TIBET DIGEST



MAY 2025



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- May Tibet Digest

May 2025 witnessed China's escalating campaign of systematic oppression across Tibet and minority regions. The US confirmed China maintained the



world's most restrictive access to Tibet, with no American officials permitted entry since 2019. Most critically, rights groups revealed approximately one million Tibetan children are being forced into state boarding schools from age four, where Tibetan language and religious practices are severely restricted in a calculated cultural assimilation strategy. China's inaugural National Security White Paper explicitly labeled Tibet and East Turkestan as security threats, while Tibetan leaders at Tokyo's 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention urged global action against deteriorating human rights conditions. The cultural suppression extended beyond Tibet, with Uyghur rapper Yashar Shohret sentenced to three years for "extremism" through his Uyghur-language music, as authorities deemed 42 of his 51 songs problematic. Meanwhile, 145 Tibet organizations successfully opposed Chinese propaganda films at Nepal's Kathmandu festival, denouncing them as weaponized storytelling to justify cultural genocide. These developments underscore China's comprehensive strategy of forced assimilation, cultural erasure, and systematic denial of minority rights, while internal military purges suggest growing instability beneath the authoritarian facade.

CCP'S Tibet Policy

US report says China continued to most tightly restrict access to Tibet in 2024: China maintained strict restrictions on access to Tibet for diplomats, journalists, and Tibetan Americans in 2024, with no US officials permitted to visit since 2019 despite multiple requests. The Tibet Autonomous Region remains the only area in China requiring formal permission for diplomatic visits, while tourists must obtain special permits through government-registered agencies for guided group tours only.

China accused of 'indoctrinating' Tibetan children from age of four with state-run boarding schools: Rights activists report that approximately one million Tibetan children are forced to attend centralized boarding schools where they face restrictions on Tibetan language education and religious activities. The Tibet Action Institute claims these schools are part of a broader strategy to erode Tibetan identity and assimilate children into Chinese culture through indoctrination and separation from families.

China's first national security White Paper labels Tibet and East Turkestan as 'security concerns': China's inaugural National Security White Paper positions the Chinese Communist Party as central to national security strategy and explicitly categorizes Tibet and East Turkestan as security threats linked to "Western anti-China forces." The document emphasizes political security and CCP leadership as fundamental to national stability while promising to crack down on separatist activities.

China to highlight 'Xizang' on 60th TAR anniversary: China is preparing to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region's establishment with emphasis on using the Sinicized name "Xizang" instead of "Tibet" in all official communications. The official logo features modern Chinese elements like high-speed trains and wind power while omitting traditional Tibetan spiritual and cultural characteristics.

China prioritizes CCP loyalty over Tibetan welfare in leadership selections in Tibet: A new report reveals China's failure to cultivate credible Tibetan leaders, with current officials chosen more for political loyalty to Xi Jinping than competence or legitimacy among Tibetans. No Tibetan holds top party positions in key Tibetan areas, and the regime increasingly relies on state-controlled religious figures to project legitimacy while marginalizing authentic Tibetan representation.

'Do not get into a fight': police send warning after rare pub brawl in Tibet: Police in Lhasa issued stern warnings after tracking down all 31 participants in a rare pub brawl, emphasizing harsh penalties for fighting in the tightly controlled region. The incident highlights Tibet's intense security measures where even minor disturbances are heavily policed due to fears of independence activities or threats to social stability.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Viral Video Exposes Environmental Destruction from Mining in Tibet: A video from Drongri village in Markham County reveals severe ecological damage from state-approved mining, including landslides, damaged homes, and polluted water sources. Villagers express frustration over ignored pleas and exploitation, accusing authorities of prioritizing mineral extraction over community well-being. A related video from Amnye Machen shows rapid glacier melt, highlighting how mining and climate change are together threatening Tibet's fragile environment.

Tibetan Plateau Found to Offset Greenhouse Emissions Amid Global Warming: A Chinese study finds the Tibetan Plateau functions as a net greenhouse gas sink, absorbing significant carbon dioxide through forests and grasslands. However, emissions from livestock and melting permafrost partially offset this benefit. Despite global warming threats, the region has achieved near climate neutrality and is crucial for China's carbon balance.

Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Identified as China's Only Net GHG Sink: Chinese researchers confirm that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is the country's only region with net greenhouse gas absorption. While CO₂ sinks are strong, rising methane and nitrous oxide emissions from livestock and wetland expansion remain concerning. The study suggests that sustainable pastoral practices could enhance the plateau's climate mitigation role.

5.5-Magnitude Earthquake Hits Southwest Tibet, No Casualties Reported: A 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Lhatse County in Shigatse, an area already reeling from a deadly 6.8-magnitude quake in January. With residents living in temporary shelters, no casualties were reported. Seismic activity remains frequent in the region due to deep tectonic rifts beneath the Tibetan Plateau.

Tibet in Exile

Tibetan leaders urge global action at Tokyo convention, highlight China's rights abuses in Tibet: Central Tibetan Administration leaders participated in the 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet in Tokyo, urging global leaders to avoid using "Xizang" for Tibet and calling for recognition of the Dalai Lama's commitments. They highlighted deteriorating human rights conditions under Chinese Communist Party rule and systematic suppression of Tibetan culture, language, and religious practices since the 1950s.

Global groups oppose Chinese propaganda films on Tibet at Kathmandu festival: A coalition of 145 Tibet-related organizations called for cancellation of the "Xizang Panorama" film program at Nepal's Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival, denouncing it as Chinese propaganda that promotes false narratives about Tibet's "peaceful liberation." The groups argued the films represent weaponized storytelling to justify cultural genocide and erase Tibetan history.

CTA Leadership Arrives in Tokyo for 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet: The Central Tibetan Administration delegation including Speaker, Sikyong, and Deputy Speaker met with Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet at the National Diet Building. They emphasized the worsening human rights situation in Tibet and urged international recognition of the Dalai Lama's four principal commitments while calling for resolutions honoring his upcoming 90th birthday.

Over 30,000 Tibetan farmers, herders relocated from ancestral land: The Tibet Policy Institute reported that over 30,000 Tibetan farmers and herders were forcibly relocated from high-altitude regions between 2019-2022 under China's "population colonisation policy." While China justifies this as ecological protection, researchers characterize it as destroying traditional nomadic identity and part of broader forced population movements affecting over 1.4 million Tibetans since 2000.

16 teams to compete in exile Tibetans' top sporting event this year: The 30th Gyalyum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup football tournament will feature 16 teams and be dedicated to the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday. For the first time, the tournament will be held under All India Football Federation affiliation, with teams from North America, Europe, Australia, Nepal, and India competing in Dharamshala.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Highlights 16th Kashag's V-TAG Initiative During his Public Address in Vancouver: The Sikyong addressed the Tibetan community in Vancouver, calling for unity between different approaches to the Tibet struggle and emphasizing Tibet's historical independence. He highlighted the U.S. Resolve Tibet Act and introduced the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group initiative aimed at engaging educated Tibetan youth in advocacy efforts.

V-TAG Canada Hosts Dinner Reception in Honour of Sikyong Penpa Tsering: V-TAG Canada organized a dinner reception with over 300 attendees featuring youth-led programming, cultural performances, and a panel discussion on identity and civic responsibility. The event achieved financial sustainability and demonstrated growing Tibetan youth leadership in community engagement and advocacy work.

Veteran Tibetan activist embarks on last leg of sixth solo-cycle rally for Tibet: 65-year-old Jamyang Tenzin departed Dharamshala for New Delhi to conclude his sixth solo cycling campaign raising Tibet awareness. His month-long journey began on the 36th birthday of the missing 11th Panchen Lama, with plans for a six-month South India campaign dedicated to the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebration.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Calls for Unity and Shared Responsibility Among Tibetans in Calgary: During his official visit to Calgary, the Sikyong addressed the Tibetan community emphasizing unity, youth empowerment, and the Middle Way Approach for resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict. He highlighted the Dalai Lama's Four Principal Commitments and encouraged reading "My Land and My People" and "The Voice of the Voiceless."

Coordinator Thupten Tsering Visits Metz Tibetan Community to Collect Annual Tibetan Voluntary Contributions: The Bureau du Tibet coordinator visited the Metz Tibetan community where 57 people made annual voluntary contributions and 23 families donated toward the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebration fund. The community of 130 individuals maintains a weekend Tibetan language school and observes traditional festivals.

Swiss Representative Thinlay Chukki Leads Advocacy Meetings in Frankfurt to Strengthen Support for Tibet: Swiss Representative Thinlay Chukki led a delegation to Frankfurt for meetings with German officials and politicians to reinforce international support for Tibet, discussing human rights conditions and preparations for the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations.

Parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten and Tenzin Jigdal Successfully Complete Official Visit to Darjeeling in West Bengal: Two Tibetan parliamentarians completed an official visit to Darjeeling's Tibetan settlement, visiting schools, cultural centers, and community organizations while discussing Tibet's struggle and providing guidance on preserving Tibetan culture.

Scottish Parliament opposes Chinese interference in Dalai Lama's reincarnation: The Scottish Government reaffirmed its support for religious freedom and human rights for Tibetans, particularly regarding the Dalai Lama's reincarnation process, while expressing concerns about Chinese interference.

Parliamentarians Lopon Thupten Gyaltsen and Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar Visit Yanglesho in Nepal: Two Tibetan parliamentarians continued their periodic visit to Nepal, touring monasteries and settlements in the Yanglesho region, giving talks and addressing questions from local communities.

Tibetan panel denounce China's Seventeen-Point Agreement on 74th anniversary: A panel discussion in Dharamshala examined the controversial Seventeen-Point Agreement, with experts emphasizing the need to challenge China's narrative and expose violations of the agreement's original promises regarding Tibet's autonomy and religious freedom.

A New Book on Tibetan Women Writers in Exile: Kunsang Dolma introduced her book "Exile Women and Literature" which documents the literary contributions of nearly thirty Tibetan women writers in exile, highlighting their overlooked voices and the complex relationship between language and identity in diaspora.

28th Shoton Festival Concludes with a Keynote Address from Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche: The 28th Shoton Festival concluded after 13 days of Tibetan opera performances, with Rinpoche urging perseverance in preserving Tibetan cultural heritage and emphasizing the responsibility of younger generations to carry forward traditions.

Officiating Sikyong Dolma Gyari Welcomes Indian Delegation from RSS and Senior Hindu Priests to Dharamshala: A delegation from RSS and senior Hindu spiritual leaders met with the Dalai Lama and visited the Central Tibetan Administration, marking an important step in fostering interfaith understanding between Indian and Tibetan communities.

Parliamentarians Tenpa Yarphel and Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong Conclude Visit to Manang Nyeshang in Nepal: Two parliamentarians completed their visit to Nepal's Manang

region, visiting sacred sites, schools, and conducting public meetings to address community concerns and grievances.

World Uyghur Congress joins Berlin protest marking 30 years since Panchen Lama's disappearance: The World Uyghur Congress joined a protest outside the Chinese Embassy in Berlin to mark 30 years since the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, condemning Chinese religious persecution and expressing solidarity with Tibetans.

European Parliament Presses High Representative Kaja Kallas on the Fate of the 11th Panchen Lama: Seven Members of European Parliament from four political groups tabled urgent questions to EU High Representative Kaja Kallas seeking clarity on the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama and pressing for a more assertive EU stance in advocating for his release.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetans at TCCC Tibetan Language and Culture School: Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited the Tibetan Language and Culture School in Canada, praising the Canadian Tibetan Association's volunteer efforts and emphasizing the critical importance of preserving Tibetan language and Buddhist values among diaspora communities.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Makes Maiden Official Visit to Belleville-Trenton Tibetan Community: Sikyong made his first official visit to one of the oldest Tibetan communities in the West, discussing the community's growth since the 1970s and urging preservation of Tibetan identity against increasing assimilation pressures.

German MP Michael Brand Urges Chinese Government to Release the 11th Panchen Lama: German MP Michael Brand condemned the abduction of the six-year-old Panchen Lama as "a crime out of fear" and stressed that his fate is a matter of justice, calling for international unity in demanding his release.

US Secretary of State Rubio urges release of 11th Panchen Lama after 30 yrs: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio demanded the immediate release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, highlighting that he was abducted by Chinese authorities 30 years ago when he was only six years old.

Zurich Marks 30th Anniversary of Panchen Lama's Enforced Disappearance with Campaign and Global Appeal: Over 200 Tibetans and human rights supporters gathered in Zurich for a peaceful demonstration marking 30 years since the Panchen Lama's disappearance, including a march to the Chinese Embassy with petitions calling for transparency.

EU Spokesperson Anour El Anouni Expresses Concern Over 11th Panchen Lama for the First Time: For the first time, EU Spokesperson Anouar El Anouni publicly expressed concern regarding the wellbeing of the 11th Panchen Lama, emphasizing that religious communities must conduct their affairs without government interference.

Office of Tibet Brussels Leads Campaigns Marking 36th Birthday and 30th Enforced Disappearance of Panchen Lama: The Office of Tibet Brussels organized campaigns targeting the European Parliament, including photo initiatives with MEPs and children's artwork, culminating in the European Parliament's resolution opposing China's interference in Tibetan religious succession.

Swiss Parliamentarians Call for Immediate Release of the 11th Panchen Lama: Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet condemned China's abduction of the Panchen Lama and called on the Swiss government to demand his release, emphasizing that Chinese interference in religious reincarnation processes violates religious freedom.

Exile Tibetans continue to seek clarity on Tulku Hungkar Dorje's Vietnam death: Tibetans gathered for memorial prayers for Tulku Hungkar Dorje, who died under suspicious circumstances in Vietnam after fleeing Tibet, with activists calling it a murder under China's transnational repression and demanding answers about the sequence of events.

Italian Senator Andrea De Priamo Calls on China to Disclose Whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima: Italian Senator Andrea De Priamo urges China to release the 11th Panchen Lama and respect Tibetan rights on the 30th anniversary of his enforced disappearance, calling it the longest-standing case of enforced disappearance in modern history.

Central Tibetan Administration Holds Staff Session to Deepen Insights into the issue of the 11th Panchen Lama: The Central Tibetan Administration organized a public talk featuring speakers who discussed the spiritual relationship between the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama lineages, criticized China's distortion of traditional recognition practices, and emphasized the need for continued advocacy efforts.

Department of Information and International Relations Commemorates 30th Anniversary of 11th Panchen Lama's Enforced Disappearance at Upper TCV School: A student elocution event was held at TCV School featuring speeches about the 10th and 11th Panchen Lamas, with speakers emphasizing the importance of educating youth about the Tibetan cause and preserving Tibetan identity and language.

Tibetan activists demand immediate release of 11th Panchen Lama on 30th anniversary of enforced disappearance: Tibetan activist groups marked 30 years since the Panchen Lama's abduction, calling for strategic shifts in advocacy approaches while demanding his immediate release and condemning China's installation of a state-selected replacement.

German Commissioner for Freedom of Religion or Belief Calls on Chinese Government to Release the 11th Panchen Lama: German Commissioner Frank Schwabe condemned China's abduction of the Panchen Lama and called for his release, urging China to stop interfering in Tibetan Buddhist practices including the recognition of the next Dalai Lama.

The Tibet Museum Marks 48th International Museum Day with Theme: 'The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities': The Tibet Museum launched its latest journal and hosted an art fair, with officials expressing concerns about the politicization of museums and China's use of museums to promote fabricated narratives about Tibet.

Tibetan leader slams China's repression in Tibet at UK parliament, urges action on religious freedom: A Tibetan representative spoke at a UK parliamentary event about China's systematic suppression of Tibetan Buddhism, highlighting the 30-year disappearance of the Panchen Lama and urging the UK government to support Tibetan religious freedom.

ICT alerts European Parliamentarians on the devastating impacts of China's hydropower dams in Tibet: A European Parliament conference examined China's dambuilding projects on the Tibetan Plateau, with experts highlighting environmental risks, human

rights violations, and the need for EU action to prevent European companies from participating in these projects.

Risch, Shaheen Anniversary Statement on Abduction of Panchen Lama: US Senators released a statement condemning China's abduction of the Panchen Lama, calling Beijing's actions immoral and unjust while demanding credible evidence of his well-being and immediate release.

HRW urges China to release 11th Panchen Lama, calls on 'concerned parties' to assert Tibetan rights: Human Rights Watch called for China to free the Panchen Lama and his parents, describing China's intervention in religious succession as part of broader Sinicization efforts and urging countries with Buddhist populations to increase pressure on China.

Representative Karma Singey Attends 25th Anniversary of UN Day of Vesak Celebration at Australian Parliament House: Representative Karma Singey joined the commemoration of the UN Day of Vesak at Australia's Parliament House, organized by the Buddhist Federation of Australia with various dignitaries, ambassadors, and Buddhist community members in attendance.

Parliamentarians Tenpa Yarphel and Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong Visit Lo-Tserok Namgyaling in Nepal: Two Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile members conducted an official visit to the Tibetan settlement in Nepal, addressing public gatherings about the Dalai Lama's contributions, Tibet's situation, and parliamentary procedures while inspecting local institutions.

Representative Tsering Yangkey Highlights Tibetan Democratic Model at UK-Hong Kong Symposium 2025: The Office of Tibet London representative presented the Central Tibetan Administration's democratic structure at a symposium bringing together activists from Hong Kong, Tibet, Uyghur and other communities resisting authoritarian repression.

Buddhist nations urged to speak up ahead of China's 30-year Panchen Lama abduction, disappearance: Human Rights Watch called on Buddhist-majority countries to speak out on the 30th anniversary of the Panchen Lama's disappearance, emphasizing urgency as the Dalai Lama approaches his 90th birthday and China continues tightening control over Tibet.

Tibetan-Origin Mayor Aftab Karma Pureval poised for re-election in Cincinnati, USA: Cincinnati's first Asian-American mayor, who is of Tibetan-Indian heritage, secured a decisive lead in the mayoral primary with over 82% of the vote and is expected to win re-election in November.

Mundgod Doeguling Tibetan Settlement Observes Buddha Purnima in Theravada Tradition: Over 300 Indian and Tibetan community members celebrated Buddha Purnima at the Tibetan settlement in Karnataka, with local government officials attending and honoring former Special Frontier Force members.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Meets with Canadian MPs James Maloney, Karim Bardeesy, and Former Minister Arif Virani in Toronto: The Tibetan political leader met with Canadian politicians in Toronto and Montreal, discussing the Tibetan movement and seeking continued support for the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations and parliamentary representation.

Tibetan activists condemn Hong Kong police over arrest of exiled pro-democracy activist's family: Students for a Free Tibet condemned Hong Kong authorities for arresting the father and detaining the brother of exiled activist Anna Kwok under national security laws, calling it collective punishment to silence overseas dissidents.

Mother of Late Hungkar Rinpoche Passes Away Following Prolonged Illness and Grief: The 85-year-old mother of the Tibetan religious leader who died suspiciously in Chinese custody in Vietnam passed away from illness exacerbated by grief, while Chinese authorities continue restricting memorial activities and information flow.

Sherab Nangjey Weekend School Hosts Mother's Day Celebration Highlighting Love and Kindness: The Belgium Tibetan Community's weekend school organized a Mother's Day celebration in Antwerp featuring cultural performances, fundraising activities, and community services including Green Book collection and distribution.

HRW urges Pope Leo XIV to rethink China-Vatican deal amid ongoing religious repression: Human Rights Watch calls on the newly elected Pope to review the 2018 Vatican-China agreement allowing Beijing to nominate bishops, citing continued persecution of underground clergy and religious freedom concerns in China.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Communities in Amherst and Ithaca: The Tibetan leader met with community members and youth in Massachusetts and New York, discussing Tibet's geopolitical importance, engaging with U.S. lawmakers, and encouraging participation in preserving Tibetan culture and identity.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering secures US backing against China's crackdown on Tibet: Meeting with Congressman Joe Wilson, the Tibetan leader proposed a congressional resolution honoring the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday and discussed concerns about budget cuts affecting Tibetan programs.

Participants of 28th Shoton Festival Receive Special Audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama: Nearly 500 Tibetan opera performers from 14 groups met with the Dalai Lama, who reflected on Tibet's cultural heritage and expressed confidence in the ultimate success of the Tibetan struggle.

Dalai Lama says Tibetanness underlines our dedication to Tibetan cause in speech to Shoton festival participants: The Dalai Lama emphasized the strong bond among Tibetans across all provinces and their unwavering dedication to preserving Tibetan identity and culture despite Chinese occupation.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Launches Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's E-Biography: The Speaker launched the three-volume biography of the late religious leader, highlighting his contributions to the Tibetan cause and the Central Tibetan Administration during challenging times in exile.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Congratulates German Chancellor Friedrich Merz: The Tibetan Parliament Speaker extended congratulations to Germany's new Chancellor while appealing for continued support for Tibet's peaceful struggle and cultural preservation.

European Parliament passes resolution on violations of religious freedom in Tibet: The Parliament adopted a resolution condemning China's religious repression in Tibet, calling for

investigations into the suspicious death of Tulku Hungkar Dorje and demanding sanctions against human rights violators.

Office of Tibet in Nepal Joins Europe Day 2025 Celebration in Kathmandu: The Office of Tibet participated in EU celebrations, with representatives presenting ceremonial scarves and the Dalai Lama's latest book to European diplomatic officials.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Emphasises Cultural Importance of Tibetan Opera at 28th Shoton Festival Opening Ceremony: The Speaker highlighted the significance of preserving Tibet's 600-year-old opera tradition, warning of threats from China's cultural assimilation policies and modern entertainment's influence.

28th Shoton Festival Kicks Off in Dharamshala, Drawing Record Participation to Mark the Year of Compassion: The annual Tibetan opera festival began with 14 troupes participating, featuring nearly 50% student performers. The event celebrates the Year of Compassion in honor of the Dalai Lama's upcoming 90th birthday and continues the tradition of preserving Tibetan cultural heritage in exile.

Autonomous University of Madrid Hosts Seminar on the Life and Works of Renowned Tibetan Writer and Filmmaker Pema Tseden: A seminar focused on the literary and cinematic works of Pema Tseden, featuring discussions about his creative journey, the challenges he faced under Chinese censorship, and the current situation inside Tibet.

Danish politicians call for government inquiry into transnational repression following China Targets investigation: Lawmakers from three Danish political parties are demanding a government probe into China's harassment campaign against dissidents living in Denmark, following an international investigation that revealed systematic intimidation tactics used by Beijing against critics abroad.

Kalon Dolma Gyari Attends 26th Anniversary of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta: The India-Tibet solidarity organization celebrated its anniversary with prominent Indian leaders reaffirming support for the Tibetan cause and strengthening ties between India and Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Attends Long-life Prayers Offering: The Dalai Lama participated in longevity prayers offered by various Tibetan communities, where he expressed his commitment to serving sentient beings and the Dharma for decades to come.

RFA to shut down Tibetan service amid budget cuts and legal battle: Radio Free Asia's Tibetan Service will cease operations due to funding disputes between RFA and the U.S. Agency for Global Media, eliminating a crucial independent news source for Tibetans under Chinese rule.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Congratulates Australian PM Anthony Albanese On His Re-Election: The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Speaker thanked Australia for its support of Tibet and expressed hope for continued backing of the Middle Way Approach for resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Attend Offering of Long-life Prayers by Shang Gaden Choekhorling Monastery, Chatring and Phari Communities: Announcement of an upcoming longevity prayer ceremony for the Dalai Lama at the Main Tibetan Temple.

Eighth ecumenical conference of Tibetan religious traditions underway: Representatives from various Tibetan monasteries are gathering to discuss key religious texts and promote understanding among different Buddhist traditions, with senior religious leaders also planning a conference ahead of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday.

Tibetan community in France continues protest outside Musée Guimet over erasure of 'Tibet' label: Tibetans and French supporters are maintaining their 26th consecutive demonstration against the museum's removal of "Tibet" from artifact labels, demanding restoration of proper Tibetan identification in cultural exhibits.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetans in Washington, Underlines Tibetan Identity as Pillar of Struggle: Sikyong emphasized the importance of maintaining Tibetan identity to youth and community members, discussed the Middle Way Approach and Tibet's historical independence, and updated on efforts to restore suspended US funding and support programs.

Session Announcement: The 10th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile is scheduled for eight working days from September 10-18 in Dharamshala.

Parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende and Wangdue Dorjee to Visit North East India: Two MPs will visit Tibetan settlements and communities across Northeast India including Guwahati, Shillong, Tenzingang, Bomdila, Tawang, and Dirang.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Community in Charlottesville: Sikyong highlighted unity among Tibetans, the importance of preserving Tibetan language and culture, youth engagement, and the Middle Way Approach to resolving the Tibet-China conflict.

Coordinator Thupten Tsering Engages with Tibet Supporters in Amiens, Meets Deputy Francois Ruffin of Nouveau Front Populaire: The Bureau du Tibet coordinator met with French supporters and Deputy Francois Ruffin while collecting voluntary contributions from the local Tibetan community.

Dalai Lama has not changed position on practice of Dolgyal spirit: Gaden Phodrang clarified that the Dalai Lama's position against the controversial Dolgyal spirit practice remains unchanged, addressing misconceptions from a 2021 statement about showing compassion to followers.

Columbia Heights declares May 3 as 'Four River Six Ranges Day' honouring Tibetan resistance and heritage: Minnesota city proclaimed a special day coinciding with the premiere of a Tibetan film about the Chushi Gangdruk resistance movement that helped the Dalai Lama escape to exile.

Tibet House Japan and Save Tibet Network Jointly Organise Tibetan Spiritual Festival in Tokyo: A two-day festival introduced Tibetan spiritual culture to Japanese audiences through talks, meditation sessions, cultural performances, and traditional food.

Buddhist leaders' conference to be held in Dharamshala ahead of Dalai Lama's 90th birthday: Senior Tibetan Buddhist leaders will convene in July, with speculation about potential discussions on the Dalai Lama's succession, while the CTA President confirmed ongoing informal contacts with China.

Parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen Attends World Press Freedom Day Event: A Tibetan MP emphasized the importance of free press as the fourth pillar of democracy and honored longtime journalist Pema Ngodup at an event organized by the Tibetan Journalists Association.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Offers Congratulations to Anthony Albanese on His Reelection as Prime Minister of Australia: The Dalai Lama congratulated the Australian Prime Minister on his re-election and expressed gratitude for Australia's support for Tibetan freedom and dignity.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on His Party's Election Victory: Sikyong extended congratulations to the new Canadian Prime Minister, acknowledging Canada's longstanding support for Tibetans and expressing hope for continued friendship and support for the Middle Way Approach.

Representative Thinlay Chukki Attends Memorial Service Held in Honour of Late Representative Lobsang Choephel in Zurich: The Tibet Bureau Geneva representative attended a memorial service with 100 community members, delivered condolence letters on behalf of the Kashag, and called for prayers for swift rebirth.

RFA announces over 90% staff lay off, including at its Tibetan service: Radio Free Asia will terminate 280 staff members and close several language services including Tibetan after President Trump cut funding, despite court orders to restore it.

Tibetan Sikyong lobbies in Capitol Hill as Trump budget proposal slashes foreign aid: Sikyong met with Congressional leaders including the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party to seek restoration of US aid and support for Tibet amid Trump's foreign aid cuts.

Obituary: Department of Information and International Relations Mourns The Demise of its Former Kalon Tashi Wangdi: Former minister and prominent Tibetan leader Tashi Wangdi passed away at age 78 in Ottawa after decades of service to the Tibetan cause, including roles in negotiations with China and as representative in multiple countries.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Implores Continued US Support for Tibet During Ongoing Official Engagements: Sikyong met with key Congress members including Nancy Pelosi and the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, briefing them on Tibet's deteriorating situation and the impact of US budget cuts on Tibetan programs.

Czech Republic reaffirms support for Tibet amid China tensions: Representative Thinlay Chukki met with Czech lawmakers in Prague who reaffirmed their commitment to the Tibetan cause and discussed upcoming initiatives as the Dalai Lama approaches his 90th birthday.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Congratulates Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Election Victory: The Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile congratulated the new Canadian Prime Minister and expressed gratitude for Canada's support, hoping for continued backing of the Middle Way Approach.

Secretary Dhondul Dorjee and Jigme Namgyal Attends Graduation Ceremony of Sarah College for Higher Tibetan Studies: CTA officials attended the 24th anniversary graduation ceremony featuring multiple programs including Tibetan teacher training and Vietnamese students completing Buddhist dialectics studies.

European Parliament chairs push for probe into death of Tibetan leader in Chinese custody: Two European Parliament chairs called for investigation into the suspicious death of Tulku Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche, who reportedly died in Chinese custody in Vietnam after being arrested in a coordinated operation.

Chinese Liaison Officers of Offices of Tibet Hold Online Meeting for 'Year of Compassion' Initiative: Liaison officers from Europe, North America, and Australia met virtually to coordinate outreach efforts and collaborative projects with Chinese democrats, scholars, students, and allied groups like Uyghurs and Taiwanese for the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday year.

Former minister and representative Tashi Wangdi passes away at 78: Tibetan diplomat and former CTA minister Tashi Wangdi died in Canada after serving four decades in various leadership roles including as minister of six departments and diplomatic representative in multiple countries.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Extends Heartfelt Condolences on the Passing of U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern's Daughter, Molly McGovern: Sikyong offered condolences to the Tibet-supporting Congressman whose 23-year-old daughter died unexpectedly from rare cancer, expressing solidarity from the Tibetan community and sharing Buddhist perspectives on consciousness continuing after death.

Czech Legislators Reaffirm Steadfast Support for the Tibetan Cause During Meeting with Representative Thinlay Chukki-led Delegation: Czech lawmakers met with Tibet Bureau Geneva representatives in Prague, reaffirming support for Tibet and discussing upcoming activities while Professor van Walt van Praag emphasized Tibet's historical independence and the issue as one of international political justice.

Protests, Detentions And Other News From The PRC

Uyghur Rapper Jailed for Music Allegedly Promoting Extremism: Uyghur rapper Yashar Shohret, known as "Uigga," was sentenced to three years in prison in Xinjiang for "advocating extremism" through his Uyghur-language lyrics and possession of banned books. Arrested in 2023, his detention was marked by secrecy and harsh conditions. Authorities cited 42 of his 51 songs as problematic, reflecting a broader crackdown on Uyghur cultural expression under expanded anti-terrorism laws.

Top Chinese General Dies Amid Widening Military Corruption Purge: General He Hongjun, a senior PLA official, reportedly died by suicide while under investigation in a widening military anti-corruption campaign. His death follows a string of mysterious deaths and dismissals targeting PLA generals, especially in the Rocket Force, exposing growing instability and internal purges within China's military elite under Xi Jinping's rule.

Tibetan Man Detained for Demanding Basic Utilities: Kelsang, a 42-year-old Tibetan from Chamdo, was detained after publicly appealing for electricity and water denied to his family for nine years. He faces political persecution, with a history of detentions and surveillance tied to his family's past resistance to Chinese rule. His arrest highlights systematic discrimination and human rights abuses in Tibet.

China Ranks Among Worst for Press Freedom, Jails Most Journalists: China remains the world's leading jailer of journalists and now ranks 178 out of 180 in global press freedom. Press access is tightly controlled, with reporters banned from Tibet and East Turkestan unless on state-organized tours. Experts warn that China's totalitarian media model is increasingly influencing authoritarian regimes worldwide.

CCP'S TIBET POLICY

US report says China continued to most tightly restrict access to Tibet in 2024

30 May 2025, Tibetan Review

China continued to tightly restrict or altogether deny access to Tibet in 2024 to all categories of prospective visitors, but especially diplomats and other officials as well as journalists and Tibetans living abroad, said the US State Department May 29. The department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs released the report in compliance with Section 4 of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018.

The finding means that officials of the Chinese government responsible for this situation could face sanctions.

The report said Chinese government regulations and procedures that have historically impeded travel to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan areas outside the TAR for US diplomats and officials, journalists, and tourists remained in place in 2024. In the case of other International visitors, traveling to the TAR continued to require the approval of TAR government travel permits.

The report said no US official has been able to visit the TAR since 2019. This was despite the fact that in 2024, US officials made five requests for official travel to the TAR, with none of them being approved. Before that, in 2023, all three requests were not approved.

In 2024, the TAR continued to be the only area of the People's Republic of China (PRC) that the government required diplomats and other foreign officials to formally request permission to visit.

While diplomats and other foreign officials did not require a permit or prior notification to travel to Tibetan areas outside of the TAR, China's security forces used conspicuous surveillance to intimidate, monitor, harass, and restrict their movements, whether on official of personal travel.

No consular officer has been able to visited the TAR to conduct American Citizen Services since 2019. Before that, local officials in the TAR had been responsive to consular requests to provide assistance to US citizens but occasionally delayed their response to emergency access requests, the report said.

On the travel of international visitors to the TAR for tourism, Beijing imposed regulations the like of which did not apply to any other provincial-level entity in the PRC. They were required to obtain an official confirmation letter issued by the TAR government, which reports to the central government in Beijing, before entering the TAR. The letters were booked and received through travel agencies officially registered with the Chinese government, with only guided group-tours being permitted.

Besides, the Tibet travel permit did not allow visits to all areas within the TAR. Some areas were generally closed to visitors and required supplemental permission from the TAR Public Security Bureau. Tourists planning to visit certain border areas, such as Mount Everest, also required a military area entry permit from the Military Affairs Office and a foreign affairs office permit from the TAR Foreign Office, the report said.

On the other hand, there have also been reports of increased access granted to foreign influencers and travel bloggers, some of whom have been promoted by Chinese state media for their positive coverage of the situation in Tibet.

Tibetan Americans have regularly faced restrictions on their travel to Tibetan areas. They are subjected to a stricter screening process than other US citizens. Their applications are processed through the United Front Work Department (UFWD) and often require a letter from a relative or host in the Tibetan area, an in-person interview with the Chinese Embassy or Consulate officer in charge of Tibetan affairs, and submission of personal documents such as copies of naturalization certificates, birth certificates, school and work records, affidavits, and other materials, the report said.

Even if finally permitted to visit Tibet, they face more frequent harassment by security officials in Tibetan areas than in other parts of China, including requirements to report to the local UFWD office where some were reportedly interrogated, threatened, and forced to download tracking software on their phones.

This drives some members of the Tibetan American community to self-censor their behavior in the United States out of fear of retribution against their family members in Tibet or fear of losing future access to Tibet and threats from Chinese officials, the report said.

In yet another sign that Tibet is much more strictly controlled or restricted than other parts of the PRC, Chinese regulations did not regularly require international journalists to obtain prior permission to travel to any part of the country other than the TAR. The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China (FCCC) has been cited a saying Beijing has rejected the vast majority of US journalists' requests to visit and report from the TAR.

When access is at all granted, security officials monitored and controlled these journalists' movements at all times. The FCCC's 2023 annual report was cited as saying only one foreign journalist was granted permission to travel to the TAR.

China usually relies on organized group tours of the region for registered reporters selected by Chinese authorities. However, Beijing suppresses their ability to report about Tibet by intimidating and preventing Chinese nationals from interacting with them while maintaining strict control over the information conveyed.

The report said the Chinese government did not disclose its decision-making process for granting permission to travel to the TAR, nor did it share the names of officials involved in issuing travel permits to US citizens to visit the TAR.

In the case of US official requests to visit the TAR, they are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The TAR Foreign Affairs Office generally required a diplomatic note for any official visit, accompanied by a list of trip attendees. Once the TAR government received a request, it reportedly informed a foreign affairs leading committee, consisting of representatives at the prefectural, provincial, and central levels from the

UFWD, Ministry of State Security, Ministry of Public Security, People's Liberation Army, and MFA. This committee reviewed requests, although frequently, no specific response was provided, the report noted.

China accused of 'indoctrinating' Tibetan children from age of four with state-run boarding schools

29 May 2025, <u>The Independent</u>, Alisha Rahaman Sarkar

Group says lives of Tibetan children are 'irrevocably altered to serve the purposes of the Chinese government'



Tibetan students at the closing ceremony for Jigme Gyaltsen's renowned Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School, located in Golok (Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy)

Rights activists have accused Chinese authorities of indoctrinating Tibetan children and eroding their culture by forcing them to attend "colonial" boarding schools.

The Tibet Action Institute, a movement advocating for Tibetan independence founded by Tibetan-Canadian activist Lhadon Tethong, published a new report on Thursday warning that schools are teaching children as young as four to be loyal to the Chinese Communist Party.

The activists estimate that one million children in the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan districts study at such boarding schools, though the number is difficult to confirm. The group has claimed that the schools are a smaller part of a broader strategy

to dilute Tibetan identity and assimilate Tibetans into the majority Chinese culture, with the Xi Jinping-led government perceiving Tibetan identity as a "threat".

China has shuttered village schools across Tibet and replaced them with centralised boarding schools over the last dozen years, leaving parents with little choice but to send their children to such facilities. Many students come from remote farming villages and live at the schools full-time.

Through these boarding schools, the report warned, the Chinese government was trying "to deracinate Tibetan children from their culture, language, and identity".

The report found students were restricted from enrolling in Tibetan language classes or engaging in religious activities. Tibetans view the practice of their language as the fundamental guarantee of their future as a distinct people within the broader Chinese region.

The group said it documented numerous instances of negligence and abuse in Tibetan boarding schools.

"Tibetan children's lives are being irrevocably altered to serve the purposes of the Chinese government," the Tibet Action Institute said after conducting 15 in-depth interviews with Tibetans between 2023 and 2024.

It added: "The separation from family and deliberate reshaping of children's identity in boarding schools is causing emotional and psychological harm, including attachment trauma and alienation."

The report quotes a Tibetan who fled to India saying that "the indoctrination process begins from a very young age", when children are removed from their parents.

