet meaningful task, in the process strengthening bilateral people-to-people friendship.

For Sun, former deputy head of Hebei Institute of Cultural Heritage and Ancient Architecture Preservation, which was involved in restoring the site, one incident stands out vividly in her mind.

Early one morning, a Nepalese neighbor of Sun saw her at their residential community's yard in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. The lady walked toward her, crushed a freshly picked flower and dotted her forehead with the petal's color, and then placed her palms together in greeting, smiling broadly.

The middle-aged Nepalese woman's gesture touched Sun in a way no words could.

"Back then, I didn't know the meaning of that gesture, but I could feel her kindness, so I said thank you in Nepali — the only one of the two words I learned there, the other being hello," Sun recalled.

## China-Pakistan

### Uyghur-American politician slams Pakistan's Gwadar Airport as China's strategic tool

25 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*In a post on social media platform X, Salih argued that the airport serves China's strategic interests rather than benefiting Pakistan or the local population of*

*Gwadar. He warned that China intends to transform Balochistan into a 'strategic colony.'*

A minister of the East Turkistan Government in exile has slammed Pakistan's New Gwadar International Airport, which was funded by China, raising significant concerns about its true purpose.

In a post on social media platform X, Salih Hidayar, the Foreign and Security Minister argued that the airport serves China's strategic interests rather than benefiting Pakistan or the local population of Gwadar. He warned that China intends to transform Balochistan into a "strategic colony."

Hidayar's comments followed a report by Voice of America (VOA), which highlighted the underwhelming utilization of the airport, completed in October 2024 at a cost of 240 million dollars in Chinese funding. Despite being a key component of the multi-billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Gwadar remains largely underdeveloped, with local residents seeing few benefits from the project.

VOA pointed out that the region continues to struggle with basic infrastructure issues, including unreliable electricity and a shortage of clean water. Many residents remain unemployed despite promises of job creation tied to CPEC projects.

The airport, according to locals, is viewed more as a Chinese effort to assert control over the region rather than a genuine development initiative for the people of Gwadar. Tensions between the Pakistani government, military, and Baloch separatist groups have been escalating, with protests over the area's poor living conditions largely ignored.

VOA also noted that the airport's opening was delayed due to security concerns, and its first flight was restricted from public access, which has only fueled further skepticism about its true purpose. This situation underscores the growing frustration and resentment among the local population toward China's increasing presence in the region.

The broader issue at play is the China-Pakistan debt trap, which has been exacerbated by Pakistan's rising debt to China for projects under the CPEC. While these infrastructure projects, including roads, energy systems, and ports, are intended to drive development in Pakistan, there are serious concerns about Pakistan's ability to repay the loans.

Meanwhile, China stands to benefit greatly from these projects, gaining access to key trade routes, resource extraction, and increasing its political leverage in the region.

### **Pakistan, China to expand education, media ties: envoy**

25 February 2025, [The Express Tribune](#)

We will help Pakistan in developing human resources, increasing training opportunities.

### **Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong Monday said that it is a high time to take profound and substantial steps to further strengthen China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.**

"We are ready to expand cooperation with Pakistan in education, media, think tanks, youth exchanges, and the film and television industries, to foster mutual learning between civilizations and strengthen cultural and people-to-people ties," the ambassador said talking to media after addressing a ceremony.

"We will help Pakistan in developing human resources, increasing training opportunities, and implement the bilateral initiative of sending 1,000 Pakistanis to China for modern agricultural training."

He said that at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari paid a successful state visit to China earlier this month. "We are pleased to see that since the establishment of the new Pakistani government last year, China and Pakistan have maintained close high-level exchanges."

He said, "We are ready to work with Pakistani side for the implementation, and turn the important consensus into tangible practices and fruitful outcomes of our bilateral cooperation."

The ambassador said, "We must aim high to deepen high-level strategic cooperation." Headed the development of China-Pakistan relations over the past year further indicates that high-level strategic guidance is the fundamental guarantee for the steady and long-term development of our bilateral relations."

### **Pakistani president: CPEC helps promote economic development**

19 February 2025, [China Daily](#)

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said on Tuesday that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offered immense opportunities for Pakistan, China and other regional countries to promote economic development.

Multiple infrastructure and road projects under the CPEC helped Pakistan to better link with neighboring countries including China, supporting trade and economic integration, the president said during a seminar on regional connectivity organized by Pakistani think-tank Pakistan-China Institute.

He said that the development of Gwadar Port, a key project under the CPEC in the country's southwest

Balochistan province, would bring dividends for future generations by giving impetus to trade, economic cooperation and prosperity.

Stressing Pakistan's commitment to strengthen regional connectivity, Zardari said that Pakistan has great geostrategic importance which presented an option to enhance regional trade, terming the country as a "natural trade corridor" linking China, Central Asia and the Middle East.

The president also emphasized the importance of revitalizing historic trade routes to further strengthen economic and cultural ties across the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti said that the CPEC is reflective of the long-standing friendship between Pakistan and China.

He said that after successfully implementing the first phase of the CPEC which modernized Pakistan's transportation system by building roads, ports and airports, the CPEC has entered its second phase of trade, industrialization, economic development and regional connectivity.

Terming Gwadar Port as a symbol of hope and opportunity for the people of Pakistan especially Balochistan, the chief minister said that the port would be transformed into a significant global port with state-of-the-art facilities to provide access to global markets and serve as a gateway to the world for regional countries.

### **President Zardari praises China's economic growth and innovation**

16 February 2025, [Profit](#)

Zardari highlights Pakistan's proximity and strong ties with China to leverage its expertise for economic growth

President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasized Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its strategic and economic ties with China, citing the country's advancements in technology, industry, space, and agriculture as key areas for collaboration.

Speaking in an interview with China Central Television (CCTV) during his recent visit to China, Zardari highlighted Pakistan's geographical proximity and extensive partnership with China as crucial factors in leveraging Chinese expertise for economic growth.

Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for China and expressed appreciation for its steadfast friendship, particularly in times of crisis. He described China's achievements in science and technology as a positive force for the global economy, adding that Pakistan is eager to incorporate Chinese advancements to improve agricultural productivity, water management, and climate resilience.

He noted that Pakistan's per-acre crop yield remains significantly lower than China's and urged greater cooperation in this sector.

Discussing China-Pakistan cooperation in space technology, the president said Pakistan aimed to expand its capabilities through Chinese partnerships, calling it a "good thing" for Pakistan's technological progress. He also lauded China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects for accelerating infrastructure and connectivity development, transforming Pakistan's economic landscape.

During his meetings with Chinese leadership, Zardari discussed industrial collaboration, outlining plans for specialized industrial parks for Chinese enterprises that would employ Pakistani labor while enabling Chinese executives to operate remotely. He described China as Pakistan's all-weather friend and reiterated the importance of leveraging Chinese technology for future generations.

Zardari also praised President Xi Jinping's governance, calling him a "strong and steadfast leader" who had significantly advanced China's economic standing. He dismissed global concerns over China's rapid growth, stating that Pakistan welcomes China's rise and values its non-interference policy in global affairs.

On regional cooperation, Zardari expressed confidence in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) under China's leadership, expecting it to play a greater role in global economic and security frameworks. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's historical ties with China, highlighting centuries of trade, cultural exchange, and mutual trust between the two nations. The president's visit reinforces Pakistan's long-term commitment to economic collaboration with China, particularly in technology, industrial development, and agricultural modernization, as the two countries continue to deepen their strategic economic partnership.

### **Pakistan Requests China to Reschedule Debt to Prevent Delays in \$7 Billion IMF Program**

13 February 2025, [The Khaama Press](#), Noman Hossain

Pakistan has formally requested China to defer \$3.4 billion in debt payments for two years as part of an effort to fulfill a crucial condition for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan program. Failure to secure this debt rescheduling before the upcoming IMF review talks in March 2025 could result in delays to the disbursement of loan tranches or even the cancellation of the \$7 billion program. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar made the request during a visit to China. While Islamabad maintains that Beijing is willing to cooperate, some analysts have expressed doubt about whether the Export-Import (Exim) Bank of China will agree to defer payments on loans due

from October 2024 to September 2027 before the IMF review.

The request highlights Pakistan's significant reliance on China to meet IMF terms and avoid default. The country must identify financing sources to fill a \$5 billion gap in external financing for the three-year IMF program. However, China has shown hesitance toward the IMF's stringent terms, which could expose sensitive details about Pakistan's financial obligations, particularly regarding Chinese loans and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). According to reports, the IMF has urged Islamabad to seek oil on deferred payment terms from Saudi Arabia and request China to reschedule its debt, marking the IMF's increasing concern over Pakistan's debt management and economic reforms (Reuters, 2024; Dawn, 2024).

In November 2024, the IMF raised concerns over Pakistan's tax shortfall and delays in securing foreign loans, which have hindered the progress of the \$7 billion loan package. These delays, along with Pakistan's failure to meet the IMF's conditions, led to a three-month delay in securing the new loan program. As part of the agreement, the IMF also required Pakistan to arrange for a rollover of debt repayments with China, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, as well as additional financing. In the most recent talks, Pakistan has been trying to secure a minimum of two-year extensions for repaying Chinese loans, which are due from October 2024 to September 2027.

Ishaq Dar has criticized the IMF, accusing the institution of deliberately delaying the release of funds and attributing the setback to geopolitical factors. However, the IMF's concerns are centered on Pakistan's external debt, which exceeds \$130 billion, with nearly 30% owed to China (DW, 2024). Analysts suggest that Pakistan's economic dependence on China has grown significantly over the past decade, raising concerns among global lenders who fear that loans might be used to repay Chinese debt rather than fund much-needed economic reforms.

Pakistan's repeated requests to China for debt rescheduling—this being the second such request in five months—highlight the country's ongoing struggle to meet the IMF's financing requirements. A joint statement issued during President Asif Ali Zardari's recent visit to Beijing acknowledged China's support in ensuring Pakistan's fiscal stability, but the debt rescheduling remains critical for Pakistan to meet the IMF's external financing requirements (AA, 2024). The debt, which is set to mature between October 2024 and September 2027, coincides with the three-year IMF program period, making its rescheduling a necessary step for Pakistan to bridge the financing gap. The formal review of Pakistan's \$7 billion IMF loan program is expected to begin in the first week of March 2025. A successful review would unlock the

next loan tranche of over \$1 billion. However, Pakistan has faced challenges in negotiating with external lenders such as China, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE since 2019 to delay debt payments in order to prevent the failure of multiple IMF programs.

Despite frustrations from the Exim Bank, which has reportedly expressed concerns about the repayment delays and the inability of Pakistan to make timely payments to Chinese companies operating in Pakistan, the country remains heavily dependent on China. Beijing continues to provide vital financial support, including rolling over \$4 billion in cash deposits, \$6.5 billion in commercial loans, and \$4.3 billion in trade financing (Brecorder, 2024; Tribune, 2024).

The increasing reliance on Chinese financial support has sparked concerns about a growing "debt-trap" strategy, where Pakistan's economic dependency on China could be leveraged to influence its foreign, defense, and economic policies. President Zardari's visit to China underscored this reality, with the primary focus on securing debt rescheduling rather than advancing broader bilateral relations.

Given these ongoing financial dependencies, global lenders such as the IMF may need to reconsider their approach to Pakistan's bailout programs. Pakistan's economic structure may remain heavily reliant on China, and the country could struggle to fulfill the terms and conditions required by international lenders.

### **China, Pakistan pledge to boost cooperation on infrastructure, mining projects**

06 February 2025, [Reuters](#)

China and Pakistan will upgrade and reconstruct Pakistan's railway network and further develop its Gwadar port, while Chinese companies can invest in the South Asian nation's offshore oil and gas developments, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Thursday.

The comments came as Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari visits China from February 4-8, where he will also attend the opening ceremony of the Asian Winter Games.

Chinese investment and financial support for Pakistan since 2013 have been a boon for the South Asian nation's struggling economy.

The two countries have had close ties underpinned by long-standing wariness of their common neighbour, India, and a desire to hedge against U.S. influence across the region.

Pakistan and China recognised the importance of Pakistan's "Gwadar Port and agreed to fully unleash its potential as a key node for connectivity and trade," Xinhua said quoting a joint statement from the two countries.

Chinese-funded enterprises would be encouraged to "carry out mining investment cooperation in Pakistan" and cooperate in terrestrial and marine geological resources.

"Pakistan welcomes Chinese companies to participate in the development of offshore oil and gas resources in Pakistan."

Longtime Pakistan ally China has thousands of nationals working on projects grouped under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The \$65-billion investment is part of President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, designed to Beijing's global reach by road, rail and sea.

### **Pakistan's Zardari says militants can't derail China ties, discusses cooperation with Xi**

05 February 2025, [Arab News](#), Saima Shabbir

President Asif Ali Zardari said on Wednesday militant attacks will not undermine Pakistan's ties with China, as the two countries pledged to move forward on the next phase of the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Zardari issued the statement during his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, where both leaders discussed security issues and economic cooperation. The interaction came amid increasing concerns in Beijing over the security of its workers in Pakistan, many of whom are involved in CPEC infrastructure projects and have been targeted in a series of attacks in recent years.

Despite acknowledging that his country's friendship with China had "gone through ups and downs," the Pakistani president said it would not be broken down by militant attacks.

"Pakistan and China will always be friends, all-weather friends," he said at the opening of talks with Xi. "No matter how many terrors, how many issues crop up in the world, I will stand, Pakistani people will stand with the people of China."

According to an official Pakistani statement released after the meeting, the two leaders discussed the high-quality development of CPEC 2.0, which aims to expand beyond infrastructure to include other areas. Initially launched in 2013 as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the first phase of CPEC focused on transport infrastructure, energy projects and the development of the Gwadar Port. The next phase, dubbed CPEC 2.0, seeks to emphasize industrialization, agricultural modernization, and partnerships with third countries to enhance regional connectivity and economic growth. Both leaders emphasized people-to-people exchanges and cultural linkages as key elements of strengthening the China-Pakistan community of shared future in the

new era. President Xi also acknowledged that China and Pakistan have an enduring friendship and have set a model for relations between two countries by advancing the construction of CPEC and cooperation in various fields. A Chinese-funded \$230 million airport, the largest in Pakistan, started operations last month in the coastal city of Gwadar in Balochistan province, where a separatist group has launched multiple attacks targeting many groups including Chinese. A shipping port in Gwadar is the end of the envisioned economic corridor, which would cross the length of Pakistan to link the western Chinese region of Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea. "The Chinese side is willing to work with the Pakistani side to move forward hand-in-hand on our respective paths of modernization," the Chinese president said. The start of operations at the airport was delayed from last year after a surge in attacks in Balochistan. Zardari also extended an invitation to Xi to visit Pakistan, highlighting the strong public admiration for the Chinese leader in Pakistan. Following the meeting, both presidents witnessed the signing of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to boost cooperation in science and technology, clean energy, socio-economic development, and media collaboration. The event concluded with a state banquet hosted by President Xi in honor of the visiting Pakistani delegation.

## China- Taiwan

### Taiwan severs academic ties with Chinese universities, citing propaganda links

24 February 2025, [RFA](#), Alan Lu

*The ban sparked domestic debate over its impact on cross-strait relations.*

Taiwan barred the island's universities from collaborating with three mainland Chinese institutions, citing their ties with Beijing's overseas propaganda arm, in what Taiwan opposition lawmakers said was a blow to cross-strait exchanges that have historically served as a bridge for dialogue despite geopolitical rifts.

China and Taiwan have maintained educational exchanges, despite political and military tensions, allowing students and scholars from both sides to participate in academic collaborations, research projects and university partnerships.

But on Thursday, Taiwan banned its universities from working with China's Jinan University in the city of Guangzhou, Huaqiao University in Xiamen and

Quanzhou, and Beijing Chinese Language and Culture College, citing their ties with the United Front Work Department.

"Chinese universities affiliated with the United Front Work Department serve a political purpose rather than a purely academic one," said Taiwan's Minister of Education Cheng Ying-yao.

The United Front Work Department is a key arm of the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, that conducts influence operations, propaganda and political engagement globally. It works to shape narratives, co-opt elites, and extend Beijing's reach into academia, media, and diaspora communities.

Critics, including Taipei, accuse it of covert interference, disinformation, and suppressing dissent, with several governments warning of its role in election meddling, intellectual property theft, and undermining democratic institutions.

"To prevent political influence operations we must halt cooperation and exchanges," Cheng added.

The ban drew criticism from Taiwan's main opposition Kuomintang, or KMT, which criticized it as "politically motivated" and "detrimental" to cross-strait exchanges.

"Students from over 80 countries attend these universities. It is shortsighted for the DPP to isolate Taiwan academically," KMT legislative Fu Kun-chi said, referring to the island's ruling Democratic Progressive Party.

KMT chairman Eric Chu Li-luan also said the policy would do more damage to Taiwan's higher education sector.

"Academic cooperation should be based on international accreditation, not political considerations," Chu said. "The DPP is using this as part of its broader political strategy for 2025, creating division instead of fostering engagement."

A DPP legislator, Wu Szu-yao, however, defended the ban, comparing it to the global shutdown of Confucius Institutes due to similar concerns over Chinese influence.

Confucius Institutes are Chinese-funded language and cultural centers, which have drawn suspicion around the world of Chinese propaganda and influence. The U.S., Europe and Australia have closed many of the institutes, citing threats to academic freedom and security.

"Taiwan has never restricted normal academic and cultural exchanges, as long as they are free from official influence. But these schools, being under the United Front Work Department control, inherently serve political purposes and follow political directives," Wu said.

Taiwanese students have long pursued degrees in Chinese universities, drawn by lower tuition fees, scholarship opportunities, and career prospects in the mainland.

Chinese students also study in Taiwan, though in smaller numbers due to political restrictions. Universities from both sides have established joint research programs and academic agreements, facilitating faculty collaboration and student mobility. But exchanges have not been immune to political influence. China has at times limited the number of its students permitted to study in Taiwan, citing political concerns, while Taipei has imposed tighter regulations on Chinese scholars and researchers due to security considerations.

Cross-strait relations under Taiwan's pro-independence leadership have further strained the programs, leading to a decline in Chinese enrollment in Taiwan. The COVID-19 pandemic also disrupted exchanges, though some academic collaboration has resumed.

China sees Taiwan as a breakaway province that must eventually reunite, even by force if necessary. Beijing views the island's leader, Lai Ching-te, a pro-independence advocate, as a separatist and has increased military drills, economic pressure and diplomatic isolation to counter his leadership.

### **Taiwan ready to welcome Chinese students, but no response from Beijing: Mainland Affairs Council Minister**

21 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*Speaking at the National Conference for University Presidents in Taiwan, Chiu urged China not to use educational exchanges as a tool for 'united front' strategies. He was invited to discuss cross-strait relations and relevant policies, Taipei Times reported.*

The Ministry of Education is considering discussions on inviting Chinese students to pursue their studies in Taiwan, but Beijing has not responded, said Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Chiu Chui-cheng, as reported by Taipei Times.

Speaking at the National Conference for University Presidents in Taiwan, Chiu urged China not to use educational exchanges as a tool for "united front" strategies. He was invited to discuss cross-strait relations and relevant policies, Taipei Times reported. He said that since 2004, around 20,000 agreements have been signed between educational institutions across the strait, and educational exchanges have gradually stabilized following the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by Taipei Times.

Chiu mentioned that last year, approximately 2,000 Chinese students travelled to Taiwan for short-term studies, and over 300 Chinese school administrators or vice presidents visited Taiwan for exchanges. However, he stated that China continues to regulate the number

of Chinese students studying in Taiwan, Taipei Times reported.

In 2020, China imposed a temporary ban on its students enrolling in Taiwanese institutions due to the pandemic and political circumstances, resulting in only about 1,500 students remaining in Taiwan last year, he said. Conversely, he pointed out that China has been attracting Taiwanese students to study within its borders, thereby creating an imbalance in cross-strait educational exchanges, as reported by Taipei Times.

Chiu emphasized that the Taiwanese government has already implemented 10 policies to promote Chinese students studying in Taiwan, such as acknowledging more Chinese qualifications, raising admission quotas for Chinese students, and, since February of last year, broadening the National Health Insurance system to include Chinese students, as reported by Taipei Times. Minister of Education Cheng Ying-yao announced this week that Taiwanese institutions will be prohibited from collaborating with four Chinese universities due to security apprehensions: Huaqiao University in Xiamen and Quanzhou, Jinan University in Guangzhou, and Beijing Chinese Language and Culture College, Taipei Times reported.

The MAC will honour the Ministry of Education's decision and work together accordingly, Chiu stated. Educational exchanges should be grounded in reciprocity, respect, and fairness, he remarked. He asserted that the restrictions on Chinese students coming to Taiwan often stem from stringent regulations imposed by Beijing rather than Taipei, Taipei Times reported.

### **Taiwan detects 20 Chinese military aircraft near its territory today**

19 February 2025, [ANI](#)

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has said that 20 Chinese military aircraft, including J-16, KJ-500, etc were detected near its territory from 8:50 am (local time) on Wednesday. Out of those, 15 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered the northern, central and southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in conducting air-sea joint training along with other naval vessels, according to Taiwan's MND. It said that Taiwan Armed Forces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly. In a post on X, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) stated, "Overall 20 #PLA aircraft in various types (including J-16, KJ-500, etc.) were detected from 0850hr today. Out of which, 15 crossed the median line of the #Taiwan Strait and entered the northern, central and southwestern ADIZ in conducting air-sea joint training along with other PLAN vessels.



#ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

Meanwhile, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) stated that Taiwan Armed Forces have been modernizing barracks living quarters since 2017. It noted that 83 facilities were completed by the end of last year, with nine more set for completion this year. "Since 2017, the #ROCArmedForces have been modernizing barracks living quarters. By the end of last year, 83 facilities were completed, with 9 more set for completion this year, ensuring better care for the dedicated service members safeguarding our nation," Taiwan MND posted on X. Earlier in the day, Taiwan recorded 36 sorties of People's Liberation Army aircraft and seven naval vessels operating near its territory till 6 am (local time) on Wednesday, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND). As per the Taiwan Defence Ministry, 33 out of 36 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, eastern and southwestern ADIZ.

"36 sorties of PLA aircraft and 7 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 33 out of 36 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, eastern and southwestern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly", Taiwan's MND posted on X. The 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.

China 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.

On February 17, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has strongly asserted that the Taiwan Strait is not under the sovereignty of China, emphasising that the freedom of navigation exercised by like-minded countries proves its legal status. The MND further criticised China's military actions against Taiwan and its neighbouring countries, saying that these actions only highlight China's role as the greatest threat to regional peace and stability. Sharing a post on X on Monday, MND said, "The Taiwan Strait is by no means under PRC sovereignty! Like-minded countries' freedom of navigation proves its legal status. #PLA military actions

against #Taiwan and its neighbors only reaffirm that the PRC is the greatest threat to regional peace and stability."

### Taiwan records heightened Chinese military activity with 41 aircraft, 9 vessels, 1 ship around its territory

17 February 2025, [Indian Narrative](#)

Taiwan has reported heightened Chinese military activity with 41 aircraft, 9 PLAN vessels and 1 official ship recorded operating around the island on Monday as per the Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND).

In a post on X, the MND noted that these were detected up until 6 AM (UTC+8).

MND said that out of the 41 aircraft, 28 crossed the median line and had entered into Taiwan's northern, central and southwestern ADIZ.

"41 PLA aircraft, 9 PLAN vessels and 1 official ship operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 28 out of 41 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, central and southwestern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded."

Meanwhile, following the recent transit of two US ships through the Taiwan Strait, Beijing reiterated its position on Taiwan, emphasised that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory and stated that it "opposes any country challenging or threatening China's sovereignty and security under the pretext of freedom of navigation."

During a regular press conference on Wednesday, Guo Jiakun, Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said, "Let me stress that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. The Taiwan question has nothing to do with freedom of navigation but bears on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

He added, "China firmly opposes any country challenging or threatening China's sovereignty and security under the pretext of freedom of navigation."

In recent weeks, China has visibly increased its capacity to conduct amphibious assaults on Taiwan's beaches with new naval equipment. This includes the formal launch of a unique advanced landing helicopter assault (LHA) vessel and the mass production of floating bridge docks to aid ship unloading during beach landings.

The Taiwan-China conflict remained a longstanding geopolitical issue centred on Taiwan's sovereignty. While Taiwan functioned as a de facto independent state with its own government, military, and economy, Beijing considered it a breakaway province under the "One China" policy.

Since the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), when the Republic of China government retreated to Taiwan, China had used diplomatic, economic, and military

measures to pressure Taiwan, which continued to assert its independence with strong domestic support.

### Taiwan cracks down on firms helping residents apply for Chinese identity cards

15 February 2025, [Independent](#), Arpan Rai

#### Nearly 4,000 Taiwanese residents have reportedly applied for Chinese IDs in coastal Xiamen city

Taipei is cracking down on Taiwanese people illegally procuring Chinese identity cards, apparently in a bid to contain Beijing's expanding influence.

The Mainland Affairs Council said it is taking action against residents who hold valid identity documents for both the self-governed island and the mainland.

Interior minister Liu Shyh-fang said investigators have identified several companies that allegedly help people apply for Chinese ID cards.

This comes shortly after two Taiwanese influencers shared a video showing how Beijing is luring the island's residents to apply for Chinese identity cards in a tactic move to swing public opinion in its favour.

China considers Taiwan a part of its territory and doesn't rule out the use of force to bring the island under its control. Taiwanese leaders, however, reject Chinese sovereignty.

At least 4,000 Taiwanese residents are reported to have applied for Chinese identity cards in the coastal city of Xiamen in Fujian province. About half of them did so without giving up their Taiwanese identification documents or travel permits required to visit the mainland.

One of the influencers behind the YouTube video, Pa Chiung, has alleged that three to five travel and public relations companies in Taiwan and two firms in China are assisting Taiwanese residents in securing People's Republic of China identity cards during trips to the mainland.

Ms Shyh-fang confirmed this. "Three to five public relations firms in southern and northern Taiwan have allegedly helped Taiwanese apply for Chinese ID cards and are under investigation for potential legal violations," the minister said earlier this month.

Ms Shyh-fang, whose ministry oversees Taiwan's immigration and investigation agencies, said at least 30 individuals are being questioned in connection with the procurement of Chinese identity papers.

The interior ministry is also investigating whether the Taiwanese companies under investigation were driven by "purely commercial" motives or were part of a larger operation to promote China's annexation of Taiwan.

### Did a Taiwan official say he didn't want Chinese tourists coming in bulk?

11 February 2025, [RFA](#), Dong Zhe

#### Verdict: Misleading

A claim began to circulate online that Taiwan's minister of the Mainland Affairs Council Chiu Chui-cheng said in a media interview he didn't want a large number of mainland Chinese tourists coming to the island.

**But the claim is misleading. Chiu's statement was a paraphrase of feedback received by his ministry from the Taiwanese public, not a statement of his own views.**

The claim was [shared](#) on Weibo on Jan. 13.

A Weibo user said on Jan. 13 that although there was a decrease in mainland Chinese tourists visiting Southeast Asia, Taiwan shouldn't be excited about receiving them since Taiwan was not the option for them because Taiwan said it didn't want Chinese tourists.

The user attached a media interview of Chiu Chui-cheng, the minister of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, which oversees cross-strait relations, as evidence, claiming that Chiu publicly said he didn't want Chinese tourists coming to the island in bulk since it would harm the island's tourism industry.

Taiwan has long welcomed tourists from mainland China, viewing such visits as a means to foster cross-strait exchanges. In 2008, agreements were established to facilitate group tourism from mainland China to Taiwan. By 2015, mainland Chinese tourists comprised approximately 40.54% of Taiwan's total tourist arrivals.

However, in August 2019, Beijing suspended individual travel permits for mainland residents visiting Taiwan, leading to a significant decline in tourist numbers. The COVID-19 pandemic further disrupted cross-strait tourism.

In August 2023, Taiwan announced plans to relax restrictions on Chinese business and group travelers, aiming to resume tourism exchanges.

Despite these efforts, as of early 2025, comprehensive tourism exchanges have not fully resumed. In January 2025, China announced preparations to resume group tours to Taiwan for residents of Shanghai and Fujian province, signaling a potential thaw in tourism relations.

But the claim about Chiu is misleading. Chiu's statement was a paraphrase of feedback received by his ministry from the Taiwanese public, not a statement of his own views.

#### Chiu's statement

A reverse image search on Google found the clip on Weibo was taken from Chiu's interview with Taiwanese broadcaster FTV News aired on Jan. 4.

At the interview's five-minute and 35-second mark, Chiu can be heard discussing the Taiwanese public's negative reaction to a recent announcement by Chinese officials.

"Shanghai's vice mayor announced that the city will actively promote tourist groups to come to Taiwan. The following day, the Mainland Affairs Council received more than 100 calls and media voicing opposition against this proposal, stating their reason as not wanting large numbers of tourists to lower the quality of Taiwan's tourism," Chiu said.

A close look at the video shows Chiu made no mention that he didn't want Chinese tourists coming to the island in bulk since it would harm the island's tourism industry.

At the video's six-minute and 24-second mark, Chiu said that his ministry was focused on ensuring that Chinese tourists visit Taiwan in a healthy and orderly way.

He pointed out that tourism from China was not entirely market-driven, as travelers must apply for a permit from Chinese authorities, adding that this meant that China could use policy measures to influence cross-strait tourism.

If Taiwan implements policies that China disapproves of, Beijing may reduce the number of Chinese tourists as a form of pressure, impacting Taiwan's tourism industry and even compelling businesses to express support for China, Chiu noted.

"This is something we must closely monitor," the minister added.

### **China's stunning new campaign to turn the world against Taiwan**

10 February 2025, [Financial Review](#)

*Seventy countries have recently backed "all Chinese efforts" to take the island. The new wording has been adopted in the past 18 months, after a Chinese diplomatic offensive across the global south.*

or those anxious about Chinese aggression towards the self-ruled island of Taiwan, there was a welcome signal at the end of Donald Trump's third week back in the White House. After talks with Shigeru Ishiba, the Japanese prime minister, on February 7, the two leaders said America and Japan "opposed any attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion" in relation to Taiwan, which China claims as its own.

This steely new language was a win in America's long quest to get its allies to show more solidarity with Taiwan. Yet in the battle for global backing over the island's fate, China is rapidly gaining ground.

By *The Economist's* count, 70 countries have now officially endorsed both China's sovereignty over Taiwan and, just as crucially, that China is entitled to

pursue "all" efforts to achieve unification, without specifying that those efforts should be peaceful. Moreover, the vast majority of those countries have adopted that new wording in the past 18 months, after a Chinese diplomatic offensive across the global south. Our findings are consistent with those in a study published on January 15 by the Lowy Institute think tank. It found that by the end of last year 119 countries – 62 per cent of the United Nation's member states – had endorsed China's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan. Of them, 89 also backed China's unification efforts, with many supporting "all" such measures. (The Lowy study did not quantify the latter group or specify when they adopted this expansive language.) China's latest diplomatic push appears to be designed to secure global support for its broadening campaign of coercion against Taiwan. That campaign includes the threat of imposing a quarantine or inspection regime on Taiwan (huge Chinese military drills in October practiced a blockade). A full-scale invasion does not appear imminent, but American officials say that China's leader, Xi Jinping, has ordered his generals to have the capability to invade Taiwan by 2027.

China wants protection from the sanctions that Western officials have discussed imposing in the event of a Taiwan crisis. By ensuring much of the world recognises the legitimacy of its actions, it makes it unlikely sanctions or even censure could be imposed via the UN and means that global compliance with Western-led sanctions might be even lower than has been the case after Russia's attack on Ukraine.

"It is plausible to conclude that nearly half of UN member states have, intentionally or not, formally endorsed a PRC [People's Republic of China] takeover of the island," noted Benjamin Herscovitch, a former Australian defence official, in the Lowy Institute study. How these countries would actually respond is unclear, he says, but China would probably "portray these countries as having given the green light for its use of force".

The 70 countries adopting the most pro-China language span Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania and Latin America; 97 per cent, including South Africa, Egypt and Pakistan, are in the global south. In many of these countries, China has secured access to critical natural resources and financed ports and other transport projects through its Belt and Road infrastructure scheme.

Among the most recent examples is Sri Lanka, where Chinese companies have invested in two strategically important ports. When its president, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, visited China in January a joint statement said, for the first time, that Sri Lanka "firmly supports all efforts by the Chinese government to achieve national reunification".

That replaced a more vague phrase in the previous joint statement, in 2024, which backed China's efforts

to “safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity”. Similar new wording appeared in a joint statement with Nepal in December.

China’s influence grows

One of China’s biggest coups came in September, when 53 African governments signed a statement at a summit in Beijing. They agreed that Taiwan was Chinese territory and said that Africa “firmly supports all” China’s unification efforts. At the previous such summit, in 2021, they did not explicitly mention Taiwan but supported “resolving territorial and maritime disputes peacefully”.

Even Malaysia, which has its own territorial dispute with China and typically avoids taking sides on Taiwan, has leaned towards the Chinese position. In a joint statement in June 2024, Malaysia used new language recognising Taiwan as Chinese territory “in order for China to achieve national reunification”. It stopped short of endorsing “all” unification measures but dropped an earlier call for “peaceful” efforts to that end.

The shift suggests that China’s influence in the global south continues to grow even as its overseas lending has declined, and many developing nations have had problems servicing Chinese loans. America and its allies, meanwhile, have failed to incentivise poor countries to resist Chinese pressure over Taiwan, partly because of a reluctance (until Trump came back) to link aid to foreign-policy goals.

UN member states’ positions on Taiwan and China



Because there are so many developing countries, they could play a decisive role in judging the legitimacy of any Chinese act of aggression against Taiwan – and of any American-led attempt to intervene. China would rally support for its actions at the UN, while America and its allies would urge member states to join them in condemning China and imposing sanctions. And the West, it seems, would face a far tougher battle than it did in March 2022, when 141 of 193 UN member states backed a resolution demanding Russia’s withdrawal from Ukraine.

**The battle for global support on Taiwan will be even harder fought than in Ukraine. And China is already on the advance.**

China’s diplomatic offensive appears to be linked to the war in Ukraine, says Ja Ian Chong of the National University of Singapore. “Looking at the diplomatic isolation Russia faced, they’d prefer to avoid that” and

to ensure that China-friendly countries continue to supply oil and other resources (or allow transshipment through their ports) in a conflict over Taiwan, he says. Besides, he adds, China “likes to appear legitimate”.

Dr Chong did a study on national positions on Taiwan in February 2023. That did not include countries that supported all of China’s unification efforts because there were so few then. But it found that 51 accepted China’s preferred formula for defining its sovereignty claim over Taiwan. China appears to have won over at least 68 more countries since then, judging by the figures from the Lowy study and one published on January 17 by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London-based think-tank.

Among those adopting firmer language is Russia, which has become increasingly reliant on Chinese imports to offset Western sanctions since its invasion of Ukraine. Still, even though others with close ties to China, such as North Korea and Serbia, have endorsed “all” China’s unification efforts, Russia has held back, endorsing only “initiatives” to that end.

‘Three warfares’

China exaggerates the level of international support for its position on Taiwan, claiming there is a “universal” consensus in its favour. And some foreign officials may be unaware of the new wording’s nuances, cautions Meia Nouwens of the IISS. She links China’s efforts to its armed forces’ recent focus on what they call the “three warfares” – psychological, public opinion and legal – in preparing for a Taiwan conflict.

China may also fear that its sovereignty claim is increasingly being challenged by the West. Japan is among several American allies that have recently made firmer and more frequent statements criticising Chinese military pressure on Taiwan and backing “meaningful” participation in the UN for the island, which is not a member.

Bonnie Glaser of the German Marshall Fund, a think-tank based in Washington, notes that much of Europe has recently woken up to a Taiwan conflict’s potential economic cost. “There have been conversations in many capitals about how countries can contribute to strengthening deterrence” and impose costs on China in a war, she says.

A more recent concern for China is that Trump could coerce some countries to change their positions on Taiwan. Panama, for example, switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 2017 and signed up to Xi’s Belt and Road infrastructure scheme the same year. But on February 6, under pressure from Trump, Panama withdrew from Belt and Road. It is also conducting an audit of a China-linked company that controls ports adjacent to the Panama Canal.

Of course, America could simply bypass the UN if China attacked or blockaded Taiwan. American forces

could unilaterally block shipping to and from China. But America will also need access to bases, ports and other facilities in the global south, especially the Indo-Pacific. And if a large majority of countries view its response as illegitimate, even some of its allies might waver.

It has been tough enough for the West to sustain international solidarity with Ukraine, whose sovereignty was not in dispute before Russia invaded. The battle for global support on Taiwan will be even harder fought. And China is already on the advance.

### China is infiltrating Taiwan's armed forces

06 February 2025, [The Economist](#)

#### And Taiwan is struggling to deal with the growing number of spies

In 2021 a retired Taiwanese general named Kao An-kuo made a video of himself dressed in camouflage, calling on Taiwan's armed forces to overthrow the island's government. The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (dpp) was full of "ethnic traitors" who were selling Taiwan out to America, he said, and obstructing the Chinese nation's great rejuvenation. At that time it drew little attention. Mr Kao was the ageing leader of a fringe pro-unification group with scarce support in Taiwanese society. But in January Mr Kao, who is now 80, was indicted for military espionage. Prosecutors allege that he and five others created an armed group to work with China's armed forces towards an invasion of Taiwan. They were accused of using drones to track military drills, reporting training results to China and trying to recruit more collaborators.

Mr Kao is the highest-ranking veteran of Taiwan's armed forces to have been accused of spying for China, but he is not the first. In January another group of veterans was indicted for allegedly sending photos and maps of America's de facto embassy in Taipei and of Taiwanese military bases to Chinese agents. Last year Taiwan's courts prosecuted 64 people for spying for China. Two-thirds were current or retired military personnel. Prosecutions have jumped fourfold in the past four years, according to Taiwan's National Security Bureau. Yet China's infiltration is still evolving in both scope and tactics.

There have been 1,706 instances of Chinese intelligence trying to recruit Taiwanese officers and soldiers online between January 2022 and June 2024, says one government report, creating an "unprecedented challenge" for Taiwan's armed forces. China is targeting rank-and-file soldiers as well as high-level officers, reaching them through channels such as online gaming platforms and underground lenders. Chinese goals are shifting, too, from stealing tactically useful intelligence to using co-opted soldiers for

psychological warfare. Some have allegedly filmed "surrender videos" in which they pose in Taiwanese uniform with a Chinese flag and promise not to fight, or sign oaths of loyalty to the Chinese motherland if war broke out.

How is China convincing Taiwan's soldiers and officers to collaborate? In the past it targeted retired officers first. These older veterans tended to come from a generation that may have fled the mainland, identified as Chinese nationalists and opposed Taiwan's independence. Many also disliked the dpp for cutting veterans' pensions in 2018. Resentful Taiwanese veterans were susceptible to Chinese agents, says Chang Yen-ting, a retired air-force general. They would befriend them on family visits or business trips, taking them out to meals, inviting them to play golf, "peeling them like an onion, layer by layer", until they felt that the mainlanders were their true allies and the dpp their enemy.

#### Turning the tide

China is now targeting younger personnel, says one of the special prosecutors who handles national-security cases in Taiwan. Many of the younger targets are in debt, he says. They start out searching for ways to make money online. Some of them get into gambling. Others look for loans through informal lenders, often linked with criminal gangs that are associated with Taiwan's temple networks.

China works through middlemen affiliated with those groups, who will offer base payments of up to NT\$200,000 (\$6,000) for "rubbish intelligence" he says, such as a photo of toilets in a training base or a video saying they don't want war. Naive soldiers think it's easy money. "Hundreds of thousands just for a twenty-second video, it's incredible," says the prosecutor. But once the first payment has been made, the middlemen will ask targets to provide more advanced information.

Listen to this story

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#### **Turning the tide**

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prosecutor. But once the first payment has been made, the middlemen will ask targets to provide more advanced information.

None of these videos have been released. But, says the prosecutor, China may be collecting them for use in future, when it wants to break the Taiwanese public's will to resist. "They can be used to tell ordinary Taiwanese people, 'Look, even your army is not loyal to your country,'" says Nie Ruiyi, a lawyer who has worked on many military-espionage cases.

That psychology is also one of China's recruitment methods. Agents will reveal to Taiwanese targets that they already know all about that soldier's deployment orders. They scare the target, then tell him that war is coming soon, and they can keep their family safe if they collaborate, says Mr Nie. Some of these methods are working. The prosecutor says he dealt with a recent case where a Taiwanese lieutenant agreed to collaborate in return for Thai passports, obtained through Chinese investment on behalf of his family. "That lieutenant told me, if war happens, he will remain here to fulfil his duty. But he wants to get his wife and children out right away."

Taiwan is trying to stop China's military infiltration. Most of the prosecuted cases have been uncovered through internal reporting, showing that anti-spy education is working, says the defence ministry. Its courts have also been meting out heavier sentences as a deterrent. China is maximising the propaganda value of these cases by using them to fan Taiwan's domestic divisions. Asked about Mr Kao's case this month, Chen Binhua, a spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said the dpp was using an "evil" national-security law to suppress opponents.

#### **Taipei denies 13 Chinese officials from entering Taiwan**

02 February 2025, [AA](#), Berk Kutay Gokmen

Among 13 Chinese officials banned from entering Taiwan is Jin Mei, director of Shanghai Taiwan Affairs Office

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council denied 13 Chinese officials from entering the self-governing island, Taiwan based Liberty Times reported on Monday.

Among the 13 Chinese officials banned from entering the island for attending the Taipei Lantern Festival is Jin Mei, the director of the Shanghai Taiwan Affairs Office.

The festival is an annual cultural event celebrated in Taiwan.

Minister-designate of the Mainland Affairs Council, Chiu Chui-cheng, said that the decision was made in response to Beijing's actions preventing Taiwanese businessmen living in China from returning home to

take part in events organized by the Straits Exchange Foundation.

Straits Exchange Foundation, a Taiwan-based organization that deals with civil and business affairs with China, is inviting Taiwanese businessmen based in China to its cultural events.

Chiu said that some groups from China were approved to take part in the Taipei Lantern Festival, but application of Jin Mei's delegation was submitted too late for consideration.

China views Taiwan as a "breakaway province" despite Taipei having governed itself since 1949. Beijing has vowed to reunify the island, including by force if necessary.

### **Taiwan bans Chinese AI DeepSeek in public sector over security concerns**

01 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

Taiwan has prohibited public sector employees and critical infrastructure workers from using DeepSeek, citing national security concerns over the Chinese artificial intelligence platform. The ban was announced on Friday by Taiwan's Digital Development Department.

In a statement, the Digital Development Department stated that the ban on DeepSeek's products is to "avoid the transmission of user-related data or consultations by products with cybersecurity concerns."

"DeepSeek AI services are Chinese products, with concerns involving cross-border data transmission and information leakage, posing a threat to national cybersecurity," the statement from the Digital Development Department stated.

The ban aligns with existing guidelines for generative AI use in Taiwan's government institutions, which prohibit officials from sharing confidential public affairs, personal data, or non-public information with AI platforms.

"Officers in charge of business matters must not provide generative AI with information involving confidential public affairs, personal data, or information not publicly disclosed by the agency or institution, nor should they ask generative AI questions that might involve confidential business or personal data," the statement further noted.

Several countries, including South Korea, Ireland, France, Australia, and Italy, have raised questions about the company's handling of user information. On the same day as Taiwan's announcement, South Korean privacy regulators launched an inquiry into DeepSeek's personal information collection and management practices.

Beyond data security, concerns have been raised about DeepSeek's content censorship, particularly

regarding politically sensitive topics. Critics argue that the platform's alignment with Chinese state narratives could influence public perception on contested issues involving countries occupied by China like Tibet, East Turkestan, and Hong Kong.

The ban comes at a time of heightened cybersecurity concerns, with Taiwan reporting an increase in cyberattacks. According to the Taiwan National Security Bureau, cyberattacks on government departments have doubled in 2024, reaching an average of 2.4 million attacks per day, compared to 1.2 million in 2023. The majority of these attacks have been attributed to Chinese cyber forces.

The decision also comes amid heightened cross-strait tensions between Taiwan and China, with the latter continuing to assert territorial claims over the self-governing island. Taiwan's recently elected President Lai Ching-te has called for dialogue with China while maintaining the cross-strait status quo.

## CHINA- US

### Trump administration targets China with new trade and investment restrictions

24 February 2025, [The Hindustan Times](#)

Donald Trump has issued a memo instructing a top government committee to limit Chinese investment in energy, technology, and other vital U.S. industries.

The Trump administration took aim at China with a series of moves involving investment, trade and other issues that raises the risk ties may soon worsen between the US and its top economic rival.

In recent days, President Donald Trump has rolled out a memorandum telling a key government committee to curb Chinese spending on tech, energy and other strategic American sectors. The administration also called on Mexican officials to place their own levies on Chinese imports – a move that comes after Chinese firms moved production to the US neighbor to get around duties the Republican enacted in his first term. The US also proposed fees on the use of commercial ships made in China to counter the nation's dominance in the production of the vessels. Chinese shipping stocks fell on Monday, while the benchmark CSI 300 Index fluctuated. The yuan traded onshore rose 0.2% to 7.2359 versus the dollar as of 12:30 p.m. in Shanghai.

Taken together, the steps amount to the most sweeping, forceful actions targeting Beijing of Trump's second term and could complicate a deal to reduce China's trade surplus with the US that the president has indicated he wants to forge.

The memo with the order to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US – a secretive panel that scrutinizes proposals by foreign entities to buy US companies or property – seems to be the most impactful of the flurry of the actions. Referring to Beijing as a “foreign adversary,” it says the changes are needed to protect “the crown jewels of United States technology, food supplies, farmland, minerals, natural resources, ports, and shipping terminals.”

“This is likely a disappointment for Beijing, which hoped to offer a large-scale investments in the US as a concession in a negotiation,” said Martin Chorzempa, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. “This calls into question whether the US would be open to that kind of investment.”

To be sure, China's investment into North America tumbled at the end of last year below levels seen during the worst of the pandemic, a slide likely due to prospective investors waiting to see if Trump would win election in November. Companies announced only \$191 million of new investments into Canada, Mexico and the US last quarter, according to US-based consultancy Rhodium Group, a decline of more than 90% from the same period a year earlier.



After the memorandum was released, Beijing urged Washington to stop politicizing and weaponizing economic and trade issues. The US government's push to strengthen reviews of business ties on security grounds would seriously undermine the confidence of Chinese companies investing in the US, the Ministry of Commerce said.

The memorandum also says the US government should also review a 1984 tax deal with China that frees individuals and companies from double taxation, and an arrangement known as "variable interest entity" that Chinese firms use to list on American exchanges.

"Eliminating these kind of treaties just makes things very uncertain and complicated for investors because they don't know if they're going to be taxed," Chorzempa said.

A call in the memo for new and expanded limits on investment from US pension and endowment funds in high-tech sectors in China could affect companies along the Asian nation's artificial intelligence supply chains, UBS Group AG said in a note. The rule could impact hardware, software and internet firms, strategists including James Wang wrote.

The outline for a plan for fees on Chinese-built ships that carry traded goods also has mandates requiring that a portion of US products be moved on American vessels. It results from an inquiry into China's practices in the maritime, logistics and shipbuilding industries that started during the Biden administration and ended with a report days before Trump took office.

China's share of global shipbuilding capacity has surged over the past decade to account for around half of the world's new builds, partly driven by its own domestic demand for more ships. The country's fleet was valued at \$255.2 billion in January, the most in the world, according to analytics platform VesselsValue. Japan was second at \$231.4 billion, while the US ranked fourth at \$116.4 billion.

Shares of Cosco Shipping Holdings Co., which was earlier blacklisted by the Defense Department over alleged links to the People's Liberation Army, fell as much as 8.3% in Hong Kong on Monday. Singapore-listed Yangzijiang Shipbuilding Holdings Ltd. also slid.

Underscoring the divide between the two economic powers, last week Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng expressed "serious concern" over a 10% tariff hike that Trump earlier placed on goods from the Asian country. He made the comments in a call with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who raised a host of issues with China, including "economic imbalances."

China's \$295 billion trade surplus with the US looms large in the new administration's list of worries, though Trump has said he may be able to reach a fresh deal with Beijing, following one during his first term. "It's possible, it's possible," he said last week. Trump earlier threatened tariffs of 60% on Chinese goods —

a level that would devastate trade between the nations — and has ordered his administration to investigate whether Beijing had complied with that agreement.

The Bessent-He call came weeks after the new tariffs took effect, hitting the entirety of Chinese goods shipped to the US. Trump linked them to complaints over Chinese production of precursors for illicit fentanyl heading to America.

The rising China-US tensions come as Trump pushes to end the war in Ukraine, a move that started with landmark discussions between Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin. While China would welcome an end to the war because it would help improve its ties with Europe, it raises the possibility that once the fighting ends Washington would turn its full attention to Beijing.

### **Trump tariffs promise chaos, but China's Xi Jinping may be the biggest threat to the global economy, former Treasury official warns**

23 February 2025, [Fortune](#), Jason Ma

**China's lopsided trade flows** and Xi Jinping's focus on manufacturing may represent the biggest danger to the global economy, according to former Treasury official Brad Setser. But he added that President Donald Trump's tariffs are not the solution and could even make matters worse, especially if US trade policy remains unpredictable.

China's policies and the flood of exports it's unloading around the world could pose the worst threat to the global economy, even eclipsing President Donald Trump's tariffs, according to a former Treasury official. To be sure, Trump's aggressive tariff stance has caused so much unpredictability that US trade partners don't know how to react and businesses can't plan, said Brad Setser, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a deputy assistant secretary at the Treasury Department during the Obama administration.

"But he is not the only danger the world economy faces and may not even be the biggest," Setser wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed on Tuesday. "That may be President Xi Jinping of China, whose more strategic and calibrated industrial and economic policies are fundamentally distorting and harming global trade."

Trump has imposed tariffs on China, announced duties on steel and aluminum, paused tariffs on Canada and Mexico, and directed his administration to study reciprocal tariffs, with potential to enact them in April. Meanwhile, a closer look at China's trade data reveals a radical shift in how the country has been interacting with the rest of the world recently, Setser said.

Imports of manufactured goods into China have grown by an average of just \$15 billion annually over the last

six years, essentially unchanged after accounting for inflation. But exports from China have shot up by more than \$150 billion.

“When it comes to manufactured goods, trade with China is virtually a one-way street,” Setser said.

That massive disparity is hurting other economies, especially other export-oriented ones like Germany and Japan, he added.

The problem can be traced back to China’s refusal to rebalance its economy after the global financial crash away from its heavy dependence on investment and trade. Rather than shift the economy toward the consumer sector, Beijing fueled a real estate and infrastructure bonanza. But fearing a bubble, Xi clamped down on the boom, setting off a slump that China still hasn’t recovered from.

At the same time, Xi avoided directing massive stimulus to consumers during the pandemic, unlike many other countries that fueled demand for Chinese products. Instead of consumers, China offered support to its manufacturers, resulting in overproduction that only overseas demand couldn’t match.