"Children cannot study Tibetan and Tibetan history. They are taught the Chinese language and the history of China written by Chinese writers," the interviewee was quoted as saying.

Another person alleged that the materials on classroom walls were in Chinese, including pictures of leaders such as Mr Xi, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. "Xi Jinping

Thought" is taught in classes as part of the curriculum, the person said.

"Essays and drawings were judged based on how much we were able to praise the Party, the state, and the army."

The group found that in 2022, a 13-year-old Tibetan girl with underlying medical conditions died after her family persistently tried to reach her with prescription medicine at her boarding school. The school first neglected to provide the medicine, and then failed to seek medical attention, it added.

China has long sought to eradicate any possibility of unrest in regions home to sizeable ethnic populations by imprisoning dissenters, reshaping societies and religions to align them with the views of the Communist Party. The approach has hardened in the past decade under the leadership of Mr Xi, who has been accused of a brutal crackdown on the Uyghur community in the Xinjiang region north of Tibet.

The Chinese government has repeatedly denied allegations of human rights abuses in Tibet, as well as other regions like Xinjiang. Xu Zhitao, vice chair of the Tibet region's government, rejected similar criticism in 2023, arguing that China opened the boarding school system to improve education for children from remote areas.

"The claim that Tibetan children are forced to go to boarding schools is deliberate smearing with an ulterior motive," he told reporters at the release of an official report on the Communist Party's policies in Tibet.

He said the curriculum at the schools included Tibetan language and culture. "These are all implemented to effectively secure our Tibetan children's rights to access high-quality education, and it is an important expression of the development and progress of human rights in Tibet."

The Chinese government and Tibet's government-in-exile offer competing versions of whether the remote, mountainous territory was historically ruled as part of China, or whether it has legitimate claims to independence or autonomy.

"A generation of Tibetan children is being harmed by China's colonial boarding school policy – socially, emotionally, and psychologically," said Lhadon Tethong, the co-founder and director of Tibet Action Institute.

"The lifelong negative impact on each of these children and their families, and on the future health of Tibetan society overall, cannot be overstated. The international community must step up all efforts to urgently push the Chinese government to abolish this abusive and coercive system."

In February 2023, a group of UN experts raised alarm over reports of Tibetan children being separated from their families. "We are alarmed by what appears to be a policy of forced assimilation of the Tibetan identity into the dominant Han-Chinese majority, through a series of oppressive actions against Tibetan educational, religious, and linguistic institutions," the UN experts said.

The rights group urged the UN and concerned governments to call on the Chinese government to conduct a public investigation into the alleged abuses, deaths, and mental health concerns of Tibetan children in Chinese state-run boarding schools.

China's first national security White Paper labels Tibet and East Turkestan as 'security concerns'

27 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup



Tibetan monks being detained by Chinese police in the so-called Sichuan Province in Eastern Tibet in 2011 (Photo/Boxun)

The Chinese government has released its first-ever National Security White Paper,

marking a significant shift in the framing of national security by positioning the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the central pillar of the country's security strategy. Issued on May 12 through the State Council, the document underscores the primacy of "political security", placing the CCP's leadership and ruling status at the core of China's national stability and unity. The White Paper repeatedly stresses that safeguarding the CCP and the continuation of China's socialist system are fundamental to the country's national interests. One of its key assertions states that "the leadership and ruling status of the Communist Party of China" constitutes the "fundamental framework of national security". Rooted in Xi Jinping's "comprehensive national security" doctrine, the document links internal dissent with external threats, particularly in Chinese occupied countries such as Tibet and East Turkestan. In three notable mentions, it frames Tibetan and Uyghur issues not as matters of governance or civil rights, but as products of "Western anti-China forces" seeking to undermine China. "We must fully implement the Party's strategies for governing Tibet and Xinjiang in the new era," the document states, pledging to "crack down on secessionist and sabotage activities," and to "effectively curb infiltration."

Critics have noted a difference between the Chinese and English versions of the white paper. According to advocacy group *International Campaign for Tibet*, the Chinese-language version emphasises ideological loyalty and the CCP's role in securing the nation, while the English summary presents a more benign picture centred around general themes such as public welfare and development omitting the more overt political messaging.

Observers say the elevation of the CCP's role in a national security document reflects growing authoritarian tendencies under Xi Jinping, where dissent is equated with instability, and loyalty to the Party is deemed synonymous with patriotism. The explicit categorisation of Tibet as a "security

concern" raises alarm among Tibetan advocacy groups, who see this as justification for continued surveillance, militarisation, and repression in the region. The White Paper also comments on China's border issues, claiming the resolution of land boundary disputes with 12 of its 14 neighbours, while naming India and Bhutan as exceptions. Notably, it asserts that disputes with Nepal have been resolved, a claim at odds with reports from Nepali media highlighting continued disagreements between the two nations.

As an official government publication, a white paper from the State Council typically outlines strategic directions and justifies state actions. This document, with its focus on the CCP's role in national security, critics argue, signals a further tightening of political control and a securitised approach to ethnic and regional governance, particularly in Tibet.

China to highlight 'Xizang' on 60th TAR anniversary?

24 May 2025, Tibetan Review

China appears to be preparing to make a big deal of celebrating the 60th anniversary of its establishment of Tibet Autonomous Region, following its annexation of the Himalayan Buddhist country in 1951. Apart from everything else, a major highlight appears to be to emphasize China's Oct 2023 decision to use only the Sinicized name "Xizang" for "Tibet" in all its official documents.

A logo marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of "Xizang Autonomous Region" has been officially unveiled, reported China's official globaltimes.cn May 23, citing China Central Television (CCTV).

The publicity and cultural affairs group of the organizing committee for the 60th anniversary celebration has said the logo features the number "60," formed by a flowing ribbon derived from the Chinese national flag and petals of the Gesang flower, also called happy flowers. The fluttering red flag is stated to represent "the care and

support of the motherland, which has enabled Xizang to flourish over the past six decades." The design is stated to incorporate elements such as the Fuxing high-speed train, modern rural communities, wind power, snow-capped mountains and Tibetan antelopes — "all emblematic of the remarkable achievements in Xizang's socialist modernization over the past 60 years."

The dates "1965-2025" on the logo is stated to mark the span since the establishment of the autonomous region.

Missing from the logo is any depiction of Tibet's centuries-old, defining spiritual and cultural characteristics which China is accused of destroying in the name of Sinicization.

The changeover to 'Xizang' is viewed as part of China's broader campaign to control narratives around Tibet, assert sovereignty, and align global discourse more closely with its internal terminology and political framework.

China prioritizes CCP loyalty over Tibetan welfare in leadership selections in Tibet: ICT report

21 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon



Chinese President Xi Jinping stands with his cadres during the 19th Party Congress closing ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing (Photo/AP)

In a new report, the Washington-based advocacy group *International Campaign for Tibet* (ICT) has spotlighted China's deepening legitimacy crisis in governing Tibet, citing the regime's failure to cultivate

credible Tibetan leaders who can both serve the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and earn the trust of the Tibetan people.

The report highlighted a stark contrast between historical Tibetan figures—such as Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, and the 10th Panchen Lama—who retained a degree of commitment to the Tibetan cause, and today's crop of Tibetan officials, whose careers are shaped more by political loyalty to Chinese President Xi Jinping than by competence or popular legitimacy. Recent policies and training programs in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) heavily emphasize ideological indoctrination and allegiance to the CCP, prioritizing control and "stability" over genuine representation.

ICT's report maps the current leadership structure across 17 prefectural-level and two county-level areas within China's Tibetan autonomous regions. Among the notable shifts, Yan Jinhai has replaced Lobsang Gyaltsen as head of the TAR People's Congress, while Karma Tseten—an official from Jomda County with a background in security roles in the politically sensitive region of Nagchu—now heads the TAR government. Despite these changes, neither Karma, Yan, nor other top Tibetan officials have managed to garner the trust of the Tibetan public.

A significant indicator of Beijing's failure is its continued marginalization of Tibetans in top-tier leadership positions. While 85-yearold Phakpalha Gelek Namgyal still holds senior roles in the TAR, no Tibetan occupies top posts in key Tibetan areas of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan, provinces that host the majority of the Tibetan population. Moreover, the report details how non-Tibetans overwhelmingly dominate CCP's powerful party apparatus in Tibetan regions. No Tibetan has ever served as Party Secretary at the provincial level, and only four of the 17 prefectures have Tibetan Party Secretaries. While many government heads are Tibetan, overall representation remains below what is mandated by China's own Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law.

The ICT report further outlined the CCP's growing reliance on religious figures, especially Tibetan Buddhist lamas monks, to project legitimacy, simultaneously condemning the monastic tradition as "feudal theocracy." Over 20 officially recognized reincarnate lamas have been placed in leadership roles, often under the control of the state-run Buddhist Association of China. This paradoxical strategy underscores the enduring influence of Tibetan Buddhism and China's attempt to harness religious authority to bolster its rule, particularly concerning succession plans for the Dalai Lama.

One example is the CCP-appointed Panchen Lama, Gyaltsen Norbu, who has seen a notable decline in influence. Once paraded at major political and religious events, he now plays a diminished role, with his visibility in Chinese state media waning and his influence among Tibetans virtually nonexistent. Despite initial heavy promotion, Norbu has failed to win over the Tibetan public, limiting his utility as a political tool for the CCP.

Corruption also looms large in the governance of Tibetan areas. The report highlighted the increasing number of Tibetan officials who have been investigated, prosecuted, or sentenced for corruption in 2024, many of them former high-ranking leaders. ICT noted that such patterns reflect both widespread graft and the potential use of anti-corruption campaigns as instruments of political control in an opaque and repressive system. The ongoing investigations signal that past warnings, including Hu Yaobang's 1980 critique and a 2014 party inspection, have not translated into meaningful reform.

The judiciary, too, is portrayed as an arm of Party control rather than a system of justice. While some Tibetans hold positions in courts and procuratorates, their authority is strictly subordinate to the CCP. The Party's Political and Legal Affairs Commission exercises overarching control, turning the legal system into a tool of "rule by law," a façade of legality masking authoritarian rule. A few Tibetan officials have risen to prominence outside traditional Tibetan regions, suggesting a

limited path for career advancement within the rigid confines of the Party-state structure. The ICT report concluded that China's governance in Tibet is characterized by systemic mistrust, ethnic marginalization, and a lack of genuine representation. The continued absence of Tibetan voices in key decision-making roles, especially in security and party leadership, reflects Beijing's fear of empowering Tibetans and emphasises the persistent instability in its rule over the region.

'Do not get into a fight': police send warning after rare pub brawl in Tibet 13 May 2025, SCMP,

Dozens of people involved in a rare brawl in <u>Tibet</u> have been handed administrative penalties, according to police in the autonomous region, where security is tight for fear of independence or terrorist activities.

Police in Lhasa, capital of the western region, said in a statement on Monday that the fight had broken out in front of a pub in the city around 4am on May 7.

Some of those involved in the melee had already fled the scene by the time police arrived, but all 31 people who took part were tracked down by officers later in the day.

They were handed administrative penalties on Friday, the statement said.



The people involved in the brawl received administrative penalties on Friday. Photo: Handout

It warned that there were heavy punishments for fighting in Tibet, including being excluded from serving in the military and being disqualified from applying for government jobs.

The police statement also cited legal consequences if a clash led to injury or death, including heavy fines, jail time or even the death penalty.

"Do not get into a fight," the police said. "If you lose, you'll end up in hospital. If you win, you'll end up in jail."

Brawls are a rare occurrence in China, especially in tightly controlled Tibet and amid a national campaign to crack down on organised crime that targets acts including crowd fights.

In Tibet, much of the police force is tasked with maintaining social stability and guarding against incidents that threaten that stability – something that is often stressed by the authorities.

In September, ahead of China's National Day, security chief <u>Chen Wenqing visited</u> <u>Tibet</u> and called for the region's security forces to "resolutely crack down on separatist and destructive activities".

Chen said they must "resolutely manage religious affairs, while resolutely protecting normal religious activities" to prevent risks, crack down on crimes, and maintain stability. His trip also included a stop in the Ganzi Tibetan autonomous prefecture in southwestern Sichuan province.

In addition, the security tsar called for more propaganda and education campaigns in the Tibetan regions.

President Xi Jinping has also emphasised the need to maintain social stability as well as safeguard border security in Tibet, which shares a border with India.

At a <u>forum on Tibet policy</u> in 2020, China's leader called on the ruling Communist Party, the government and the military to "solidify border defences and ensure frontier security" and to ensure "national security and enduring peace and stability", state news agency Xinhua reported.

Chinese authorities restrict Tibetans from celebrating Buddha's Birthday in Tibet

13 May 2025, The Tibet Post, Tenzin Lhadon

Buddhists across Asia celebrated Gautama Buddha's birthday (Saka Dawa) with joy and freedom on Monday. But the Chinese authorities restricted Tibetans from celebrating, and even the limited celebrations were surrounded by large numbers of Chinese police and strictly under their surveillance.

Buddhists in India, Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, China, Japan and Tibet celebrate the birthday of Gautama Buddha, according to their lunar calendar, in May 2025, in commemoration of the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who became Gautama Buddha and founded Buddhism.

According to Tibetan sources, the Chinese authorities have imposed restrictions on the celebration of the Buddha's birthday in Lhasa, Kham and Amdo, the three traditional regions of Tibet, on May 12, 2025. Despite the restrictions on public gatherings, Tibetans, especially monks and nuns, celebrated the Buddha's Birthday, in Tibetan, called Saka Dawa. The site of the event was cordoned off by Chinese police, whose vehicles were equipped with waning lights.

A video shows Tibetans, mainly monks, carrying large portraits of the Buddha and other enlightened deities painted on large canvases. They carry these portraits from the monastery to a nearby hill where they are displayed for the public to see and pray to the Buddha. This activity is part of the Buddha's Birthday celebration. However, when they carried the Buddha portraits, a large number of Chinese authorities followed them. The police restricted and monitored all of the Tibetans' actions.

In another video, Tibetans, mainly women, carrying large flags with mantras printed on them, moved from village to mountain in commemoration Buddha's birthday on May 12, 2025. They were also surrounded by Chinese police and their cars, who restricted

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their movements and monitored all Tibetan actions. These actions by the Chinese police violated the basic rights of Tibetans and their freedom of religion and movement.

Tibetans visit monasteries to pray, offer flowers, light incense, and recite sutras on the 15th day of the fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar each year. This year, that day fell on May 12. However, Chinese authorities prevent Tibetans from visiting monasteries, especially Tibetan officials and their family members. If they don't comply, they will lose their jobs.

India Successfully Halts Sale of Sacred Buddha Relics in Hong Kong

07 May 2025, <u>The Tibet Express</u>, Tenzin Chokyi



Sacred Buddha relics discovered by William Claxton Peppè, an English estate manager who excavated a stupa at Piprahwa, located south of Lumbini in present-day Uttar Pradesh state in India.

India has successfully stopped Sotheby's auction of sacred Buddha relics, with the global giant auction house postponing the sale of the relics scheduled to be auctioned on Wednesday in Hong Kong. This last-minute decision came after India accused Sotheby's on Monday of perpetuating colonial exploitation and demanded the return of the relics to their rightful owner.

"In light of the matters raised by the Government of India and with the agreement of the consignors, the auction of the Piprahwa Gems of the Historical Buddha, scheduled for 7 May, has been postponed," the auction house said in an announcement.

"This will allow for discussions between the parties, and we look forward to sharing any updates as appropriate."

NDTV reported that Sotheby's, one of the oldest and largest auction houses specialised in fine art, luxury items and collectables, has estimated the auction value of the items at around HK\$ 100 million (around Rs 107 crore).

Earlier on Monday, the Indian Ministry of Culture has reportedly served a legal notice to Sotheby's and Chris Pepper, the grandson of William Claxton Peppe, who excavated the relics in 1898, demanding immediate withdrawal of the relics from auction, stating, they "constitute inalienable religious and cultural heritage of India and the Global Buddhist community."

The letter noted that the treasures discovered in India in 1898 during the British colonial rule granted temporary custody and not ownership to Mr Peppe under the Indian Treasure Trove Act of 1878. It clarified that custodianship does not grant the right to "alienate or misappropriate the asset."

According to the Peppé family, the relics in question have been described as "duplicates" of precious stones, pearls and pieces of gold buried beside what were believed to be the Buddha's ashes and bones.

However, in the legal notice, India has specifically stated that the use of the word "duplicate" in all aspects of these items is "misleading" and demanded clarification at the outset. It contended sacred artefacts have layers of deposits and "there is no reason to interpret the upper layer of deposits as being lesser, decoys or duplicates."

Scholars have argued that the gems are part of the Buddha's Śarīra – a term used to describe pearls and other precious objects found among the cremated ashes of Buddhist spiritual masters. As such, they have maintained that the relics are "imbued with the living presence of beings who have not truly died but have reached awakening."

The gems were discovered by William Claxton Peppè, an English estate manager who excavated a stupa at Piprahwa, located

south of Lumbini in present-day Uttar Pradesh state in India.

His findings included nearly 1800 gems, including rubies, topaz, sapphires and patterned gold sheets, stored inside a brick chamber. Large parts of the discovery were handed to the colonial Indian government, and a portion of one-fifth was kept by the family.

Dalai Lama happy to contribute to flourishing of Buddha Dharma in China 07 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

Some 5,000 people attended a long-life prayer ceremony offered by three Tibetan groups this morning to His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Tsuglakhang, Dharamshala, one of great many such offerings being continuously made to him as he turns 90 in July this year

In his address, the Dalai Lama has expressed happiness over the fact that people throughout India have been appreciative of his work, whether or not they believed in the Buddha Dharma, with many of them coming to visit him.

"I have good, strong connections with people throughout India. In China, Buddhism is gaining ground and I feel I may be able to make some contribution to the flourishing of the teaching there too. So, I hope to be able to help people through sharing what the Buddha taught," he has said.

The long-life ceremony this morning was offered jointly by Nepal-based Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery, a group from the Chatreng Community, and the Phari Community.

The ceremony was presided over by Ven. Samdhong Rinpoché. Other prominent religious figures who attended the event included the Abbot of Gyumé Monastery, the Abbot of Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery and the young reincarnations of Dromo Geshé Rinpoché, Geshé Lhundup Sopa, and of the former Abbot of Sé-Gyu Monastery.

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The Dalai Lama has repeatedly stressed that he feels healthy enough to live to be more than 110 years of age and continues to maintain busy schedules, holding conferences and seeing an endless stream of visitors and blessing seekers.

Just the day before the long-life ceremony, he gave blessings to 360 devotees who had come from across India and abroad.

On Jun 4, He will be offered another long-life prayer ceremony jointly by Ex-students of CST Darjeeling, the Tibetan Community of New York & New Jersey (TCNYNJ), and the Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota (TAFM).

On Jun 30, he will attend a public programme in honour of his 90th birthday (5th day of the 5th month on Tibetan calendar) during which a brief long-life prayer offering ceremony will be organized by the people of Domey Cholkha in the morning at the Tsuglakhang. Then on Jul 5, the eve of his 90th birthday, a long-life prayer ceremony will be offered by the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) on behalf of all the Tibetan people at the Tsuglakhang.

On Jul 6, His Holiness will attend a public programme in honour of his 90th birthday, organized by the Kashag of the CTA on behalf of all the Tibetan people at the Tsuglakhang.

China's suspicion at a Tibetan Lama's Visit to Taiwan

02 May 2025, <u>European Times</u>, Khedroob Thondup

The recent visit of a high-ranking Tibetan lama to Taiwan has once again exposed the deep-seated anxieties of Chinese intelligence agencies. Reports indicate that Chinese operatives closely monitored the lama's movements, photographing and tracking him throughout his stay. This reaction underscores Beijing's persistent concerns over Tibetan figures engaging with Taiwan—a self-governing island that China claims as its own. China has long viewed Tibetan religious leaders as political figures, particularly those

associated with the Dalai Lama. The Chinese government considers the Dalai Lama a separatist, despite his repeated assertions that he seeks only genuine autonomy for Tibet, not independence. Any engagement between Tibetan leaders and Taiwan is perceived by Beijing as a challenge to its authority, fueling fears of a united front between Tibetan and Taiwanese pro-independence movements.

The lama's visit to Taiwan likely raised alarms in Beijing due to its symbolic significance. Taiwan has historically welcomed Tibetan spiritual leaders, and the island's vibrant democracy provides a platform for discussions on religious freedom and human rights—topics that China seeks to control. The presence of a Tibetan lama in Taiwan, engaging with local leaders and religious communities, may have been interpreted as an implicit endorsement of Taiwan's autonomy.

China's intelligence apparatus is known for its extensive surveillance operations, both domestically and abroad. The tracking of the Tibetan lama in Taiwan aligns with Beijing's broader strategy of monitoring individuals it politically sensitive. deems operatives have been reported to shadow Tibetan activists, scholars, and religious figures worldwide, aiming to intelligence and deter actions that could challenge Beijing's narratives.

Photographing and following the lama serves multiple purposes. First, it allows Chinese authorities to document interactions that could be used as evidence of alleged separatist activities. Second, it sends a clear message to both Taiwan and Tibetan leaders that Beijing is watching closely, discouraging further engagement. Lastly, it reinforces China's broader efforts to control the narrative surrounding Tibet and Taiwan, ensuring that any perceived threats to its sovereignty are swiftly countered.

This incident highlights the ongoing tensions between China, Taiwan, and the Tibetan exile community. It raises questions about the extent to which Beijing is willing to go to suppress interactions that challenge its territorial claims. As Taiwan continues to assert its distinct identity and Tibetan leaders seek international recognition, China's surveillance tactics may only deepen mistrust and resistance.

The lama's visit, rather than being a mere religious engagement, has become a geopolitical flashpoint—one that underscores the lengths to which China will go to maintain its grip on narratives surrounding Tibet and Taiwan. Whether such tactics will succeed in deterring future visits remains uncertain, but they undeniably reveal the depth of Beijing's insecurities.

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Viral video exposes devastating toll of state-approved mining in Tibet

30 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup

A viral video footage from Tibet circulating on Chinese social media in the second week of this month has exposed the devastating environmental toll of government-approved mining operations in Drongri village, Tsonga Township, Markham County, Chamdo City. According to the London-based Tibetan human rights monitoring outlet *Tibet Watch*, the footage documents the villagers' growing anguish over the environmental damage and hardships resulting from these activities.

The video, recorded by local villagers, shows alarming scenes of ecological degradation, including stripped hillsides, landslides, and damaged homes. Α written accompanying the footage highlights that the mining efforts have "severely damaged hillside vegetation and worsened landslides", creating a perilous situation community. Villagers have reported that these activities have critically compromised the local ecosystem, leading to increasing and unpredictable natural disasters such as landslides and floods that directly threaten their lives and livelihoods.

The note further details the scale of destruction and disruption, describing how the mining has led to damage to agricultural land, causing flooding and soil quality loss, deposits from hillside erosion that degrade grasslands, and damage to homes from repeated flooding incidents. The villagers also note that the broader environment has suffered, with waterways obstructed and drinking water contaminated.



Tibetans protest against China's mining in Shigatse, 2011, whilst Chinese police look on (Photo/FreeTibet)

In the footage, a senior villager expresses frustration how government at authorities and mining companies have prioritised their own interests over those of the local community. "The miner informed us that the excavation of the mineral mountains and road construction to the mining site was approved by party leaders, presenting us with documents authorised by county township governments," the villager says. "They ignore the views and hardships of the local population and overlook environmental damage and risks. The mining contracts show that these operations only benefit the miners, not the residents. This is merely a scheme to destroy the mineral mountains and local villages."

Tibet Watch reports that Chinese miners have been active in the area since August 2020, with villagers forced to endure a string of environmental disasters since then. The villagers' pleas for help, shared through the video, call on viewers to spread the word and support their efforts to defend their land and livelihoods. Due to strict information controls in Tibet imposed by Chinese authorities, further details about the mining company involved or any potential compensation for the villagers remain unclear.

The footage from Drongri village is not an isolated case. In April, a video titled "The Change of Amnye Machen" circulated widely on Chinese social media, drawing further attention to Tibet's mounting environmental crisis. Produced by the Plateau

Nature Conservancy in the so-called Qinghai Province in Tibet, the video describes how the snow of the sacred Amnye Machen mountain is melting at an alarming rate of 17 metres per year—threatening its very existence within decades.

The video, obtained by the Dharamshala-based *Tibet Times*, features a local Tibetan nomad who vividly recalls his first pilgrimage around Amnye Machen in 1986. Comparing historical snow coverage to present conditions, he estimates that up to 1,200 metres of snow have vanished from the mountain's upper reaches, with at least 240 metres lost at the base. From 2017 to 2023 alone, the snow has receded steadily at 17 metres annually, he says.

This escalating environmental crisis is closely linked to Tibet's mineral wealth. Often called the "water tower of Asia" for its abundant glaciers and rivers, Tibet is also rich in copper, iron, lead, zinc, lithium, and other strategic minerals. In 2001, China announced the discovery of vast copper and lithium deposits in Tibet—resources that are in short supply in China itself but abundant in the Tibetan Plateau.

While China's appetite for these minerals has grown especially for lithium, a key ingredient in modern batteries mining in Tibet has come at an enormous cost to the environment and to Tibetan communities. Critics describe this as a "resource curse", where resource extraction benefits external actors while leaving local populations to bear the brunt of environmental and social destruction.

Study: Tibetan Plateau neutralizes local global warming amid rising global temperature

29 May 2025, Tibetan Review

As two of the world's top weather agencies forecast several years of even more record-breaking heat that pushes Earth to more deadly, fiery and uncomfortable extremes, Chinese scientists have found that the Tibetan Plateau plays a significant role in countering

global warming, reported the AP May 29 and China's official *chinadaily.com.cn* May 27.

The Tibetan Plateau serves as a net greenhouse gas sink, a phenomenon that is expected to persist for several decades amid global warming, the *chinadaily.com.cn* report cited Chinese scientists as saying in a new study.

The report explained that greenhouse gas sinks, such as forests and soils, absorb more carbon than they release and are crucial to fighting climate change.

Data on the land surface of the Tibetan Plateau in the 2000s and 2010s "showed that the region absorbs greenhouse gases at a rate that effectively offsets its emissions, resulting in a state of near climate neutrality", Wang Tao, the corresponding author of the study, which was published this month in the journal *Science Bulletin*, has said. Wang is stated to be a researcher at the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Wang has said the Tibetan Plateau plays an important role in China's carbon neutrality efforts, with significant annual absorption of carbon dioxide, or CO2, especially through its forests and grasslands.

However, despite this, he has said uncertainties remain regarding its greenhouse gas budget — the set amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted for a given level of global warming — due to factors such as the intensification of livestock systems and the expansion of surface water bodies.

"Simply put, the greenhouse gas sink on the Tibetan Plateau can be viewed as a process involving the absorption of carbon dioxide and the emission of other greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide," Wang said.

He has emphasized that the warming effect per unit of methane is about 27 times that of carbon dioxide, while nitrous oxide's warming effect is even more pronounced, at around 273 times that of CO2.

The belching, flatulence and excrement of the more than 40 million livestock on the grassland are stated to contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Besides, the region harbours more than onethird of the PRC's inland waters and wetlands, including massive emerging thermokarst lakes that form as the permafrost melts, a process that contributes to the release of greenhouse gases, particularly methane, that had previously been sequestered in the soil, Wang has said.

The study was stated to have found that methane and nitrous oxide emissions offset 40% of the terrestrial carbon dioxide sink. Emissions from the livestock system account for around 21% of that, while those from inland waters and wetlands contribute around 13%.

The study was also stated to have found that the greenhouse gas sink nearly compensated for anthropogenic emissions — those that are a direct result of human activities — including those from fossil fuels and industrial sources, suggesting that the Tibetan Plateau has achieved a near climate-neutral state.

The findings are slated to indicate that the existing greenhouse gas sink will persist until 2060.

Meanwhile, a five-year forecast released May 28 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UK Meteorological Office said there's an 80% chance the world will break another annual temperature record in the next five years, and it's even more probable that the world will again exceed the international temperature threshold set 10 years ago, said the *AP* report.

With every tenth of a degree the world warms from human-caused climate change, "we will experience higher frequency and more extreme events (particularly heat waves but also droughts, floods, fires and human-reinforced hurricanes/typhoons)," Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany who was not part of the research, has said.

And for the first time there's a chance — albeit slight — that before the end of the decade, the world's annual temperature will shoot past the Paris climate accord goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) and hit a more alarming 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of

heating since the mid-1800s, the two agencies have said.

Chinese scientists discover Qinghai-Tibet Plateau's unique role in greenhouse emissions

23 May 2025, China Daily

Chinese scientists have recently discovered that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau acts as the only net greenhouse gas (GHG) sink region in China.

The study, led by Wang Tao, a researcher from the Institute of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Research under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was published in the journal Science Bulletin this month.

The study integrated GHG flux measurements in empirical modeling approaches, emissions from the livestock sector with process-based biogeochemistry modeling to systematically estimate methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O) fluxes across terrestrial ecosystems and inland waters in 2000s and 2010s. In addition, they projected the total livestock CH4 and N2O emission during 2060s under scenarios with different policy intervention and mitigation measures.

Wang noted that CH4 and N2O are the second and third most important GHG after carbon dioxide (CO2). Current scientific research largely focuses on carbon neutrality with anthropogenic CO2 emissions being net-zero, while climate neutrality, with the sum of GHG emissions being net-zero, has been gaining prominence in climate policy in the context of limiting global warming to 1.5 C and 2 C.

Enhancing the land surface uptake of GHG could contribute to climate neutrality, but as a prerequisite, it requires accurate quantification of the net land surface GHG balance. The annual carbon sinks in forests and grasslands have been reported to completely offset the total annual fossil CO2 emissions on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

However, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is the most elevated pastoral area in the world, where more than 40 million of livestock (eg

Yak and Tibetan sheep) graze on grasslands that are the primary sources of energy, protein and fat for at least 5 million local residents, and encompasses more than half of China's lakes that are major contributors to CH4 and N2O emissions.

These CH4 and N2O emissions from an intensifying livestock system and expanding surface water, especially for massive emerging thermokarst lakes on permafrost regions over the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, remain unknown, and the potential of these emissions in offsetting terrestrial carbon dioxide (CO2) sinks are both of great concern and uncertainty.

Results indicated that the contemporary GHG over the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau acted as a sink of 90.18 Tg CO2e a-1 in 2000s and 2010s, nearly twice that of China, and more than 40 percent offset by CH4 and N2O emissions.

In addition, CH4 and N2O emissions from the livestock system, mostly (90 percent) comprised of enteric fermentation by ruminants, compensated around 21 percent of the terrestrial CO2 sink, and those from wetlands and inland waters accounted for around 13 percent of the terrestrial CO2 sink. Moreover, the GHG sink is larger than direct anthropogenic (fossil fuel and industrial source) GHG emissions, suggesting that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau acted as the only near climate-neutral state region in China.

The research further showed that the current GHG sink has the low possibility to tip in a warmer and wetter climate, and the land surface of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau would continue to act as an appreciable GHG sink under the medium scenarios for the 2060s. However, the sink strength depends on the evolution of terrestrial CO2 sinks and future pathways of pastoralism.

Under the medium warming scenario, the enhancement of terrestrial CO2 sinks in 2060s due to warming and rising CO2 fertilization effect would be counterbalanced by livestock CH4 emissions when the current overgrazing status continues.

The GHG sinks could be further maximized to 139.7 Tg CO2e a-1 for the 2060s, which is around 1.5 times as large as the current GHG

sink, when implementing reduced emission intensity policies under the dynamic livestock-forage balance policy.

The research suggested that a transition to a sustainable pastoralism, coupled with the adoption of mitigation practices (eg, improved livestock diets and animal health) that reduce emission intensity per livestock product could significantly reduce CH4 and N2O emissions, making it being as a cost-effective approach in achieving self-defined national climate pledges for China under the Paris Agreement.

No casualties reported as 5.5-magnitude earthquake jolts southwest Tibet

13 May 2025, Tibetan Review

An earthquake of what China said was of 5.5-magnitutde has struck early this morning an area in Tibet that was previously hit also by the devastating 6.8-magnitude earthquake of Jan 7 this year, according to Chinese state media. Though strongly felt, there are no immediate reports of casualties, perhaps because most of the people were living in makeshift shelters after the Jan 7 earthquake disaster.

A 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Lhatse County in Shigatse City of Tibet Autonomous Region at 5:11 am Monday, with no casualties reported, reported China's official *Xinhua* news agency, citing local authorities.

The epicentre was stated to have been monitored at 28.91 degrees north latitude and 87.54 degrees east longitude. The earthquake struck at a depth of 10 km, according to the China Earthquake Networks Centre.

local official in the county's Chukhu village in Mangphu township have told China's official *China Daily* that the quake was strongly felt, but no casualties have been reported as most residents were living in makeshift houses they were offered after the 6.8 magnitude earthquake early in January.

Earlier, on May 8, an earthquake of magnitude 3.7 jolted the region, noted *independent.co.uk* May 12. Before that,

an earthquake of magnitude 3.9 hit the region on Apr 23, noted *indiatvnews.com* May 12, citing India's National Centre for Seismology (NCS) in an *X* post at that time.

This morning's tremor came just months after a devastating 6.8-magnitude earthquake hit Dingri county – about 240km (149 miles) from Shigatse – in January, which China said killed 126 people and injured over 180.

Shallow earthquakes like these are more dangerous than deeper ones due to their greater energy release closer to the Earth's surface. This causes stronger ground shaking and increased damage to structures and casualties, compared to deeper earthquakes, which lose energy as they travel to the surface, noted the *indiatvnews.com* report.

Tibet has experienced multiple massive earthquakes over the past few decades, including a devastating 8.6-magnitude quake in 1950.

According to a study published last year, the Indian tectonic plate – which collided with the Eurasian plate – is now gradually tearing apart beneath Tibet. This phenomenon, known as a "slab tear", occurs when the upper crust of the Indian plate separates from its denser lower layer, generating considerable seismic activity, the *independent.co.uk* report noted. While this deep subterranean rift is unlikely to produce visible surface fractures, it is said to have the potential to geologically divide Tibet into two distinct zones.

EU hopes to convince China that forced assimilation is not needed to maintain national unity

28 May 2025, Tibetan Review

The European Union (EU) hopes to convince China that forced assimilation is not the best solution to integrating its so-called ethnic minority regions by showcasing its own experience in the Tyrol region, according to the *scmp.com* May 27.

The occasion will be the EU's hosting of talks on human rights, which rarely yield progress, on Jun 13, the report noted.

As part of this event, the two sides will visit the Tyrol region on the Austrian/Italian border to "showcase how multilinguism in education can happily function".

The site region – where a mix of German, Italian and the local Ladin dialect is spoken – used to be the subject of a long-running border dispute but the "site trip" will be used by the EU to broach China's alleged "coercive" efforts to replace local languages in Tibet and Xinjiang with Mandarin, the report said.

Human rights and related issues are things China does its best to avoid talking about. The report noted that following a summit in 2022, the EU's former top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said Beijing "wanted to set aside our differences on Ukraine, they didn't want to talk about Ukraine.

"They didn't want to talk about human rights and other stuff and instead focus on positive things".

"This was not exactly a dialogue, maybe a dialogue of the deaf ... we could not talk about Ukraine a lot, and we did not agree on anything else," Borrell was quoted as having said at that time.

And as the two sides seek to break the deadlock in their ties in a blitz of diplomacy leading up to July's high-stakes summit in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is planning to visit Brussels early that month for talks on prickly foreign policy issues with Borrell's successor, Kaja Kallas, the High

CHINA POLITICS

Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

It remains to be seen whether Kallas, a former Estonian Prime Minister, will have better luck than her predecessor is getting Wang to take interest in discussing human rights improvement issues.

World's Poorest 75 nations owe China \$22bn debt repayments this year alone

27 May 2025, Tibetan Review

The most vulnerable nations on Earth are facing a "tidal wave" of debt repayments from this year as a Chinese lending boom starts to be called in, reported *theguardian.com* May 27, citing a new report published May 27 by Australian foreign policy thinktank the Lowy Institute. China has long been accused of debt trapping poor nations with loans for highly questionable projects on terms that lack transparency, often signed with corrupt leaders.

China will now be more of a debt collector than banker to the poorest 75 countries of the world as they collectively owe some \$22 bn to it this year alone for loans taken mostly under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure projects, the report said.

These nations' debts are stated to form the bulk of the total of \$35bn calculated by Lowy for 2025.

"Now, and for the rest of this decade, China will be more debt collector than banker to the developing world," the Lowy Institute report has said.

And the pressure to repay is seen to put strain on local funding for health and education as well as climate change mitigation.

"China's lending has collapsed exactly when it is needed most, instead creating large net financial outflows when countries are already under intense economic pressure," the institute has said.

The loans were stated to have been largely issued under President Xi's signature BRI, a state-backed global infrastructure investment programme which has underwritten national

projects from schools, bridges and hospitals to major roads and shipping and air ports.

The report has noted that China's lending spree turned it into the largest supplier of bilateral loans, peaking with a total of more than \$50bn in 2016 – more than all western creditors combined.

But not only has China denied accusations that it deliberately creates debt traps, but the recipient nations have also pushed back, saying China was a more reliable partner and offered crucial loans when others refused.

But that is not the only issue. Lowy report has said the record high debt now due to China could be used for "political leverage", noting that it has come amid huge cuts to foreign aid by the Trump administration.

Meanwhile, China has given new large-scale loans to Honduras, Nicaragua, Solomon Islands, Burkina Faso and the Dominican Republic, all within 18 months of them switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to Beijing.

This has occurred despite the fact that China now finds itself in a bind, pulled between diplomatic pressure to restructure unsustainable debt in vulnerable nations and domestic pressure to recall loans amid China's own economic downturn.