Now, China alone has the capacity to produce two-thirds of the world’s demand for cars, Setser said. Similarly, China makes more than half the world’s supply of steel, aluminum, and ships. China’s volume of exports is expanding three times faster than global trade, meaning its gains are coming at the expense of others.

“This points to a world economy in which China has no need for the industrial inputs of other countries while leaving those countries dependent on Chinese-made goods—and vulnerable to Beijing’s political and economic pressure,” he predicted.

Trump’s tariffs could actually make the problem worse, Setser noted. One-off duties and retaliation wouldn’t fundamentally change trade flows, but Trump’s unpredictability makes adjusting to his tariffs extremely difficult.

Indeed, Trump has also threatened to target Europe next with tariffs, claiming its use of value-added taxes is unfair to US exporters. And more recently, he has floated tariffs on autos, chips and drugs.

“Mr. Xi has a one-way vision of trade. Mr. Trump often sounds as if he doesn’t believe in any trade. Between the two of them, the global economy is in for a rough ride,” Setser warned.

Others have also raised alarms about China’s overcapacity and its support for manufacturers over consumers, saying it would hurt China’s economy too. With domestic demand weak, any excess supply in China could result in deflation.

Zongyuan Zou Liu, a China scholar at the Council on Foreign Relations, pointed to Beijing’s decades-old strategy of favoring industrial production.

“Simply put, in many crucial economic sectors, China is producing far more output than it, or foreign

markets, can sustainably absorb,” she wrote in *Foreign Affairs* magazine last August. “As a result, the Chinese economy runs the risk of getting caught in a doom loop of falling prices, insolvency, factory closures, and, ultimately, job losses.”

### **US Senators slam China's misuse of UN Resolution 2758 to isolate Taiwan**

23 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*The resolution stresses that UN Resolution 2758, adopted in 1971, did not address China's territorial claims over Taiwan or determine Taiwan's political status.*

A bipartisan group of US senators has introduced a resolution reaffirming American support for Taiwan, condemning China's "weaponization" of UN Resolution 2758 to manipulate history and marginalize Taiwan.

The nonbinding resolution, presented by Senators Jim Risch and Jeanne Shaheen, emphasizes that the US "one China policy" differs from the Chinese Communist Party's "one China principle," Taipei Times reported.

The resolution stresses that UN Resolution 2758, adopted in 1971, did not address China's territorial claims over Taiwan or determine Taiwan's political status.

Despite this, China has misused the resolution to block Taiwan's participation in international organizations. The US senators assert that Resolution 2758 does not endorse the "one China principle" and should not prevent Taiwan's meaningful involvement in UN bodies.

It further emphasizes that the US is against China's attempts to inhibit Taiwan's meaningful involvement in international organizations.

The resolution was presented by US senators Jim Risch and Jeanne Shaheen, who are the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, along with senators Pete Ricketts and Chris Coons. Representatives Young Kim, Ami Bera, John Moolenaar, and Raja Krishnamoorthi also collaborated with the senators in introducing this resolution, according to the Taipei Times.

In 1971, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted UN Resolution 2758, which transferred China's UN seat from the Republic of China to the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, the report did not address China's territorial claims over Taiwan or assert a position regarding Taiwan's political status.

"Once again, the Chinese government has attempted to trick the world and subvert the UN for its own purposes but we see these malign tactics and stand in support of our friends in Taiwan," a Senate Foreign

Relations Committee news release cited Risch as quoted by Taipei Times.

"Beijing's attempts to prevent Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN further erode international support for Taiwan, and this bipartisan resolution makes it clear that the United States won't allow for that," he said.

"To be clear, UNGA Resolution 2758 does not define Taiwan's political status, does not dictate how countries can engage with Taiwan and should not prevent Taiwan from meaningfully participating in UN bodies, full stop" quoted Taipei Times report

The US Senate resolution also states that Resolution 2758 did not endorse and is not equivalent to the "one China principle," so countries that supported Resolution 2758 do not necessarily accept the "one China principle," but the PRC misleadingly claims that those countries abide by Beijing's policy, Taipei Times reported.

As per the report, the US rejects China's coercive attempts to limit Taiwan's global role and to intimidate other countries from strengthening partnerships with Taiwan, he said.

The Senate resolution states that the US recognizes Taiwan as a reliable and indispensable partner on issues ranging from global health to advanced manufacturing, and its resources and expertise are assets from which the international community should fully benefit.

It also encouraged the US government to work with partners on joint efforts to counter China's false narratives about UN Resolution 2758 and support other countries to differentiate their policies and "one China principle" propaganda.

### US State Department tweaks online fact sheet on China

20 February 2025, [VOA](#), Steve Herman

PRC is out. China is in.

That is among the significant modifications to the U.S. State Department's online fact sheet on China, which drops the country's official name, the People's Republic of China (PRC), in favor of just China.

Former President Joe Biden's administration routinely referenced the Beijing government with the PRC abbreviation. Since former President Richard Nixon began the process to normalize relations with Beijing — which would end recognition of the government in Taipei, officially known as the Republic of China, on Jan. 1, 1979 — the United States has maintained diplomatic ties with the communist-run government on the mainland, while reducing the relationship with Taiwan to unofficial but friendly.

"Taipei should take solace in the fact that the change in the term [from PRC to China] does not represent a

policy change in the United States. The fact of the matter is that the U.S. still has its 'One China' policy, and under that policy, it maintains diplomatic relations with Beijing and robust unofficial relations with Taipei," Russell Hsiao, Global Taiwan Institute executive director, told VOA.

"Since 1979, Washington has recognized the government in Beijing of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, so the change in term is essentially a different way of presenting the same set of facts, all of which haven't changed," Hsiao said.

China considers Taiwan a rogue province. Nationalist forces, backed by the United States and commanded by Chiang Kai-shek, fled the mainland for Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war to the communist forces led by Mao Zedong. Chiang became Taiwan's relatively benign dictator until his death in 1975. Mao ruled over the mainland as a rigid authoritarian until his death a year after Chiang died.

Washington continues to provide Taipei with weapons and has left the question ambiguous as to whether the United States would use its military to defend the island if Taiwan were to be attacked. The Taiwan Relations Act commits the United States to help Taiwan defend itself, but the final decision on military intervention would rest with the president and Congress.

Language changes last week by the State Department eliminated a reference to Washington not supporting Taiwan independence, but left intact was content noting that the United States opposes "unilateral changes to the status quo" by either side of the Taiwan Strait.

A significant change to the State Department's web page on China, however, is the deletion of content on cooperating with allies on China-related issues and on helping Beijing with cultural matters and environmental protections. Instead, there is new language focusing on the U.S.-China trade relationship, noting the difficulty for American businesses to operate in China and that the Chinese economy is "one of the most restrictive investment climates in the world."

Yet another shift in tone, in line with rhetoric used by President Donald Trump's administration, is reflected by frequent references to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The party is directly accused of trying to "manipulate and subvert" United Nations organizations and other international bodies and seeking to "groom and install CCP members in leadership and other positions" in such groups.

In the newly edited fact sheet, the CCP is also blamed for "malicious cyber activity against U.S. government, private sector and critical infrastructure networks." The document now notes the United States is

dedicated to countering these activities “to help protect American citizens, businesses and industries.” “These moves reflect an overall sense in Washington and within the Trump administration that engagement with China has failed and a tougher approach is warranted,” Rorry Daniels, managing director of the Asia Society Policy Institute, told VOA.

“This mood has been building — particularly in Congress — for years, and a change of emphasis is no surprise. However, swapping out PRC for China reflects a deeper and more dangerous narrative that attacks the CCP’s legitimacy as the governing authority of China. I expect this will be viewed with grave concern by Beijing and raised at the highest levels in the coming days and weeks,” added Daniels.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun, responding during Thursday’s regular press briefing, expressed strong dissatisfaction with the website changes.

The State Department’s actions “misrepresent the facts, attack China’s foreign policy and peddle the so-called China-U.S. strategic competition. We strongly deplore and firmly oppose it,” Guo said.

The changes come after Trump imposed an additional 10% tariff on all imports from China. The president said he was taking the action because Beijing’s government has failed to stop the flow into the United States of the illicit opioid fentanyl.

Trump has also announced he intends to put in place further retaliatory tariffs on all trading partners that limit access for U.S. goods into their markets.

### **Former USAID official warns China is already looking to fill void left by paused programs**

19 February 2025, [Yahoo News](#), Rachel Wolf

The Trump administration’s pause of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding may leave the door open for China to spread its influence, and Beijing is not wasting time trying to fill in the gaps.

A former USAID official, who spoke with Fox News Digital under the condition of anonymity, said that whereas the U.S. stepped down, China has “immediately” stepped in.

“We’ve just seen news reporting coming out of Nepal, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, documenting directly that where USAID programs have ended that the People’s Republic of China has told these governments that it will step in and become the partner for these governments to continue that work,” a former USAID official told Fox News Digital.

China has already stepped up its funding to Cambodia’s largest demining organization, the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), in the absence of U.S. funds, according to Reuters. As it seeks

increased influence, Beijing pledged \$4.4 million to CMAC, more than double the \$2 million it received from the U.S. last year, the outlet added.

Additionally, China is also watching the funding freeze’s impact on Nepal, the Annapurna Express reports. While China is already sending funds to Nepal, it is reportedly increasing its financial support in various areas.

The former USAID official emphasized that “by removing these [USAID] programs it adds one more reason for many of these partners to now not see the United States as a partner who shares their priorities of investing in the people of their countries.”

While there are several populations around the globe feeling the impact of the Trump administration’s funding freeze, the situation is particularly treacherous for women.

During President Donald Trump’s first term in office, his daughter, Ivanka, played a key role in launching the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP). At the time, the White House said the program was aimed at advancing women’s economic empowerment.

Lilian Achom, who is based in Uganda, participated in USAID W-GDP Fund programming and was present when Trump launched the W-GDP. Now, she fears that women grappling with HIV/AIDS, many of whom are widows trying to raise children.

When speaking to Fox News Digital, Achom said Trump needs to “think about the underprivileged deep down in northern Uganda. The underprivileged, the children, the women who are currently suffering.”

Achom recalled meeting Ivanka Trump and spoke highly of the president’s daughter, saying that she was “inspired” by her.

“I saw in her someone who was really, really interested in women’s empowerment, economic development and digital inclusion for women around the world,” Achom said of Ivanka.

The former USAID official who spoke with Fox News Digital said that the funding freeze is “impacting potentially every aspect of the lives of women and girls who were benefiting from USAID programs.” The official added that while China is already trying to fill certain voids left by the U.S., it’s unclear whether they will fund programs focused on women.

“Beijing’s economic diplomacy is inherently predatory,” a State Department spokesperson said in response to a Fox News request for comment. “We will work with partner nations so they can make informed decisions about their interactions with China. It’s no secret that when CCP-aligned companies arrive in town, they are often backed by state-sponsored theft of intellectual property and economic espionage.”

“This is not about ending foreign aid, but restructuring assistance to serve U.S. interests, and to be sure the money spent on aid programs actually reaches people

in need," the spokesperson added. "Programs that serve the national interest will continue."

The White House has accused USAID of funding "the ridiculous — and, in many cases, malicious — pet projects of entrenched bureaucrats."

Among the areas of "waste and abuse" highlighted by the White House are \$2.5 million for electric vehicles for Vietnam, \$1.5 million to "advance diversity, equity and inclusion in Serbia's workplaces and business communities," and \$6 million to fund tourism in Egypt.

### Chinese FM responds to Donald Trump Jr.'s remarks: Hope US will meet China halfway

19 February 2025, [Global Times](#)



On the issue of China-US relations, China's position is consistent and clear. We are willing to resolve our respective concerns with the US through dialogue and consultation, based on the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, while firmly safeguarding our national sovereignty, security, and development interests, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Wednesday.

He made the comments in response to a media inquiry concerning President Donald Trump's oldest son's remarks involving China. It was reported that citing a nominated Pentagon post, Trump Jr. claimed that the US military should focus on China, but at the same time, the American people would benefit most from a balance of power with China that avoids war. Guo expressed the hope that the US will meet China halfway to jointly deliver on the important consensus reached between the two heads of state, and to promote the stable, healthy, and sustainable development of China-US relations.

### US withdrawal from UN Human Rights Council sparks concerns about China

18 February 2025, [RFA](#), Choegy and Tenzin Dickyi

**Tibetan and Uyghur advocacy groups will need to work harder for support from the international community.**

Tibetan and Uyghur groups and other activists have expressed concern over the U.S. withdrawal from the U.N. Human Rights Council, saying the move will remove a key voice speaking out against autocratic countries that don't respect human rights, including China.

Advocacy groups said they must now redouble their efforts to win support from other nations.

In an Feb. 4 executive order, President Donald Trump announced that the United States would not participate in the U.N. Human Rights Council, or UNHRC, and would not seek election to the Geneva-based body.

Trump also pulled the United States out of the UNHRC in 2018 during his first term, though it rejoined in 2021 during the Biden administration. Biden then decided not to seek a second term as a board member when the three-year U.S. tenure expired at the end of 2024. "This action removes American leadership in the U.N., taking away a voice that has held accountable those who disrespect human rights and standing against those whose goal is to subvert the international discourse on human rights to fit autocratic agendas," said Tencho Gyatso, president of the International Campaign for Tibet.

Gyatso said that the U.S. has been among the countries on the UNHRC that have consistently raised the issue of human rights of the Tibetan people.

The council promotes human rights around the world by investigating human rights violations, making recommendations and addressing human rights emergencies.

"The absence of the U.S. on the U.N. Human Rights Council means human rights advocates and activists will need to work harder to seek support from other countries," she added.

#### **Bilateral and multi-stakeholder tools**

In response, a U.S. State Department spokesperson told Radio Free Asia that as a leader in taking actions to address human rights violations around the world, the U.S. has bilateral and multi-stakeholder tools that ensure American values and interests are represented globally.

"The United States will continue to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms," the spokesperson said in an email.

In 2024, the UNHRC sharply criticized Beijing's systematic human rights violations against Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers and Chinese during its evaluation of China's human rights record, called the Universal Periodic Review, or UPR, which is held every five years to address a country's human rights record. At that time, Amnesty International's China director Sarah Brooks said China sought to "gaslight the global community, denying the scope and scale of violations of human rights documented in U.N. reports, while

offering up its anti-human rights approach as a model for other countries.”

Beijing later rejected the body’s recommendations or said that various human rights standards had already been implemented.

### **Chinese suppression**

In a statement on Feb. 5, the International Campaign for Tibet, or ICT, called on the UNHRC to strengthen human rights protections, particularly in Tibet, as the Chinese government systematically attempts to suppress any criticism about its policies that repress Tibetans.

“The Tibet issue is not only about the Tibetan people but is also a global concern involving human rights, environmental protection, and the suppression of freedoms [because] the consequences of neglecting these issues will impact the global community,” said Phuntsok Topgyal, U.N. advocacy officer at the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, the official agency of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile.

“While not all countries may currently align with Tibet’s cause, the advocacy for human rights and environmental preservation will have wider repercussions, and future generations will recognize its importance for all nations,” he said.

Still, Topgyal said he remained optimistic that Washington would continue to champion Tibetans’ rights and global human rights efforts through other diplomatic and international channels.

But John Sifton, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch, said that by pulling out of the UNHRC the U.S. was making it more difficult for the U.N. to address important human rights crises around the world, from North Korea to Myanmar to Sudan to Haiti.

“The harm is made even worse by the suspension and likely permanent cuts to the State Department and USAID assistance to civil society and vital health programs,” he added.

“These cuts are already weakening programs all over the world that were saving lives, supporting vulnerable communities, and promoting democracy, human rights and rule of law,” he said.

### **Uyghurs ‘have lost an important partner’**

The U.S., United Kingdom and other Western countries have condemned China for its persecution and arbitrary detention of some of the 12 million mostly Muslim Uyghurs living in Xinjiang, and called on Beijing to allow genuine freedom of religion and cultural expression.

They also have raised concern about the erosion of freedoms in Hong Kong.

Now, with China, Russia and Iran trying to replace universal human rights with their own definition of rights, smaller countries and democracies will find it harder to uphold the values of the U.N. system, said Hanno Schedler, advisor on genocide prevention at the

Society for Threatened Peoples which has offices in Germany and Switzerland.

“The withdrawal of the United States makes it much easier for China to imprint its own version of human rights and human rights definitions within the U.N. system, and I foresee in the upcoming Human Rights Council session China will be emboldened,” said Schedler.

“And now the Uyghurs have lost an important partner in making sure that the crimes committed against them are being talked about on a global stage,” he added.

The departure of the U.S. as a “crucial ally in the U.N. human rights system” will make it easier for the Chinese to repeat their lies on what they’ve done or what they’re still doing to the Uyghurs, Schedler said. The Chinese government has extended its repression of Tibetans and Uyghurs beyond its borders to those living in other countries.

The Swiss government issued a report on Feb. 12 finding that Chinese authorities are likely using tactics to monitor and intimidate Uyghurs and Tibetans living in the Western country.

The report, based on a study conducted by the University of Basel, found that Chinese authorities have targeted Tibetan and Uyghur dissidents in Switzerland through cyberattacks, communications surveillance and the exploitation of judicial systems.

### **China rails against US, Japan for Taiwan ‘mistakes’**

18 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

The US State Department has dropped a statement from its website which stated that Washington does not support Taiwan’s independence, sparking anger from China which demanded that the “mistake” be “corrected”. China has also taken strong exception to the fact that Japan has decided to allow Taiwan to be listed as place of origin by people coming from the island under its revised family law.

The so-called “update” to the Taiwan fact sheet displayed on the US State Department website is another example of the US side using the Taiwan question to contain China, and China urges the United States to immediately correct its mistakes, China’s official *Xinhua* news agency Feb 17 cited the country’s foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun as saying.

Guo has maintained that there is only one China and Taiwan is part of it, and the government of the People’s Republic of China is the only legal government representing the whole of China, adding that it is a prevailing international consensus and basic norm governing international relations, and also a solemn commitment the US has made in the three China-US joint communiqués.

He has accused the US of having gravely backpedalled on its position on Taiwan-related issues, sending a severely wrong signal to “Taiwan independence” separatist forces.

Guo has continued: “We urge the US to immediately correct its wrongdoings, abide by the one-China principle and three China-US joint communiqués.” He wanted the US side to stop upgrading substantive relations with Taiwan, refrain from assisting Taiwan in expanding its international space, and stop emboldening and supporting “Taiwan independence,” and avoid further severe damage to China-US relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Meanwhile, Guo has also demanded that Japan abide by the one-China principle and the spirit of the four political documents between the two countries, and stop playing tricks on the Taiwan question.

He was reacting to reports that Japan was going to revise its family law rules to allow Taiwan, Palestine and other non-national state regions or districts to be listed as a place of origin for people from those places. This means that people coming from Taiwan could now list themselves as being from the self-ruled democratic island, instead of China.

China urges Japan to abide by the one-China principle and the spirit of the four political documents between China and Japan, and stop playing tricks on the Taiwan question, reported *Xinhua* Feb 17, citing Guo.

Claiming that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory and compatriots from both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the same Chinese nation, Guo has maintained that the Taiwan question is purely China’s internal affair that brooks no foreign interference.

Accusing Japan of having committed aggression against Taiwan and exercised colonial rule over the island, Guo has argued that Tokyo bears serious historical responsibilities to the Chinese people, and should act all the more prudently on the Taiwan question.

### **INTERVIEW: US needs to recognize China’s genocide in Tibet**

10 February 2025, [RFA](#), Tenzin Dickyi and Tenzin Pema

#### **Sam Brownback warns Beijing about interfering in the Dalai Lama’s succession.**

Sam Brownback, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, has urged the American government to recognize China’s actions in Tibet as genocide and to oppose Beijing’s efforts to control the Dalai Lama’s succession, he told Radio Free Asia in an interview.

Brownback also called for banning any form of Chinese Communist Party lobbying in the U.S. capital.

The Chinese government has stepped up its repressive rule in Tibet in an effort to erode Tibetan culture, language and religion, said Brownback, 68, who served in that role 2018 to 2021 — the fifth person to hold the position.

Brownback said the decades-long repression of Tibetan culture and religion by the Chinese government meets the legal definition of genocide, and that Tibet should be formally recognized as a site of genocide.

“(What) needs to take place now is to declare genocide in Tibet,” he told RFA. “The genocide definition is about targeting a specific group of people for annihilation and that’s what’s taking place in Tibet, and it’s been happening over a 70-year time period... and it needs to be talked about and doesn’t get discussed near enough.”

Appointed by U.S. President Donald Trump during his first administration, Brownback was tasked with promoting religious freedom as a key objective of U.S. foreign policy while monitoring religious persecution and discrimination around the world.

He made the comments during an interview with RFA on Feb. 5 on the sidelines of the 2025 International Religious Freedom Summit in Washington, which he co-chaired.

#### **Calls for no CCP lobbying**

At the conference, members of the international religious community released a white paper with a series of policy recommendations for the Trump administration to undertake to advance religious freedom globally.

“The lead recommendation we make is no lobbying by the CCP in Washington,” said Brownback, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

“We see so much lobbying against the interests of people in Tibet, people in Xinjiang, the Christians, the Falun Gong ... and we’ve got to get them [the CCP] out of the halls of Congress and trying to influence us in Washington,” he said.

“This is a major issue... and [they’re] pushing for things that are in China’s interest but really are against American interest,” said Brownback, a former U.S. senator and state governor of Kansas.

Also at the summit, Adrian Zenz, a senior fellow and director of China Studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in Washington, urged the United States and its allies to impose Magnitsky sanctions on top Chinese officials responsible for human rights abuses in Tibet.

The sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act, imposed by the Treasury Department, prevent those listed from accessing the U.S. financial system and prohibit American citizens from conducting business with them.

“Under [Chinese President] Xi Jinping, religious oppression continues to get worse,” Zenz said, while

highlighting China's increasing ideological crackdown and crushing of religious freedom in Tibet. "There's no improvement and none is in sight."

When U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance addressed the 1,500 religious freedom advocates at the summit, he highlighted the Trump administration's commitment to combating religious persecution worldwide.

The administration believes it must stand for religious freedom "not just as a legal principle" but "as a lived reality, both within our own borders and especially outside our borders," Vance said.

#### **Dalai Lama succession**

On China's efforts to control the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, Brownback dismissed Beijing's claim to having the authority to appoint a successor to the 89-year-old spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism as a "fraud."

He emphasized that the U.S. government must make clear — again — that it will not support any such recognition by the Chinese government and that there will be consequences should Beijing attempt to interfere in the process.

Brownback noted that when he was the ambassador-at-large, he traveled to Dharamsala, India, the residence of the Dalai Lama and headquarters of the Tibetan government-in-exile, to announce that the U.S. government would not recognize attempts by the Chinese government to select the next Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader.

"We need to step back up and say that again," he told RFA.

"We also need to put teeth in it, saying that there will be consequences if the Chinese government attempts to do that," he said. "The big thing really right now is to announce to the world that this is a fraud if the Chinese government attempts to do this."

The Dalai Lama, who turns 90 in July, has been the face and symbol of the Tibetan freedom struggle for over seven decades, having fled Tibet into exile in India amid a historic Tibetan national uprising that took place on March 10, 1959, against Chinese rule in Tibet. The Dalai Lama, who is expected to outline his succession plan this year when he turns 90, has said Beijing will have no say in who will succeed him as Tibet's spiritual leader if he decides the tradition should continue.

"The Dalai Lama has been picked for hundreds of years by the process set forth by Tibetan Buddhists," Brownback said. "And the Chinese government's going to step in and declare itself the wise person to choose? This is a complete fraud by the Chinese government."

#### **American support for Tibetans**

Rashad Hussain, another former U.S. ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom, told RFA that despite ongoing concerns over religious freedom in Tibet, he was optimistic that U.S. bipartisan support

for protecting religious freedom would continue with the Trump administration.

"We've been very, very clear about the right to succession and that the people of Tibet should have the sole authority to choose a successor," he said. "I am confident that we will continue to reinforce this point."

The Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020, which outlines U.S. policy on Tibet, says the Dalai Lama's succession is solely a religious matter to be decided by him and the Tibetan Buddhist community, without interference from China.

Under this law, any Chinese officials attempting to appoint a future Dalai Lama will face sanctions, including asset freezes and visa bans.

Additionally, the U.S. State Department is mandated to collaborate with like-minded nations to counter Beijing's attempts to control Tibetan religious affairs — a policy that aligns with Brownback's warnings at the summit about China's interference in the Dalai Lama's succession and his call for Tibet to be recognized as a site of genocide.

"The cavalry is coming," said Brownback as he urged Tibetans inside Tibet to not give up hope.

"You're seeing more and more people in the world standing up for religious freedom," he said, "and that means Tibetan Buddhists will be able to practice their faith freely and carry on their traditions."

#### **China invites countries to fund programs instead of USAID**

11 February 2025, [RBC Ukraine](#)

China is offering its assistance to countries affected by the Trump administration's decision to halt the US Agency for International Development (USAID), stepping in to fund programs that lost American support, Politico reports.

According to the report, Chinese officials have already informed Nepal's government — a strategically significant country for Beijing, located on the southern slopes of the Himalayas between India and China — that China is ready to replace USAID programs with its own development projects.

Meanwhile, a delegation from the Cook Islands, a Pacific archipelago, led by Prime Minister Mark Brown, will visit China this week to sign an agreement on deepening trade and economic cooperation, including increased Chinese investment in the nation's infrastructure.

In Colombia, non-governmental organizations report that China is showing interest in stepping in to replace USAID programs that were frozen. Last year, Colombia received approximately \$385 million from USAID.

#### **China's strategic push**



These moves indicate China's intent to capitalize on the situation and quickly expand its influence in regions crucial to its global ambitions, potentially displacing the United States from key strategic areas. In response, Democratic lawmakers in the US House of Representatives have developed a strategy to warn the Trump administration about the risk of China strengthening its global position due to the suspension of US foreign aid. However, House Republicans have not taken steps to defend USAID or push for the restoration of assistance.

#### **USAID suspension**

On January 21, US President Donald Trump announced a 90-day suspension of all foreign aid programs to review their alignment with his administration's foreign policy goals.

A few days later, an order was issued for the termination of existing foreign aid programs and a freeze on new funding. USAID operations in Ukraine were also put on hold, suspending ongoing projects and financial support.

Meanwhile, a group of former USAID officials condemned the Trump administration's actions and urged Congress to take swift action to protect the agency's statutory role.

For more details, see RBC-Ukraine's report: "USAID on hold: Why billions in US aid to Ukraine have been frozen and what it means."

#### **China slams US as Panama quits Belt and Road Initiative**

07 February 2025, [Aljazeera](#)

*Amid pressure from the US, Panama is first Latin American country to leave Beijing's global infrastructure club.*

China has slammed Washington's "Cold War mentality" in Latin America after Panama quit its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on Friday hit out at the United States for sabotaging the global infrastructure programme.

Beijing "firmly opposes the United States using pressure and coercion to smear and undermine Belt and Road cooperation," said Lin Jian in a statement. "The US side's attacks ... once again expose its hegemonic nature."

Referring to a visit this week to the region by Marco Rubio, Lin said the US Secretary of State's comments "unjustly accuse China, deliberately sow discord between China and relevant Latin American countries, interfere in China's internal affairs, and undermine China's legitimate rights and interests".

Jian noted that more than 20 Latin American nations are among the more than 150 countries that have

participated in the BRI since it was rolled out by China in 2013.

Panama in 2017 became the first in the region to officially join the massive infrastructure plan, which is a central pillar of President Xi Jinping's bid to expand his country's global influence.

But on Thursday, Panama's President Jose Raul Mulino said his country has formally lodged a notice that it will leave the project.

The announcement followed a visit by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who also toured the Panama Canal.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly accused Panama of ceding control of the strategic waterway to China, despite denials from both countries.

Mulino denied that the US had pushed Panama to make the move to quit the BRI.

Rubio, who had threatened action against Panama unless it made immediate changes to reduce Chinese influence on the canal, hailed the announcement as a "great step forward" for bilateral relations.

Beijing on Friday insisted that it "supports Panama's sovereignty over the canal".

"We hope that Panama will make the right decision based on the overall situation of bilateral relations and the long-term interests of the two peoples, and eliminate external interference," Jian said.

#### **China linked to 'malicious' WeChat campaign against Chrystia Freeland: monitoring task force**

07 February 2025, [National Post](#), Christopher Nardi

*In total, SITE and its partners spotted over 30 WeChat news accounts that were part of the campaign against Freeland*

The federal elections monitoring task force says the Chinese government is linked to a "coordinated and malicious" disparagement campaign against Liberal leadership candidate Chrystia Freeland on China's largest social media platform.

In a release late Friday, the federal government's Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force said that a suspicious number of "disparaging" posts targeting Freeland recently began appearing on WeChat.

"The launch of this information operation was traced to WeChat's most popular news account – an anonymous blog that has been previously linked by experts at the *China Digital Times* to the People's Republic of China," reads the statement from SITE.

The SITE task force was set up in 2019 to monitor for hostile foreign interference during federal elections and by-elections. Its composed of members from CSIS,

the RCMP, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC). SITE and its partners said Friday they spotted over 30 WeChat news accounts that were part of the campaign against Freeland. The task force briefed both Liberal Party leadership and members of Freeland's campaign on Friday before making its findings public.

The statement did not say what the disparaging content was about, nor did it identify the WeChat accounts in question. But it said that the malicious content was viewed by millions of people.

"The campaign received very high levels of engagement and views, with WeChat news articles disparaging Ms. Freeland netting over 140,000 interactions between January 29 and February 3, 2025. RRM Canada estimates that 2 to 3 million WeChat users saw the campaign globally," reads the statement.

GAC did not immediately respond to a request for more information, such as which accounts were spreading the "disparaging" content and if the government had acted to limit its spread.

In a statement on social media, Freeland said she would not be intimidated by Chinese foreign interference.

"Having spent years confronting authoritarian regimes, I know firsthand the importance of defending our freedoms. Canada's democracy is strong. My thanks to our national security agencies for protecting it," she wrote.

In its statement, SITE said it "will continue to monitor the digital information environment for foreign information manipulation, and to shine a light on hostile foreign state-backed information operations during the Liberal Party of Canada leadership campaign."

In her final report released last week, Foreign Interference Inquiry Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue said disinformation was an "existential threat" against Canada.

She also said the People's Republic of China (PRC) was the biggest foreign interference threat to Canada.

"PRC foreign interference is wide-ranging. It targets all levels of government in Canada. Canadian security and intelligence officials view the PRC as generally 'party agnostic': it supports those it believes helpful to its interests at the time, and those it believes are likely to have power, no matter their political party," Hogue wrote.

In late 2023, Global Affairs Canada's Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), which monitors the Web for foreign state-sponsored disinformation, issued a report linking the Chinese government to a "spamouflage" campaign that used a network of bot accounts to spam thousands of comments on MPs' Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts in August and September.

The comments targeted posts by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and dozens of other Liberal and Conservative MPs. The accounts, which were either new or hijacked, usually accused the MP of various criminal or ethical violations.

### Despite tough talk, Trump allegedly shows weakness toward China

02 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

China's foreign ministry has vowed to take "necessary countermeasures to defend its legitimate rights and interests" following US President Donald Trump's announcement of a relatively modest 10% additional tariffs on imports from the country. China's Ministry of Commerce has also promised to take unspecified "corresponding countermeasures". Still, according to one analysis, Trump's tough talk toward China has often been followed by weak implementation, inviting ridicule from Beijing. Worse, much of his anti-globalist policy actions are seen as benefiting China, even if inadvertently.

Apart from the 10% tariffs on China, Trump has also announced 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, all coming into force by Feb 4. Both have also vowed to retaliate.

Trump imposed those punitive tariffs on the biggest US trading partners as a means to pressure them to take actions to stem cross-border illegal immigration and the inflow of drugs, mainly fentanyl, into the country. Still, the fact that China has side-stepped the 25% hitting Canada and Mexico suggests that there could be a grand deal between the US and China in the works, reported *news.sky.com* Feb 1, citing analysts.

The report noted that Trump previously spoke on the phone to China's President Xi Jinping, and they discussed trade, TikTok, and fentanyl. Fentanyl has fuelled the US opioid drug crisis. Chinese companies export chemical precursors that are used by Mexican cartels to make fentanyl.

According to an *msnbc.com* analysis Jan 31, it is hard not to notice the disconnect between what the American president said about China before Election Day 2024, and what he's doing now.

The analysis, by Steve Benen, begins by saying that ahead of his first presidential term, which began in Jan 2017, Trump boasted to voters about how "tough" he'd be with China. But once in the White House, he struggled to follow through on his posturing.

It noted: "Trump vowed to label China a currency manipulator, for example, before backing down. He said he was prepared to walk away from the existing 'One China' policy, before backing down on that, too. The administration also started to crack down on the

Chinese-backed ZTE Corporation, before once again backing down.”

It all made Trump the subject of mockery in China's state-run media, with one especially memorable headline in Apr 2017 reading, “Trump slaps self in face, again,” the analysis said.

It continued that as Trump's second term gets underway, it's hard not to wonder whether history is repeating itself. For example, Trump is now refusing to implement the TikTok ban.

It noted that after vowing to impose new tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China from day one of assuming office, Trump for a while stopped mentioning China ahead of his delayed tariffs announcement. Well, he eventually announced 25% each on Mexico and Canada, but only 10% on China.

On this, the president had earlier told reporters his administration was “in the process” of moving forward with plans for tariffs on China, but he and his team still needed to “make that determination.” The analysis thought that Trump was actually about to exclude China from new tariffs, before the 10% decision.

The analysis thought Trump's new tariffs on other trading partners might actually benefit China. It cited Edward Fishman, a sanctions expert who served in the Obama administration, as having told *The Washington Post* this week that the Trump administration's broader approach to tariffs will give many countries fresh incentive to deepen their economic ties with China.

“[Trump's strategy] will undercut the potency of US economic weapons and undercut our efforts to get other countries on our side against China,” Fishman has explained.

The analysis said this is, in fact, a concern with broad applicability. It said *The New York Times'* Thomas Friedman had explained in his latest column, for example, that Trump's anti-climate energy policies “will not make America great again. But it will definitely help make China great again.”

The American president has not yet explained why, exactly, he's taken steps that will, deliberately or inadvertently, benefit Beijing, but the disconnect between what Trump said before Election Day 2024 and what he's doing now is significant, the analysis said.

### **China denounces Trump tariff: 'Fentanyl is America's problem'**

02 February 2025, [Reuters](#)

China's government on Sunday denounced the Trump administration's imposition of a long-threatened 10% tariff on Chinese imports while leaving the door open for talks with the U.S. that could avoid a deepening conflict.

Beijing will challenge President Donald Trump's tariff at the World Trade Organization - a symbolic gesture - and take unspecified “countermeasures” in response to the levy, which takes effect on Tuesday, China's finance and commerce ministries said.

That response stopped short of the immediate escalation that had marked China's trade showdown with Trump in his first term as president and repeated the more measured language Beijing has used in recent weeks.

Trump on Saturday ordered 25% tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports and 10% on goods from China, saying Beijing needed to stanch the flow of fentanyl, a deadly opioid, into the United States.

China's toned-down response marked a contrast with the direct retaliation and heated language from Canada, a long-time U.S. ally, and Mexico, the top destination for U.S. exports.

China's commerce ministry said in a statement that Trump's move “seriously violates” international trade rules, urging the U.S. to “engage in frank dialogue and strengthen cooperation”.

Filing a lawsuit with the WTO could allow Beijing a win in messaging by standing up for the rules-based trading system long advocated by U.S. administrations of both parties. Beijing has taken the same step in a challenge to tariffs of up to 45% on Chinese-made electric vehicles by the European Union.

At the same time, a WTO appeal poses no immediate cost or threat to Washington.

The WTO's dispute settlement system has been effectively shut down since 2019 when Trump blocked appointments of judges to handle appeals. Since President Barack Obama, the U.S. has charged that the WTO appeals body had overstepped its authority. 'AMERICA'S PROBLEM'

For weeks Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning has said Beijing believes there is no winner in a trade war.

Chinese officials have also been encouraged by signs Trump could be seeking a more nuanced relationship with China since a conversation he had with Chinese leader Xi Jinping last month.

Both Republicans and Democrats have come to view China as the biggest foreign policy and economic challenge to the United States.

China's massive trade surplus - almost \$1 trillion last year - is a vulnerability for Beijing. China's exports in key industries, including autos, have been growing faster in volume than value, suggesting manufacturers are discounting to try to win overseas sales when demand at home has been sputtering.

For that reason, analysts have expected China to try to strike a deal early with Trump to soften the blow from trade action by the U.S.

China has also been preparing for the long-expected Trump move on tariffs for months by deepening ties

with allies, pushing for some self-reliance in key areas of technology and setting aside funds to prop up a vulnerable economy.

China's economy, the world's second-largest, hit its official growth target of 5% last year, even as many complained of declining job prospects and worsening living standards.

China's sharpest pushback on Sunday was over fentanyl, an area where the Biden administration had also been urging Beijing to crack down on shipments of the China-made precursor chemicals needed to manufacture the drug.

"Fentanyl is America's problem," China's foreign ministry said. "The Chinese side has carried out extensive anti-narcotics cooperation with the United States and achieved remarkable results."

## SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

**After Modi-Xi 'consensus', ties in for a reboot: Envoy**

26 February 2025, [Times of India](#)

The Sino-Indian ties are set for a reboot, following the Modi-Xi meeting in Kazan last year and the subsequent visits to Beijing by NSA Ajit Doval and foreign secretary Vikram Misri that resulted in a series of "common understandings on the boundary question and practical cooperation", said Chinese ambassador Xu Feihong Tuesday. The remarks followed the recent meeting between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his counterpart Wang Yi in which the former had lauded cooperation between the 2 countries on multilateral forums, particularly the G20. Doval had visited China in December for talks between the Special Representatives that took place after a gap of 5 years. This was followed by Misri's visit to China during which India and China agreed to resume Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, trans-border river cooperation and, in principle, direct air services.

"Since the meeting between President Xi Jinping and PM Modi in Kazan last year, the 2 sides have earnestly implemented the important consensus reached by the two leaders, engaged in active interactions at various levels, and reached many common understandings on improving bilateral relations," said Xu, interacting with journalists on the margins the 3rd China-India Youth Dialogue. Calling India-China relationship one of the most important in the world, the ambassador said that the 2 countries are promoting positive changes in the international balance of power. For the first time in 5 years, Modi and Xi had met in Russia in October 2024 on the sidelines of the BRICS summit, days after the 2 countries reached an agreement to complete the military disengagement process in eastern Ladakh. India, however, wants to tread cautiously in normalising ties with China and, in his meeting with Wang last week, Jaishankar stressed the importance of restoring mutual trust in bilateral ties and jointly maintaining border peace.

Calling for respecting each other's core interests, Xu said that Xi and Modi had agreed to handle relations from a long-term perspective, prevent "specific disagreements" from affecting the overall relationship, enhance strategic mutual trust and ensure peace and tranquillity in the border areas. China will host the SCO summit later this year and expects Modi to participate. Appreciating India's contribution to the Eurasian bloc, Xu said China is willing to work with India to host a "friendly, united and fruitful" summit. China holds the rotating presidency of SCO this year. According to the ambassador, the recent high-level engagements had created an important opportunity for the "reboot of China-India relations and provided a

broader platform for exchanges and cooperation between the youth of our 2 countries”.

### **Chinese media plays up heroism of Galwan valley clash soldiers amid efforts to heal Sino-India rift in ties**

24 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

Even as its foreign minister met with his Indian counterpart on Feb 21 in South Africa, and the latter spoke of “some notable developments” in the two countries’ bid to improve their ties, China’s online media has played up the Galwan Valley clash of mid-June 2020 which plunged their relations to decades-long nadir.

Chinese media have once again revisited the incident and portrayed it as a battle where Chinese soldiers bravely “defended” their territory against “foreign incursions,” reported *eurasianimes.com* Feb 22.

The Indian case is that Chinese troops crossed into their territory in Ladakh in the middle of the night and attacked its soldiers with crude, improvised lethal weapons, including metallic rods and nail-spiked clubs, killing 20 of them in the ensuing river-bank clash. China claimed, after a long delay, that it lost four of its soldiers, although others have estimated its casualty figure to be much higher.

The report said the latest coverage by Chinese media outlet Sohu (run by the Chinese internet company Sohu, Inc. in Beijing), tells the story of Chen Xiangrong, a soldier who died in the Galwan Valley clash.

The Sohu new report has claimed that approximately 600 foreign [Indian] troops crossed into what China considers its territory in the Karakoram Mountains, armed with improvised weapons such as maces and shields.

In response, their regiment commander, Qi Fabao, along with ten soldiers, were claimed to have approached the “intruding forces” for negotiations but were met with sudden violence. This was claimed to have led to a brutal hand-to-hand clash, where Chinese reinforcements were called to push back the Indian troops.

Among those soldiers, who celebrated in Chinese media reports, was stated to be 19-year-old Chen Xiangrong, who was described as a fearless “shield-bearer” protecting his comrades.

Chen’s purportedly unfinished letter to his mother was claimed to contain his now-famous quote – “My love is crystal clear, it is only for China”. It was widely circulated in Chinese media, possibly to reinforce his image as a young patriot who died for his country.

The propaganda story continued that his mother, when informed of his death, reportedly asked only one question: “Did my son fight bravely?” Her response

has been held up as an example of selfless devotion to the country.

Beijing disclosed its soldiers’ deaths nearly a year after the clash, and so also the story about his claimed patriotism and bravery, the *eurasianimes.com* report noted.

Continuing the propaganda story, the Sohu new story has said Chen’s sister, Chen Qiaochai, later joined the military in a civilian capacity, stating that she wanted to complete the duty that her brother left behind.

Her own writings, particularly an article titled “Clear Love, Forever Stay in the World,” were stated to have been published in state media to cement the emotional resonance of her brother’s story.

### **EAM Jaishankar meets Wang, says India & China strove hard to protect G20**

22 February 2025, [Times of India](#), Sachin Parashar

The recent thaw in Sino-Indian ties was on display again as foreign minister S Jaishankar met his counterpart Wang Yi and talked up cooperation between the 2 countries on regional and multilateral forums like G20, SCO and BRICS, while stressing the importance of restoring mutual trust in bilateral ties and jointly maintaining border peace. Jaishankar spoke about “notable developments” since their last meeting in Rio in November, but China went a step further in its readout and said exchanges at all levels have been restored between the 2 countries. Jaishankar and Wang met on the sidelines of a G20 meeting in Johannesburg. Even as the US Secretary of State, Marcio Rubio, skipped the event, Jaishankar backed South Africa’s presidency at the event saying its priorities sit well with India’s own G20 focus. Jaishankar told Wang in his opening remarks in a formal bilateral meeting that in a polarized global situation, India and China have worked hard to preserve and protect the G20 as an institution. “This in itself testifies to the importance of international cooperation,” said the minister, adding platforms like G20 provided an opportunity for interaction between India and China even when ties were going through a difficult phase. This was the latest in a series of high-level engagements between India and China, including visits to Beijing by NSA Ajit Doval and foreign secretary Vikram Misri, since the October 21 agreement last year to complete the military disengagement process in eastern Ladakh and the meeting between PM Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping 2 days later in Kazan.

Significantly, China said in its readout that exchanges at all levels between the two countries have been restored in an “orderly manner, and the Special Representatives on the border issue have reached a consensus on properly handling specific differences.

"It is in line with the common expectations of the two peoples for China and India to restore mutual trust and achieve win-win cooperation," said Beijing. Apart from maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the border, issues like resumption of Kailash Mansarovar yatra, direct air services, trans-border river cooperation and travel facilitation were discussed. During Misri's visit, India and China had agreed to resume the pilgrimage and direct flights between the 2 countries. Underlining India and China's membership of G20, SCO and BRICS, Jaishankar also said that there are also "regional and global issues of mutual interest, where an exchange of perspectives will be to our mutual benefit". Jaishankar is expected to visit China for a meeting of the SCO foreign ministers later this year, which will be followed by the summit that Beijing expects Modi to attend. The Chinese readout quoted Jaishankar as saying that India is willing to speed up the restoration of cooperation mechanisms with China, enhance cultural exchanges, facilitation of personnel exchanges, and joint maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas. "Since our last meeting in Rio during the G20 Summit in November 2024, there have been some notable developments. Our NSA and Foreign Secretary have visited China and there have been discussions about various aspects of our relationship," said Jaishankar, in his opening remarks before the meeting. "These have included management of peace and tranquility in the border areas as well as other dimensions of our ties. I am glad today to have a further exchange of views," he added.

### **Protests Over PRC for Moran Community Turn Violent at Assam-Arunachal Border**

22 February 2025, [Pratidin Time](#)

As per sources, led by the All Moran Students' Union, the agitation resulted in road blockages, police detentions, and widespread unrest in the region. The situation turned chaotic at the Assam-Arunachal border on Saturday as protests over the long-standing demand for Permanent Resident Certificates (PRC) for the Moran community intensified.

As per sources, led by the All Moran Students' Union, the agitation resulted in road blockages, police detentions, and widespread unrest in the region. Union members obstructed National Highway 15 at Dirak Gate, halting vehicular movement and causing major traffic disruptions.

Protesters reportedly set tyres on fire along the highway, shouting slogans for the grant of PRC to the Moran community. The protests quickly escalated, prompting intervention by security forces.

In response to the growing unrest, the police reportedly detained five prominent members of the Students' Union. Their arrest sparked a wave of anger, with hundreds of protesters assembling outside the Mahadevpur police station in Arunachal Pradesh's [Namsai](#). The demonstrators surrounded the station, demanding the immediate release of the detained activists.

### **India speaks of 'some notable developments' in bilateral ties with China as their foreign ministers met**

22 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

India's foreign minister has met with his Chinese counterpart on Feb 21 in South Africa and said there has been "some notable developments" made between the two nations in a bid to improve relations. External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Group of 20 foreign ministers' summit in Johannesburg, their first in-person meeting since the G-20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in November, reported [bloomberg.com](#) and a number of Indian news outlets Feb 21.

"The G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Johannesburg provided an opportunity to meet CPC Politburo member and FM Wang Yi of China this morning on its sidelines," Jaishankar said in his X post.

The meeting lasted about 30 minutes and the two ministers discussed "developments in bilateral relations since their last meeting in November, specifically management of peace and tranquillity in the border areas, resumption of pilgrimage, trans-border rivers, flight connectivity and travel facilitation," Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for India's Ministry of External Affairs, has told reporters Feb 21. They have also exchanged views about the G-20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The G-20 meeting was stated to have been marred by the US's snub of the event, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio declining to attend it in protest at what he said was an attempt by South Africa to promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and tackle climate change.

### **Government orders ban on 119 apps on Google Play Store on national security ground; most apps linked to China and HongKong**

20 February 2025, [Times of India](#)

The government has reportedly issued orders to block 119 mobile apps, primarily video and voice chat platforms linked to Chinese and Hong Kong developers. According to a report in Moneycontrol that quotes a now deleted listing on the Harvard University-operated Lumen Database. The ban comes

after the year 2020, when the government implemented similar bans on popular Chinese apps including TikTok and ShareIt, citing national security concerns. On June 20, 2020, the Indian government banned almost 100 Chinese apps. Similar bans on Chinese and China-linked apps followed in 2021 and 2022 as well; but in much smaller numbers. The blocking orders, reportedly issued under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, also affect some apps from Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Section 69A empowers the central government to restrict public access to online content for national security and public order reasons. Officials told the publication that orders under the same are confidential.

**Majority of apps are still available for download, but may ..**

MoneyControl reports that the majority of the apps remain available to download, and only 15 apps have been removed from the Google Play Store so far. Of the 119 apps ordered to be blocked by the Indian government, only three were specifically identified in the report. ChillChat, a Singapore-based video chat and gaming platform developed by Mangostar Team, boasts over one million downloads and a 4.1-star rating on the Google Play Store. The Chinese-developed ChangApp, created by Blom, was also named among the affected applications. The third identified app, HoneyCam, is operated by Australian company Shellin PTY Ltd and features content review mechanisms including automated filtering and manual oversight.

Three affected developers told MoneyControl they learned about the ban through Google and expressed willingness to work with Indian authorities to address concerns. ChillChat, a Singapore-based app with over one million downloads, reported that the blocking would significantly impact their Indian users' daily communications and entertainment activities. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has not publicly disclosed specific security concerns related to these applications. Google's disclosure on the Lumen Database, which was published on February 18 but has since been deleted, did not specify the timeline for enforcing the remaining blocks.

**China building 90 villages along Arunachal border**

20 February 2025, [The Tribune](#), Ajay Banerjee

*Reinforcing Tibet-Nepal frontier with major infra*

Two recent developments in Tibet are being closely monitored by security experts. First, China is establishing 90 new village settlements along its side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). In a separate move,

Beijing is significantly enhancing infrastructure at the historic border crossing between Tibet and Mustang in Nepal, a route frequently used by Tibetan refugees attempting to escape the Chinese communist regime. Sources have informed The Tribune that the 90 new settlements are part of China's expansion of what it calls "prosperous villages" or "Xiaokang" along the LAC, including areas opposite Arunachal Pradesh. These villages not only bolster China's territorial claims but also strengthen its military preparedness along the LAC, a border that remains undemarcated on the ground.

To date, China has established a total of 628 such villages, with the current 90 villages forming part of its latest expansion. The sources also note that China is seeking to create a legal defence under the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (2005) with India, which addresses border settlements and local populations residing along the border. According to Article VII of the agreement, "The two sides shall safeguard the due interests of their settled populations in the border areas." So, as and when a situation arises to demarcate the LAC, these villages do not get disturbed in any such exercise.

India too has its own border village initiative, which includes upgrading existing villages in Arunachal Pradesh under the ongoing Vibrant Villages Programme. This initiative was inaugurated on April 13, 2023, at Kibithoo in far-east Arunachal Pradesh, and aims to upgrade a total of 2,963 villages over the next 10 years.

The second development concerns China's transformation of operations at the Korala border crossing between Tibet and Mustang in Nepal. This border, historically a passage for Tibetan refugees, has seen the construction of massive infrastructure, including buildings and accommodations on the Chinese side.

Mustang, a Buddhist-majority region in Nepal, holds historical importance, as it was a key site during the 1959 Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule. The Korala border crossing, located at an altitude of 15,250 ft, has long been a route for Tibetan refugees fleeing Chinese oppression. In 1960, Mustang became the central base for the CIA-supported Tibetan resistance movement known as the Chushi Gandrung Army, or the Khampa Rebellion, which lasted until 1972. Although the rebellion ended, Mustang has remained a geopolitically sensitive area.



## Beijing objects to India-China borderline on map in textbooks of Bangladesh

18 February 2025, [The Tribune](#)

*China objected to the India-China borderline on the map in the textbooks of Bangladesh, the Chinese envoy in Dhaka said on Tuesday.*

China objected to the India-China borderline on the map in the textbooks of Bangladesh, the Chinese envoy in Dhaka said on Tuesday.

"We do find that some of the maps and related information published in the textbooks and some official websites contained some incorrect references to China, like the province, Hong Kong special administrative regions, as well as some incorrect markings on the borderline between China and India," Yao Wen, Chinese Ambassador in Bangladesh, said at a news conference.