China publishes little data on its BRI scheme, and the Lowy Institute has said its estimates – based on World Bank data – likely underestimated the full scale of China's lending. In 2021 AidData (an Aid Transparency, Information Technology, and Geocoding institute based in Williamsburg, Virginia) estimated China was owed a "hidden debt" of about \$385bn, the report said.

CCP regime dominance at the core of China's national security

23 May 2025, <u>ICT</u>

China released its first-ever White Paper on national security on May 12, 2025, in which it outlined Xi Jinping thought on national security unhesitatingly asserting that the survival of "the leadership and ruling status of

the Communist Party of China" is the "fundamental" framework of national security. In essence, the white paper emphasizes preserving the continuity and dominance of the CCP over the country as the bedrock of China's national security.

At the time of this report, the full text of the White Paper is available only in Chinese with a sanitized "abstract" in English and some other languages. This version does not make the above assertion while presenting the White Paper as an explanation of Xi Jinping's "holistic approach" to national security. This could be an indication that the White Paper is more meant for domestic consumption than for the world at large.

For the international audience, the abstract makes the benign and acceptable case that "China's national security in the new era is one that takes the people's security as its ultimate goal, political security as the fundamental task, and national interests as the guiding principle."

However, if we look at the full text then the White Paper is a message to the people in the People's Republic of China about how they should be looking at the CCP and its governance policy. The text categorically equates the continuation of CCP rule to China's "political security". The report text in Chinese under the section "Safeguarding the Party's leadership and the socialist system," maintains that "China's national security hinges on the Party. China places political security as its top priority, always planning and advancing security in other areas from the perspective of political security..."

Also, under the section, "Upholding political security as the top priority" the White Paper says, "This is the lifeline of China's national security in the new era. The core of political security is the security of the regime and the security of the system, and the most fundamental aspect is to safeguard the leadership and ruling position of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. If political security is not guaranteed, China will inevitably fall into a state of disunity and chaos, and the great rejuvenation of the

Chinese nation will be impossible to achieve. The fundamental and long-term interests of the people will not be safeguarded."

The White Paper conveys to the Chinese people that CCP will accordingly "place greater emphasis on maintaining social stability" and "on resolving conflicts and disputes at the grassroots level, and building harmony and stability at the grassroots level." This would mean that China will continue to use local people and institutions as the vanguard in its sinicization of Tibet.

While the abstract does not mention Tibet, the full text has three references projecting the Tibetan issue (as well as that of the Uyghurs) as merely tools for interference by "Western anti-China forces" (and by implication a threat to China's national security). The White Paper, while maintaining that "Western anti-China forces are doing everything they can to contain, suppress and contain China" says under the same section, "We must fully implement the Party's strategies governing Tibet and Xinjiang in the new era, crack down on secessionist and sabotage activities in accordance with the law, effectively curb infiltration, and significantly improve the public security situation." Interestingly, the White Paper "Overseas separatist forces such as "Tibetan independence" and "East Turkestan" are frequently active." The relevant portion on Tibet fundamentally aligns with China's long-standing narrative of "the century of humiliation" to shift the blame on "foreign devils" to deflect its failings in Tibet. This blame-shifting serves a dual purpose: it deflects scrutiny from the CCP's governance failures in Tibet, and it galvanizes Chinese nationalism by positioning the CCP as the steadfast defender of China's sovereignty and dignity against perceived Western hostility.

The White Paper also includes "separatism, religious extremism" as being part of "non-traditional security challenges" that are increasing.

Human rights are mentioned thrice in the White Paper, including cited as being one of the four "red lines" that the United States cannot challenge China on. The White Paper

calls the concept of human rights as well as democracy and freedom being "universal values" as instrument of "overseas anti-China forces" that needs to be prevented.

The White Paper makes reference to border security and claims that "China has negotiated and resolved land border issues with 12 of its 14 land-based neighboring countries". As for the two remaining border countries, India and Bhutan, negotiations are ongoing. People's Republic of China current land borders are with 14 countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Vietnam. It is interesting that the White Paper includes Nepal among those countries with whom border issues have been resolved even though reports in Nepal's media talk about disputes at a few regions that are yet to be resolved. Overall, the White Paper appears to be a message predominantly directed to the people in the PRC that China is confident in the midst of international turmoil and that it can withstand any challenges under the leadership of the CCP.

No booze, no bouquets: China tightens frugal code for officials

22 May 2025, The State Council Information Office

No booze, no banquets, no bouquets. China has barred alcohol, luxury dishes, and cigarettes from official meals, part of a sweeping crackdown on extravagance in public life. Government cars must forgo flashy upgrades, and meeting rooms must be free of ornamental plants and fancy backdrops.

The new rules, set out in the newly revised Regulations on Practicing Thrift and Opposing Waste in Party and Government Organs, are the latest effort by China's top leadership to rein in official perks and promote restraint.

First introduced in 2013 as a follow-up to the Party's landmark eight-point rules, an initiative launched in late 2012 to curb official

misconduct and restore public trust, austerity guidelines were reaffirmed this May amid a broader campaign to reinforce discipline and compliance across the Party's 100 million members.

These updated guidelines set out more detailed rules than ever before for Party and government officials -- targeting public funds, official travel, receptions, vehicle use, meetings, and office space.

Extravagant banquets and heavy drinking were once fixtures of official life in China, customs so entrenched that phrases like "no banquet is complete without alcohol" and "business is done over drinks" became part of the vernacular. But such excesses, long resented by the public, have since increasingly come under scrutiny.

As part of a renewed push for ensuring discipline, China has now imposed a sweeping ban on alcohol at official receptions, while cigarettes and luxury dishes are also off the table.

Analysts said the ban is unlikely to meaningfully affect the industry of baijiu, a fiery Chinese liquor once a staple at government banquets.

Xiao Zhuqing, an industry expert, noted that since the rollout of the Party's eight-point rules just over a decade ago, government-related consumption of baijiu has shrunk considerably. Today, official purchases account for less than 5 percent of the market, limiting the new regulation's impact on the sector.

Excessive drinking not only erodes the image of government officials but can also end in tragedy. In a recent case that drew national attention, a county-level official in central China's Henan Province died after consuming alcohol at a midday banquet during a training seminar in March. Nine other officials present at this banquet were later disciplined, demoted, or dismissed.

Under the new rules, officials on domestic trips are barred from accepting cash gifts, souvenirs, or local specialties. For overseas trips, private jet travel is off-limits, while officials are no longer allowed to add extra stops or extend their stays abroad without prior authorization.

Officials are also barred from using public cars for private errands or claiming personal vehicle expenses from public funds. These new rules call for government fleets to prioritize new energy vehicles, part of a wider push to reduce emissions.

Party and government bodies are under orders to trim back meetings to only what is essential. Gone are the days of lavish conference setups -- this means no floral arrangements and no elaborate staging. Holding official gatherings at scenic resorts is strictly forbidden.

The new rules have received largely positive feedback online. Wang Xuming, a scholar and retired official from the Ministry of Education, praised them as "detailed and pragmatic" on microblogging site Weibo.

Grassroots officials have also voiced their support. Some have long borne the health costs of official banquets, such as fatty liver and high blood pressure, widely seen as occupational hazards in a work culture where "drinking twice a day felt like part of the job." As part of its austerity drive, China's central government has been steadily trimming its public expenses on official receptions, vehicles, and overseas travel for years.

The 2025 budget includes 6.12 billion yuan (about 851.7 million U.S. dollars) for such expenses, down 322 million yuan from last year. Reception spending alone is capped at 302 million yuan, 13 million less than in 2024.

The savings from reduced official spending, according to the regulations, will be redirected toward development priorities and public welfare.

As China continues its campaign against official extravagance, the once-routine perks of public office, including opulent banquets and taxpayer-funded junkets, have quietly receded.

The government's austerity push is rippling through society at large. Frugality has begun to replace excess as a social value. Restaurants are downsizing portions -- and it

has become common for diners to take leftovers home.

This culture shift extends to major life events. Costly wedding and funeral banquets, once seen as obligatory displays of status, are giving way to simpler, more modest affairs, reflecting a broader embrace of restraint inspired from the top down.

China Events of 2024

16 May 2025, HRW

Over a decade into President Xi Jinping's rule, efforts to centralize control has led to heightened repression throughout the country. There is no independent civil society, no freedom of expression, association, assembly or religion, and human rights defenders and other perceived critics of the government are persecuted. The government considers the culturally and ethnically distinct Tibetans and Uyghurs as threats and subjects them to particularly harsh repression. Hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs remain imprisoned as part of the government's crimes against humanity in the region. It has also ended longprotected civil liberties in Hong Kong. While foreign governments recognize the Chinese government's worsening rights record, they have not confronted Beijing.

Freedom of Expression

The Chinese government controls all major channels of information, such as television, radio, and print publications. Its "Great Firewall" blocks people in China from accessing information commonly available on the internet. It also imposes ideological control over the education system.

While most people in China habitually self-censor, some stories—those that do not challenge the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy—occasionally reach the broader public. A Chinese media outlet's investigative report on cooking oil contamination in July and Chinese lawyer Yi Shenghua's post in August exposing an illegal human remains trade attracted widespread public attention. They were

followed swiftly by official censorship and punishments.

There were numerous instances of censorship throughout the year. In January, Shanghai police arrested filmmaker Chen Pinlin ("Plato") for a documentary about the 2022 White Paper protests.

Authorities continued to update the country's censorship and surveillance regime to tighten control. In February, the State Secrets Law revised and implementing was published regulations were in July, expanding the law's already overly broad scope. In July, the government proposed a new national digital ID card system. The cards, which are ostensibly voluntary, would give state agencies even more ability to track people online offline.

Previously tolerated topics have become offlimits. With the Chinese economy faltering, the government has prohibited discussions of its economic policies and penalized those critical of them. In September, a top Chinese Academy of Social Sciences economist went missing after he disparaged President Xi's economic policies in a private WeChat Also in September, Beijing group. police detained US-based artist Gao Zhen. acclaimed for his work critiquing the late Chinese leader Mao Zedong, for "slandering China's heroes and martyrs" while he was visiting the country. Both topics-- China's economic policies and Mao's disastrous legacy – were topics that could be openly discussed in China until recently.

The Chinese government's strengthened information control has international implications, as it has targeted critics of China who have gone into exile and foreign nationals abroad. "Teacher Li," who collects news and videos from around China and broadcasts them on X, revealed that he had been harassed in Italy, where he is based. Chinese police had also interrogated his followers in China. In August, investigative reports exposed how people affiliated with the Chinese government had intimidated and assaulted Chinese, Hong Kong and Tibetan protesters during Xi's visit to San Francisco earlier.

The Chinese government's nine-yearsentence of Taiwanese political activist Yang "separatism," Chih-yuan for and the suspended death sentence of naturalized Australian writer Yang Hengiun "espionage" generated widespread attention in these countries. In February, the prominent Hugo Award for science fiction was found to have self-censored and excluded authors for consideration for its 2023 award before holding its ceremony in China.

Freedom of Religion

The Chinese government allows people to practice only five officially recognized religions in approved premises, and maintains control over personnel appointments, publications, finances, and seminary applications.

Since 2016, when President Xi called for "Sinicization" of religions, authorities have sought to reshape religions to promote allegiance to the Party and to Xi. They have stepped up ideological education of religious leaders. They have removed "unauthorized" religious materials online, including by taking down religious apps and videos, and by harassing those who make and share such materials.

Police routinely arrest, detain, and harass leaders and members of various "illegal" religious groups, including those Catholic and Protestant congregations (or "house churches") that refuse to join official churches, and disrupt their peaceful activities. Throughout 2024, these individuals were charged with and convicted of fabricated crimes. In July, Zhang Chunlei, leader of a church called Ren'ai Reformed Church, was sentenced to five years in prison for "inciting subversion" and "fraud." The government continues to classify some religious groups, notably the Falun Gong, as "evil cults," and subjects their members to harassment, arbitrary imprisonment, and torture.

In October, the Vatican renewed for the third time the 2018 China-Vatican agreement, which gives the Chinese authorities the power to name Catholic bishops even as they continue to persecute Catholic house churches and leaders, notably Bishop Cui Tai. In September, the government freed Chinese-American pastor David Lin, after he had served nearly 20 years in prison.

Human Rights Defenders

Human rights defenders in China are frequently harassed, tortured, and imprisoned. The police also harass their families, including children. Some, such as lawyer Gao Zhisheng and Peng Lifa, known as "Bridge Man" for his public display of antigovernment signs, remain forcibly disappeared.

In February, women's rights activist Li Qiaochu was sentenced to nearly four years in prison for speaking out on detention conditions faced by her partner and fellow activist Xu Zhiyong. She was released in August after completing her sentence, having been detained since 2021. In October, Xu Zhiyong went on a hunger strike to protest his inhumane treatment in prison.

Chinese authorities released citizen journalist Zhang Zhan in May after she served a four-year prison sentence for reporting on the Covid-19 pandemic. They detained her again in late August and in November arrested her for "creating disturbances".

In June, feminist journalist Huang Xueqin and labor rights activist Wang Jianbing were sentenced, respectively, to five years and three years and six months in prison for "inciting subversion of state power" for their leading involvement in the #MeToo Movement.

In October, human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng and his wife, rights activist Xu Yan, were convicted of "inciting subversion of state power" Yu was sentenced to three years in prison and Xu to 21 months. They were taken into custody while on their way to meet the European Union delegation to China in April 2023.

Women's and Girls' Rights

Gender discrimination in employment remains widespread while alarming cases of violence against women and sexual harassment have received public attention in recent years.

China's declining fertility rate has led the government to pivot from restricting births to exhorting women to get married and return to "traditional virtues" in ways that undermine gender equality.

The government's push for higher birth rates is limited to heterosexual, married couples. In a landmark case, a Beijing court rejected Xu Zaozao's final appeal to freeze her eggs, in a blow to the reproductive rights of single women.

In August, the Chinese government proposed a revised draft law to simplify marriage registration while adding an abusive "30-day cooling off" period to make it harder to divorce.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While there is growing public acceptance of equal rights for LGBT people in China, increasing repression has also led to greater censorship and closure of LGBT spaces and advocacy groups.

In January, Weibo censored viral photos and videos of transgender celebrity Jin Xing, who was holding a rainbow flag with the slogan "love is love, love and gender are unrelated." One of China's few remaining lesbian bars, Roxie, closed in June, alluding to official pressure.

In August, a custody ruling handed down by a Beijing court became the first legal recognition in China that a child can have two mothers. However, the petitioner, Didi, was denied contact with her son on the grounds that she did not give birth to him and is not genetically related to him.

Tibet

Authorities continue to severely control information in Tibetan areas and respond to public concerns over issues such as mass relocation, environmental degradation, or the marginalization of Tibetan language in primary education with repression.

Information is heavily restricted, but the majority of arbitrary detentions reported by exile media were for posting unapproved content online or having online contact with Tibetans outside China. Tibetans accused of

such offenses have been sentenced to years in prison.

In February and March, hundreds of monks and villagers in Derge county, Sichuan, were reportedly detained for protesting the construction of a hydroelectric dam that will submerge historic monasteries and numerous Tibetan villages.

Hong Kong

In March, the Hong Kong government introduced another national security law, the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), after the draconian 2020 National Security Law. The SNSO criminalizes peaceful activities, expands police powers, and replaces the colonial-era sedition law, raising the maximum sentence for "sedition" from two to seven years of imprisonment.

After the SNSO came into effect, police arrested six people in May, including prominent activist Chow Hang-tung who is already imprisoned, for allegedly publishing "seditious" posts online to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre. Three people were sentenced to between 10 and 14 months in prison for "sedition" for wearing a T-shirt, making online posts, and drawing prodemocracy graffiti on buses. The Hong Kong government used the new powers under the SNSO to revoke the Hong Kong passports of six exiled activists and to deny political prisoners early release for good behavior.

In May, three judges handpicked for national security cases convicted 14 activists and ex-Hong Kong lawmakers of "conspiracy to commit subversion" in the city's largest national security trial to date, with 31 other defendants having earlier pleaded guilty. In November, the court sentenced all 45 to prison terms ranging from 4 years and 2 months to 10 years.

At least 304 people have been arrested for allegedly violating the National Security Law, the SNSO, and the now-revoked "sedition" law since 2020. Among the 176 individuals charged, 161 have been convicted. According to police figures, 10,279 people have been arrested in connection with the 2019 pro-democracy protests, among whom 2,328

"faced legal consequences" including conviction, many for non-violent crimes like "unlawful assembly."

Press freedom declined further. Media tycoon Jimmy Lai's national security trial, which began in December 2023, is ongoing. The 76-year-old Lai has been held in solitary confinement since December 2020. In September, two journalists of the now-defunct Stand News were sentenced to 21 and 11 months respectively for "sedition." That month, the government denied work visa and entry into the city to an Associated Press photojournalist who took photos of Jimmy Lai in prison.

The Hong Kong government has repeatedly harassed the Hong Kong Journalist Association, including making a claim for HK\$400,000 (US\$51,000) in back taxes. Radio Free Asia, funded by the US government, closed its Hong Kong office in May 2024.

Authorities curtailed freedoms of expression, association and assembly. On June 4, police arrested at least nine people for holding placards, lighting candles, or turning on their phone flashlights near Victoria Park, where the Tiananmen Massacre commemorations took place before 2020.

The government also curbed freedom of expression. In May, the High Court ruled that the government's injunction to block use of the popular 2019 protest song "Glory to Hong Kong" was lawful. Scottish and US distributors repeatedly removed the song from streaming platforms even though the order had no extraterritorial effect. In October, Hong Kong authorities appeared to block some Hong Kong internet users' access to *Flow HK*, an online magazine hosted in the US.

In January, the government-funded Hong Kong Arts Development Council withdrew its funding for the Hong Kong Drama Awards, while the Leisure and Cultural Services Department refused to provide the awards ceremony a venue.

Xinjiang

The Chinese government has committed crimes against humanity against

Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims as part of its abusive "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism." Violations in Xinjiang include mass arbitrary detention torture, mass surveillance, forced labor, cultural religious persecution, and family separation. The Chinese government has continued to deny these abuses. Responding to a number of relevant recommendations made during the Universal Periodic Review of its rights record by the UN Human Rights Council in January, the government dismissed a Chinese groundbreaking 2022 UN report documenting these abuses, including alleged crimes against humanity, as "illegal and void." In August, the office of the UN high commissioner for human rights reported that problematic laws and policies" underlying the 2022 UN report remain in place and noted the challenges in monitoring the situation due to "limited access to information and the fear of reprisals against individuals who engage with the United Nations." In September, the US delivered a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council on behalf of the "core group of countries" that previously sought a dedicated discussion of the situation by the UN rights body, calling on the Chinese government to "engage meaningfully" with implement the UN to report's recommendations.

Official Chinese statements continue to affirm its abusive campaign, which conflates Uyghurs' everyday peaceful behavior with terrorism and extremism. In May, a top central government official responsible for political and legal affairs, Wenging, said the government will "persist in cracking down on violent terrorist crimes" and "promote legalization and normalization counterterrorism of and stability maintenance" in the Uyghur region.

An estimated half-million people have been sentenced to long prison sentences without due process during the Strike Hard Campaign, and many remain imprisoned, including Rahile Dawut, Gulshan Abbas, Perhat Tursun, Adil Tuniyaz, Yalqun Rozi, Ekpar Asat. Prominent Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti has spent 10 years in

prison as part of his unjust life sentence for "separatism."

In February, China revised regulations in Xinjiang to further tighten control over religious practices, which includes controlling the appearance, number, location and size of religious venues, and requiring them to become training grounds that promote the values of the Chinese Communist Party to the people.

A Human Rights Watch report found that global car brands have increasing risk of exposure to Uyghur forced labor in their aluminum supply chain, adding to a growing body of research that shows that Uyghur forced labor taints industries globally, including solar panels, cars, apparel, seafood, and critical minerals. Since the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in 2022 entered into force, the US government has denied entry to \$750 million worth of goods linked to forced labor in Xinjiang. The European Union approved a law in December prohibiting the import and export of goods linked to forced labor.

Climate Change Policy and Impacts

China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, largest producer and consumer of coal, and the largest importer of oil and gas. Its banks are among the largest financiers of fossil-fuel operations in the world.

Despite improved targets, the Climate Action Tracker rates China's domestic emission reduction target as "highly insufficient" to meet the Paris Agreement goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. Extreme weather events driven by global warming have become more common across China and are projected to increase in frequency and severity.

Correction

The chapter was revised to remove language stating that Epoch Times, a media outlet run by the persecuted religious group Falun Gong, closed its Hong Kong office in 2024. The Epoch Times did not close its office, but suspended its print edition in September 2024 due to "a failure to renew the lease of its print shop" and "various factors in Hong Kong."

China: Joint Statement from Civil Society Groups on the Chinese Government's Arbitrary Detention of Journalist Zhang Zhan

14 May 2025, OMCT

A coalition of 62 press freedom and human rights organisations including the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the protection of human rights defenders, demand the release of Chinese journalist Zhang Zhan on the 5th anniversary of her arrest.

We, the undersigned press freedom and human rights organisations, strongly condemn the Chinese government's ongoing arbitrary detention of journalist, human rights defender and former lawyer **Zhang Zhan**, on the 5th anniversary of her arrest.

Zhang is an outspoken journalist, and one of many Chinese citizens who are imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of the press and expression. Zhang Zhan was first detained on 14 May 2020, after she travelled to the city of Wuhan to courageously report on the early stages of Covid-19 pandemic, documenting overflowing hospitals, empty families and of victims independent journalists being harassed by the authorities. She is currently persecuted for supporting pro-democracy activist Zhang Pancheng, and reporting on human rights violations in the country.

At the beginning of March 2025, NGOs sources confirmed that Zhang will soon be tried on the charge of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble", a charge often used by Chinese authorities to suppress journalists, writers and human rights defenders. The date of her trial is still unknown, as she remains detained in the Pudong Detention Center in Shanghai, facing an additional up to 5 years in prison if convicted.

Zhang Zhan, was apprehended by the police on 28 August 2024, only three months after completion of an earlier four-year sentence under the same charge, while travelling to her hometown in the Shaanxi province in northwest China. In the weeks leading up to this incident, Zhang kept reporting on the harassment of activists in China on her social media.

Her first detention was deemed arbitrary under international human rights law by the UN's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention 2021 opinion. In a November 2024 letter to the Chinese government, nine UN Special Procedures mandates raised lengthy concerns about patterns of repression against Zhang Zhan, alongside 17 other human rights defenders, requesting the government to take measures to prevent any irreparable damage to life and personal integrity, and halt the violations of her human rights. The government's three-lines response on Zhang Zhan's status merely asserted that "her legitimate rights and interests have been fully protected."

China remains one of the most repressive countries for freedom of speech and press, and ranks 178th out of 180 in the 2025 Reporters without Borders (RSF)'s World Press Freedom Index, and is the world's leading jailer of journalists and writers, according to data from Committee to Protect Journalists, RSF, and PEN America.

The charge "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" was used against over **100** individuals for peacefully exercising or defending human rights between 2019 and 2024. Chinese authorities often used this crime to justify political persecution of human rights defenders, including journalists. In March 2024, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, also called on the Chinese government to revise the "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" provision and release all HRDs, lawyers, and others detained under that charge.

In detention, Zhang Zhan has engaged in intermittent hunger strikes to protest her arbitrary detention. In 2021 she was twice hospitalised due to severe malnutrition and a rapid deterioration of her health.

In January 2025, Zhang Zhan again re-started her hunger strike in protest of her second arrest. In response, detention centre personnel have subjected her to forced-feeding through a gastric tube – a practice that may amount to torture or other ill-treatment, in violation of the Convention against Torture ratified by China in 1988. Her lawyer has been allowed to meet with her but has been under pressure from the authorities not to disclose the case details publicly.

Despite the relentless calls of the international community to immediately release Zhang Zhan, the Chinese government continues to ignore the urgency of the matter. Yet, the restrictions against journalists or anyone who speaks out against the abuse of the government has tightened drastically, despite the right to freedom of speech and press being guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as by Article 35 of the Chinese Constitution. Zhang's prosecution is being used as a warning to others who might challenge the government's propaganda machine.

Zhang Zhan's arbitrary detention is a mockery of China's international human rights obligations to ensure humane prison conditions. Furthermore, Zhang Zhan has committed no internationally recognisable offence, but has been subjected to harsh punishment for reporting on facts and exercising her right to freedom of expression.

We urge the Chinese government to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Zhang Zhan and put an end to all acts of harassment towards her;
- Guarantee Zhang Zhan's safety, psychological well-being and access to adequate and independent medical care;
- Allow her unhindered access to her family members and lawyer of her choosing;
- Submit its state report to the Committee against Torture (CAT), which is over five years overdue, including providing information on the conditions in secret detention and Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location, and providing concrete legislative measures and data about the implementation of previous

- CAT recommendations concerning these practices;
- Put an end to systemic crackdown on civil society, including harassment, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention of journalists, writers, and human rights defenders.

We urge UN bodies and officials, including High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, and governments concerned with human rights in China to:

- Increase support to journalists, writers, and human rights defenders across and from China;
- Advocate for the releases of arbitrary detained journalists, writers, and human rights defenders, including using high-level meetings to publicly call for the release of specific individuals by name;
- Condition international law enforcement interactions and rule of law cooperation with the Chinese government on the government's dropping all charges and quashing all convictions against those wrongfully detained for peacefully exercising or advocating human rights, including press freedom and right to information.

Signatories:

- 1. l'ACAT-France
- 2. ARTICLE 19
- 3. Alliance for Citizens Rights
- 4. Amnesty International
- 5. Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)
- 6. China Aid Association (ChinaAid)
- 7. China Change
- 8. China Dissent Network
- 9. Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)
- 10. Coalition For Women In Journalism
- 11. Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong (CFHK) Foundation
- 12. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
- 13. Den norske Tibet komité
- 14. Dialogue China

- 15. European Values Center for Security Policy Taiwan Office
- 16. Fortify Rights
- 17. Georgetown Center for Asian Law
- 18. Gerakan Media Merdeka (GERAMM)
- 19. Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities
- 20. Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete-Portugal
- 21. Hong Kong Committee in Norway
- 22. Hong Kong Watch
- 23. Human Rights Watch
- 24. Human Rights in China (HRIC)
- 25. Humanitarian China
- 26. Independent Chinese PEN Center
- 27. Index on Censorship
- 28. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- 29. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
- 30. International Tibet Network
- 31. International Women's Media Foundation
- 32. Legal Initiatives for Vietnam (LIV)
- 33. No Business With Genocide
- 34. PEN America
- 35. PEN International
- 36. Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
- 37. Safeguard Defenders
- 38. Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet
- 39. Scottish Hongkongers
- 40. Solidarité Chine
- 41. Students for a Free Tibet
- 42. Taiwan Association of Human Rights (TAHR)
- 43. The Human Rights Foundation
- 44. The Rights Practice
- 45. The Tibet Support Committee, Denmark
- 46. Tibet Action Institute
- 47. Tibet Solidarity
- 48. Tibet Support Group Ireland
- 49. Tibet Watch
- 50. Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP)
- 51. Vancouver Activists of Hong Kong (VAHK)

- 52. Victoria Hongkongers Association (VHKA)
- 53. Viet Tan
- 54. World Liberty Congress
- 55. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

China deploys army of fake NGOs at U.N. to intimidate critics, probe finds

10 May 2025, Indo Pacific Defense Forum

China is deploying a growing army of groups masquerading as nongovernmental organizations (NGO) to monitor and intimidate rights activists at the United Nations, an investigation found.

Dubbed "China Targets," the investigation involving 42 media organizations delves into the tactics Beijing uses to silence critics beyond its borders.

One segment of the probe published in April 2025 by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) deals with China's increasing offensive at the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. It focuses on the growing presence at the council of pro-China, government-organized NGOs, referred to as "Gongos."

Such groups crowd into council sessions to praise China and present glowing accounts of its actions that are largely at odds with U.N. and expert findings of widespread rights violations and repression.

A 2022 report published by the then U.N. human rights chief, for instance, cited possible "crimes against humanity" against the Uyghur minority in China's western Xinjiang region. Other reports highlighted the separation of Tibetan children from their families and the targeting of democracy activists in Hong Kong.

But when legitimate NGOs raise such issues at the council, Gongos often strive to disrupt the session and drown out their testimonies, the ICIJ reported.

The number of Chinese NGOs registered with the U.N. has nearly doubled since 2018, the report found. An ICIJ analysis of 106 NGOs from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and self-governed Taiwan registered with the U.N. found that 59 had close links to the Chinese government or Chinese Communist Party.

"It's corrosive. It's dishonest," Michele Taylor, who served as the United States ambassador to the Human Rights Council from 2022 to January 2025, was quoted as saying in the report.

She decried Beijing's broader attempt "to obfuscate their own human rights violations and reshape the narrative."

Increasingly, the Beijing-controlled groups also monitor and intimidate those planning to testify about alleged abuses, the investigation found.

The ICIJ and its partners said they spoke with 15 activists and lawyers focused on rights issues in China who "described being surveilled or harassed by people suspected to be proxies for the Chinese government."

Such incidents occurred inside the U.N. and elsewhere in Geneva.

The report highlighted how a group of Chinese activists and dissidents were so fearful of Beijing's swelling presence at the council that they refused to enter the U.N. buildings in March 2024.

"Instead, they gathered for a secret meeting on the top floor of a nondescript office building nearby" with U.N. rights chief Volker Türk, the report said.

However, four people claiming to work with the Guangdong Human Rights Association suddenly arrived and asked about the meeting, to which they were not invited.

Zumretay Arkin, vice president of the World Uyghur Congress, told the ICIJ that she believed the Guangdong group was sending a message from Beijing: "We're watching you. ... You can't escape us."

The inspectors keeping China's corrupt officials up at night

04 May 2025, SCMP, Yuanyue Dang

The graft-buster's inspection teams have become important tools for maintaining discipline under Xi Jinping

Chinese central government inspectors have been sent to investigate the activities of lower-level officials since imperial times but the practice has become a particularly pointed anti-corruption weapon on the watch of President Xi Jinping.

Advertisement

These inspections are known as *xunshi*, and they have been a hallmark of Xi's sweeping anti-graft campaign since he came to power more than a decade ago.

They have also become a cause of sleepless nights for many officials. Countless officials and cadres, including dozens of heads of provincial areas and state ministries, have been brought down as a result of such disciplinary checks.

In the latest round of the campaign, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), China's top anticorruption body, has stationed 16 disciplinary inspection teams in various regions. One of those areas is the central province of Shanxi, where former governor Jin Xiangjun soon became the target of an investigation.

How do discipline inspections work?

The CCDI used to rely on tip-offs from the public and disgraced officials for leads. Since 2013, the inspection teams have largely generated their own.

The teams sent to investigate activities at the ministerial and provincial level are usually from the CCDI. Those inspecting city and county-level officials are usually sent by provincial discipline commissions.

The teams are typically deployed for at least two months, using the time to canvas officials and take complaints from the public. The team will report problems to higher officials and pass on evidence of wrongdoing to the CCDI for a full investigation. Sometimes provinces and ministries will be inspected for a second or even a third time at Beijing's behest.

The CCDI teams occasionally work with provincial teams, and may even directly inspect lower-level cities. For example, a CCDI team was involved in the latest round of inspections in the southwestern city of Kunming, where several leading officials have been implicated in corruption cases in the past decade.

The arrival of a team in the northwestern province of Gansu in 2014 was so unnerving that vice-governor Yu Haiyan relied on sleeping pills to get through the night, according to an article published by Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily in 2019. Yu was sentenced to 15 years in prison for bribery in 2018.

The CCDI also opened an investigation into Chang Xiaobing, then chairman of state-owned China Unicom, after a team paid a surprise visit to his office in December 2014 and found a large quantity of expensive cigarettes, wine, tea and artwork.

Why are these inspections so important to Xi?

Corruption in the party's top ranks has long been a problem – and long been seen as a threat to the legitimacy of one-party rule.

Internal disciplinary inspections began when the party was still a revolutionary group in the early 1920s. They were formalised after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 but disbanded during the havoc of the decadelong Cultural Revolution.

The *xunshi* concept was revived in 1990 but the process then was a joint effort between the party's personnel unit, the Central Organisation Department, and the CCDI.

When Xi became party general secretary in late 2012, he launched a major anti-corruption campaign, which he described as "the party's self-revolution".

Xi then repeatedly said that inspections were a "sharp weapon" for the smooth running of the campaign, which affected the interests of many officials.

In 2017, at the start of Xi's second term as party general secretary, the inspection system

was amended in the party constitution to require all levels of party committees, both central and local, to achieve "full coverage" of inspections in their subordinate regions or departments during each five-year term.

These inspections are a "Chinese-style solution" to corruption, according to some academics in China.

Jiang Shigong, president of Minzu University of China and a former professor at Peking University's law school, told People's Daily in 2019 that the disciplinary inspection system was a form of "democratic supervision" that the West could learn from, and that such a model "will not lead to social division due to electoral rivalries".

Who are the CCDI's power brokers?

Wang Qishan was head of the CCDI from 2012 to 2017, and was Xi's most trusted ally in this campaign.

Wang proposed in 2015 that the remit of disciplinary inspections be expanded from "operational inspections" to "political inspections" of officials, including whether they were "in line with the party's instructions", especially those from Xi.

Wang also changed the practice of previous disciplinary teams so that each team is headed by a different person each time they visit an area.

Beijing has not said what proportion of the corrupt officials uncovered in the overall anticorruption campaign were exposed by the work of these teams but Wang has hinted that the ratio is high.

In 2015, two years after Beijing began its campaign, Wang told a meeting that inspection teams had been responsible for uncovering about half of the cadres investigated by the CCDI since 2013.

Wang stepped down in 2017 and was replaced by Zhao Leji, who spent five years in the job before handing over to Li Xi, the seventhranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee, the party's top decision-making body.

Which officials have been brought by inspections?

At least dozens of provincial party chiefs and heads of ministries have fallen from grace because of the disciplinary inspections.

The most notable of these was the fall of <u>Sun</u> <u>Zhengcai</u> in 2017 when he was the party secretary of the southwestern metropolis of Chongqing.

Sun had risen rapidly through the ranks to become a Politburo member at a young age and was seen as a strong contender for the party's top leadership.

That all changed during a second-round, twomonth inspection in Chongqing in February 2017, when Sun was criticised for promoting questionable cadres and "weakening the party's leadership" in the municipality.

He was also criticised for failing to rid Chongqing of the bad influence of <u>Bo Xilai</u>, another disgraced former party secretary and Politburo member.

Just over a year later, Sun was jailed for life.

Have some inspectors also been corrupt?

Some inspection team members have been found to be corrupt, in most cases by colluding with the target of their investigations.

The most high-profile case was that of <u>Dong</u> <u>Hong</u>, who until 2018 was deputy head of the CCDI's central inspection team, the body that assigns the inspection teams.

Dong was given a suspended death sentence in 2022 after being accused of embezzling and taking 460 million yuan in bribes.

Dong was the personal assistant to Wang, the former CCDI chief and former vice-president.

Tibetan leaders urge global action at Tokyo convention, highlight China's rights abuses in Tibet

30 May 2025, India Narrative



The leadership team from the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) arrived in Tokyo to participate in the 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet (WPCT), representing a crucial moment for international involvement regarding the Tibetan situation.

As reported by the Central Tibet Administration, the delegation featured Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, along with the Representative of the Liaison Office of Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia.

One of the first official activities of the delegation was a meeting of high significance with the Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet at the National Diet Building. This meeting was led by Eriko Yamatani and facilitated by General Secretary Hiroshi Yamada, and included Yoshiko Sakurai, President of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals, as per CTA's report.

During this meeting, Sikyong Penpa Tsering underscored the deteriorating human rights conditions in Tibet under the governance of the Chinese Communist Party and urged global leaders to avoid referring to Tibet as "Xizang." He also stressed the necessity for worldwide acknowledgement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's four fundamental commitments and called on legislators to enact resolutions honouring His Holiness' life

TIBET IN EXILE

and legacy as he approaches his 90th birthday, according to the CTA's report.

Since the 1950s, Tibetans in China have endured oppression following the annexation of Tibet by the Chinese government. The 1959 uprising led to the exile of the Dalai Lama and escalated repression. Tibetan culture, language, and religious practices have faced systematic suppression. Various reports indicate that monasteries in China are heavily monitored, and religious activities face significant restrictions. Widespread surveillance exists, and dissent is met with severe punishment.

Protests against cultural erasure and human rights violations have led to instances of self-immolation. Educational systems promote Mandarin over Tibetan. The Chinese government characterises Tibetan activism as separatism, rationalising its stringent policies. Despite global concern, Beijing continues to enforce strict control, portraying its actions as efforts aimed at development and stability, while restricting access to the region for outsiders.

Global groups oppose Chinese propaganda films on Tibet at Kathmandu festival

29 May 2025, Tibetan Review



A coalition of 145 global Tibet-related organisations have called on the organizers of the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF) to cancel "Xizang Panorama" immediately, saying it is China's "propaganda". Nepal has long cracked down on Tibetan refugees and others in the country

in the name of upholding Beijing's "one China" policy and usually defers to China on Tibet related matters.

"Xizang Panorama" is a programme under KIMFF's international category, featuring a selection of six short films, each approximately 15 minutes long. All list China as the county of origin.

The Tibet organisations have objected to the KIMFF's "Xizang Panorama" for wrongly referring to Tibet by the name "Xizang" which they said is promoted by China as a tool of imperial erasure, with its use undermining the distinct historical and cultural identity of Tibet

Kathmandu is hosting the 22nd edition of the KIMFF from May 28 to Jun 1.