"We have called the government authority of Bangladesh about it. I want to say that 'one-China policy' is the political foundation for all the countries in the world including Bangladesh. There is a universal consensus in the international community. Taiwan and Hong Kong are part of China's territory," he added.

"I believe our suggestions are also supported by the Bangladesh government," Wen said. Bangladeshi officials have refused to comment publicly on the matter. However, an official on condition of anonymity said that China objected as the borderline on the map coincided with India's position.

"The map in the textbook has been like this for many years. After many years, China objected this time. We will maintain the status quo regarding the boundary line," the Bangladeshi official said. However, Bangladesh believes in the 'one-China policy.'

"If there is anything on the map that is inconsistent with the One China policy, we will correct it," a Bangladeshi official told ANI over the phone.

The Chinese ambassador also said his country is ready to implement the Teesta River mega project in northern Bangladesh amid tension over huge protests by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) against India over blocking the waters.

"The Teesta project is a Bangladesh project. If Bangladesh wants, China is ready to implement the project as soon as possible," the Chinese envoy said.

"China also wants to sell arms to Bangladesh with competitive prices. We are fit for the national condition of Bangladesh," the envoy said.

"China Southern Airlines wants to sell 9/10 secondhand aircraft to Bangladesh Biman Airlines. The auction will be held anytime in April," he added.

## Congress distances from Sam Pitroda's China remark: Definitely not party's view

17 February 2025, [India Today](#)

The Congress distanced itself from Sam Pitroda's remarks on China, stating they do not reflect the party's views. Pitroda questioned the perceived Chinese threat, calling it exaggerated. Congress reaffirmed concerns over China's security and economic challenges.

Congress on Monday distanced itself from their overseas in-charge Sam Pitroda's remarks on China, saying that they don't reflect the party's views.

"The views reportedly expressed by Sam Pitroda on China are most definitely not the views of the Indian National Congress," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X.

The clarification came after Pitroda said that he "does not understand the threat from China that India is facing." In an interview, he said that the threat from China is usually exaggerated, and it is the US that has a "tendency to define an enemy."

Ramesh, slamming the government, stated, "China continues to be our primary foreign policy, external security, and economic challenge. The Congress has repeatedly raised questions on the Modi government's approach to China, including the PM's public clean chit to it on June 19, 2020. Our most recent statement on China was on January 28, 2025." Pitroda's remarks, which came in response to US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate the issue during PM Modi's visit to Washington last week, drew sharp criticism from the BJP on Monday.

However, Trump's offer was refused by the government.

The BJP said that the remarks by the Congress veteran were "a very deep blow to India's identity, diplomacy, and sovereignty".

BJP leader Sudhanshu Pandey slammed Sam Pitroda, saying his remarks reflected his party's stance on China. He linked Pitroda's comments to past statements by Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha. "During one of his foreign trips, Rahul Gandhi claimed that China had addressed unemployment despite challenges. But the reality is that China's employment rate is only 24 per cent," Pandey said.

## Trump meets Modi, says he hopes US, China, India, Russia can all 'get along'

14 February 2025, [SCMP](#), Khushboo Razdan

Bilateral talks yield trade commitments and promises on F-35 jets, as well as praise for the Quad partnership

Standing alongside Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the White House on Thursday, US President Donald Trump referred to China as a “very important player in the world”, adding that Beijing could play a key role in resolving the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

“I got along with [Chinese] President Xi [Jinping] very, very well. We were very close. As leaders go, I don’t want to be naive. As leaders go, I think we were very close,” Trump said at a joint press conference with Modi on Thursday.

“China is a very important player in the world. I think they can help us get this war over with Ukraine and Russia.”

Trump said that he next planned a meeting with Xi to discuss denuclearisation – something he claimed both Russia and China were open to during his first term as US president.

“I’m going to meet with China, and I’m going to meet with Russia and we’re going to see if we can de-escalate it ... especially as it pertains to nuclear,” he said.

Asked how he envisioned India’s role in the Ukraine peace process and in tackling China, Trump said he hoped that “China, India, Russia, the US, and all of us can get along. It’s very important.”

Trump also reminded the large crowd of reporters gathered in the White House that he had revived the Quadrilateral security partnership with India, Australia and Japan during his first term of office.

He said that during his meeting with Modi the two leaders “reaffirmed the strong cooperation among the United States, India, Australia and Japan”, adding that the Quad was “crucial [to maintaining] peace and prosperity, tranquillity even, in the Indo-Pacific”.

Analysts said that while New Delhi was confident about reaching an agreement with Trump on trade and defence, it remained uneasy about the prospect of a “grand deal” between China and the US.

Mukesh Aghi of the United States-India Strategic Partnership Forum said New Delhi officials had voiced a particular concern: “While we focus on driving this relationship closer with the US, will Trump make a deal with China and leave us hanging as far as India goes?” He added there was “overall optimism” in India about reaching a deal with Trump, but also “some sense of trepidation”.

Aghi also noted that while India did not want to “burn bridges” with China, it expected Beijing to remain “aggressive and assertive in the region”.

During his meeting with Trump in the Oval Office on Thursday, Modi said he appreciated that the US president regarded the national interest as “supreme”. “I also keep the national interest of India at the top of everything else,” he said.

Despite saying that the US and India were “friends [who were] going to stay that way” during the press

conference, Trump criticised New Delhi for its high tariffs on American goods and emphasised his commitment to “reciprocal” duties.

“India has just about the highest tariff nation anywhere in the world,” he said, adding that the US was a “reciprocal nation” and would impose the same as “whatever India charges”.

Trump said the two leaders had agreed to negotiate on and address the “long-running disparities”. He called for a “certain level playing field, which we really think we’re entitled to”.

Modi announced that New Delhi would be buying more oil and gas to reduce India’s US\$45 billion trade surplus with the US. Trump said the US wanted to become a “leading supplier of oil and gas to India”.

New Delhi has also committed to buying more US defence equipment, including F-35 jets. Additionally, the two sides set a goal to double bilateral trade to US\$500 billion by 2030 and are working towards finalising a mutually beneficial trade agreement.

Modi said the US and India would collaborate on artificial intelligence and semiconductors, as well as work on building robust supply chains for strategic rare earths and critical minerals.

Trump also criticised the European Union for being “very difficult” as a trading partner with the US, while labelling China as “terrible”.

Earlier in the day, he reiterated his warning that if nations in the Brics alliance of emerging economies – which includes India and China – tried to move away from the US dollar as their reserve currency, he would impose tariffs of 100 per cent on their exports.

“I told them if they want to play games with the dollar, then they’re going to be hit with a 100 per cent tariff the day they mentioned that they want to do it,” Trump said.

But other analysts noted that since Trump’s return to power last month, New Delhi had drawn unusual attention from Washington. They suggested that Trump’s advisers were eager to strike a deal with India that would sideline Beijing, using deeper trade and defence ties with New Delhi as leverage in negotiations with China.

Analysts also anticipated more US tariffs on Chinese goods, while Modi seemed to offer trade concessions and investments.

Mark Linscott, a trade negotiator during Trump’s first term, played down Delhi’s concern, saying that “there’s a greater likelihood of the US doing a trade agreement with India that sidelines China than the reverse”.

“In broad terms, my sense is the Trump administration is more focused on decoupling with China, while it’s becoming closer and more integrated with India,” he added.

Trump announced new “reciprocal” tariffs before his meeting with Modi.

"India is a very hard place to do business in because of the tariffs. They have the highest tariffs, just about, in the world," Trump said on Thursday.

Before his session with Trump at the White House, Modi met Elon Musk, the billionaire Tesla chief executive who is overseeing a downsizing of the federal government, and national security adviser Mike Waltz.

"We discussed various issues, including those he is passionate about such as space, mobility, technology and innovation. I talked about India's efforts towards reform and furthering 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'", Modi wrote on X about his meeting with Musk, who also owns the social media platform.

Shortly after landing in Washington on Wednesday, Modi met Tulsi Gabbard, the newly confirmed US director of national intelligence.

The Trump-Modi bilateral talks were also attended by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. Ernie Thrasher of Xcoal Energy & Resources, a Pennsylvania-based marketing and logistics company, argued that Modi had "more room to move quickly than President Xi" on any potential deal.

Noting that Trump's 2020 US-China phase-one trade deal took 20 months to finalise, Thrasher said that "there may be a grand deal coming, but I don't think it's coming quickly".

Farwa Aamer of the Asia Society said that "President Trump's China approach will always be important for India" but that New Delhi sought to deepen ties beyond that strategic alliance.

"India's hope would be to establish the relationship's strength beyond the China factor – while keeping a strong eye on that – and ensure that the US continues to see India as a pivotal player in the Indo-Pacific region and the evolving geopolitical order," Aamer said.

### **India reaffirms long-held policy to rule out third party role in its border row with China**

14 February 2025, [The Economic Times](#)

India has virtually ruled out any role for a third party in its border dispute with China after US President Donald Trump suggested that he was ready to extend support if it helps in the resolution of the lingering issue between the two neighbours. At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on Thursday (Friday IST) that New Delhi has always adopted a bilateral approach in dealing with these issues.

As a matter of long-held policy, India has been maintaining that there is no role for any third party in any of its bilateral issues or disputes with any country.

"Your question about the offer to mediate between India and China, I think, I suspect you know the answer to this question," he said when asked about Trump's offer.

"Whatever issues we have with any of our neighbours, we have always adopted a bilateral approach to dealing with these issues. It's no different between India and China," he said.

"We have been discussing any issues that we have with them on a bilateral plane, and we will continue to do so," Misri added.

After his talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the US president made the offer of support at a media briefing while responding to a question on India's frosty ties with China over the border row. "I do see the skirmishes on the border, which are quite vicious, and I guess they continue to go on. If I could be of help, I would love to help as that should be stopped," he said.

The US president also described China as a "very important player" globally and even suggested that Beijing could play a role in ending the war in Ukraine.

Trump also underlined the importance of cooperation among India, China, Russia and the US.

"I would hope that China and India and Russia and the US and all of us can get along. It's very important," he said.

The ties between India and China came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan Valley clashes between the militaries of the two countries in June, 2020.

The two sides completed the disengagement process after firming up a pact for the withdrawal of troops from Depsang and Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

Two days after finalisation of the pact, Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks in Kazan on October 23.

In the meeting, the two sides decided to revive the various dialogue mechanisms.

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

### **China's mega dam project in Tibet provokes opposition in India**

12 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The world's largest hydropower dam proposed by China on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet has triggered strong opposition in India, raising concerns over environmental and geopolitical ramifications.

During the [Zero Hour session](#) in Indian Parliament on Monday, Assam Lok Sabha MP and BJP state chief Dilip

Saikia voiced objections to the proposed dam. He warned of its potentially devastating impact on Assam and the broader Northeast region, urging the Indian government to implement immediate diplomatic and strategic measures to halt the project. He cited significant threats to the region's ecological stability, cultural heritage, and water security.



Lok Sabha MP and BJP state chief Dilip Saikia at the Lok Sabha on February 10, 2025 (screengrab/youtube)

The Brahmaputra River, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, originates in the Tibetan Plateau and flows through Arunachal Pradesh as the Siang River and Assam as the Brahmaputra before reaching Bangladesh as the Jamuna.

The proposed dam is in a seismically active region in Medog County in Nyingtri Prefecture in Kham Province bordering the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Saikia cautioned that the massive infrastructure project could heighten the risk of devastating earthquakes, landslides, and flash floods, further destabilising an already fragile ecosystem in Northeast India.

"The Northeast and Bangladesh already experience recurring floods, and this dam could exacerbate the crisis, disturbing the ecological balance and endangering millions of lives," Saikia stated in Parliament.

Estimated to cost \$137 billion, the dam forms a crucial part of China's broader hydropower strategy outlined in its 14th Five-Year Plan. Once operational, the facility is expected to generate over 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually. However, critics argue that China's control over the river's water flow could serve as a geopolitical tool against India and Bangladesh, potentially leading to strategic water shortages or engineered flooding in downstream regions.

"China will gain unprecedented control over the river's flow, making Northeast India perpetually vulnerable to water manipulation. Additionally, the dam's proximity to Arunachal Pradesh raises significant national security concerns for India," Saikia emphasised.

On January 3, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) voiced its concerns regarding the project, reiterating the necessity for transparency and consultation with downstream nations. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "As a lower riparian state with

established water-use rights, we have formally conveyed our concerns to China through diplomatic channels."

A report released by the *International Campaign for Tibet* in December last year raised alarm over China's rapid hydropower development in Tibet, citing severe ecological, cultural, and human rights concerns. The study examined 193 dams constructed or planned in Tibet since 2000, highlighting their impact on local communities and religious heritage sites. One notable case is the Khamtok hydroelectric dam, which has caused the displacement of thousands of Tibetans, sparked widespread protests against Chinese authorities, and led to the destruction of centuries-old monasteries.

"China's aggressive hydropower expansion poses an existential threat to Tibet's environment, its indigenous communities, and downstream nations," said Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet. "This unchecked development disregards scientific assessments, human rights, and global climate responsibility."

### India not expected to lift ban on Chinese investments soon, top government adviser says

11 February 2025, [Reuters](#)

India is not expected to lift a ban on Chinese investments into the country soon, according to remarks by India's Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran on Tuesday.

"It requires both sides to understand mutual dependence and benefits," he said at an event in Mumbai.

"I don't think it is something that you'll expect to see immediate results because both the sides are crossing the river by feeling the stones," he said, when asked about whether India is considering making any changes to its policy on Chinese investments.

India has tightened its scrutiny of investments from Chinese companies since 2020, as relations between the two nuclear giants have soured after clashes between their soldiers on their largely undemarcated Himalayan frontier left 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead in June 2020.

Nageswaran said that India has [triggered](#) a conversation with China to discuss the growing trade deficit between the two countries.

India is among the top three countries with the largest trade imbalance with China, with a trade deficit of \$93 billion to \$95 billion, he said.

## VOA Mandarin: China courts India as Trump, Modi vow to deepen ties

10 February 2025, [VOA](#), Nayan Seth

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit the U.S. on Wednesday. President Donald Trump announced Modi's White House visit as India's foreign secretary, Vikram Misri, met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing, where they agreed to restore bilateral ties and resume direct flights and pilgrimages by Indian pilgrims to a holy site in Tibet. While Modi's government has shifted toward populist policies, China launched an aggressive public relations campaign in 2024 to improve its standing with India. Analysts view China's diplomatic push as a response to the deepening U.S.-India partnership and Beijing's desire to maintain regional influence, particularly given expected tensions with the Trump administration.

[Click here for the full story in Mandarin.](#)

## Talk to China to halt Brahmaputra dam project in Tibet: BJP member Saikia

10 February 2025, [Metro Vaartha](#)

*BJP member Dilip Saikia on Monday urged the government to hold bilateral talks with China to halt the construction of a massive dam on river Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet which could put Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in danger.*

BJP member Dilip Saikia on Monday urged the government to hold bilateral talks with China to halt the construction of a massive dam on river Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet which could put Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in danger.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, Saikia said that the dam, described as the largest in the world, would put downstream regions such as northeastern India and Bangladesh in danger.

He said the site of the dam is an earthquake prone region and is called the 'ring of fire'.

The dam will put in danger the people and communities in the downstream region, including Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Last year, China approved plans to build a dam over the Brahmaputra River called Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet close to the Indian border.

As per the plan, the massive dam will be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

The project, estimated to cost around USD 137 billion, is located in the ecologically fragile Himalayan region along a tectonic plate boundary where earthquakes occur frequently.

Saikia said the dam will be able to store huge amounts of water which can be used to cause floods or drought in the downstream region.

## After hacking incidents at border, India scraps deal for 400 drones with Chinese parts

07 February 2025, [First Post](#)

*In response to hacking incidents involving drones with Chinese parts, the Indian government has cancelled three contracts for 400 drones meant for the Army. The move follows security concerns after reports of drone hacking along the international border.*

The Indian government has scrapped three contracts for the procurement of 400 logistics drones for the army, *The Times of India* reported. The development came after reported incidents of hacking of drones that use Chinese parts at the international border.

The major crackdown came on the domestic private sector enterprises which uses Chinese parts in drones supplied to the armed forces

A source told TOI that the defence establishment is putting a "stringent mechanism" in place to ensure that the military drones being inducted do not contain any Chinese parts or electronic codes.

The scrapped contract was for 200 medium-altitude, 100 heavy-weight, and 100 light-weight logistics drones. The purchase was worth 230 crore.

The drones were to be deployed at the Line of Actual Control. This decision was made after the 2020 Galwan clashes along the Tibet border, when the Chinese army attempted multiple incursions.

The source emphasised that drones with Chinese parts are a major cybersecurity threat and pose a significant risk of data security and operations being compromised.

This development follows multiple reports of drones used by the Indian army, procured under the Make in India initiative, being hacked in border areas.

The news is highly significant as many armed forces use drones for intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, and offensive purposes.

### Drone hacking incidents at border

India Today reported that drones of the Indian Army were hacked twice over the past year at the Line of Actual Control and the Line of Control.

Sources told the magazine that the drones were hacked by exploiting Chinese components in those drones.

A defence official told India Today that in the first case of drone hacking, the drone refused to take off, while in the second case, the drones veered off course and entered Pakistani territory after "people across the border" took control of them.

### Chinese dominance in drone market

China leads the global drone market. Chinese firms supply up to 90% of commercial drones, according to CSIS research. One Chinese company DJI alone holds a 70% market share.

**'China inside Indian territory because 'Make in India' failed': LoP Rahul Gandhi criticises Centre during Parliament session**

03 February 2025, Times of India

Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi criticized the government's 'Make in India' initiative on Monday, claiming its failure has allowed China to establish a presence within Indian territory. Speaking during the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the ongoing Budget Session, he raised concern alleging India's dependence on Chinese products and its impact on national security. Gandhi cited statements from the Chief of Army Staff, asserting that Chinese troops have entered Indian territory. He linked this to India's declining domestic production capabilities, arguing that the country is increasingly reliant on Chinese-made electric motors, batteries, and optics. "Our Chief of Army Staff has said that the Chinese are inside our territory. This is a fact. The reason China is inside our territory is important...The reason China is sitting inside this country is because 'Make in India' has failed," said the LoP.

Further emphasising on Chinese presence, he added, "The reason China sitting inside this country is because India is refusing to produce and I'm worried that India is going to give up this revolution to the Chinese once again...If and when we fight a war with China, we will be fighting with Chinese electric motors, Chinese batteries and Chinese optics and we will be buying Chinese motors, Chinese optics and Chinese batteries."

Also highlighting India's strategic partnership with the United States, Gandhi urged both nations to collaborate in building a robust industrial system. He asserted that India plays a crucial role in global manufacturing due to its cost-effective production capabilities, making it an essential partner for the US.

"We have a strategic partner called the United States. The partnership should focus on how India and the United States can work together to take advantage of this revolution. India is as important as the United States for the simple reason that they cannot build an industrial system without us. The Americans simply cannot do what India can do because their cost structure is much more expensive than ours. We can build things that the Americans would never imagine," he said.

Further, reiterating his stand on India's manufacturing sector, stating that while the country effectively

manages consumption (services), it has failed to organize production (manufacturing). He pointed out that although some Indian companies attempt to structure production, much of it has been outsourced to China. "We have excellent companies that try to organize production, but essentially, what we have done is we have handed over the organization of production to the Chinese," he added. Then, using mobile phones as an example, he argued that despite claims of being "made in India," they are merely assembled domestically, with most components originating from China—essentially making India dependent on and paying a "tax" to China.

Responding to the claims, BJP MP Sambit Patra hit back at Rahul Gandhi, shifting the blame to the Congress government, when they were in power. "Rahul Gandhi claimed that the manufacturing sector is behind China, but who is responsible for this? There was a trade deficit of 25 per cent between India and China from 2004-14, when their government was in power."

## COMMENTARIES

With mounting debt, increasing Chinese control over critical infrastructure, and an economic model that benefits Beijing more than Islamabad, Pakistan must reconsider whether this so-called friendship is truly in its national interest or a slow march towards economic subjugation.

For decades, Pakistan has considered China its “all-weather friend,” a relationship deeply rooted in strategic, economic, and diplomatic cooperation. However, beneath the surface of this seemingly unshakable alliance lies a growing imbalance—one that increasingly positions China not as a benevolent partner, but as a dominant force shaping Pakistan’s future in ways that could prove detrimental to its sovereignty. From the massive debt burden under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Beijing’s expanding security footprint within Pakistani territory, China’s role in Pakistan is shifting from an ally to an overseer. The promises of economic upliftment have been overshadowed by concerns of debt entrapment, exploitation of natural resources, and an increasing dependence on China’s financial aid. With China tightening its grip on key sectors, is Pakistan heading towards economic and strategic subjugation rather than partnership? In this article of mine, I will highlight for my readers the evolving dynamics of China-Pakistan relations, examining how Beijing’s influence has transformed from economic assistance to a geopolitical liability. While some hail China as Pakistan’s economic saviour, growing evidence suggests that this alliance is more parasitic than symbiotic.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), initiated in 2015 under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was projected as a transformational project that would uplift Pakistan’s economy. It promised better infrastructure, employment opportunities, and an economic revival that the country had long awaited. However, nearly a decade later, the reality paints a different picture. Instead of prosperity, Pakistan finds itself trapped in unsustainable debt, increasing Chinese control over its key assets, and a widening trade imbalance that favours Beijing. One of the most concerning aspects of this growing dependence is the Chinese dominance over Pakistan’s roads, railways, and ports, which are now strategically aligned with Beijing’s economic and military interests rather than Pakistan’s national development goals. The Karakoram Highway expansion, originally meant to boost trade, primarily serves China’s supply lines from Xinjiang to Gwadar. The Multan-Sukkur Motorway (M-5) and East Bay Expressway in Gwadar have similarly reinforced China’s logistical corridors, while Pakistan struggles with economic instability. The ML-1 Railway Project, a

\$10 billion initiative financed by Chinese loans, only adds to the burden, raising concerns about whether Pakistan can afford these projects without further compromising its sovereignty. Perhaps the most telling example of China's deepening hold over Pakistan is Gwadar Port. Marketed as Pakistan's economic gateway, the port is now under Chinese lease for 40 years, significantly reducing Islamabad's decision-making power. Instead of creating jobs for Pakistanis, it has become a Chinese-controlled zone, with restricted access to local businesses and protests by local fishermen who have been sidelined. This growing dominance is not limited to infrastructure alone—China has increasingly penetrated Pakistan's energy sector, financing coal-based power plants under agreements that heavily favour Beijing while pushing Pakistan deeper into an energy crisis due to rising capacity payments and debt liabilities.

While China presents itself as Pakistan's greatest economic partner, the numbers tell a different story. Pakistan owes over \$30 billion to China, a figure that continues to rise with additional loans and infrastructure commitments. Instead of bringing financial stability, these projects have created an economic chokehold where Pakistan remains dependent on Chinese funding to keep projects running. The terms of these loans remain opaque, raising suspicions that Pakistan is falling into the same trap as other countries under the BRI, where failure to repay debts has resulted in China taking control of strategic assets. The case of Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port, which was handed over to Beijing on a 99-year lease after Colombo failed to meet repayment obligations, serves as a grim warning. Despite these alarming signs, Islamabad continues to deepen its reliance on Beijing, often at the cost of its own economic sovereignty. While China claims to be Pakistan's closest ally, its actions indicate a strategic agenda focused on securing economic and military advantages rather than genuine development partnerships. With mounting debt, increasing Chinese control over critical infrastructure, and an economic model that benefits Beijing more than Islamabad, Pakistan must reconsider whether this so-called friendship is truly in its national interest or a slow march towards economic subjugation.

### **Red Tides in Blue Waters: China's Strategic Moves in Europe**

26 February 2025, [IMPRI](#), Srikanth Kondapalli

Any deep understanding between the US and Russia will erode China's influence at the high table. Rapid global developments following US President Donald Trump's phone call to his Russian counterpart

President Vladimir Putin, Vice President J D Vance's critique at the Munich Security Conference and the US-Russia talks at Riyadh on resolving the Ukraine conflict, sans Ukrainian representation – have all been eroding the edifice built assiduously by China since President Nixon's visit in 1972. The quick strategic transformation underway and the cataclysmic change it is unleashing is worrying Beijing, given its carefully crafted policies of keeping the US-Russia differences intact through multipolarity and global governance initiatives.

Any deep understanding between the US and Russia will erode China's influence at the high table. Under Trump, the US is tearing apart the NATO alliance; he has announced big tariffs and is attempting to expand the US' sphere of influence over Greenland, Canada, Panama Canal and the Gulf of Mexico. These have opened up a Pandora's box on strategic stability that characterised much of the post-Cold War order and that benefited China's expansion of influence.

Even though China formally welcomed Trump's phone call to Putin on February 12 and the subsequent meeting at Riyadh on ending the three-year Russia-Ukraine conflict, there are lurking fears that the strategic ground is slipping away from under its feet given the emerging US-Russia rapprochement. To put some skin in the great game, China has begun a major push in the besieged Europe with leaders on a whirlwind tour, meetings with leaders of Germany, France, Spain and other countries, and deals on bullet trains in the UK and other regions to blunt any "de-risking" strategies and soften the "systemic rivalry" position of Europe.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi, addressing the 61st Munich Security Conference on February 14, alluding to "Westlessness", said "some countries believe might makes right and have opened a Pandora's box marked the law of the jungle". Even though Wang was referring to the US "sovereignist" postures recently, the participants are aware of the militarisation of the South China Sea or the India-China borders.

Speaking to the United Nations Security Council "high-level" meeting on February 18, Wang insisted on to "reinvigorate true multilateralism" but took a dig at the US by stating that "Any act of bullying, trickery or extortion is a flagrant violation of the basic norms of international relations". He also said that any unilateral sanctions that circumvent the Security Council authorisation "lacks legal basis, defies justification and contradicts common sense."

Again, at the G20 foreign ministerial meeting at Johannesburg on February 20, which the US leaders skipped, Wang stated that a "country must not pursue its own security at the expense of the security of other countries". Wang offered Europe to be part of its multi polarisation drive and sync its Belt and Road Initiative with that of the European Union's Global Gateway



strategy. Wang offered his Hungarian counterpart that China would be a “trustworthy partner”. At one time in April 2022, China even attempted to persuade the EU to take an “independent” position on the Ukraine conflict and on NATO expansion.

European leaders, however, are aware that China’s self-serving proposals are not assuring a level-playing field nor any IPR protection for the European companies in the China market. Yet, the drubbing from the US is troubling Europe. Since 1977, China has been eyeing for a share in the European Common market, independent policies of Charles de Gaulle, multipolarity, divergence from the dollar-centred monetary system, trade and investments, and hi-tech collaborations. Today, China and Europe have become one of the largest trading partners to each other, with bilateral trade touching nearly \$600 billion, regardless of European criticism of China on mounting trade deficits, violation of intellectual property rights or espionage cases.

The road for China in Europe is tough though. The EU, for instance, termed in its “Strategic Outlook” on March 12, 2019 that China is a partner for cooperation and negotiation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. Several European countries criticised China for cyber-attacks, rolled back Huawei 5G telecom networks, and decried China’s efforts to divide the region through the China + Central and East European countries format. It needs to be seen how China’s charm offensive will wean away Europe from the US.

For long, western strategic thought poured resources to build a “democratic” China, castigating at the same time India as “authoritarian” and imposing sanctions that curtailed its growth. The EU even persuaded Russia not to provide cryogenic engines for space launches by India. US-Russia relations are complicated by history, Cold War legacy, persistent proxy wars and complex mechanics of resolving conflict. India, nevertheless, needs to welcome the new churning out that portends to strategic stability and opens new realignments.

### **Tibet is one of the most linguistically diverse places in the world. This is in danger of extinction**

26 February 2025, [The Conversation](#), Rajat Gupta

Three days after he was released from prison in December, a Tibetan village leader named Gonpo Namgyal [died](#). As his body was being prepared for traditional Tibetan funeral rites, marks were found indicating he had been brutally tortured in jail.

His crime? Gonpo Namgyal had been part of a campaign to protect the Tibetan language in China. Gonpo Namgyal is the victim of a slow-moving conflict that has dragged on for nearly 75 years, since China

invaded Tibet in the mid-20th century. Language has been central to that conflict.

Tibetans have worked to protect the Tibetan language and resisted efforts to enforce Mandarin Chinese. Yet, Tibetan children are losing their language through enrolment in state boarding schools where they are being educated nearly exclusively in Mandarin Chinese. Tibetan is typically only taught a few times a week – not enough to sustain the language.

My research, published in a new book in 2024, provides unique insights into the struggle of other minority languages in Tibet that receive far less attention.

My research shows that language politics in Tibet are surprisingly complex and driven by subtle violence, perpetuated not only by Chinese authorities but also other Tibetans. I’ve also found that outsiders’ efforts to help are failing the minority languages at the highest risk of extinction.

#### **Tibetan culture under attack**

I lived in Ziling, the largest city on the Tibetan Plateau, from 2005 to 2013, teaching in a university, studying Tibetan and supporting local non-government organisations.

Most of my research since then has focused on language politics in the Rebgong valley on the northeast Tibetan Plateau. From 2014 to 2018, I interviewed dozens of people, spoke informally with many others, and conducted hundreds of household surveys about language use.

I also collected and analysed Tibetan language texts, including government policies, online essays, social media posts and even pop song lyrics.

When I was in Ziling, Tibetans launched a massive protest movement against Chinese rule just before the Beijing Olympics in 2008. These protests led to harsh government crackdowns, including mass arrests, increased surveillance, and restrictions on freedom of movement and expressions of Tibetan identity. This was largely focused on language and religion.

Years of unrest ensued, marked by more demonstrations and individual acts of sacrifice. Since 2009, more than 150 Tibetans have set themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule.

#### **Not just Tibetan under threat**

Tibet is a linguistically diverse place. In addition to Tibetan, about 60 other languages are spoken in the region. About 4% of Tibetans (around 250,000 people) speak a minority language.

Government policy forces all Tibetans to learn and use Mandarin Chinese. Those who speak only Tibetan have a harder time finding work and are faced with discrimination and even violence from the dominant Han ethnic group.

Meanwhile, support for Tibetan language education has slowly been whittled away: the government even recently banned students from having private Tibetan lessons or tutors on their school holidays.

Linguistic minorities in Tibet all need to learn and use Mandarin. But many also need to learn Tibetan to communicate with other Tibetans: classmates, teachers, doctors, bureaucrats or bosses.

In Rebgong, where I did my research, the locals speak a language they call Manegacha. Increasingly, this language is being replaced by Tibetan: about a third of all families that speak Manegacha are now teaching Tibetan to their children (who also must learn Mandarin).

The government refuses to provide any opportunities to use and learn minority languages like Manegacha. It also tolerates constant discrimination and violence against Manegacha speakers by other Tibetans.

These assimilationist state policies are causing linguistic diversity across Tibet to collapse. As these minority languages are lost, people's mental and physical health suffers and their social connections and communal identities are destroyed.

#### **Why does this matter?**

Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule dates back to the People's Liberation Army invasion in the early 1950s.

When the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, that resistance movement went global. Governments around the world have continued to support Tibetan self-determination and combat Chinese misinformation about Tibet, such as the US Congress passage of the Resolve Tibet Act in 2024.

Outside efforts to support the Tibetan struggle, however, are failing some of the most vulnerable people: those who speak minority languages.

Manegacha speakers want to maintain their language. They resist the pressure to assimilate whenever they speak Manegacha to each other, post memes online in Manegacha or push back against the discrimination they face from other Tibetans.

However, if Tibetans stop speaking Manegacha and other minority languages, this will contribute to the Chinese government's efforts to erase Tibetan identity and culture.

Even if the Tibetan language somehow survives in China, the loss of even one of Tibet's minority languages would be a victory for the Communist Party in the conflict it started 75 years ago.

#### **World's largest dam or Chinese trial balloon?**

26 February 2025, [Kashmir Times](#), Claude Arpi

*Plans for a mega dam on the Tsangpo gave way to possibility of a cascade of smaller dams years ago but there's no clarity on when - and if - these will be built.*

On December 25, 2024, China's Xinhua News Agency reported Beijing's approval for the construction of a hydropower project (HPP) in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet. This is the river whose lower course is known as the Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and, after a confluence with two other major tributaries, as the Brahmaputra in Assam.

Since then, Indian and global media have produced hundreds of experts elaborating on the issue of a 'dam', though the Chinese report did not specify what type of hydropower plant (or plants) will be built or when construction will start.

It has generally been assumed that this will be a single dam, the largest in the world, which could produce three times more energy than the 22,500 MegaWatt Three Gorges Dam.

A study of the Chinese media over the years, however, indicates that the construction of a single mega dam was abandoned well before this announcement in favour of a more elaborate project: a series of smaller HPPs from Deyang, a remote location near Pai town in Nyingchi City, Southern Tibet, to an area close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh.

For the mega project to materialise, many factors are involved.

First and foremost, it has to be a political decision, taking into account the reaction of neighbouring countries downstream, as well as the environmental and economic consequences for Tibet itself.

It is possible or even likely that Xinhua's press release of December 25 was just a trial balloon to test India's reactions including the official response from the Ministry of External Affairs. This would explain the vagueness of the communiqué.

#### **Remember 2004**

In April 2004, *The New York Times* announced that Prime Minister Wen Jiabao "unexpectedly suspended plans for a massive dam system on the Nu (Salween) River in western China that scientists had warned could ruin one of the country's last unspoiled places."

The newspaper added: "Mr. Wen's intervention signals that China's top leaders have not approved a plan that most dam opponents had considered a *fait accompli*. His personal involvement is a rare and surprising response in a non-democratic government that in the past has shown little concern about the environmental effect of major public works projects."

In a written instruction, Wen ordered officials to conduct a major review of many hydropower projects: "Environmentalists consider the Nu, which rises in Tibet and flows 1,750 miles through Yunnan Province between the Mekong and Yangtze, one of the last pristine rivers in Asia."

But in 2012, once Wen was no longer at the helm of the government, the projects were again back on the

cards. Reuters noted: “The number of new hydropower projects in China could surge as the country’s populist premier Wen Jiabao retires and a new leadership team races to meet ambitious 2020 energy goals.”

Reuters added that “Dam building slowed considerably under Wen, who personally intervened to block hydropower projects and avoid the potential for protest from local populations. Projects such as the US\$59 billion Three Gorges Dam have been the focus of criticism over the social and environmental costs China is paying for development.”

It is clear that a decision to build HPPs on the Yarlung Tsangpo will be taken at the highest level, and while the scientific lobby is usually not in favour of these unsustainable mega structures, the dam lobby (which is motivated by the potential financial gains from massive contracts), is pushing hard for Beijing to ‘invest’.

Incidentally, when President Hu Jintao visited Delhi in 2006, he gave the Indian government the assurance that the ‘dam’ would not be built. Instead, according to the joint communiqué: “The two sides will set up an expert-level mechanism to discuss interaction and cooperation on the provision of flood season hydrological data, emergency management, and other issues regarding trans-border rivers as agreed between them.”

#### **The present project**

There are other factors to be taken into consideration, mainly technical issues.

Though it is true that the development of hydropower “has undergone several decades of in-depth research,” as Mao Ning, the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, put it, one can seriously doubt that the new development, if it happens, will have no implications for the areas downstream.

The project has been in the pipeline for decades. Already in November 2020, Beijing had included the survey of the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo in China’s 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), for this purpose. Four years ago, it was clear that the idea of a single dam had been abandoned in favour of a series of nine or ten large run-of-the-river HPPs with minimum reservoirs.

An important factor is the opening in July 2021 of the Pai-Metok (Pai-Mo) Highway, linking Nyingchi to Metok, north of Upper Siang District in Arunachal Pradesh. After the completion of the highway, the length of the road from Nyingchi City to Metok County was shortened from 346 kilometres to 180 kilometres, and the driving time was reduced from 11 hours to 4.5 hours.

Technically, in strategic terms, a 67-kilometre long highway and a tunnel under the Doshung-la mountain will be a game-changer. This could definitely help to pave the way for the hydroelectric power projects.

#### **Taking out the electricity produced**

Another question is how to evacuate the electricity produced to the mainland.

An article from the *People’s Daily*, dated January 26, partially answers the question. It informs us of a technological breakthrough: the commissioning of “one of China’s ‘power highways’, the 800 kV ultra-high-voltage direct current (UHVDC) transmission project from the upper reaches of the Jinsha (Yangtze) River to central China’s Hubei province, the highest UHVDC transmission project in the world.”

The Communist newspaper explains: “With a total length of 1,901 kilometres, the transmission project passes through northwest China’s Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region, southwest China’s Sichuan Province, southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality, and Hubei.”

Something that has been an issue for decades seems to have been solved on the Yangtze River. Similar technology could be used on the Yarlung Tsangpo.

#### **The seismicity of the Himalayan belt**

The seismicity of the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo and the Himalayas in general has been one of the main objections to any mega or even large projects in the area. This is indeed a serious issue.

On August 15, 1950, the Assam-Tibet Earthquake, measuring 8.7 on the Richter scale, took place in what is today’s Lohit and Anjaw districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The Dalai Lama, who was 15 at the time, noted in his memoirs: “It was like an artillery barrage – which is what we assumed to be the cause of both the tremors and the noise: a test of some sort being carried out by the Tibetan army... Some people reported seeing a strange red glow in the skies in the direction from which the noise came...”

The 1950 quake happened not far from the Great Bend (and Upper Siang); it changed the course of the rivers in the area. Such an earthquake is a real danger even for a cascade of HPPs.

All these factors will have to be taken into consideration by Beijing before it undertakes such a hazardous project.

Finally, does Beijing want a water war with India? This is another question that only the future can answer.

#### **Claude Arpi | How Gyalo Thondup, Dalai Lama’s brother, fought for Tibet from his Kalimpong home**

25 February 2025, [Deccan Chronicle](#), Claude Arpi

**The Dalai Lama said of his brother: “He was a good man who did his best for the Tibetan cause. I pray he will take a good rebirth as a Tibetan again and that he will be able to serve the Tibetan administration once more”;**

Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama’s eldest brother who passed away on February 9, aged 97, at his home in

Kalimpong, West Bengal, was described by the New York Times as a “political operator in Tibet and the greater region”, and “the second-most influential person” in Tibet, “eclipsed only by his brother, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama”.

The Dalai Lama said of his brother: “He was a good man who did his best for the Tibetan cause. I pray he will take a good rebirth as a Tibetan again and that he will be able to serve the Tibetan administration once more.”

The “Noodlemaker of Kalimpong”, as Thondup’s biography called him, was born in 1927 in the tiny village of Takser in the Tibetan province of Amdo. The International Tibet Network, a global coalition of Tibet-related NGOs, said: “Gyalo Thondup was a central figure in Tibet’s modern history. He was liaising with global powers and leading efforts to support Tibetan resistance to China’s occupation. Throughout his life, he played a crucial role in taking the Tibetan issue to the United Nations, resulting in three significant resolutions between 1959 and 1965.”

But Thondup was first and foremost a great fighter for Tibet’s independence. In *A History of Modern Tibet*, historian Melvyn Goldstein mentions the power struggle between the pro-independence supporters led by Gyalo Thondup and the Chinese authorities in Tibet in the 1950s: “A group, based in Kalimpong, known as Jenkhentsisum, fought for Tibetan freedom. The term is an acronym of the titles of its three leaders, Gyalo Thondup, Tshipön Shakabpa and Khenjung Lobsang Gyentsen -- literally, jen (older brother), khen (khenjung, or fourth rank official), tsi (tshipön or finance secretary), and sum (number 3).”

In August 1954, a month after dreadful floods which destroyed the Indian Trade Agency in Gyantse, Jenkhentsisum began to organise Tibetans living in India “to provide relief to the flood victims but also saw this as a perfect opportunity to launch the political organisation they had been planning. On August 5, they met in Kalimpong and openly started the Tibet Relief Committee, whose aim was to raise relief funds for flood victims. At the same time, they covertly started the Association for the Welfare of Tibet, to work for Tibetan independence,” wrote Goldstein, adding: “The members took an oath in front of various protector deities, swearing to serve the cause of the organisation for as long as it might take.”

At that time, the US consulate-general in Kolkata was contacted for support; in the following decades, Thondup would be the main interlocutor of the US authorities (including the CIA) for Tibetan affairs.

The 1962 India-China war led to creation of the Special Frontier Force (SFF), a Tibetan army based in Chakrata, Uttarakhand, whose objective was to infiltrate into Tibet within six months of its creation. This did not happen, but here too Thondup was involved.

For most Indians, November 14 is Jawaharlal Nehru’s birthday, but it is also another anniversary, though “uncelebrated”: the SFF’s creation. It was also known as Vikas Regiment or “Two-Twos”. Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, in *The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet*, recounted one day an emissary was sent from the Intelligence Bureau to Darjeeling “to fetch the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalo Thondup. After years of attempting to court the Indians – often sympathetic but never committal -- Gyalo relished the moment as he sat in front of a select group of senior intelligence and military officials in the capital.”

Thondup Gyalo told the meeting he needed 5,000 volunteers.

Ratuk Ngawang, one of the commanders, recalled that one day, Gyalo Thondup asked Andruk Gonpo Tashi, the top Khampa guerilla leader, to come to his residence in Darjeeling. Ratuk accompanied the Khampa leader; Thondup thought of starting a large Tibetan military academy in India.

He sought Gonpo Tashi’s opinion, who told Thondup it would be an important military initiative that could make the Tibetan people more powerful. When Gyalo Thondup asked the Khampa leader about recruitment plans, Gonpo Tashi said that 1,00-2,000 soldiers wouldn’t be of much help, and the objective should be to have as many soldiers as possible.

The Dalai Lama’s brother said he would speak with the IB to check if there was any possibility of finding Indian support, and told Gonpo Tashi he should maintain strict confidentiality. This is how the SFF came into being.

While the move was orchestrated by R.N. Kao, RAW’s first chief, Thondup was also indirectly instrumental in the Tibetan participation in the 1971 operations for Bangladesh’s liberation. Rathuk Ngawang, by then a commander in Chakrata, said Kao instructed the SFF and advised its leaders to prepare themselves and fight well. In his memoirs, *The Phantoms of Chittagong*, Brig. Surjeet Singh Uban, the SFF commander, recounted the details of the Tibetans’ achievements: “After we captured Chittagong, Mr Kao came to visit our regiment and gave awards and speeches in praise of the Tibetan unit’s heroic battles.” Gyalo Thondup was not directly involved in the decision to send the Tibetan soldiers to the Bangladesh front as New Delhi had categorically banned from doing any political activities, but at that time, he was still deeply involved with the SFF in Chakrata.

Several years ago, during an interview, Gyalo Thondup spoke of one of his encounters with Xi Zhongxun, Xi Jinping’s father, who showed him his watch: “In 1954, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited China, he gave me an Omega watch... I think that it was an Omega that he showed me. I told him: ‘Very good, keep it.’ He attached a great importance to this watch

because the Dalai Lama presented it to him, it came from India.”

Tibet has indeed lost a great man who lived a great life.

### Gyalo Thondup obituary

25 February 2025, [The Guardian](#), Alexander Norman

Brother of the Dalai Lama and envoy who led talks on the exiled leader’s possible return to Tibet with the Chinese government.

The life of Gyalo Thondup, who has died aged 97, was transformed after one of his younger brothers, Lhamo Thondup, was identified by senior Tibetan monks as the reincarnation of the great 13th Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader who in 1912 had declared Tibet’s independence. In 1940, the boy was installed as the 14th Dalai Lama.

At once, they were catapulted to being the leading family in the country, swapping their farmhouse for a mansion in the city of Lhasa, where Gyalo attended a private school for the children of aristocrats. In 1942, aged 14, he was sent to Nanjing, China.

This led to his meeting the president of what was still the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, who regarded the young Tibetan as the ideal person to liaise between himself and the Dalai Lama as soon as the latter came of age.

It was a policy of the nationalists – no less than of the communists – that Tibet should be reunited with the motherland. In his 2015 autobiography, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong*, Thondup recounted how he had been a frequent houseguest of the president and his wife, who came to treat him “as a son”.

Not long after the communists came to power in 1949, they moved troops into Tibet. Thondup – who had by now separated from a Tibetan wife and married the daughter of a high-ranking officer in the nationalist navy – soon fled to Kalimpong, West Bengal, where there was already a large community of Tibetan exiles. During the winter of 1949-50, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa for southern Tibet, with a view to possibly seeking asylum in India.

It was at this time that Thondup first came into contact with the CIA. Concerned at the loss of China to the communists, the US state department was keen to build relationships with the Dalai Lama’s government. Thondup, who had emerged as de facto leader of the Tibetan émigrés, was approached by the CIA. Although never anti-Chinese, Thondup was, as might be expected, staunchly anti-communist. As the situation in Tibet deteriorated, the US decided to arm a resistance movement.

Thondup was charged with identifying six candidates who were exfiltrated to a CIA base on Okinawa, Japan, for training in intelligence gathering and sabotage. To

their surprise, their translator was the eldest brother of Thondup and the Dalai Lama, who had acquired the name of Taktser Rinpoche and a position as abbot of an important monastery through another reincarnation. Having fled the Chinese and renounced his religious vocation, he too had become a CIA asset.

The agents that Thondup recruited impressed the Americans sufficiently for them to mount a full-scale operation in Tibet. Training was switched from Okinawa to a secret base at Camp Hale, Colorado, where 250 agents – most of them ex-monks and all recruited by Thondup – received training.

When the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa for India in March 1959, he established contact with some of them. As a result, though the fact was kept secret for decades, the US president, Dwight D Eisenhower, and, through him, the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, were kept aware of the Dalai Lama’s movements almost from the start.

US support for the Tibetan resistance continued throughout the early 60s, but tailed off as it became clear that the Chinese would not easily be dislodged. The agents did some sabotage, including blowing up an armoury and damaging some convoys, but the main effect was to harden Chinese resolve. For his part, Thondup spent the next decade or so pursuing various business interests, including a noodle factory.

He also had a direct role in the Tibetan government in exile. In 1959, 1961 and 1965 he promoted resolutions relating to Tibet by the general assembly of the United Nations in the course of handling its foreign affairs, and in the early 90s he became the chairman of the Kashag (cabinet). In between he established a base in Hong Kong, in addition to a residence in Kalimpong.

His apparent success caused considerable envy and questioning within the exile community. He was a key figure in the sale in the early 60s of about \$2m worth of gold that had been sent from Tibet in 1950 and had been held in safekeeping for the Dalai Lama by the maharajah of Sikkim. Investments were made in various Indian enterprises, none of them successful, with the result that an inventory taken four years later showed their value had fallen to just a third.

When news of this reached the Tibetan community in exile, several people involved in the debacle, chief among them Thondup, came under suspicion. But despite the rumblings of discontent, he retained the confidence of the Dalai Lama and became his chief envoy, first to the Indian government and then to the Chinese government.

In 1979, after the death of Mao Zedong and in the wake of Deng Xiaoping’s opening of China, Thondup visited the Chinese premier for a discussion about a possible return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Partly as a result of this meeting, several fact-finding missions from the Tibetan government in exile visited Tibet with a view to the Dalai Lama himself doing so in 1985.

However, the news of conditions in Tibet brought back by the delegates was so shocking that the Dalai Lama cancelled the prospective trip. Intermittent discussions with the Chinese government, again facilitated by Thondup, continued until the early 90s when he himself withdrew on the grounds that no progress had been made, a situation that still obtains. Born in the small settlement of Taktser, eastern Tibet, Gyalo was the third of seven surviving children, and second son, of Choekyong Tsering and his wife Diki, and spent his early years living and working on the family farm. The older brother that he went on to meet again through the CIA went by the name of Thubten Jigme Norbu until recognised by the 13th Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the lama Taktser Rinpoche.

After a life closely connected to that of the Dalai Lama, Gyalo retired to Kalimpong, yet remained a controversial figure within the Tibetan community in exile. He consolidated that reputation with his autobiography, in which he responded combatively to the allegations of wrongdoing in relation to the Dalai Lama's gold.

His second wife, Diki Dolkar, and their daughter, Yangzom Dolma, predeceased him. He is survived by two sons, Ngawang Tanpa and Khedroob Thondup, two brothers, the Dalai Lama and Tendzin Choegyal, and a sister, Jetsun Pema.

Gyalo Thondup, businessman and political envoy, born 5 November 1928; died 8 February 2025

### **Why has India overlooked President Trump's offer to mediate in India-China conflict?**

25 February 2025, [The Indian Express](#), P Stoban

*The CIA's role in fuelling the India-China conflict is a legacy of the American deep state during the Cold War.*

*The outcome was an irreversible split between China and India, destroying over 3,000 years of deeply ingrained civilisational links between the two countries*

For the first time in 75 years, an American President has expressed willingness to heal rather than sour relations between China and India. In a joint news conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13, President Donald Trump said that his government was ready to offer assistance to mend relations between India and China.

New Delhi has chosen to dismiss Trump's offer, declaring that India will deal with such issues through a "bilateral approach". Even the media has disregarded the offer in favour of issues such as F-35 stealth fighters, tariffs, Tahawwur Rana's extradition, etc.

While pursuing a bilateral approach is legitimate, Indian mandarins often forget that the India-China dispute originated in the Cold War politics fostered by the United States. India and China had a cordial relationship in the 1950s, though both nations felt the

need to settle differences in their boundary maps. The drift occurred during the Cold War when the US took exception to India's non-alignment policy, Nehru's rhetoric of Asian unity, and his soft spot for China. The Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 infuriated the Americans. Nehru refused to be dragged into the US-China conflict in Korea, and the United States waited for the opportunity to foment a China-India rift.

While the border dispute remained open, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) quickly stoked the flames by inciting a rebellion in Lhasa in March 1951. China's military forays into Tibet didn't concern Nehru, for he didn't think Tibet was legitimately independent. India only sought an autonomous status there to reduce China's military presence, protect India's commercial interests, and thwart any Tibetan irredentist aspirations to the Himalayas.

In any case, the Dalai Lama's government had already signed the Seventeen Point Agreement with China on May 23, 1951, affirming Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. India liberated Tawang in February 1951. Neither China's annexation of Tibet nor India's action in Tawang impacted ties. Instead, the two countries started concluding a peace deal in 1953.

Tibet's reassertion of independence in the 1950s was linked to its desire to have the 1914 Simla Treaty nullified through Britain or India. They never ratified it because China never accepted the McMahon line. Nehru sternly rebuffed the ploy and told the Dalai Lama in 1956 to return home and cooperate with China.

The groundwork for trouble was laid in the early 1950s when US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, approved a verbal message sent in August 1951, asking that the Dalai Lama avoid Communist control and denounce the Seventeen Point agreement. The US support was contingent on Dalai Lama's public disavowal of the agreements under "duress".

President Eisenhower meanwhile authorised the CIA to train Tibetan guerillas at Camp Hale in Colorado before parachuting them into Tibet under the ST Circus programme. The Chinese army outnumbered them. A May 2007 CIA/RSS DD/I Staff Study provides declassified details.

The Dalai Lama's asylum put India in an awkward situation. Tensions arose after he was officially welcomed in March 1959. China charged that Nehru's administration covertly supported CIA operatives and sowed the seeds of war. Nehru was unaware that Kalimpong had been turned into a den of spies. Even though the CIA abandoned the Tibetan guerrillas after 1972, Indian involvement in the clandestine operations had a long-lasting effect on Sino-India relationship.