"The programme – Xizang Panorama – is not only inaccurately named 'Xizang', but it also features propaganda films that showcase China's false narrative about the situation in Tibet. One such is 'Life of Buda' which promotes China's false narrative of the occupation of Tibet as a 'peaceful liberation', the organisations have said in their statement. The signatories to the statement include India Tibet Friendship Society, Students for a Free Tibet, The Global Alliance for Tibet and Persecuted Minorities, US Tibet Committee, V-TAG United Kingdom, Tibetan Women's Association among others.

They have said "Xizang Panorama" does not simply feature films about Tibet; it is rather a showcase of weaponised storytelling by China to further oppress Tibetans and erase their history. By giving a platform for China's propaganda, KIMFF is actively endorsing, normalising and justifying the Chinese government's ongoing cultural genocide in Tibet."

They have called on the KIMFF to immediately cancel the "Xizang Panorama" programme and film screenings.

Tibetan writer and independence activist Tenzin Tsundue has said it is unfortunate that a select group of Nepalese politicians are allowing the sacred land of Nepal for Chinese propaganda on Tibet.

"This is never the wish of the Nepalese people who are like brothers and sisters to the

Tibetans inside Tibet, suffering under Chinese communist dictatorship. In the 7th century, Nepalese princess Bhrikuti Devi was offered as queen to emperor Songtsen Gampo of Tibet, not Xizang. Tibet may be under foreign occupation today, but tomorrow, when we re-established the entire country of 2.5 million sq km of land as Tibet, with what face will Nepal face the Dalai Lama?" hindustantimes.com May 29 quoted Tsundue as saying.

CTA Leadership Arrives in Tokyo for 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet

29 May 2025, CTA



CTA Leadership Arrives in Tokyo for 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet

The leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has arrived in Tokyo ahead of the 9th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet (WPCT), marking a significant step in international engagement on the Tibetan issue. The delegation includes Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, accompanied by the Representative of the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia.

One of the delegation's first official engagements was a high-level meeting with the Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet at the National Diet Building. The meeting was chaired by Eriko Yamatani and moderated by General Secretary Hiroshi Yamada, with the presence of Yoshiko

Sakurai, President of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals.

During the meeting, Sikyong Penpa Tsering highlighted the worsening human rights situation in Tibet under Chinese Communist Party rule and urged global leaders to refrain from using the term "Xizang" in reference to Tibet. He also emphasised the importance of international recognition of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's four principal commitments and called upon lawmakers to pass resolutions honouring His Holiness' life and legacy on his upcoming 90th birthday.

The CTA leadership extended invitations to Japanese lawmakers to attend the Tibetan Democracy Day celebrations in September and will meet with the local Tibetan community in Tokyo on 1 June. Sikyong Penpa Tsering is scheduled to travel to Osaka on 31 May to engage with local parliamentarians and visit Seifu Gakuin school.

Over 30,000 Tibetan farmers, herders relocated from ancestral land: TPI Report

28 May 2025, Phayul



TPI releases a research report titled "Extremely High-Altitude Ecological Relocation Projects in Tibet on May 28, 2025 at Dharamshala (Phayul Photo)

In an alarmingrevelation, over 30,000 Tibetan farmers and herders in their ancestral lands in the high altitude regions of Tibet have been forcefully relocated between 2019 to 2022 under what is described as "population colonisation policy" by Chinese authorities, according to a report released by a think-tank

under the exile Tibetan government on Wednesday.

The Tibet Policy Institute (TPI) under the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Information and International Relations released a research report, examining China's large-scale relocation of Tibetan nomads and farmers from high-altitude regions.

The report titled "Extremely High-Altitude Ecological Relocation Projects in Tibet", analyses the Chinese government's programme that has relocated over 30,000 Tibetans from three counties in the Nagchu region to southern areas between 2019 and 2025.

30,364 Tibetan farmers and herders have been moved from Amdo County, Shuanghu County, and Nyima County in Nagchu to Sinpo Mountain in Gongkar County. The relocations occurred in two major phases: 4,058 people in December 2019 and 26,304 people in June 2022.

While Chinese authorities justify the program as "ecological relocation" to protect people from areas unsuitable for human habitation, the TPI report characterises it as a "population colonisation policy" that destroys traditional Tibetan nomadic identity.

At the report's launch event, Tibetan Parliamentarian Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltsen highlighted the relocation program's impact on traditional ways of life. "Children from affected areas are required to attend state-run boarding schools, while elders in nomadic families become unable to continue herding activities, effectively losing their traditional lifestyle," he said. He noted that displaced elders often struggle to adapt to new environments, with some succumbing to alcoholism and community tensions.

The report places these relocations within a larger context of forced population movements across Tibet. According to data from *Human Rights Watch*, over 1.4 million Tibetans across traditional Tibetan regions have been forcibly relocated since around 2000, with nearly 2.3 million Tibetans in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region affected by such programmes.

DIIR Secretary Karma Choeying emphasised the importance of exposing these policies to the international community. "It is extremely important to research and expose to the international community the erroneous policies that the Chinese government is implementing in Tibet," he stated at the launch event.

Former Nagchu resident Gyaltsen Choekyi described the relocations as "part of the PRC's larger colonisation and sinicisation policy targeting the Tibetan ethnic group," aimed at diluting traditional Tibetan culture. The six-month study was conducted by TPI researchers Dr. Tsewang Dorji Jeshong and Lobsang Tashi, who gathered information from government documents, non-governmental organisation reports, and local sources both inside and outside Tibet.

16 teams to compete in exile Tibetans' top sporting event this year

28 May 2025, Tibetan Review

This year's Gyalyum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup (GCMGC) football tournament, the exile Tibetans' top sporting event, will be dedicated to the 90th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and will feature 16 teams. Also, for the first time, this 30th edition of the

Also, for the first time, this 50th edition of the tournament will be held under the affiliation of All India Football Federation (AIFF), India's football governing body and a member of FIFA, the global football governing body, reported the Tibetanlanguage tibettimes.net May 28, citing Tibetan National Sports Association (TNSA). The tournament will be held on the Upper TCV school ground in Dharamshala from Jun 1 to 11, ahead of the Dalai Lama's Jul 6 birthday. The number of teams is stated to have been shortlisted to 16 in order to fit the entire tournament within this period.

Apart from two teams from North America, Europe, and Australia and one from Nepal, all the rest are from within India, including one from Upper TCV school as the host, and one from Mundgod Tibetan settlement as the defending champion.

Still, the Executive Director Mr Jangchup Gyaltsen of TNSA, which runs the tournament, has said many teams which had been absent from its previous tournaments for a long time, were also participating, while four of the five major Tibetan settlements in South India were also sending teams.

He has said the AIFF affiliation will be a new feature of this tournament.

Gyaltsen has said that under a new rule to be introduced from this year, in keeping with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's general advice for showing concern for the environment, each player will be provided with an especially designed water bottle in order to avoid the use of commercially available bottled drinking water.

The first GCMGC football tournament was held on the Upper TCV school ground in 1981 and continued at various locations in the Tibetan settlements in India. It has been continuously held annually since 2006, except during the global Covid-19 pandemic outbreak of 2020.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Highlights 16th Kashag's V-TAG Initiative During his Public Address in Vancouver

27 May 2025, CTA

Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited Vancouver and addressed members of the Tibetan community from the Greater Vancouver region at the Tibetan Cultural Society of British Columbia on 25 May 2025.

In his address, the Sikyong stated, "Though struggle involves two different our approaches, we must stand united—setting aside all trivial disputes—to advance our cause. Both sides, Rangzen and Uma, must first fully understand and champion the crucial historical truth—that Tibet was an independent nation before its illegal occupation—using this undeniable fact to legitimise and strengthen our fight."

Highlighting recent developments, Sikyong added, "The U.S.-passed Resolve Tibet Act is an important step, as it recognises the longstanding Tibet-China dispute as an

unresolved international conflict and calls for the resumption of unconditional, peaceful dialogue between the two sides in accordance with international law." As this legislation also affirms the Tibetan people's right to selfdetermination and rejects China's historical claims over Tibet as inaccurate and based on distorted narratives, Sikyong underscored, "Such laws help highlight Tibet's historical status as an independent nation."

To bolster the movement, particularly among younger generations, the Sikyong noted that the 16th Kashag launched the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG) immediately after assuming office. This initiative, Sikyong said, aims to draw active engagement from capable and educated Tibetan youth and intensify advocacy efforts. Sikyong added that one of the goals of V-TAG is to cultivate a new generation of Tibetan leaders around the world to ensure the continued existence of the Tibetan freedom struggle.

However, Sikyong encouraged Tibetans to preserve their rich religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage amid rising threats to their very existence.

V-TAG Canada Hosts Dinner Reception in Honour of Sikyong Penpa Tsering

27 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>



Coordinator and the members of V-TAG Canada with Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Representative Dr Namgyal Choedup.

The Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG) Canada hosting a Dinner Reception in honour of Sikyong Penpa Tsering during his official visit to Canada on Friday, 16 May 2025, at the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Center.

Drawing over 300 attendees, the event set a for youth-led benchmark engagement within the Tibetan diaspora. It was the result of weeks of strategic planning and collaboration, and brought together a Tibetan community diverse array of members, elected officials, local government representatives, long-standing allies, and community partners. The evening stood as a powerful testament to the growing leadership of Tibetan youth and their pivotal role in shaping the future of their communities, both within Canada and globally.

The program featured briefings by V-TAG Canada, which offered an in-depth overview organisation's of mission, accomplishments to date, and vision for the future—reinforcing its steadfast commitment to youth empowerment and civic engagement. A special video compilation highlighted V-TAG representatives from across Canada, celebrating Tibetan youth leadership on a national scale and underscoring a sense of cross-regional unity. One of the evening's standout moments was a 30-minute youth panel discussion led by V-TAG team which thoughtfully members, explored themes such as identity, civic responsibility, and the role of youth in community building. The panel was widely praised for its authenticity and depth.

Cultural expression also played a central role in the evening, with performances that deeply resonated with the audience. These included a heartfelt musical piece by a V-TAG team member, a captivating act by former TIPA artists, and a vibrant presentation from the Toronto Nashoen youth group. Adding to the evening's significance, Alexa Gilmour, Member of Provincial Parliament, delivered a message recognising V-TAG and the contributions of Tibetan youth to Canada's multicultural fabric and democratic future.

The success of the event was made possible through the tireless dedication of over 50 volunteers and 15 core V-TAG team members, along with the generous support of more than 20 sponsors and numerous individual donors. Notably, the event achieved full financial sustainability, marking

a key milestone in ensuring the long-term impact of V-TAG's initiatives.

Reflecting on the event, V-TAG Canada Coordinator Tenzin Wangmo emphasised the building importance of a resilient, community-driven foundation for youth engagement. "Dinner With Sikyong was not only a celebration of who we are today, but a launching point for what we aim to become. It affirmed that our community believes in the power and potential of our youth." She further added, "VTAG Canada extends its heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the evening, recognising that this collective effort continues to inspire and empower a new generation of Tibetan leaders."

-Report filed by Tibet Advocacy Section, DIIR, CTA

Veteran Tibetan activist embarks on last leg of sixth solo-cycle rally for Tibet\

27 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon



Jamyang Tenzin, surrounded by group of supporters and well-wishers in Dharamshala before he embarks on his final leg of sixth solo-cycle rally on March 27, 2025 (Phayul photo)

Tibetan activist Jamyang Tenzin departed from Dharamshala on Tuesday for the final leg of his sixth solo cycling campaign, which will conclude in New Delhi. This month-long awareness campaign began on April 25, marking the 36th birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who has remained missing since his abduction by Chinese authorities in 1995.

Jamyang arrived in Dharamshala on Sunday, where he was warmly seen off by members of the Central and Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, along with local Tibetans, including well-known activist Tenzin Tsundue and singer Loten Namling.

In a statement to exile media, the 65-year-old activist shared his future plans. "After concluding this sixth rally in Delhi, I aim to begin my next journey across South India, which may last six to seven months, if my health permits. This will be dedicated to the upcoming 90th birthday celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama," he said.

Reflecting on his interactions during the journey, Jamyang highlighted the widespread lack of awareness about Tibet. "Only about 30% of the people I meet know about Tibet. The rest often confuse Tibetans with Nepalese or Chinese. I take the time to explain our identity, our history, and our struggle. While many people recognize His Holiness the Dalai Lama, they often know little about the Tibetan people and our life in exile. I tell them we are his followers and I also speak about the Indo-Tibet relationship and the ongoing repression inside Tibet," he added.

Jamyang's solo-cycle rallies have become a hallmark of his grassroots activism. His previous campaigns have taken him across India, raising awareness about the Tibetan issue. His first rally spanned 3,000 km from Dharamshala to Bodhgaya, followed by a second journey from Bylakuppe in Karnataka to Dekyiling in Dehradun, also covering 3,000 km. His third rally from Dekyiling to Delhi stretched 250 km, while the fourth took him from Khardung La in Ladakh to Dharamshala, covering 800 km. The fifth rally began in Tawang at Urgenling, the birthplace of the 6th Dalai Lama, and ended in Delhi, covering 2,500 km.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Calls for Unity and Shared Responsibility Among Tibetans in Calgary

26 May 2025, CTA

On 24 May 2025, as part of his ongoing official visit, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) visited Calgary, Canada, where he was warmly welcomed by members of the Tibetan community and representatives of the Tibetan Association of Alberta (TAA).

In the afternoon, Sikyong convened a separate session with Tibetan youth. Afterwards, he visited the local Tibetan Chorten (Stupa) and offered prayers. Later in the evening, the main public program was held at the Slovakia Club. The event began with a cultural performance of *Tashi Shölpa*, followed by the singing of Tibetan and Canadian national anthems and a group song presentation by students of Gangchen Rigney School.

The President of the TAA delivered the opening remarks and presented certificates of appreciation to former executive members. This was followed by introductory remarks from Dr Namgyal Choedup, Representative of the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC, who outlined the objectives of Sikyong's visit.

In his keynote address, Sikyong Penpa Tsering spoke on the current political situation concerning Tibet, the CTA's ongoing engagements with international stakeholders, and the need for unity within the Tibetan diaspora. Emphasising the importance of youth empowerment and active community participation, he urged Tibetans in Canada to remain committed to preserving their cultural identity and supporting the Tibetan cause.

Sikyong noted that Tibetans have distinguished themselves from other refugee communities through their resilience and collective spirit. Sikyong remarked that the Tibetan cause has remained visible on the international stage largely due to the unwavering commitment of His Holiness the

14th Dalai Lama and the enduring courage of Tibetans inside Tibet.

He reaffirmed the Kashag's firm commitment to resolve the Sino-Tibetan conflict through dialogue based on the Middle Way Approach, a policy framework envisioned by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and endorsed by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

Sikyong further underlined the teachings and guidance of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, particularly highlighting His Holiness's Four Principal Commitments—promotion of human values, promotion of religious harmony, preservation of Tibetan culture and environment, and revival of ancient Indian knowledge. He encouraged the Tibetan community to internalise these values in their personal and collective lives.

Speaking on the forthcoming celebration of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, Sikyong stressed the significance of this historic milestone for Tibetans. He noted that the celebration is not only a moment of gratitude but also an opportunity to reflect on His Holiness's lifetime of commitment to nonviolence, compassion, and global ethics.

Sikyong also highlighted His Holiness's advocacy for Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning, an educational framework rooted in compassion, emotional intelligence, and ethical engagement. He emphasised that His Holiness has long envisioned education as a transformative tool for creating a more peaceful and ethical world, championed since the late 1990s. "It is through such education that we nurture compassionate global citizens," said Sikyong.

Reflecting on the literary works of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, he encouraged the community, especially the youth, to read "My Land and My People", His Holiness's first autobiography published in 1962, which offers profound account of Tibet's history, its struggle and the deep spiritual connection Tibetans share with their homeland.

Sikyong also referred to His Holiness's recent book, "The Voice of the Voiceless", noting how it continues to echo the hopes of the

Tibetan people and His Holiness's lifelong dedication to truth and justice. He reiterated the importance of understanding Tibetan history, culture, and the political journey that continues to shape the identity and resilience of Tibetans in exile.

During his address to the Tibetan community in Canada, Sikyong Penpa Tsering emphasised the importance of the Green Book, issued by the Department of Finance of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). He explained that the Green Book not only affirms an individual's Tibetan identity in exile but also symbolises the collective recognition of the CTA as the sole legitimate representative of the Tibetan people.

Highlighting its significance, Sikyong noted that the Green Book allows Tibetans to actively participate in the Tibetan freedom movement through annual voluntary contributions. These contributions, he said, play a vital role in generating revenue to support the CTA's ongoing administrative and community welfare initiatives, as laid out in its financial regulations.

The visit wrapped up with a community gathering, during which members of the Tibetan diaspora expressed their appreciation, followed by a formal vote of thanks from the Tibetan Association of Alberta.

Coordinator Thupten Tsering Visits Metz Tibetan Community to Collect Annual Tibetan Voluntary Contributions

26 May 2025, CTA

On 24 May 2025, Thupten Tsering, Coordinator of the Bureau du Tibet in Paris, visited the Tibetan community in Metz to collect this year's voluntary contributions following a formal invitation from the local residents.



During the visit, 57 Tibetans offered their annual contributions, and 23 families made additional donations toward the 90th birthday celebration fund for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan community in Metz comprises about 130 individuals and runs a weekend Tibetan language school with 20 students. Tibetan festivals are observed by the community throughout the year.

- Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Paris

Swiss Representative Thinlay Chukki Leads Advocacy Meetings in Frankfurt to Strengthen Support for Tibet

From 20 to 21 May 2025, Representative

26 May 2025, CTA

and human dignity.

Thinlay Chukki of the Tibet Bureau in Geneva led a delegation to Frankfurt for a series of meetings aimed at reinforcing international support for the Tibetan cause. She was accompanied by Kelsang Gyaltsen, former Special Envoy and Advisor to the Permanent Strategy Committee, and Phuntsok Tobgyal, UN Advocacy Officer from the Office of Tibet in Geneva. During the visit, the delegation met with Frank Auth, President of Friends for Friends in Frankfurt, and Dieter Beine, Chief Protocol Officer of the state of Hessen. The discussions focused strengthening long-term on partnerships and enhancing cooperation in support of Tibet's struggle for political rights

Representative Chukki provided updates on the current human rights situation inside Tibet and briefed attendees on preparations for the upcoming global celebrations marking the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. She emphasised the need for continued international engagement to spotlight the peaceful struggle of the Tibetan people under Chinese rule.

The delegation also held talks with former German politician and legal expert Roland Koch. The discussions explored the broader geopolitical climate, challenges inside Tibet, and ways Germany could expand its support for Tibetan aspirations. Koch praised the resilience of the Tibetan people and offered his perspectives on advancing the cause in alignment with evolving global realities.

In his remarks, Representative Kelsang Gyaltsen noted that although global attention on Tibet may be decreasing and His Holiness the Dalai Lama is growing older, the Tibetan freedom struggle remains strong, especially among the younger generation. He stated that the Tibetan cause is not weakening but moving forward. A new generation of educated and aware Tibetans is stepping up to take responsibility. They are deeply committed to carrying on the struggle through peaceful means and dialogue.

He also highlighted the increasing significance of Europe in the international advocacy landscape and urged Germany, as a long-standing proponent of democracy and human rights, to take a leading role in supporting Tibet during this critical period.

The delegation concluded their visit with a stop at Tibet House Germany, where they engaged in discussions on promoting Tibetan culture, religion, and festivals to the German public. Representative Chukki also toured photo exhibitions featuring His Holiness the Dalai Lama, underlining the importance of cultural outreach in building awareness and solidarity for the Tibetan cause.

- Report filed by Office of Tibet, Geneva

Parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten and Tenzin Jigdal Successfully Complete Official Visit to Darjeeling in West Bengal

25 May 2025, CTA

Parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten and Tenzin Jigdal successfully completed their official visitation program to the Darjeeling Tibetan settlement in West Bengal on 23 May 2025.

After completing programs in Kurseong and Sonada Tashiling settlement, the two MPs visited the Darjeeling's Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement and the settlement office construction project on the morning of 23 May. They also paid respects at the Phuntsok Pema Choekorling monastery.

Subsequently, they visited the Darjeeling Tibetan Refugee Self Centre, where its director Tseten, guided them through an introduction to the centre and showed them the carpet weaving section and the sales shop. Tibetan Refugee Self-Centre was The established on 2 October 1959, by Lhacham Dekyi Dolkar out of great compassion for the Tibetan people. She served as director for a full 27 years until her passing away on 22 September bringing 1989, immense immediate and long-term benefits to Tibetan refugees.

In the afternoon, the two MPs visited Sambhota Tibetan School, where principal around Kalsang showed them administrative building, workshop, student dormitories, and other facilities. Then, in the school assembly hall, they met with local Tibetan community members and senior students. Settlement Officer Dorjee Rigzin introduced the two visiting parliamentarians and gave a welcome speech, along with a work report from the settlement office. The two MPs then spoke about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's great deeds, the work of the Central Tibetan Administration. the international situation regarding Tibet's struggle and situation inside China, and the current critical situation in Tibet. They

provided detailed responses to questions and concerns raised by the community.

Afterwards, they visited the Manjushree Centre of Tibetan Culture, where they were welcomed by the director and staff. They toured an exhibition related to Tibet's historical independence, coming into exile, the biography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the evolution of Tibetan democracy, and the unique religious and cultural heritage of the three traditional provinces of Tibet. Following the tour, they held a meeting with the centre's staff, during which the two parliamentary members provided guidance on the importance of Tibetan culture, its continuous preservation, and the need for efficient management of the organisation's work.

Upon the successful completion of official visit to the Darjeeling in West Bengal, local organisations jointly hosted a farewell reception for the two parliamentarians.

-Report filed by the Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Scottish Parliament opposes Chinese interference in Dalai Lama's reincarnation

24 May 2025, The Tribune

The Scottish Government has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting religious freedom and human rights for the Tibetan people, especially concerning the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama, as reported by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

In a session of the Scottish Parliament held on May 22, MSP Ross Greer raised inquiries about the Scottish government's preparations to celebrate the upcoming 90th birthday of the 14th Dalai Lama alongside the Buddhist community in Scotland and highlighted concerns over potential Chinese interference in the reincarnation process, as noted by the CTA.

In reply, the Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart, expressed the Scottish Government's gratitude for the contributions made by various faith and belief communities in Scotland, including Buddhists.

She conveyed warm wishes to Dalai Lama and the Buddhist community, acknowledging their vital role in promoting peace, compassion, and cultural diversity in the country, as emphasised in the CTA report.

MSP Ross Greer also reminded everyone of the Chinese government's abduction of the six-year-old Panchen Lama three decades ago and the subsequent replacement with another boy.

Parliamentarians Lopon Thupten Gyaltsen and Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar Visit Yanglesho in Nepal

23 May 2025, CTA



Parliamentarians Lopon Thupten Gyaltsen and Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar Visit Yanglesho in Nepal.

As per the program of the Tibetan Parliamentin-Exile, a delegation consisting of parliamentarians Lopon Thupten Gyaltsen and Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar continued their periodic visit to Nepal. After completing their visits to Sharkhum Delekling and Rasuwa Gegayling, the MPs accompanied by a representative of the Office of Tibet and Tibetan Settlement Officer Tashi Dorjee of Gyal-Phag, visited Yanglesho on 11 May.

They were received by coordinator Butruk Nyima and staff from Drubtob Monastery. In the evening, they visited and inspected about ten non-sectarian monasteries in Lesho, gave talks, and provided explanations and answers to questions and doubts that were raised.

In the afternoon, they visited Rongshar Chuwar Ganden Drophenling to view the display of sacred items for the memorial service of the Jetsun Milarepa and toured the site. After the two parliamentarians completed their visit to Sharkhum Delekling and Rasuwa Gegayling settlements, on 15, 16, and 17 May, they toured monasteries and schools within the jurisdiction of Choejor TSO, gave talks, and listened carefully to various matters that were presented.

Similarly, they held meetings with representatives from both government and non-government organisations, gave talks, and provided explanations and answers to their questions and doubts. On 18 May, after all the programs were successfully completed, the two parliamentarians returned to their respective places.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Tibetan panel denounce China's Seventeen-Point Agreement on 74th anniversary

23 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon



(L-R) Panel moderator Tashi Lhamo and panellists Dr Tsewang Topla, Tenzin Lekshay, Tenzin Tsundue, and Dr Lobsang Yangtso during the panel discussion on May 23, 2025 (Phayul photo)

On the 74th anniversary of the controversial Seventeen-Point Agreement, a panel discussion was held in Dharamshala to revisit the historical and political implications of the document that marked a turning point in Tibet's modern history.

Organized by the Regional *Tibetan Youth Congress*, Dharamshala, the discussion brought together a panel of experts including Dr. Tsewang Topla, senior lecturer at Sarah College, Tenzin Lekshay, spokesperson for the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), exile activist Tenzin Tsundue, and Dr. Lobsang Yangtso, researcher at the International Tibet Network.

Dr. Tsewang Topla provided a historical overview of the Seventeen-Point Agreement, outlining its context and the events leading up to its signing. Central Tibetan Administration spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay emphasized that this agreement remains the sole document China has consistently used to justify its claim over Tibet.

Exile activist Tenzin Tsundue addressed the politicisation of the agreement, noting that while China initially portrayed it as a "peaceful liberation" that promised religious freedom, language rights, and environmental protection, these commitments have been repeatedly violated by the People's Republic of China. Dr. Lobsang Yangtso drew parallels agreement and between the military occupation, citing the deployment of nearly 500,000 Chinese troops in Tibet and questioning the need for such a massive military presence if the agreement was indeed peaceful.

The panel discussion as a whole focused on the importance of consistently challenging China's narrative surrounding the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Speakers emphasized the need to expose the ongoing violations of the agreement's original promises, particularly the assurances of genuine autonomy, religious freedom, and the preservation of Tibetan language, culture, and identity.

Signed under duress on May 23, 1951, the Seventeen-Point Agreement officially titled the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was imposed on Tibetan representatives by the People's Republic of China. The agreement is frequently cited by

the Chinese government as the legal basis for its claim over Tibet, despite long-standing rejection by the Tibetan government-in-exile and the broader exile community, who argue that it lacks legal validity due to coercion.

The exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, formally repudiated the Seventeen-Point Agreement in 1959 after fleeing to India, during a statement made in Tezpur. In his 1991 autobiography *Freedom in Exile*, he wrote, "The so-called Seventeen-Point Agreement was imposed on us by threats of violence and was never valid under international law." From a legal standpoint, any agreement signed under coercion or threat of force is considered invalid under international law, as outlined in Article 52 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

A New Book on Tibetan Women Writers in Exile

22 May 2025, <u>Bitter Winter</u>, Choephel Chodron

China compelled them to leave their country. Exiled, they still speak with a powerful voice, Kunsang Dolma said.



Kunsang Dolma introducing her book in Dharamshala. From Instagram.

Kunsang Dolma's latest book, "Exile Women and Literature," offers a crucial look at the overlooked literary voices of Tibetan women in exile. Introduced at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) in Dharamshala, this publication is supported by the Washington-based advocacy organization International Campaign for Tibet (ICT). Dolma's objective is to gather and assess the

literary contributions of Tibetan women in exile by conducting data collection and comparative analysis.

This book stems from Dolma's thorough research that commenced in 2022. She initiated this project to document the literary contributions of Tibetan women in exile and to highlight their circumstances. Dolma's work chronicles nearly thirty Tibetan women who escaped Tibet and have written in both English and Tibetan during their time in exile. Furthermore, she discovered approximately twenty Tibetan women who produced literary that remain unpublished. features around twenty collection also journals, newspapers, periodicals, and articles authored by Tibetan women, showcasing a vibrant literary tradition in exile.

Dolma observes that more Tibetan women writers choose to write in English rather than in Tibetan. This observation illuminates the intricate relationship between language and identity among Tibetan women living in exile. The book explores the motivations behind Dolma's endeavors. She reveals that her inspiration emerged after she was invited to speak at the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education (DLIHE) about "The Role of Tibetan Women in Contemporary Society." Drawing from nearly a decade of writing and research experience since her exile, Dolma contemplated the impact of Tibetan women writers in the diaspora. This contemplation made her realize that there was no existing compilation of their literary contributions, prompting her to pursue this writing project.



Tsering Wangmo Dhompa, perhaps the most famous literary voice of the Tibetan diaspora. <u>Credits</u>.

The work "Exile Women and Literature" emphasizes the achievements of five notable Tibetan women authors: Tsering Wangmo Dhompa, Tsering Yangzom Lama, Tenzin Dickey (also spelled Tenzin Dickie), Monsal Pekar, and Nyima Tso. Dolma elaborates on each writer, offering an in-depth look at their contributions and importance. For example, Tsering Wangmo Dhompa, who was born in India, writes poignantly about the feelings associated with being stateless, particularly after losing her beloved mother at the age of twenty-three. Her writings delve into the essence of living without a homeland and how to transform that experience into literary form.

Tsering Yangzom Lama distinguishes herself through her distinctive method of character development in contemporary fiction. Her viewpoint provides a novel contrast to literature produced within Tibet.



Tenzin Dickey (Dickie). From X.

Tenzin Dickey (Dickie) serves as a powerful example by uniting voices from different backgrounds, gathering writers in exile from Tibet and around the world into a cohesive anthology. Her efforts illustrate how literature can foster solidarity and collaboration, even among stateless communities.

"Exile Women and Literature" is an innovative work highlighting the significant but frequently neglected contributions of Tibetan women writers living in exile. Kunsang Dolma's thorough research and insightful analysis render this book a must-read for those interested in the Chinese suppression of Tibetan culture, Tibetan literature, women's studies, and the broader themes of exile and identity.

28th Shoton Festival Concludes with a Keynote Address from Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche

21 May 2025, CTA



28th Shoton Festival Concludes with a Keynote Address from Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche

After 13 days of vibrant Tibetan opera performances from 14 different troupes from various Tibetan diaspora communities, the 28th Shoton Festival concluded yesterday on 20 May 2025 with an insightful keynote speech from closing ceremony's chief guest Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche.

Officiating Sikyong Dolma Gyari, Kalon (Minister) of the Department of Security, attended the event as its special guest, Tibetan Chief alongside Justice Commissioner Yeshi Wangmo, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Deputy Speaker Tsering Teykhang, Justice Dolma Commissioner Dawa Phunkyi, Justice Commissioner Phagpa Tsering, Election Commissioner Lobsang Yeshi, Public Service Commissioner Karma Yeshi, and Auditor General Tashi Topgyal. Members of the Tibetan Standing Committee of the Parliament in Exile and secretaries of the various departments under the Central Administration were Tibetan attendance. Also in attendance were Nechung Kuten Rinpoche and Lhagyal Choktrul Rinpoche.

The final day of the festival featured a performance of the Tibetan opera *Drowa Sangmo* by the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts. This was followed by the

ofsouvenirs from presentation the of Religion and Culture, Department conferred by the Officiating Sikyong to all participating troupes. Subsequently, Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche graciously awarded certificates and souvenirs on behalf of the Department of Religion and Culture and the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts to troupes who partook in the festival more than 20 years.

Before concluding the ceremony, Chief Guest Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche expressed deep appreciation to both the participants organisers and commemorating the 28th Shoton Festival, held in celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday. "From a spiritual standpoint, it is a sacred duty to honour our guide for his wisdom and compassion. From a temporal perspective, it is equally important to recognise His Holiness' tireless efforts in advancing the wellbeing and continuity of our traditions." Rinpoche also praised the festival's traditional performances as vital to the preservation and celebration of Tibet's rich cultural heritage.

Reflecting on the challenges faced by the Tibetan people, Rinpoche urged perseverance. "At a time when our cultural heritage is increasingly at risk, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to all the artists and performers who continue to uphold and transmit our traditions. His Holiness, in his recent audience with festival participants, reminded us not to lose heart, but to remain steadfast in our dedication and struggle."

Rinpoche went on to reflect on the unique legacy of Tibetan civilisation—from its early origins to its flourishing under the great emperors. He underscored the depth and richness of Tibet's linguistic, religious, and artistic traditions of Tibetan opera.

"Every civilisation experiences both ascent and decline—neither is permanent. Our current challenges too shall pass. What matters is that we continue to carry the torch of our heritage with courage and responsibility."

"We have safeguarded our traditions through decades of adversity. It is now the responsibility of the younger generations to take up this mantle, ensuring that our cultural and spiritual heritage not only survives, but thrives for generations to come," Rinpoche concluded.

Officiating Sikyong Dolma Gyari Welcomes Indian Delegation from RSS and Senior Hindu Priests to Dharamshala

21 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>



Officiating Sikyong Dolma Gyari Welcomes Indian Delegation from RSS and Senior Hindu Priests to Dharamshala

This morning, 21 May 2025, a distinguished delegation from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and senior Hindu spiritual leaders had the honour of an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala. The meeting reflected the growing spiritual and cultural dialogue between the Tibetan and Indian religious traditions.

Following their audience, the delegation visited The Tibet Museum, where they explored the rich history and enduring resilience of the Tibetan people.

Later, the delegation was warmly received at the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) by the Officiating Sikyong Dolma Gyari, accompanied by Additional Secretary Kunga Gyaltsen from the Department of Religion and Culture. The delegation included prominent Hindu leaders such as Swami Sachhidananda Saraswati, a respected young sannyasi known for his teachings on Vedanta, meditation, and social service. He is a disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati and teaches at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam and Arsha Vidya Kendra in Bangalore. Swami ji is also the head of Sri Vasavi Peetam.

Also present was Sri Jayendra Puri Swami ji, the spiritual head of Sri Kailash Ashrama Mahasamsthana Trust and its affiliated institutions. Revered for his deep scriptural knowledge and spiritual wisdom, Mahaswami ji is recognised for his global outreach, engaging with devotees and seekers in multiple languages.

This visit marks an important step in fostering interfaith understanding and strengthening the spiritual ties between the Indian and Tibetan communities.

-Report filed by Department of Security, CTA

Parliamentarians Tenpa Yarphel and Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong Conclude Visit to Manang Nyeshang in Nepal

21 May 2025, CTA

As per the program of the Tibetan Parliamentin-Exile, parliament members Tenpa Yarphel Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong, successfully completing their programs in the Pokhara region of Nepal on 14 May 2025, departed for Manang or Nyeshang region in Nepal along with Tashiling Settlement Officer Tenzin Palden. They arrived in the Manang region in the afternoon of 15 May. On the morning of 16 May, the two parliamentarians visited Jetsun Milarepa's meditation cave, the sacred spring, and the local monastery for prayers and tours. Afterwards, they visited Lhophelling Boarding School, where they were warmly welcomed by the school headmaster, staff, students, and local dignitaries, including the Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement President and members, as well as community members who presented ceremonial scarves and traditional offerings. They toured the

classrooms, library, playground, and the new community hall construction project site.

In the afternoon, chaired by the Tibetan settlement officer, a public meeting was convened with the BRDL president and coordinator, regional school members, headmaster. teachers. and other local dignitaries in attendance. During this meeting, both parliamentarians addressed the local community, conducted a O&A session to learn about public opinions and grievances, provided necessary clarifications. and Afterwards, the settlement officer made clarifications to the public, and the school headmaster delivered a thank-you speech, meeting. concluding the public Lhopheling Boarding School students, dressed traditional Tibetan attire, in various Tibetan dances. performed successfully concluding all programs in the Manang region.

On 19 May, they met with the Secretary General of the Snow Lion Foundation of Nepal, Tsering Topgyal, and the Secretary of the Tibet Office in Nepal, Karma Gyaltsen, in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. They had extensive discussions on finding solutions to various grievances raised by people from Pokhara settlements, LoTserog Namgyaling, and Dothang Norzinling, thus successfully completing their official regional visit to Nepal.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

World Uyghur Congress joins Berlin protest marking 30 years since Panchen Lama's disappearance

20 May 2025, ANI

The <u>World Uyghur Congress</u> (<u>WUC</u>) has reaffirmed its unwavering support for the Tibetan cause, joining a protest held last Saturday outside the Chinese Embassy in Berlin.

The demonstration, organised by the Berlinbased non-profit Tibet Initiative Deutschland, marked the 30th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama --

one of the most significant spiritual figures in Tibetan Buddhism

In a post shared on social media platform X, World Uyghur Congress stated, "Last Saturday, the WUC Berlin Office Director Gheyyur Qurban joined a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Berlin organised by Tibet Initiative Deutschland. Mr. Qurban attended and underscored WUC's unwavering and long-standing support for the Tibetan cause. We stand in full solidarity with the Tibetan people and their right to practice their religion freely and without fear."

It further stated, "We strongly condemn the Chinese government for abducting the Panchen Lama and for its ongoing campaign of repression against Tibetan religious and cultural identity. Religious freedom is a fundamental right. Tibet must not be forgotten"

The 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was recognised by the 14th Dalai Lama in 1995 at the age of six. Just days later, he was taken into custody by Chinese authorities and has not been seen since. His prolonged disappearance continues to be one of the most prominent cases of religious persecution under Chinese rule.

European Parliament Presses High Representative Kaja Kallas on the Fate of the 11th Panchen Lama

19 May 2025, **CTA**

To mark the 30th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of Gedun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, a group of seven Members of European Parliament from four political groups expressing deep concerns have tabled urgent questions to the EU High Representative Kaja Kallas. The MEPs are seeking clarity on his current whereabouts and pressing the EU to take a more assertive stance in advocating for his release.

In a symbolic gesture on 25 April 2025, MEPs marked the 36th birthday of Gedun Choekyi Nyima by displaying placards reading: "The 11th Panchen Lama turns 36 on 25 April 2025. But where is he? China is answerable to

the world." The act underscored the ongoing international demand for transparency and justice regarding his disappearance.