The deep state had laid the field guide in the 1950s when it started funding the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) to propagate the Western Cold War

narrative in India. It managed to entice a wide section of prominent Indians to machinate a divergent ideology and persuade Nehru to embrace the idea of “Chinese danger”.

Despite Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev’s advice to engage in negotiations, fiery public speeches invoked the rhetoric of Indian invincibility. Nehru became “captive” to domestic hysteria and was forced to renounce friendship with China. He chose a “forward policy” instead, and by sending ill-equipped soldiers on border patrol, China humiliatingly beat us in 1962. If the idea was to resolve the boundary dispute, the Dalai Lama’s escape meant Beijing denied the option and America never let it happen. The CIA assessment suggests the US casting its lot singularly on the Dalai Lama for a sustained period altered the India-China game, though without resolving the Tibet issue.

Although the 1962 battle was short-lived, China emerged victorious, India refrained from making a formal settlement and left the boundary dispute “theoretically unresolved”. Beijing referred to the border with India as an “imperialist fabrication” following the CIA’s Tibet operation, even though it settled the line with Burma using the McMahon Line principles. It also accused India of “meddling” and aiding “Tibetan separatists” while India accused China of aggression. For decades, the Tibetan people suffered the repercussions.

In this way, the CIA achieved its objective of pitting India and China against one another. There are numerous accounts on the subject, most of which focus on Nehru’s blunder, China’s betrayal, Mao’s love of using force, etc. However, little is known about how the deep state weaponised the Tibetans to incite insurrection during the East-West conflict, and they continue to do so today.

The 33-day war irreversibly split China and India against one another, destroying over 3,000 years of deeply ingrained civilisational links between the two countries. There have been wide-ranging repercussions, with both sides using alliances and proxies to restrain one another. China counters India’s proxy Dalai Lama game by supporting Pakistan. The US factor still weighs in on the India-China rivalry, without comprehending what the two sides want or need. As he brings about a major shakeup in the geopolitical arena, President Trump’s willingness to alter the rules, if only by reducing the scope of the deep state, is an interesting departure.

### A past foretold

24 February 2025, [Nepali Times](#), Sudiksha Tuladhar

Two new books urge Nepal to leverage relations with China and India in its own national interest.

Till about 200 years ago China and India were the world’s largest economies, and that helped Kathmandu prosper as an entrepôt between the two. We have now come full circle.

China and India are ascendant once more, and the two giant neighbours can be the locomotives to pull Nepal along if we play our cards right.

That is the message in former Kantipur editor Sudheer Sharma’s omnibus edition of two books that explore the historical and geopolitical dimensions of Nepal’s relations with China.

The two Nepali language books, *भिक्षु, व्यापार र बिद्रोह* (Monks, Trade and Rebellion) and *हिमालपारिको हुरी* (Trans-Himalayan Hurricane) follow Sharma’s previous work *प्रयोगशाला* (Laboratory) which looked mainly at Nepal-India relations and was translated into English as *The Nepal Nexus*.



*Mao and the monarch: King Mahendra with Mao Zedong in Beijing during the king's state visit to China in 1967.*

The first book is predominantly about Kathmandu’s historical links with Lhasa, and by extension Beijing. Vajrayana Buddhism played a significant role in bringing the two sides of the Himalaya together, allowing social and trade relations to thrive.

Princess Bhrikuti, King Narendra Dev and Arniko were prominent historical figures, but thousands of lesser known monks, traders, and travellers also played their part in cementing Kathmandu-Lhasa ties. These connections were so strong that they endured three wars that the Gorkha Kingdom and Tibet fought against each other in which Chinese emperors sent military help to fight off the Nepalis.

Although Nepal's historic connections with Tibet waned after the Chinese annexation of the plateau in the 1950s, it is on that foundation that present day Nepal-China relations are built.

Till today, Nepal is the only country with a consulate in Lhasa, and the only international flights from Lhasa are to Kathmandu. But as Sharma notes, even back then, Nepal's proximity with northern India figured importantly in its socio-economic and cultural connections with Tibet.

Nepal was the corridor for the exchange of trade and faith between the Ganga plains and the Tibetan plateau. The road between Patna and Potala, Banaras and Beijing passed through Kathmandu Valley. Sharma traces this socio-political landscape to explain how it went on to shape the country's modern day relations with the neighbours.

There were 2,000 Buddhist monks in Nepal during the reign of Lichhavi king Amshuverma, and Arniko established himself in the court of Kubilai Khan and took eight years to build the massive White Dagoba in Beijing.

Read also: The life and times of Arniko, Sewa Bhattarai While Mahayana Buddhism spread from India, through Nepal to China and beyond, it was Communism that later came from China to Nepal. King Mahendra had great geopolitical savvy and navigated the complicated geopolitics of the Cold War to cultivate relations with both Nehru and Mao, while keeping both at arms length.

Mahendra wrested aid to build infrastructure like the Kodari and Prithvi Highways from China, but also from India, the Soviet Union and the United States. In fact Nepal was only the eighth non-Communist country to receive foreign aid during Mao's China.

Read also: The new equaliser

But when Nepal's Maoists launched an armed struggle against the monarchy, China's official media never called them 'Maoists'. As far as Beijing was concerned, Mao was dead in his mausoleum. It was only later under Xi Jinping that China warmed up to Pushpa Kamal Dahal's 'Maoist' label.

The first book takes us to the point when the Constituent Assembly abolished Nepal's monarchy in 2008, and the second book, as the name suggests, looks at how the whirlwind rise of China has buffeted Nepal.

Sharma encourages readers to abandon Prithvi Narayan Shah's famous metaphor of Nepal being 'yam between two boulders' to it being more like a 'narrow canyon' between two big mountains, emphasising the challenges of maintaining sovereignty amid geopolitical pressures not just between India and China, but increasingly, with the United States.

We have to see how the new Sino-US Cold War will evolve under the second Donald Trump presidency. The suspension of the MCC this week will be an

opening for China to push its own BRI infrastructure projects in Nepal.

It is not very helpful to see Nepal as being 'squeezed' between its giant neighbours, but leverage the country's geostrategic location by being a connector between India and China. Both neighbours, naturally, have their own interests in Nepal as a buffer state, but both want stability. Kathmandu's strategy should be to take advantage of the economic growth of its neighbours.

Read also: Poor cash-rich Nepal, Sonia Awale

Both books look at the arrival of Tibetan refugees into Nepal from the late 1950s, and how this resulted in geopolitical push and pull. Although American support for Khampa guerrillas was cut off after Henry Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing in 1971, US and western support for Tibetans in exile resumed after that.

Nepal allowed the refugees to stay and work here, but under Chinese pressure Kathmandu adopted stricter measures — including deporting Tibetans entering Nepal.

The Tibetan exile community remains one of Beijing's biggest concerns in Nepal. Successive Kathmandu governments have been pressured to curb 'anti-Chinese activities' like celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday and other anniversaries.

Sharma notes that so far Nepal has deftly balanced its support for refugees while keeping relations with Beijing on an even keel. It is significant that China has been surprisingly understanding of the presence of Gorkha soldiers from Nepal in the Indian Army along the disputed border where India and China fought a war in 1962, and after which there have been frequent skirmishes.

The two books should be read chronologically so as to track the trajectory of historical Nepal-Tibet ties right up to present-day Nepal-China relations. The most relevant concern for bilateral relations today, as Sharma points out, is Nepal's economic independence, sovereignty, and role in a transformed world order.

### Hope for more rational voices on China within India

24 February 2025, [The Global Times](#), Zhang Jiadong

China and India are both major powers and their bilateral relationship is complex and multilayered. In India, although hardline and hostile voices against China at times take a dominant position, rational voices have always existed. Recently, Indian Overseas Congress (IOC) chairman Sam Pitroda said India should not view China as an "enemy," as "confrontational attitude creates enemies." What Pitroda was expressing is a classic assertion in international relations known as the "self-fulfilling prophecy." If you



regard a country as an enemy, you will ultimately end up with one. In fact, over the past few years, while there have been many unfriendly voices against China in mainstream Indian media, rational viewpoints have also frequently emerged. In June 2024, mainstream Indian media reported that escalating tensions with China had cost Indian electronics manufacturers \$15 billion in production losses as well as 100,000 jobs in the past four years. This served as a call to the Indian government to improve relations with China, especially in terms of economic and trade relations. There are different attitudes within India toward these rational voices. Pitroda is known in India for his outspoken views and has made what many consider as "inopportune" remarks. This time, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will not miss the opportunity to attack him. BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi stated that "it is a blow to India's prestige," claiming it appears from Pitroda's comments that as if India is the aggressor. Trivedi also attempted to use this to undermine the image of the Indian National Congress (INC). INC General Secretary Jairam Ramesh had to quickly distance the party from Pitroda's views, stating that Pitroda's remarks did not reflect the official stance of the INC, and that "China remains a major foreign policy, security, and economic challenge for India." These statements indicate that there is a rising trend of voices in India advocating for cooperation and friendship with China, but hostility toward China and concerns within the public opinion still exist. Pitroda's views and the reactions they provoked reflect an important fact: India's mind-set toward China must be adjusted. India shouldn't fall into the trap of its own hostile rhetoric against China, which would harm China-India relations and, in turn, damage India's own interests. China and India are major powers and neighbors, and it is normal for them to have a relationship that includes competition, cooperation, and confrontation. The primary mission of a nation is to maintain its own security and survival, which requires a bottom-line mindset and preparation for the worst-case scenarios. Theoretically, China is India's largest neighbor, and there are indeed some historical and current disputes between China and India. It is also normal that there are some unfriendly voices against China within India. However, there is a division of labor among different departments within a country. Within any country, there are departments dedicated to international cooperation, departments pursuing national interests, and departments serving bottom-line thinking. The need for a country to have bottom-line thinking does not mean that it must handle all affairs with others solely from that perspective. In times of peace, no single department or function should monopolize foreign policy. This has actually been the biggest problem in India's past understanding of its policy

toward China. India's past singular and absolute view of China and its approach of defining the entire China-India relationship through border disputes don't align with the reality that China-India relations are complex and diverse.

In both China and India, there are departments that serve the purpose of bottom-line thinking, which must always be prepared for the worst possible scenarios, even during periods of friendly cooperation between the two countries. However, the China-India relationship is not in a state of war, and the worst-case scenarios are often the least likely to occur; they should not easily dictate a country's foreign behavior. Otherwise, this would not be "self-fulfilling," but rather "self-destructive." The daily interactions between China and India, from economic and trade relations to people-to-people exchanges, should proceed according to normal conditions and should not fall into a decision-making deadlock of seeking imaginary enemies and responding to them. In today's world, the international order, international landscape, and international system are all facing significant tests and challenges. As rising powers, the worst choice for China and India would be to be adversarial toward each other, as this would weaken both countries' ability to respond to any changes. Therefore, India must rationally view domestic rational voices toward China. Rational voices are often voices that are truly beneficial to one's own country. India is a diverse country, and cultural diversity is India's reality and an important source of power for India's development. Many outstanding entrepreneurs and scientists in India come from minority groups and have made great contributions to India. Only in a diverse and inclusive political and cultural environment can a small number of elites find space to play their role. We must also look rationally at some irrational voices in India. Some so-called irrational voices are often partially rational voices, emanating from departments and people who pay attention to bottom-line thinking. In addition, we cannot interpret some irrational voices in India as all voices in India, although these voices can seem powerful at times. But those who are silent are often the majority. There is no need for strategic confrontation between China and India. Exchanges and cooperation between China and India are the best choice for both countries. Of course, to achieve the optimal choice, China and India need multiple complex cooperation and competition to establish sufficient strategic mutual trust so as to provide the possibilities for the optimal choice.

In short, with the simultaneous rise of China and India, the national interests of the two countries will become more and more relevant to the stability of world order, and there will be more and more global issues that China and India need to jointly solve. Only by looking at China-India relations beyond bilateral differences,

border disputes and other sensitive issues, and creating conditions for normal exchanges between the two countries, can we find a way for China and India to get along as they should.

### **Siang at risk: The impacts of China's Yarlung Tsangpo megadam**

24 February 2025, [The Arunachal Times](#), AN Mohammed

#### **China's secretive plans:**

Since the 1990s, there has been speculation about China's plans to build a megadam on the Tsangpo river at the Great Bend, capable of generating 38 gwof electricity and diverting water through a 1,000-kilometre tunnel to the arid northern regions. China initially dismissed these plans as economically unviable due to the remote location. However, in 2020, Beijing officially announced its intention to build the dam, raising alarms in India over potential impacts on water and food security. The project could severely affect livelihoods, ecology and water availability for millions downstream.

India fears that China might weaponise water by calculatedly causing floods during monsoons or droughts in non-monsoon periods. India has repeatedly urged China to ensure transparency and engage in consultations to safeguard downstream interests.

China asserts that its hydropower projects planned on the Yarlung Tsangpo are run-of-the-river, minimising downstream impacts, but India remains sceptical. Despite the absence of a water-sharing treaty, India and China have agreements in 2005, 2008, renewed in 2013 and 2018 for sharing hydrometeorological data and providing flood warnings during monsoon months. Under these agreements, China shares hydrological information (water level, discharge, rainfall) from three Tibetan stations – Nugesha, Yangcun and Nuxia – between 15 May and 15 October each year. The two countries have also coordinated on emergency responses for landslide-induced blockages downstream of Nuxia, as seen in October 2018 when China reported such an event and shared hourly observations. However, cooperation has been inconsistent, with data-sharing disruptions during periods of tension, such as the 2017 Doklam and 2020 Ladakh standoffs.

#### **China's super dam:**

In December 2024, China's state news agency Xinhua announced the approval of a massive hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, which could generate three times the energy of the 22.5 gw Three Gorges Dam. This mega project, with an estimated cost exceeding US\$137 billion, faces unprecedented engineering challenges. The Yarlung Tsangpo, Tibet's

longest river, flows through the world's deepest canyon and features a 2,000-metre vertical drop over 50 kms before entering India, offering nearly 70 gwof hydropower potential. The project involves drilling four to six 20 km-long tunnels through the Namcha Barwa mountain to divert half of the river's flow, around 2,000 cumecs (cubic metres per second). Once completed, the 60 gw hydropower station is expected to produce over 300 billion kWh of electricity annually. Xinhua emphasised that extensive geological exploration and technological advancements have laid a solid foundation for the project's safe and high-quality development. The project prioritises environmental protection and aligns with China's green energy transition, carbon peaking, and carbon neutrality goals, as well as global climate change mitigation efforts. However, the project raises significant concerns for downstream regions, particularly India, regarding water availability, ecological impact, and potential geopolitical implications.

#### **Journey of the Siang:**

The Siang river starts from the Ansi Glacier at an altitude of 5,300 metres, about 63 kilometres southwest of Manasarovar Lake near Mount Kailash in southwest Tibet. It flows for 1,700 kilometres in Tibet, where it is known as the Yarlung Zangbo or Tsangpo, and then flows for 278 kilometres in Arunachal Pradesh. In western Tibet, it travels from west to east, parallel to the Himalayan mountains, and passes around the snow-capped peaks of Namche Burwa and Gyal Peri, carving through the world's largest canyon, the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon, which is 240 kilometres long, with an average depth of 5,000 metres.

The river enters Arunachal as the Siang at Kepang La near Gelling, taking a U-turn towards the south around the Brahmaputra's Great Bend at an elevation of 535 metres near Tuting, and 170 kilometres north of Yingkiong, situated at an altitude of 200 metres. In Arunachal, the Siang river flows southward for 226 kilometres through steep gorges before reaching Pasighat at an elevation of 152 metres, where the river flows in a braided pattern with several channels due to the mild slope and silt deposits. River terraces are noticeable along the stretches between Yingkiong and Pasighat. From Pasighat, the Siang flows another 52 kilometres before joining two major rivers, the Lohit and the Dibang, near Sadiya in Assam at an elevation of 123 metres, forming the Brahmaputra. The Brahmaputra then flows for 642 kilometres in Assam and 260 kilometres in Bangladesh, where it is known as the Jamuna, before draining into the Bay of Bengal.

#### **River discharge and flows:**

Wide variances in precipitation and snow melts have resulted in huge variations in the flow regimes across the Tsangpo basin. The average annual discharge and

flow of the Tsangpo is 91 bcm (billion cubic metre) and 2,900 cumecs, respectively. The average annual discharge and flow of the Siang river is 120 bcm and 3,800 cumecs recorded at Pasighat. The average annual discharge and flow of the Brahmaputra is 615 bcm and 20,000 cumecs. The overall snowmelt contribution to annual runoff in the Tsangpo catchments is about 34 percent, with 10-25 percent during monsoon and 5-10 percent in winter months. The annual precipitation in the Trans-Himalaya averages about 300 mm. As the flow moves to the south of the Himalaya, the annual average precipitation reaches about 4,500 mm. The foothills are frequently fed by inconsistent precipitation of magnitude that can cause great floods. The peak flows at Nuxia in Tibet, the nearest station to the Great Bend is about 6,000 cumecs, while lean season flow is calculated at 500 cumecs by Chinese researchers. An important left-bank tributary, Parlung Tsangpo joins the Yarlung Tsangpo further 130 kms downstream of Nuxia. The precipitation increases substantially downstream of their confluence. This substantially increases the flow downstream of Nuxia. The discharge of the Yarlung Tsangpo increases by more than twice as the river crosses Nuxia, undertakes the Great Bend, and enters India.

India is most concerned of the area between Nuxia, the last hydrological station from which India receives flood-period data, and Tuting, the first hydrological station within Indian territory between which the river traverses approximately 320 kms. On this rain-rich part of the journey of the river, however, no data is available. The regions exhibit high monsoonal precipitation with strong possibilities of landslides and avalanches that could lead to flashflood events. This is corroborated by the fact that in many of the patches, 10 or more instances of such hazardous events occur yearly, increasing the hazard risk further downstream. The downstream districts of Arunachal and Assam are most vulnerable to floods. The Yarlung Tsangpo Great Canyon has 17 snow-clad peaks above 6,000 metres. Historic floods and droughts frequently thrash the Siang river due to creation of artificial dams by landslide and glacially dammed lakes blocking the river flow for a long time and subsequent breaches releasing huge quantity of water.

From the available hydrological data during 2008, including from Tuting (1978-1992, 1995) and Yingkiong (1977-1991), it was seen that the minimum flow of the Siang at Pasighat in non-monsoon period was of the order of 1,000 cumecs. There was no consistent data to ascertain what would be the corresponding minimum flow of the river in China, where the proposed megadam would be located. Keeping in view the fact that river reaches in China region are largely snow fed, minimum discharge would be sufficiently lower than that available at Pasighat,

226 kms away from China border. As several streams and large tributaries like the Siyom joins the Siang in Indian catchments, the minimum flow in China territory was considered half of that at Pasighat, maximum diversion that could be theoretically affected by China would be of the order of 500 cumecs (power potential studies of Lower Siang HEP approved by CWC). With this quantity of water, a 60 gw project is possible because of utilisation of 2 km head available at the Great Bend of the Brahmaputra as power generation in a hydroelectric plant is directly proportional to the quantity of water and head (height of water flow to the power plant).

China planned to produce 300 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy annually from 60 gw plant, utilising 2,000 cumecs flow with 2,000 m head. In comparison India's Lower Siang HEP near Pasighat designed to produce 13.93 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) from 2.7 gw plant, utilising 5440 cumecs flow from 55 m head.

#### **Impacts of Chinese megadam:**

The extent of implications from proposed project depends on China's planning for conventional hydropower or for multipurpose consumptive use for irrigation, drinking water and diversion of Tsangpo water to its arid northern areas. If the project is utilised solely for hydroelectric power generation as indicated by China, once the reservoir is filled up, the power plant can be continuously run if the river flow is more than 2,000 cumecs (designed discharge of the power plant) during monsoon period and downstream areas will get normal river flow. There will also be probability of dam induced flood. If stored water in the reservoir is released suddenly, the downstream areas will be flooded. By virtue of its location at the foothills of the Himalaya and the abrupt decline in the river's gradient, Siang valley districts especially become a potentially vulnerable zone. This can also seriously affect the neighbouring districts of Sadiya, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh in Assam with the travel time of flood wave from the Great Bend to Dibrugarh being about 12 hours.

During non-monsoon period, the flow of the Tsangpo goes below 2,000 cumecs. The power plant will have to be frequently stopped for hours or even days for replenishment of reservoir, during which there may be no flow in the downstream as China may not release minimum environment flow like Indian hydropower dams mandatorily release. In such a situation, there will be drought-like situation in the downstream and the most affected area will be the 150 km reach from the Indo-China border to the Siyom river confluence at Panging where the Siang river may dry up.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Siang river, the lifeline for the Adi tribe of Arunachal, supports the culture and livelihoods through fishing, and agriculture has repeatedly suffered from many historic floods, droughts, and

polluted water threatening the ecology of the region. The available hydrometeorological data shows that the Siang contributes 25 to 33 percent water to the Brahmaputra, whereas the Yarlung Tsangpo contributes about 7 to 15 percent. It is inferred that China may have been using a substantial quantity of Tsangpo waters during non-monsoon periods for irrigations, drinking, etc. China's announcement of construction of 60 gw Yarlung Tsangpo mega dam at the Great Bend raises pressing concerns about environmental impacts, mostly on the Siang river. Without a formal water treaty between China and India, the protections offered by international laws on trans-boundary rivers may be insufficient to address the complexities of such a mega project. As such, transparency and international cooperation are paramount importance to ensure a balance between the project's benefits and its potential risks.

Constructing large reservoirs on the Siang to store potential floodwaters released by China and releasing during droughts stands out as the most viable solution to secure optimal water availability in the Siang/Brahmaputra, safeguarding the interests and wellbeing of all affected regions. As China has already started activities for construction of the mega project as revealed by satellite imageries, India must take up counter actions on priority to save the Siang river from imminent risks.

### **Did the Trump Gov't Just Tell China to Stop Bullying Taiwan?**

24 February 2025, [Japan Forward](#)

The US State Department removed "We do not support Taiwan independence" from its website. It comes after Secretary Rubio criticized China for its coercive acts.

China should calmly interpret the message being sent by the Trump administration regarding cross-Strait relations with Taiwan.

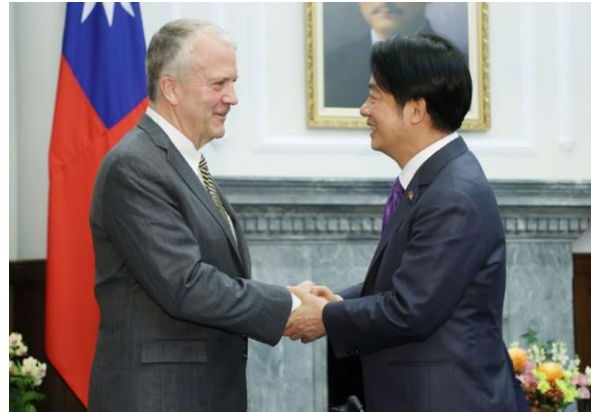
The United States Department of State has updated its website fact sheet on US-Taiwan relations. Specifically, it removed the phrase "We do not support Taiwan independence."

The website has also added language expressing staunch support for Taiwan's participation in international organizations. Taipei has been blocked from participating due to pressure from China.

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs lauded the move, saying it "welcomes the active stance and support for Taiwan-US relations."

Meanwhile, China, which considers Taiwan as its "inalienable territory," reacted sharply. A foreign ministry spokesperson accused Washington of "serious regression in its position on the Taiwan issue"

and called for the US to "immediately correct this mistake."



*Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te and US Senator Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) shake hands in Taipei in May, 2024. (@Central News Agency via Kyodo News)*

### **Bipartisan Perspective on Taiwan**

Similar wording was removed in 2022 under the previous Biden administration. However, afterward, it was restored following a backlash from the Chinese government.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio sees China as a serious threat. During his Senate confirmation hearing on January 15, Rubio expressed a sense of crisis, warning that China was preparing to invade Taiwan and, "unless something dramatic changes...we're going to have to deal with this before the end of this decade."

He also emphasized the importance of deterrence, arguing that the way to prevent a Chinese invasion is to make Beijing "conclude that the costs of intervening in Taiwan are too high."

After taking office, Rubio held a telephone conversation with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. In the call, Rubio criticized the Chinese military's "coercive actions" in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

The Chinese military recently conducted military exercises around Taiwan. Meanwhile, the Trump administration has stepped up its efforts to contain China, viewing its coercive behavior as having reached a dangerous level.

Its latest update to the State Department's website probably has the same objective. The Trump administration is not aiming for "Taiwan independence."

### **Deterring Coercion in Favor of Peace**

Regarding the issue of China and Taiwan, the website states, "We expect cross-Strait differences to be resolved by peaceful means, free from coercion, in a manner acceptable to the people on both sides of the Strait." This is clearer than the equivalent statement posted during the Biden administration.

China considers the Lai Ching-te administration in Taiwan, which rejects annexation by China, to be an "independence faction." There is a risk that China will

step up its interference in Taiwan and unilaterally attempt to change the status quo under the pretext of removing the current government. The Trump administration's stance of not overlooking such attempts is also apparent.

China must not precipitate war in East Asia by attempting to change the status quo by force. Rather, Beijing should strive for peaceful dialogue.

### When China fishes in troubled European waters

23 February 2025, [Deccan Herald](#), Srikanth Kondapalli

Any deep understanding between the US and Russia will erode China's influence at the high table.

Rapid global developments following US President Donald Trump's phone call to his Russian counterpart President Vladimir Putin, Vice President J D Vance's critique at the Munich Security Conference and the US-Russia talks at Riyadh on resolving the Ukraine conflict, sans Ukrainian representation – have all been eroding the edifice built assiduously by China since President Nixon's visit in 1972.

The quick strategic transformation underway and the cataclysmic change it is unleashing is worrying Beijing, given its carefully crafted policies of keeping the US-Russia differences intact through multipolarity and global governance initiatives. Any deep understanding between the US and Russia will erode China's influence at the high table. Under Trump, the US is tearing apart the NATO alliance; he has announced big tariffs and is attempting to expand the US' sphere of influence over Greenland, Canada, Panama Canal and the Gulf of Mexico. These have opened up a Pandora's box on strategic stability that characterised much of the post-Cold War order and that benefited China's expansion of influence.

Even though China formally welcomed Trump's phone call to Putin on February 12 and the subsequent meeting at Riyadh on ending the three-year Russia-Ukraine conflict, there are lurking fears that the strategic ground is slipping away from under its feet given the emerging US-Russia rapprochement. To put some skin in the great game, China has begun a major push in the besieged Europe with leaders on a whirlwind tour, meetings with leaders of Germany, France, Spain and other countries, and deals on bullet trains in the UK and other regions to blunt any "de-risking" strategies and soften the "systemic rivalry" position of Europe. Foreign Minister Wang Yi, addressing the 61st Munich Security Conference on February 14, alluding to "Westlessness", said "some countries believe might makes right and have opened a Pandora's box marked the law of the jungle". Even though Wang was referring to the US "sovereignist" postures recently, the participants are aware of the

militarisation of the South China Sea or the India-China borders.

Speaking to the United Nations Security Council "high-level" meeting on February 18, Wang insisted on to "reinvigorate true multilateralism" but took a dig at the US by stating that "Any act of bullying, trickery or extortion is a flagrant violation of the basic norms of international relations". He also said that any unilateral sanctions that circumvent the Security Council authorisation "lacks legal basis, defies justification and contradicts common sense."

Again, at the G20 foreign ministerial meeting at Johannesburg on February 20, which the US leaders skipped, Wang stated that a "country must not pursue its own security at the expense of the security of other countries". Wang offered Europe to be part of its multi polarisation drive and sync its Belt and Road Initiative with that of the European Union's Global Gateway strategy. Wang offered his Hungarian counterpart that China would be a "trustworthy partner". At one time in April 2022, China even attempted to persuade the EU to take an "independent" position on the Ukraine conflict and on NATO expansion.

European leaders, however, are aware that China's self-serving proposals are not assuring a level-playing field nor any IPR protection for the European companies in the China market. Yet, the drubbing from the US is troubling Europe. Since 1977, China has been eyeing for a share in the European Common market, independent policies of Charles de Gaulle, multipolarity, divergence from the dollar-centred monetary system, trade and investments, and hi-tech collaborations. Today, China and Europe have become one of the largest trading partners to each other, with bilateral trade touching nearly \$600 billion, regardless of European criticism of China on mounting trade deficits, violation of intellectual property rights or espionage cases.

The road for China in Europe is tough though. The EU, for instance, termed in its "Strategic Outlook" on March 12, 2019 that China is a partner for cooperation and negotiation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. Several European countries criticised China for cyber-attacks, rolled back Huawei 5G telecom networks, and decried China's efforts to divide the region through the China + Central and East European countries format. It needs to be seen how China's charm offensive will wean away Europe from the US.

For long, western strategic thought poured resources to build a "democratic" China, castigating at the same time India as "authoritarian" and imposing sanctions that curtailed its growth. The EU even persuaded Russia not to provide cryogenic engines for space launches by India. US-Russia relations are complicated by history, Cold War legacy, persistent proxy wars and complex mechanics of resolving conflict. India,

nevertheless, needs to welcome the new churning out that portends to strategic stability and opens new realignments.

### **China seeks legitimacy from the Dalai Lama**

23 February 2025, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

Tibet and Taiwan have never been unequivocally part of China but Beijing continues to press for this recognition from the Dalai Lama.

China's insistence on having the Dalai Lama recognize Tibet and Taiwan as integral parts of its territory is rooted in a complex interplay of historical narratives, political strategy, and national identity. Despite historical evidence suggesting that Tibet and Taiwan have never been unequivocally part of China, Beijing continues to press for this recognition.

Tibet, with its unique cultural and religious identity, existed as an independent entity before China's occupation in the 1950s. Similarly, Taiwan has a distinct history, having been governed by various powers and remaining separate from mainland China since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. The People's Republic of China (PRC) views the acknowledgment of its claims by the Dalai Lama as a way to legitimize its historical narrative and solidify its territorial ambitions.

China's approach is deeply intertwined with its broader political strategy. By securing the Dalai Lama's recognition, Beijing aims to dismantle the most prominent symbol of Tibetan resistance and neutralize international support for Tibetan autonomy. In the case of Taiwan, the PRC's insistence on "One China" policy remains a cornerstone of its foreign policy, seeking to prevent any moves towards formal Taiwanese independence.

The demand for the Dalai Lama's recognition also fits within China's broader agenda of cultural assimilation. The Chinese government has been systematically integrating Tibetan culture into the Han Chinese mainstream, suppressing Tibetan religious practices, and promoting Mandarin as the dominant language. Recognition from the Dalai Lama would further integrate Tibetan Buddhism under state control, diluting its distinctiveness and merging it into the larger narrative of a unified Chinese identity.

On a geopolitical level, the Dalai Lama's global influence poses a challenge to China's image. His meetings with world leaders and his advocacy for human rights bring attention to China's policies in Tibet. By demanding his recognition of Tibet and Taiwan as part of China, Beijing seeks to undercut his moral authority and diminish his standing in the international community

China's efforts to obtain the Dalai Lama's recognition of Tibet and Taiwan as parts of its territory are driven by a desire to legitimize its claims, suppress separatist sentiments, and integrate diverse cultural identities into a cohesive national framework. This quest reflects the complexities and contradictions inherent in China's approach to territorial integrity and cultural assimilation. As long as the Dalai Lama remains a prominent global figure, Beijing's insistence on his recognition will continue to underscore the ongoing struggle for legitimacy and sovereignty in these contested regions.

### **Dalai Lama's Brother Gyalo Thondup Dies. What It Means For Tibetan Cause**

23 February 2025, [StratNews Global](#), Anukriti

Barry Sautman argues that any return to negotiations would require the Dalai Lama to change his "basic political orientation" and conclude that the "emigre cause ... has no future."

The death of Gyalo Thondup was announced earlier this month. He was elder brother to the Dalai Lama, and for 40 years a trusted conduit to the Chinese, to the Indians and even to the Americans. He worked largely in the shadows, preferring to avoid the limelight, nevertheless you cannot be the Dalai Lama's brother and expect anonymity.

As the Hong Kong based South China Morning Post (SCMP) noted, quoting Robert Barnett of the School of Oriental & African Studies in London ...

"It (Thondup's death) has brought China's leaders ever closer to the point where there are no Tibetan, Mongolian or other non-Chinese leaders alive who can personally remind the Communist Party of the promises of autonomy and cultural tolerance it made to them in the 1950s and sometimes again in the late 1970s, but has since discarded."

Case in point is China's refusal to acknowledge a crucial statement made to Gyalo Thondup by the late General Secretary Deng Xiaoping who had said "Except independence (for Tibet) everything is negotiable."

China says Deng's statement is absent in its records and Chinese Tibetologists say there is nothing in their archives either.

Gyalo Thondup also represented a view that is not popular among Tibet's exiled community. The SCMP quotes Prof Barry Sautman of the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, that Thondup believed no progress could be made in terms of dialogue with China as long as the Tibetan exiles maintained that "Tibet has never been part of China," for this he was sidelined by the exiles.

Sautman argues that any return to negotiations would require the Dalai Lama to change his "basic political

orientation” and conclude that the “emigre cause ... has no future.”

That line of thinking is anathema to the current Tibetan leadership in exile. But what happens after this leadership passes including the Dalai Lama?

Tibet watchers say many Tibetans have moved to the West, cannot communicate well in Mandarin, and have no experience of direct engagement with Beijing. What about the US? Last July the US passed the Resolve Tibet Act which seeks to foster without preconditions, dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama and to explore activities that could improve the prospects for a negotiated settlement on Tibet.

It came on the back of other legislation, Tibet policy and Support Act 2019, and the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act 2018. But other than seeking to leverage Tibet to embarrass China, it's not clear what Washington's plans for Tibet are.

In this context is Thondup's interview broadcast on Radio Free Asia in 2003, where he underscored that neither the US nor India could resolve the Tibetan issue. In fact, Thondup deeply regretted relying on US promises of Tibetan independence.

As he noted in his memoirs of *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong*, “In all my life I have only one regret, my involvement with the CIA ... it only sought to stir up trouble and use Tibetans to create misunderstandings and discord between China and India.”

### **Op-Ed: China is Getting Stronger, But Taiwan Invasion in 2025 is Unlikely**

23 February 2025, [The Maritime Executive](#), Joe Keary

Despite China's rapid military improvements, it's unlikely to use large-scale force against Taiwan in 2025. The Chinese leadership's concerns over the quality of military command, economic weakening, uncertain social stability, and effects of the Trump administration will likely forestall any large-scale military maneuver.

However, China will continue to ramp up pressure against Taiwan in 2025.

On January 6, the United States' new defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, told the Senate Armed Services Committee he believed a Chinese Communist Party fait accompli invasion of Taiwan was the pacing risk scenario for the Department of Defense. He reminded the committee that “Xi Jinping has openly expressed his intention to annex Taiwan to mainland China” and “has told his military to be prepared to use force to achieve such an outcome by 2027.”

Like its successes in artificial intelligence, improvements in China's military should not be underestimated. In several areas, China's military is now reaching standards typical of the US military.

China's navy is transforming rapidly and by the end of 2025 is expected to have 395 ships, including three operational aircraft carriers. China is also improving its amphibious fleet, acquiring assault ships that can carry large numbers of landing craft, troops, fixed-wing drones, armored vehicles, and helicopters. In early 2025, there were reports of China building special barges that would support Taiwan landings.

China's military now has the largest aviation force in the region, with new fighters and stealth aircraft that expand its ability to operate farther from its shores. It is also increasing its inventory of nuclear weapons and now has the world's leading arsenal of hypersonic missiles. The army has increased the number of troops along the Taiwan Strait and improved its firepower, mobility, and rapid strike capabilities.

Throughout 2024, China's military and coast guard continued to exercise Taiwan invasion and blockade scenarios. In May, following the inauguration of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te, Beijing launched large-scale military exercises, surrounding Taiwan within two days. In October, it undertook a second series of drills, taking just one day to implement a mock blockade or quarantine of Taiwan. In December, China staged its largest show of force in decades, showing the world how it could repel a foreign force approaching Taiwan.

The military has dramatically improved its ability to conduct a blockade or invasion, but Beijing will still have doubts. During the release of the 2024 China Military Power Report, senior Pentagon officials said, “despite its rapid progress, the force has not yet demonstrated the type and scale of sophisticated urban warfare or long-distance logistic capabilities that would likely be required for operations against Taiwan.” A lack of combat experience is a significant imposition for a force wanting to undertake complicated operations across the Taiwan Strait. Exercising will only get you so far.

Serious questions have also been asked about China's officer corps and their ability to ‘judge situations, understand higher authorities’ intentions, make operational decisions, deploy troops, and deal with unexpected situations’. Corruption also remains an endemic issue, with China's military experiencing a new wave of corruption-related scandals over the past two years that has led to the removal of two defense ministers and a high-ranking member of China's Central Military Commission.

Domestic factors will also influence any decision to use military force. China is facing adverse demographic trends, including an aging population and low birth rates. There are other internal struggles, such as a trend of rising violence, following a string of indiscriminate mass attacks throughout 2024.

China is also seeking to manage a faltering economy, worsened by ballooning local government debt, a loss

of investor confidence and the gradual collapse of its real estate sector. Beijing has struggled to stimulate domestic consumption, relying on its growing share of global exports to drive the economy. Researchers at Rhodium Group estimated that China's GDP was only 2.4 to 2.8 percent higher in 2024 than a year earlier, well below the official claim of 5.0 percent growth.

China's trade surplus reached a new high of nearly US\$1 trillion in 2024. Beijing will be wary of the impact of a potential trade war with the United States. It will want to strengthen its trade relationships with other partners to reinforce its economy. China has already sought to recalibrate ties with Japan, India and Australia, while doubling down on its engagement with the Global South. Within this context, China will want to perform a careful balancing act over Taiwan. It will not want to damage international relationships by taking unnecessarily aggressive military actions.

Amid the problems, the leadership nonetheless probably has growing confidence that, if called upon, the military will be able to 'resolve the Taiwan issue'. However, Xi probably hasn't yet decided to use force against Taiwan.

2027 almost certainly remains a short-term goal for military modernization, not a date for a Taiwan invasion. Concerns over the economy and social stability will remain as key priorities for China's leadership.

Xi will also want to carefully assess the Trump administration's resolve on the Taiwan issue. Trump has hinted at a more transactional approach to Taiwan, suggesting it contribute more to its own security while still supporting Taipei's right to self-defense. Trump is already threatening tariffs on Taiwan's semiconductors.

In 2025, China's military will continue to undertake exercises around Taiwan as part of a broader coercion campaign against Taipei. However, the likelihood of large-scale use of force against Taiwan in 2025 remains low.

### **India's Growing US Ties And Its Impact On China Relations – OpEd**

22 February 2025, [Eurasia Review](#), Altaf Moti

India's growing closeness with the United States has significant implications for its relationship with China, shaping the geopolitical landscape of Asia and beyond. As New Delhi strengthens its ties with Washington, concerns arise regarding the potential for increased tensions with Beijing. This dynamic is influenced by various factors, including military cooperation, economic strategies, and regional security considerations.

#### **Military Cooperation and Strategic Alignments**

The deepening military cooperation between India and the U.S. is a central element of their burgeoning partnership. This includes joint military exercises, defense technology transfers, and intelligence sharing, which enhance India's capabilities to counter Chinese assertiveness in the region. The U.S. has positioned itself as a reliable partner for India, especially in times of crisis, as demonstrated during recent border tensions with China. This support has bolstered India's confidence in confronting Chinese aggression, leading to a more assertive stance along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

However, this military alignment also provokes a strong reaction from China. Beijing perceives the U.S.-India partnership as a direct threat to its regional influence and security interests. Chinese analysts have expressed concerns that India's increasing military capabilities, supported by the U.S., could lead to a strategic encirclement of China. Consequently, China may respond by enhancing its military presence along its borders with India and increasing its support for Pakistan, further complicating the security dynamics in South Asia.

#### **Economic Implications**

Economically, India's alignment with the U.S. presents both opportunities and challenges in its relationship with China. The U.S. seeks to diversify supply chains away from China, and India is positioned as a potential alternative manufacturing hub. This shift could benefit India's economy by attracting foreign investment and creating jobs. However, it also risks exacerbating tensions with China, which may view these developments as an attempt to undermine its economic standing.

China has historically leveraged its economic influence in South Asia through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has strengthened its ties with neighboring countries. As India aligns more closely with the U.S., it may find itself at odds with these Chinese-led initiatives, leading to further economic competition between the two nations.

#### **Technology and Supply Chain Dynamics**

The U.S.-India partnership emphasizes technology cooperation, particularly in sectors like defense and cybersecurity. As India seeks to attract American investment in technology sectors such as semiconductors, it faces the challenge of competing against China's established supply chains. The potential for U.S.-India collaboration in critical technologies could bolster India's position but may also lead to increased competition with China in global markets. Beijing is likely to respond by enhancing its own technological capabilities and seeking alternative partnerships.

#### **The Role of Global Actors**

The evolving dynamic between India, the U.S., and China is not isolated; it affects other global actors as



well. For instance, Russia has historically maintained strong ties with both India and China. As India aligns more closely with the U.S., Moscow may seek to leverage its relationships to maintain influence in South Asia while also benefiting from China's economic growth. This triadic relationship complicates India's strategic calculations as it navigates its partnerships while being mindful of Russia's interests.

### **Regional Security Dynamics**

The strategic rivalry between India and China is further complicated by regional security dynamics. China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean poses a direct challenge to India's traditional dominance in the region. The U.S.-India partnership aims to counterbalance China's maritime ambitions through initiatives like the Quad—a strategic alliance involving Japan and Australia focused on ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.

This increased collaboration among Quad members signals a collective effort to address shared concerns about China's assertiveness. However, it may also provoke Beijing to intensify its own maritime activities, leading to heightened tensions in contested waters. The potential for miscalculations or confrontations in these areas underscores the fragility of peace in the region.

### **Diplomatic Maneuvering**

Despite these tensions, both India and China have expressed interest in managing their bilateral relations amid their respective alignments with the U.S. However, this balancing act is precarious; any significant warming of relations between India and the U.S. could prompt China to adopt a more aggressive posture towards India.

Moreover, India's historical ties with Russia complicate this dynamic further. As India navigates its relationship with the U.S., it must also consider its longstanding partnership with Moscow, which remains critical for defense procurement and energy supplies. The interplay between these relationships will shape India's foreign policy choices moving forward.

In conclusion, India's growing closeness with the United States significantly impacts its relationship with China across military, economic, and diplomatic dimensions. While this partnership enhances India's capabilities and positions it as a key player in countering Chinese influence in Asia, it also invites greater scrutiny and potential retaliation from Beijing.

### **The U.S. and Europe's role in supporting India to counter China**

22 February 2025, [Modern Diplomacy](#), Gerald Walker

*This month marked the 5th anniversary of the Pulwama-Balakot Crisis and the 3rd anniversary of the*

*Indo-Pak ceasefire agreement on the Line of Control (LoC).*

This month marked the 5th anniversary of the Pulwama-Balakot Crisis and the 3rd anniversary of the Indo-Pak ceasefire agreement on the Line of Control (LoC).

While the Pulwama-Balakot Crisis brought the two nuclear-armed neighbors perilously close to a catastrophe, the Indo-Pak ceasefire agreement brought about a temporary end to violence on the most militarized boundary in the world. Unfortunately, neither the nuclear-tinged crisis nor the ceasefire agreement portends better days ahead for Indo-Pak relations.

This is not the first ceasefire agreement as both countries have made four attempts to achieve quiet along the LoC since 2000. The result of these efforts shows that while it does provide relief to civilians on both sides of the LoC, any ceasefire is unlikely to be sufficient to achieve enduring peace between the two countries.

These two incidents are significant aspects of the Indo-Pakistani relationship. In the short term, according to experts, we should not expect a breakthrough in relations between the two countries.

The border region connecting China, Pakistan, and India is one of the most complicated and unstable geopolitical areas in the world, characterized by ongoing territorial disputes stemming from historical conflicts, as well as contemporary military buildups.

What are the perceived threats? And what roles do the United States and Europe play in this region?

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Liu Jianchao, head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, in Beijing recently to discuss bilateral ties, including political and economic issues. Talks addressed the LAC dispute, people-to-people exchanges, and unresolved tensions following the Ladakh standoff.

In October 2024, India achieved a diplomatic win after it convinced China to return to the patrolling agreements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh that was in place before the Galwan clashes in April 2020.

Given both sides' deployments and infrastructure improvements, the presence of troops only highlighted the prospect of military conflict.

There are conflicting claims of sovereignty because the LAC, which divides China's and India's borders, is not clearly defined in many places. What makes the LAC distinguishable from the LoC is that the former has a buffer zone.

The Indian and Chinese armies patrol their respective border maintaining a certain distance from each other. On the other hand, Indian and Pakistani forces are always face to face on either sides of the LoC.

Key disputes include the Aksai Chin region (controlled by China but claimed by India) and Arunachal Pradesh (administered by India but claimed by China as “South Tibet”).

In the meantime, tensions along the India-Pakistan border still exist in the Jammu and Kashmir region, where India administers most of the territory while Pakistan controls portions of it. Parts of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) cross Indian-claimed territory, adding to the complexity of Pakistan’s expanding relations with China.

China’s control over Aksai Chin and Pakistan’s administration of Gilgit-Baltistan form part of their ongoing strategy to counterbalance what they perceive as India’s negative influence in South Asia.

On the flipside, India’s military expansion is shaped by what *it* perceives as dual threats from China and Pakistan.

Both India and China view their military buildups as necessary to protect their sovereignty, ensure regional dominance, and deter adversaries.

India has concerns about Chinese assertiveness along the LAC, including infrastructure projects and military patrols. India is also countering China’s influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), where China is increasing its naval presence and close ties with Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Myanmar.

At the same time, India is concerned about persistent cross-border terrorism and Pakistan’s use of militant proxies. For India, the possibility of a two-front war, with simultaneous pressure from China and Pakistan, remains a tangible threat.

For this reason, India is actively modernizing its armed forces with advanced weapons systems. It is also strengthening border infrastructure to support rapid troop deployment and expanding partnerships with the U.S., France, and Israel for defense technology and intelligence sharing.

Of course, China is not sitting by idly. Its military strategy is focused on reinforcing its position as a global power and securing its borders.

China views India’s growing partnerships with the U.S. (e.g., QUAD alliance) as an attempt to contain it, and India’s development of border infrastructure along the LAC challenges China’s territorial claims.

As part of its concerns, China is securing Tibet and Xinjiang by controlling disputed border regions, protecting its investments in South Asia and the Indian Ocean under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and establishing military superiority in the South China Sea and beyond.

India’s rationale is to counter China’s growing influence in the region, deter Pakistan from engaging in asymmetric warfare, and assert itself as a regional and global power.

China’s aim is to secure its borders and territorial claims, safeguard its economic corridors and trade

routes, maintain regional dominance, and challenge U.S.-led alliances.

All this points to the necessity of the United States and Europe to remain active in the region.

The U.S. and India have significantly strengthened security ties in recent years. Washington, which supports New Delhi as part of its Indo-Pacific Strategy to counter China, must continue to watch the region closely and maintain an active role.

Europe, particularly France and the UK, plays a secondary but significant role by selling arms to India. European nations are concerned about maintaining freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific and have occasionally supported India’s stance against Chinese aggression.

At the same time, Germany and other EU countries are advocating for de-escalation and a multilateral solution. The U.S. and Europe are key external players, and while they primarily support India to balance China’s rise, they must urge de-escalation. The region’s future depends on diplomacy, dialogue, and the careful management of tensions on each side.

### Taiwan May Already Be Lost To China

21 February 2025, [The National Interest](#), Brandon J. Weichert

***There’s little chance at this point the Trump administration could effectively roll back China’s immense gains in the First Island Chain.***

China has been methodically expanding its reach and influence beyond its borders, fixating like a laser on dominating what is referred to as the “three island chains”—radiating from the Chinese coastline all the way to the Hawaiian Islands.

For years, those China watchers who were skeptical of Beijing’s professed benign intentions watched warily as China, using trade as the gateway for dominating the Indo-Pacific, expanded without much of a challenge from the Pacific’s main power, the United States.

### The Failed Pivot to Asia

For over a decade, China steadily grew its presence in the Indo-Pacific, while the Americans vacantly looked on.

Former President Barack Obama made a great show of “pivoting” to Asia in the late 2000s—yet this ambition was quickly subsumed by the Arab Spring in the Middle East, followed by the eventual Russian annexation of Crimea and the start of the Ukraine conflict in 2014.

President Trump strove to correct this Obama-era failure. But he too, was unable to truly pivot to Asia.

And the Biden administration made another public display of standing against China, but it, too, ultimately failed to pivot following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Now, Donald Trump is back in office, and has the opportunity to try again. It appears that he is more disciplined than he was in his first term, and is allowing for the Pentagon to follow through on its desire to reconstitute old World War II-era bomber bases throughout the South Pacific in order to reestablish a firmer American geopolitical footing in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### **U.S. Forces Back at Tinian For the First Time Since WWII**

Joseph Trevithick of *The War Zone* reports that “satellite imagery shows the dramatic restoration of Tinian Island’s historic North Field” by the United States military—in an obvious bid to create a beachhead in the second of the three island chains. That article was published shortly after the *Financial Times* reported a dramatic show of Chinese naval power 172 miles off the coast of Sydney, Australia—considered to be part of that Second Island Chain.

These developments are key to understand. What it indicates is that, on some level, the battle for the First Island Chain may be over even before it is fought. And China is the *de facto* victor—simply because the United States and its allies will be unable to prevent it from winning.

#### **What are the Island Chains?**

The First Island Chain is a string of archipelagos in the Pacific Ocean that start at the Kamchatka Peninsula and run south to the Malay Peninsula. Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia sit in between.

The Second Island Chain is a grouping of islands in the Western Pacific Ocean that include the Bonin Islands, Volcano Islands, Mariana Islands, and Caroline Islands. Australia serves as the strategic lynchpin linking the second and third island chains.

Lastly, the Third Island Chain begins north in Alaska’s Aleutian Islands, is centered around Hawaii, and runs south to New Zealand.

#### **China Already Dominates the First Island Chain**

As of 2025, China functionally controls the South China Sea (SCS) with their advanced anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) systems. Using these systems, Beijing’s forces can exert dominance relatively easily over the Taiwan Strait, along with competing for control over the East China Sea and beyond. If China decided to invade or, more probably, blockade Taiwan right now, the People’s Liberation Army could do this. And their strategy of regional denial would likely stymie America’s efforts to relieve the beleaguered island.

The Pentagon understands this—and it seems to *finally* be taking the pivot to Asia seriously. But the Defense Department is focusing on establishing its position in the Second Island Chain.

That could mean that the U.S. military simply wants to reinforce its position in the contested First Island Chain. But it could also represent a reworking of its overall defense strategy for containing China’s

unwanted growth in the Indo-Pacific—in the likely event that Beijing truly does try to absorb at least the beating heart of the First Island Chain, Taiwan.

#### **Washington Focuses on Second Island Chain Because It Already Lost the First Island Chain**

Big changes are afoot in the region. America is going to fight harder and commit more resources to holding on to its diminishing stance in the Indo-Pacific after years of benign neglect.

Sadly, there’s little chance at this point the Trump administration could effectively roll back China’s immense gains in the First Island Chain. While they’d never admit it publicly, the probability is great that fixating on the Second Island Chain is their attempt to bottle Chinese power to the First Island Chain only.

#### **China’s Silent Takeover? How Beijing’s Intelligence Network Is Encroaching On Islamabad’s Security And Remaining Sovereignty – Analysis**

20 February 2025, [Eurasia Review](#), Aritra Banerjee

For decades, Pakistan has viewed China as an all-weather friend, a strategic counterweight to India, and a reliable economic partner. But behind the public displays of camaraderie, a growing web of Chinese intelligence operations and strategic manoeuvring is reshaping the country’s security and sovereignty in ways few had anticipated.

China’s Ministry of State Security (MSS) is at the heart of this shift, an intelligence agency whose activities in Pakistan have intensified over the past few years. Reports suggest that MSS has not only established a covert presence but may have struck clandestine deals with separatist rebels in Balochistan—an arrangement that has led to a cessation of attacks on Chinese nationals in the region. If true, this signals unprecedented Chinese influence over Pakistan’s internal affairs.

#### **Beijing’s Expanding Intelligence Footprint**

The growing role of MSS in Pakistan is not surprising, given Beijing’s mounting security concerns over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a \$62 billion infrastructure initiative that has faced relentless militant attacks. Last November, following a wave of targeted bombings and shootings against Chinese workers, Beijing and Islamabad announced an expansion of their intelligence-sharing framework.

The MSS has reportedly been working closely with Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to bolster counter-terrorism efforts. The collaboration extends beyond intelligence-sharing—Chinese operatives are believed to be actively tracking militant movements, assessing threats, and formulating countermeasures. However, a more shadowy dimension to these operations has begun to surface.

#### **A Secret Deal with Baloch Separatists?**

Perhaps the most striking revelation is the alleged covert agreement between MSS and Baloch separatist groups. For years, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) has targeted Chinese personnel and infrastructure, opposing what it sees as Beijing's exploitation of local resources. But recent reports indicate that attacks on Chinese nationals have mysteriously ceased, even as violence persists in other parts of Pakistan.

"There is growing evidence that China has opened indirect communication channels with Baloch rebel groups," said a former Pakistani military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "The goal is clear—neutralise threats to CPEC without relying solely on Pakistan's fragile security apparatus." If these claims hold weight, they point to a fundamental shift in Beijing's security strategy: bypassing the Pakistani state and directly managing threats to its interests.

#### **Karachi: A New Chinese Intelligence Hub?**

Meanwhile, another development has raised eyebrows. Former Pakistani military officer Adil Raja has claimed that China is planning to set up an intelligence facility in Karachi's Defence Housing Society—a posh neighbourhood home to high-ranking Pakistani officials and expatriates. According to Raja, the facility will house a command-and-control centre operated by MSS, a 1,000-bed hospital and advanced communication infrastructure.

Pakistan's government has not confirmed these reports, but if true, they would signal a deepening of Chinese control over the country's intelligence landscape. Such a facility would give Beijing an unparalleled foothold to monitor regional developments, from political shifts in Islamabad to movements of U.S. and Indian naval forces in the Arabian Sea.

#### **China's Frustration with Pakistan's Military Leadership**

Despite its growing clout, China's relations with Pakistan's military establishment have not been entirely smooth. General Asim Munir, Pakistan's current Army Chief, is reportedly viewed with scepticism in Beijing. According to sources cited by Arab News, Chinese officials believe Munir's strategic priorities have been at odds with Beijing's interests, particularly regarding CPEC security.

China's dissatisfaction is further brought out by recent reports suggesting that Beijing is keen on recruiting retired Pakistani military officers to serve as a private security force for its operations. If it materialises, this move would reflect an evident mistrust of Pakistan's ability or willingness to protect Chinese assets.

#### **What are the Geopolitical Ramifications?**

The implications of China's intelligence expansion in Pakistan extend beyond bilateral ties. The growing Chinese presence in Karachi and Gwadar for India raises security concerns, particularly regarding

Beijing's long-term naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, the United States, which has been strengthening its security cooperation with India and the broader Indo-Pacific, will likely view these developments with alarm.

For Pakistan, the situation presents a paradox. While Chinese investment remains vital for economic stability, an increasingly assertive Beijing threatens to erode Islamabad's autonomy. If China is indeed bypassing Pakistani institutions to secure its interests, the long-held notion of a balanced partnership may soon give way to a more one-sided relationship where Pakistan is a client state.

#### **A Precarious Future**

As President Xi Jinping prepares for a possible visit to Pakistan, analysts expect major announcements on security cooperation and infrastructure projects. Whether these will include formal recognition of MSS operations remains to be seen. However, one thing is clear: China's intelligence game in Pakistan is no longer covert. It is evolving into an overt strategic manoeuvre that could redefine South Asia's power dynamics for years to come.

#### **Exporting Culture, Cementing Control: How the CCP Pursues Domestic Legitimacy Through Soft Power**

20 February 2025, [The Diplomat](#), Gu Bin

By strategically aligning soft power expansion with a revival of traditional culture, the Chinese government leverages successes like "Ne Zha 2" to enhance its domestic political legitimacy.

On February 17, the Chinese animated film "Ne Zha 2" took its place among the top 10 highest-grossing films of all time, with its global box office haul at \$1.66 billion and climbing. This milestone followed the global success of the video game "Black Myth: Wukong." Both are emblematic of China's accelerating cultural exports and expanding soft power.

Domestically, such successes resonate deeply within a society undergoing a state-driven cultural rejuvenation, cultivating a strong culture-centric nationalism. By strategically aligning soft power expansion with this revival of traditional culture, the Chinese government leverages symbolic achievements to enhance its domestic political legitimacy. As China continues to integrate culture into its global strategy, this interplay between external recognition and internal legitimacy will remain central to its pursuit of soft power.

#### **Cultivating a Cultural Rejuvenation at Home**

Despite the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s historical campaigns against traditional culture, Xi Jinping's leadership has placed culture at the core of China's great rejuvenation plan. Xi actively embraces Chinese traditional culture, reframing the preservation

and development of excellent traditional culture as the party's mission.

This shift is evident in the CCP's evolving ideological framework. On July 1, 2016, during the 95th anniversary celebration of the party's founding, Xi notably added "Confidence in Culture" to the established "Three Confidences" introduced at the 18th Party Congress, thus formulating the "Four Confidences." This marked an explicit elevation of cultural identity within the CCP's legitimacy discourse, blurring the boundary of culture and ideology.

More recently, Xi's Thought on Culture was formally introduced during the National Conference on Propaganda, Ideological and Cultural Work in October 2023. While the ideological foundation remains deeply rooted in party doctrine, its practical implementation has increasingly emphasized the revival and promotion of traditional Chinese culture over communist ideological narratives. Underscoring the role of traditional culture in Chinese-style modernization, Beijing suggests that this legacy should be reinvigorated to fuel contemporary national development.

Within this framework, a surge in cultural enthusiasm has become evident across Chinese society. One example is the popularity of Han clothing (*hanfu*), particularly among the younger generation. In 2023, the number of registered Han clothing-related enterprises in China increased by 355.25 percent year-on-year, with the market size exceeding 14.4 billion yuan. The Chinese Hanfu market is expected to continue to grow, reaching a predicted 24.28 billion yuan by 2027.

This cultural resurgence also reinforces a culture-centric nationalism, where pride in Chinese heritage increasingly defines national identity. For instance, many Chinese take great pride in seeing foreigners wearing traditional Chinese attire, such as the Mamian skirt, or participating in cultural festivities. While foreign appreciation of Chinese traditions is celebrated, reverse cultural exchanges – such as Chinese individuals wearing Japanese kimonos – often provoke nationalist backlash. Similarly, while international adoption of Chinese holidays is welcomed, the domestic celebration of Western festivals like Christmas frequently sparks criticism, with some schools and local governments discouraging or even banning such observances.

The social media landscape further amplifies these dynamics. Trending videos of foreigners eating Chinese cuisine or traveling across China generate significant online traffic in China, reinforcing the narrative of Chinese culture's global appeal. These trends illustrate how cultural nationalism is not merely state-imposed but also reinforced by popular

sentiment, shaping both domestic identity and China's outward projection of soft power.

### **Expanding Culture Influence Abroad to Build a Great Power Image at Home**

Against the backdrop, China has been actively expanding its cultural influence abroad through two key tactics: deepening engagement with international institutions and promoting the global export of cultural products. These efforts are not only aimed at enhancing China's soft power on the world stage but also at reinforcing its great power image domestically. The increasing interaction with international institutions particularly materialized through heritage diplomacy and holding international conferences. By becoming the largest contributor to UNESCO, China has systematically elevated its civilizational stature. As of 2024, China has 44 items on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List and 57 UNESCO World Heritage sites, making it the first and second most enlisted country in the world. Domestic media often portrayed China's leading role in heritage conservation, linking international recognition to domestic cultural pride. U.N. recognition of Chinese culture – UNESCO's 2024 recognition of the Chinese New Year, for instance – is celebrated not only as a contribution to world cultural heritage but also as a diplomatic victory.

Concurrently, China has institutionalized its influence through platforms such as the Beijing Culture Forum, the Nishan Forum on World Civilization, and other multilateral forums, promoting "cultural connectivity" under its leadership. Additionally, in 2023, Xi introduced the Global Civilization Initiative, aiming to showcase China's capability to provide public goods to the international community.

The second strategy revolves around the global export of Chinese cultural products, attempting to merge market success with ideological validation. The success of films such as "Ne Zha" and "The Wandering Earth" highlights China's growing ability to shape global entertainment markets. In the gaming industry, "Genshin Impact" and "Black Myth: Wukong" have gained massive international followings, bringing Chinese mythology and aesthetics to a global audience.

The 2024 Report on the Chinese Cultural Symbols International Communication Index (CSIC) pointed out that traditional culture is experiencing a resurgence among China's exported cultural products. These commercial achievements are leveraged domestically as proof that China's cultural industries are no longer confined to national borders but are actively influencing global cultural trends.

More importantly, the export of cultural products also has an economic motivation. The development of China's cultural industry is also driving the development of related industries, such as cultural

tourism, catering, and film and television. This becomes critical for China against the domestic backdrop of an economic slowdown and a pivot toward the so-called “new productive forces.”

### Conclusion

However, while these cultural exports enhance China’s international image, their greatest impact is within China itself. The CCP strategically presents these successes as validation of China’s civilizational strength, reinforcing domestic nationalism and consolidating its legitimacy. The more China’s cultural products are embraced abroad, the stronger the perception that China’s influence is expanding. Through these efforts, China’s cultural diplomacy serves a dual purpose: strengthening its international image while simultaneously deepening domestic confidence in its role as a great power. As China continues to integrate culture into its global strategy, this interplay between external recognition and internal legitimacy will remain central to its pursuit of soft power.

In addition, the extent to which China’s cultural diplomacy can garner foreign support remains uncertain. The success of U.S. soft power, for example, is not solely built on Hollywood but also on a broader spectrum of values, such as human rights and democracy. While China argues that its cultural products convey universal values, such as hard work, family ties, and friendship, it remains unclear how these products can translate into effective soft power.

### China’s propaganda AI chatbot DeepSeek headed for TikTok’s fate?

20 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#)

*DeepSeek*, China’s propaganda AI chatbot, appears to be headed for the fate of the country’s *TikTok* short video app – highly popular among ordinary folks, but restricted from use on government devices, with likelihood of being banned nationwide for endangering national security and over privacy concerns.

The data privacy and security concerns raised over *DeepSeek* use and the ban that followed in South Korea and other countries echoes the fate that *TikTok*, another Chinese app, met in several countries, reported *indiatoday.in* Feb 18.

*DeepSeek*, which became the most downloaded app in the US to surpass *ChatGPT*, has been lauded for its speed, efficiency, and mighty reasoning skills. But the open-source generative AI model has now landed in hot waters with countries raising the same concerns they had with *TikTok*.

The report noted that *TikTok*, a video-creating platform which turned many normal people into social media influencers and stars even bigger than movie

celebrities, has faced a similar ban in India and other countries over security concerns. A decision on its future in the United States is pending after President Donald Trump ordered a 75-day pause on the ban’s enforcement to determine if he could work out a deal to have ByteDance, *TikTok*’s parent company, divest from the app. Countries like Taiwan, Canada, Pakistan, New Zealand have either banned the app or restricted its use.

South Korea announced Feb 17 that it was banning the Chinese alternative to *ChatGPT* over national security concerns, becoming only the latest country to do so, albeit temporarily.

Countries that consider *DeepSeek* ban have raised national security concerns over fears that its AI models could be used by the Chinese government to spy on people in their countries, learn proprietary secrets, and wage influence campaigns.

There are also concerns over data collection. The company’s privacy policy states that it automatically collects a slew of input data from its users, including IP addresses and keystroke patterns, and may use that to train their models. Users’ personal information is stated to be stored in “secure servers located in the People’s Republic of China.”

“*DeepSeek* could pose a greater threat to national security than *TikTok*”, the report quoted Allie Mellen, a senior analyst with Forrester, as saying. She has pointed out that *DeepSeek*’s privacy policy explicitly states it can collect “your text or audio input, prompt, uploaded files, feedback, chat history, or other content” and use it for training purposes.

“It also states it can share this information with law enforcement agencies, public authorities, and so forth at its discretion, and that any information collected is stored in China,” she has told *TechNewsWorld*.

Rich Vibert, CEO of Metomic, a data privacy and security software company, has noted that while both *DeepSeek* and *TikTok* raise concerns about data security, their risks are distinct.

“Concerns around *TikTok* focus on the scale of data collection, with fears around where and how that data is stored,” he has explained. “*DeepSeek*, however, represents a more targeted risk, as it appears to be designed to identify and exploit vulnerabilities on a massive scale.”

*DeepSeek* is also faulted for misinformation, censorship, and propaganda. The report said several users were alarmed to find that *DeepSeek*’s R1 refuses to answer questions about certain topics like the 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square, and asserts that Taiwan is a part of China. Some American leaders have raised concerns about *DeepSeek* being used to promote Chinese values and political aims—or wielded as a tool for espionage or cyberattacks.

“This technology, if unchecked, has the potential to feed disinformation campaigns, erode public trust,

and entrench authoritarian narratives within our democracies,” Ross Burley, co-founder of the nonprofit Centre for Information Resilience, has told *TIME*.

Many experts have noted that the app echoes *TikTok* ban as it raises privacy and security risks.

“This has the echoes of the *TikTok* ban: there are legitimate privacy and security risks with the way these companies are operating,” Ben Winters, the director of AI and data privacy at the Consumer Federation of America, has said.

South Korea suspended new downloads of *DeepSeek* due to concerns over personal data protection.

In the USA, lawmakers have proposed a bill to ban *DeepSeek* from federal devices over surveillance concerns. At the state level, Texas, Virginia, and New York have already implemented similar restrictions for government employees, the report noted.

At the federal level, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt has said in her first press briefing that the National Security Council was “looking into” the potential security implications of *DeepSeek*. This followed the news that the US Navy had banned its use among its ranks due to “potential security and ethical concerns.”

Australia banned *DeepSeek* from all government devices and systems in the first week of February over the security risk the Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) startup poses.

Taiwan has also blocked government departments from using *DeepSeek* programmes, citing security and other risks.

The report concluded that even as China continues to defend *DeepSeek* and encourages its use, the chatbot seems on path to meet the same fate as *TikTok* amid emerging national security and data privacy concerns.

### LAC Stalemate: Why China Fears Fighting In The Himalayas – Analysis

20 February 2025, [Eurasia Review](#), Anitra Banerjee

The towering peaks of the Himalayas form more than just a geographical barrier between India and China; they represent a formidable military challenge. The Line of Actual Control (LAC), where the two nations’ troops stand eye to eye, presents some of the harshest conditions known to warfare. For China, these mountains are more than a border—they are a battleground for which it remains unprepared. **The Terrain That Tests Resolve**

The LAC’s rugged terrain and extreme altitude impose logistical nightmares. Sustained military operations here require highly skilled soldiers and a robust support infrastructure. At elevations where oxygen levels drop by 40 percent at 15,000 feet, combat

effectiveness declines sharply. These conditions are an unfamiliar adversary for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), whose training largely focuses on plains and urban warfare.

In contrast, the Indian Army’s history is steeped in high-altitude warfare. Decades of deployment in Siachen—the world’s highest battlefield—and the gruelling Kargil conflict at 16,000 to 18,000 feet altitudes have honed Indian soldiers into specialists in mountain combat. The Kargil War, fought on steep, rocky terrain under extreme weather, remains a testament to India’s unmatched resilience and skill in these unforgiving environments.

### Infrastructure: India’s Operational Edge

A modern war is fought not just with weapons but with roads, bridges, and airstrips. India’s focused efforts to enhance border infrastructure have paid dividends. Strategic projects, from advanced airstrips to all-weather roads, have cut troop deployment times drastically. The Indian Air Force (IAF) has operational bases in Leh, Chandigarh, Bagdogra, Tezpur, and Hasimara—much closer to the LAC than China’s facilities. With Rafale fighter jets and S-400 missile systems now in its arsenal, India’s rapid-response capabilities are unmatched.

Meanwhile, though expanding, China’s infrastructure in Tibet continues to lag. The absence of highways, railways, and airfields capable of sustaining large-scale military operations limits Beijing’s options. Heavy artillery and tanks—essential for prolonged ground operations—are of limited use in such inhospitable terrains, further diminishing China’s ability to mount an offensive.

### Acclimatised and Armed: India’s Military Readiness

India’s advantage is not solely infrastructural. The Indian Army’s long-standing mountain divisions undergo rigorous acclimatisation and training, making them battle-ready at short notice. Strategic positions along key heights in eastern Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh give India control over vital observation and mobility routes. Sophisticated surveillance systems—including drones, satellites, and advanced radar—ensure that Chinese troop movements are detected long before they pose a threat.

Recent studies by the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Center for a New American Security reaffirm India’s operational superiority in high-altitude warfare. These assessments underline that while China may possess numerical superiority, India’s defensive positioning neutralises this advantage.

### The Two-Front Predicament for China

Beijing’s strategic calculus is further complicated by its focus on Taiwan. Taiwan represents not just a territorial claim but a core national interest for China—a geopolitical chess piece that could draw in global powers like the United States and Japan. Engaging in a

prolonged Himalayan conflict risks diluting China's military focus, leaving its flanks vulnerable in the Taiwan Strait.

A two-front scenario would overstretch China's resources and logistics. Balancing the demands of two geographically and strategically distinct conflicts is a challenge the PLA would struggle to manage. India's steady military presence along the LAC ensures that any miscalculation by China could lead to an engagement it cannot sustain.

#### **Quad and Diplomatic Calculations**

India has cultivated robust strategic partnerships, unlike China, which finds itself increasingly isolated in the Indo-Pacific. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)—comprising India, the United States, Japan, and Australia—has emerged as a significant deterrent to Chinese aggression. Regular joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and enhanced defence cooperation with Western allies position India as a linchpin in regional security.

India's influential role in the Indo-Pacific further limits China's strategic manoeuvrability. A conflict with India risks galvanising this emerging coalition, opening up new diplomatic and military resistance fronts for Beijing.

#### **Economic and Diplomatic Repercussions**

The economic stakes are equally high. India-China bilateral trade surpassed \$136 billion in 2023, underscoring deep economic interdependence. However, India has shown a willingness to leverage this relationship when national security is at stake. The ban on over 300 Chinese apps following the Galwan Valley clash inflicted significant losses on Chinese tech giants.

A full-scale conflict would trigger further economic decoupling, with India restricting investments and operations of major Chinese companies. The diplomatic fallout would be equally severe, casting China as an expansionist power at a time when its global image is already under strain due to tensions in the South China Sea and human rights issues in Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

#### **Resilience and Strategy: India's Calculated Posture**

The LAC has been described by top military officials and experts as stable but sensitive. India's sustained deployment along the border and proactive military-to-military dialogues ensure that tensions are managed and do not escalate inadvertently.

India's diplomatic finesse in maintaining global partnerships has further reduced its strategic vulnerabilities. By presenting itself as a responsible power committed to regional stability, India has not only strengthened its own position but also exposed the limitations of China's strategic posture in the Himalayas.

#### **A Stalemate on India's Terms**

China's reluctance to escalate tensions along the LAC is rooted in a complex web of strategic, logistical, and economic considerations. The extreme terrain of the Himalayas, India's superior high-altitude warfare capabilities, infrastructural advantages, and robust diplomatic networks make a full-scale conflict an unpalatable option for Beijing.

By transforming the LAC stalemate into a scenario that exposes Chinese weaknesses rather than one that serves Beijing's territorial ambitions, India has demonstrated that in the heights of the Himalayas, it holds the upper hand—on its own terms and in its own time.

#### **Reading The Tea Leaves on The Recent Border Deal With China**

19 February 2025, [Bharat Shakti](#), Dr. Bhashyam Kasturi

#### **Editor's Note**

*Dealing with China is often a slow and arduous trek, requiring ample patience. The agreement reached in October 2024 is a prime example of this. However, despite this agreement, the perceptions of the two countries of the LAC on the ground do not yet converge, leaving room for transgressions. To ensure peace and tranquillity at the borders, it's crucial to bring the issue of boundary settlement to the forefront and arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. While the current situation may seem challenging, there is potential for positive change in China-LAC relations, inspiring hope and optimism.*

The 21 October 2024 agreement between India and China on disengagements on two flashpoints in Eastern Ladakh is a telling example of how perseverance and commitment can go a long way in resolving tactical issues with Beijing along the border. The disengagement of Chinese and Indian troops from Depsang and Demchok in Eastern Ladakh thus completes the first stage of conflict resolution since 2020. The resolution is significant as a tactical measure since China had stopped India from patrolling in Depsang by occupying positions patrolled by India prior to 2020.

Three points make the current agreement important from an Indian perspective. First is the integrated politico-military approach to resolving the two flash points led by the MEA. It also was the case with Gogra and Pangong Tso earlier. Second, quiet but firm political leadership by PM Narendra Modi maintains India's position on the need to restore the status quo as of April 2020 and, finally, military tenacity in operating in all weather and terrain along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This pact, it is expected, will lead to a normalisation of relations, which had been marked by tension and distrust since 2020.



Subsequently, the Special Representatives of India and China met and agreed upon a 'six-point' consensus. Actually, China made the consensus points public, while India merely reiterated the desire to reach an agreement on the boundary question based on the 2005 agreement. India kept quiet on the Chinese posturing, suggesting that both sides, while agreeing on the tactical deal, continued to differ on the strategic aspects of the border issue.

While one more pact in the series of disengagement agreements signed since 2020 has been put in place, disengagement is a process that takes time and verification. China has reportedly withdrawn from the Y junction and Raki Nala in the Depsang region. According to the EAM, Dr Jaishankar, the problem in Depsang and Demchok was related to the inability of the Indian Army to patrol these areas due to their being blocked by the Chinese PLA. In Demchok, there was also the question of our nomadic population's access to traditional grazing grounds. The signpost for the post-2020 diffusion of tensions is a determination by the government that it would do what it took to maintain the status quo.

A closer reading of the briefing EAM Dr S. Jaishankar gave to Lok Sabha MPs on December 3, 2024, makes it clear that the inflexion point was caused by China's military build-up and aggressive military posture in April/May 2020. The operative part of the statement reads, "There is a Line of Actual Control; it does not have a common understanding in some areas."

Two issues need flagging here. If both sides don't have common clarity on where the LAC lies, then the potential for future dissonance always exists. Second, are some areas mentioned by the EAM disputed prior to 2020, or are these where China intruded in 2020? Given the tenor of Jaishankar's statements, the latter appears to be more likely. It will be important when the two sides decide to engage on the boundary issue in the future.

The numerous agreements between India and China since 1988 have been listed, and these are the ones that China violated in 2020. However, the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) agreed to in 2012 is a mechanism that has continued to be used effectively even post-2020. Additionally, the meeting of the senior-level military commanders, along with representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, to discuss the nitty-gritty of withdrawal and disengagement has provided significant impetus to the current resolution.

The WMCC, for instance, has met 17 times since 2020, with the last meeting held in August 2024. Soon after the agreement on 26 October 2024, the WMCC met once again. The military commanders have met more than 21 times since 2020 to discuss the finer details of disengagement. It shows the high level of diplomatic

and military engagement leading to the current agreement.

According to the External Affairs Minister, both sides have completed the task of disengagement at 'friction points', which in the current instance refers only to Depsang and Demchok, and will now move towards de-escalation. It will happen in two stages: first, with the moving back of troops amassed on the border and second, with management of the border, in the light of experiences gained. Once this is done, will both sides seek to find a new mechanism for boundary resolution, or will the 2005 Agreement continue to form the basis for a final settlement? It makes sense for India to now push for the former as the basis for a settlement.

Disengagement undertaken by both sides will determine the future opening of relations in a 'calibrated manner', says the EAM. It is undoubtedly a complex relationship, but giving primacy to the border issue requires mentioning the post-1988 Joint Working Group (JWG) which was formed to clarify the LAC. The JWG continued to work till 2002 when differences reportedly arose over the interpretation of the LAC in the Western Sector. Post this, both sides signed the 2005 Agreement, Article IX of which proposes that both sides should "strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control" and recommended that the JWG and Diplomatic and Military Expert Group continue their work, which inter alia included clarifying the LAC.

As far as the incumbent government is concerned, normal relations with China cannot be conducted until peace and tranquility on the border are restored. This stance demonstrated the government's commitment to the high priority it attached to maintaining peace on the border. The fact that the government has brought military and diplomatic personnel to the same table while discussing the border issue with China is an important signpost that India may now attempt to take the next step in searching for a final boundary settlement with China.

However, problems arose when both sides started negotiating a framework agreement on each article in the 2005 pact. Given this situation, does it look realistic to expect China to appreciate the need for an understanding on the border?

All indications currently indicate a negative trend. It, however, should not stop India and, more importantly, the Modi government from pushing the envelope to seek a two-stage process for boundary settlement. Given the experience of 2020 and its aftermath, clarifying the LAC may become necessary to determine where the respective forces stand to effectively 'manage' the border. Subsequently, India and China can attempt to undertake a full and final settlement of the boundary question based on the 2005 agreement. The EAM and his boss, the Prime Minister of India,

know that this issue can only be resolved with PM Modi and President Xi Jinping.

### **Tensions over Dalai Lama's reincarnation: Can China determine Tibet's future?**

19 February 2025, [The Indian Express](#), P Stobdan

*As the spiritual leader of inner Asia, the Dalai Lama is a uniquely oriental phenomenon. Beijing dismisses any claim that the Dalai Lama's successor can be found in the West or in India. Uncertainty permeates the entire Tibet lobby as well.*



*While responding to the demise of the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup, Beijing stated that if certain preconditions are fulfilled, it would be amenable to discuss the Dalai Lama's future. (File photo)*

China, it appears, is getting anxious about the Dalai Lama's future. On February 10, China's foreign ministry expressed hope that the Tibetan leader will "return to the right path". While responding to the demise of the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup, Beijing stated that if certain preconditions are fulfilled, it would be amenable to discuss the Dalai Lama's future. In 2023, Beijing had said discussions on his "personal future" or "whether he wants to return to China" were open if he gave up "independence" and acknowledged that Tibet and Taiwan are inseparable parts of China. Beijing ceased dialogue with the Dalai Lama's envoy in 2010. It doesn't recognise the Tibetan government-in-exile. The Dalai Lama, meanwhile, has not taken a firm stand and has been making conflicting statements regarding his afterlife. In 2004, he stated that it is up to the Tibetan people to decide if they want the 15th Dalai Lama. About a decade later, he said the next Dalai Lama could be a woman, a "blonde woman" who must be attractive to be useful.

Story continues below this ad

To pre-empt any interference from Beijing, the Dalai Lama had also said that only he would decide the place and mode of his reincarnation and that he would take a call, when he is "90" in July 2025. The Zurich-based Gaden Phodrang Trust would oversee the process, and he would leave a note specifying the location of the new birth. His forthcoming book, scheduled for release in March, is expected to offer a perspective on Tibet's future.

However, in 2019, he had also discussed abolishing the reincarnation system due to its feudal roots and also because a "weak" successor would lend himself or herself to manipulation by Beijing.

It's unclear if his ambivalent stance is a protest against Beijing or a means for him to vent his frustration with the lack of unity among his people. But China accused the Dalai Lama of duplicity and flip-flopping, claiming that he is defaming Tibetan Buddhism "by doubting his reincarnation": Just as the Dalai Lama did not decide on his birth, it was not his choice to make one now. Beijing stated that he was chosen following religious rules and historical traditions and with the government's approval.

China reaffirmed its longstanding stance in 2023, stating that "the successor must be searched within China" and "the reincarnation must be approved by the central government" — a convention continuing from the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368).

China's State Religious Affairs Bureau's Order No. 5 of 2007 lays down specific regulations for the selection through the Golden Urn procedure. Article 2 of the Order prohibits the role of outside powers. Article 5 says the reincarnation is "subject to an application for approval". Tibetans have decried any Chinese involvement in the process of succession in the past and there are likely to be questions over China's moral authority to select the next Dalai Lama.

However, the Dalai Lama would still be under a lot of religious and social pressure over his rebirth, especially given his contentious claim that the next Dalai Lama could be born outside of China.

In theory, a person's spirit can transcend state borders. For instance, Tawang is the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama, whereas Mongolia is the birthplace of the fourth. But, the issue, in reality, is about political legitimacy. China insists that the legitimacy of the reincarnated citizen is effectively established by the laws of the jurisdiction or by *lex domicilii*, even if the rebirth is sought through a divination. Beijing will, therefore, treat the succession issue as a state matter and it claims the moral right to exercise "recognitional legitimacy" by both domestic and international law and context.

Even though religion may transcend national boundaries, believers have their nationalities. The dispute over the reincarnation of the 11th Panchen Lama persists after the Dalai Lama's chosen candidate, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, vanished. China selected a successor, Gyaincain Norbu, through the Golden Urn ritual in 1995. Norbu is considered a fake Panchen, but he is the vice-president of the Buddhist Association of China and officially recognised as the 11th Panchen Lama. More importantly, traditionally, the Panchen Lama has played a direct role in choosing almost all of the previous Dalai Lamas. The incumbent Panchen Lama is a member of the standing committee of the

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. As such, he will be required to acknowledge the next Dalai Lama.

As the spiritual leader of inner Asia, the Dalai Lama is a uniquely oriental phenomenon. Beijing dismisses any claim that the Dalai Lama's successor can be found in the West or in India. Uncertainty permeates the entire Tibet lobby as well. To begin with, a gestation period will follow after the Dalai Lama is no more. Given China's goals, forming a regency council (search team) would not be simple. In addition to the apparent sectarian differences, his succession may also be influenced by feudal aristocracy, family groups, and coteries. Whether his successor will sustain the momentum is another worry. The conflict would intensify should there be two Dalai Lamas. The exiles would reject any Beijing-chosen candidate, but Beijing would deploy its political prowess, economic arsenal, and media skills to gain international support for its chosen Dalai Lama. It is unlikely that states that practice Vajrayana, such as Bhutan, Mongolia, Russia and even India, will directly meddle in the selection process.

Stakes are rather high for Tibetans in exile. As they reach out to governments in the West to stop China from meddling in the succession process, they are unlikely to draw the attention of the US. The previous Trump administration had signed the Tibet Policy and Support Act of 2020 (TPSA) that stated that the succession issue should be left to the Tibetans. This time, the Trump administration has already shut down USAID, which used to give over \$10 million on average annually to bolster Tibetan self-determination against China. This could have a direct impact on the succession issue.

Beijing, on the side, is hosting gatherings of academics and religious leaders to reaffirm the significance of government approval for the recognition of the reincarnated Tibetan religious leader.

Ideally, the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists should aim to achieve a consensus on the succession issue. However, it seems unlikely given the current state of global flux and because of Donald Trump's second tenure in the White House.

### Eye on China, India's 'soft power' to play out in Arunachal

18 February 2025, [The Week](#), Sanjib Kr. Baruah

India setting up its third Film and Television Institute in Arunachal Pradesh, under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, is indicative of the intent to depict soft power by New Delhi

With just 17 persons inhabiting one square kilometre, India's biggest state in the Northeast is also the country's most thinly populated state. It is also a turf

where China plays out its strategic ambitions by calling it 'Zangnan' or the southern part of Tibet.

The Chinese claim to territorial suzerainty over Arunachal also prompted Beijing in recent years to go on a naming spree wherein about 32 places in the hilly state were given new names by Beijing.

The much-laboured Chinese claim is based on Arunachal Pradesh's perceived subordination to the Tibetan kingdom headquartered in Lhasa and hence by extension to Beijing.

The very fact that the country's third Film and Television Institute, after the one at Pune and Satyajit Ray Film And Television Institute at Kolkata, is being set up in Arunachal Pradesh is indicative of the intent to depict soft power by New Delhi. All these institutes are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

Located in Jollang-Rakap (Jote) in Papum Pare district, the institute is 24 km away from Itanagar, and aims to provide students "with the knowledge, skills, and creativity necessary to craft captivating narratives across audio-visual platforms" that will "promote the rich cultural heritage and creative talent of the region while contributing to the national growth of the film and television industry".

While the institute has begun its online classes, it is yet to be formally inaugurated. "It may be inaugurated in a month or two as everything is more or less ready," a source familiar with the development told THE WEEK. Interestingly, in October, the Indian Army inaugurated the Kameng Culture and Heritage Museum at Nyukmadung in the West Kameng district which besides showcasing the state's rich cultural heritage will also establish the hilly state's "deep-rooted connection to Indian civilisation".

The region that is now Arunachal is believed to be the Prabhu mountains mentioned in the Puranas. The first mention of the region is found in the literature of the Kalika Purana, a text from the medieval period but believed to have been composed much earlier.

### Trump Could Make China Great Again

18 February 2025, [Foreign Policy](#), James Crabtree

Beijing won't say so in public, but it sees new geopolitical opportunities.

China hawks in the United States have made what amounted to a Faustian pact with President Donald Trump. Anxious that Beijing's power was surpassing Washington's and critical of Democrats such as former President Joe Biden for failing to turn it back, Trump seemed to be the best option for a more robust approach to China. But after the whirlwind start of the new administration, that bargain already looks shaky, raising questions about whether Trump's much-

anticipated pivot to a tougher China policy will instead turn out to be a geopolitical win for Beijing.

Trump's approach presents a conundrum. On the one hand, he has appointed serious China hawks to important positions, including at the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Defense Department. This team has been crafting the elements of a more competitive approach—albeit with some degree of continuity with Biden's team.

On the other hand, it should by now be obvious not just that Trump's strategic agenda is more radical and far-reaching than in his first term, but also that his ferocious transactional instincts risk pulling his approach to China in directions that would be entirely welcomed by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Indeed, as it's viewed from Beijing, Trump's second start in the White House already presents myriad unexpected opportunities for China to exploit.

Those who support a more competitive approach can still point to early wins. Trump has lambasted European allies but been much gentler in Asia. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba enjoyed a successful trip to Washington in early February, and a visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week demonstrated an Indo-U.S. relationship in seemingly rude health. Trump's team reaffirmed its support for the Australia-United Kingdom-United States pact (known as AUKUS) while U.S. warplanes conducted joint patrols above the South China Sea to support the Philippines. And by browbeating Panama, the United States persuaded it to abandon China's Belt and Road Initiative.

More starkly, Trump's approach to Ukraine—his demand that European nations provide security guarantees for any peace deal as well as Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's declaration that Washington is no longer "primarily focused" on Europe's security—bears the hallmarks of an administration that is serious about prioritizing the Indo-Pacific over other parts of the world. "America, as the leader of the free world defending American interests, is going to need to make sure we're focused properly on the Communist Chinese," Hegseth said on Feb. 12 during a trip to Germany.

Yet this apparent drive to prioritize competition with China stands in sharp contrast to Trump's wider geopolitical approach—much of which will likely be a cause for quiet contentment in Beijing. Some of this links to Trump's rough-and-tumble treatment of allies as well as China's long-term hope that the United States' globe-spanning alliance system might crumble. Just as important is Trump's new embrace of a raw form of great-power politics.

His inaugural address featured little criticism of China, barring two references citing Beijing as the justification for Trump's plan to retake the Panama Canal. Its other themes, including his neo-imperial

aspirations for Greenland, will be welcomed by China—given that they align with its ambitions to control Taiwan and signal the demise of U.S. support for a rules-based order that China has long sought to end.

Much the same is true of the way that Trump is pursuing a great-power deal in Ukraine by reportedly handing concessions to Russian President Vladimir Putin while sidelining Europe. All of this plays to Beijing's geopolitical advantage, given its quasi-alliance with Moscow as well as its long-term aims of driving a split between Europe and the United States and undermining NATO so that it cannot get involved in Asia.

Elsewhere, Trump's policies are creating openings for possible Chinese influence. His controversial plan to take control of Gaza has sown discord—not just between the United States and the wider Middle East, but also among Muslim-majority nations in Asia, notably including Indonesia and Malaysia. His effort to shutter the United States Agency for International Development, while not a critical injury to Washington's ability to manage great-power competition, reinforces Beijing's narrative about U.S. unreliability.

More institutional disruption is likely to follow in ways that will further benefit Beijing, from the hollowing out U.S. intelligence agencies to potential purges of military leaders.

China might not be able to capitalize on these opportunities, of course. But it will certainly attempt to do so. As Jin Yanan, a professor of military strategy at China's National Defense University, once noted in a 2018 interview with the *New Yorker*, China will often claim in public that Trump's policies do it harm, while actually quietly recognizing they provide opportunities. "As the U.S. retreats globally, China shows up," he told the magazine.

None of this should be surprising. The weaknesses of Trump's transactional approach to China were clear in his first term. At the time, he did push a new, hard-line approach to great-power competition with China and Russia. But he also struck erratic arrangements, from tariff deals to a plan to save ZTE, a Chinese telecommunications company. Xi's part of his bargain with Trump—a commitment to a sharp increase in purchases of U.S. products—was never fulfilled or enforced. Trump's deal-making instincts remain clear, from his invitation to Xi to attend his inauguration to his U-turn to preserve Chinese control of TikTok.

Beijing's main hope will be to lure Trump into a big deal involving the status of Taiwan. Trump has shown little interest in supporting the island. He is known to be pessimistic about the United States' ability to deter China's long-term goal of unification. Trump's policymaking style is notoriously unpredictable, and he has few fixed ideological convictions, but he

remains a transactional leader. High-profile visits to Beijing, future summits with Xi, and the idea of striking a major deal will appeal to him. A new economic bargain must be conceivable—perhaps one in which China promises to invest in the United States in exchange for reductions in technology export controls. For now, a grander bargain over Taiwan's future may be a step too far, although some kind of fourth joint U.S.-China communiqué clarifying Washington's position cannot be ruled out, adding to the existing three communiqués signed between 1972 and 1982 that act as a bedrock set of understandings for U.S.-China relations.

Either way, the very unpredictability of Trump's approach—capable of shifting rapidly from aggressive tariff threats to warm personal diplomacy—makes it exceedingly hard for the hawks he appointed, or indeed U.S. allies, to judge what he might ultimately do.

Although they have welcomed Trump on the surface, those allies are clearly deeply nervous. During their meeting, Ishiba managed to get Trump to affirm the importance of stability across the Taiwan Strait—but it is hard to see how Japan or anyone else can rely on any statement not being reversed on a sudden presidential whim. Meanwhile, former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong gave a striking speech on Feb. 8 in which he warned that “the U.S. is no longer prepared to underwrite the global order,” leaving countries like his own scrambling to cope and adapt.

Naturally, China's leadership is not going to express in public that it senses a geopolitical opportunity. More likely, it will continue to suggest that the two superpowers “respect each other's core interests and major concerns,” as Xi put it in a call with Trump in January. But just as Washington's allies are worried in private about Trump's willingness to upend core tenets of the existing international order, so too is Beijing calculating that his second presidency will accelerate the very changes that China has long sought to achieve.

### **China's LAC Infrastructure In Xinjiang: A Colonial Perspective – Analysis**

18 February 2025, [Eurasia Review](#), Ayjaz Wani

In a tactical move to reduce the travel time between northern and southern Xinjiang from seven hours to three hours while protecting goods from harsh winter conditions, China completed excavating the world's longest roadway tunnel in the Tianshan Mountains of Xinjiang in December 2024. The 22.13 km tunnel, set to open in 2025, is crucial to China's ambitious 319.72 km Urumqi-Yuli Expressway.

Around the same time, China's Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCCP) and State

Council approved the creation of two new counties, He'an and Hekang, in the Aksai Chin region of India, which was unlawfully ceded to China by Pakistan through a border agreement in 1963. The illegal creation of new counties in the Aksai Chin region, close on the heels of the recent rapprochement with India, shows Beijing's colonial mentality, adding to the complexities of Sino-India bilateral relations.

The new counties managed by Khotan prefecture and the establishment of counties in the uninhabited region close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) represent an effort aimed at building infrastructure and increasing the Han population along the border, reminiscent of actions taken during the Great Leap Forward in 1958. However, China has maintained that the tunnel will enhance connectivity and support the socio-economic development of southern regions predominantly inhabited by Uyghurs, thus strengthening unity among ethnicities.

### **China's Xinjiang border policy post-1949**

Xinjiang's history is marked by conflicts over its autonomy and independence. Chinese imperial rule lasted only 400 years, until 1949. In 1720, the Qing dynasty extended its control into the area for the first time since the Tang dynasty, but sustaining authority was challenging. This historical context is crucial to understanding China's current Xinjiang border policy. After 1760, Qing leaders began relocating Han criminals from the mainland to Xinjiang, providing them subsidies and loans to settle and farm.

After 1950, Beijing initiated the mass migration of the Han people to the province to leverage its natural resources, establish political dominance, and integrate the local population into Chinese culture. Following 1949, this migration aimed to exploit resources and safeguard the frontier from external influences, particularly those of the erstwhile Soviet Union. Following 1958, 60,000 Kazaks moved to the former Soviet Central Asian Republics.

Beijing responded by sealing the border and forcibly relocating thousands of non-Han families from the border area, replacing them with Han citizens. The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), established in 1954, facilitated all these population transfers. Comprising primarily of demobilised troops, XPCC functions as an economic enterprise and military force, wielding considerable governmental authority that impacts the region's socio-political and financial dynamics. The organisation aimed to relocate Han individuals outside existing cities by establishing colonies, promoting the slogan of ‘transforming nature and reforming man’ to reclaim land, build industries, explore natural resources, and construct strategic roads and railway lines. XPCC assisted Beijing in extracting oil and gas from Xinjiang. Estimates indicate the region has 23.4 billion tonnes of oil reserves and 13 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves.

The XPCC constructed the Xinjiang-Xizang highway through Aksai Chin. By 1958, over 6,000 miles of roads had been built. The highway network expanded from 17,830 km in 2015 to 20,920 km in 2020. After 2021, Beijing commenced the construction of new roads towards the LAC from the G219 highway, which runs along the border. Beijing has prioritised building strategic roads and highways in the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) to upgrade the LAC infrastructure in Tibet and Xinjiang. Similarly, China is also constructing the rail networks in Xinjiang, which have expanded from 5,900 km in 2015 to approximately 7,800 km in 2020.

### **Colonial rationale behind the new counties and infrastructure**

Most Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang reside in the southern regions, particularly in Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, and Kurla, where they have managed to resist the Chinese Communist Party's enforced sinicisation, a process of assimilating non-Chinese communities into Chinese culture. Beijing's growing security and economic interests in neighbouring Central and South Asia and concerns about potential unrest within southern Xinjiang have forced China to create new counties and increase its push for infrastructure. Despite its draconian policies in Xinjiang, Beijing is increasingly concerned about the rising security dilemmas along the Pakistan border, making enhancing security measures there and along Uyghur-dominated regions a priority. The new Han migrants are mostly retired army personnel and work as a security force wielding administrative powers. Additionally, due to the rising demand for lithium and the estimated presence of 2 million tons of lithium in the vicinity of these new counties, XPCC intends to promote mining in the area.

The Tianshan Shengli Tunnel will enhance Xinjiang's connectivity and boost Chinese trade and commerce with Central Asia, especially after the completion of the China- Kyrgyzstan- Uzbekistan railway line. Enhanced connectivity will attract more Chinese companies and further integrate the south of Xinjiang with Eurasian nations under the Belt and Road Initiative. Similarly, establishing two new counties in the parts of the Aksai Chin region of India will facilitate the transfer of Han migrants to the area through XPCC to develop new infrastructure and logistics to support the Chinese army in the region, which will have geostrategic implications along the LAC for India.

### **India's response**

After 1991, China capitalised on Central Asia's economic and political instability to extend its influence into the tumultuous Xinjiang region. Beijing exploited the economic and political upheaval in the Central Asian countries bordering Xinjiang, securing 22 per cent, 32 per cent, and 3.5 per cent of land claimed from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, respectively. Beijing tried the same towards India after

2020, which heightened tensions along the LAC and increased standoffs. Unlike other neighbouring countries in restive Xinjiang, New Delhi has intensified its infrastructure initiatives in Kashmir and Ladakh. It has built the impressive Chenab Bridge, recognised as the tallest cable-stayed bridge in the world, alongside the 12.77 km T49 rail tunnel.

Additionally, the ongoing construction of the 13.5 km Zojila Tunnel showcases India's exceptional engineering feats and strategic edge over its rivals. Since 2019, India's Prime Minister has personally overseen many of these geo-economic and geostrategic projects. On 13 January 2025, the Prime Minister formally opened the Z-Mohr tunnel on the critical Srinagar-Leh highway. The Zojila Tunnel is anticipated to be finished by 2026, further boosting New Delhi's strategic influence in Eastern Ladakh and along the LAC. India has also expanded its road and bridge infrastructure along the LAC in Ladakh. In 2021, 87 bridges were completed, while in 2022, the Defence Minister inaugurated projects costing INR 2,180 crores, including 18 solely dedicated to Ladakh. Following the successful rail connection with Kashmir, New Delhi should prioritise the 489 km Bilaspur-Manali-Leh railway line to swiftly deploy forces and equipment along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh.

To maintain its pace and strategic advantage over Beijing along the LAC, India requires a multi-faceted strategy that includes expedited infrastructure development, enhanced defence capabilities, and collaborative international efforts with allied nations to counter Chinese deceptive tactics.

### **The Dalai Lama and his security; enjoys the 'most protected' status in India and US**

17 February 2025, [South Asia Monitor](#), Tenzin Sherab

The most elaborate and multi-layer security cordon for the Dalai Lama was given when he visited the northeastern border state of Arunachal Pradesh - which is disputed by China - in 2017. His high-profile visit was considered a major risk having global and diplomatic implications due to unresolved and tense border flare-ups between the two neighboring Asian giants.

In the wake of the world becoming more dynamic and intricate, the security of renowned leaders faces imminent challenges. It needed strategic planning, navigating and assessing risk perception, and taking agile methods to act swiftly in volatile situations. In more than a decade of my leadership training and dealing with various security companies, proper implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in line with the company policy and the guidelines and visibility of security personnel ensures a risk-free, safe and secure environment.

Recent media reports indicate that the Indian government has enhanced Z+ category security cover to the Dalai Lama which is a welcome step following the latest threat analysis report of the Indian Intelligence Bureau.

Deities protect the Dalai Lama

The topic of safety and security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has also figured frequently in the exile Tibetan parliament and the subject matter is often raised and debated within the diasporic community. The Dalai Lama has visited more than 65 countries, the first one to Japan and Thailand in 1967 and then to western hemisphere - Europe and North America - in 1973 and 1979 respectively. In view of the Chinese threat to his divine well-being, some countries have provided top-notch security protection to the Dalai Lama. The Department of Security, Central Tibetan Administration has stated in their website, "Invisible but constant blessings of Tibet's deities also played a significant role in the security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama".

Many Tibetans believe that there are celestial deities including fierce and wrathful protectors and guardians of Tibet such as Palden Lhamo (Shri Devi), Mahakala, etc. who protect the Dalai Lama. Mahakala is perceived as the fierce emanation of Avalokitesvara, the patron saint of Tibet. According to Hinduism, Mahakala is considered the ultimate form of Lord Shiva, the destroyer of all elements and whose holy abode Mount Kailash is splendidly located in the Ngari region of Tibet.

India apart, the small but vibrant Baltic countries provided the Dalai Lama with outstanding security arrangement and protection. Even Poland has provided the Dalai Lama with high-level security with a large and robust police protection usually offered to the Heads of the States.

The historical records reveal that the Portuguese first entered independent Tibet in the 16th century AD. However, it was the British diplomatic mission led by Colonel Francis Younghusband who established relations with Tibet in 1904 and even signed the "Convention between Great Britain and Tibet". Thus, the Dalai Lama as Head of State and the Institution of Dalai Lamas were officially recognized by Great Britain. However, the present British government, either through sheer ignorance or in deference to China, seems to have taken the security of His Holiness lightly. One hardly noticed any law enforcement personnel safeguarding the Dalai Lama during his last visit. But his lifelong practice and teachings of Buddhist precepts such as the cultivation of loving kindness, forgiveness, contentment, compassion for every sentient being, including the Chinese Communist Party leadership, became even more empowering, and brook no ill-will towards anyone.

Multi-layer security cordon

So, it's safe to say that two largest and oldest democracies of the world - India and USA - top the list of countries which extend top security to the Dalai Lama. India has given the 'most protected' VVIP status or Z+ security category to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the highest level of security blanket includes (but are not limited to) the President of India, Vice President, Prime Minister, Chiefs of Armed Forces, Governors of States and others.

Z+ security involves personnel from India's Central Reserve Police Force and commandos and the state police unit. These officers are armed with MP5 sub-machine guns. However, the personal bodyguards of the Dalai Lama are equipped with the latest tactical weapons, state-of-art modern communication equipment, and are highly trained in unarmed combat skills.

Another layer of security at his abode in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh is also backed by the Special Frontier Force, nicknamed "Phantoms of Chittagong". This force comprises Tibetan refugees well trained in guerrilla warfare, airborne and commando operations. The security apparatus of every state where the Dalai Lama visits varies - the state of Karnataka recently provided more than 300 police personnel during his six-week stay at Bylakuppe Tibetan settlements.

The most elaborate and multi-layer security cordon for the Dalai Lama was given when he visited the northeastern border state of Arunachal Pradesh - which is disputed by China - in 2017. His high-profile visit was considered a major risk having global and diplomatic implications due to unresolved and tense border flare-ups between the two neighboring Asian giants. In his last visit to Arunachal Pradesh, the Dalai Lama was given six layers of security protection, more than the Prime Minister of India. Sikkim also provided last year an outstanding and elaborate security to the Dalai Lama during the visits.

The Dalai Lama is also given highly honored privileges of no-frisking at all airports across India. People of Tibet and millions of Buddhists across the world owe an incredible debt of gratitude to the government and people of India.