As the EU continues to engage with China on human rights issues, MEPs are calling for a more robust and coordinated approach to ensure the Panchen Lama's case remains a priority in diplomatic discussions.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Brussels

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetans at TCCC Tibetan Language and Culture School

19 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

On 18 May 2025, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited the Tibetan Language and Culture School of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre (TCCC) to address the students there. The event began with a briefing of the school's annual report by its Principal, who also detailed upcoming programmes.

In his keynote speech, Sikyong remarked, "This school owes its success in large part to the unwavering support of the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario. Despite the numerous responsibilities the Association shoulders, it has generously undertaken this initiative on a voluntary basis, without financial compensation. Their dedication has been instrumental in bringing the school to its current standing. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the executive committee, as well as the broader membership of the Association, for their commendable efforts."

Sikyong also expressed his gratitude to the parents who recognise the importance of preserving the Tibetan language and Buddhist values, and who entrust the school with the education of their children. He also acknowledged the principal and faculty members for their devoted guidance and care in nurturing the students.

Following this, Sikyong addressed the current situation in Tibet, highlighting a concerning issue of Tibetan children speaking Chinese at home and losing familiarity with the Tibetan language. He emphasised that, as Tibetans living in free countries, it is our collective responsibility to preserve and promote our

language and script. In this regard, Sikyong mentioned that Tibetan is one of the world's 15 oldest dialects with a script, according to experts. He also highlighted the creation of a 223-volume extensive Tibetan dictionary, an initiative spearheaded by the Monlam Tibetan Information Technology Research Center. Sikyong stressed that it is not enough to merely acknowledge the importance of the Tibetan language; we must actively use it in our daily lives. He particularly emphasised that, in internal interactions, Tibetans must communicate in Tibetan to ensure the language's preservation.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Makes Maiden Official Visit to Belleville-Trenton Tibetan Community

19 May 2025, CTA

Sikyong Penpa Tsering made his maiden official visit to the Bay of Quinte region on 17 May 2025 to meet with the Belleville-Trenton Tibetan Community, as the democratically elected political leader of the Tibetan community in exile.

This visit marked his first official engagement both as Sikyong and, previously, as the Representative of the Office of Tibet in Washington. During the visit, Sikyong extended his warm greetings to the community members and provided an update on the rapidly changing demographics of the Tibetan exile community, as well as the diverse geographical distribution of Tibetans in the diaspora. "Our community has flourished and spread across the farthest corners of the globe, thanks to the astute leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the unwavering contributions of our elders," said Sikyong. He then offered a brief overview of the community's establishment in the 1970s, its gradual growth, and how it laid a solid foundation for the fledgling Tibetan community in Canada.

Given that the Belleville-Trenton Tibetan Community is one of the oldest Tibetan communities in the West, Sikyong underscored, "Despite the ongoing challenges that increasingly draw us toward assimilation into the cultural fabric of our host nations, we must remain steadfast in preserving our unique identity, as it is the very cornerstone of our struggle."

Sikyong further addressed concerns about the alarming rise in the number of Tibetan children who now primarily speak Chinese due to the systematic institutionalisation of schools following ethnic assimilation policies. "Tibetans from various regions within Tibet often adopt Chinese as a common language to communicate, as it is difficult to understand one another in different dialects. With growing concerns regarding the sustainability of the Tibetan language, it is crucial for the younger generation to recognise their inherited responsibility to safeguard our language," he stated. Sikyong encouraged the youth in attendance to participate in the annual summer camps held in Dharamshala, which aim to educate Tibetans from the West and Australasia on Tibetan language and culture. He also urged them to engage in the Tibetan Youth Forums to become actively involved in the broader Tibetan movement.

In his address, Sikyong also touched upon the geopolitical and strategic significance of the Tibetan Plateau and the historical status of Tibet as an independent nation. Sikyong elaborated on how the current Kashag strategises its policies, particularly the Middle Way Approach, to gain leverage to it in the global stage.

German MP Michael Brand Urges Chinese Government to Release the 11th Panchen Lama

19 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

Marking 30 years since the disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, German MP Michael Brand, Chairman of the Tibet Parliamentary Group in the Bundestag, has issued a statement urging the Chinese government to release the 11th Panchen Lama and provide information about his well-being.



 ${\bf Member\ German\ Parliament}$ Chairman of the Tibet Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag

Statement by Michael Brand, Member of German Parliament and Chairman of the Tibet Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, about the necessity to free the 11th Panchen Lama and to disclose information about his where

Panchen Lama and to disclose information about his whereabouts and his well-bening:
The violent kidnapping of a 6-year-old by the communist regime in Beijing remains a
crime. This crime by the communist leadership and the state of the People's Republic of
China has been a crime out of fear. The communist regime is afraid of the power of
Tibetan Buddhism as a force for the good in this world and the region. The Communist
regime remains fearful not only of his own people but especially of powerful ideas like a
peaceful Tibetan culture and religion. This crime has become a testament to the brutality
and the ruthlessness of small people who are even afraid of the power of a peace-loving
religion and its centuries-long rules to select their spiritual leader.

Nothing can be considered credible what the communist regime is trying to communicate to Tibet and to the world about the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

The world, and even more so, Tibet and its people have a right to get to the truth about the abduction of the Panchen Lama by the communist regime. The whereabouts and the well-being of this now 36-year-old person is not the property of the Chinese state but information, that has to be shared with Tibet and the world.

By trying to censor, manipulate, and control the narrative in this high-profile state crime the perpetrator, the communist regime, only shows that it is not in any way interested it heeding its obligations originating from international agreements and UN conventions signed by the People's Republic of China.

All civilized governments in the world are requested to condemn this barbaric act of child abduction and continue to pressure Beijing in order to get the Panchen Lama released and freed as soon as possible. The CCP will fail in its attempt to undermine the faith and the religious tradition of a peaceful Tibetan Buddhism by introducing force, brutality, and barbarism in Beijing's dealings with one of the oldest and most respected cultures on this planet.

MP Brand condemned the abduction of the then-six-year-old boy in 1995 by Chinese authorities, calling it not only a crime against a child but also a symbol of the regime's deep fear of Tibetan Buddhism. He described the act as "a crime out of fear," emphasising that the Chinese Communist Party is afraid of peaceful ideas like Tibetan culture and religion, which continue to inspire people despite decades of repression.

He noted that the government in Beijing has tried to erase the traditional Tibetan religious process by imposing its own hand-picked replacement for the Panchen Lama—an act widely rejected by Tibetans. According to MP Brand, this is a deliberate attempt to control the future of Tibetan Buddhism and its leadership.

"Nothing can be considered credible," he said, "about what the communist regime is trying to communicate to Tibet and to the world about the 11th Panchen Lama."

MP Brand stressed that the fate of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima—now 36 years old—is not a matter of state secrecy but a matter of justice. He called on China to disclose his whereabouts and condition, adding that the continued censorship and manipulation of this

case only underscore Beijing's disregard for its international human rights obligations.

He concluded with a call to the international community to remain united in condemning this act and to intensify pressure on China for the Panchen Lama's release. Brand affirmed his belief that the Chinese government will ultimately fail in its attempt to suppress the faith and cultural identity of the Tibetan people through "force, brutality, and barbarism."

US Secretary of State Rubio urges release of 11th Panchen Lama after 30 yrs

19 May 2025, Business Standard

On May 17, 1995, just three days after the Dalai Lama recognised him, the six-year-old Panchen Lama and his family were abducted by the Chinese Communist Party

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday demanded the immediate release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, who was abducted by Chinese authorities 30 years ago at the age of six.

"Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was only six years old when Chinese authorities abducted him 30 years ago. The Panchen Lama should be released immediately," Rubio stated in a post on X, highlighting the long-standing issue of the Panchen Lama's enforced disappearance. On May 17, 1995, just three days after the Dalai Lama recognised him, the six-year-old Panchen Lama and his family were abducted the Chinese Communist bv Party. Subsequently, Beijing appointed another child as the Panchen Lama in a clear and illegitimate attempt to exert its control over Tibetan Buddhism.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) renewed calls for transparency and accountability over the fate of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama.

In a statement posted on its official X account, the CTA wrote, "On this day, May 14, 1995, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama officially

recognised six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet. Merely three days later, on May 17, 11th Panchen Lama and his parents were taken into custody by Chinese authorities and vanished from public view. The Chinese government later confirmed they were being held in an undisclosed location, citing concerns for their safety. Yet, for the past 30 years, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's whereabouts and condition have remained unknown, making him one of the world's longest-standing cases of enforced disappearance."

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, born on April 25, 1989, in Lhari County, Tibet, was recognised by the 14th Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama.

The tension between Tibet and China arises from the political conflicts related to Tibet and its governance by China. Historically, Tibet operated as a sovereign state but was integrated into China in 1951 through military force.

Under the leadership of the Dalai Lama, Tibetans have been advocating for increased autonomy and the protection of their cultural, religious, and political rights. In contrast, the Chinese government views Tibet as an integral part of its territory. This contention has resulted in protests, cultural suppression, and ongoing debates about human rights and self-administration.

Zurich Marks 30th Anniversary of Panchen Lama's Enforced Disappearance with Campaign and Global Appeal

19 May 2025, CTA

Over 200 Tibetans and human rights supporters gathered in Zurich, Switzerland, on Saturday to mark the 30th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, His Serenity Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshi Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo, with a campaign and global appeal. The event took place on 17 May 2025.

The event underscored the ongoing human rights violations in Tibet and growing

international concern about one of the world's most serious cases of religious persecution, while also calling for increased international action.

For the past three decades, despite appeals from the United Nations, government and human rights organisations, China has failed to provide credible information about Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's status or whereabouts. The event was jointly organised by the Tibetan Youth Association and the Swiss Tibetan Women's Association.

The program began with the organising committee welcoming participants to the peaceful demonstration, followed by singing the Tibetan national anthem and observing a minute of silence in solidarity with those who have sacrificed their lives for Tibet and their bereaved families.

Pasang Dolma Youdutsang, Co-President of the Tibetan Women's Association, read a powerful petition calling for global justice and truth, urging China to provide transparent information regarding the situation of the Panchen Rinpoche. This petition, highlighting Tibetan concerns, was formally submitted to the Chinese Embassy through security personnel.

Following this, Karma Gahler, Co-President of Tibetan Youth Association in Europe, emphasised that the continued disappearance of the Panchen Rinpoche symbolises the ongoing religious and cultural repression in Tibet. He also pointed out that the international demand for his release on this significant anniversary serves as a testament that the Panchen Rinpoche has not been forgotten.

Following these speeches, a peaceful protest march proceeded from Zurich city to the Chinese Embassy. Protesters carried Tibetan flags and images with slogans such as "Where is the Panchen Rinpoche?" and "Free Tibet," chanting in Tibetan, German, and English. Upon arriving at the Chinese Embassy, a second round of speeches commenced,

second round of speeches commenced, offering in-depth insights into Tibet's political struggle, the situation of the Panchen Rinpoche, and the preservation of Tibetan culture and religion.

Geshe Tenzin Jangchub, the abbot of Rikon Monastery, delivered a poignant address on the Panchen Rinpoche's critical responsibilities. He explained to the gathered protesters the vital role the Panchen Lama plays in safeguarding Tibetan Buddhism, highlighting how the legacy of the 10th Panchen Lama embodies courage, truth, and the unwavering commitment to cultural preservation.

Thinlay Chukki, the Swiss Representative of the Tibetan government-in-exile, noted: "Today marks 30 years since the Panchen Rinpoche's enforced disappearance. For thirty years, the world has been unable to determine his whereabouts and well-being. During these 30 years, he has been denied the opportunity to freely study and practice Tibetan Buddhism."

She pointed out that despite multiple UN Special Rapporteurs issuing statements about the Panchen Rinpoche, China claims he is living a normal life and does not wish to be disturbed. "If true, why do Chinese authorities prevent international organisations from verifying his status and condition?" she asked. She also expressed gratitude for the continued support from international figures, including German MP Michael Brand parliamentarians from Switzerland and Italy, who have called for his release and restoration of his rights.

Kalsang Namgyal, Vice President of the Tibetan Community in Switzerland, urged young Tibetans to take greater responsibility. Norden Pema, President of the Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association, read a statement from the Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet marking the 30th anniversary of the Panchen Rinpoche's disappearance, followed by a prayer.

The Tibetan Youth Association called on international leaders to take action and demand the release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. The event concluded with closing remarks from the organisers thanking everyone for the peaceful march.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Geneva

EU Spokesperson Anour El Anouni Expresses Concern Over 11th Panchen Lama for the First Time

18 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

Anouar El Anouni

@AnouarEUspox

Porte-Parole de l'UE pour les Affaires étrangères | EU Spokesman for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy | Team @kajakallas @eu eeas @EU Commission

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Posts

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Videos

Photos



Anouar El Anouni ■ @AnouarE... · 4h Ø · · · · 30 years ago, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, was taken into custody by the Chinese authorities.

Since then, his whereabouts have remained unknown.

We are concerned about his wellbeing.

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For the first time, Anouar El Anouni, Spokesperson for the European Union publicly expresses concern regarding the wellbeing of the 11th Panchen Lama.

The tweet emphasises the EU's position that religious communities must be allowed to conduct their fundamental affairs without interference from any government.

The EU's remarks highlight growing international scrutiny over religious freedom and persecution of Tibetan Buddhists. The reference to the Panchen Lama, who was abducted by the Chinese authorities at the age of six in 1995 and has not been seen in public since — marks a notable development in the EU's stance on religious rights in the region.

This unprecedented acknowledgment by the EU signals an increased willingness to raise issues of religious freedom and human rights in Tibet in its engagement with China.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Brussels

Office of Tibet Brussels Leads Campaigns Marking 36th Birthday and 30th Enforced Disappearance of Panchen Lama

18 May 2025, CTA



Office of Tibet Brussels Leads Campaigns Marking 36th Birthday and 30th Enforced Disappearance of Panchen Lama.

Central Tibetan As of the part Administration's month-long global awareness campaign, the Office of Tibet Brussels organised two key initiatives to mark the 36th birthday of Gedun Choekyi Nyima, 11th Panchen Lama and 30th anniversary his of enforced disappearance. These campaigns targeting the European Parliament sought to awareness, mobilize support and international attention to China's ongoing violation of religious freedom in Tibet.

As part of the first campaign, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were provided background briefing on the case of the Panchen Lama and were invited to take photos holding a canvas that read "The 11th Panchen Lama turns 36 on 25 April 2025—But where is he? China is answerable to the world" a symbolic yet powerful gesture of solidarity. Many MEPs enthusiastically joined the campaign, showing strong support in marking the Panchen Lama's 36th birthday with expressions of concern over his

continued detention and the lack of information about his whereabouts.

The second campaign included a deeply moving letter fro m the Panchen Lama to world leaders and artwork created by sixyear-old children of both Tibetan weekend schools in Belgium. The letter, written in the voice of the Panchen Lama appealing to world leaders to advocate for his release. The accompanying drawings depicted innocence, vulnerability and the experience of separation powerfully connecting to the fact that the Panchen Lama himself was abducted by the Chinese authorities at the age of six. The emotionally campaign resonated audiences and served as a poignant reminder of the human cost of enforced disappearance. The appeal letters and the artwork were sent to all Members of the European Parliament.

The Office of Tibet's continued outreach coupled with these campaigns culminated with the successful adoption of the European Parliament's resolution of 08 May on the violations of religious freedom in Tibet, strongly opposing China's interference in His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's succession and calling for the immediate release of all Tibetan political and religious prisoners, including the *11th Panchen Lama*.

Major Tibetan associations in Belgium along with the International Campaign for Tibet and Lungta jointly organized a peaceful protest at the Brussels city center on Saturday, 17 May to mark the Panchen Lama's 30 anniversary of enforced disappearance. EU Advocacy Officer Tenzin Phuntsok and recently joined Tibetan Liaison officer Dhundup Gyalpo represented the office of Tibet Brussels.

-Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Brussels

Swiss Parliamentarians Call for Immediate Release of the 11th Panchen Lama

17 May 2025, CTA



Swiss Parliamentarians Call on the Chinese Government to Immediately Release the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima

Parlamentarische Gruppe Tibet Groupe Parlementaire pour le Tibet

Co-President Councillor of States Tiana Moser, Co-President National Councillor Fabian Molina, Co-President National Councillor Nicolas Walder, Co-President National Councillor Nik Gugger, and Vice-President Councillor of States Maya Graf.

Observing the 30 Years of Enforced Disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the **Swiss Parliamentarians** from the **Swiss** Parliamentary Group for Tibet have called on the Swiss Government (Federal Council) to urge China for the immediate release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family members.

In their strongly worded statement, the Parliamentarians have condemned the Chinese government for abducting the then-six-year-old boy Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his family on 17 May 1995.

Nicolas Walder, Co-President of the Parliamentary Group for Tibet, explains, "The goals of the PRC are obvious: through these massive propaganda shows with the "official" Panchen Lama, the communist authorities of the PRC want to demonstrate pseudo-religious freedom in Tibet.' The Parliamentarians have further underscored that "the real goal of the PRC is to pave the way for the future appointment of the successor to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama according to the rules of the PRC by strictly controlling the reincarnations of Tibetan Buddhist personalities."

"The Chinese state's interference in this religious process is an unacceptable suppression of religious freedom," concluded Co-President of the Group Fabian Molina. The Joint statement on behalf of the group was issued by Co-President Councillor of States Tiana Moser, Co-President National Co-President Councillor Nik Gugger, National Councillor Fabian Molina, Co-President National Councillor Nicolas Walder and Vice-President Councillor of States Maya Graf.

In their statement, the parliamentarians have appealed to the Chinese government to:

- report on the whereabouts of Gendun Choeki Nyima and his parents
- refrain from interfering in the process of finding Buddhist reincarnations
- guarantee Tibetans in Tibet their full cultural rights to freedom of religion and education in the Tibetan language

They have further called on the Swiss Government:

- that it demands the free exercise of fundamental human rights in accordance with international standards, to which the PRC is also committed, in all contacts with representatives of the People's Republic of China
- that the Presidency of the UN Human Rights Council be used to ensure that Swiss human rights policy, which is enshrined in the Swiss Constitution, also leads to clear condemnation of violations of human rights standards by the PRC
- that it calls on the PRC in particular to immediately end the massive human rights violations against Tibetan Buddhists and their religious leaders, including violent disappearances, arrests, physical abuse and prolonged detention of monks, nuns and other persons without trial on the basis of their religious beliefs;
- that it urges the authorities of the People's Republic of China to immediately release Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family

Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Tibet Bureau Geneva, Thinlay Chukki, has welcomed the strongly worded statement issued bv the Parliamentarians and noted that, "three decades of enforced disappearance of any individual is a gross violation of human rights and dignity. In this case of 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, it is not just an individual person's violation, but also the right of the Tibetan people to choose their own religious leader and worship. This not only undermines the religious traditions and practices of Tibetan Buddhists but is also discriminatory against the Tibetans based on their religious beliefs. This contravenes the international human rights laws, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. The Chinese government should release of 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his family as a first step towards respecting and enforcing international laws."

Exile Tibetans continue to seek clarity on Tulku Hungkar Dorje's Vietnam death

17 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

As they marked the culmination of the 49-day rituals on the death of Tulku Hungkar Dorje, Tibetans remain determined to find out about the sequence of events which led to the highly respected lama's escape from Tibet and his death under suspicious circumstances in an act of China's transnational repression in Vietnam towards the end of Mar 2025.

Tibetans gathered in hundreds at the Tsuglakhang, the main Buddhist temple in Dharamshala, on May 17 to pray for the 10th abbot of Lung-Ngon Monastery in Ga-de county of Golog prefecture, Qinghai province. He died, aged 56, on Mar 29, 2025, in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City.

The abbot had remained missing for eight months, having fled to Vietnam to escape

persecution for his activism in promoting Tibetan language and culture; for his devotion to Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama; and for his perceived lack of wholehearted welcome to the China-foisted 11th Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu last year.

A visiting delegation of five monks from his monastery was permitted only a 3-4-minute look only at his face in a hospital while the cremation of his body was carried out in great haste, under tight security, and with utmost secrecy in the middle of the night on Apr 20, raising all sorts of questions which remain unanswered to this day.

Chinese authorities forbade the monastery and local Tibetans from holding public memorial services and even prayers for the abbot, said *rfa.org* May 16, citing sources.

At a separate memorial service later in the afternoon on May 17, Khenpo Ju Tenkyong, Director of Amnye Machen Institute, who has been closely monitoring the developments, has said it was clear that the respected lama was murdered in Vietnam under China's influence. However, it was not clear how he was put to death and when. He haa said it was incumbent on both the Tibetan government in exile and Tibetan the civil society to continue to seek out that information.

The gathering was organized by five major exile Tibetan NGOs and was addressed also by Mr Tenzin Lekshay, spokesman of the Central Tibetan Administration; General Secretary Mr Sonam Tsering of Tibetan Youth Congress; and nun Gedun Sangmo, a former political prisoner from Tibet.

Italian Senator Andrea De Priamo Calls on China to Disclose Whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima

17 May 2025, CTA

On the 30th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, Italian Senator Andrea De Priamo, President of the Italian Tibet Interparliamentary Group, has issued a

strong <u>statement</u> urging the Chinese Government to release him and respect the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people.

On 17 May 1995, just days after being recognised by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama, the six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was abducted by Chinese authorities along with his family. No credible information about their whereabouts has been made available since. Senator De Priamo noted that this case represents the longeststanding enforced disappearance in modern history and constitutes a serious, ongoing violation of international human rights and religious freedom.

"In place of the legitimate Panchen Lama, the Chinese government appointed a state-selected figure, lacking spiritual legitimacy and widely rejected by the Tibetan people, with the apparent aim of exerting political control over the future of Tibetan religious leadership," Senator De Priamo stated.

In his appeal, Senator De Priamo called on the Chinese authorities to "disclose the whereabouts and well-being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family, and to uphold the inalienable rights of the Tibetan people, including their right to religious and cultural self-determination."

The Senator further urged "the international community, national governments, and human rights organisations to sustain and intensify diplomatic efforts and public advocacy on this issue. The cause of justice, human dignity, and religious freedom requires nothing less."

Central Tibetan Administration Holds Staff Session to Deepen Insights into the issue of the 11th Panchen Lama 17 May 2025, CTA



The guest speakers addressing during the talk session. Photo / Tenzin Jigmey Taydeh / CTA

As part of its month-long campaign to raise awareness among Tibetans and the international community regarding the issue of the 11th Panchen Lama, His Serenity Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshi Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo, the Tibet Advocacy Section of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) convened a public talk at Sikyong Hall, Gangchen Kyishong on 15 May 2025.

The session aimed to deepen the understanding Tibetan of Central Administration (CTA) staff about the profound spiritual bond shared between His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and the 10th Panchen Rinpoche, and to shed light on the longstanding concerns over the unknown whereabouts of the current Panchen Lama, who has been missing since 1995.

The event featured Secretary Lobsang Jinpa from the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Geshe Lharampa Tenzin Dorjee (Singey Rinpoche) of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery as keynote speakers.

Among the attendees were Acting Sikyong Tharlam Dolma Changra, Kalon of the Department of Education; Tibetan Justice Commissioners Dawa Phunkyi and Phakpa Tsering; Tibetan Parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen, a member of the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile; as well as secretaries and staff members of the CTA.

Opening the session, moderator Dukthan Kyi, Joint Secretary and head of the Tibet Advocacy Section, provided a comprehensive overview of advocacy initiatives undertaken over the past five years. Her remarks contextualised these efforts within the broader movement sustained over the past three decades since the abduction of the 11th Panchen Lama. She emphasised, "While the Central Tibetan Administration continues to collaborate with Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in organising annual events, Tibetan nongovernmental organisations have also significant spearheaded activism and campaigns to draw attention to the gravity of this unresolved issue." She added, "Until a credible and transparent response is provided by the Chinese government, these advocacy efforts will persist in demanding accountability and truth regarding the 11th Panchen Lama."

Secretary Lobsang Jinpa offered an in-depth historical account of the spiritual and institutional relationship between the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama lineages. He elaborated on the mutual respect and admiration shared between His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and the late 10th Panchen Rinpoche, illustrating his narrative with anecdotes. He also discussed the circumstances surrounding the recognition of the 11th Panchen Lama, noting that, "Although the Chinese government was kept informed throughout the recognition process, it ultimately chose to disregard the legitimate outcome."

He further addressed the traditional Tibetan protocols for identifying reincarnated lamas and criticised the Chinese government's distortion of these practices. In particular, he challenged the historical inaccuracies promoted by the Chinese authorities, especially their selective interpretation of Qing dynasty-era precedents, which are grounded in the patron-priest relationship rather than any state authority over religious affairs.

Geshe Lharampa Tenzin Dorjee (Singey Rinpoche) followed with a comprehensive presentation on the life and legacy of the 10th Panchen Lama. He highlighted His Serenity's moral courage, including his submission of the landmark 70,000-character petition to Chinese authorities, which criticised policies detrimental to the Tibetan people.

Rinpoche further emphasised the 10th Panchen Lama's unwavering commitment to the preservation and revitalisation of Tibetan language, culture, and religious traditions. He concluded his address by stating, "If we remain steadfast and dedicated in our efforts to preserve our heritage, we will have truly honoured and fulfilled His Serenity's noble aspirations."

Department of Information and International Relations Commemorates 30th Anniversary of 11th Panchen Lama's Enforced Disappearance at Upper TCV School

17 May 2025, CTA

To mark the 30th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, the Tibet Advocacy Section of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) under the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), in collaboration with Upper TCV school organised a students elocution on the life and legacy of the 10th and 11th Panchen Lama at Hermann Gmeiner Hall, Upper TCV School, today, Saturday, at 3:00 PM.

Upon the arrival of the chief guest and special guest, they were warmly welcomed by TCV President Sonam Sichoe, Education Director Ngawang Lhamo, Director Tsultrim Dorjee, Principal Tenzin Choekyi, and the students. The program commenced with an opening address by Karma Choeying, Secretary of the

address by Karma Choeying, Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations. In his remarks, he introduced the purpose of the event and outlined the objectives of the commemoration, emphasising the significance of remembering the 11th Panchen Lama's disappearance and

educating the younger generation about the continued Tibetan struggle for justice and religious freedom.

The event was attended by Chief Guest Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Special guests Geshe Lharampa Tenzin Dorjee (Singye Rinpoche), representative of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, and Jigme Namgyal, Secretary of the Department of Education, who addressed the gathering respectively.

Geshe Lharampa Tenzin Dorjee emphasised the spiritual and political significance of the day, stating, "The enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama is not only a personal tragedy but a symbol of China's ongoing suppression of Tibetan religion and identity." Rinpoche further underscored the importance of preserving the Tibetan language and continuing the collective struggle for truth. He expressed hope that truth will ultimately prevail and lead to the fulfilment of the Tibetan cause. He emphasised the importance of preserving the Tibetan language as a pillar of Tibetan identity and the younger generation is the future seed of Tibet and must recognise the worthiness of our language and heritage.

Jigme Namgyal, Secretary of the Department of Education, reflected on the importance of youth engagement: "Educating the younger generation about the Tibetan cause is essential in preserving our identity and carrying forward the legacy of our spiritual leaders like Panchen Lama."

Additionally, he commended the initiative as a meaningful platform to instil awareness, responsibility, and a sense of national identity among Tibetan students.

The participants of the elocution include students from various Tibetan schools in and around Dharamshala, including Mewoen Tsuglag Petoen School, TCV Upper, TCV Suja, TCV Chauntra, and TCV Gopalpur.

Representing from each school covering different topic of elocution reflect on the 10th Panchen Lama's life, legacy and unjust disappearance of the the 11th Panchen Lama, as well as the historical relationship between Panchen Lama lineages, the traditional recognition process of the 11th Panchen

Lama, and his subsequent abduction by Chinese authorities—a clear violation of international law and religious freedom.

The gathering concluded with a quiz session on this significant historical matter and the launch of the special reprint of the book "Tibet's Stolen Child," which meticulously documents the life and circumstances surrounding the 11th Panchen Lama's disappearance.

Following this, the Chief Guest, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, graced the occasion with an address. In his speech, he reflected on the unjust disappearance of the 11th Panchen highlighted Lama and the continued responsibility of the Tibetan people to keep his memory alive. He encouraged the younger generation to remain steadfast in their commitment to truth, justice, and the of Tibetan identity, preservation and commended the participating students and organisers.

The program also includes the presentation of certificates of appreciation to participating student speakers and scarves of gratitude to the Tibetan teachers and mentors involved in preparing the students.

The event concluded with closing remarks and a vote of thanks from Dukthen Kyi, head of the Tibet Advocacy Section at the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

Tibetan activists demand immediate release of 11th Panchen Lama on 30th anniversary of enforced disappearance

17 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon

Activist group, the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress Dharamshala, marked 30 years since the abduction of the 11th Panchen Lama by the Chinese Communist Party on Saturday. The NGO renewed its call for the immediate release of the Panchen Lama and full disclosure of his whereabouts, condemning China's installation of a fake Panchen Lama,

accusing Beijing of using him to echo Chinese Communist Party propaganda.

Speaking to Phayul, Tibetan writer and activist Tenzin Tsundue remarked, "The fact that China is keeping the Panchen Lama under Chinese control for all these years is a fact to prove the real importance of the Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima. China is scheming to make use of Gendun Choekyi Nyima in recognising the future 15th Dalai Lama, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said already and declared in his latest book that his reincarnation would be born in a free world, and therefore all China's scheme has fallen flat. It is important for all of us to continue to campaign for Panchen Lama's release and for his safety, at the same time, assert our political right over Tibet's independence and the freedom of Tibet."

Sonam Tsering, Secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), emphasized the need for a strategic shift in advocacy efforts. "For three decades, TYC and other Tibetan nongovernmental organizations have been tirelessly campaigning for the release and whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama. Despite repeated appeals, China has remained silent. While we have consistently urged the international community to take a stand, it is clear that continuing along the same advocacy path has yielded little progress in the past 30 years. This is not to say that our efforts have been in vain. The global human rights organizations are well aware of this and they should apply pressure on China. While it is imperative that we continue our campaigns, but with new and strategic forms of advocacy. We must persist in calling on the international community to demand China release the Panchen Lama and provide verifiable his information on well-being whereabouts."

Grassroots activist group, the Tibetan Women's Association, in collaboration with organizations representing Tibet's three traditional provinces, organized a bike rally on May 17 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Panchen Lama's abduction. The coalition has issued urgent calls to the UN, international leaders, and human rights organizations to

investigate his whereabouts, secure his immediate release along with all Tibetan political prisoners, and press for genuine dialogue between Sino-Tibetan representatives. They vowed to continue their advocacy until the now 36-year-old spiritual leader is returned to his rightful place at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Shigatse, Tibet.

The head of the exile Tibetan leadership, President Penpa Tsering of the exile Tibetan government, known officially as the Central Tibetan Administration, issued a statement condemning China's enforced disappearance of the Panchen Lama. "Today marks a solemn commemoration—30 years since the Chinese government abducted the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. continued disappearance is one of the most blatant violations of religious freedom in our time. Despite Beijing's attempts to erase his identity, Tibetans across the world continue to speak his name, uphold their faith in him, and demand justice," he stated.

"I call upon the international community to renew its efforts to press for his immediate release. We offer our prayers for his freedom and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to seeing him restored to his rightful, legitimate role."

The 11th Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, revered as one of the eminent spiritual figures in Tibetan Buddhism, was officially recognised by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in 1995 when he was just six years old. However, shortly after his recognition, on May 17, 1995, the Chinese Communist Party forcefully abducted him and his family into state custody, making him the world's youngest political prisoner. Since then, the disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama has remained a grave concern for the Tibetan administration in exile, as well as various advocacy Tibetan groups and governmental organisations in exile, which have persistently campaigned transparency regarding his health and current whereabouts.

In April 2022, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian reiterated previous claims from 2020 regarding Gedhun Choekyi

Nyima. Zhao stated that Gedhun received compulsory education as a child, successfully passed college entrance examinations, and is now employed. According to Zhao, Gedhun and his family desire privacy and wish to maintain their current lifestyle without disturbance. However, the Chinese government has not offered any additional statements or evidence concerning the whereabouts or well-being of the 11th Panchen Lama since then.

German Commissioner for Freedom of Religion or Belief Calls on Chinese Government to Release the 11th Panchen Lama

17 May 2025, CTA



German Commissioner for Freedom of Religion or Belief calls on China to Release 11th Panchen Lama Gedun Choekyi Nyima





The German Commissioner for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Frank Schwabe, has called on the Chinese Government to release the 11th Panchen Lama, Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshi Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo, also known as Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and to stop interfering in the religious practices of Tibetan Buddhism, including in reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Marking the 30 years of enforced disappearance, the Commissioner has issued a strong statement of condemnation against the Chinese government for abducting the 11th Panchen Lama Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his family.

"To the Government of China: release the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima. Ensure that Tibetan Buddhists can practice their religion in accordance with international human rights standards. This includes the recognition of the next Dalai Lama according to traditional methods — and not the

interference of the CCP in reincarnation," noted Commissioner Frank Schwabe.

Referring to the massive repression of the Tibetan people by the Chinese government, Commissioner Schwabe has noted that "the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has not succeeded in eradicating Tibetan cultural and religious identity."

Expressing sincere gratitude to Commissioner Schwabe, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Tibet Bureau, Geneva, has welcomed the statement. She noted, "The case of 11th Panchen Lama Gedun Choekyi Nyima is one of the longest-running cases of enforced disappearances in the world. His abduction is a grave violation of his personal rights as well as the right of the Tibetan Buddhists to freely choose their religious leader and practice their religion. The voice of Commissioner Schwabe provides strong impetus to the calls heard across Europe and the world for the protection of the rights of the Tibetan People to freely choose their religious leaders, including the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama and practice one's religion free from fear and persecution."

-Report filed by Tibet Bureau, Geneva

The Tibet Museum Marks 48th International Museum Day with Theme: 'The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities' 16 May 2025, CTA

The Tibet Museum of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration, marked the 48th International Museum Day—held under the theme "The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities"—with the launch of its latest journal edition and an art fair showcasing works by seven Tibetan artists on 16 May 2025.

Secretary Karma Choeying and Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay of the DIIR attended the event as chief guests, joined by contributors to the journal, participating artists, students from Upper Tibetan Children's Village School, and Tibetan and Indian media personnel based in Dharamshala.

The event began with a brief gathering at the Tibet Museum's auditorium, where museum staff introduced ongoing initiatives and recent developments.

Director of The Tibet Museum, Tenzin Topdhen, delivered the opening remarks, highlighting the significance of International Museum Day and offering a concise overview of the International Council of Museums—an international organisation of museums and museum professionals—and The Tibet Museum's engagement in its activities.

While emphasising the core roles of museums worldwide—to preserve and exhibit artefacts, educate the public, support research, promote cultural heritage, and foster community engagement—Director Topdhen expressed concern over the politicisation of museums in China. "The Chinese government has ramped up efforts to promote fabricated narratives about Tibet and its history through national museums, using them as tools to disseminate distorted information under the guise of 'promoting ethnic unity and countering divisive narratives," he stated.

He further noted that even reputable international museums in the West are, unfortunately, beginning to align with these narratives under pressure from Beijing. He cited recent instances of museums in France and the UK adopting the term "Xizang" to refer to Tibet. "Museums have a powerful influence in shaping public perspectives. It is alarming that political agendas are seeping into the exhibitions of museums," he warned. Following that, the Tibet Museum's staff Karma Tashi presented an overview of the Tibet Museum's photo archives. He detailed the process of gathering and categorising photographs in accordance with museum standards, and explained how these archives are utilised in exhibitions, publications, and academic research.

Curator Ngawang Dorjee then discussed the museum's object collection and preventive conservation efforts. He shared that the museum houses approximately 1,300 objects,

including scriptures, traditional costumes, woodblocks, and metal artefacts such as Buddha statues. These items are primarily acquired through donations or on loan. He also outlined the procedures followed when accepting artefacts and how they are incorporated into the museum's educational and exhibition programs.

Staff member Tenzin Khetsun provided an update on the museum's outreach efforts, noting that awareness campaigns regularly conducted both in India internationally to promote the Tibetan cause. He emphasised that these efforts have successfully educated both Tibetan and non-Tibetan communities—especially students about the Tibetan struggle and its historical context. In Dharamshala, the museum maintains both permanent and temporary exhibitions and has hosted numerous prominent guests, including revered Tibetan Buddhist lamas and international dignitaries. also mentioned that the museum periodically organises talk series, featururing scholars, experts, and activists.

Before the keynote address by Secretary Karma Choeying, Volume 2 of The Tibet Museum's journal was officially launched.

In his address, Secretary Karma Choeying stressed the museum's vital role in countering the distorted narratives propagated by the People's Republic of China regarding Tibet's history. "The primary mission of the Tibet Museum is to educate both the international community and our own Tibetan people about the true history, religion, and culture of Tibet," he said. "Despite the limitations we face in terms of funding and manpower, we are doing our utmost to achieve this mission." Choeying Secretary Karma emphasised that the responsibility to preserve the aspects of Tibetan identity must be shouldered by every Tibetan, especially as the challenges to that identity continue to grow from multiple fronts. One major threat is the ongoing Sinicisation campaign carried out by the Chinese government, particularly through state-run, colonial-style boarding schools Another is gradual within Tibet. the assimilation of the diaspora Tibetan

community into the cultures of their host countries, which risks diluting their distinct heritage.

In his closing remarks, Secretary Karma Choeying underscored, "Our movement is grounded in truth and justice. If we continue to persevere with dedication, our efforts will bear fruit and our struggle will ultimately prevail."