The Dalai Lama's multiple visits to the USA were the most extraordinary. The State Department extends and assigns its much-acclaimed diplomatic security services (DSS) to protect and ensure the Dalai Lama's safety from the moment he touches down at the airport. Anyone can spot multiple secret service agents wearing conservative suits, reflective sunglasses and communication earpieces. Most of them are of the same height over six feet with customized attire concealing the wide array of protective weapons while on duty. In addition, there were dozens of other state and city police officers who kept their watchful eyes on potential security risks

within and outside the perimeter of his divine presence.

Every so often, the risk level of a leader's security may evolve and change in a manner that is not regular in pattern or method. Ability in foreseeing potential threats and responding swiftly to changing circumstances, motivating and updating staff training and integrity, and getting proactive in the safety of all involved are some of the key qualities of effective and successful security leadership and its management.

### What does Zardari's China visit mean for Pakistan?

17 February 2025, [The Express Tribune](#), Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

Strategic partnerships, economic revival, and security cooperation take centre stage

**President Asif Zardari visited China at the invitation of President Xi Jinping. He visited at a critical moment in history as Pakistan is facing multiple complex challenges. On one hand, the economy struggles to recover amid skewed opportunities, and the GDP growth rate remains low. The financial crisis has plagued Pakistan for a long time and presents various dimensions. On the other hand, climate change-related disasters have become regular occurrences. Pakistan continues to grapple with the impacts of the 2022 flood and is now facing the threat of drought in 2025.**

In recent years, terrorism has begun to resurface, particularly following the abrupt withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. Terrorist groups are collaborating closely with anti-Pakistan forces and are targeting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Chinese nationals. It has threatened the hard-earned peace and security. Additionally, political instability is affecting Pakistan. The ruling elite have failed to demonstrate any maturity in resolving their differences and restoring stability to the country. They seem unable to understand that the economy cannot progress without stability, leaving all other sectors stalled.

In this context, Pakistan is seeking options and partnerships to revive its economy, restore financial stability, counter terrorism, ensure security, and combat the impacts of climate change. It is good to note that President Zardari's visit was focused on these areas. In pursuit of this agenda, President Zardari met with President Xi, Prime Minister Li Qiang, and others. The leadership of both countries deliberated on Pakistan-China relations, with a particular focus on economic and trade cooperation, counter-terrorism and security collaboration, the CPEC, and future connectivity initiatives. China's top leadership assured President Zardari that China would

try to help Pakistan overcome its challenges and enhance bilateral relations.

However, the real work will begin after the visit. Pakistan must focus on three key areas to implement the agreements and fully capitalise on China's opportunities. First, it needs to transform its business and investment environment. There's no need to elaborate on the current state of the business environment; it is widely acknowledged as highly inefficient, with time-consuming processes and deep-rooted corruption. The self-serving behaviour of the ruling elite exacerbates the situation. Additionally, the culture of subsidies and preferential treatment for selected business groups is equally harmful. Pakistan established the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), but it still struggles to achieve its intended objectives. Among other challenges, a lack of authority to make and implement decisions, coupled with limited capacity, presents significant hurdles to achieving those goals.

Therefore, Pakistan must work to create a business and investment system that is efficient, free of corruption, and less time-consuming. Efforts should also focus on reducing the influence of the ruling elite and curbing rent-seeking behaviour. The government should empower the SIFC by bringing in professionals capable of developing feasibility studies and implementation frameworks. Each desk at the SIFC (China desk, Gulf desk, etc.) should be staffed with experts who understand the specific country or region. Staffing should not be generic or mediocre.

Additionally, Pakistan must think beyond just a few rules and processes, incorporating better living conditions into the definition of a business environment. Enhancing the living conditions for investors and their families is equally important as developing appropriate regulations and procedures. For instance, a few days ago, Volker from Germany brought up this issue in a meeting focused on investment in Pakistan. He asserted that when an investor or their team considers investing in a country, they also evaluate the living conditions, services, and facilities, such as education, healthcare, recreational opportunities, and more.

Without a sound business and investment environment, Pakistan will not be able to fully capitalise on the opportunities presented by China and CPEC. This argument can be strengthened by examining the performance of the past 11 years. Many of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which were anticipated to be fully operational, are still in the early stages of development. Currently, there are only two operational SEZs, which are also not running at full capacity. Agricultural cooperation has not achieved the desired results. Thus, the business environment should be one of the top priorities.



Second, security is critical in building a business and investment-friendly environment, ensuring the smooth execution of CPEC, and reaping its full benefits. It is also required to create better living conditions. I have written extensively on this subject, so I will not deliberate more on this. However, I will reiterate that without improving security, Pakistan will not be able to benefit from the opportunities offered by China and CPEC. As President Xi has said, our cooperation in the security and economic fields reinforces each other, and the two wheels must be advanced simultaneously. A safe and stable environment is indispensable for China-Pakistan's practical cooperation, including the construction of CPEC. It is good to note that the interior ministers of both countries deliberated and agreed to enhance security cooperation to ensure the safety and security of Chinese nationals and CPEC investments. However, we will have to wait for the implementation.

Third, the right choices should be made, and cooperation should be prioritised based on ground realities and situations. For example, Pakistan is struggling to enhance exports. China has offered Pakistan multiple opportunities to increase exports. China and Pakistan have also signed a free trade agreement to enhance trade. Pakistan can benefit from these opportunities by identifying the right products and commodities for export based on Pakistan's comparative advantage and Chinese needs. Market analysis of China indicates that imports of agriculture, food, meat, and dairy products are on the rise.

Fortunately, Pakistan has the capacity and comparative advantage to export agricultural and food products to China. Pakistan can export high-quality meat, dairy products, and fresh vegetables and fruits. The close vicinity further enhances the advantage. Pakistan can even export products by road, and it will take only a few days.

Unfortunately, Pakistan is still unable to benefit from the Chinese agriculture and food market. Pakistan's exports to China are only a few million dollars, except for rice (billions). The country could earn billions of dollars every year by exporting agricultural products. For example, Pakistani mangoes, meat, and dairy products have a good market in China. The major impediments to this are the low priority of the sector, government negligence, and failure to meet sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

Fourth, the Pakistani system does not have many people who understand the Chinese governance, economic, and environmental system. The Chinese system is quite different from the liberal system. Pakistan has a majority of people who have studied under the liberal system and worked within it. They try to understand the Chinese system through the lens of the liberal system. It's like trying to understand

football with the rules of cricket. This slows the pace of the implementation of agreements and cooperation mechanisms. For example, Pakistan has signed many MoUs with China, but many of them have yet to be implemented. Thus, Pakistan must work on recruiting people who have a good understanding of Chinese systems. Fortunately, in the recent past, many young Pakistanis have graduated from China.

In conclusion, to fully exploit the potential of CPEC and the opportunities offered by the Chinese market, Pakistan will need to transform its business and investment system and provide fool-proof security. More importantly, Pakistan must move beyond rhetoric and focus on practical actions because actions matter, not rhetoric.

### **Women's Political Representation in Tibetan-Inhabited Regions: Insights from Provincial, Prefectural, and County Levels**

17 February 2025, [FNVA](#), Rinzin Namgyal

This study critically investigates the political representation of women in Tibetan-inhabited regions, with a particular focus on their roles within governmental and party structures across various administrative tiers. Despite the Chinese Communist Party's rhetorical commitment to gender equality, Tibetan women remain markedly underrepresented in positions of substantive political authority. Utilizing a "division of labour" analytical framework, this research elucidates their systematic relegation to culturally and socially oriented domains which is the case of all women irrespective of ethnicity, while strategic spheres of political decision-making, state security, and ideological governance remain overly male-dominated. The study encompasses one province, twelve prefectures, two prefecture-level cities, one autonomous region, and 89 counties across Tibetan-inhabited regions. The findings substantiate two key hypotheses: (H1) that women are disproportionately assigned to roles that align with conventional gender norms within political institutions, and (H2) that ethnic minorities experience entrenched structural marginalization within China's political apparatus. This study underscores the imperative for further scholarly inquiry into the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity within China's political appointment mechanisms, particularly concerning the systemic constraints faced by Tibetan women in achieving higher political office.

Read more [here](#).

## 'Battle for Tibet' offers a view of decades of protest against Chinese rule

17 February 2025, [The Boston Globe](#), Don Aucoin



In "Battle for Tibet," Frontline investigates China's rule over Tibet. Reuters

To the (limited) degree that international crises penetrate the consciousnesses of your average American these days, it usually involves Ukraine or Gaza.

Tibet? Not so much.

But in its focused, unshowy, methodical way, "Frontline"'s "Battle for Tibet" makes the case that the world should be paying closer attention to the isolated mountain territory, where the Tibetan people are struggling to hold on to their language, culture, traditions, and religious freedom -- all in the face of what Tibetans describe as Chinese oppression.

A reminder of how long that battle has been unfolding arrived a week ago with the death of Gyalo Thondup, the older brother of the Dalai Lama, at the age of 97. For decades, the politically savvy Thondup had fought for Tibetan autonomy and for the return to their homeland of his brother, Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, who will turn 90 in July and has spent more than six decades living in exile.

("Frontline" requested an interview with the Dalai Lama, but he declined, according to a "Frontline" spokesperson. The show drew on archival footage of previous interviews.)

Helmed by Emmy-winning director Gesbeen Mohammad and narrated as usual by Boston theater legend Will Lyman, "Battle for Tibet" is the kind of solid, sober, substantive effort that's one of "Frontline"'s hallmarks.

Its meticulous, measured but tough-minded approach consistently offers a welcome change of pace from the hyperkinetic, superficial documentaries that are popping up like weeds all over television. Rather than inundate the screen with fly-by images, "Frontline" gives you time to think about what you're seeing.

Or not seeing. As described in "Battle for Tibet" the day-to-day reality for Tibetans is a political and cultural climate of censorship, constant surveillance (including of monasteries), arrests, indoctrination of

schoolchildren, and violent putdowns of peaceful protests.

"It's like living in prison," says dissident Tsering Dawa. "Frontline" cites estimates by human rights organizations that approximately 160 Tibetans have burned themselves alive since 2009 to protest Chinese rule. "Battle for Tibet" shows horrific footage of one such self-immolation.

China has accused independence activists of being "separatists." Victor Gao, who runs a think tank in Beijing and is an advocate of China's rule in Tibet, airily asserts that: "For the Chinese government, for the Chinese nation, the thing is very simple. There is only one China, and Tibet is part of China."

A more persuasive voice is that of a young woman named Namkyi, who fled Tibet in 2023 after participating in protests against China's rule, which began when China invaded and annexed Tibet in 1950. "China subjects us to huge repression both mentally and physically," she says, adding: "China only shows the beautiful and good parts. The true situation in Tibet isn't allowed to be seen."

At a time when China's economic and geopolitical clout is growing all the time and there is widespread concern about its plans for Taiwan, it might be a good idea for the world to make more efforts to see the "true situation" in Tibet. "Frontline", at least, has done its part.

### **BATTLE FOR TIBET**

"Frontline" documentary airs on Channel 2 (GBH) on Tues., Feb.18 at 10 p.m., and also begins streaming on [pbs.org/Frontline](#) on Tues., Feb 18

## Could USAID's closure open the door to greater Chinese soft power in the Global South?

16 February 2025, [SCMP](#)

### **Chinese officials say the American agency's demise leaves more room for China to have an impact**

The sudden closure of the US' foreign aid agency offers China opportunities to grow its soft power in the Global South, Chinese officials say, while warning that Beijing's influence should not be overestimated.

Earlier this month, US President Donald Trump announced the shutdown of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington's principal agency for global humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

The USAID website is offline and hundreds of senior staff have been put on leave, leaving grants in jeopardy amid a cost-cutting campaign driven by billionaire Elon Musk. The agency's closure was temporarily halted by a federal judge's order but its long-term future remains uncertain.

Beijing has not commented on the drama in Washington but a handful of Chinese officials in central government agencies related to foreign aid, commerce and economics said it was an opportunity for Beijing to grow its influence abroad.

“The retreat of USAID will benefit Beijing in promoting its image and building up its footprint in the developing world,” an economic official said, declining to be named because he was not allowed to speak to the media.

An aid official agreed, saying Beijing would gain room to project its influence if USAID ceased to exist.

“The international community would give more attention to China’s foreign aid,” the official said.

The economic official said China’s state-owned companies would also play their part in the developing world as soft power influence shifted “inevitably” from the US to China.

USAID was set up in 1961 by then-president John F. Kennedy partly to expand American soft power and counter the Soviet Union’s influence.

Over decades, USAID spent billions in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia to support health, education and human rights projects.

It has continued to be funded, in part to counter China’s growing influence.

Democrat Senator Chris Coons said the agency’s closure would be “a gift to China ... a gift to our adversaries around the world”.

China’s equivalent of USAID, the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), was launched in 2018 and assumed the foreign-aid portfolios of the ministries of foreign affairs and commerce.

CIDCA’s structure was partly inspired by USAID and was seen as necessary as China pushed forward the Belt and Road Initiative, according to a source familiar with the Chinese relief agency.

The initiative is Chinese President Xi Jinping’s flagship infrastructure investment project and has much the same footprint in the developing world as USAID.

In an interview with Phoenix TV on Wednesday, CIDCA vice-chairman Hu Zhangliang did not refer to the United States directly but said: “We will not behave like some countries that leave aid recipients feeling helpless, caught off guard, or unprepared for such situations.”

Hu said China would increase investment in international development and upgrade its approach to foreign aid.

A commerce official said China would gain from the chaos created by Trump’s new administration but its soft power influence should not be overestimated.

“The third world is hedging between both sides and wouldn’t dare rely solely on China for fear of hard-handed policies from the US,” the official said, adding

that “China’s influence is surely smaller than [that of] the US”.

### How China’s adoption laws risk freezing tens of thousands of children out of family life

16 February 2025, [SCMP](#), Phoebe Zhang

Strict rules designed to protect children mean large numbers of would-be adopters are facing a near-impossible task

The decades-long one-child policy in China has not only left the legacy of an ageing population, but also a set of strict adoption laws that have denied large numbers of abandoned children the chance of a family life.

Families looking to adopt have faced a series of bureaucratic hurdles, in some cases leaving them with no legal way of proceeding with a planned adoption even if the child’s mother is happy for it to go ahead.

One such woman, Sichuan resident He Hua, was offered the chance to adopt a baby in 2021.

She had a medical condition that left her unable to give birth but she had always wanted a child of her own, and her elder sister told her that she knew an unmarried woman who was pregnant and would be unable to look after the child.

“My sister told her that I could take the child, and the woman agreed immediately,” He said.

She accompanied the woman to a hospital in Chengdu, the provincial capital, where the baby was born. The biological mother had already told He that she would leave the city after giving birth and wanted nothing more to do with the baby.

But He’s joy soon turned into frustration when she tried to formalise the adoption with the local police and civil affairs bureau and was told she did not meet the requirements to adopt the baby.

They said the birth mother needed to be present during the proceedings, and that she would have to be handicapped or have a serious illness in order to give up the child legally.

There are many others who have faced similar problems when trying to adopt a child through private channels.

There is a relatively simple process for those adopting through state-run child welfare institutions, but most of the children in these facilities have disabilities and many families are unable or unwilling to care for them.

Most families trying to adopt privately are unable to provide the necessary documents, such as a birth certificate or written statement from the birth parents, to secure the child a hukou – a vitally important household registration and identification document that grants access to social benefits including vaccinations and school.

China's strict adoption laws were motivated by concerns about child protection, including dangers such as trafficking – a problem that was fuelled by the one-child policy as the traditional preference for sons drove some people who could not have one of their own to buy one from criminal gangs.

Despite strict penalties against child trafficking, it remains an ongoing concern. Last year, Yu Huaying, a woman who had sold 17 kidnapped children in the 1990s, was sentenced to death following a retrial.

The previous year, three former officials in Henan province were jailed for their part in the theft and sale of birth certificates which were used to fraudulently obtain hukous for children – many of whom may have been abducted and sold to families.

But these barriers to adoption mean that there are far more children living in institutions than there are families on the approved adoption list.

In 2023, the most recent available figures from the Civil Affairs Bureau, there were 144,000 orphans awaiting homes but only 8,000 families had successfully registered to adopt a child. There is no data for other children awaiting adoption.

Although it is hard to find exact figures about the extent of the problem, media reports and grass-roots volunteers have said there may be hundreds of thousands of children and families affected.

Some local authorities have previously recognised that there are large numbers of children whose families cannot properly care for them.

But attempts by some provinces to deal with the problem by way of “baby hatches” that would allow babies to be dropped off anonymously to be cared for were abandoned because local care services could not cope with the weight of numbers.

Lu Yu, a lawyer with the Beijing Qianqian Law Firm, which specialises in women's rights advocacy, argued society needed to provide resources for people at the bottom, saying: “When society doesn't allow these people to abandon their children, but doesn't provide other options for them to raise the child either, it's a dilemma.”

These limited channels for legal adoption have led to the existence of what China Youth Daily has described as “illegal de facto adoptions” across the country.

While searching for a solution to her own problems, He came across a network of women trying to resolve similar problems in a chat group on the messaging app WeChat.

The group's organiser Wei Ximei, a domestic services agent from Zhengzhou in central China, had recently solved a similar problem for her adopted daughter Niuniu.

The birth mother had tricked Wei's mother into taking care of the baby by hiring her as a nanny, and then refusing to pay and disappearing.

Although Wei decided to raise the girl alongside her two other children, three years later when she wanted to register the girl in a kindergarten and could not get a hukou she decided to contact a local television station for help.

After a story about the case was broadcast, local police helped her track down the birth mother while a local kindergarten also offered assistance in securing a hukou, a process that took her around a year, a process that can take as little as a few days in some cities.



Anyone wanting to adopt an unwanted baby faces a series of hurdles. Photo: Shutterstock

The publicity the case generated made her realise there were others in a similar position after dozens of people started contacting her with details of their own difficulties in getting a hukou.

One woman in the group told the Post that she had agreed to adopt a newborn after the birth mother contacted her via social media and told her “just come and take the baby, I will never ask about the child, whether in sickness or in health”.

Another woman had been given a baby by a 25-year-old who did not even know who the child's father was and said she dared not take the baby home with her. Lawyers and campaigners have warned that the country's adoption laws need updating to suit current conditions.

The decades-long one-child policy was scrapped in 2015 when authorities raised the limit to two children, then to three in 2021.

Lu said the plight of women like Wei and He showed that the adoption laws were outdated.

These laws have changed over time along with the country's population policies.

Previously the adoption law had stated that children under 14 could be adopted if they had no legal guardian or the parents had “special difficulties” in caring for the child.

But those adopting the child had to be over the age of 30, with no children of their own and be judged capable of raising children.

But a new order issued in 2023, two years after the three-child limit came into force, said the birth parents needed to give a statement that they could not raise the child and explain their problems.

Meanwhile, the adopters would be asked to obtain a statement from local authorities stating how many children they already had as well as confirming their ability to raise the child.

Meanwhile the Civil Code, released in 2020, also included the over-30s rule and said adoptive parents should have “no child or only one child” and have no criminal record or “diseases making them unable to raise a child”.

But Lu argued that these requirements match the two-child policy rather than the three-child limit, adding that the law is too generalised and vague.

She said this meant local governments usually issued their own ordinances to fill out the details.

“For example, the law says those with ‘special difficulties’ may give up their child for adoption, but what does that mean? Does going to prison count as difficult? Is having no other relatives difficult?” she said.

The ageing Chinese town where the one-child policy worked too well

The strict adoption rules still have their defenders. Wang Zhenyao, director of the China Philanthropy Research Institute at Beijing Normal University, has warned in the past that government regulation is needed to stop disputes from hurting children.

“Adoption around the world is very strict. It must be child-centred and attach importance to the protection of children’s interests. People have basic dignity and cannot be treated as commodities,” he told China Youth Daily.

Wei acknowledged the trafficking issue, saying she had been accused of encouraging such crimes by the parents of missing children.

But she insisted there is another side to the story, citing the example of a friend of hers whose daughter died in an accident after being left at home when the mother had to go out to work and could not find anyone to care for her.

She had previously tried to give away the girl, but the adoptive parents returned her when they could not get a hukou.

Wei said this case had made her especially sad and she had visited the child’s body at the local funeral home, bringing offerings to help her rest in peace.

“I often wonder, if the child’s hukou issue had been solved, would she have lived?” Wei said.

### **The unyielding spirit of Tibet**

16 February 2025, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

For 66 long years, China has attempted to impose its rule over Tibet, yet it has spectacularly failed to win the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people. Despite relentless efforts through economic, political, and

cultural policies, the Chinese government has not succeeded in gaining the genuine support and loyalty of Tibetans. This failure can be attributed to three key factors: economic exploitation, political repression, and cultural erosion.

China’s economic policies in Tibet have been touted as developmental, but they have largely served to benefit Chinese interests at the expense of Tibetans. Infrastructure projects like the Qinghai-Tibet Railway have facilitated the influx of Chinese settlers, which has led to the economic marginalization of Tibetans. The economic benefits promised by these projects have largely bypassed the Tibetan population, deepening the socio-economic divide and fuelling resentment. Rather than bringing prosperity to Tibetans, these policies have exacerbated their economic struggles and fostered a sense of exploitation.

The Chinese government’s political control measures have been draconian and oppressive. Tibetan political dissent has been met with brutal crackdowns, arbitrary detentions, and human rights abuses. The imposition of strict surveillance, censorship, and re-education programs has created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) heavy-handed approach has only strengthened Tibetan resolve to resist and fight for their autonomy. The lack of political freedoms and self-determination has been a significant factor in the failure to win over Tibetans.

Backward Skip 10sPlay VideoForward Skip 10s

Perhaps the most profound reason for the failure of Chinese policies in Tibet is the systematic erosion of Tibetan culture and religion. The CCP has sought to Sinicize Tibetan culture, imposing Mandarin Chinese as the primary language and restricting religious practices. Monasteries have been demolished, religious leaders persecuted, and Tibetan traditions undermined. These actions have been perceived as an existential threat to the very identity of the Tibetan people. The deep-seated attachment to their cultural and religious heritage has fuelled Tibetan resistance and a strong sense of national identity. Despite six decades of Chinese occupation, the spirit of Tibetans remains unbroken. From the 1959 uprising to the more recent self-immolation protests, Tibetans have continually voiced their opposition to Chinese rule. The Tibetan government in exile, led by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), has played a crucial role in advocating for the rights of Tibetans and keeping their struggle alive on the international stage. If China truly wishes to achieve stability in Tibet, it must address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people and respect their cultural and religious rights. Only then can there be hope for a peaceful and harmonious future for Tibet.

## Why death of Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup is the 'end of an era' for Tibetan exiles

14 February 2025, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

Gyalo Thondup, who sought to mediate with Beijing, died aged 97 last week in his adopted Indian hometown

The death of Gyalo Thondup, elder brother to the 14th Dalai Lama and a prominent figure among exiled Tibetans, marks the “the end of an era” for attempted negotiations between Dharamsala and Beijing, according to observers.

Thondup's death also comes at a sensitive time for Tibet, with the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama expected to announce how his successor should be chosen when he reaches the age of 90 this July.

Thondup had long led negotiations with Beijing. Although those talks were suspended decades ago, his loss had deprived Tibetan exiles of an elder with first-hand experience of dealing with Beijing, the analysts said.

Thondup, one of six siblings of the Dalai Lama, died aged 97 on Saturday, in the Himalayan hill town of Kalimpong in eastern India.

A young Thondup left Tibet to settle in India in 1952 – the year after the People's Liberation Army seized Lhasa in what Beijing has termed a “peaceful liberation”.

He quickly became instrumental in raising international support for the “Tibetan cause”, which in his early years meant total independence – but was later changed to indicate a high degree of autonomy under Beijing's governance.

Thondup liaised with Indian and US officials to help the Dalai Lama flee Tibet in 1959, following a failed uprising against the PLA.

He was also among key Tibetan figures who reached out to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the 1950s for supplies to a 2,000-strong guerilla force that launched attacks against PLA troops as a Cold War proxy against communist China.

However, in his 2015 memoir, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong*, Thondup wrote, “In all my life, I have only one regret: my involvement with the CIA.”

He initially believed the US agency would help to achieve Tibetan independence but later realised this was “misguided and wishful thinking”. This was because the CIA sought only to “stir up trouble” and use Tibetans to “create misunderstandings and discord between China and India”, resulting in the deadly 1962 border war and the destruction of Tibetan culture and loss of Tibetan lives, he wrote.

According to Barry Sautman, a specialist on China's ethnic minorities and professor emeritus at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Thondup's “passing symbolises the end of the era in which

Tibetan émigrés gained ostensibly effective support from the West and India”.

“In the end, the arms, money, and accolades from these sources produced little for the émigrés, apart from visas that have now allowed many of them to migrate from South Asia to the West,” he said.

Since the 1970s, in a departure from his earlier radical approach, Thondup had played a crucial role in discussions between China's central government and the Dalai Lama's faction as his envoy – aided by his fluent Mandarin gained from studying in Nanjing, a rare skill among senior officials of the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Thondup became the second-most influential figure in the Tibetan community, after the Dalai Lama. From 1991 to 1993, he served as chairman of the Tibetan government-in-exile based in the northern Indian hill town of Dharamsala – home to his famous younger brother.

Among Thondup's most notable achievements was a historic meeting in 1979 with paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, which laid the groundwork for a series of negotiations with Beijing until they stalled in 2010.

He was one Tibetan “who met with Deng Xiaoping and brought China closer than at any other time to resolving its conflict over Tibet”, said Robert Barnett, professorial research associate at SOAS University of London.

Barnett, who also founded the Modern Tibetan Studies Programme at Columbia University, said Thondup's death was “of great significance” as it had brought “China's leaders ever closer to the point when there are no Tibetan, Mongolian or other non-Chinese leaders alive who can personally remind the [Communist] Party of the promises of autonomy and cultural tolerance it made to them in the 1950s and sometimes again in the late 1970s but has since discarded”.

Under a 17-point agreement between Tibetan officials and the central government signed in May 1951, Beijing pledged autonomy for Tibet and promised not to change its political system and cultural practices, while agreeing that the Dalai Lama would remain the leader of Tibet, with its military to merge with the PLA. The pact fell apart after the failed uprising of March 1959, and the Dalai Lama and several thousand other Tibetans fled to India.

Tibetans in exile march in solidarity with Dalai Lama in India

The meeting between Deng and Thondup represented a rare opportunity for direct dialogue after two decades of suspicion and conflict, and Deng's willingness to engage suggested a potential thaw in relations. But, according to Thondup's autobiography, Deng ultimately reneged on his promises to grant certain concessions to Tibetans.

“My visit with Deng Xiaoping opened a whole new chapter in our relations with both China and Tibet. The single most important sentence in my conversation with Deng was that except for independence, everything could be discussed,” he wrote in his memoir.

That sentence, however, is absent from Beijing’s records, and Chinese Tibetologists told local media that party archives did not contain those words from Deng.

Thondup’s death also gives rise to concerns for the future of the Tibetan diaspora as the older generation of leaders fades, according to observers, particularly as many younger Tibetans have moved to the West and often cannot communicate well in Mandarin and lack experience of direct engagement with Beijing.

There are concerns also about potential social tensions after the Dalai Lama dies and reincarnates as per centuries of Tibetan Buddhist tradition. His decision on who that would be is expected to be made clear this year, as the Dalai Lama has promised, but this might be challenged by Beijing.

Beijing is expected to insist on following the traditional succession process while the Dalai Lama has previously suggested ending the reincarnation tradition to prevent interference – as the traditional process for Beijing would require approval of the candidate by the central government.

In a 2003 interview with the US-backed Radio Free Asia, Thondup said that neither India nor the United States could resolve the Tibetan issue, and that any progress would need to be achieved through direct negotiations with Beijing.

Thondup appeared to have come to recognise that “no progress could be made” in dialogue with Beijing as long as exiles maintained that “Tibet had never been part of China”, a perspective that led to his being “denounced” and “sidelined” by key forces among the exiles, said Sautman, who is also a visiting professor at Tsinghua University.

“His younger brother, the Dalai Lama, has continued to promote the ‘not part of China’ or ‘occupied country’ position,” Sautman added, calling it “one reason why there have been no significant negotiations between the émigré administration and the Chinese government since 2010”.

Tourists fight for photo spot in Lhasa

In commenting on Thondup’s death, the Chinese foreign ministry on Monday reiterated several preconditions to resuming dialogue about the Dalai Lama’s personal future – including the need for him to recognise Tibet and Taiwan as “an inseparable part of China” and to abandon his stance on Tibetan independence.

These preconditions have long been rejected by the Tibetan government-in-exile – but it revealed to Indian

media last year that some backchannel contact had resumed in 2023.

The Tibetan government-in-exile and the Dalai Lama’s office did not respond to emails requesting comment. Sautman said any return to negotiations would require the Dalai Lama to change his “basic political orientation” and conclude “the émigré cause ... has no future”.

“The Tibetan émigrés can prepare themselves better by reaching an accommodation with the Chinese government that will at least allow ‘moderate’ people from the émigré community to individually come to live in China .... and acquaint themselves with its politics, society and culture,” he said.

“That however would require establishing a level of trust that at present does not exist.”

### China’s military is proving to be a Paper Dragon

14 February 2025, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Ashish Singh

For years, China has projected an image of military invincibility, flaunting hypersonic missile tests, unveiling stealth fighter jets, and orchestrating grand military parades designed to impress the world. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA), with its vast personnel and deep state backing, is often perceived as a force capable of challenging the United States and its allies. Yet, beneath the carefully curated spectacle lies an underwhelming reality—one defined by systemic weaknesses, unproven capabilities, and mounting strategic vulnerabilities. From unreliable weaponry, an ill-prepared conscript army, rampant corruption, and a lack of combat experience, China’s military remains more of a paper dragon than a formidable war machine. TECHNOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS AND WEAPON FAILURES

China has carefully constructed an image of military dominance through state-controlled media, selective leaks of supposed technological breakthroughs, and aggressive propaganda. But the reality on the ground often tells a different story. While Beijing has invested heavily in its military-industrial complex, many of its advancements are reverse-engineered copies of foreign designs, struggling to match the quality and reliability of their Western counterparts. The much-touted J-20 stealth fighter, often compared to America’s F-35, continues to suffer from engine limitations, avionics shortfalls, and questionable stealth capabilities. Reports indicate that China has yet to mass-produce its WS-15 engine, forcing it to rely on outdated Russian AL-31F engines, which significantly undercut the J-20’s performance in combat scenarios. Similarly, China’s hypersonic missile tests, while impressive in state-controlled narratives, remain unproven in actual warfare. Many of these weapons

have not been tested under battlefield conditions, raising doubts about their reliability.

**CHINA'S STRUGGLES IN THE GLOBAL ARMS MARKET**  
China's efforts to become a major arms exporter have been plagued by complaints of poor quality, frequent malfunctions, and high maintenance costs. Many nations that opted for Chinese military equipment due to lower costs have encountered significant reliability issues. Pakistan, China's closest military client, has repeatedly reported engine failures, avionics malfunctions, and structural weaknesses in its fleet of JF-17 Thunder fighter jets. Bangladesh's Navy suffered severe mechanical failures in its newly acquired Chinese-built frigates, forcing costly repairs within just months of commissioning. Myanmar's Air Force had to ground eleven Chinese-made JF-17 jets in 2022 due to radar and structural defects that made them unsafe for operational use. Nigeria's Air Force was forced to return multiple Chinese F-7 fighter jets after persistent engine failures made them unreliable. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China's arms exports declined by 7.8% between 2016 and 2020, with a 23% drop in value from 2013-2017 to 2018-2022. This downward trend has not really gotten any better and reflects a growing realisation among global buyers that Chinese weapons are cheaper but highly unreliable.

**PLA'S CONSCRIPT WEAKNESS VS INDIA'S PROFESSIONAL ARMY**

A strong military is not built on numbers alone. The PLA relies on a conscript-heavy model, with nearly 400,000 new recruits annually serving for just two years before being rotated out. This leads to a lack of battlefield cohesion, limited training cycles, and weak operational continuity, all of which reduce the PLA's ability to fight prolonged wars. By contrast, the Indian Army is an all-volunteer force, steeped in regimental traditions and honed by decades of counterinsurgency and high-altitude warfare experience. India's soldiers are trained for sustained deployments in extreme conditions—something the PLA lacks. This was evident in the 2020 Galwan Valley clash, where Indian troops, conditioned by years of Himalayan deployments, held their ground despite being outnumbered. The PLA soldiers, unaccustomed to hand-to-hand combat in harsh environments, suffered heavy casualties and withdrew. While the exact numbers of Chinese casualties are not known as a result of being kept hidden by Beijing, reports

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indicate the body count to be far higher.

**ENDEMIC CORRUPTION IN THE PLA**  
Beyond training deficiencies, China's military modernisation efforts have been crippled by widespread corruption. Investigations have revealed a

deeply entrenched system of bribery, fraud, and kickbacks that has compromised the PLA's operational effectiveness. A 2023 investigation found that PLA missile inventories included defective weapons; in some cases, missiles were filled with water instead of fuel.

Two consecutive Chinese defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu, were removed amid corruption scandals, raising concerns about how much of China's military budget is being siphoned away by senior officials. Promotions within the PLA are often secured through bribes rather than merit, resulting in unqualified officers leading critical military units. Despite Xi Jinping's decade-long anti-corruption drive, PLA corruption remains endemic, affecting military procurement, battlefield readiness, and the lack of a merit-based military leadership structure.

**CHINA'S HESITATION TO ESCALATE AGAINST INDIA**  
Despite its aggressive rhetoric, China has avoided escalating its conflict with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The reason is China's inability to sustain high-altitude warfare and its logistical vulnerabilities in the Himalayas. Unlike the Indian Army, which maintains a year-round presence at high altitudes, PLA troops rotate in and out due to acclimatisation difficulties.

Reports indicate that many Chinese soldiers suffer from altitude sickness and cold-weather injuries, further weakening their ability to engage in prolonged conflicts. Moreover, while India's Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has built extensive infrastructure—bridges, roads, and airstrips—to maintain supply lines, China struggles to sustain logistics in Tibet. In the event of a war of attrition, India holds the upper hand in sustaining troop movements and supplies.

**TWO-FRONT DILEMMA: TAIWAN AND INDIA**  
China's military ambitions are constrained by its two-front dilemma, having to prepare for a potential Taiwan invasion while maintaining forces along the Indian border. The Pentagon's 2023 China Military Report noted that diverting PLA forces to the Indian border weakens China's deterrence capabilities against Taiwan and the US Navy. India's growing defence cooperation with the Quad alliance, comprising the US, Japan, and Australia, increases regional deterrence against Chinese aggression. A prolonged border conflict with India could overstretch China's military resources, limiting its ability to focus on maritime expansion in the Indo-Pacific.

**XI JINPING'S OVEREXTENDED AMBITIONS**  
Xi Jinping has staked his leadership on China's rise as a global military power, yet the PLA's failures are mounting. The inability to impose a new status quo on India, combined with growing concerns over corruption and operational inefficiencies, exposes the fragility of Beijing's military ambitions. Meanwhile,



China's economic slowdown, coupled with declining foreign investment and a real estate crisis, is straining its military budget. For all of China's aggressive posturing, its ability to sustain a prolonged military engagement remains highly questionable.

**A POWER BUILT ON ILLUSIONS**  
China's military may look formidable in state-controlled media, but the reality is far less imposing. The PLA's combat effectiveness is highly questionable, as it has unreliable weapons, an inexperienced conscript army, endemic corruption, and severe logistical challenges. In modern warfare, victories are secured by experienced soldiers, reliable equipment, resilience and astute military leadership from the tactical to strategic level—qualities India's military possesses in abundance. In contrast, China's military remains a paper dragon, vulnerable to exposure when tested in actual combat.

### **Cascading Effects: Will China's New Dam Create A Himalayan Rift?**

15 February 2025, [The National Interest](#), Jagannath Panda and Mrityika Guha Sarkar

#### ***Chinese hydroelectric power plans in Tibet threaten to destabilize the Himalayan region's ecology and politics.***

In mid-December, China marked the thirtieth anniversary of the official inauguration of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, the world's largest hydroelectric project (in terms of installed capacity). Notwithstanding the decades-long ecological controversies surrounding the dam, the Chinese government has boosted the project as a hallmark of its economic development policies.

Days after the anniversary, Chinese state media announced that the government had approved another massive hydropower project in the lower reaches of the world's highest river, Yarlung Zangbo (or "Yarlung Tsangpo," the Tibetan name for the river also known as the Brahmaputra in India, which becomes the Jamuna River once it enters Bangladesh). Reports of a new mega-dam are not new. In 2020, state media crowed about building a "historic" hydroelectric project in Tibet. However, speculation about China damming the Yarlung Tsangpo-Brahmaputra at the remote "Great Bend" of the river swirled long before President Xi Jinping came to power.

Unfortunately, China's push for mega dams has become a routine headline-grabber, showcasing the country's engineering capabilities and renewable energy ambitions. Alongside these mega-dams, China has also invested heavily in Small Hydropower Projects (SHP). These smaller-scale developments have helped to position China as a model for developing countries, offering sustainable and decentralized energy

solutions, particularly in rural and remote areas. While SHPs have played a significant role in addressing domestic energy challenges, they complement rather than replace the broader strategy of large-scale hydropower development.

However, the continued protests in Tibet against China's over-damming of rivers that originate in the Tibetan glaciers, as well as protests from downstream countries like India and Bangladesh, have put the spotlight on China's true aims. China's unilateral pursuit of hydroelectric and water resources in transnational rivers belie its claims to be acting solely in the interests of "economic development" and "climate neutrality."

#### **The Numbers Game**

The proposed Medog Hydropower Station in Tibet represents a monumental leap in China's ambition to harness its water resources. However, the details surrounding the project remain largely opaque. The available information showcases China's political intent and technological prowess as well as the complex costs and challenges inherent in such a massive undertaking.

The project's scale is unparalleled. Expected to generate over 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually—more than triple the capacity of the Three Gorges Dam—the project is projected to cost upwards of \$137 billion, dwarfing the Three Gorges' \$34 billion price tag. These figures underscore China's determination to assert itself as a leader in renewable energy infrastructure. Yet, they also raise questions about the broader implications of such a colossal endeavor.

The dam is situated in the Indo-Tsangpo Suture Zone, a seismically active region of the Himalayas where the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates converge. This location presents significant structural resilience challenges. The 2011 Sikkim earthquake near the Indian border serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of Himalayan hydropower projects to tectonic stresses. Furthermore, the project's construction runs the risk of exacerbating geological instability, triggering landslides or earthquakes with potentially catastrophic consequences for local communities and downstream ecosystems. The Medog project, located in one of the rainiest parts of mainland China, further amplifies these risks due to its reliance on unpredictable hydrological and geological conditions.

China's earlier hydropower projects, such as the Three Gorges Dam, have demonstrated the unintended consequences of large-scale sediment disruption, including reduced agricultural productivity and diminished biodiversity downstream. The Yarlung Zangbo River, the lifeblood of many ecosystems in South Asia, could face similar degradation, affecting

not just local environments but also neighboring countries dependent on its waters.

Socially, the project's human impact is equally troubling. Medog County, with a population of around 14,000, may see fewer displacements compared to the 1.4 million uprooted by the Three Gorges Dam, but even limited relocation carries profound consequences. The loss of livelihoods, cultural heritage, and social cohesion can marginalize affected communities, creating long-term challenges.

### **Inflaming The Tibetan Ecosystem**

China's continued push for dams on Tibetan rivers is a direct result of its growing demands for not only water for drinking and other purposes but also electricity amid shrinking resources. This latter demand, in turn, is in large part compounded by China's expanding infrastructure activities in Tibet, mainland China, and in the border areas.

Undoubtedly, the over-damming will weaken the Tibetan Plateau's ecosystem, which is already under strain due to global warming. The Tibetan Plateau, often referred to as the "Third Pole," is warming at a rate nearly two times the global average. This accelerated warming is melting glaciers rapidly, destabilizing seasonal river flows, and increasing sedimentation risks in dam reservoirs. Additionally, aerosol deposits in the region further amplify glacial retreat, compounding risks for downstream populations and ecosystems. These cascading climate risks not only endanger ecosystems but also exacerbate security concerns.

Water scarcity driven by glacial retreat could heighten cross-border tensions over resource access, particularly between India and China, where disputes over water-sharing remain unresolved. The infrastructure activities by China are bound to increase environmental disasters such as flash floods and earthquakes. For example, after the floods in 2020 that strained China's dams and crippled domestic woes, debates over whether such dams, including the Three Gorges Dam, were truly necessary to get a new lease.

However, China has insisted on whitewashing the concerns around its over-exploitation of Tibetan resources as efforts that are contributing to climate action, primarily as projects that will usher in cleaner, green energy and reduce China's dependence on coal-fired thermal power plants. China claims that the latest project will allow it to achieve its stated objectives of reaching a carbon emissions peak before 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060.

Notably, even as the state media and officials have insisted that such hydropower constructions have mitigated the possibilities of higher losses and are built to withstand immense pressures, critics have correctly emphasized the limits of human control. They argue

that hydropower projects like the Medog Dam undermine sustainable development. Case studies from the Lancang-Mekong River reveal that large dams reduce sediment flow by over 50 percent, leading to biodiversity collapse and fish population declines. This mirrors the risks facing the Yarlung Tsangpo Basin, as unchecked damming could destabilize critical ecosystems.

### **Strategic Implications For Himalayan States In South Asia**

Not just the Tibetans but Himalayan states as a whole will bear the brunt of China's goals. In response to China's aforementioned infrastructure (damming) activities in the vicinity of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, India submitted its concerns to Beijing: "The Chinese side has been urged to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas."

More to the point, India has already initiated plans to build dams on the tributaries of Brahmaputra. These hydropower projects are part of India's broader strategy to counterbalance China's dam-building spree. However, without regional coordination, such efforts risk compounding ecological harm in the fragile region. Additionally, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) extends its geopolitical influence across South Asia, leveraging massive infrastructure projects to strengthen economic ties with Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Bhutan.

As per Indian media reports, the Indian government has initiated the development of thirteen hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh, with an investment of INR 1.4 lakh crore (~\$16 billion). In August 2023, it signed a memorandum of agreement with NEEPCO, SJVN, and NHPC to execute these stalled projects, totaling a capacity of 11.2 GW. This strategic push reflects India's assertive stance on harnessing its hydropower potential. However, success depends on addressing environmental concerns and local opposition, as well as ensuring transparency.

Already, the 2020 Galwan clash and China's ongoing strategy of claiming territories in the Himalayas (e.g., the new standard map in 2023 and the China-Nepal boundary row in Humla in 2020) have almost permanently heightened tensions along China's borders, the intermittent thaws notwithstanding. Another layer was added to the India-China long-standing mistrust when China—in the same month as the announcement of the Medog Dam—created two new counties, one of which is contested by India since it falls within India's Union Territory of Ladakh.

Notably, China is challenging the "trans-Himalayan balance of power" via its infrastructure projects as well as financial and political clout in South Asia, primarily Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. This trans-Himalayan contest extends beyond traditional territorial disputes, as water security is increasingly

intertwined with broader geopolitical rivalries. The Medog Dam grants China significant upstream control over the Brahmaputra, raising fears of strategic weaponization of water during conflicts. Such control could enable China to influence downstream water availability, particularly during the dry season, potentially crippling agriculture and hydroelectric output in India and Bangladesh.

The good news is that the recently concluded special representatives meeting has provided momentum for further strategic dialogue between India and China, including the sharing of data on transboundary rivers. Yet China's announcement about building a contested dam on the Brahmaputra will give rise to new misgivings on the bilateral front. Beyond bilateral concerns, the Medog Dam underscores China's evolving "hydro-hegemony," where control over shared water resources becomes a strategic tool for regional influence. This is reminiscent of China's activities along the Mekong River, where damming has curtailed flow to downstream nations, amplifying droughts and increasing dependency on Beijing for water management solutions.

In South Asia, India's response has been largely reactive and has been characterized by stalled or delayed dam projects in Arunachal Pradesh. This reflects a lack of cohesive strategy in dealing with China's upstream dominance. The failure of past deals to share adequate water data (e.g., China's refusal to cooperate during the Doklam standoff) and the apparent lack of willingness on China's part to foster consensus continue to exacerbate existing challenges.

#### **Catalyzing Targeted Strategies**

Building on the analysis of China's hydro-hegemony and its cascading impacts, fostering regional stability and sustainable development requires targeted strategies that address both geopolitical tensions and environmental concerns. While the realities of South Asian geopolitics make sweeping agreements challenging, incremental steps rooted in collaboration and pragmatism offer a way forward. The absence of robust transboundary water-sharing agreements exacerbates mistrust among nations.

Expanding existing bilateral mechanisms into a formal transboundary water-sharing framework remains essential. While a Mekong River Commission-style agreement may be ambitious, incremental steps like joint hydrological monitoring and sediment data-sharing could build trust and provide a foundation for future negotiations. At the same time, South Asia must diversify its energy strategy. Collaborative solar and wind energy projects along India-Nepal or India-Bangladesh borders can alleviate energy pressures while reducing reliance on ecologically damaging hydropower. These initiatives could also dilute China's infrastructural dominance in the region.

Finally, a participatory approach to infrastructure planning is vital. Including local and indigenous voices in development decisions, as seen in India's sovereign state in Sikkim's smaller hydropower projects, could help balance ecological preservation with energy needs. The hope remains that the stakeholder countries will place ecological and regional stability above their domestic agendas.

#### **The Tibetan Struggle**

15 February 2025, [Tibetan Review](#), Phuntsog Wangyal

*The history of Tibetan negotiations with China thus far has been a saga of failures, was marked by lack of good faith from the other side, were held between inherently unequal sides, and they all bear testimony to the fact that there is no alternative to abiding by the struggle for independence so long as the entrenched current political dispensation in Beijing continues, argues Phuntsog Wangyal.\**

Tibetans have lived under Chinese occupation for 75 long years. After the forced annexation of Tibet, China's strategy of winning Tibetans over through material prosperity has failed. A subsequent approach has been to win over the Dalai Lama to their side of the argument. Since 1979, several such attempts have been made, including inviting the Dalai Lama to send delegations to Tibet and initiating talks in Beijing. Now, 45 years later, it is clear that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) warm words have never been backed by action.

Recently, the Tibetan government in Dharamsala stated that the Chinese government is "reaching out to us," though Beijing has not publicly confirmed this. Is this a genuine change in China's strategy, or is it a subtle stratagem to lure Tibetans into a dangerous position? If, as I suspect, it is the latter, we must be extremely cautious not to fall into another carefully laid trap. Any negotiations between Dharamsala and Beijing are inherently unequal; Tibet's leverage is minuscule compared to that of the world's second-largest economy. Under such circumstances, no negotiation should take place in private or without the presence of a trusted international mediator to ensure fairness.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has stated that "*Tibet, historically, has never been part of China.*" However, he has not explicitly said that Tibet will never be part of China. On the contrary, he has indicated that Tibet could accept "*genuine autonomy within China*" under the Chinese Constitution—an idea that essentially concedes Tibet's incorporation into China if conditions were more favourable. This is as precarious as walking on a precipice. It is important to recognize that the Chinese Constitution is not the constitution of a democratic state, as seen in Western countries. It is, in

reality, the constitution of the CCP. China does not care about international law—only about what strengthens its power.

The ultimate goal of the Tibetan people has always been an independent Tibet. We have all heard the slogan “*Never give up!*” many times. I take this as a call to never abandon hope—the hope for our fundamental right to exist as a people and a nation. Any weakness on the part of the Tibetan government—such as accepting Tibet’s status within China under the Communist constitution, the failure of those close to our government (both Tibetans and non-Tibetans) to push for clear objectives, or the CCP’s long-term strategy of assimilating the next generation of Tibetans into Chinese culture—fills me with deep concern.

While some recent articles on Tibet highlight the failures of the Chinese government—music to Tibetan ears—they overlook crucial points. Tibetans and their supporters must be realistic. The next generation of young Tibetans has already been largely cut off from their native culture, traditions, families, language, and religion. Most are unable to read Tibetan and instead use Chinese to learn and communicate. Tibetan culture, for many, has become a distant wish, a dream to be cherished but not practiced—much like the experience of the Māori in New Zealand or Native Americans in the United States, whose cultures have become museum pieces within the dominant cultures that assimilated them.

Past negotiations with China have yielded nothing meaningful for Tibetans. Some argue that the failure lies in our negotiators’ lack of the right skills. But the real issue is not only how negotiations are conducted, but what is being negotiated. Negotiators must have a clear understanding of their objectives and the leverage they hold. Without a clear goal, the battle is lost before it even begins, and the enemy grows bolder as they push toward their ultimate aim—to turn Tibetans into Chinese and Tibet into Xizang. Given the imbalance of power, a neutral mediator is essential to ensure fair negotiations.

Secondly, Tibetans must recognize the CCP’s endless deception and bad faith. Seventy years of concessions have achieved nothing for Tibetans. Instead, they have emboldened China to implement its Final Resolution—a plan that is already well underway. The CCP has systematically sown confusion within the Tibetan community, frustrated Tibetan leadership, and forced further concessions from Tibetans.

China has made many mistakes in its brutal treatment of Tibetans, but it will not relent. Its latest and more subtle strategy is to provide economic prosperity while ensuring the complete assimilation of young Tibetans into Chinese identity. Although the CCP may not be as confident as it projects, it still wields enough power to control its people domestically and confront perceived

threats abroad. It also has powerful AI systems—such as the recently launched DeepSeek—to spread its version of history. For the CCP, security is paramount—safeguarding its so-called Motherland—and it trusts no one, not even the Dalai Lama.

Tibetans, for their part, cling to the hope of internal change within China while hesitating to clearly define what they truly want—independence. Instead, they wait for miraculous developments. But realistically, unless the CCP collapses, there is little chance of a significant shift in China’s Tibet policy.

Tibetans are strong believers in the impermanence of all things. The CCP will not last forever. Tibetans and their supporters must oppose China’s latest strategy and recognize Chinese criticism of the Dalai Lama for what it is—a deliberate provocation. The Resolve Tibet Act is a step in the right direction. It challenges China’s historical claims over Tibet, exposing them as self-serving fabrications. This is the strategy Tibetans and their supporters must adopt. It strikes at the very foundation of China’s control over Tibet. Tibetans must continue the struggle and, above all, clearly define what they are fighting for. Only then will there be a vision and a direction for the future.

Perhaps it is fitting to recall the words of Thubten Jigme Norbu, the Dalai Lama’s eldest brother, who spoke outside the Chinese Embassy in 1995 after completing a 25-day march from Washington to New York:

“It is important that we speak up here so that the people inside the Chinese Embassy know that no matter what methods they use to suppress the desires of the Tibetan people, the Tibetan struggle for independence will always continue. It will not end until the legitimate hopes and desires of the Tibetan people—their inalienable right to independence, not some sort of ‘autonomy’ within China—are realized. We cannot and will not fly half the Tibetan flag. Our entire flag must be flown all over the world, including at the United Nations. We will not occupy one half of a seat at the United Nations. We have the right to a full seat.”

### **A childish act with geopolitical consequences**

14 February 2025, [The Contrarian](#), Brian O’Neill

How Trump renaming the Gulf of Mexico could give China cover to claim the South China Sea and more.

Americans opening Google Maps will see a new name for the Gulf of Mexico. Following Donald Trump’s executive order, the body of water is now labeled the “Gulf of America.” This trivial, nationalist rebranding seems designed more to stoke domestic applause than to serve any meaningful purpose. Given the array of global crises demanding attention—from conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East to tensions in the

Pacific—it's hard to imagine a less pressing concern for a U.S. president than renaming a body of water.

But this act, unserious as it might seem, should not be dismissed outright. Not because it fundamentally changes anything—Mexico is unlikely to redraw its own maps, nor will the United Nations amend maritime boundaries—but because of the precedent it sets. If Trump, or any U.S. leader, can unilaterally rename a major international feature and have it reflected in digital cartography, China will take note. And unlike Trump's transparent attempt at nationalist theater, Beijing's territorial renaming efforts carry far more serious implications.

China has long used maps as a tool of statecraft. From Tibet to the South China Sea, Beijing has systematically redefined geography to justify its territorial claims. In the South China Sea, it has renamed dozens of geographical features, reinforcing its claims over contested waters. In 2023, China's Ministry of Natural Resources issued new names for eight Russian cities in the Far East, reasserting historical claims to territories ceded under 19th-century treaties. Last year, Beijing unilaterally renamed locations in Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian-administered region China refers to as Zangnan, claiming it has been Chinese territory "since ancient times."

For China, these are not arbitrary gestures. They are part of a deliberate strategy to reshape international narratives. The logic is simple: If maps reflect Beijing's preferred terminology long enough, those terms begin to take hold. Over time, an artificial name change can morph into a broader claim of historical legitimacy.

Chinese maps label almost the entire South China Sea as theirs. School textbooks reinforce the notion that disputed territories are integral parts of China. When international companies use the "wrong" terminology—listing Taiwan as separate from China, for instance—Beijing pressures them into compliance. Previously, the United States could argue that unilateral renaming of geographical features to serve territorial ambitions was a bad-faith tactic employed by revisionist states such as China; in fact Trump's first administration explicitly rejected China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and championed a rules-based order. Now, with the renaming the Gulf of Mexico by fiat, the president has eroded that argument—though he has shown little regard for contradicting himself or ignoring diplomatic norms. If the United States can arbitrarily rename a major body of water to serve domestic nationalist narratives, how can it credibly challenge China's renaming of Arunachal Pradesh or the South China Sea, let alone China's use of these claims to justify further actions in Taiwan?

Perhaps none of this should be surprising. Trump's relationship with maps has always been transactional—tools for self-importance rather than

serious geopolitical instruments. One can easily imagine him sitting in the Oval Office, a Sharpie in hand, expanding Florida's borders southward to include Panama and possibly Cuba—Guantánamo Bay, of course, would get extra bold underlining. It's not far removed from his infamous "Sharpiegate" episode, when he altered a hurricane projection map to justify his false claim that Alabama was in the storm's path.

The logic here is the same: Territory is whatever Trump decides it to be. If he can redraw a weather map, why not a maritime border? If he can rename the Gulf of Mexico, why not extend U.S. territorial waters all the way down to the Panama Canal? The problem is that international boundaries aren't as forgiving as ink on a White House briefing map.

Unlike Trump's renaming action, which carries, at least for now, little substantive weight beyond nationalistic signaling, China's territorial assertions are backed by military force, economic pressure, and political coercion. The South China Sea is perhaps the most blatant example of this strategy. China has built and militarized at least seven artificial islands in the Spratly Islands, a region contested by Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and others. Despite an international tribunal ruling in 2016 that rejected China's sweeping maritime claims, Beijing has ignored the ruling and expanded its military footprint, deploying naval vessels and fortifying bases with runways, missile systems, and radar installations. The Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia regularly report Chinese military harassment of their vessels, with Chinese coast guard and militia ships ramming foreign fishing boats and blocking resupply missions. China now treats much of the South China Sea as de facto sovereign territory, despite protests from regional nations and the United States.

What appears to be a trivial renaming of the gulf might be viewed by Beijing as an acknowledgment of its own geographic revisions and actions to date. Whether its next steps are measured or overtly aggressive, Beijing will undoubtedly frame them as defensive measures rooted in historical entitlement.

Trump's defenders might dismiss such concerns as overstatement, arguing that the Gulf of America decree is merely a superficial flex of executive power. But in geopolitics, precedent matters. This act—ostensibly symbolic—provides adversaries with a pretext to justify their own territorial maneuvers, reinforcing their claims under the guise of historical correction. Their interpretation will not lead to cautious recalibrations of their strategic aims; it will be seen as yet another opportunity to exploit.

For China, a nation that has made cartographic warfare a central pillar of its expansionist ambitions, this is an opportunity that will not be wasted. The Gulf of America might not just be a joke—it might be

remembered as yet another justification for Beijing's next move.

### **Trump thinks antagonising China will help save the US economy. He couldn't be more wrong**

14 February 2025, [The Guardian](#), Melanie Brusseler

Politicians believe tariffs will revive a lost era of American manufacturing. But they won't improve people's everyday lives

Donald Trump appears to be testing the boundaries of the power he can accumulate and then exert upon his allies, with a singular ambition: to coerce them into submitting to US supremacy. Though the president temporarily walked back his threat to unleash severe universal tariffs on Mexico and Canada, he has since imposed 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports, which will primarily hit Canada, Mexico and China, and has announced a new plan for "reciprocal tariffs" on American trading partners. Above all, he clearly intends to wage a trade war against China. His brash, bombastic and belligerent threats reflect the reactionary political energy that drove his rise, which feeds on displays of dominance and disruption. His trade war won't work to restore US economic dominance – but it tells us a lot about how both sides of the political aisle blame the US's economic precarity on China's economic ascent.

Over the past decade both Democrats and Republicans have blamed growing economic discontent on the sharp decline of American industry. The share of the US workforce employed in manufacturing has been in decline since the 1950s: today, just over 8% of American workers are employed in manufacturing, compared with 32% in 1953. The postwar era holds a powerful resonance for both the right and the left, and is often romanticised as a period when unionised male breadwinners in the industrial working class enjoyed far greater economic stability and prosperity than working and middle-class people do today. Viewed through this prism, since the decline of US manufacturing has occurred at the same time that China has emerged as a global manufacturing powerhouse, China's gains equate to the US's – and its workers' – losses.

It follows from this that trade protectionism against China will restore manufacturing employment, re-establish American hegemony, and help to make the US economy great again for working people. And it's not just Trump who has fallen for this story. The Biden administration largely maintained the average 21% tariffs against China that Trump imposed in his first term, expanding their scope to cover Chinese-made electric vehicles, silicon chips and lithium batteries. So far, Trump has imposed an additional 10% tariff on Chinese imports and may revoke a previous

exemption for cheap direct to consumer purchases, with the threat that the US will further escalate if China retaliates. China, for its part, has already responded with far less aggressive but quite strategic levies, ranging from 10% to 15% on a selection of American imports including coal and crude oil, and put strict export controls on a list of critical minerals.

This escalating trade war may not result in the aggressive 60% tariffs on all Chinese imports that Trump called for on the campaign trail. But it will still exacerbate the problem that he is ostensibly seeking to solve. Tariffs work better on paper than they do in practice. While they can theoretically help to boost domestic manufacturing by subsidising the domestic producers of goods that Americans consume or trade abroad, broad-based tariffs actually function as an inflationary and regressive tax on middle and working-class people. In order for tariffs to boost manufacturing, corporations have to earn a profit from them, and decide to then increase investment to expand production. But there's no guarantee that they will spend this surplus money on building new manufacturing plants and not on, say, increasing shareholder dividends.

And there's no guarantee that tariffs will necessarily increase profits, either. In fact, since tariffs increase the costs of goods across supply chains, and create inflation that will probably lead to an interest rate hike, they may simply make the cost of production more expensive. Meanwhile, Trump's tariffs on Chinese imports, together with the tax cuts that many people expect him to make, will probably do the opposite of boosting the US manufacturing sector, by strengthening the dollar – which will cheapen imports and make US exports more expensive and less competitive.

Taken together, all of these side-effects mean that Trump's trade war will sow economic pain and do very little to support domestic manufacturing. One might imagine that this could play into the Democrats' hands in the 2026 midterm elections. That would be misguided. Trump rose to power by leveraging the US' politically explosive economic crisis. But he certainly doesn't need to resolve this crisis to maintain popularity, nor for the Republican right to secure future electoral victories. If anything, he stands to gain more from stoking the flames, and channelling this anger into nationalism, racism, transphobia and misogyny. Reactionary politics feeds on and ignites resentment, and Trumpism works by appearing to continually upend the system while lashing out at enemies whom he claims are making Americans' lives worse.

Trump's return to power raises an even bigger question for progressives. Can boosting US manufacturing and reducing its trade deficit with China ameliorate the economic distress experienced

by many Americans? Could a more tame, sane approach to trade protectionism help dismantle the new rightwing republic that Trump and his reactionary front are attempting to build? The Biden administration was explicitly betting on this. It sought to contain Trumpism by stoking a rapid post-Covid economic recovery – especially for the labour market. It attempted to boost domestic manufacturing by using light trade restrictions, such as more limited tariffs and export controls, and embracing industrial policy.

Bidenomics was an attempt to revive what the economic historian Gabriel Winant described in a recent interview as “a historic connection in the mid-twentieth century between productivity growth and manufacturing and the possibility of a more egalitarian labor market and social structure”. Back then, the rising productivity unique to manufacturing increased the wages, bargaining power and living standards of the working and middle class, without requiring further state-led redistributive measures such as increasing corporate taxation or creating European-style social welfare systems. As an anti-Trumpian project, Bidenomics rested on the assumption that American workers would be able to successfully press for higher wages amid a growing, reindustrialising economy, and that this would be enough to keep Trumpism at bay. This gamble did not pay off.

It would be shortsighted for the Democratic party to now abandon the good aspects of Bidenomics, such as public investment and support for full employment, and turn instead towards anti-China trade antagonism. The past decade of US politics and economic policymaking has been defined by the twinned force of pervasive economic distress and bipartisan consensus to refuse to address it head on. How can the US deliver affordable, universal and high-quality housing, healthcare and education? How do we make employment in the care and service economy – where the American working class now works – dignified and well-paying? How can we deliver rapid decarbonisation, end stagnation and reduce inequalities of wealth and power within and between countries? How do we wrest power from corporations and the wealthy towards everyday Americans? This is the stuff of class war, not trade war.

### **Why death of Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup is the 'end of an era' for Tibetan exiles**

14 February 2025, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

**Gyalo Thondup, who sought to mediate with Beijing, died aged 97 last week in his adopted Indian hometown**

### **Does Anyone Care About the Climate Crisis in Tibet?**

12 February 2025, [The Diplomat](#), Jagannath Panda

The CCP's religious and cultural repression on the Tibetan Plateau is also feeding an ecological crisis. The response from the world has been a deafening silence.

In early January, a powerful 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck the remote Dingri county (Shigatse) on the Tibetan Plateau, generating thousands of aftershocks within the first three days. The ripple effects were felt in neighboring Bhutan, India, and Nepal. It was the most severe earthquake to impact the Himalayan region in the past century. Media observers have argued that this natural disaster may serve as an indicator of the deleterious effects of China's unsustainable exploitation of Tibetan ecological resources to satisfy its domestic developmental imperatives.

Days before the earthquake, in late December, China had announced plans to build one of the largest hydroprojects in the world on Tibet's Yarlung Tsangpo River, triggering strong opposition from neighboring Himalayan states and the Tibetan community. Beijing's relentless pursuit of large-scale infrastructure projects in Tibet – under the guise of economic development – is exacerbating the region's environmental fragility. Critics argue that such projects, particularly in an ecologically sensitive and seismically active zone, not only threaten local ecosystems but may also contribute to heightened seismic risks. The question, then, is whether China's unchecked exploitation of Tibet's natural resources is not just an environmental crisis in the making but a direct catalyst for disaster.

In this context, the Dalai Lama has always been a forward thinker. He has over the years been tirelessly campaigning about the dangers of playing with natural forces or disturbing the ecological balance of the high mountains of Asia, including China. Even against the background of suffering due to the Dingri earthquake, the Dalai Lama not only offered prayers but also invoked “the Buddhist spirit of seeking to transform adverse circumstances into an opportunity for growth and thus a stage on the path to enlightenment.”

In light of the Dalai Lama's long-standing climate advocacy, the words “opportunity,” “growth,” and “path to enlightenment” should not be interpreted narrowly, whether in purely economic or religious terms. Instead, they must be understood within the broader context of sustainable development, ecological responsibility, and ethical governance in Tibet as a way to course correction. Primarily, this refers to protecting the endangered “Third Pole” – the largest frozen mass on the planet after the North and South poles – and coalescing an international community to resist damaging human actions,

including over-damming, over-mining, and over-harnessing of Himalayan resources.

But does the Dalai Lama, who retired from active politics in 2011, have the world's ears? In the constant din of perpetually advancing technological needs, does the world even care for his philosophy on nature and the environment?

### **Tibet's Ecological Future Is Greatly Interlinked with Cultural and Religious Repression**

As the debate around the Dalai Lama's reincarnation heats up, President Xi Jinping and his ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are looking to increase their stranglehold over Tibetan Buddhism. In this context, the Dalai Lama, acutely aware of China's power and intent to manipulate the Tibetan belief system, has been ambiguous about reincarnation. He has even contemplated publicly an end to "the institution of the Dalai Lama" and wholeheartedly espoused the modern democratic system via the Tibetan government-in-exile. Yet the ruling CCP has heightened its preparations (by using forced approvals) to deal with this pressing religious issue, as part of bigger geopolitical and geoeconomic reasons.

Further, a New York Times report highlighted China's deliberate erosion of Tibetan identity via the abhorrent practice of separating Tibetan children from their families through special Chinese boarding schools. There are also efforts to politically undermine Tibetan identity by erasing the very term "Tibet," as seen in China's recent push to standardize "Xizang" (Mandarin word for the region) in diplomatic and official documents, as well as across state media platforms. This shift is not merely semantic but part of a broader strategy to reinforce Beijing's narrative of control. Tibetan sources argue that "Tibet" predates "Xizang" by nearly a thousand years, making this linguistic imposition yet another tool in China's ongoing efforts to reshape historical and cultural discourse.

These moves reflect the state's deep-rooted paranoia over losing control of occupied territories. China needs to maintain complete authority over the valuable Tibetan Plateau and the vast natural resources it offers via its control of the region's culture, language, religion, and identity. This centralized control, however, only exacerbates the environmental degradation and climate crisis unfolding in the region. Tibet serves as a vital source of glaciers and rivers, fueling some of Asia's largest waterways. From the great Dzachu (Mekong), which is one of the world's longest waterways, to the steep Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) which has natural hydropower generation potential, these waterways nourish billions of people in South and Southeast Asia. Tibet's rivers provide essential resources such as water, food, and fisheries, and support agricultural livelihoods, among

many other human needs. Beyond these, the region's rich biodiversity plays a critical role in maintaining ecological balance.

However, Tibet is also a central hub for "geological disasters," making its environmental stability crucial not just for local populations but for broader regional security. As a result, Chinese scholars have also highlighted the critical need for maximizing conservation in a region such as the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon, where the region's geological instability frequently causes landslides and debris flow, among other disasters. Yet the Chinese government seems unmindful, as evidenced by the spate of big dams in this region, and the growing threat from earthquakes, flash floods, and other calamities in the extended neighborhood.

More concerning still is how the drive to control this region's natural wealth and strategic significance becomes increasingly apparent through China's expanding infrastructure initiatives, further deepening its hold on both the environment and the geopolitical landscape. China has long employed dual-use infrastructure strategies in Tibet and along the borders of India, Bhutan, and Nepal, integrating civilian projects with military utility. This is not a new development but has been decades in the making. China's building of rail and road infrastructure in the early 2000s contributed to the so-called development of the region by allowing greater access to Chinese and other profit-oriented international companies to erode the Tibetan ecosystem.

For example, international reports at the time questioned the economic viability of the Qinghai-Tibet railway, completed at an official cost of \$4.1 billion, noting that its financial justification was tenuous and that any potential benefits "would appear to lie decades in the future," if they materialized at all. This underscores how infrastructure projects in Tibet often serve purposes beyond economic development, reinforcing China's long-term political and strategic objectives in the region.

Certainly, China's "Go West" policy, under which such programs were propagated, enhanced China's economic-military control and helped further Chinese exploitation of mineral resources. But as reports about China's uber-militarization of Tibet indicate, the focus is on supporting China's climate and economic goals for country's politically dominant east, be it harnessing water and electricity through the construction of dams or digging oil pipelines.

To make matters worse, big Western companies like BP – one of the largest foreign investors in China's energy and petrochemicals sectors – were in the past accused of being involved in oil exploration in Tibet, neglecting the social and environmental impact assessments, as well as human rights concerns.



The Chinese government has also focused on developing the model “border Xiaokang” (referring to “moderate prosperity”) villages launched in 2017 via the “Plan for the Construction of Well-off Villages.” Yet, these are drawing from China’s civil-military fusion policy (e.g., using civilian settlements to securitize China’s sensitive border areas in Xinjiang and Tibet), per Xi’s security-obsessed strategic thinking. Such measures have ensured the forced relocation of Tibetans across multiple border counties. Notably, the question of whether Chinese investments in essential infrastructure genuinely serve local Tibetans remains largely rhetorical. The deeply entrenched view of Tibetans as “separatists” within the Chinese political establishment has long obstructed any prospect of holistic and inclusive development in the region. Instead, China’s subsidy schemes have increased China’s control over the Tibetan people, as local agriculture practices and nomadic livelihoods have given way to unsustainable practices such as using Tibetan manual labor for mining, or dam-building – sectors that not only accelerate environmental degradation but also reinforce Tibetans’ economic dependence on the Chinese state.

#### **U.N. Forums and the Climate Crisis in Tibet – No Deal?**

One of the most troubling aspects of the growing climate crisis in Tibet is the lack of teeth of international institutions, most notably the United Nations-led agencies. Certainly, such a challenge is reflected across issues, including traditional and nontraditional areas of security like climate change. The raging wars and perennial conflicts in various parts of the world and the inability of global and regional organizations, such as the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to stem them is very much linked to the global leadership community’s indifference toward global climate change.

In this regard, the disappointing results from the last two U.N. climate conferences – namely COP28 and COP29, held in 2023 and 2024, respectively – are an eye-opener.

Certainly, the failure to recognize that the Third Pole demands urgent strategic intervention – rather than just academic analysis – has contributed to its exclusion from global policymaking priorities. Despite a wealth of climate reports from esteemed institutions like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), which repeatedly highlight the region’s vulnerabilities, meaningful action remains elusive. This lack of political will has relegated the Himalayas and Tibet to the periphery of international agendas, even as their environmental stability is crucial to billions across Asia.

Then there is also the general inability to find consensus among states on climate issues. That paralysis is not limited to the Himalayan agenda but also includes small islands in the Indo-Pacific region. The failure to phase out fossil fuels due to concerns and clout of big economies like China and India, as well as oil producer Saudi Arabia – all considered developing economies – is a case in point. In contrast, countries in the industrialized West, including European countries that are rather stringent about the green transition, are shying away from fulfilling their financial responsibilities.

For the Third Pole, the prospect of climate action faces an additional barrier: China’s control of the U.N. bodies and China’s clear warning against anyone violating Beijing’s red lines, including Tibet and the “One China” principle – even as Tibetan leaders insist that the latter “has nothing to do with Tibet,” only Taiwan. As a result, climate action in the Third Pole, as elsewhere, is taking a backseat among such political squabbles and assertions of territorial aggression.

#### **Channeling the Dalai Lama’s Climate Urgency**

The Dalai Lama, in an interview in 2020, warned against the effects of global warming and the flurry of human activities (e.g., deforestation, mining, and damming) on the Third Pole, where rivers will dry and “eventually Tibet will become like Afghanistan.” For the billions of people dependent on Tibetan natural resources, primarily the many Asian rivers that originate in the Tibetan Plateau, such a looming scenario would be undoubtedly catastrophic.

This issue combines two of the Dalai Lama’s pertinent concerns: China’s relentless repression of Tibet and Tibetans, and the international community’s lack of genuine political will to address climate change. As one of the most vocal critics of China’s occupation, he has consistently condemned Beijing’s systematic sinicization of Tibetan culture, religion, education, language, and traditions – an orchestrated effort that erodes Tibetan identity. He has also highlighted the forced relocation of nomadic communities, China’s strict censorship and information blockade, the spread of disinformation, and the reckless overexploitation of Tibet’s natural resources. Notably, he has repeatedly criticized global powers for their misplaced priorities, lamenting that “big nations who spent a lot of money for weapons or war” remain complacent in allocating resources to fight climate change – an existential threat that requires urgent and coordinated action.

Even as Tibet’s revered spiritual leader advocates for smaller, practical, and individual ways to pursue a healthier, more climate-friendly lifestyle, ultimately governmental and inter-governmental actions have to lead the way. Individual responsibility, while important, cannot substitute for the large-scale policy

interventions and structural reforms needed to address the escalating environmental crisis in Tibet and beyond. Unfortunately, with Donald Trump, a resolute climate denier, starting his second term as the U.S. president and Xi's unchanging stance on damming Tibet's rivers – not to mention, the United Nations' apathy – Tibet's climate crisis may just be another casualty.

### What's Driving China's Controversial Mega-Dam in Tibet?

12 February 2025, [The Diplomat](#), Genevieve Donnellon-May and Mark Wang

While the proposed hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo River has sparked concerns in India, from China's perspective it is mostly motivated by domestic factors.

On December 25, 2024, Chinese state media Xinhua reported that the country had officially approved the construction of what will be the world largest hydro-dam with annual capacity of 60 gigawatts (GW), or 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity. The planned site is on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo River in the Tibet Autonomous Region, in the foothills of the Himalayas.

With recent estimates suggest that the new hydropower dam's cost to potentially exceed 1 trillion yuan (\$137 billion), the planned hydropower dam is expected to surpass the country's famous Three Gorges Dam as the largest – and most expensive – in the world. The Three Gorges dam cost 254.2 billion yuan and generates 88.2 billion kilowatt-hours annually.

The Power Construction Corporation of China (PowerChina), in partnership with the Tibet Autonomous Region government, is expected to oversee the project. When the proposal was unveiled in late 2020, Yan Zhiyong, chairman of PowerChina, hailed it as an "historic opportunity for the Chinese hydropower industry."

Chinese officials and media have declared that the day will be a "people-centric project aimed at enriching the people and promoting Tibet's development." The hydropower dam's construction is expected to boost rapid growth in local industries (such as logistics) and also create local employment opportunities.

In India, however, the prospect of a major dam in Tibet has raised both environmental and geopolitical concerns. The Yarlung Tsangpo River flows into India, where it becomes the Brahmaputra, and then on to Bangladesh, where its known as the Jamuna.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has denied that the new dam will have any potential negative impact on downstream countries. In a press conference in December last year, Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesperson Mao Ning reaffirmed China's "responsible attitude" to transboundary rivers, claiming the planned dam would not harm downstream regions. She also highlighted China's commitment to dialogue and cooperation with neighboring countries on disaster prevention.

Despite these assurances, India remains cautious and is moving forward with its own plans to ensure water security. In late 2020, India announced plans to build a 10-12 GW hydroelectric dam in Arunachal Pradesh as a countermeasure to China's proposed "super dam."

Amid the competing narratives, what do we actually know about the proposed dam, and China's reasons for approving the project?

### Details of the New Hydropower Dam

This ambitious project reflects China's broader push to enhance its infrastructure capabilities and capitalize on the vast hydropower potential of the Yarlung Tsangpo. The new dam will take advantage of a section where the river drops 2,000 meters in around 50 kilometers. The hydropower project will be constructed near the river's "Great Bend" in Medog County, Nyingchi (Linzhi) Prefecture. Medog is the final county before the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between China and India. This site, sandwiched between mountains, offers ideal conditions for hydropower generation, potentially creating nearly 70 million kilowatts of technically exploitable energy.

It's believed that China's government has been quietly researching this enormous hydropower project for a number of years, if not decades. However, the Chinese central authorities did not make it public until November 2020. That month, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China included the hydropower project in the country's national 14th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development and the 2035 Long-Term Goals.

Two key factors may explain China's cautious approach to this project. First, the project site's extreme remoteness, which until recently lacked road access and power supply, made launching such a large-scale initiative unfeasible. Second, Beijing may have previously lacked the readiness or capacity to manage potential conflicts with downstream countries, particularly India. Now, however, China appears better positioned to address concerns of its neighbors, enabling the project to advance.

India has strongly opposed the proposal, largely because Tibet supplies about one-third of its water. From New Delhi's perspective, altering downstream flows could disrupt the Yarlung Tsangpo-Brahmaputra's rhythm, affecting groundwater and surface water levels. This could jeopardize water access for agriculture, drinking, and other essential needs. Additionally, the dam's impact on water quality raises concerns. These changes could have far-reaching consequences for downstream communities,

including agro-pastoralists, farmers, and others reliant on the river for drinking, fishing, and livelihoods

The hydropower project could affect water flow into the bordering Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. However, it is unlikely, at least in theory, to significantly impact the region where the Brahmaputra flows. Research indicates that while 50 percent of the Brahmaputra River basin lies within China, it accounts for only a small minority of the total basin discharge. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that waters from China contribute 30 percent of the Brahmaputra River's flow, while other sources suggest the figure could be as low as 7 percent. These varying figures illustrate differing views on China's role in the river's flow, and thus the dam's impact. Given that the Indian portion of the basin experiences some of the highest rainfall in the world, the downstream impact may be less significant than anticipated.

Indeed, the Chinese side offers a highly positive view of the project, suggesting minimal environmental impact. It has portrayed the hydropower dam as a "run-of-the-river" project, meaning the water will be diverted to generate electricity and then allowed to re-enter the Yarlung Tsangpo. China has also pledged to maintain dialogue through existing channels and increase cooperation on disaster prevention.

The timing of the official approval of the project is noteworthy, particularly in the context of China-India relations. After a five-year hiatus, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met in 2024 on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, signalling a potential thaw in their relationship. However, a major challenge remains the absence of strong bilateral mechanisms for managing transboundary river governance, an issue that has become increasingly critical given the growing securitization of water. This challenge is closely tied to the broader political and military dynamics between the two countries.

Many details about the dam are still unclear at this point. Critical information, such as the number of residents that will potentially be displaced and the project's environmental impacts, remain undisclosed. The region's fragility, including its susceptibility to natural disasters like landslides, earthquakes, and floods, has also been little discussed by Chinese sources, raising concerns about the dam's safety and stability.

### **Understanding China's Expanding Hydropower Ambitions**

Beijing's interest in the new hydropower project reflects its domestic energy transition priorities. China's growing focus on hydropower development in Tibet is driven by the region's immense renewable energy potential, which aligns with the

country's ambitious domestic energy goals and green low-carbon circular development.

At present, the country's hydropower resources have the potential to create over 676 million kilowatts of energy, the largest in the world. Of this amount, Tibet accounts for around 30 percent. Despite this vast potential, much of Tibet's resources remain undeveloped, with the installed capacity representing only 1 percent of the region's technically exploitable potential.

The autonomous region's hydropower resources are mainly concentrated along the Yarlung Tsangpo, Nu, Lancang, and Jinsha rivers. Among them, the Yarlung Tsangpo, which flows through Tibet before crossing into India and Bangladesh, is central to Tibet's vast energy potential. Given its capacity to generate nearly 80 million kilowatts, due in part to the river's steep gradient and high flow rate, it is vital in China's efforts to meet its clean energy demands.

This strategy is central to Xi's commitment for China to reach peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. These goals have positioned carbon emission reductions and the transition to clean energy as key priorities in the country's 14th Five-Year Plan and 2035 Long-Term Goals.

As part of this, China aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions intensity by 18 percent and energy intensity (emissions per unit of GDP) by 13.5 percent by 2025. With these ambitious climate targets, the government has placed a strong emphasis on expanding renewable energy sources, and hydropower is expected to play a crucial role. Hydropower, particularly in Tibet, is viewed as an essential resource to meet China's growing clean energy needs.

Recent energy shortages have taught China to go slowly on changing its energy mix, however. During the winter of 2020, provinces including Hunan, Jiangxi, Inner Mongolia, and Zhejiang encountered significant power supply constraints. Energy shortages recurred in September and October 2021, affecting 18 out of China's 30 provinces, with shortfalls ranging from 1 percent to 16 percent. Consequently, a number of provincial governments decided to approve and build large amounts of new coal capacity to address these power shortages.

In other words, in China the expansion of renewable energy is being encouraged alongside construction of hundreds of new coal-fired power plants to protect against power blackouts. This dual strategy ensures a stable energy supply while simultaneously advancing the transition toward a greener energy mix. While coal still provides 55.3 percent of China's total energy consumption, the government is increasingly focusing on renewable sources like hydroelectricity to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and meet its emissions targets.

As China shifts away from coal, Tibet is poised to play a pivotal role in the nation's clean energy future. The region's vast hydroelectric potential is a central element of the country's energy strategy, as outlined in the Tibet Autonomous Regional Government's 14th Five-Year Plan and 2035 Vision. Harnessing Tibet's hydropower resources is expected to be a key driver in achieving China's low-carbon energy goals, further solidifying Tibet's importance in China's broader renewable energy agenda.

### **Local Interests Driving Hydropower Development in Tibet**

Locals have been forced to bear significant environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural losses from the construction of major hydropower projects in China. As a result, such hydro-engineering projects are often portrayed in state media as a sacrifice for the national interest in which local authorities align with central government priorities. The strong backing of the Tibet Autonomous Regional government and hydropower companies is evident in this project. Both entities have consistently promoted hydropower development as a solution to regional economic disparities and a driver of growth in one of China's most underdeveloped regions.

This push aligns with Tibet's broader three-step plan for advancing its electricity and hydropower sectors, as outlined by Ding Yexian, the former vice chairman of Tibet. The plan's stages include alleviating power shortages before 2012, resolving electricity access issues between 2013 and 2015, and promoting rapid hydropower development from 2016 to 2020, with the long-term goal of transforming hydropower into a strategic industry for "outward transmission" of electricity. The ultimate objective is to establish hydropower as a key economic pillar for Tibet, delivering substantial economic benefits to the region. More recently, key plans, including the Tibetan Autonomous Regional Government's 13th Five-Year Plan and 14th Five-Year Plan, called for developing hydropower projects on region's major rivers (including the Yarlung Tsangpo) as part of broader efforts to achieve energy generation and build clean energy bases for local and national consumption.

Local leaders have signed cooperation agreements with major state-owned power companies like China Huaneng Group, PowerChina, and the China Three Gorges Corporation to accelerate hydropower development.

There is potential for the new hydropower project to export hydroelectricity to other provinces, such as to provinces in central China that have faced power shortages in recent years. It is estimated to bring in 20 billion yuan (\$2.744 billion), further attracting investment and boosting the region's economy. Through these efforts, the local government hopes to

use hydropower to address regional economic disparities and drive long-term growth in Tibet.

While the dam offers substantial energy potential, it also poses significant environmental and geopolitical risks, particularly for neighboring countries like India. To fully realize its benefits while mitigating potential conflicts, robust international dialogue will be crucial in addressing the project's complex challenges.

### **Documentary film on Dalai Lama enjoys box-office success in Europe**

12 February 2025, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



*A portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from the film 'Wisdom of Happiness' (Photo/Das Kollektiv)*

After its premiere at the Zurich Film Festival last October, the documentary film 'Wisdom of Happiness—A Heart-to-Heart with the Dalai Lama', based on the Tibetan leader's vision, has experienced strong box office performances across Europe, including Switzerland, Germany, and Denmark, with its overseas rollout continuing to expand.

The film, directed by Barbara Miller and Philip Delaquis, features the Dalai Lama engaging directly with the audience, creating what has been described as "a meditative cinema experience that resonates long after." Executive producers Richard Gere and Oren Moverman have played a crucial role in the project, ensuring its widespread reach overseas.

Outlook Film sales represents the documentary and is set to showcase it at the European Film Market (EFM) to broaden its distribution. Discussions are currently underway for releases in Latin America and the United States, according to US-based digital media Deadline.

In Switzerland, *Wisdom of Happiness* has sold over 70,000 tickets since its December release by Ascot Elite, maintaining a position in the Top 10 for seven consecutive weeks and ranking among the Top 3 arthouse films.

Germany's Via X Filmverleih released the documentary on November 7, 2023, where it has since sold more than 48,000 tickets, positioning it among the Top 5 documentaries of 2024. In Denmark, Øst For Paradis launched the film in mid-January, with over 5,000 admissions so far.

Expressing excitement over the film's success, Ralph Dietrich of Ascot Elite told the media, "We are thrilled and proud of the strong box office performance of Wisdom of Happiness. In these challenging times for the industry, it's deeply rewarding to see audiences embrace a film that speaks to our shared humanity and inspires optimism for the future." He also noted the rarity of repeat viewings, highlighting how visitors are returning multiple times, particularly for afternoon and early evening screenings.

Stephanie Fuchs, CEO of world sales at Outlook Filmsales, added, "This success reflects the universal appeal of Wisdom of Happiness, and we are certain that it will continue to thrive in cinemas and resonate with audiences worldwide."

Wisdom of Happiness is set to continue its rollout in other European countries. In April, it will screen at the Barcelona Film Festival, with Richard Gere in attendance, before being released in Spain on April 30 via A Contracorriente's Selecta Vision. Further releases include Italy (via Wanted) in May, also supported by Gere.

Other international distributors include Portugal (A Contracorriente), Australia/New Zealand (Madman), Taiwan (Swallow Wings), Greece (Filmtrade), Poland (Aurora), Israel (New Cinema), the Baltics (Best Film), former Yugoslavia (Demiurg), Slovakia & Czech Republic (Garfield Films), and Brazil (Aquarius).

Beyond commercial success, the film has also been showcased at significant international venues. On December 9, 2023, it was screened at a U.S. Congressional venue, attended by former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Richard Gere, the Dalai Lama's sister Jetsun Pema, and President of the Central Tibetan Administration, Penpa Tsering.

Hollywood star Richard Gere, a long-time friend of the Dalai Lama and the executive producer of the film said, "Wisdom of Happiness is a very special film that we hope will profoundly influence how we think and feel about ourselves and the others with whom we share this beautiful planet. My friends tell me this is the most important film of my life."

### **The Silent Struggle: How China is systematically erasing Tibet's identity**

12 February 2025, [Yes Punjab](#)

China's coercive and violently assimilationist policies towards its religious and racial minorities are not unknown. Despite the regular condemnation that it receives from the international community and civil society regarding its egregious violations of human rights, China disregards all opposition and persists unabated on its path.

A glaring example of this is the unmitigated political, physical, cultural, and spiritual violence that the CCP

metes out to the Tibetans. The Tibetans, many of them exiled from their native homeland, continue to struggle for autonomy as well as the freedom to live with dignity and practice their unique cultural traditions, and represent one of the most powerful forces against Chinese hegemonic aggression today.

After invading the Tibetan plateau in 1949, the CCP enacted complete annexation of the region in 1951, which till date is referred to by the Chinese government as 'peaceful liberation from feudal serfdom'.

Thereafter, the subsequent decade was characterized by mass protests and uprisings by Tibetans, which were brutally suppressed by the Chinese regime, forcing the Dalai Lama, the highest spiritual leader and head of Tibetan Buddhism, to flee Tibet in 1949 and seek asylum in neighboring India.

The Dalai Lama's flight was followed by more than 80,000 Tibetans over the years, thereby constituting a significant population of Tibetans who are forced to live outside of Tibet.

The ones who live inside are subjected by the Chinese government to a host of policies aimed at erasing their culture, severing the next generation from the consciousness of a distinct Tibetan identity, and demographic engineering in order to marginalize the Tibetans further.

Often termed as 'cultural genocide' and 'Sinicization', these policies range from banning the Tibetan language in favour of Mandarin in schools and public institutions, to official interference in the religious practises of the Tibetans such as the determination of reincarnations of major spiritual leaders.

For the Tibetans, their form of Buddhism, i.e., Tibetan Buddhism, plays a profound and fundamental role in structuring the social, political, cultural, philosophical, and spiritual mores of their society.

So intertwined have the political and the religious been for the Tibetans that their highest spiritual leader also serves as the highest seat of political power.

The 14th Dalai Lama, or Tenzin Gyatso, due to his persistent struggle for Tibetan rights to meaningful autonomy as well as his global campaign for peace, human rights, and universal responsibility, is a world-revered figure who was also awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1989.

For the Chinese government which already perceives him as a threat due to his tremendous influence over Tibetans, his exceptionally charismatic, resilient, and globally hailed characteristics make him even more potent.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the CCP consistently engages in malicious propaganda against the venerated leader, from labelling him an erstwhile slave-owning theocrat to even a paedophile.

In fact, as early as 1996, the CCP forbade the possession and display of the Dalai Lama's images in

Tibet, construing it as solidarity with Tibetan secessionism.

Forcing Tibetans not to stick pictures of their spiritual leader on their walls and instead, put portraits of Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping, obviously constitutes a grotesque abuse of power and subjugation of a people.

Such is the CCP's urge for totalitarian control that the party, which under Mao was expressly averse to religion, has now taken an interest in deciding who should succeed the Dalai Lama.

The party has repeatedly asserted that it reserves the right to decide on the Dalai Lama's reincarnation through the 'golden urn' process, and to preside over it, it has convened a committee comprising government-selected Tibetan monks and CPC officials, triggering concerns of a possible split within Tibetan Buddhism.

It should be remembered here that the six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was named by the Dalai Lama as the reincarnated Panchen Lama in 1995, was arrested soon after, never to be found again, while the CCP nominated his replacement.

Furthermore, the Chinese government has also pursued the systematic destruction or downsizing of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries as well as village and private Tibetan schools.

For instance, over a period of a year till September 2017, Chinese authorities demolished significant parts of the Sichuan-based Larung Gar Buddhist Academy, one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist study centres in the world, citing a risk of disaster. About 4,725 homes were crushed and 5,000 residents were evicted from what was once inhabited by between 10,000 to 40,000 monks, nuns, and students.

To add insult to injury, the evicted residents were forcefully subjected to a 're-education' program, which essentially means indoctrination into the CCP's ideology.

Similarly, the government has routinely ordered the closing down of private Tibetan schools, such as the 2024 case of Gangjong Sherig Norling School, and the 2021 case of Gaden Rabten Namgyaling School, so that the next generation of Tibetan children are not exposed to their language, religious/spiritual practises, values, and ways of being.

To supplement the destruction of Tibetan educational institutions, the Chinese government forces Tibetan children to attend residential schools, uprooting them from their homes, wherein they are injected with Mandarin-based education as well as Chinese majoritarian ideology. Chinese President Xi Jinping, on a visit to one such school in 2024, declared that education must "implant a shared consciousness of Chinese nationhood in the souls of children from an early age".

Additionally, reports have also revealed how these Tibetan children suffer from distressing loneliness, depression, and other psychological harm in the boarding schools.

As per estimates by the Tibetan government-in-exile, there have been over 150 cases of self-immolation by Tibetans since 2009.

Despite relentless Chinese aggression and extremely invasive and advanced surveillance, the resistance of the Tibetans persists. As the 112th Tibetan Independence Day approaches on February 13th, it is imperative that the Tibetan struggle, which has gone on for over three quarters of a century, is honoured and amplified.

The international community must focus and intensify its efforts towards the liberation of the Tibetan people, as they have stood up as a pillar of strength, resilience, and pride, and taught the world to not bend even in the face of back-breaking oppression.

### **Tibet policy should reflect U.S. strategic interests today**

12 February 2025, [George W. Bush Presidential Center](#), Ellen Bork

As the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday approaches in July, American officials should mark the occasion by undertaking a comprehensive review of Tibet policy.

If they do, they will discover that America has repeatedly subordinated Tibet to China based on perceptions of strategic interest that no longer exist. Washington's deference to Beijing over Tibet has emboldened China in projecting its aggression and influence around the world.

Washington had little involvement in Tibet until after China's last empire collapsed in 1911. Although Tibet "was a part of empires in the past that were centered in China ... Tibet was never part of a country called China, never became a Chinese province, was de facto independent in the first half of the 20th century, and was not directly ruled by Beijing until the 1950s," Robert Barnett [wrote](#).

Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of China's Nationalist government and America's ally in World War II, maintained an unrealistic ambition to reclaim lost imperial territories. Washington didn't wish to undermine him, even though American officials knew he [exerted no authority](#) and they themselves regarded Tibet as de facto independent. The United States continued to recognize Chiang, the Republic of China government, and its claim to Tibet after Chiang fled to Taiwan in 1949.

Communist China invaded Tibet in the 1950s forcing the Dalai Lama into exile in India in 1959. From there, he has preserved Tibetan religion and culture and led the democratization of Tibet's theocratic government.

He transferred his political power to an elected prime minister in 2011.

President Nixon dramatically changed American policy toward China and Tibet with the opening to Beijing in 1972. (A small program of support for Tibetan rebels resisting the People's Republic of China's occupation had already ended.) President Jimmy Carter normalized relations with the PRC in 1979, abruptly severing diplomatic relations with the Republic of China, by then ruled by Chiang's son, Chiang Ching-kuo.

While visiting Beijing that year, Vice President Walter Mondale **promised** Deng Xiaoping "our position, whenever asked, is that Tibet is part of China." The Dalai Lama would henceforth be received "as a religious figure, not a political leader."

"Up to that point, we had never explicitly stated that Tibet was part of China," **according** to the diplomat J. Stapleton Roy. Effectively, the United States transferred its deference from the Republic of China, an authoritarian dictatorship that never exerted authority in Tibet, to the People's Republic of China, a totalitarian regime that invaded and subjugated it.

Since then, deferring to China's sovereignty, America's policy on Tibet has focused chiefly on addressing China's human and religious rights abuses and supporting a "dialogue" between Chinese leaders and the Tibetan leadership, albeit with little to show for it. As Tenzin Dorjee, senior researcher at the Tibet Action Institute told me, the support Tibet has received so far "has been valuable, but it doesn't impose a cost on China. It doesn't refute China's claims and it doesn't delegitimize China's rule in Tibet."

For its part, Beijing has expanded its Tibet agenda. It has projected its influence and force across Tibet's former borders with its neighbors. Beijing has **pressured** Nepal to end its hospitality to Tibetan refugees, and Chinese security forces operate in the country. Beijing has annexed parts of **Bhutan** and built villages there. Incursions by the People's Liberation Army across the former Tibetan border with **India** have increased, and Beijing refers to parts of northeast India as "Southern Tibet."

Beijing's international agenda for Tibet includes pressure on capitals around the world to isolate the Dalai Lama and the exile government and to accept Beijing's false claims that Tibet has been part of China "since antiquity."

The Chinese Communist Party has also made clear it intends to appoint an impostor to succeed the Dalai Lama. It has already installed other important lamas and is using them to **advance** its Tibetan Buddhist sharp power agenda. The Dalai Lama comprehensively rejected any role for China in determining his successor in a 2011 **statement**.

Tibet's elected exile government has started challenging China's lack of historical legitimacy in

Tibet. Penpa Tsering, the elected Prime Minister of Tibet's exiled government, the Central Tibet Administration, **told** the Financial Times in 2023, "we thought it's important to change our strategy to focus on the historical status.... Otherwise, there's no reason for China to come and talk to us."

The U.S. Congress has taken a step toward reversing America's deference to Beijing over Tibet. Last year, it passed the Resolve Tibet Act, which **establishes** U.S. policy in favor of Tibetan self-determination and asserts that Tibet's "legal status remains undetermined."

Congress should continue updating Tibet policy to reflect America's strategic interests today. That includes elevating the status of the CTA through high level contacts with the Tibetan prime minister, government and parliament.

Washington should also counter Chinese disinformation and united front influence efforts distorting Tibet's history and international status at international organizations, on university campuses and at state and local levels.

At the same time, the U.S. should increase efforts on behalf of Tibetan political prisoners and make their well-being and release a prominent feature of relations with China.

China lacks both historical and democratic legitimacy in Tibet. U.S. policy needs to be revised to acknowledge and act on that essential premise.

### **India refuses to be America's attack dog against China**

10 February 2025, **Capital**, Alexey Kupriyanov

The Galwan is one of the many Himalayan rivers. A narrow mountain stream, in some places almost a brook, in others a turbulent, seething mass of icy water foaming on the rocks. The river, which few people knew about except geographers, diplomats and military personnel – staff officers in Delhi and Srinagar and ordinary soldiers who regularly patrolled the disputed territory of the Line of Actual Control between India and China – suddenly became the talk of the town in June 2020.

Then, literally a couple of months after the announcement of a strict nationwide quarantine in India and China because of the Covid-19 pandemic, a not uncommon skirmish between patrols took place on its banks. Indian and Chinese soldiers patrol without live ammunition, in accordance with a 1996 agreement, and such episodes usually end with a dozen bruises and bumps and a few broken bones. But not this time: as far as we know, one of the newly appointed Chinese commanders responsible for this area decided to demonstrate to the Indians and his superiors his uncompromising nature, initiative and tactical talents.

The Indian military was not going to back down: just recently, Chief of Defense Staff Bipin Rawat said that it was necessary to review the priorities and structure of military spending, threatening to freeze the program to build a third aircraft carrier for the navy and the contract to buy 110 fighters from Israel. The army had an opportunity to clearly demonstrate that its spending should not be cut.

The outcome of the clash in the Galwan Valley shocked India. Twenty people were killed, and neither side used firearms – the injuries sustained from falling off a cliff at night, the fast flow of an icy river and the lack of medical care were enough. The Chinese reported four of their own killed, while Indian media later accused the Chinese of concealing losses and wrote about 40 dead PLA soldiers.

In one way or another, Indian society, already frustrated by the strict lockdown and frightened by reports from Covid-19 hospitals, demanded a tough response from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, and the Indian authorities were forced to meet voters halfway. Everything that Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping had managed to achieve in bilateral relations over the preceding two years went down the drain.

Modi had visited China in April 2018, unexpectedly for most Indians and outside observers. At the time, relations between Delhi and Beijing were far from ideal: the Indians were frightened by the growing Chinese presence in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region, where in 2016 the Chinese began building a naval base in Djibouti. Indians were irritated by the support that China was providing to their long-time adversary Pakistan.

In addition, less than a year had passed since the standoff on the Doklam plateau, where the Indian Army came to the aid of the Bhutanese military, preventing the Chinese from unilaterally adjusting the border line in their favor. Therefore, both the fact of the visit and its outcome came as a surprise: the negotiations took place in an extremely friendly atmosphere, and the concept of the "*Wuhan spirit*" firmly entered into common usage, by analogy with the term "*Shanghai spirit*," used to describe an atmosphere of mutual trust, understanding and readiness for cooperation.

The following year, Xi Jinping visited Modi in Mahabalipuram. There, according to media reports, the "*Wuhan spirit*" grew even stronger. Then, the pandemic began and the Galwan Valley incident occurred, demonstrating that the most ambitious strategic plans can collapse due to a nasty virus combined with an overly proactive commander along a disputed section of the border.

Only five years later, during a [personal meeting between Modi and Xi](#) at the BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan, was it finally possible to turn the

Galwan page in the history of bilateral relations. A full-fledged settlement of all problems is still far away, and it is too early to talk about the return of the "*Wuhan spirit*."

Soon after the Kazan summit, however, both sides withdrew forces from the border and agreed on patrol schedules to avoid future clashes in the disputed areas. At the recent meeting between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, the parties agreed on a six-point program of further cooperation regarding the border. India, which until recently had looked at its northern neighbor in the Himalayas with demonstrative suspicion, has suddenly changed its anger to mercy, and not without reason.

Until recently, India has successfully pursued a policy of '*Duobus litigantibus tertius gaudet*' (the third party enjoying itself while two are fighting). The Americans, who are trying by hook or by crook to prevent the growth of China's power and its transformation into the world's leading economy, are ready to pay handsomely for Sinophobia. India is in such a convenient strategic position that the US helps it simply because it exists and has a territorial dispute with China – until, of course, it is settled, and India and China become best friends.

Delhi understands very well what exactly the US wants from the Indians, but does not see this as a particular problem as long as American and Indian interests coincide.

Neither India nor the US want to see China as the only world superpower and the only pole of power in Asia. However, the Indian elites realize that China will not disappear from the world map and will forever remain India's neighbor. This means that even a successful conflict in the present may result in huge problems in the future, and India has no reason to lend blind support to the American strategy, because all the benefits in the event of its successful implementation will go to the US, while India will get the bruises.

Before the "*Galwan incident*," India was quite successfully trying to sit on two chairs, developing economic relations with both the United States and China. In that situation, this was the only reasonable strategy.

By 2014, India had a lot of problems with its economy, and the Modi government, which won the elections that year, launched a package of programs in order to maintain the growth rate at least at 5% of GDP, aimed to include India in global production chains. The key programs were infrastructure development (construction of roads and railways, canals and ports) and the mass retraining of specialists, who were taught skills which are in demand in the new world.

Both China and the US were extremely important to India: the work of almost all sectors of the Indian economy, from pharmaceuticals to IT, depended on



Chinese imports, and the US was (and remains) the most promising export market for India.

After the Galwan incident, the balance was destroyed, and the Modi government, realizing that it would not be possible to resolve the situation in relations with China in the coming years, decided to squeeze the maximum possible out of the border incident, behaving in an emphatically unfriendly manner and demonstratively limiting the import of Chinese capital and the presence of Chinese companies in the Indian market.

This did not particularly affect Indian-Chinese economic relations – trade turnover is still growing – but Western investment in the Indian economy increased.

Nevertheless, in the last year, there has been a tendency towards a decline in foreign direct investment from Western countries. There are many reasons: the problems in the global economy that resulted from the Ukraine conflict, the uncertainty associated with the US elections and the future policy of Donald Trump, and, finally, the unfulfilled hopes for a tough decoupling.

As it turned out, American and European companies are not at all going to urgently move production away from China. In order to continue the already launched reform programs and prevent internal socio-economic problems, the Indian authorities need new investments – and China emerges as the only potential source.

The next round of the waltz with the participation of Beijing and Delhi will, of course, have its own peculiarities. The Chinese will clearly not be allowed into border areas and the most sensitive strategic industries, and the flow of FDI will be directed into infrastructure projects – while special attention is paid to preventing the excessive growth of Chinese influence.

### China Is Not Seeking To Remake World Order

09 February 2025, [The National Interest](#), Paul Heer

***China's goal is not to usurp the U.S. role and unilaterally set the rules of international behavior but instead to increase its role relative to that of the United States in setting the rules.***

As the Trump administration gets underway, key aspects of how it will approach China remain unclear. It's especially uncertain what consensus will emerge among Trump's team on the nature and scope of the threat that China poses. During his confirmation hearing, Secretary of State Marco Rubio asserted that the People's Republic of China is "the most potent and dangerous near-peer adversary this nation has ever confronted." Along similar lines, Trump's national security adviser Mike Waltz has stated that "we are, I

believe, in a cold war" with China because its goal is "replacing the American Dream and American leadership around the world with the Chinese Dream and Chinese leadership."