Tibetan leader slams China's repression in Tibet at UK parliament, urges action on religious freedom

16 May 2025, Public TV

Secretary of the Office of Tibet in London, made a powerful plea for Tibet during a joint parliamentary event titled "United Voices: A Joint Discussion About Freedom in North Korea, China, Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Burma/Myanmar," as reported by the Central Tibet Administration (CTA).

The event took place on May 14 in the UK Parliament and was co-hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on North Korea and Fortify Rights.

It was chaired by David Smith MP, the UK's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, alongside John Glen MP, according to the CTA report.

As a representative of the Tibetan cause, Kunga spoke about the severe and ongoing suppression of religious and cultural liberties in Tibet under Chinese governance. He emphasised the systematic attempts by the Chinese government to undermine Tibetan Buddhism, which include monitoring of monasteries, enforced political re-education for monks and nuns, and colonial-style boarding schools that exclude Tibetan language and religion.

In reflecting on the other speakers' presentations, Tenzin Kunga drew connections and pointed out similarities to the situation in Tibet. He cautioned the audience about the broader threat posed by the Chinese Communist regime to the international rules-based order, as noted by the CTA.

He highlighted two significant cases: the 30-year disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshi Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo, known as Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and the recent death of Tulku Hungkar Dorje, a revered Tibetan religious leader, while in custody in Vietnam.

Kunga described this latter case as a troubling example of China's transnational repression, indicating a new and perilous phase in silencing dissent abroad, and called for an independent investigation, according to the CTA report.

Kunga urged the UK Government, through the special envoy and the attending MP, to undertake two essential actions: to publicly declare that the Dalai Lama alone has the sole authority to determine his reincarnation without any political interference, and also to elevate the issues surrounding the cases of the Panchen Lama and Tulku Hungkar Dorje in bilateral talks and at the United Nations, advocating for transparency and accountability.

At the end of his remarks, Kunga presented a copy of the Dalai Lama's new book, Voice for the Voiceless, to Special Envoy David Smith and encouraged increased attention to the case of Tulku Hungkar Dorje. This was noted in the CTA report. (ANI)

ICT alerts European Parliamentarians on the devastating impacts of China's hydropower dams in Tibet

16 May 2025, ICT

At a conference held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 14 May, EU policymakers, scientists, and human rights experts came together to examine China's hydropower dams-building spree on the Tibetan Plateau and its serious and farreaching consequences after being alerted to the issue by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT).

Co-hosted by Members of the European Parliament Dainius Žalimas and Hannes Heide – respectively Chair and Co-Chair of the European Parliament's Friends of Tibet group – the event highlighted the urgent need for the EU to pay more attention to the devastating impacts of these dams for Tibetans, Asia and beyond.

"What happens on the roof of the world impacts us all globally, and the European Union cannot remain silent about China's dams in Tibet," Mr. Heide (Austria, S&D) insisted in his welcoming remarks to the conference. "Resource extraction in an occupied country that is resulting in abuses of human rights and destruction of the environment is unacceptable. Real sustainability is when projects respect the planet AND the people who live on it." Mr. Žalimas added.

Palmo Tenzin, Senior Researcher at ICT, opened the panel with an overview of the findings from ICT's recent report on China's hydropower dam projects in Tibet. She explained why such projects are not as sustainable as claimed by the Chinese government, and outlined a series of recommendations for international bodies and foreign governments – including the need for the EU to ensure that European companies are not involved in the supply chain of the hydropower construction industry in Tibet.

Tenzin Choekyi, Senior Researcher at Tibet Watch, provided insight on the human, cultural and civilisational costs of China's unregulated hydropower expansion, sharing video footage from the protests against the Kamtok (Gangtuo) dam in February 2024, which were met with violent repression by Chinese

geomorphologist at the University of Potsdam with field experience in the Himalayan region, offered a scientific perspective on the environmental risks associated with dam construction in Tibet. He also highlighted the dangers of building large-scale hydropower projects in a highly seismic region, pointing to the January earthquake in Dingri as a stark reminder of the potential consequences. In particular, he raised concerns about the recently approved Medog (Motuo) hydropower project - which experts have described as "the world's riskiest project" due to its location in a remote, landslide-prone

area with frequent earthquakes, limited infrastructure, and high geopolitical tensions between China and India.

In her closing address, Rigzin Genkhang, Representative of the Dalai Lama in Brussels, highlighted the urgent need for environmental bodies to acknowledge the strategic role of the Tibetan Plateau for global climate, and ensure its inclusion in environmental protection frameworks.

"It is clear that, under the pretext of combating climate change, perpetuating the mistakes of the past. By developing strategies without guaranteeing space, transparency, civic access information, public participation, and the rights to freedom of expression and selfdetermination, perpetuating we are extractivism. uncontrolled environmental and serious human rights impacts, violations," Gaëlle Dusepulchre, Deputy Director for Business, Human Rights and Environment at FIDH concluded.

Co-organised by ICT and FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), the event was attended by MEPs or their parliamentary assistants and members of the civil society, including representatives of the Uyghur people, who have faced similar colonialist resource extraction policies.

Risch, Shaheen Anniversary Statement on Abduction of Panchen Lama

16 May 2025, Foreign Relations Committee

U.S. Senators Jim Risch (R-Idaho) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, today released the following statement ahead of the 30th anniversary of the People's Republic of China's abduction of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama. The Panchen Lama is both a key spiritual leader for Tibetans and a symbol of their struggle for religious freedom.

"Beijing's abduction of the Panchen Lama was an affront to the Tibetan people and their pursuit of religious freedom.

"For decades, China has denied Tibetans the right to self-determination and refused to engage in direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. Meanwhile, Beijing continues to carry out policies to erase Tibetan religion, culture, and language. This is immoral and unjust.

"We call on Beijing to provide credible evidence of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's well-being and for his immediate release. The U.S. will continue to steadfastly support Tibetans' rights to have a say in their own future, preserve their culture, and maintain their religious freedom."

Background:

On May 17, 1995, three days after he was recognized by the Dalai Lama, the six-year-old Panchen Lama and his parents were kidnapped by the Chinese Communist Party. Beijing then named another boy as the Panchen Lama in a blatant and illegitimate effort to assert its authority over Tibetan Buddhism.

HRW urges China to release 11th Panchen Lama, calls on 'concerned parties' to assert Tibetan rights

16 May 2025, <u>Jurist News</u>, Sarisha Harikrishna

Human Rights Watch on Thursday urged China to free the 11th Panchen Lama, Gendun Choki Nyima, and his parents, who were removed from public view in 1995 and have remained missing ever since. As the 30th anniversary of their disappearance approaches on Saturday, human rights advocates have intensified pressure on Beijing to end decades of secrecy and take accountability for the Panchen Lama and his family.

There is still some doubt over whether Nyima, who disappeared at the age of six, is alive—despite an unsubstantiated claim in 2015 from Chinese authorities that "this so-called 'soul boy' designated by the Dalai Lama is receiving education, living normally and growing healthily. He does not want to be disturbed by anyone."

The Panchen Lama is one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism, with his spiritual authority second only to the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama himself is believed to be the reincarnation of a long line of compassionate teachers who choose to be reborn to help others. After the Panchen Lama was taken, Chinese authorities allegedly engaged in an illegal method of choosing his replacement that ran contrary to the values of Tibetan Buddhism. The authorities ultimately selected Gyaltsen Norbu, whose parents were members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Norbu's appointment is alleged to be a tool for the Chinese government to exert control over the religious and cultural traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly to assert state power over spiritual accession. The majority of Tibetan Buddhists reject Norbu's appointment, branding it an abuse of human rights.

The Chinese government's intervention in religious circles in Tibet has been alleged to be a part of a broader wave of Sinicization i.e., an effort to completely subordinate groups to the CCP's political agenda and Marxist vision for religion. In addition to controlling the selection of the Panchen Lama, Chinese authorities have been accused of committing gross violations of religious freedom against the Tibetan Buddhist community over the years. According to HRW, monks have been forced undergo political reeducation, religious imagery, texts and statues have been forcibly altered in Buddhist shrines, and Tibetan children have been forcibly assimilated to the majority Hans culture in a fashion that is eerily similar to the residential school system imposed on Indigenous Canadians until as late as 1996. Tibetan children have also allegedly been prohibited from attending Tibetan language classes in local monasteries, with the Chinese government describing the classes as "ideological infiltration among the young."

The alleged persecution of Tibetan Buddhists is believed to stem from China's aim to promote national unity by destroying the very foundations of the religion from the top down. With the Dalai Lama turning 90 in July, it is expected that the Chinese government will also interfere in the process of choosing his successor. The Dalai Lama has been living in exile in North India since 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese forces.

HRW has urged countries with significant Buddhist populations, such as Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, and India, to speak out and step up international pressure on China to return the Panchen Lama.

Representative Karma Singey Attends 25th Anniversary of UN Day of Vesak Celebration at Australian Parliament House

15 May 2025, CTA

Representative Karma Singey joined the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Australian Observance of United Nations Day of Vesak held at the Great Hall of Parliament House on 14 May 2025.

The event was organised by the Buddhist Federation of Australia in cooperation with other Buddhist Organisations and temples from the various Buddhist traditions represented in Australia.

Several dignitaries attended the event, including the Hon. Chris Bowden MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Alicia Payne MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Brian Gleeson, National Vice President of the United Nations Association of Australia. Others in attendance were Ambassadors from India, Thailand, and Bhutan, prominent religious and community leaders, and the Buddhist community from various regions.

The event began with the chanting from different Buddhist traditions, followed by addresses by prominent guests and a Vesak message from the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Anthony Albanese. The event concluded with a presentation of souvenirs to the guests, followed by traditional dance performances by Korean artists from Jongbopsa Sydney.

Parliamentarians Tenpa Yarphel and Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong Visit Lo-Tserok Namgyaling in Nepal

15 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

As per the program of the Tibetan Parliamentin-Exile, a delegation comprising MP Tenpa Yarphel and MP Phurpa Dorjee Gyaldhong commenced their official periodic visit to Nepal.

Accompanied by Tibetan Settlement Officer Tashi Tseten of Pokhara Tashi Palkhil, the MPs were warmly received upon their arrival in Lo-Tserok Namgyaling on 6 May 2025. Welcoming them were the President and members of the Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement (BRDL), the regional coordinator, local staff, the President of the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, and members of the public. Their visit began with a closed-door meeting with local leaders at the coordinator's office.

A public gathering was later held at the settlement's hall, where the MPs addressed the audience on several key topics: the noble contributions of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the current critical situation in Tibet, the Tibetan issue on the global stage, and important matters from the 9th session of the Parliament, including legislative procedures. A Q&A session followed to respond to public concerns and queries.

The MPs also visited various institutions within the settlement, including the monastery, school, healthcare centre, and other facilities. They also inspected a flood-prone area within the settlement.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Representative Tsering Yangkey Highlights Tibetan Democratic Model at UK-Hong Kong Symposium 2025

15 May 2025, CTA

On 10 May 2025, Representative Tsering Yangkey of the Office of Tibet, London, addressed the third annual UK-Hong Kong

Symposium held at Capital City College, Angel, London, upon invitation by the event's organiser, noted Hong Kong activist Finn Lau.

In her remarks, Representative Yangkey presented the structure, journey, and guiding principles of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), highlighting its democratic foundation and governance model in exile. She elaborated on the CTA's three-pillar system—executive, legislature, and judiciary—alongside independent oversight commissions, and emphasised their roles in ensuring transparency and accountability.

Encouraging Hongkongers to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage amid their struggle for political rights and freedom, Representative Yangkey drew parallels between the Tibetan and Hong Kong experiences of resisting authoritarianism. Her talk concluded with an engaging Q&A session with participants.

Since its inception in 2023, the UK-Hong Kong Symposium has become a vital platform for civil society representatives and community leaders across the UK to connect, strategise, and strengthen the democratic The 2025 edition gathered movement. activists, academics, and diaspora leaders from the Hong Kong, Tibetan, Uyghur, and other communities, fostering solidarity resisting authoritarian among groups repression.

This marks the third consecutive year of Tibetan participation in the symposium. In previous editions, Office of Tibet staff member Tenzin Kunga delivered presentations on the Tibetan freedom struggle, contributing to the broader discourse on democracy and self-determination.

The Office of Tibet's ongoing engagement with the symposium reflects its commitment to building alliances with other diaspora communities advocating for justice, rights, and freedom.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, London

Buddhist nations urged to speak up ahead of China's 30-year Panchen Lama abduction, disappearance

15 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

Human Rights Watch has on May 15 reiterated its call on China to release the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents, ahead of the completion of 30 years since it abducted them on May 17, 1995. The New York-based international rights group said the issue had become all the more urgent as the Dalai Lama marks his 90th birthday on Jul 6, 2025 and the two top spiritual leaders of Tibet have historically played key roles in recognizing each other's reincarnations. This is an opportune moment for Buddhist nations especially to raise their voices, the group said.

Noting that the question of the current, 14th Dalai Lama's succession—and the future of Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan people—is becoming increasingly urgent, the group said the Chinese government forcibly disappeared the then six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima three days after the Dalai Lama recognized him as the 11th Panchen Lama. Even his pictures, along with those of the Dalai Lama, are prohibited in Tibet.

The kidnapping and disappearance of the sixyear-old and his family for 30 years thus far was meant to "control the selection of the next Dalai Lama and thus Tibetan Buddhism itself," Yalkun Uluyol, the group's China researcher, has said.

The human rights situation only worsened since then, with the Chinese government tightening its grip over Tibet, which includes the Tibet Autonomous Region and the neighbouring Tibetan autonomous areas within Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces, especially since 2008, the group's May 15 statement noted.

"Since 2008, when a massive crackdown on popular protests swept the Tibetan plateau, Chinese security forces have maintained a heavy presence in Tibet and tightly restricted access and travel to Tibetan areas. Any questioning of government policies, however mild, can result in arbitrary detention or long-term imprisonment, prosecution, enforced disappearance, and even instances of torture. Authorities maintain highly intrusive mass surveillance systems in Tibet, require Tibetans to use Mandarin Chinese as the medium of instruction in schools, and pressure many to relocate en masse from their long-established villages to new government-built settlements. Authorities also make it extremely difficult for Tibetans to travel abroad or to obtain passports and punish people severely for contacting relatives or others outside the country."

After imposing regulations in 2007 to assume the ultimate authority to recognize reincarnate lamas, China further tightened control on monasteries in Tibet. In 2012, nearly all Tibetan monasteries were placed under the direct control of permanently stationed Chinese government officials.

Since 2018, Chinese authorities have required all monastics to meet the "Four Standards," including "political reliability" and "being dependable at critical moments." These standards are believed to involve support for the Chinese government's choice of the next Dalai Lama and any other reincarnate lama, the statement said.

The group has expressed disappointment over China's lack of response to repeated international calls, including from the UN and the European Parliament, for information on, access to, and release of the 11th Panchen Lama.

The statement suggested that concerned governments, especially those with significant Buddhist populations, such as Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, and India, should mark the 30th anniversary of the Panchen Lama's enforced disappearance by speaking out publicly and by asserting the rights of Tibetans to exercise their religious freedom., saying this is an opportune moment.

Tibetan-Origin Mayor Aftab Karma Pureval poised for re-election in Cincinnati, USA

14 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup

Aftab Karma Singh Pureval, the Tibetan-Indian-origin mayor of Cincinnati, is widely seen as the frontrunner in the city's upcoming general election in November after securing a lead in the May 6 mayoral primary election. Pureval, a Democrat and the city's first Asian-American mayor, is expected to face Republican challenger Cory Bowman, the half-brother of U.S. Vice President JD Vance. According to official results, Pureval earned a decisive 82.53% of the vote, with 18,505 ballots cast in his favour. Bowman followed with just 12.91% (2,894 votes), while Republican Brian Frank was eliminated from the race after receiving only 4.56% (1,022 votes).

Under Cincinnati's nonpartisan primary system, the top two vote-getters regardless of party affiliation advance to the general election in November. Though the election is technically nonpartisan, Pureval's popularity in this predominantly Democratic city makes him the clear favourite heading into the fall. Pureval, 42, was first elected mayor in 2021, becoming the 70th mayor of Cincinnati, winning nearly two-thirds of the vote. He made history as Cincinnati's first Asian-American mayor. Born to an Indian Sikh father, Devinder Singh Pureval, and a Tibetan mother, Drenko, both immigrants, Pureval has often spoken about the importance of representation and diversity in public office. Before entering politics, Pureval served as a special assistant U.S. attorney and worked as a global brand attorney for Procter & Gamble. He first gained political traction when he was elected as Hamilton County Clerk of Courts in 2016—the first Democrat to hold the office in over a century.

According to reports, Pureval's campaign is expected to focus on his record of city revitalisation, economic investment, and inclusive leadership. In 2022, he was honoured by Gold House, a non-profit

recognising influential Asian Pacific leaders, for his impact in advocacy and policy alongside fellow mayors Bruce Harrell (Seattle) and Michelle Wu (Boston).



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama with Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Karma Singh Pureval at His Holiness' residence. (Photo/OHHDL)

On December 5, 2022, Pureval met with the Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, in Dharamshala at his residence. During his trip to the capital of the exiled Tibetan polity, Pureval offered solidarity to Tibetans under Chinese rule: "We feel your pain. We understand your struggle. You are not alone, and you are not forgotten." He emphasised the role of the Tibetan diaspora in preserving their shared heritage, adding, "The preservation of our culture, history and religion is a responsibility that those outside of Tibet feel very personally and very strongly."

Mundgod Doeguling Tibetan Settlement Observes Buddha Purnima in Theravada Tradition

14 May 2025, CTA

In accordance with the directive issued by the Karnataka State Government to the Mundgod District Commissioner, and with arrangements made by the Doeguling Tibetan Settlement Office, Buddha Purnima was celebrated on 12 May 2025, the 15th day of the 3rd Tibetan month, in line with Theravada Buddhist tradition.

This sacred day marks a triple event in the life of Buddha Shakyamuni according to

Theravada tradition: his birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana.

Over 300 Indian and Tibetan community members gathered at the local community hall for the occasion. The event was graced by Smt. Kavyarani, Assistant Kumari Commissioner & Sub-divisional Magistrate of Sirsi, as the chief guest. Other distinguished guests included Smt. Mangala Naik (Assistant Director, Kannada & Culture Department, Uttara Kannada), Shri Shankar Goudi (Tahsildar, Mundgod), Jigme Tsultrim (Chief Representative Officer, South Zone), Wangmo (Settlement Rinchen Doeguling), along with representatives from the Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association, Local Tibetan Assembly, Cooperative Society, former SFF organisation, and other local Tibetan civil society groups.

Prior to her arrival at the venue, the chief guest paid floral tribute at the memorial stone honouring the martyrs who gave their lives for India's protection. She also met with former members of the Special Frontier Force (SFF) who were introduced to her at the event.

The chief guest spoke about the importance of practicing the Buddha's teachings, which are inseparably intertwined with ancient Indian culture, and emphasised their relevance in the present time. She also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hold such an event under the state government's directive at the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod. She then thanked the monastic community and presented certificates to former members of SFF organisation.

The program included remarks by other dignitaries and cultural performances by students, adding colour and spirit to the event. -Report filed by TSO, Mundgod

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Meets with Canadian MPs James Maloney, Karim Bardeesy, and Former Minister Arif Virani in Toronto

14 May 2025, CTA

Sikyong Penpa Tsering met with Canadian MPs James Maloney and Karim Bardeesy, as

well as former Minister and MP Arif Virani, on 13 May 2025 during his visit to Toronto.

The meeting, held at the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre, was also attended by Representative Namgyal Choedup and Sherap Therchin, Executive Director of the Canada Tibet Committee.

Sikyong extended his congratulations to MPs Maloney and Bardeesy on their recent election victories and expressed his heartfelt appreciation to former Minister and MP Arif Virani for his enduring support and leadership on the Tibetan cause in Canada.

During the discussion, Sikyong provided an Central update the Administration's ongoing efforts to advance the Tibetan movement and shared details about the year-long official celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, designated as the Year of Compassion. Sikyong implored the Canadian leaders to join in the celebration and to help amplify His Holiness' universal messages of nonviolence, Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) Learning/secular ethics, and interfaith harmony.

Sikyong also underscored the importance of continued Canadian parliamentary representation at the World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet.

On 14 May 2025, Sikyong Penpa Tsering met with the leader of Bloc Quebecois Yves-François Blanchet and MP Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe in Montreal. Sikyong congratulated them on their re-election and expressed gratitude for their support in the passage of motion in the Canadian parliament supporting the right for self-determination of the Tibetan people. Leader Blanchet expressed continued support for the just cause of Tibetan people. Representative Namgyal Choedup Canada Tibet Committee's Executive Director Sherap Therchin joined the meeting along with Tibetan community leaders of Montreal.

Tibetan activists condemn Hong Kong police over arrest of exiled prodemocracy activist's family

13 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon



US-based pro-democracy activist Anna Kwok (Photo/Anna Kwok, via Facebook)

Tibetan activist group Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) has strongly condemned the Hong Kong authorities for the arrest of the father and detention of the brother of exiled pro-democracy activist Anna Kwok, an outspoken ally of the Tibetan freedom movement.

On April 30, Hong Kong police arrested 68-year-old Kwok Yin-sang, Anna Kwok's father, under the newly enacted national security legislation—Article 23 of the National Security Law—on charges of "collusion with foreign forces." His 35-year-old son, Kwok's brother, was also taken into custody but later released on bail without formal charges. Authorities allege that the two attempted to manage financial assets on behalf of Kwok, who has been living in exile in the United States since 2020.

Anna Kwok, 28, is the Executive Director of the Washington-based Hong Kong Democracy Council. She is among 19 overseas activists targeted by Hong Kong's government with a HK\$1 million bounty, accused of violating national security laws, including incitement to subversion and foreign collusion. Kwok has since revealed parents subjected her were "questioning, harassment, and intimidation" by authorities.

SFT condemned the arrests as a blatant act of collective punishment and an alarming escalation aimed at silencing exiled dissidents by targeting their families. The organization highlighted that this marks the first instance of Hong Kong's national security law being used to prosecute family members of overseas activists. "This is a chilling escalation by the Chinese government to silence dissidents abroad by threatening their loved ones at home," the group said.

"As Tibetans, we are all too familiar with this tactic," the group added. "The Chinese government has long punished people not for what they've done, but for who they are and who they're connected to. Intimidating families in Tibet to pressure activists in exile is a cruel and well-documented strategy."

SFT added that it has joined Human Rights Watch and 86 other human rights organizations in condemning the arrest of Kwok's family members. The group has demanded the immediate and unconditional release of her father and the full dismissal of all charges. "The world must speak out for all those targeted by Beijing's long arm of repression," the group urged

Human Rights Watch had earlier warned that the newly implemented security law would tighten the noose on freedom in Hong Kong. In March 2024, the rights watchdog called the legislation a "full-scale assault on the rights of Hong Kong residents." "The new security law will usher in a new era of broad-based oppression," said Elaine Pearson, Asia Director at Human Rights Watch. "Even owning a book critical of the Chinese government could now carry a prison sentence in Hong Kong."

Mother of Late Hungkar Rinpoche Passes Away Following Prolonged Illness and Grief

13 May 2025, CTA

Kasa Dukar Dolma (Tib: শ্ৰের্থেন্স্ব্র্র্থ্র্ন্স্), 85, the mother of the late Hungkar Rinpoche, reportedly passed away on 6 May 2025 in Golog, Amdo, following a prolonged illness caused and exacerbated by the distress and emotional toll of her son's suspicious death. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has verified the news through credible sources, although it only surfaced on 11 May due to heightened restrictions on the flow of information from inside Tibet. Her passing marks another tragic chapter in the unfolding aftermath of Rinpoche's untimely death, which occurred under suspicious circumstances in Vietnam while allegedly in the custody of Chinese authorities in late March this year.

Rinpoche's Hungkar sudden demise generated widespread international concern, with many rights organizations and media outlets urging transparency from both the Vietnamese and Chinese governments amid fears of transnational repression. The late Rinpoche, a respected spiritual leader and vocal advocate for Tibetan cultural and religious preservation, was reportedly detained in Vietnam, raising urgent questions about cross-border coordination between the two governments. The loss deeply affected his mother, who had been in declining health and reportedly suffered great anguish in the weeks following the incident.

In early 2024, the passing of Phude, mother of Tibetan writer Tenzin Khenrab, underscored the severe emotional toll that enforced disappearances inflict on families—she died after battling depression and anxiety for over a year, unable to learn the fate of her son who was arrested for keeping a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Her death on 17 profound mirrors the February experienced by Hungkar Rinpoche's mother, illustrating how prolonged psychological suffering caused by such disappearances can ultimately become life-threatening.

As per Tibetan Buddhist tradition, 16 May 2025 will mark the 49th day since Hungkar Rinpoche's death—a spiritually significant day when prayers and rituals are performed to guide the consciousness of the deceased toward a peaceful rebirth. The Central Tibetan Administration continues to express concern over the repressive measures imposed by Chinese authorities in Tibet, especially

following the passing of prominent Tibetan figures, often aimed at preventing news from reaching the outside world. The delayed reporting of Dukar Dolma's death appears consistent with these ongoing efforts to suppress the truth and silence Tibetan voices. The CTA confirmed Hungkar Rinpoche's death in early April after he had been missing since July 2024, with Chinese authorities refusing to return his body or disclose details, marking yet another case of repression against Tibetan religious figures. Few days later, on 8 April 2025, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) held press conference condemning China's action and called for international accountability and intervention. On 8 May, the European Parliament has passed a resolution strongly China's interference in opposing succession of the 14th Dalai Lama, highlighting the suspicious death of Tibetan religious leader Tulku Hungkar Dorje, who died in Chinese custody in Vietnam.

In Tibet, authorities have barred Hungkar Rinpoche's monastery and residents from holding public memorial services for the abbot. Several Tibetans who shared his photos or posted messages mourning his loss on social media have reportedly been interrogated and detained. Reports suggest that even now, Lung Ngon Monastery is facing immense difficulties and forwarding and disseminating photos and information about Rinpoche is strictly forbidden. The monastery has reportedly been threatened with shutdown if it

violates orders from the Chinese government. Neither the Vietnamese nor Chinese governments have made public statements about the Rinpoche's death or responded to requests for comment from media organisations.

Considering this egregious case of transnational repression and human rights violations, it is imperative that the United Nations Human Rights Council establish an independent fact-finding mission to investigate the circumstances of Hungkar Rinpoche's detention and death, focusing on the roles of both Chinese and Vietnamese

authorities. We also call upon nations committed to human rights protection reconsider their diplomatic and economic engagement with China and Vietnam until transparent accountability measures implemented Rinpoche's in demise. Governments consider must imposing targeted sanctions on officials from both countries who were involved in the detention, death, and subsequent cover-up. Lastly, international organisations must strengthen protection mechanisms for Tibetan religious and cultural leaders who continue to face persecution for their work preserving Tibetan identity.

-Report filed by UN, EU, and the Human Rights Desk, Tibet Advocacy Section, DIIR

Sherab Nangjey Weekend School Hosts Mother's Day Celebration Highlighting Love and Kindness

13 May 2025, CTA

Under the bright and sunny sky at North Park, a beautiful meadow in Antwerp, the Sherab Nangjey Weekend School of the Belgium Tibetan Community hosted a joyful and meaningful Mother's Day celebration, themed "Love and Kindness." The event served both as a tribute to mothers and a fundraising initiative in support of the school's cultural and educational efforts.

The celebration drew a large gathering of schoolchildren, teachers, staff, parents, and members of the Tibetan community. It was honoured by the presence of Chief Guest Thinley Wangdue, Secretary of the Office of Tibet, Brussels, along with respected guests Metok Rinpoche from the Himalayan Dolma Buddhist Centre, Geshe Tseten Phuntsok from Shedrub Tengye Ling Buddhist Centre, and other Tibetan community leaders.

In his opening address, School Director Sonam Tsering highlighted the significance of organising the Mother's Day event, focusing on its aims to honour motherhood, strengthen family values, and promote the preservation of Tibetan language and culture among younger generations.

Secretary Thinley Wangdue, in his keynote speech, commended the school's teachers, parents, students, and staff for their collective commitment to sustaining the rich Tibetan language, culture, and identity in exile. He emphasised the invaluable role of mothers and recalled the frequent teachings of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, who has often said that his earliest lessons in compassion and kindness came from his late mother, Dekyi Tsering. He urged the community to carry forward these values with pride and unity. During the event, Secretary Thinley also briefly introduced Dhundup Gyalpo, the newly appointed Tibetan Liaison Officer to Europe, who will outreach to and oversee the Tibetan communities under the umbrella of the three representative offices in Europe.

Following the formal program, schoolchildren performed various cultural presentations, showcasing the rich Tibetan music and dance. A highlight of the event was a touching poem recitation by Tenzin Metok, who beautifully expressed gratitude and admiration for mothers through her heartfelt words, adding a deeply emotional and artistic dimension to the celebration. The celebration concluded with a lively and joyful Gorshey (traditional Tibetan circle dance), with active participation from the public.

Secretary Thinley was accompanied by Tibetan Liaison Office Dhundup Gyalpo, EU Advocacy Officer Tenzin Phuntsok, and Accountant Tenzin Nordhen. The team provided important community services by collecting Green Book contribution dues, distributing completed Green Books, and assisting with Green Book validity extensions.

Gathering applications for new or modified Green Books The event successfully combined cultural preservation, public service, and heartfelt appreciation for mothers. It was a proud and joyful occasion for the Tibetan community in Belgium.

- Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Brussels

HRW urges Pope Leo XIV to rethink China-Vatican deal amid ongoing religious repression

12 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup



People praying at Bishop Bai Cave, a holy site in southeastern China where a Dominican friar hid from Qing dynasty soldiers before being executed in the 1700s (Photo/The New York Times)

International rights Watch dog *Human Rights Watch* has called on newly elected Pope Leo XIV to urgently review the Vatican's 2018 agreement with China that allows the Chinese government to nominate bishops for the statesanctioned Catholic Church, citing continued persecution of underground clergy and concerns over religious freedom.

In a statement released Monday, the international rights watchdog called on the pontiff to push Beijing to halt its crackdown on unregistered churches and clergy who remain loyal to Rome but operate outside the Chinese government's officially sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association.

"Pope Leo XIV has an opportunity to make a fresh start with China to protect the religious freedom of China's Catholics," said Maya Wang, associate China director at Human Rights Watch. "The new pope should press for negotiations that could help improve the right to religious practice for everyone in China."

The Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China, signed in 2018, was intended to resolve disputes over the appointment of Catholic bishops in China. For decades, the Vatican maintained authority over bishop appointments worldwide, while the Chinese government insisted on controlling appointments within its territory.



A demolished house church is seen in the city of Zhengzhou in central China's Henan province. (Photo/Ng Han Guan/AP)

The agreement allowed Beijing to propose bishop candidates, with the pope retaining final approval, though the full terms of the agreement remain undisclosed. Critics have questioned the arrangement's effectiveness, especially as China has made unilateral appointments that were later accepted by the Vatican.

Human Rights Watch noted that new bishops were installed in Shanghai and East Turkistan (Xinxiang) during the Vatican's mourning period for Pope Francis, who passed away on April 21. These appointments reportedly proceeded without any public objection from the Holy See.

The organization also urged Pope Leo XIV to advocate for the release of several prominent underground clergy, including Bishop James Su Zhimin—missing since 1997—Bishop Augustine Cui Tai, who has been repeatedly placed under house arrest, and Bishop Joseph Zhang Weizhu, detained in a 2021 raid on clergy training.

The call for a policy review comes amid wider concerns about religious repression in China, where the government has ramped up a campaign of "Sinicisation" of religion under President Xi Jinping. The policy has seen the demolition of church buildings, confiscation of unauthorised religious materials, bans on Bible apps, and heightened surveillance of faith groups.

"Chinese Catholics worshipping in underground churches are among the 'ordinary people' on whom Pope Leo has said the Church should focus its attention," said Wang. "It's critical for religious freedom in China that the Catholic Church stands on their side and not on the side of their oppressors." Human Rights Watch also drew attention to broader abuses under China's religious policy, including the alleged crimes against humanity committed against Uyghur Muslims in East Turkestan, where an estimated one million people have been detained since 2017. The group also cited the forced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama and suppression of Tibetan Buddhism as examples of Beijing's broader crackdown on religion.

Religious life under China is regulated by the state through five officially sanctioned religious associations: the CPCA for Catholics, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement for Protestants, the Islamic Association of China, the Buddhist Association of China, which oversees all the Tibetan monasteries in Tibet and the Taoist Association of China.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Communities in Amherst and Ithaca

12 May 2025, CTA



Sikyong Penpa Tsering making a presentation on the geopolitical significance of the Tibetan Plateau during the meeting with Tibetan youths in Amherst, Massachusetts.

After successfully concluding his engagements with Members of Congress in Washington, DC, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited Amherst, Massachusetts and Ithaca, New York on 10 and 11 May 2025, respectively, to connect with members of the Tibetan community.

In Amherst, Sikyong first met separately with Tibetan youth to educate them on the geopolitical importance of the Tibetan Plateau, highlighting its water resources, strategic significance, and the environmental consequences of continued mismanagement by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). He also spoke about Tibet's historical status as an independent nation and the deterioration of conditions inside Tibet, particularly the erosion of the Tibetan people's unique civilisation and identity under Beijing's oppressive rule.

Sikyong emphasised the critical role of youth engagement in preserving Tibetan culture, identity, and advancing the broader Tibetan movement. He reiterated the Kashag's commitment to strengthening ties with youth groups and fostering greater awareness among younger generations about their vital role in shaping the future of the Tibetan cause. As the upcoming Tibetan Youth Forum approaches, Sikyong encouraged young Tibetans to actively participate in the conference.

Later that day, Sikyong addressed the members of Tibetan community in Amherst, discussing key issues related to the Tibetan movement and the administration of welfare programs in exile.

On 11 May, Sikyong met with Tibetan community members in Ithaca, delivering a public address during his visit.

In both Amherst and Ithaca, Sikyong briefed attendees on his recent engagements with U.S. lawmakers in Washington, DC, held during the legislative sessions of the House of Representatives and the Senate between late April and early May.

"During our meetings with Representatives and Senators in DC, we requested their continued support for the Tibetan cause," said Sikyong. "We also implored them to publicly express this support during key moments, such as the birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama or the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, to make small yet meaningful gestures of solidarity." Sikyong further shared that legislators were invited to attend upcoming events and celebrations marking the Year of Compassion.

In this regard, Sikyong said, "As the language of violence and war continues to spread across the globe, it is crucial that we, as followers of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, amplify his message of love and compassion during the Year of Compassion to foster peace and harmony in these tumultuous times."

Sikyong further encouraged the community to promote His Holiness' Four Noble Commitments through various programs and initiatives during the year-long celebration of His Holiness' 90th birthday.

Apart from that, Sikyong called on Tibetans in exile to remain united and steadfast in the pursuit of restoring freedom and rights in Tibet. "While we are committed to resolving the long-standing Tibet-China conflict through the Middle Way Approach, one of the 16th Kashag's key priorities has been substantiating Tibet's historical independence to enhance our legitimacy and leverage." For those advocating for full independence, Sikyong stressed the importance of being able to convincingly articulate Tibet's historical independence to the international community as a basis for their advocacy.

Sikyong recommended that Tibetans read the works of Professor Michael van Walt van Praag and Professor Lau Han Shiang for deeper understanding of Tibet's historical and legal status.

Before concluding, Sikyong also highlighted major initiatives of the 16th Kashag, including the Building Back Compact Communities program and the provision of housing and land for Tibetans lacking access to these resources. These efforts aim to sustain Tibetan settlements and institutions in India, Nepal, and Bhutan. He also mentioned the Tibetan Digital Library Project, among other significant undertakings.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering secures US backing against China's crackdown on Tibet

11 May 2025, The Tribune

In a direct counter to China's continued suppression of Tibetan rights and identity, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration met with US Congressman Joe Wilson in Washington, DC.

As per the Central Tibetan Administration, the high-level meeting highlighted rising international resistance to Beijing's oppressive Tibet policy.

Congressman Wilson expressed admiration for Dalai Lama, describing him as a global symbol of peace and inspiration.

According to the Central Tibetan Administration, Sikyong used the occasion to propose a congressional resolution honouring the Dalai Lama's legacy ahead of his 90th birthday. Wilson welcomed the idea and pledged to push it forward in Congress, confronting China's attempts to diminish the Dalai Lama's global standing.

The meeting also addressed recent budget cuts impacting Tibetan programs. As cited by the Central Tibetan Administration, the Tibetan delegation, which included staff from the Office of Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet--raised concerns about the implications for their movement. Wilson, reaffirming his longstanding support, responded by emphasising the power of persistence and the need for unwavering advocacy amid Chinese pressure.

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Campaign for Tibet--raised concerns about the implications for their movement. Wilson, reaffirming his longstanding support, responded by emphasising the power of persistence and the need for unwavering advocacy amid Chinese pressure.

Participants of 28th Shoton Festival Receive Special Audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

10 May 2025, CTA

Almost 500 Tibetan opera performers and their supporters met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the Tsuglagkhang courtyard today. They belonged to 14 groups who are attending the Sho-tön, the annual opera festival, at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA). Singing and dancing vigorously on either side of the aisle through the courtyard, Tashi Shölpa and Gyalu dancers welcomed His Holiness as he emerged through the gate to his residence. He walked steadily to his seat on the veranda below the temple, his right hand keeping time to the rhythm of the drums.

Dhondup Tsering, Director of TIPA offered a mandala and representations of the body, speech and mind of the Buddha. He presented TIPA's annual written report to His Holiness and gave a short introductory talk.

"Since you were born in Tibet, the teaching has spread around the world. You are the compassionate one, Avalokiteshvara, may you live long. This year, which marks your 90th birthday, we'd like to present a series of songs from the Lhamo operas as part of our offering to you."