Does Trump himself share this view of the China threat? He rarely, if ever, talks about it in such strategic or ideological terms. His approach is often described as more "transactional," focused on the opportunities provided by the relationship he has (or thinks he has) with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Contrary to the prevailing view of Xi as a brutal dictator—and the view among many in GOP circles that diplomatic engagement with Beijing is futile or dangerous—Trump said publicly last month that "I like President Xi very much. I've always liked him. We always had a very good relationship." And "it is my expectation that we will solve many problems together." Whether Trump's approach will be consistent with the principles of his national security team—or the interests of the United States—remains to be seen. The meager results of his personal diplomacy during his first term with Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un, not to mention Xi himself, should be examined for clues and lessons.

In the meantime, Trump's advisers should also reexamine Rubio's and Waltz's views of Beijing's strategic intentions. They would benefit greatly from a new book by Brookings Institution Fellow Melanie Sisson entitled *The United States, China, and the Competition for Control*. In this slim volume (less than 100 pages of text before the endnotes), Sisson persuasively refutes the notion that China is seeking to supplant the United States as the global hegemon.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi told Rubio in their first phone conversation that "we have no intention of overtaking or replacing anyone." This was readily dismissed as typical Chinese disingenuousness. However, those who claim that China seeks world domination never seem to confront the logic of the argument. Do the math. How would Chinese global hegemony come about, and how would it operate? Is it possible that Beijing has the resources to make it happen and that the competing resources and resistance of the rest of the world could not prevent it? What reason do Chinese leaders have to believe that they could achieve and sustain it?

They are amply familiar with the reasons why many historical bids by other great powers for regional or global hegemony failed or did not survive. That is why Beijing is focused instead on maximizing China's wealth, power, and influence in a multipolar world. Chinese leaders almost certainly see this as a more viable and pragmatic approach than launching a winner-take-all contest with the United States. This is especially so given the advantages and opportunities Beijing can derive from China's growing relative power,

the receptivity of much of the Global South, and the emerging limits on U.S. power and influence.

This is the “competition for control” that Sisson addresses in her book. It is not a zero-sum contest because China’s goal is not to usurp the U.S. role and unilaterally set the rules of international behavior but instead to increase its role relative to that of the United States in setting the rules. One of the central points here is that Chinese and U.S. interests are competitive but not irreconcilable. As Sisson observes, the widespread view that China’s vision for world order is “definitionally antithetical to the United States” is a “conviction [that] has preceded the evidence.”

Sisson acknowledges the literature supporting the argument that Beijing is “seeking actively to displace, and ultimately, to replace the United States as the world’s most influential, indeed the world’s dominant, actor” and intends to do so by “establishing an illiberal hegemony first regionally, and then globally.” In particular, she cites *The Strategy of Denial* by Elbridge Colby (nominated to be Trump’s Undersecretary of Defense for Policy); *The World According to China* by Elizabeth Economy (who worked in Biden’s Commerce Department); and *The Long Game* by Rush Doshi (who worked in Biden’s National Security Council). However, like some other analysts, Sisson asserts that key elements of the argument are based heavily on selective and debatable interpretations of Chinese policy statements and documents.

The core challenge to the United States is not that Beijing seeks to remake the international order in the image of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) system but simply that it wants the existing order to legitimize the CCP system and let it participate in writing the rules. This is disconcerting to the United States because of the CCP’s effectiveness and the external leverage this has given China.

As Sisson observes, what Washington is really confronting is “China’s success in demonstrating that its illiberal political system is socially stable, economically productive, and militarily capable” and that this in itself “will make it harder for the United States to pursue its goals and interests.” This has fueled “anxiety that a world in which Beijing is allowed to exercise international leadership to any greater extent than it does already will be a world hostile to liberal principles and menacing to the United States.” And this, in turn, has been the impetus for the inflated notion that China seeks to undermine the world order in ways that are fundamentally incompatible with U.S. interests.

This exaggerated threat perception serves several purposes. Pointing to an existential threat from China allows Washington to divert attention from the self-inflicted vulnerabilities that have undercut U.S. competitiveness. It also deflects the hard policy

choices that might be required for constructive engagement with Beijing. Why consider compromises with China if the CCP isn’t interested in peaceful coexistence and is instead determined to impose its will on the United States and the rest of the world? Finally, as Sisson notes with concern, the narrative of China’s pursuit of global hegemony is being used as the basis for a confrontational and exclusively competitive approach to Beijing that is probably increasing both costs and risks for the United States.

To support the alternative notion that constructive engagement with China is both possible and necessary, Sisson briefly traces the history of Washington’s and Beijing’s respective approaches to the post-1945 international order. On the U.S. side, she notes that much of what Washington associates with that order today “are not products of its founders’ design but of American power” and its embrace of liberalism.

Moreover, Washington largely adopted the view that both its security and that of the international order itself require other countries to subscribe to its values—even though it has been inconsistent with the post-war order’s founding principles of free trade and multilateralism. Sisson’s summary assessment is that the United States, notwithstanding its central role in establishing that order, has “vacillated between full-throated endorsement of its principles and its institutions, equivocation about America’s willingness to assume the obligations and duties of its membership in them and loud objections to the notion of being constrained by their rules.”

For its part, China was represented at the establishment of the post-war order by the Nationalist (KMT) Government, which later fled to Taiwan in 1949. However, CCP leaders eventually endorsed that order because they believed it could provide both internal stability and protection against “disruptive external agents and influences” and challenges to China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. After the Cold War, however, Beijing remained somewhat uncomfortable with the U.S. approach to multilateralism, which the Chinese predictably interpreted as aimed at perpetuating American hegemony. China’s own approach has thus been aimed at pursuing a range of policies that are “consistent with a state responding to an environment in which it recognizes threats to its interests at the same time that it sees opportunities to advance them.”

On balance, Sisson asserts that China, “far from opting out or of seeking to obstruct or overturn the post-war order’s institutions,” has “integrated itself into them and, from there, worked within their procedures to gain and exercise influence.” Although openly critical of some of the rules, Beijing’s emphasis has been on advocating reform from within the system and “strengthening its bargaining position” in the process.

It is certainly true that China—like the United States—engages in “diplomatic dissembling, economic and military coercion, and selective interpretations of history to pursue its interests.” But Sisson concludes that “what China has said, and done, over time and into the present day suggests that China is more in support of than opposed to” the founding principles and institutions of the post-war order.

Notwithstanding this historical balance sheet, Sisson reiterates that many in Washington have “adopted a narrative about U.S.-China competition that is as insistent about America’s attachment to the post-war order as it is about China’s intent to supplant it with a less legitimate and more dangerous one.”

What is obscured in this narrative is the difference between an existential threat and a geostrategic challenge. Sisson acknowledges that “China’s growing power makes it possible to imagine an international order...that privileges America’s liberal preferences less and China’s illiberal preferences more.” But this is not (or at least need not be) a winner-take-all contest. Neither side’s preferences would necessarily negate or exclude the other’s. Also, efforts by China to alter the balance of preferences “do not themselves constitute a major break with the principles and institutions of the post-war order and should not be the basis for extrapolation about China’s ambitions to create a new one.”

So what is to be done? One of Sisson’s most compelling observations is that the [U.S. narrative](#) “makes order the object of great power conflict, not the means of managing it. It is a dangerous inversion, one that converts negotiating the rules of international affairs into a competition to set them.” The bottom line is that Washington needs to recognize that it cannot unilaterally set the terms of either the U.S.-China relationship or the international order.

Instead, the United States simply needs to get down to the business of working out those terms through sustained strategic engagement with Beijing. Contrary to the presumption of irreconcilable differences, Sisson notes that there is common ground from which to work. Although both sides seek to maximize their relative wealth, power, and influence, both also “profess ongoing attachment” to many common principles and objectives, including “a desire to maintain a global economy that runs on rules that facilitate the worldwide movement of goods, money, ideas, and people.”

Washington’s goal should thus be to “capitalize on China’s attachment to the current order” and meet Beijing on that playing field rather than assume that China is trying to destroy or monopolize it. The United States should be “pragmatically engaging China within the institutional structures of the post-war order” in an effort to maximize the extent to which that order

serves or at least is conducive to U.S. interests and values. Beijing is already invested in maximizing the extent to which it is conducive to Chinese interests and values. “Negotiating the rules of international affairs” will inevitably be a contentious and prolonged process, and neither side will be able to get everything it wants. However, the challenge of working out a mutually acceptable version of world order must be preferable to the dangers of concluding prematurely that none is possible.

Within that framework, Sisson adds that the United States also “will need to accept that it is unlikely to persuade Beijing to negotiate, compromise, or cooperate in the ways and places Washington would like” if, at the same time, the United States is clearly implementing policies that challenge core Chinese security interests and seek to “constrain China’s role in the international community and global economy.” Washington has the power to influence Chinese behavior, but only if it pursues dialogue with Beijing that is genuinely aimed at mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. To Sisson, “it is worrisome that the U.S. national security community seems ever less inclined to find ways to do so and ever more inclined instead toward categorical narratives and combative policies.”

In a Chinese echo of Sisson’s perspective, Wang Jisi—arguably the dean of China’s “America-watchers”—recently emphasized the need for Beijing and Washington to overcome strategic distrust in favor of “strategic consensus” on key global and bilateral issues. He observed that while the United States suspects that China’s goal is to overthrow the world order, Beijing suspects that [Washington’s goal](#) is to overthrow the Chinese political system. Neither side believes the other’s denials. “Only when both sides abandon the zero-sum thinking of competition,” Wang [said](#), “will China-U.S. relations see a brighter future.” Wang and Sisson show that there are strategic thinkers on both sides who have identified a path forward. It remains to be seen whether Washington and Beijing are willing and prepared to follow it.

### How a nervous China gears up aggressively on Dalai Lama

09 February 2025, [First Post](#), Claude Arpi

*The reason could be the forthcoming 90th birthday of the Tibetan leader, as in 2011, the Dalai Lama had announced that he would give details about his ‘return’ when he turns 90 years old*

China is nervous.

Beijing has recently started a barrage of fire against the Dalai Lama; it has not happened for years on this scale. The attack seems to target the ‘foreign’ audience, as it was mainly posted in English

by CGTN through a series of several articles and two videos (featuring a well-known Indian Communist). But what is CGTN, or China Central Television (CCTV)? It is an English-language news channel under the control of the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This explains many things.

On February 1, four articles appeared denouncing the Tibetan religious leader: "Unmasking the Dalai Lama: The root of darkness in old Xizang".

Of course, it was also an occasion to 'sell' Tibet's new name, Xizang. Beijing's 'friends', like Pakistan and Nepal, have already started reporting about 'Xizang' and no more about Tibet or the Land of Snows.

"Xizang in the past: A grim picture" argues the article, adding, "Throughout history, there have been reactionary forces that attempted to halt the rolling wheels of history, and the 14th Dalai Lama is a notorious example. He is by no means the 'messenger of peace' that he paints himself to be, but the face of the institution that was responsible for the darkest period in Xizang in the past, also known as Tibet in the West."

It raises the question: why demonise the Dalai Lama and India, who offered him asylum, at that point in time?

For a few years, Beijing seemed quite comfortable with the Dalai Lama's Middle Path approach, which accepted that Tibet could be a part of China. But the issue is the past history. The Communist Party would like the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile, known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), to admit that Tibet has been part of the Motherland since 'immemorial times'. But historically, it is not the case.

The CGTN article can argue, "Before it was liberated in 1951, Xizang, a feudal society propped up by serfs, had a population of only 1 million. Yet this relatively small population had almost 200 noble families, officials, monks, and aristocrats who plundered all the resources, suppressing and oppressing Xizang people. In this distorted social structure, people were divided into different classes." All this does not change the facts.

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Old Tibet was perhaps not a perfect society, but which country was or is perfect (definitely not Communist China)?

However, there was a certain harmony and contentment in the society. Ironically, the Dalai Lama, even in his young age, has always been keen to introduce reforms and give the masses a voice; unfortunately, after China's invasion of Tibet, it was systematically blocked by the Chinese generals ruling in Lhasa in the 1950s; he had to wait to be in exile to democratise the Tibetan society.

The CGTN mentions the Dalai Lama's role in more than derogatory (and untrue) terms: "The Dalai Lama was the chief representative of old Xizang's theocratic feudal serfdom. The interest group he represented upheld the corrupt feudal serf system, repressing social progress and preventing the serfs from gaining freedom as it would overturn their privileged status and undermine their vested interests. After the peaceful liberation of Xizang, when democratic reform started, bringing new hope to the vast number of serfs, the Dalai Lama clique launched an armed rebellion. But it failed, and he fled to India, where he has since been engaged in separatist activities."

#### **The Historical Facts**

The truth is the opposite: the so-called 'armed rebellion' was a popular movement. Maj SL Chibber, the Consul General of India in Lhasa, was the only non-Tibetan witness of the March 1959 events, when the Dalai Lama had no choice but to leave his country and take refuge in India.

In June 1959, Chibber sent to the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi his "Report for the months of March, April, and May 1959," available in the National Archives of India.

Chibber, the eyewitness, writes, "In the history of the movement for a free Tibet, the month of March, 1959, will be most historic, as during this month Tibetans high and low, in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, openly challenged the Chinese rule in Tibet. They set up an organisation called 'Pho Mimang Ranchen Chi Chog', meaning 'Tibetan Peoples Independent Organisation', renounced the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951, staged demonstrations to give vent to their anti-Chinese feelings, and demanded withdrawal of the Chinese from Tibet."

At no point in time were the people instigated by the Dalai Lama; on the contrary, the Tibetan leader was trying his best to find a modus vivendi with the Chinese generals to avoid bloodshed in the Land of Snows (the massacre of the Tibetan populace nonetheless took place at the end of the month of March 1959).

Chibber continues his narration: "But this challenge (the withdrawal of the Chinese), before the MIGHT OF CHINESE People's Liberation Army, who on 20th March, 1959, started an all-out offensive against the ill-organised, ill-equipped, untrained Tibetans with artillery, mortars, machine guns, and all types of automatic weapons, was short-lived. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, smelling danger, left Lhasa secretly on the night of the 17th March, 1959, with important members of his personal staff, three Cabinet Ministers, and members of his family for the Lhoka area (south of Lhasa), where at that time Khampas had full sway and from where it was easier for him to escape to India if need arose. ... The actual trouble started on the night of 19th March, 1959."

The end result was that on March 28, China's State Council (government) dissolved the 'local' Tibet government and transferred all its functions and powers to the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, fully under the Chinese hold.

The CGTN propaganda blames the West: "He is supported by Western anti-China forces, lobbying and peddling absurd lies, attempting to discredit the Chinese government's governance of Xizang and mislead international opinion. However, facts speak louder than words."

The truth is that it was several weeks before the 'Western' governments were even aware of the happenings in the Tibetan capital; Tibet was then totally isolated.

### **The Main Question**

To come back to the question: why this renewed aggressiveness now?

The first reason could be the forthcoming 90th birthday of the Tibetan leader. In 2011, in a long statement speaking about his succession and the return of the 15th Dalai Lama, he had announced that he would give details about his 'return' when he turns 90 years old.

Could the Dalai Lama have made a decision? Could he have found an 'emanation' in India? This is possible.

It was recently announced that the CTA has started preparing for the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebration on July 6, 2025, "with speculation surrounding the Dalai Lama addressing the issue of his succession during that time," says ANI.

Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong (President) of the Tibetan government in exile, told ANI: "The Tibetan people worldwide have been urging the Dalai Lama to continue the institution of the Dalai Lama, citing its importance to both Tibetans and the broader world."

The Tibetan leader noted, "Tibetan people all around the world have been writing to the Private Office (of the Dalai Lama), requesting His Holiness to continue the institution of the Dalai Lama, which is not only important for Tibetans but for the whole world through the ancient Indian wisdom and the messages that are embodied through His Holiness the Dalai Lama," according to Tsering.

ANI rightly concluded, "The issue has gained much attention due to China's interest in the reincarnation process for political reasons."

### **China Nervous**

All this, including the Sikyong's trip on the northeastern border, is certainly rattling China. They may realise that the succession will soon be decided and they will not be a part of the process.

Also, the Dalai Lama's stay at the Tashilhunpo monastery near Mysore has attracted thousands of devotees and shown that the health of the Tibetan leader was good, despite the problem with his knees (one was operated on in the US a few months ago)

...And despite the lack of political support from the governments worldwide, his popularity remains formidable.

Another reason for Beijing's frustration and anger is that the attack on India in May 2020 in Eastern Ladakh has shown Beijing's military limits, while at the same time triggering a never-seen-before development of India's northern borders (ie, the construction of new roads, providing better communications with telecom towers in remote areas, the adoption of the Vibrant Village Scheme for border settlements, and a general revitalisation of local faith, in particular Tibetan Buddhism in the Himalaya).

The last is taking place at a time when China is pushing for the 'sinization' of the same Buddhism (which is the opposite of the Buddha's profound teachings). All these factors probably concur to make Beijing nervous; an insecure China can be an aggressive China. India needs to be watchful.

### **Business and human rights: growing pressure to root out modern slavery in supply chains**

07 February 2025, [IBA](#), Alice Johnson

In January, the UK Parliament's Business and Trade Committee questioned Chinese fashion company SHEIN as part of an enquiry into workers' rights.

Yinan Zhu, EMEA General Counsel at SHEIN, was unable to answer questions on whether the company sells clothing that contains cotton from the Xinjiang region in China where Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic minorities are allegedly forced to work and subject to abuse, torture and other human rights violations.

Chair of the committee, Liam Byrne, said that SHEIN's reluctance to answer 'basic questions' about the materials used in its products and the working conditions of its employees 'bordered on contempt of the Committee'.

The committee, which said it had been left with 'zero confidence' in the integrity of SHEIN's supply chains, also did not receive an answer from the company on how it defined appropriate working hours following allegations that manufacturers used by SHEIN had employees working 18 hour days with only one day off a month.

SHEIN told *Global Insight*: 'SHEIN takes supply chain risks extremely seriously and strictly prohibits forced labour in its supply chain globally. SHEIN complies with all applicable laws and regulations in the countries in which it operates, including the Modern Slavery Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act in the UK.'

Pressure on companies to do more to root out modern slavery and other human rights harms in their supply chains is rising. In June the Court of Appeal in London handed down a landmark judgment that removed

certain legal barriers to proceeds of crime investigations into businesses suspected of profiting from alleged forced labour in China. A month earlier the EU introduced legislation requiring companies with over 1000 employees to identify and address adverse human rights and environmental impacts in their supply chains. In 2021, the US passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, prohibiting the import of goods from Xinjiang.

Human rights organisations, however, still want the UK government to do more to tackle the use of forced labour by companies and promote human rights. Baroness Helena Kennedy KC, the director of the IBA's Human Rights Institute, says that the Joint Committee on Human Rights, of which she is a member, is considering whether the UK's Modern Slavery Act needs to be amended to introduce more accountability for companies over their supply chains. The UK's Modern Slavery Act was introduced in 2015 and requires businesses with a turnover of £36m or more to publish an annual statement on their efforts to prevent modern slavery in their supply chains. In recent years the law has received criticism over the quality and scope of the modern slavery statements and the lack of enforcement around the reporting requirements. 'The sense is that there needs to be something that makes companies much more alert to their responsibilities because at the moment it's a bit of a box ticking exercise,' says KC.

Sanctions are an issue globally of great concern to our clients because they do not want to fall foul, and in particular be blocked from doing business with the US. Many companies in the UK, US and EU outsource the work of supply chain due diligence to law firms or corporate investigations companies. Anwar Darkazally, a managing partner at Field Intelligence in London and an officer of the IBA's Business and Human Rights Committee, says that sanctions related to the US Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act are something his clients take seriously when looking at the fast fashion sector. 'Sanctions are an issue globally of great concern to our clients because they do not want to fall foul, and in particular be blocked from doing business with the US, or lose access to their banking facilities,' he says.

Darkazally explains that to mitigate risks companies can use open-source research, which examines publicly available data, and human source research, which involves speaking to people with firsthand knowledge of entities involved in a certain type of business. 'It is possible, for example, if you have a Chinese speaker, to be able to navigate some Chinese websites and databases, which will show a chain of relationships in far more detail,' he says.

The UN, an independent people's tribunal in London and the US government have concluded that China may have committed crimes against humanity against

Uyghurs in Xinjiang. KC, who was sanctioned by China for speaking out about the abuses, says that the IBA's Human Rights Institute has concluded that crimes against humanity at the very least, and possibly even genocide, are taking place against Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang.

When it comes to stopping UK based businesses from profiting from Uyghur forced labour KC believes that the UK should introduce import bans on cotton from the Xinjiang region. 'I would want to be looking at having import bans on commodities coming from certain places where we know there's a presumption that forced labour is in the supply chain if it's coming from Xinjiang,' she says.

In January, UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves visited Beijing to strengthen economic cooperation and trade ties with China and boasted securing £600m worth of agreements for the UK economy. In a statement about the trip the UK government said Reeves raised human rights, including Xinjiang, and forced labour, with Chinese officials and made it clear that China's sanctions against UK parliamentarians were unacceptable.

KC says that conversations with China about trade and forced labour in Xinjiang need to be held within the wider context of human rights and paying people fairly for the work they do. 'I believe we should always be holding the doors open to have decent conversations and one of the ways that I would be wanting to see a conversation with China taking place on this is around employment practices. To be talking about the ways all of us struggle to create fairness in the workplace and proper reward for people's work,' she says.

### **With US funding freeze, China nonprofits are facing extinction. They need emergency assistance**

06 February 2025, [The Strategist](#), Bethany Allen

An entire ecosystem of vital China-related work is now in crisis. When the Trump administration froze foreign funding and USAID programs last week, dozens of scrappy nonprofits in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States were immediately affected. Staff are losing their jobs; some organisations face imminent closure due to lack of funding; others are paring back their programming.

In many cases, these organisations provide our last window into what is actually happening in China. They do the painstaking and often personally risky work of tracking Chinese media censorship, tallying local protests, uncovering human rights violations, documenting the Uyghur genocide, and supporting what remains of civil society in China. They provide platforms for Chinese people to speak freely; they help keep the dream of democracy in China alive. I'm not listing the names of any specific organisations at this

time, because some prefer not to disclose that they receive foreign funding. Beijing believes funding that supports free speech and human rights is interference by 'hostile foreign forces'.

As China's President Xi Jinping has squeezed Chinese civil society and expelled journalists, information from inside China has gotten harder and harder to access. The 2017 Chinese foreign NGO law crushed US and other foreign nonprofits based in China. Some moved to Hong Kong or elsewhere. The spending freeze may deal them a death blow.

The research and other work done by these nonprofits is invaluable. It largely isn't replicated by think tanks, universities, private firms, or journalists. If it disappears, nothing will replace it, and Beijing's work to crush it will be complete.

As a journalist who covered China for more than 10 years, I took for granted the numerous organisations I could turn to when I needed certain kinds of information. But Donald Trump's foreign spending freeze has revealed how dependent these organisations are on a single government for their survival—and, by extension, how fragile our sources of information about China really are.

The US must immediately grant emergency waivers to China-focussed nonprofits. If the US is not able to do this, governments around the world that value democracy, human rights and truth must step in and find a way to restore funding to these organisations now. It wouldn't take much; a few million dollars spread across a handful of donor nations would be enough to preserve the research, expertise and networks these organisations represent.

Regardless of whether the US continues funding this work, this crisis should serve as a wake-up call for democracies everywhere. Funding from a single government should not be the only thing standing between us and an information blackout on Chinese civil society. That is not a model of international democratic resilience.

Providing funding for China nonprofits operating outside of China is directly aligned with the core interests of democratic nations. We base our security on the idea that democratic systems are the best way to guarantee the long-term stability, prosperity and wellbeing of citizens. Government budgets exist to preserve the democratic systems that make these goals possible; we don't sacrifice these ideals to shave off a few numbers on a budget.

A key part of China's agenda is to persuade its own citizens and the world, falsely and through deception and coercion, that democratic systems are not better. Beijing claims its system is the best way to guarantee economic prosperity and stability. It claims its one-party system is a meritocracy.

It is difficult and time-consuming—though not particularly expensive—to do the work that proves

Beijing is lying, and that what it offers is smoke and mirrors. Tools that allow us to uncover the flaws of China's own system and the actual struggles Chinese people face, directly support the goals, security and resilience of democratic governments.

Without the work that China nonprofits do, it will be much harder to show that China's domestic model of economic and political governance is deeply flawed. If we can no longer prove that, it becomes much harder to understand why democracies are worth fighting for in the first place.

### **India feels the tremors as China plans mega dam, copper mining in Tibet**

06 February 2025, [The Federal](#), Subir Bhaumik

While dam raises spectre of a water tsunami if it collapses in an earthquake, extensive copper mining may cause major river water and groundwater contamination.

China's plan to build the world's biggest hydropower project in Tibet and exploit huge copper deposits in the plateau has raised serious environmental concerns for India and Bangladesh.

While the dam raises the spectre of a water tsunami if it collapses in a massive earthquake, extensive copper mining may lead to a high level of river water and groundwater contamination, impacting both Tibet and its downstream neighbours.

India launched a "solemn protest" once China announced its plans on December 25 to go ahead with the dam on Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river that is expected to produce 60,000 MW electricity.

#### **China's assurances**

Bangladesh's foreign affairs adviser Touhid Hossain, during a recent visit to Beijing, expressed his country's concern over the proposed dam as well.

China has sought to reassure both India and Bangladesh that the dam will neither affect downstream flows because it was a run-of-the-river project nor will it cause any environmental hazard.

But experts warn that even if the dam does not impact much on the downstream hydrology of the Brahmaputra, they cannot wish away the nightmarish scenario of a water tsunami caused by a possible dam collapse in Tibet in the event of an earthquake.

#### **Major earthquakes**

Indeed, major earthquakes have devastated the region: Assam-Tibet in 1897 (intensity 8.2 on the Richter scale) and 1950 (intensity 8.7), or Nepal in 2015 (intensity 7.8). The Nepal disaster killed nearly 9,000 people.

Studies have shown that huge dams can increase the possibility of earthquakes by sharply increasing

“reservoir-induced seismicity” caused by huge water pressure on pre-existing fault lines.

Tibet sits on a major tectonic fault line, where the Indian plate collides with the Eurasian plate and produces intense seismic activity. Bordering Indian states, from Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh, are equally prone to high level of seismic activity and have suffered killer earthquakes in the past.

#### **Increased seismic activity**

Despite China's legendary reputation in civil engineering, experts say it will not be easy to construct a huge dam, as the one planned on the Yarlung Tsangpo, that can withstand an earthquake of 7.5 or more on the Richter scale.

In fact, there is evidence of heightened seismic activity in Tibet and neighbouring Indian states.

Tibet was shaken by a massive 7.1-intensity earthquake on January 7, barely a fortnight after China announced the construction of the Tsangpo Dam. The quake, with its epicentre in Tibet's Tingri county, killed nearly 150 people and injured hundreds.

#### **Tremors in India**

The substantial subsequent spurt in seismic activity, not only in Tibet but also in the bordering Uttarakhand state of India, has caused much consternation.

A further earthquake, 4.2 in intensity, struck Tibet on February 2 at a shallow depth of 10 km.

On January 30, a 4.1-magnitude earthquake jolted the same area. Prior to that, a 4.5-magnitude quake struck the region on January 27, while a 4.4-magnitude tremor was recorded on January 24.

#### **Shallow earthquakes**

Nine earthquakes measuring between 2.5 and 4 on the Richter scale have hit various places in Uttarakhand in the last week of January. The last of these had its epicentre at Fuch-Kandi near Sarutal lake in the Yamunotri range.

While the shallow earthquakes tend to cause substantial surface-level damage if they roll in quick succession, they also point to the possibility of a massive earthquake.

#### **China's argument**

The ambitious Yarlung Tsangpo dam has been projected by Beijing as a clean renewable energy initiative, intended to reduce China's dependence on fossil fuels and meeting its carbon neutrality goals by 2060.

The mega-dam will come up in Medog County in Tibet at the “Great Bend” where the river takes a dramatic U-turn before entering India's Arunachal Pradesh.

This location, mentioned in China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), is ideal for hydropower generation due to the river's steep descent of nearly 2,000 metres.

#### **Diverting water**

The dam will also be used to control the Yarlung Tsangpo's flow under China's ambitious South-North Water Diversion Project to reduce water stress in arid

regions like Beijing, Hebei and Tianjin in northern China.

Understandably, concerns have been raised on how the dam can give China much leverage over downstream countries like India and Bangladesh which depend on the Brahmaputra for agriculture, drinking water and livelihood.

Some fear the project could be used as a geopolitical tool in Sino-Indian relations as any manipulation of the river's flow would have significant repercussions for India's northeastern region. The plans for northward water diversion reinforce such fears.

#### **Environmental fears**

Apart from concerns over a mega-dam in an earthquake-prone area running the risks of infrastructure failure leading to catastrophic downstream flooding, environmentalists fear it could threaten the fragile Himalayan ecosystem, home to several critically endangered species.

It could also lead to large-scale deforestation and soil erosion, irreversibly altering the region's biodiversity, and make it vulnerable to adverse climate change.

#### **Copper deposits**

The recent discovery of a massive copper deposit in Tibet has been transforming China's mineral industry, with far-reaching implications for global markets, green energy production and geopolitics.

More than 20 million tonnes of newly identified copper reserves have been found in the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, significantly expanding China's already dominant resource base.

This discovery will help strengthen China's position as a global leader in copper production and fuel its ambitions for a sustainable energy future.

#### **Copper and China**

Copper demand is surging worldwide, especially due to rising production of electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies and infrastructure projects.

Copper is essential for electric grids, battery production and advanced industrial applications, making it a crucial green energy transition.

As countries compete to ensure stable copper supplies, this discovery makes China the pivot of future supply chains, potentially giving it greater leverage over global markets.

#### **Copper mining's hazards**

However, large-scale copper mining in an ecologically sensitive region could disrupt local ecosystems and exacerbate geopolitical tensions.

The Qinghai-Tibet plateau is one of the most ecologically sensitive regions in the world, home to unique biodiversity and fragile ecosystems that could be irreversibly damaged by large-scale mining.

Extracting copper from high-altitude, remote locations necessitates huge infrastructure like roads, processing plants and water-intensive refining operations, all capable of undermining traditional habitats.



### China is determined

The plateau's delicate water systems, including glaciers and high-altitude rivers, are particularly vulnerable. Copper mining often leads to heavy metal contamination, which can pollute rivers and groundwater supplies, impacting local wildlife and communities that depend on these water sources.

The risk of tailings dam failures, which have caused major environmental disasters in other mining regions, adds another layer of concern.

But China seems determined to go ahead with both the mega-dam and the huge copper mining, leaving downstream countries like India to sit and worry.

### 26 years away, so close to home: A Tibetan's heartbreak

05 February 2025, [RFA](#), Lhuboom

### Man living in Belgium is interrogated by Chinese authorities and deported after 20 hours at an airport.



Travelers look at arrival and departure boards at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing, China, January 2025. (RFA)

Tashi, an ethnic Tibetan and Belgian citizen, was elated when he heard last November that China had expanded its visa-free stay to 30 days for 38 countries, including Belgium, from the previous 15 days.

He immediately began making plans to visit relatives he hadn't seen in 26 years, as the previous 15-day limit was too short a duration for such a long trip.

As the departure day approached, Tashi — whose name has been changed for safety reasons per his request — was filled with “a mixed sense of excitement and apprehension,” he told Radio Free Asia.

Tashi is one of several ethnic Tibetans who have been denied entry to China from European countries under this visa-free policy.

When in late January Tashi boarded his flight from Brussels to Beijing, he envisioned taking a connecting flight to Chengdu, from where he expected to make the 20-hour drive to his hometown in the historic Amdo region in Qinghai province.

“After 26 years, I thought my dream of returning had finally come true,” he said. “I imagined celebrating

Losar [the Tibetan New Year] with my family, attending the Monlam Festival, and revisiting the place where I grew up.”

“But mine was a journey interrupted,” he said.

Instead, after Tashi landed, officials at Beijing Capital International Airport interrogated him for eight hours, detained him for 20 hours and put him on a plane back to Belgium.

Authorities said it was because he was a follower of the Dalai Lama and had done volunteer work to preserve Tibetan language and culture.

### Denied entry

Tashi is one of several dozens of ethnic Tibetans who have been detained and questioned at Chinese airports, the travelers have told Radio Free Asia.

The Tibetans said officials interrogated them for hours and searched their belongings before they were deported.

At least four other Tibetans have been denied entry to China from European countries under the visa-free policy.

RFA reported in 2018 that Chinese authorities at Chengdu airport in Sichuan province prohibited three Tibetans with foreign passports — two with South Korean passports and one with a U.S. passport — from entering the country, questioning them harshly and detaining them for hours before expelling them.

In January, a Tibetan woman with Belgian citizenship was also deported from China, this time from Shenzhen Baoan International Airport.

This is not a new pattern.

In April 2024, authorities at Shanghai's Pudong International Airport [detained another Belgian citizen, Thubten Gyatso](#), along with his 6-year-old son, on their way to visit family in Qinghai province.



Signs mark the immigration section at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing, China, January 2025. (RFA)

At least six Chinese officials took turns grilling him in a small room for 18 hours, Gyatso said.

They questioned him on a range of subjects, including his escape from Tibet to India in 1994, his move to Belgium and his citizenship status there, and details about his relatives' professions.

Afterwards, the officials told him that he would not be allowed to return to his hometown because they

found a photo of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan national flag — both banned in China — when searching his belongings and mobile phone.

#### **Queried about Dalai Lama links**

Similarly, in the case of Tashi, officials repeatedly accused him of being a follower of the Dalai Lama.

He told RFA that authorities accused him of being part of a campaign under the Dalai Lama, as seen by Beijing, to split Tibet from China, even though his work focuses solely on Tibetan language and culture.

“This made me realize just how important my work is and knowing my work is meaningful and effective strengthens my resolve to do more,” Tashi said.

During more than eight hours of questioning, Tashi was asked about items among his belongings, apps on his mobile phone and the volunteer work he’d been doing in Belgium since 2006 concerning the preservation of Tibetan cultural and linguistic identity.

“With each passing minute, they probed deeper, inquiring about every activity I had been involved in while volunteering in Belgium,” he said.

Despite the quizzing, officials already “seemed to know every detail, right down to specific dates” about his activities, he said.

When authorities informed Tashi that he needed to return to Belgium, they confiscated his passport and flight tickets and escorted him to immigration where he had to wait for another 13 hours without food or drink.

“With nowhere to get sustenance, I sat there feeling helpless,” Tashi said.

The Belgian Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to an RFA request for comment. Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, told RFA via email that the Chinese government does not engage in any discrimination with regards to its visa-free policy.

“The Chinese government administers the entry and exit affairs of foreigners in accordance with the Exit and Entry Administration Law of the People’s Republic of China and other laws and regulations,” Liu said.

“Patriotic overseas Tibetans are an important part of the overseas Chinese community,” he added. “The Chinese government has always been very caring about their situation, and there is certainly no discrimination.”

#### **Why the 'roof of the world' keeps rising over time**

02 February 2025, [Earth](#), Jordan Joesph

Mountains can leave us in awe, but they rarely offer easy clues about what lies beneath them. The Tibetan Plateau, often called the “roof of the world,” continues to baffle geologists and others curious about Earth’s hidden workings.

Many researchers have tried to figure out why this region keeps rising. One group recently tackled the question by analyzing ambient noise tomography recordings from northern Tibet.

#### **Why the Tibetan Plateau matters**

The research was a collaboration among Dr. Rizheng He of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, Xiaohui Yuan of the Deutsches GeoForschungsZentrum (GFZ), and Dr. Wei Li of the China University of Geosciences.

The experts studied seismic readings that reveal a complex picture of molten material deep beneath the surface.

The Tibetan Plateau was created by the Indian-Eurasian continental collision, which began around 50 million years ago. Some experts view this collision as one of Earth’s major events during the Cenozoic era.

#### **The Hoh-Xil Basin is rising**

This basin in the northern region has caught the attention of scientists because it experienced a noticeable uplift and post-collisional magmatism in the Early Miocene.

Back then, molten rock found its way into shallower levels, hinting at processes below that might still be active today.

Past seismic studies struggled with coverage gaps in this remote area, leaving scientists without a full picture. Recent instrument deployments now shed more light on the vertical push and the patches of magma that might sit below.

#### **Peering into the crust**

The scientists applied ambient noise tomography to map the subsurface. This approach interprets scattered seismic signals to paint a three-dimensional view of the region’s crust and upper mantle.

The experts discovered areas in the upper mantle where S-wave speeds drop significantly below normal. Such zones suggest the presence of molten or partially molten rock, which could alter how the surface behaves under ongoing tectonic forces.

#### **Melt signals confirmed**

“This model shows widespread low S-wave velocity anomalies in the northern Tibetan Plateau, requiring the presence of melts. The crustal and mantle melting aligns with exposed young magmatic rocks in the Hoh-Xil Basin,” said Dr. He.

Experts see this melt as a sign that sections of the lithosphere might be thinning or breaking away, allowing heat to concentrate. When heavier parts of the mantle drop off, new magma can flow upward and cause the crust to thicken.

#### **Redefining Tibetan plateau growth**

Geologically speaking, plateau growth often involves complicated feedbacks between deep rock dynamics and the overlying crust.

Many thought the northward expansion of Tibetan topography happened gradually, but the evidence for

relatively quick uplift in the Hoh-Xil Basin raises new questions.

Post-collisional magmatism can change the thickness and temperature of the crust, creating localized pockets of expansion. That process has made the plateau's northern edge rise at different intervals from the rest of the region, leaving a patchwork of uplift histories.

#### **Why removal matters**

Scientists point to lithospheric mantle removal as a factor that encourages hotter rocks to appear closer to the surface. This results in partial melting, which eventually feeds magmatic growth and pushes the land upward.

A thinner mantle can also help channel molten material more efficiently, potentially intensifying local deformation. That can create zones of weakness, where rock flows more easily under tectonic stress and changes the mountain-building pattern.

#### **Future changes expected**

Although the plateau sits far from many large cities, any shift in the ground's shape could influence rivers and ecosystems downstream. People living in nearby valleys depend on these water sources.

Learning about heat and melt distribution helps experts predict how fast the plateau might continue to rise in the decades ahead.

Ongoing geophysical surveys could reveal more hints of where crustal melting is strongest and where new volcanic activity might emerge.

Researchers sometimes compare data from satellites with on-the-ground measurements. The goal is to pinpoint where new uplifts are likely and how they connect with deep mantle dynamics.

#### **Seismic data and fieldwork**

Multiple institutions now share seismic data to fill in the knowledge gaps, especially in areas that were once inaccessible.

Coordination among research teams is essential because each vantage point captures a different piece of the puzzle, ensuring that no corner remains unexplored.

Scientists also rely on geological fieldwork to examine magmatic rocks that formed during earlier uplift phases. Linking those samples with seismic images can tell a richer story about how the region evolved.

#### **How the Tibetan Plateau may change**

Studies of the Himalayan-Tibetan orogen show that collisions can keep rearranging entire mountain systems for millions of years, creating ongoing shifts in crust and mantle structures.

More results from these advanced seismic arrays may reveal just how dynamic the Earth can be as it continues to mold this rugged corner of Asia.

According to some experts, the plateau's continued growth might spark renewed magmatic activities.

Those events could shape new local fault lines or modify existing ones in ways that surprise us.

Ongoing research in the Hoh-Xil Basin may reveal whether these melting regions shift or expand over time, changing how geologists envision the plateau's future. Such activity might lead to even more localized uplifts that alter the entire profile of northern Tibet.

#### **Future research directions**

Seismic imaging in northern Tibet is shedding new light on how molten rock shapes high terrain. Each finding adds another piece to the story of how collisions can reshape entire landscapes.

Researchers will likely keep returning to these high-altitude terrains to refine their models and spot new anomalies.

Many aspects remain uncertain, yet the recognition of partial melting in the crust and mantle highlights the complex way mountains and basins evolve.

#### **A Complex and Controversial History of China's Claim Over Tibet**

02 February 2025, [StratNews Global](#), Anukriti

For many years, the Chinese government has argued that Tibet has always been a part of China. While Tibet did have some political and cultural ties with China during certain periods, it was never fully integrated into China for most of its history.

The relationship between China and Tibet has been a subject of dispute and controversy for centuries. Since China's annexation of Tibet in 1950, the Chinese government has claimed that Tibet has always been part of China. However, this claim is deeply contested by many scholars, historians, and international bodies.

#### **China's Claim: Tibet Has Been Part of China Since Antiquity**

For many years, the Chinese government has argued that Tibet has always been a part of China, dating back to the Tang Dynasty. This argument is crucial for China's justification of its actions in Tibet, particularly the annexation in 1950. The Chinese government asserts that Tibet was under Chinese control for centuries, and thus its takeover of Tibet in 1950 was merely the 'reunification' of its ancient territory.

However, this historical connection is difficult to prove. While Tibet did have some political and cultural ties with China during certain periods, it was never fully integrated into China for most of its history. Tibet maintained a distinct identity, with its own government, culture, and religious practices.

#### **Changing Chinese Narrative**

Over time, China has refined its argument, now claiming Tibet was officially incorporated into China during the Yuan Dynasty under Kublai Khan. However, this claim is contentious. The Mongols maintained a spiritual, not political, relationship with Tibetan leaders under the Cho-Yon (Priest-Patron) system and

did not integrate Tibet into their central administration.

Similarly, during the Qing Dynasty, Tibet's spiritual leaders engaged with Qing emperors, but Tibet remained largely autonomous. China only attempted direct control in 1908, prompting the 13th Dalai Lama's exile. After the Qing collapse in 1912, Tibet reaffirmed its independence in 1913. A similar pattern can be observed in China's approach to Arunachal Pradesh.

"China not only claims Tibet as its own, it also claims that India's Arunachal Pradesh is Southern Tibet or 'zangnan'" says Dr. Sriparna Pathak, Associate Professor at O.P.Jindal Global University. In recent years, China has repeatedly attempted to reinforce its territorial claims through unilateral actions, such as renaming places within Arunachal Pradesh.

#### **Tibet's Independence From 1913 to 1950**

In 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama expelled Chinese troops and officials from Tibet. For the next 37 years, Tibet functioned as an independent nation, free from Chinese control. It established its own government, conducted its own foreign relations, and made decisions without interference from China.

During this period, Tibet was recognized as an independent state by some foreign countries. The British Empire, for example, had a treaty with Tibet in 1904 that recognized its independence. Similarly, many nations treated Tibet as an independent entity until 1950, when China sent in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to 'reunify' Tibet with China.

#### **International Law**

China continued to claim that it was simply 'reuniting' Tibet with the rest of China. In fact, China's 1992 White Paper on Tibet referred to Tibet as being 'owned' by China, as if Tibet was already an inherent part of the country before the 1950 invasion. This language is a clear attempt to legitimize China's actions in Tibet and to shift the narrative from one of colonial expansion to one of peaceful reunification.

Dr. Pathak states: "While there has been widespread condemnation of the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty.....there was no such response to China's so-called peaceful liberation of Tibet."

"The UN has expressed concerns about the situation in Tibet and has called for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, the UN has not taken any binding actions to recognize Tibet's independence or to condemn China's occupation", she added.

#### **The Tibetan Struggle and the Chinese Narrative**

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#### **Changing Chinese Narrative**

Over time, China has refined its argument, now claiming Tibet was officially incorporated into China during the Yuan Dynasty under Kublai Khan. However, this claim is contentious. The Mongols maintained a spiritual, not political, relationship with Tibetan leaders under the Cho-Yon (Priest-Patron) system and did not integrate Tibet into their central administration.

Similarly, during the Qing Dynasty, Tibet's spiritual leaders engaged with Qing emperors, but Tibet remained largely autonomous. China only attempted direct control in 1908, prompting the 13th Dalai Lama's exile. After the Qing collapse in 1912, Tibet reaffirmed its independence in 1913. A similar pattern can be observed in China's approach to Arunachal Pradesh.

"China not only claims Tibet as its own, it also claims that India's Arunachal Pradesh is Southern Tibet or 'zangnan'" says Dr. Sriparna Pathak, Associate Professor at O.P.Jindal Global University. In recent years, China has repeatedly attempted to reinforce its territorial claims through unilateral actions, such as renaming places within Arunachal Pradesh.

#### **Tibet's Independence From 1913 to 1950**

In 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama expelled Chinese troops and officials from Tibet. For the next 37 years, Tibet functioned as an independent nation, free from Chinese control. It established its own government, conducted its own foreign relations, and made decisions without interference from China.

During this period, Tibet was recognized as an independent state by some foreign countries. The British Empire, for example, had a treaty with Tibet in 1904 that recognized its independence. Similarly, many nations treated Tibet as an independent entity until 1950, when China sent in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to 'reunify' Tibet with China.

#### **International Law**

China continued to claim that it was simply 'reuniting' Tibet with the rest of China. In fact, China's 1992 White

Paper on Tibet referred to Tibet as being 'owned' by China, as if Tibet was already an inherent part of the country before the 1950 invasion. This language is a clear attempt to legitimize China's actions in Tibet and to shift the narrative from one of colonial expansion to one of peaceful reunification.

Dr. Pathak states: "While there has been widespread condemnation of the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty.....there was no such response to China's so-called peaceful liberation of Tibet. "

"The UN has expressed concerns about the situation in Tibet and has called for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, the UN has not taken any binding actions to recognize Tibet's independence or to condemn China's occupation", she added.

### **The Tibetan Struggle and the Chinese Narrative**

China argues that its rule has modernized Tibet, replacing an oppressive theocracy with economic development. Officials claim Tibetans suffered under "serfdom" before China's "liberation." However, Tibetans and human rights groups counter that this narrative overlooks decades of political and cultural repression, including restrictions on religion, language, and traditions. The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising, and many Tibetans continue to seek greater autonomy or independence. Jaydev Ranade, President at Centre for China Analysis and Strategy states: "The Chinese view is obviously that [Tibetan Buddhism] cannot [coexist with the Communist system]. That is why they're telling all the monks and nuns to adapt Tibetan Buddhism to socialism with Chinese characteristics, and to 'sinicize' Tibetan Buddhism."

It underscores the fundamental conflict between religious freedom and state control in Tibet.

He further explained that "the Chinese also emphasize that Tibetans must be patriotic and must not owe allegiance to anyone else other than the Chinese Communist Party. So that brings in a clear conflict of interest between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government."

Dr. Pathak said: "A copy of the rules, published on the website of the United Front Work Department states, "No organization or individual may use religious activity sites to conduct activities that endanger national security, disrupt social order [or] damage national interests".

### **Tibet and Broader Territorial Conflicts**

China's occupation of Tibet also raises broader concerns about territorial integrity and the enforcement of international law. Ranade noted that China has used similar strategies in other disputed regions:

"We have seen what has happened in Hong Kong and we have also seen what is happening in the South China Sea, where China made claims and then began

enforcing them step by step. Today, they are virtually dominating the South China Sea without any tangible objection by the international community."

This pattern of territorial expansion raises concerns about Taiwan's security, as well. He added, "That puts Taiwan in a precarious situation and increases its vulnerability. A lot depends on how the US and international community respond in case China tries something."

Can International Law Challenge China's Control Over Tibet?

The question of whether international law can be used to challenge China's control over Tibet remains complex. Mr. Ranade observed, "International law can be used to challenge China's occupation of 1950, but even if they succeed, it would be difficult to enforce."

"Tibet had its own currency, its own ruler, and all the attributes of a sovereign power, but few countries officially recognized it as an independent state." This lack of recognition complicates Tibet's legal standing in the present.

### **An Unresolved Issue**

As Dr. Pathak observes: "If China's occupation of Tibet since 1950 or of Xinjiang has not been challenged by any country in the international order, even in 2025, there are bleak hopes that any country would challenge China's occupation of other territories"

The future of Tibet remains in a state of uncertainty, shaped by geopolitical shifts and China's internal policies. What is crucial here is the resilience of the Tibetan people in preserving their cultural and political identity. More than ever, the conscience of the world must awaken to China's injustices in Tibet and restore its sovereignty.

**Battle for Tibet (Full Documentary)**

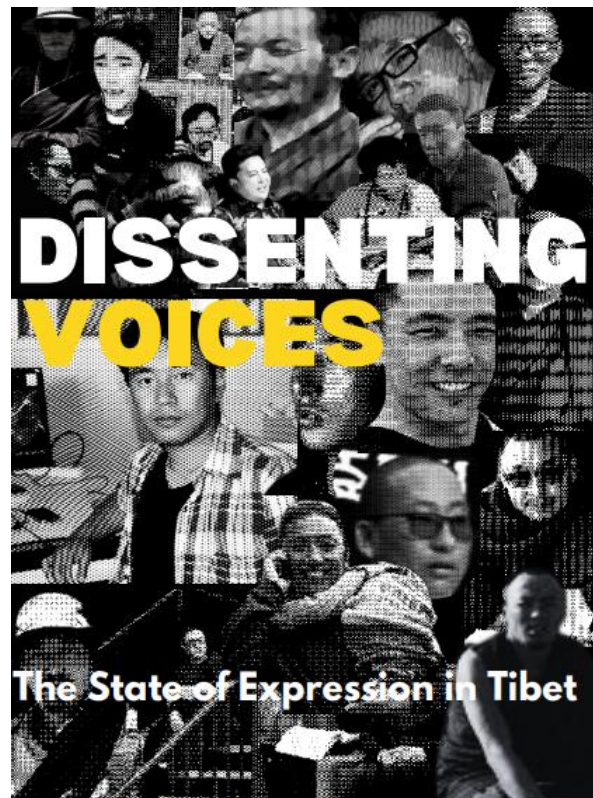
19 February 2025, [FRONTLINE](#)



**Dissenting Voices: The State of Expression in Tibet**

06 February 2025, [TCHRD](#)

# PUBLICATIONS



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has released a new report today in its *Dissenting Voices series*, documenting the intensifying crackdown on freedom of expression and information in Tibet under President Xi Jinping. Since Xi Jinping's meteoric surge to power, the Chinese government has pursued an increasingly repressive

strategy aimed at consolidating its authority and silencing independent voices. Over the past decade, China has exponentially curtailed the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, establishing an environment of pervasive surveillance, censorship and systemic repression.

This report details how China's authoritarian regime has deployed an expansive surveillance apparatus, weaponizing legal frameworks such as the Cybersecurity Law and the National Intelligence Law to monitor internet activity, criminalize dissent, and enforce the state's narrative. Real-name registration requirements and the systematic collection of personal data have effectively eradicated online anonymity, leaving Tibetans vulnerable to severe reprisals for expressing dissenting opinions. These measures not only stifle free expression but also facilitate complete erasure of cultural practices and forced assimilation.

In the past decade, influential Tibetans including artists, singers, writers, and thought leaders, are systematically persecuted for their extensive scholarship on Tibetan language, culture and literature. Many of these figures have been subjected to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, or imprisoned under vague charges, highlighting the Chinese government's intent to silence any form of cultural or intellectual resistance.

Dissenting Voices: The State of Expression in Tibet provides a comprehensive analysis of the legal, political, and technological mediums used by the Chinese government to enforce its authoritarian rule. [Download the full report here.](#)