Each of the opera troupes had two minutes to perform a song. In each case, one singer stood up to the microphone and took the lead, their soaring, emotionally stirring voice prompting a chorus in which the entire gathering took part, filling the courtyard with song.

Students from the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) Chauntra sang about offering incense from juniper trees that grow behind the monastery, its fragrance reaching the heavens. Students from Upper TCV, Dharamsala, declared they would sing to

show that the sun in the east will shine more brightly and times will be happier in the coming year.



An artist from one of the opera troupes participating in the Shoton Festival performing for His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Main Tibetan Temple courtyard in Dharamshala, HP, India on 10 May 2025. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

The song by students of the Tibetan Homes Foundation Mussoorie noted how fortunate we are that the Omniscient One is seated on the throne and a joyful sun shines on the world. Members of the Kollegal troupe gave a short presentation of the life of the Buddha. The Bylakuppé troupe's performance came from the Lhamo opera Drowa Sangmo and referred to two friends sitting together comparing their dreams.

Performers from Paonta chanted a short prayer for His Holiness's long life, then sang about the snow-lion that has long been parted from its native mountains. Members of the Mundgod troupe paid their respects to His Holiness. In their song they wished that beings from all six realms of existence be freed from suffering and reach liberation. The group from Bhandara repeated the lines about the Omniscient One seated on the throne and the sun shining on the world.

Artistes from the Chaksampa troupe based in the USA sang a couplet praising prostration to the Lamas and offerings of song to the Sages. Members of the troupe from Odisha addressed His Holiness and proclaimed, "You are an emanation of Avalokiteshvara, the leader of Tibet. May the sun of happiness shine and may you live long." They were followed by singers from Kalimpong.

The troupe from Mainpat wished His Holiness good health and sang the last two lines of the one verse prayer for his long life: "Tenzin Gyatso, Lord Chenrezig May you live until the cycle of existence comes to an end."

The verse sung by artistes from Nepal offered prostration to the Lamas and paid homage to the Three Jewels. Finally, members of TIPA wished His Holiness "Tashi Delek" and sang words of farewell while praying to meet again next year.

"Your songs and dances have reminded me of times at Norbulingka," His Holiness told the gathering. "You've brought back vivid memories of how I used to sit in my room and watch the Lhamo performances outside. And as I watched I would imitate the dancers' movements.

"Those were happy times, but all that's changed. However, our Tibetan spirit remains as firm as a mountain. When I visited China, I had a strong sense that I came from the Land of Snow. This is something I can't forget. I bear the title Dalai Lama, which indicates the responsibility I had for Tibet's spiritual and temporal affairs.

"As I say, when I was in China, I was strongly reminded that I am a Tibetan. Mao Zedong complimented me, but I didn't try to flatter him—I observed him carefully. He told me that Tibetans were strong, dedicated, sincere, stable people. I think these qualities reflect Tibetans' unflinching spirit.

"On my way to China I passed through Do-tö and Do-mé where people expressed their respect for and faith in the Dalai Lama. Wherever I met Tibetans, I would teach them. I felt very moved to have this opportunity and the people listening to me shed tears too, reflecting the strong bond that exists between them, the teaching and the Dalai Lama. This kind of dedication has existed since the time of King Songtsen Gampo. We have had special links with the Chinese, but, at the same time, a strong sense that we are Tibetans.

"Our dedication to our cause is strong and unwavering and we find this spirit, this strong sense of identity, among Tibetans wherever they are, whether in Tibet, India or elsewhere. "Regardless of the current situation, I am confident that ultimately our struggle will produce a positive result.

"As someone who bears the title Dalai Lama, I don't just pay attention to political affairs, I also take psychology into account. My main practice is to cultivate love and compassion, as well as the view of emptiness, but my brain also has room for science—this is something scientists admire. We can explore Buddhist psychology, understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions, with reason and logic. As a consequence, when Mao praised me, I was able to listen and be quietly critical of what he said and his views.

"Tibetans of the three provinces have maintained their identity. In their hearts, their view and conduct remain the same. Like them, I am determined to keep our Tibetan spirit, culture and religion alive. The explanations we have of the Perfection of Wisdom are powerful. The way we examine them logically means they can be compared to and combined with modern studies.

'This profound heritage has come down to us from the religious kings. We have kept the traditions they introduced alive. Tibetan practitioners and scholars have preserved them. And because they deal with psychology, they're timeless. That's all I have to say. Tashi Delek."

Every one of the Sho-tön artists then lined up to file past His Holiness and receive his blessings. When that was done, His Holiness climbed into a golf cart to ride back to his residence. The entire congregation sang for him as he passed by:

"Tenzin Gyatso, Lord Chenrezig May you live until the cycle of existence comes to an end."

They concluded with a line about how joyful it is to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and they continued to sing for some time after that.

Dalai Lama says Tibetanness underlines our dedication to Tibetan cause in speech to Shoton festival participants

10 May 2025, Tibetan Review

A strong bond has existed among the Tibetan people in all the historical provinces of Tibet since ancient times and it underlines our strong, unwavering dedication to our cause today, the Dalai Lama has said May 10 while addressing some 500 participants in the ongoing Tibetan opera festival in Dharamshala.

"As I say, when I was in China, I was strongly reminded that I am a Tibetan. Mao Zedong complimented me, but I didn't try to flatter him—I observed him carefully. He told me that Tibetans were strong, dedicated, sincere, stable people. I think these qualities reflect Tibetans' unflinching spirit," he has said, speaking to the participants from some 14 groups from Tibetan communities across India, Nepal and North America.

"On my way to China I passed through Dotoe and Domey where people expressed their respect for and faith in the Dalai Lama. Wherever I met Tibetans, I would teach them. I felt very moved to have this opportunity and the people listening to me shed tears too, reflecting the strong bond that exists between them, the teaching and the Dalai Lama. This kind of dedication has existed since the time of King Songtsen Gampo. We have had special links with the Chinese, but, at the same time, a strong sense that we are Tibetans."

As Tibet today stands fragmented under Chinese occupation rule and Tibetans in exile remain scattered across the free world, the Dalai has noted: "Our dedication to our cause is strong and unwavering and we find this spirit, this strong sense of identity, among Tibetans wherever they are, whether in Tibet, India or elsewhere."

"Regardless of the current situation, I am confident that ultimately our struggle will produce a positive result."

The Dalai Lama has expressed happiness with the fact that "Tibetans of the three provinces have maintained their identity. In their hearts, their view and conduct remain the same. Like them, I am determined to keep our Tibetan spirit, culture and religion alive."



His Holiness the Dalai Lama looking on as an artist from one of the opera troupes participating in the Shoton Fetival performs a short song during their audience at the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamsala, HP, India on May 10, 2025. (Photo courtesy: OHHDL/Zamling Norbu)

The 28th Shoton (yoghurt feast) Festival opened at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Dharamshala, on May 7 and will conclude on May 19. This year's festival is dedicated to The Year of Compassion in honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, which the Central Tibetan Administration is marking year-long with a series of events across the globe from Jul 6.

A representative from each participating troupe — TIPA, Nepal Opera Association, Chaksampa Opera Company America), Mundgod Opera Association, Bhandara Opera Association, Kalimpong Opera Association, Tibetan Homes Foundation School. Odisha Opera Paonta Opera Association, Association, Kollegal Opera Association, Upper TCV School, TCV Chauntra, Mainpat Opera Association, and Bylakuppe Opera Association two-minute gave presentation to the Dalai Lama.

Listening to them, the Dalai Lama has said he felt nostalgic, remembering the festival performances he witnessed in Lhasa when Tibet was free.

"Your songs and dances have reminded me of times at Norbulingka," he has said. "You've brought back vivid memories of how I used to sit in my room and watch the Lhamo performances outside. And as I watched I would imitate the dancers' movements.

"Those were happy times, but all that's changed. However, our Tibetan spirit remains as firm as a mountain. When I visited China, I had a strong sense that I came from the Land of Snow. This is something I can't forget. I bear the title Dalai Lama, which indicates the responsibility I had for Tibet's spiritual and temporal affairs."

The Lhamo opera tradition began as an initiative of the Tibetan Yogi Thangtong Gyalpo, a sort of Tibetan Leonardo da Vinci, in the 14th century. He was said to have used it to raise money for building iron-chain bridges across Tibet and present-day Bhutan for the benefit of travelling pilgrims. It was later incorporated into the Shoton festival which marks the end of summer retreat for the monastic community, typically with offering of yoghurt by the lay Tibetan public.

The festival was revived in India in 1993 by TIPA's initiative and is being held annually at different locations.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Launches Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's E-Biography

09 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, serving as the Chief Guest, launched the e-book of Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's biography on the afternoon of 9 May 2024 at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) hall. The event was also attended by LTWA Director Geshe Lhakdor, TPI Director Dawa Tsering, former Kalon Thupten Lungrig, Sherap Tharchin, author several parliamentarians, other dignitaries, and public.

Addressing the gathering, the Speaker expressed deep appreciation for Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's invaluable contributions to the Tibetan cause, particularly his significant role in the functioning of the Central Tibetan Administration. He highlighted Rinpoche's

unique perspective, shaped by his lived experiences across three distinct periods in Tibet's history: life in a free Tibet, life under Chinese occupation, and life in exile as a refugee.

"Rinpoche served the Tibetan cause during one of the most challenging periods in Tibet's history following exile," the Speaker remarked. "Despite the many hardships of life in exile, Rinpoche supported His Holiness the Dalai Lama in laying the foundation for the Tibetan administration in exile. He was a key contributor to the establishment of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), serving on several important committees, including the Constitution Review Committee in 1991, and later as Kalon (Minister) of the Department of Religion and Culture."

The Speaker further noted that the three-volume biography of Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche, offering insights into both religious and secular knowledge, will serve as a lasting source of inspiration for younger generations to continue working for the Tibetan cause.

Urging Tibetans never to lose hope, the Speaker encouraged youth to draw inspiration from the exemplary life of Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche and to contribute to the collective effort toward resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Congratulates German Chancellor Friedrich Merz

09 May 2025, CTA

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Chancellor Joachim-Friedrich Martin Josef Merz of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Speaker wrote, "We are grateful to the government and the people of Germany for their unwavering support to Tibet's non-violent struggle over the decades. Our deep and enduring relationship with your country is built on shared values. It has been further

strengthened by the many visits of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to Germany during his exile. These visits have fostered deep bonds of mutual respect and understanding between our people."

"Tibet's unique culture, language, and spiritual traditions are not only a source of identity for our people, but also serve as a global reservoir of the values of compassion, non-violence, and religious harmony. In a time of increasing global challenges, these values are more vital than ever for the well-being of humanity."

"We humbly appeal to Your Excellency and the German government to continue to support us, use your influential voice to support the preservation of Tibet's cultural heritage and to advocate for the peaceful resolution of the Sino-Tibet conflict by international principles of justice and human rights."

"We wish you great success in your leadership in guiding your nation toward peace, prosperity, and justice." concluded the Speaker.

European Parliament passes resolution on violations of religious freedom in Tibet

09 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution denouncing China's ongoing violations of religious freedom and human rights in Tibet, marking a rebuke against escalating repression under Chinese President Xi Jinping's leadership.

Passed on Thursday during a plenary session in Brussels, the <u>resolution</u> (2025/2692(RSP) was supported by 478 Members of European Parliament (MEPs), with 30 votes against and 41 abstentions. The resolution was one of several adopted on international human rights concerns, including on Russia and Tanzania. The Parliament expressed grave alarm over the worsening human rights landscape in Tibet, citing the Chinese Communist Party's intensified suppression of Tibetan religious and cultural traditions.

A focal point of the resolution is the suspicious death of Tulku Hungkar Dorje, a respected Tibetan Buddhist leader and humanitarian. He was reportedly arrested on March 25 from his hotel room in Saigon, Vietnam, by local police in collaboration with Chinese security agents. Three days later, on he died under suspicious 28, circumstances while in custody at a local public security office. His body was cremated in Vietnam without the consent of his family, triggering international outcry. The European Parliament has called for an independent and transparent investigation into his death, as well as the immediate return of his remains to his family.

The resolution also condemns widespread abuses against Tibetan Buddhists, including forced disappearances, physical mistreatment, and political interference in religious affairs. It draws particular attention to Chinese efforts to manipulate the recognition and training of Tibetan religious leaders, such as the Panchen Lama, whose legitimate successor has remained missing since childhood.

Lawmakers also denounced Beijing's attempts to reshape Tibetan identity through state-controlled education and coercive pressure on religious figures to align with state ideology. These actions, the resolution states, are part of a broader strategy to erode Tibet's unique cultural and spiritual heritage. Among its key recommendations, the European Parliament calls for the suspension of extradition treaties with China, targeted sanctions against those responsible for human rights abuses in Tibet, and an international investigation into the circumstances of Tulku Hungkar Dorje's death. It also calls for the release of all political and religious prisoners, including Tibetan spiritual leader, the Panchen Lama, and Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti.

The resolution urges EU institutions and member states to raise the issue of religious repression in Tibet and other regions such as East Turkestan in both bilateral talks and multilateral platforms. It further encourages the President of the European Parliament to

transmit the resolution to the EUSR, the governments of the PRC and Vietnam, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Central Tibetan Administration.

Earlier this month, MEPs Mounir Satouri and Engin Eroglu, senior members of the European Parliament, <u>issued letters</u> to the Chinese and Vietnamese ambassadors to the EU demanding answers about Tulku Hungkar Dorje's death and condemning the secrecy surrounding his cremation. Satouri also wrote separately to the Vietnamese ambassador, urging a transparent probe into the incident.

Office of Tibet in Nepal Joins Europe Day 2025 Celebration in Kathmandu 09 May 2025, CTA

On 8 May 2025, the Office of Tibet in Nepal participated in the Europe Day 2025 celebrations, organised by the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal.

The event was graced by the presence of the Vice President of Nepal, Hon. Ram Sahaya Yadav, who served as the chief guest. Ambassador Veronique Lorenzo, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, delivered the welcome address as the special guest of honour.

The ceremony was attended by over fifteen ambassadors and diplomatic staff, as well as prominent representatives from various international agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Karma Gyaltsen, Secretary of the Office of Tibet in Nepal, formally presented a ceremonial khata (scarf) to Ambassador Veronique Lorenzo and Deputy Ambassador Federic. On this occasion, he also presented a newly released book by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, titled *Voice for the Voiceless*.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Nepal-

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Emphasises Cultural Importance of Tibetan Opera at 28th Shoton Festival Opening Ceremony

08 May 2025, CTA

The 28th Shoton (Yogurt) **Festival** commenced on 7 May 2025 at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA). Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel as the Chief Guest, joined by officiating Sikyong Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra, Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Justice Commissioner Dawa Phunkyi, Justice Commissioner Phagpa Tsering, Election Commissioner Lobsang Yeshi, Public Service Commissioner Karma Yeshi, Auditor General Tashi Topgyal, standing committee members of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile graced the festival alongside secretaries and senior officials from the Central Tibetan Administration.

In his keynote address, the Speaker lauded the decision to host the 28th Shoton Festival in Dharamshala, coinciding with the year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, as part of the *Ghoton* Celebration — a grand commemoration of His Holiness' 90th birth anniversary.

He applauded the participation of the 14 different opera troupes from various regions for their dedicated efforts in preserving Tibet's unique opera tradition, known as *Ache* Lhamo. Founded around 600 years ago by the Thangtong Gyalpo, Ache great Lhamo has become both a treasured cultural tradition and an important field of study in Tibetan heritage. Yogi Thangtong Gyalpo, known for his high spiritual realisation and deep altruism, established the tradition of Ache Lhamo to raise funds for building iron bridges across Tibet and neighbouring regions, some of which still stand today in Tibet, Bhutan, and elsewhere.

In addition to the eight traditional plays, many new productions including depictions of the life of the Buddha have enriched the already vibrant tradition of *Ache Lhamo* performances. Unlike other operas and performing arts around the world, Tibetan opera has the unique potential to guide individuals toward Nirvana from a spiritual perspective, while also offering moral guidance for everyday life from a worldly point of view.

Speaking on the need to preserve the unique Tibetan opera, the speaker pointed out that *Acha Lhamo*'s existence is facing threat in Tibet under China's Sinicisation policy to destroy Tibet's distinct culture and identity. He also pointed out that this distinct tradition is fading away due to widespread of varied modern performances in the community.

"By the merit of this virtue, generated through the heartfelt performances of the 13 different troupes, may His Holiness the great 14th Dalai Lama live for aeons, may all his wishes be fulfilled, and may the Sino-Tibetan conflict be swiftly resolved," he concluded.

Running from 7 to 19 May 2025, the festival will feature 460 artists from 13 different troupes performing traditional Tibetan opera, known as *Ache Lhamo*.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

28th Shoton Festival Kicks Off in Dharamshala, Drawing Record Participation to Mark the Year of Compassion

07 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

The 28th Annual Tibetan Shoton Festival (Yoghurt Festival) in exile commenced today at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) in Dharamshala, celebrating the vibrant tradition of Tibetan opera from 7–19 May 2025.

This year's festival marks a particularly significant occasion—the Year of Compassion—honouring His Holiness the Dalai Lama's upcoming 90th birthday. In a record turnout, 14 opera troupes from various Tibetan settlements and schools with 50 participating, nearly percent comprising student performers. This strong youth presence highlights the successful transmission of Tibetan cultural heritage to newer generations living in exile.

On the opening day, each of the participating troupes—including TIPA, Nepal Opera Association, Chaksampa Opera Company, Mundgod Opera Association, Bhandara Opera Association, Kalimpong Opera

Association, Tibetan Homes Foundation School, Odisha Opera Association, Paonta Opera Association, Kollegal Opera Association, Upper TCV School, TCV Chauntra, Mainpat Opera Association, and Bylakuppe Opera Association—gave a preview of their operas.

Over the course of the festival, these troupes will stage traditional performances depicting stories such as the Hagiography of Lord Buddha, Choegyal Norsang, Choegyal Drimey Kunden, Pema Woebar, Sukyi Nyima, Nangsa Woebum, Mila Repa, Gyalsa Belsa, Ja Dringon Dawa, Chungpo Dhonyo Dhondup, and Drowa Sangmo.

The festival was inaugurated in the presence of chief guest Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, along with officiating Sikyong Tharlam Dolma Changra, Kalon of the Department of Education; Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang; Commissioners Dawa Phunkyi and Phagpa Tsering; Election Commissioner Lobsang Yeshi; Public Service Commissioner Karma Yeshi; and Auditor General Tashi Topgyal. Also present were standing committee members of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, along with senior officials and secretaries from the Central Tibetan Administration.

The audience also included local Indian officials, representatives from Tibetan civil society, former TIPA students and staff, Tibetan residents of Dharamshala, and attendees of the long-life prayer ceremony held earlier this morning at Tsuglagkhang. The event also drew the attention of tourists and locals, adding to the festive atmosphere. Although Lhamo (Tibetan opera) was first introduced by Thangtong Gyalpo in the 14th century and widely performed across Tibet for centuries, its continuity was threatened following the political upheavals in Tibet. In response, His Holiness the Dalai Lama established TIPA in 1959 during the early years of exile. This became a crucial step in reviving and preserving the rich Lhamo tradition. Building on this foundation, the grand Tibetan Shoton Festival (Yoghurt Festival) was initiated in exile starting in 1993, continuing the legacy of this cherished cultural celebration.

Shoton, or the Yogurt Festival, marks a traditional feast offering yogurt to monks during their summer retreat at monasteries like Sera and Drepung. In ancient India, monks were required to stay in the monastery for three months during summer, and the community would provide them with yogurt and milk feasts. In Tibet, at Sera and Drepung, monks were offered ceremonial yogurt on the thirtieth day of the sixth Tibetan month, followed by debates on Buddhist texts.

From the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Shoton featured performances by Tibetan opera troupes, such as Tashi Sholpa and Shelrong Drongtse, celebrating the unveiling of Drepung's giant thangka. In 1849, when the Eleventh Dalai Lama, Khedrup Gyatso, was eleven, he began residing at Norbulingka during the summer, where opera troupes performed during Shoton at the Kalsang Phodrang.

Autonomous University of Madrid Hosts Seminar on the Life and Works of Renowned Tibetan Writer and Filmmaker Pema Tseden

07 May 2025, CTA



Autonomous University of Madrid Hosts Seminar on the Life and Works of Renowned Tibetan Writer and Filmmaker Pema Tseden

Chinese Liaison Officer for European countries, Sangyal Kyab from the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, delivered a talk on Tibet

and the current situation inside Tibet during a seminar held at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Autonomous University of Madrid), Spain, on 6 May 2025.

The main theme of the seminar, organised by the university's Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, focused on the literary works and films of renowned Tibetan writer and filmmaker Pema Tseden. The event featured presentations by former AP News Beijing correspondent Isolda Morillo and Chinese Liaison Officer Sangyal Kyab. It was moderated by Professor Pilar González España from the Department of Philosophy and Literature.

Introducing the speakers, Professor González noted that Isolda Morillo had translated Pema Tseden's novels *Tharlo* and *Balloon* from Chinese into Spanish and had also interviewed the late filmmaker. She further explained that Sangyal Kyab hails from the same hometown as Pema Tseden and that both attended the same school.

Isolda Morillo began the session with a brief overview of Pema Tseden's life, his literary and cinematic journey, and his role in shaping Tibetan cinema. Following her talk, Sangyal Kyab discussed how Pema Tseden was shaped by a unique historical context, his educational path, the inspiration behind his creative works amid dramatic societal changes, the challenges he faced under China's tight censorship, and his enduring intellectual legacy.

The presentations were followed by a Q&A session with students and faculty. During the discussion, Chinese Liaison Officer Sangyal Kyab elaborated on the Middle Way Approach envisioned by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the current situation inside Tibet, and the Chinese Communist Party's ongoing repressive and assimilative policies in the region.

-Report filed by Tibet Bureau Geneva

Danish politicians call for government inquiry into transnational repression following China Targets investigatio 07 May 2025, ICJJ

Lawmakers from across the political spectrum condemned Beijing's "scary" tactics and said European governments should do more to protect dissidents.

Three Danish political parties have called for a government probe into China's repression campaign against dissidents living in the Nordic country following the China Targets investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, the Danish newspaper Politiken and 41 other media outlets.

Lawmakers from the Unity List, the Danish People's Party and The Alternative said they want to know how widespread Beijing's targeting of political dissidents and members of oppressed minorities is and what authorities intend to do about it, Politiken reported.

Morten Messerschmidt, the leader of the right-wing Danish People's Party, told Politiken that China Targets had unmasked the true face of the Chinese regime and said that, for too long, European politicians have turned a blind eye to its transnational repression.

"China successfully keeps its own population in a totalitarian iron grip, and they have a fundamental ambition to do the same with the rest of the world," Messerschmidt said.

He described China as a "bully" state that Western countries had emboldened economically and militarily "through an extreme degree of naivety."

China Targets uncovered the pressure tactics the Chinese government uses to silence and intimidate its critics abroad, including through proxies and professional hackers.

ICIJ and its media partners examined internal government documents and interviewed 105 transnational repression targets living in 23 countries, including Hong Kong and Taiwan independence advocates and members of Tibetan and Uyghur minorities.

Half of the victims said that members of their families in China and Hong Kong had been intimidated and interrogated by police or state security officials. In several cases, the alleged intimidation came just hours after they had participated in protests or public events overseas. Sixty victims believed they had been followed or were being surveilled in their adopted country.

Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar, a member of the Tibetan government in exile, told Politiken during a recent visit to Denmark that many activists overseas have stopped their advocacy, fearing their families back home could be harmed or imprisoned.

"We are seeing fewer and fewer protests from Tibetans around the world, especially those who have family in Tibet, choosing to remain silent, to censor themselves," Dolkar said.

'A huge responsibility'

As part of China Targets, ICIJ partners the Göteborgs-Posten, Politiken and Swedish daily, investigated the case of Chinese human rights activist Liu Dongling. Liu fled China with her teenage son in 2018 after local officials harassed her for opposing the demolition of her house and village in Henan province. After arriving in Denmark in 2022, they were placed in a center for people seeking asylum in a small southern town, while authorities processed their political asylum claim. But even at the center, Liu and her son did not feel safe after unknown Chinese men approached them, she told reporters.

She said one of the men greeted her in a shop with the words: "Now I found you."

While in Denmark, Dongling became a spokesperson for a campaign to end China's internet censorship called "Ban the Great Firewall." She began leading the organization after the campaign's founder, a journalist, suddenly disappeared in Laos in 2023 and was later arrested in China on charges of subversion.

According to Politiken, Danish authorities later rejected Liu's asylum application on the grounds that she had not demonstrated she would be at risk of persecution if she returned to China.

Liu and her son then moved to an undisclosed location in Sweden, but, even there, she has faced online abuse. A U.S.-based Chinese social media influencer posted videos accusing Liu of being a Chinese spy and repeatedly emailed Danish authorities with the same allegations. Α Chinese website linked influence to covert operations has labeled her a "traitor" and published her private information. "It's really scary," Liu told the Göteborgs-Posten.

The Göteborgs-Posten documented over 20 occasions when Liu was subjected to various forms of pressure or harassment. In some cases, the threats were clearly made by Chinese authorities.

"Even if you have fled China and are living in another country, the Chinese state is still watching you," Danish lawmaker Rosa Lund, a member of the left-wing Unity List, told Politiken. "It doesn't surprise me, but it's scary. It's about basic democratic human rights, and we have a huge responsibility in Europe to defend them," Lund said.

"These are really scary stories," she added. China Targets also showed how, since Chinese President Xi Jinping rose to power, the United Nations in Geneva has become a staging ground for China's transnational repression — and how Chinese authorities abuse Interpol red notices for political ends.

Even if you have fled China and are living in another country, the Chinese state is still watching you.

— Rosa Lund, a member of Danish political party Unity List

In response to comment requests from ICIJ and its media partners, representatives of Chinese embassies in 11 countries said that the allegations of transnational repression are fabricated and intended to smear China.

In Denmark, the investigation has sparked concern across the political spectrum. Messerschmidt, Lund and Helene Brydensholt, a lawmaker with the left-wing Alternative party, told Politiken they want a government inquiry into the scale and scope of China's transnational repression on Danish soil — similar to probes recently undertaken by other European governments.

In its 2024 report on human rights and democracy, the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs called for a coordinated response from members of the European Union to transnational repression by "illiberal regimes," including China.

Switzerland investigated China's oppression of Tibetans and Uyghurs living in the country and concluded earlier this year that transnational repression is a threat to democracy, likening it to terrorism, because it erodes freedom of expression and other rights. In the United Kingdom, a government committee recently heard testimony from experts and victims as part of an ongoing inquiry into the issue.

"Of course, it is deeply problematic that citizens in Denmark experience being controlled and have their freedom of expression and human rights violated by foreign regimes," Brydensholt told Politiken. "We politicians must take this issue very seriously."

Kalon Dolma Gyari Attends 26th Anniversary of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta

07 May 2025, CTA



Kalon Dolma Gyari of the Security Department presenting the book "Voice for the Voiceless" by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to the Honourable Delhi Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta

The Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch (BTSM) commemorated and celebrated its 26th anniversary with a thought-provoking

program held at Ghalib Institute near ITO, New Delhi. The program began with the singing of the National Song "Vande Matram", bringing together prominent leaders, academicians, and local lay people expressing their solidarity with the Tibetan cause.

Dr Indresh Kumar, Marg Darshak of BTSM, delivered the keynote address. Shri Dr Indresh Kumar emphasised the importance of unity in confronting violence and expansionism. "Tibet is under the control of China, and India has attained its freedom after great sacrifice. India has never discriminated; it has always extended support with respect and open arms," he stated. He addressed the importance of resolving of Sino-Tibet conflict using dialogue and non-violence and strengthening a secure India. He further appealed for global solidarity to eradicate conflict and terrorism, reiterating the slogan: "Tibet ki azaadi, Himalaya ki mukti – Jai Bharat, Jai Himalaya, Jai Tibbat."

Honourable Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta, the Chief Guest, addressed the gathering by acknowledging the essence and cause of the Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch, under the guidance of Senior RSS Pracharak Mannaniye Dr Indresh Kumar (Since its establishment on May 5 1999, Dharamshala, in the auspicious presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, our then Sir Karyavah, RSS ii. Mannanive Sudershan and other distinguished dignitaries). Honourable Chief Minister expressed her support toward the cause of the Tibetan movement and quoted, "It is my honour to attend this event, from my official engagements." She reaffirmed India's unwavering support for the Tibetan people. "India walks shoulder to shoulder with Tibet," she assured. Moreover, she expressed her commitment to the continued support and resolution of issues faced by Tibetan brothers and sisters.

Shri Pankaj Goyal, National General Secretary, BTSM, addressed the gathering by introducing the objective and mission of the Sangh. Shri Pankaj Goyal stressed the essence of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch playing an active role in advocating for the Tibetan

Movement, which he holds dear to his heart. He has dedicated more than 20 years of his life to the Sangh. He remarked that BTSM's 26th anniversary is not just a celebration, but a reminder of the enduring challenges that led to its founding, to stand with the Tibetan people in their long and painful struggle.

Shri Prof. Dhananjay Joshi, Vice Chancellor of Delhi Teachers University expressed his honour in attending this event, further committing to work for the cause of Tibet, and even expressed his joining of the Sangh, and commitment to offer his service, announcing to be a member of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch from this day onward.

Kalon Dolma Gyari for the Department of Security, Central Tibetan Administration, addressed the gathering by first expressing her gratitude to the Indian Government and its people for their unwavering support. She congratulated the Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch on 26th anniversary. She highlighted the essence of BTSM's unconditional support and tireless contributions, since its establishment under the blessing of His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, and the guidance of distinguished dignitaries, including then RSS Mannaniye Sudershan ji, Sir Karyavah, Senior RSS Pracharak Mannaniye Dr Indresh Kumar, and Shri Pankaj Goyal.

She expressed her gratitude to Honourable Smt. Rekha Gupta, Chief Minister, Delhi Government, for gracing this event, which is an inspiration to the Tibetan movement. Moreover, she thanked the Honourable Chief Minister for building confidence in an everlasting relationship between India and Tibet, "Dunya Janle Hindustan Kabhi Tibbat ki Saath Nahi Chorey ga. Bharat Aur Tibbat ka Dosti/Sambanth hamesha kayam rahe ga," Kalon Dolma Gyari quoted the Chief Minister's statement.

Kalon Dolma Gyari expressed the voice of the Tibetans living in India, "We are proud to be living in Hindustan and we Tibetan people are always with Hindustan", she quoted. Furthermore, she also mentioned the ongoing global observance of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's 90th birth year as the "Year of

Compassion," urging collective prayers for his long life, in line with his aspiration to live for at least 113 years. His Holiness's unwavering dedication to world peace, compassionate action, and the betterment of humanity continues to inspire and guide people across the globe.

ITCO team, led by its Coordinator Tashi Dekyi, facilitated over 500 Tibet-related books and leaflets, including the book "Voice for the Voiceless" by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, presented to Honourable Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta. The seminar saw more than 250 participants, including members of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch, Tibetan Settlement Officer Dorjee Tsering, Regional Tibetan Women's Association, Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement, Regional Welfare Association (Majnu ka tilla), Regional Tibetan Association (Ladakh Buddha Vihar), Special Frontier Force (SFF) Ex-Army Association, and other representatives from the regional Tibetan community. The event was chaired by Bhushan Kumar Jain, State President, BTSM, Delhi, and Master of Ceremonies Jagdhambha, BTSM, concluded with a strong message of unity, compassion, and the enduring friendship between India and Tibet.

-Report filed by India Tibet Coordination Office-

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Attends Long-life Prayers Offering

07 May 2025, CTA

Overnight rain let up this morning as His Holiness the Dalai Lama walked from the gate to his residence, through the courtyard, to the Tsuglagkhang, the Main Tibetan Temple. Representatives of those offering prayers, Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery, Nepal, a group from the Chatreng Community and the Phari Community, among them Yangsi Rinpoché and Lobsang Nyandak, escorted him. His Holiness smiled and waved to members of the estimated 5000 strong crowd

as he walked. Tashi Shölpa performers danced and sang to welcome him.

Having ridden up to the temple floor in the lift His Holiness stopped to survey and wave to members of the gathering. Next, he stepped into the Kalachakra temple to view the sand mandala being constructed there in preparation for the Kalachakra ritual of offering and practice being performed this month.

Once His Holiness had taken his seat on the throne in the temple the prayers began. The ceremony today was based on the 'Method for Granting the Essence (of Immortality) based on an Amitayus Ritual' by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama. It was presided over by Ven. Samdhong Rinpoché. To his right sat the Abbot of Gyumé Monastery, while to his left were the Abbot of Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery and the young reincarnations of Dromo Geshé Rinpoché, Geshé Lhundup Sopa and the former Abbot of Sé-Gyu Monastery.



Ven. Samdhong Rinpoché leading the Long Life Prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, with to his right Abbot of Gyumé Monastery, and to his left the Abbot of Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery, the young reincarnations of Dromo Geshé Rinpoché, Geshé Lhundup Sopa and the former Abbot of Sé-Gyu Monastery, at the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamshala, HP, India on 7 May 2025. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

The Amitayus Ritual included this repeated refrain: "The time has come, please grant the spiritual accomplishment of immortal life." After flourishing the long-life arrow with its silken banner, Samdhong Rinpoché presented it to His Holiness. A large ritual cake was offered as the single verse prayer for long life

composed by His Holiness at Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché's request was intoned.

A mandala offering depicting the universe, along with representations of the body, speech and mind—a statue, a scripture and a chörten, was presented to His Holiness with a request for him to remain among us for hundreds of aeons, continuing to turn the wheel of Dharma. This was followed by offerings of the nectar of longevity, long-life pills, the eight auspicious symbols, the seven royal emblems and the eight auspicious substances. The prayer for His Holiness's long life by Jamyang Khyentsé Chökyi Lodro that composed by his two tutors were recited. The Abbot of Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery offered a thanksgiving mandala. The ceremony came to a conclusion with recitations of a 'Prayer to Buddha Amitayus', the 'Prayer for the Flourishing of the Teaching' and 'Verses of Auspiciousness'. His Holiness addressed the congregation: "So, here today, members of the Shang Gaden Chökhorling Monastery, a group from the Chatreng Community, as well as the Phari Community have offered these prayers for my long life. Your dedication and sincerity are without doubt—I thank you.

"I was born in Kumbum, in Amdo. Then I came to Lhasa and because I have the title Dalai Lama, I've been able to make a positive contribution to the teaching and the welfare of beings. The Chinese were wary of me, but then I came into exile in India. Everywhere in this great land, from north to south, to east and west, tens of thousands of people come to see me regularly. The people of India, whether they have faith in the Buddha Dharma or not, appreciate what I've been doing. They're delighted to see me. So, I feel that the longer I live, the better I'll be able to serve sentient beings and the Dharma.

"I have good, strong connections with people throughout India. In China, Buddhism is gaining ground and I feel I may be able to make some contribution to the flourishing of the teaching there too. So, I hope to be able to help people through sharing what the Buddha taught.

"Having been born as a Tibetan and recognised as the Dalai Lama according to the indications in the surface of the oracular lake Lhamo Latso, I've been able to serve the Buddha Dharma. I believe I'll be able to serve the Dharma and repay the kindness of the Buddha for several decades more. I've done my best so far.

"I'm someone who came from Siling and reached Lhasa, holding the title of Dalai Lama. When I was in Lhasa, sitting on a high throne, I didn't have much contact with other people, but I studied and later took exams at the Three Great Seats of Learning, Sera, Drepung and Ganden. I sat for my final examination in the Jokhang in Lhasa during the Great Prayer Festival. I've done what I could and studied to the best of my ability. One of my most important teachers was my debating assistant Ngodrup Tsognyi who was very kind to me. That's all I have to say—Tashi Delek."

As he walked from the temple to the lift and then drove through the courtyard, wellwishers lining the way were happy to catch His Holiness's eye as he waved to them, a joyful smile on his face.

RFA to shut down Tibetan service amid budget cuts and legal battle

06 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup



RFA Tibetan service <u>bureau</u> at Radio Free Asia headquarters in Washington, March 24, 2025. (Charlie Dharapak/RFA)

Radio Free Asia's Tibetan Service, one of the few independent news sources available to Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile, will cease operations at the end of this month amid unprecedented budget cuts and legal battles between RFA and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM). This closure follows the Voice of America's Tibetan service halting operations in late March.

The closure comes as part of a massive restructuring announced on May 2, "By the end of May, half of RFA's language services will no longer produce or publish new content: RFA Tibetan, Burmese, Uyghur – which is the world's only independent Uyghur language news service – and Lao (which closed down this week already). Also, ceasing operations will be RFA English service and Asia Fact Check Lab" the statement read, affecting more than 280 staff members, approximately 90 per cent of RFA's U.S.-based workforce.

"We are losing journalists who broke the news about the CCP's genocide against the Uyghurs, who risked their lives covering a civil war in Myanmar, who exposed human trafficking networks in Southeast Asia, and who brought to light the crackdown on religious freedom in Tibet." said Bay Fang, RFA President and CEO, in a statement last Friday. "Their invaluable work is part of RFA's responsibility to uphold the truth so that dictators and despots don't have the last word."

For decades, RFA's Tibetan Service has been an important source of independent news for Tibetans living under Chinese rule and in exile, providing coverage of human rights abuses, religious freedom restrictions, and cultural preservation efforts that are censored inside Tibet.

The service has documented the systematic language erosion of Tibetan rights, restrictions practice, **Buddhist** environmental degradation on the Tibetan and surveillance of Tibetan communities — reporting that has frequently drawn Beijing's ire.

The layoffs come after USAGM terminated its grant agreement with RFA on March 15, prompting a lawsuit by RFA to receive its congressionally appropriated funds. Despite a District Court ruling last week ordering the

reinstatement of RFA's funding, the Justice Department appealed the decision.

On Friday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit temporarily granted a motion for an administrative stay on the previous ruling, effectively allowing USAGM to continue withholding funding from RFA and its sister grantee network Middle East Broadcasting Networks. Appellate Court judges Neomi Rao and Gregory Katsas ruled that the lower court lacked jurisdiction over USAGM operations, delivering what Kari Lake, a special advisor to USAGM appointed by President Trump, called "a maior victory" administration.

The closure of the Tibetan service is part of a larger crisis affecting U.S. international broadcasting under the Trump administration. In addition to RFA's Tibetan service, the organisation's Uyghur service, the world's only independent Uyghur-language news operation will also cease operations, along with RFA's English service and the Asia Fact Check Lab, which specialised in analysing Chinese government propaganda.

"We are in an unconscionable situation," Fang said. "Because we can no longer rely on USAGM to disburse our funds as Congress intended, we will have to begin mass layoffs and let entire language services go dark in the next week."

In a piece published in *The New York Times* website on May 2, Fang lamented that "these brave journalists, who have risked everything to speak truth to dictators abroad, may be silenced by the very nation whose belief in press freedom inspired them in the first place."

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Congratulates Australian PM Anthony Albanese On His Re-Election

06 May 2025, CTA

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his reelection.

The Speaker wrote, "On behalf of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on your re-election and resumption of office as the Prime Minister of Australia. This renewed mandate reflects the continued trust of the Australian people in your leadership."

"I would also like to express my profound gratitude to the people and government of Australia for their long-standing support for the just cause of Tibet. I sincerely appreciate the compassion and care extended to Tibetans through integration initiatives that have allowed many to settle and build meaningful lives in Australia. Your nation's inclusive policies have allowed Tibetan families to thrive in a free society while preserving their cultural heritage."

"I sincerely hope that your government will continue to support a peaceful resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict through the Middle Way Approach, as envisioned by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and endorsed by the Central Tibetan Administration."

"I hope that under your guidance, Australia will further its commitment to democracy, justice, and human rights. May your continued leadership bring even more progress and prosperity to the people of Australia, and may your efforts on the global stage contribute to peace, stability, and human dignity."

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Attend Offering of Long-life Prayers by Shang Gaden Choekhorling Monastery, **Chatring and Phari Communities**

06 May 2025, CTA

His Holiness the Dalai Lama will attend a Long Life Prayer offered to him by Shang Gaden Choekhorling Monastery Nepal, Chatring Community and Phari Community in the morning at the Main Tibetan Temple. All events are free and open to the public unless noted. For ticketed events, people are requested to contact the organisers directly or

visit the listed websites for further information on tickets.

For all teachings in Dharamshala, registration is required in order to attend. Registration begins a few days before the actual start of the teaching and ends the day before the first day of the teaching. Registration hours are from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm at the Main Tibetan Temple (Tsuglhakhang) courtyard. For registration purposes, all foreigners need to bring copies of their passport, Indian visa and 'C' form. People living in India need to bring copies of their aadhaar card. A nominal fee of Rs. 10 will be charged.

For your information, as a long-standing policy His Holiness the Dalai Lama does not accept any fees for his talks. Where tickets need to be purchased, organisers are requested by our office to charge the minimum entrance fee in order to cover their costs only.

ecumenical conference Eighth Tibetan religious traditions underway

06 May 2025, Tibetan Review

An ecumenical meeting of representatives of various Tibetan monasteries belonging to different philosophical schools is being held near Dharamshala from May 4 to 7 to discuss key religious treatises, reported the Tibetanlanguage tibettimes.net May 6. This is the eighth such conference since 2015.

The conference is being held at Dzongsar Shedra (the Dzongsar Institute for Higher Buddhist Studies), Chauntra in Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh, which is jointly organizing the event with the Department of Religion and Culture of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

A total of 17 monks and nuns from various Tibetan religious traditions are participating in the discussion, with 92 participants from 47 monasteries, apart from the monks of Dzongsar Institute.

The texts for discussion at this conference are the root text of Abhidharmakosha (choe by the Indian Master ngonpa dzoe) Vasubandhu, one of the five major Buddhist treatises, and the Bon religious text Sipae Dzoephug, which is on basic cosmology and metaphysical theory of Abhidharma (higher teaching or doctrine) philosophy of the Bonpo tradition.

Papers authored by two monks and a nun from each religious tradition had been submitted nine months earlier, and the discussion are being held on these research works.

The aims of these ecumenical discussions include promotion of religious knowledge, development of amity among the different religious traditions, and the creation of awareness about the different religious centres.

The conferences were stated to have been live webcasted since the 5th, with those unable to travel being able to participate online.

Nuns participated only as listeners from the first to the fourth conferences, when it was suggested that they too should be able to present papers and take part in discussions. This was duly accepted.

Regarding the importance of holding the event, organizer Tenzin Naljor from the CTA's Department of Religion and Culture has explained that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had repeatedly called for such conferences, that in 2013 representatives from 50 monasteries were accordingly invited to a conference on the promotion of study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism, which led to the adoption of a resolution for holding the first such conference in 2015 at the Gyutoe monastery.

This was followed by the conferences at the Kagyu monastery of Palpung Sherabling in 2016, at the Sakya College in 2018, at the Bon monastery of Pal Shen-ten Menri Ling in 2019, at the Nyingma monastery of Thekchen Namdol Shedrub dhargyeling in 2020, at the Gaden Monastery in 2023, and at Khamgar Druk College, Dharma Kara Institute, at Tashijong in 2024.

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Meanwhile, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the CTA has said senior Tibetan religious leaders will convene for a conference in Dharamshala from Jul 2 to 4, ahead of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday Jul 6.

"We will be holding a conference of all the religious heads of Tibetan Buddhism in Dharamshala from Jul 2nd to 4th. And we are hoping that His Holiness will address this conference," he said in an *NDTV* interview May 6, amid speculations that the spiritual leader of Tibet may address the issue of his reincarnation then.

Tibetan community in France continues protest outside Musée Guimet over erasure of 'Tibet' label

06 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon

Members of the Tibetan community in France, alongside French supporters, continued their peaceful protest on Monday outside the Musée Guimet in Paris, condemning the museum's removal of the term "Tibet" from the labels of Tibetan artifacts.

Now in its 26th consecutive demonstration, the protest is part of a growing international outcry against what activists describe as the systematic erasure of Tibetan identity in global cultural institutions. The sustained campaign follows a legal notice issued by Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) France to both the Musée Guimet and French Minister of Culture Rachida Dati, demanding the reinstatement of "Tibet" across all museum labels, publications, and exhibitions.

Protesters carrying Tibetan national flags and placards reading, "TIBET EXISTS. NAME IT." and "LABEL TRUTH. NOT PROPAGANDA." Demonstrators argue that the museum's use of politically charged terminology aligns with China's colonial narrative and undermines Tibet's historical and cultural sovereignty.

The campaign has gained renewed momentum following a recent success at another Parisian cultural institution. The Musée du quai Branly, after public pressure and advocacy efforts, reversed its decision to use "Xizang"—the Chinese government's name for Tibet—restoring "Tibet" in its artifact descriptions.

Since the beginning of the campaign, the Tibetan community in France has organized weekly sit-ins, launched social media campaigns, and distributed educational materials to raise awareness about Tibet's distinct identity. In October last year, over 140 Tibet advocacy groups collectively challenged the Musée Guimet's terminology, accusing the institution of aiding China's efforts to erase Tibet's cultural presence on the global stage.

In a formal letter also sent to Museum President Dr. Yannick Lintz, the coalition demanded immediate rectification, condemning the current labeling practices as a tacit endorsement of the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Despite a formal petition supported by international Tibet advocacy networks, the museum has yet to respond. Organizers have vowed to continue their protests until the museum acknowledges their concerns and restores the rightful designation of "Tibet" in its exhibits.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetans in Washington, Underlines Tibetan Identity as Pillar of Struggle 06 May 2025, CTA

Continuing with his official engagements in the United States, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited the Tibetan Sunday School at the Vienna Community Center on 4 May 2025, where he emphasised the Tibetan youth on critical need for maintaining unique Tibetan identity. Later that day, Sikyong addressed members of the Tibetan communities from Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia at the Capital Area Tibetan Association (CATA) community hall on other key issues concerning seeking resolution to Tibet-China conflict and sustenance of Central Tibetan Administration.

During his interaction with youth at the Vienna Community Center, Sikyong offered a clear and succinct explanation of the Tibetan Plateau's significance—beginning with its formation through the collision of the

Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates, and extending to its crucial role in contemporary geopolitical and strategic affairs.

Sikyong went on to brief the young attendees about the ongoing Tibet-China conflict, emphasising how the Middle Way Approach offers the most suitable path toward a mutually beneficial political solution. However, Sikyong underscored, "Of the two key components of this policy, it is vital that we bolster our efforts to assert Tibet's historical independence as a foundation for our political legitimacy." To support this understanding, he encouraged the audience to study the works of Professor Michael van Walt van Praag and renowned China scholar Professor Lau Han Shiang for deeper insights into Tibet's historical and legal context.

In conclusion, Sikyong urged the younger generation of Tibetans to intensify their efforts in preserving the unique Tibetan identity amid growing threats to the survival of Tibetan culture, both within Tibet and across the diaspora.

Thereafter, Sikyong convened a meeting at the CATA community hall to engage with members of the Tibetan community. Sikyong began by providing an update on his ongoing official engagements in Washington, D.C. Sikyong shared that, "Despite the uncertainty surrounding the restoration of support that was suspended following the termination of USAID programs globally, our Kashag is

making every effort to revive some of these forms of assistance. Our efforts are also directed toward exploring all possible avenues to reinstate services such as VOA and RFA, which are essential in keeping our fellow Tibetans informed on important issues that are otherwise inaccessible within Tibet." Sikvong further revealed that numerous members of Congress, both men and women, had expressed their support for this initiative and offered valuable advice. He also noted that discussions with these lawmakers included updates on the current dire situation in Tibet, as well as the unintended consequences of the suspension of support, which has inadvertently strengthened the People's Republic of China's ongoing efforts to systematically assimilate Tibetan culture and religion. "On this matter," Sikyong remarked, "many legislators conveyed their concerns and reassured us of their continued support."

Nevertheless, Sikyong acknowledged, "While the suspension of these supports represents a significant chunk of our budget, it does not mean that we are entirely depleted of funds, as the majority of our regular budgets remain intact. However, we will persist in our efforts to restore these resources, as their reinstatement would significantly expedite our endeavours to preserve and promote our cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage."

To ensure the continued survival of Tibetan identity, Sikyong also briefed the community on the key achievements of the 16th Kashag in advancing these efforts within the exile community, citing the Tibet Town Project in Minnesota as a notable example.

Session Announcement

05 May 2025, CTA



As per Article 40 of the Charter of Tibetans in

Exile, the 10th session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile is scheduled to be held for eight working days from 10 to 18 September 2025 in the Parliament Hall at Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamshala.

Members are requested to register their arrival at the Parliamentary Secretariat on 9 September 2025.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Parliamentarians Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende and Wangdue Dorjee to Visit North East India

05 May 2025, CTA



As part of the program of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Members of Parliament Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende and Wangdue Dorjee will be visiting Tibetan settlements and communities in Northeast India. Their itinerary includes visits to Guwahati, Shillong, Tenzingang, Bomdila, Tawang, and Dirang from 7 to 21 May 2025. The delegation will depart from their respective locations to Delhi on 7 May and travel onward to Guwahati on 8 May. On 9 May, they will proceed to Shillong, where they will engage with the local community from 10 to 11 May. From 13 to 19 May, the MPs will continue their visits to the remaining settlements. They are scheduled to return to Guwahati on 20 May, travel back to Delhi the same day, and conclude their journey with a return to Dharamshala on 21 May.

-Filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Tibetan Community in Charlottesville 05 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

As part of his ongoing official tour of the United States, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited the city of Charlottesville on Saturday, 3 May 2025 (EDT), where he met with members of the local Tibetan community.

The gathering began with a briefing of the Tibetan Association of Charlottesville's annual report by its President, Dhondup Dolma.

During his address, Sikyong Penpa Tsering highlighted the importance of unity among Tibetans, both in diaspora and inside Tibet. He reiterated the Central Tibetan Administration's unwavering commitment to advocating for the Tibetan cause, reassuring the community that sustained efforts are underway to maintain and strengthen bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress.

In bringing the discussions surrounding the objectives of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), significant attention has been given to the achievements of the past Kashags and the vision of the current Kashag. The past Kashag's tireless efforts and steadfast dedication laid a strong foundation for the continued struggle for Tibetan freedom, preservation of Tibetan identity, and strengthening of democratic governance within the exile community. contributions have left a lasting impact—not merely administratively, but in the collective memory of the Tibetan people."

Sikyong underlined the importance of preserving the Tibetan language and culture, pointing out that Tibetan is one of the world's oldest languages, with a history that spans over a thousand years. While there are many forms of Buddhism practised around the world, Tibetan Buddhism is especially significant because it served as a repository vast collection of ancient religious texts and scriptures of Nalanda tradition. "During the decline of Buddhism in India between the 8th and 13th centuries, many original Buddhist scriptures were translated from Pāli into

Tibetan, helping to safeguard the teachings for future generations," remarked Sikyong. However, Sikyong expressed his concerns that the Tibetan language, culture, religion, environment, and even the everyday lives of the Tibetan people are all under threat as the CCP intensifies its efforts in systematic eradication of these aspects. As Tibetans living in exile, Sikyong said, "it is our collective responsibility to safeguard and preserve these vital aspects of our identity." Sikyong further added that he often encourages the younger generation to learn and speak the Tibetan language, noting that its historical significance alone shows how important it is to preserve. One of the main reasons, he pointed out, is that within Tibet itself, learning the Tibetan language is heavily restricted.

Furthermore, Sikyong highlighted the importance of youth engagement as a central goal of the 16th Kashag recognising the vital role young Tibetans play in preserving the identity and future of the movement, Sikyong emphasised that the Kashag is working to build closer relationships with students and youth groups to raise awareness about the Tibetan cause and their role in shaping it.

"During my visit to the Tibetan settlement in India, I especially expressed my foremost gratitude to the older generations of Tibetans. Though they were not educated, they were fully committed to doing everything under His Holiness' guidance. The early times in exile were the hardest, marked by a lack of necessities, no proper food, and, tragically, some people lost their lives due to harsh weather conditions."

Regarding the ongoing Tibet-China conflict, Sikyong emphasised, "Rather than framing Tibet's struggle narrowly, it must be place within the broader international issue as Sino-Tibet conflict so that it would help garner clearer global understanding and support." Before concluding, Sikyong also spoke on the significance of the Middle Way Approach in finding mutually beneficial and peaceful resolution to the Tibet-China conflict and reflected on His Holiness the 14th Dalai

Lama's recent book "A Voice for the Voiceless".

Following that, the Association's Vice President Geshe Damchoe delivered concluding remarks.

Throughout this official engagements, Sikyong was accompanied by Tshering Doma, Secretary of the Office of Tibet, D.C.

Coordinator Thupten Tsering Engages with Tibet Supporters in Amiens, Meets Deputy François Ruffin of Nouveau Front Populaire

05 May 2025, CTA

While in Amiens (northern France) to collect annual voluntary contributions from the Tibetan community, Thupten Tsering, Coordinator of the Bureau du Tibet in Paris, met with long-time Tibet supporter Caumont Yolande, as well as Deputy Francois Ruffin of the *Nouveau Front Populaire*, and members of regional Tibet Support Groups on 4 May 2025.

During his meeting with Deputy Francois Ruffin, the Coordinator briefed him on the Tibetan community in Amiens, noting that approximately 150 Tibetans reside in the city. He highlighted the presence of a Weekend Tibetan Language and Cultural School and shared detailed updates on the increasingly dire situation inside Tibet.

The Coordinator also inquired about the progress of establishing a Tibet Support Group within the French National Assembly, expressing the Bureau du Tibet's keen willingness to assist in this initiative.

During the collection of voluntary contributions, around 60 Tibetans participated. In addition, a non-Tibetan supporter was issued a new Blue Book. Donations were also gathered in support of preparations and activities related to the upcoming "Year of Compassion".

-Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Paris

Dalai Lama has not changed position on practice of Dolgyal spirit: Gaden Phodrang

05 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup

The Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, also known as Gaden Phodrang, has issued an announcement clarifying His Holiness the Dalai Lama's unwavering position regarding the controversial propagation of the Dolgyal spirit, addressing misconceptions that have circulated since a 2021 statement. The Gaden Phodrang urged Tibetans to remain firm in their "collective stance" and not be swayed by attempts to "sow discord among Tibetans", referencing that the Chinese government has tried to exploit this issue to create divisions within Tibetan communities.

The clarification, released on May 2, 2025, responded to deliberate misinterpretations by Dolgyal followers who claimed the Dalai Lama had reversed his decades-long guidance discouraging the practice. The announcement firmly states, "His Holiness's position on restricting Dolgyal practices has clearly remained unchanged, as evidenced by his various statements."

According to the announcement, confusion arose from a brief comment made during an online teaching to Tibetan youth on June 2, 2021, when the Dalai Lama said Dolgyal followers "should be objects of compassion and love". This statement was subsequently misconstrued by some as a retraction of his previous position, the announcement asserted. The statement clarified that the Dalai Lama was emphasising the importance cultivating compassion toward all beings while still maintaining his stance against the practice itself. Shortly after that teaching, when His Holiness was informed about what the Dolgyal followers were saying, he responded: "My position on Dolgyal has not changed. As the Great Fifth Dalai Lama stated: 'This evil spirit called Dragpa Gyaltsen, who makes false claims to being a Dharma protector, is a harmful spirit born from distorted aspirations".

The announcement further stated that His Holiness's recent statements further reinforce this position. On February 5, 2025, after a ceremony at Sera Thekchen Ling in South India, the Dalai Lama enquired about potential "disturbances" regarding Dolgyal, demonstrating his continued concern about the practice. Additionally, on April 7, 2025, when responding to a woman whose daughter was allegedly possessed by a spirit some called Shugden, His Holiness said, "It's not Dolgyal. I can say that definitively. Because I have imposed restrictions on the propitiation of Dolgyal, so it cannot harm you."

The Dalai Lama renounced Dolgval practice in 1975 after discovering what he described as historical, social and religious problems associated with it. He has consistently discouraged followers from propitiating the spirit based on three main concerns: the risk of Tibetan Buddhism degenerating into spirit worship, obstacles to genuine sectarianism, and the practice being particularly inappropriate in relation to the well-being of Tibetan society.

This clarification comes against a backdrop of previous controversies surrounding Dogyal practice. In 2015, Reuters published an investigation revealing connections between the Chinese government and the International Shugden Community (ISC), which had organised protests against the Dalai Lama worldwide. A leaked Communist Party document from 2014 described the Dogyal issue as "an important front in our struggle with the Dalai clique".

The ISC subsequently disbanded in March 2016, announcing the withdrawal of all demonstrations against the Dalai Lama.

Columbia Heights declares May 3 as 'Four River Six Ranges Day' honouring Tibetan resistance and heritage

05 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon

In a powerful show of solidarity with the Tibetan community, the city of Columbia Heights in Minnesota, has officially proclaimed May 3, 2025, as "Four Rivers Six

Ranges Day: A Tribute to Tibetan Defiance and Dignity." The proclamation was announced during the world premiere of *Four Rivers Six Ranges*, a Tibetan feature film documenting the legacy of resistance and cultural perseverance, held at the historic Heights Theater.

Directed by filmmaker Shenpenn Khymsar, Four Rivers Six Ranges tells the story of the Chushi Gangdruk resistance, a grassroots movement formed in 1958 by ordinary Tibetans determined to protect their homeland from China's military occupation. The group played a crucial role in ensuring the safe escape of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama into exile in 1959.

The premiere comes ahead of the 90th birthday of His Holiness in 2025 and serves as both a cultural celebration and a tribute to his unwavering advocacy for nonviolence, human rights, and Tibetan identity during more than six decades in exile.

The proclamation, issued by Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula, highlighted the resilience of the Tibetan people, stating, "Despite decades of repression, religious persecution, and cultural erasure, Tibetans have preserved their language, spiritual traditions, and identity with unwavering strength." She further emphasized the importance of standing with those who "resist injustice with courage, compassion, and hope."

Created entirely by Tibetans in exile, the film resonates as a call for global solidarity and a testament to the enduring strength of a people whose struggle for freedom transcends borders, the proclamation further stated.

Columbia Heights, home to over 6,000 Tibetan refugees, many of whom reside in the Twin Cities area, was chosen as the premiere location in recognition of the community's significant cultural contributions. The Heights Theater was filled beyond capacity, with attendees visibly moved by the tribute and the powerful storytelling on screen.

Director Shenpenn Khymsar expressed heartfelt appreciation for the honor, dedicating the proclamation not only to the film and the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday but also to Tibetans across the globe and the brave Chushi Gangdruk fighters. "This is for our nation and our people," he said, crediting Tibetan activist Jigme Ugen and the six Tibetan associations of Minnesota for making the event possible.

Tibet House Japan and Save Tibet Network Jointly Organise Tibetan Spiritual Festival in Tokyo

05 May 2025, CTA

The Tibet House Japan and the Save Tibet Network jointly organised a two-day Tibetan Spiritual Festival at Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple in Tokyo on 3 and 4 May 2025. The purpose of the festival was to introduce and share the Tibetan spiritual and compassionate culture with the Japanese and other communities in Tokyo and promote peace, harmony, and a sense of global community. Rev. Kimura Tomohiro of Tsukiji Hongwanji

Rev. Kimura Tomohiro of Tsukiji Hongwanji and Representative Dr Tsewang Gyalpo Arya of the Tibet House Japan welcomed the audience and shared a brief history of the relationship between Tibet and the Hongwanji Temple since the time of the great 13th Dalai Lama and Rev. Otani Kozui of the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in early 1900s.

At the talk events, Prof Hirano of Tokyo University talked on the history of Tibet; Prof Yoshimura spoke about Tibetan Buddhism and its applicability in daily life; Usui Taikan, a photographer, talked on His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kalachakra through the photographs that he has taken; and a Tokyo University student Inui Masataka spoke on his experience in studying Tibetan Buddhism. Geshe Tenzin Woeser of Koyasan University led a session on meditation and Karma Dhondup, a Tibetan photographer, presented his photos to tell Tibetan refugee stories.

The colourful Tibetan lungta flags adorn the festival sites and the visitors enjoyed the ambience greatly. The festivals had several booths maintained by Potala College, Kawachen, Students for Free Tibet, and the Tibetan Community in Japan. The booths displayed Tibetan handicrafts, accessories, clothing, and books. Tibet House Japan sold

and distributed books on Tibet and Buddhism. Karma Art held an exhibition of photos of Tibet and Tibetans in India. Tashi Delek restaurant, Ama Curry, and Bodkhyim restaurant served the visitors Tibetan delicacies like momo, thukpa, Tibetan cookies, bread, and butter tea.

Tibetan artists Tenzin Kusang and Tenzin Genyen, and Japanese artist Terahara Taro entertained the audience in the evening with Tibetan songs, dance, and gorshe.

Many Japanese appreciated the festival greatly and requested more such events to learn and experience Tibetan spiritual culture. Representative Arya, at the closing day of the festival, thanked the audience and the participants and expressed hope that the festival inspired peace, harmony, and a sense of global community.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Japan

Buddhist leaders' conference to be held in Dharamshala ahead of Dalai Lama's 90th birthday: CTA President

05 May 2025, Phayul, Tenzin Nyidon

The President of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) Penpa Tsering has confirmed that senior Tibetan Buddhist leaders will convene for a conference in Dharamshala from July 2 to 4, just days ahead of the 90th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Speaking to NDTV, President Tsering said, "We will be holding a conference of all the religious heads of Tibetan Buddhism in Dharamshala from July 2nd to 4th. And we are hoping that His Holiness will address this conference."

The announcement comes amid growing speculation over the succession of the Dalai Lama, a deeply sensitive issue that has drawn increasing interference from the Chinese government. Responding to Beijing's repeated assertions that it will appoint the next Dalai Lama, the CTA President stated firmly, "A devout Buddhist practitioner will never accept that," he stated firmly. "We all know the system of reincarnation is very unique to

Tibetan Buddhism... it's the person who is going to decide where he or she will be born. It's not the communist government."

The meeting is especially awaited in the context of the octogenarian Tibetan leader's September 2011 statement where he said that he would consult with senior Tibetan Buddhist figures upon reaching the age of 90 to assess the future of his lineage. While the CTA President declined to confirm whether a decision on the 15th Dalai Lama's succession would be made at the upcoming conference, he did not rule it out. "That has to come from His Holiness," he said, adding, "Even today His Holiness keeps reassuring us that he will live up to 113 years... So we believe this Dalai Lama will live very long."

President Tsering acknowledged that any decision could include the traditional paths of reincarnation or emanation—a practice in which a spiritual successor is named during the predecessor's lifetime. However, based on His Holiness's recent book, *Voice for the Voiceless*, the CTA President believes the indication leans more toward reincarnation. With the July conference drawing near, the Tibetan community and global supporters alike await with great anticipation what the Dalai Lama may choose to share.

The Tibetan leader also addressed the appointment of US Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues, a key diplomatic position that advocates for Tibetan issues and rights which has remained vacant under the current administration stating that "We're still trying to figure out and also see what are the possibilities that we can reach out to the State Department. This is a statutory congressional decision, which we believe the State Department should be honouring, but now we'll have to see how it evolves."

He further confirmed that the annual \$12 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has currently ceased. Of that funding, \$7 million supported the Tibetan Resilience Programme—focused on education, healthcare, and rehabilitation; \$3 million was dedicated to building CTA institutional capacity; and \$2 million funded the

digitization of Tibetan scriptures. While visiting Washington, D.C., the CTA leader said he is lobbying congressional and administration officials to restore the funding. "There may still be a little leeway to manoeuver if the administration is really keen to get it back on track," he noted.

On the topic of relations with China, President Tsering confirmed the continuation of informal contact, despite public denials from Beijing. "Yes, there are personal meetings also," he said. "It's more about them trying to understand what we are thinking. They are particularly interested in His Holiness's age, health, and the succession plan."

However, he struck a cautious tone regarding the prospects for meaningful dialogue. "If you look at what President Xi Jinping is doing in China, particularly in Tibet, Uyghur, and Mongol areas, it doesn't look like there could be any common ground—even if contact is reestablished," he warned.

Parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen Attends World Press Freedom Day Event

04 May 2025, CTA



Parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen Attends World Press Freedom Day Event.

On 3 May 2025, Parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen, a member of the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, attended an event commemorating World Press Freedom Day on 3 May as the Chief Guest. The event was organised by the Tibetan Journalists Association and held at the Tibetan Settlement Officer's hall.

During the event, Pema Ngodup, a reporter for Radio Free Asia's Tibetan service, was honoured as one of the longest-serving journalists for his contributions to Tibetan-language news broadcasting.

Following that, a panel discussion on press freedom was held, during which Parliamentarian Tsering Yangchen emphasised the importance of a free press. Highlighting the media's role in informing the public about global events, she referred to the media as the fourth pillar of democracy.

Sharing her experience of attending a workshop on freedom of speech, the MP emphasised the importance of disseminating truthful information backed by reliable sources. She also spoke about the critical situation of Tibetans in Tibet, who lack freedom of expression, and urged media outlets in exile to continue spreading the truth about Tibet.

The MP addressed questions regarding the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in Article 12 of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile, as well as the Right to Information Act of the Indian government.

Other speakers included Sonam Tsering, Secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress, and Kalsang Jinpa, President of the Tibetan Journalists Association.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Offers Congratulations to Anthony Albanese on His Re-election as Prime Minister of Australia

04 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>



His Holiness the Dalai Lama Offers

Congratulations to Anthony Albanese on His Re-election as Prime Minister of Australia

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written to Anthony Albanese this morning to congratulate him on his re-election as Prime Minister following his party's victory in the Australian parliamentary elections.

"It has been a privilege for me to have been able to visit Australia several times over the years," he wrote. "The friendship and affection that Australian brothers and sisters have shown me have touched me deeply. I have also been encouraged by their enthusiasm and interest in my efforts to promote the human values of loving kindness, compassion, a sense of oneness of humanity and closer inter-religious harmony."

"I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the Australian government and its people for their interest in and support for the Tibetan people's freedom and dignity."

"I wish you every success in meeting the challenges that lie ahead in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the Australian people."

His Holiness ended his letter by offering his prayers and good wishes.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on His Party's Election Victory

03 May 2025, CTA

On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people, Sikyong Penpa Tsering wrote a letter to extend his sincere congratulations to Canadian Prime Minister Mark Joseph Carney and to the Liberal Party on their electoral victory.

In his letter, Sikyong acknowledged Canada's longstanding support for the Tibetan people, stating, "Canada has become a second home to a growing and vibrant community of Tibetan people, who have always found tremendous empathy and support from successive Canadian governments and its people. The Tibetan cause, in particular, has

received consistent support and advocacy from the Canadian Parliamentary Friends of Tibet (PFT), since its formation in 1990, demonstrating Canada's enduring commitment to human rights and democratic values."

Sikyong expressed deep appreciation for Canada's continued solidarity with the Tibetan cause and reiterated his hope for strengthened ties under the new leadership. Sikyong wrote, "We look forward to continued friendship and support under your leadership, as we continue to strive for a lasting, peaceful resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict based on the Middle Way Approach." "As you assume the responsibilities of your high office, I offer my best wishes for your success in leading Canada toward greater prosperity while upholding the principles of freedom, democracy, and human rights that your nation so admirably champions on the world stage," Sikyong concluded.

Representative Thinlay Chukki Attends Memorial Service Held in Honour of Late Representative Lobsang Choephel in Zurich

03 May 2025, CTA

Representative Thinlay Chukki of the Tibet Bureau Geneva attended a memorial service in Zurich on 2 May 2025 to pay her respects and extend condolences to the bereaved family of the late Representative Lobsang Choephel. On behalf of the Kashag, she also delivered a formal letter of condolence.

The prayer ceremony was attended by the Abbot of Rikon Chökhor Ling Monastery, members of the bereaved family, and around 100 Tibetan community members and sympathisers.

During the ceremony, Representative Thinlay Chukki offered a ceremonial scarf to the body of the deceased and addressed the gathering. She implored those present to offer prayers for his swift rebirth and shared that a prayer service in his memory had been held a day earlier by the leadership and staff of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Representative Chukki was accompanied by Chinese Liaison Officer Sangyal Kyab during the memorial service.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Geneva



RFA announces over 90% staff lay off, including at its Tibetan service

03 May 2025, Tibetan Review

Radio Free Asia (RFA) has said May 2 that it will lay off almost all of its staff and close production in several languages, including the Tibetan service, after President Donald Trump cut off funding, effective May 9.

RFA — created by the United States with a mission to deliver news in countries without free media — has said it will terminate 280 staff members in Washington, accounting for more than 90% of its US-based workforce, as well as 20 positions overseas.

Also ceasing operations will be *RFA English service* and *Asia Fact Check Lab*, a special unit focused on picking apart false narratives seeded by the Chinese Communist Party. These moves are drastic but necessary, *RFA* President and CEO Bay Fang has said, given the delays in receiving funds from the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), despite a court order last week.

"We are in an unconscionable situation," rfa.org May 2 quoted Fang as saying. "Because we can no longer rely on USAGM to disburse our funds as Congress intended, we will have to begin mass layoffs and let entire language services go dark in the next week.

A federal court last week issued a preliminary order to the government to restore funding, saying a legal challenge by *RFA* as well as US-funded Arabic media was likely to succeed.

However, the Trump administration has not complied and, meanwhile, another court May 1 temporarily stayed last week's order pending court procedures., noted the AFP May 3. A circuit court paused the preliminary order "to give the court sufficient opportunity to consider the emergency motions." The judges said it "should not be construed in any way as a ruling on the merits those motions," of noted edition.cnn.com May 2.

Expressing her sadness at the development, Fang has said, "We are losing journalists who broke the news about the CCP's genocide against the Uyghurs, who risked their lives covering a civil war in Myanmar, who exposed human trafficking networks in Southeast Asia, and who brought to light the crackdown on religious freedom in Tibet.

"Their invaluable work is part of *RFA*'s responsibility to uphold the truth so that dictators and despots don't have the last word. Our priority remains to preserve our company and Congressionally mandated mission, while protecting our most vulnerable journalists."

Voice of America (VOA), which was administered more directly by the government, shut down production after the funding cutoff but is also challenging the Trump move in court.

However, *Radio* Free Europe/Radio Liberty — created to reach inside the Soviet bloc during the Cold War — remains operational, with the Czech government stepping in to keep it afloat, said the AFP report.

Trump moved to shut down *VOA* and strip other broadcasters of federal funding in mid-March. Half a dozen lawsuits have been filed to reverse the moves.

Meanwhile., Trump has also, on May 1 signed an executive order, seeking to end federal funding for National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) over what he called their "biased and partisan news coverage".

Tibetan Sikyong lobbies in Capitol Hill as Trump budget proposal slashes foreign aid

03 May 2025, Tibetan Review

As US President Donald Trump's 90-day "pause" on foreign aid increasingly looks likely to become permanent in most of the cases – with the Tibetan services of the US funded broadcast government sharing the same fate - the Sikyong (executive head) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Mr Penpa Tsering, is series of meetings holding Congressional leaders and others to seek reassurances of continued support for Tibet, including seeking aid restoration possibilities. On his third day in the US Capitol on Apr 30, the Tibetan Sikyong met with key members of the US Congress, emphasising the urgency of the Tibetan issue amid China's intensifying repression and warning that reduced US support could embolden China, said the CTA on its *Tibet.net* website May 2.

A major focus of his day's schedule was stated to be a meeting with members of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, attended by its Chairman John Moolenaar, Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Representatives Neal Dunn, Carlos Gimenez, Gus Bilirakis, and André Carson.

The committee members were stated to have expressed deep interest in understanding the real-time effects of China's tightening grip on Tibet, on which the Sikyong was stated to have made a presentation.

He has also stressed the impact of recent US budget cuts on Tibetan programs in exile, emphasizing that continued gaps in US assistance would risk undermining decades of progress and how a pause in US support benefits China directly.

He has also underscored the broader geopolitical significance of the Tibetan Plateau, pointing to its increasing militarisation by China and the region's critical role in South and Central Asian security dynamics. He has stressed that sustained US support for Tibet is a strategic necessity.

The Tibetan Sikyong has begun his day's engagement with meetings with Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, and concluded with a meeting with Congressman Mario Díaz-Balart and his staff.



Sikyong Penpa Tsering meets U.S. Representative Michael McCaul, 29 April 2025. (Photo courtesy: FB/Sikyong Penpa Tsering)

Earlier, on Apr 29, the Tibetan Sikyong was stated to have held two successive high-level meetings on Capitol Hill, beginning with Representative Michael McCaul, former Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and, later, with the current Chair, Representative Brian Mast.

Apart from the issue of the restoration of US aid for Tibetans, a key topic of discussion was stated to be the appointment of a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. He has stressed the strategic importance of the position and advocated for placing it under the direct purview of the Secretary of State within the new administrative structure. In the previous Trump administration (2017-2021), the position was filled only in Oct 2020.

The Tibetan Sikyong has also raised concerns about ongoing funding challenges faced by *Radio Free Asia, Voice of America*, and the National Endowment for Democracy, underscoring their vital role in amplifying Tibetan voices globally.

A subsequent meeting with Mast was stated to have focused on strengthening congressional engagement on Tibet-related policy matters.

The Tibetan Sikyong has invited Chairman Mast to attend the 90th birthday celebrations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and presented him with a signed copy of his most recent book, *Voice for the Voiceless*.

Meanwhile, the White House has unveiled a budget blueprint May 2 that would pump more money into defense and homeland security, while taking an axe to programs the Trump administration has already targeted, including education, foreign aid, environment, health and public assistance programs, reported *edition.cnn.com* May 2. However, "ultimately, it is Congress that holds the power of the purse," Republican Senator Susan Collins, who chairs the Appropriations Committee, has said.

Obituary: Department of Information and International Relations Mourns The Demise of its Former Kalon Tashi Wangdi

02 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>



Central Tibetan Administration Mourns The Demise of Former Kalon Tashi Wangdi

The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) is deeply saddened by the passing of former Kalon (Minister) Tashi Wangdi, who departed this life at the age of 78 in Ottawa, Canada, on 1 May 2025.

Kasur Tashi Wangdi was a towering figure in the Tibetan freedom struggle in exile and a steadfast pillar of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Born in Tibet and forced into exile as a child following the Chinese occupation, he dedicated his entire life to the service of the Tibetan people and the Tibetan cause.

Throughout his decades-long career, he embodied a rare blend of principled leadership, humility, and unwavering commitment—deeply inspired by his reverence for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his dedication to the Tibetan community. His passing leaves a profound void in the Tibetan movement and in the hearts of all who knew him. Yet his legacy—defined by service, sacrifice, and statesmanship—will continue to guide and inspire future generations.

The Department extends its heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this time of sorrow.

This afternoon at the Department of Security, Officiating Sikyong Dolma Gyari held a press conference to convey heartfelt condolences on behalf of CTA to the bereaved family members.

During the press conference, the Officiating Sikyong also addressed the absence of an official customary prayer service by the CTA leadership and staff. She explained that, in accordance with the late Kasur's final wishes—relayed by a relative of his wife—he had specifically requested that no such service be held, as he did not want to disrupt the working hours of the CTA. "This reflects the kind of selfless and dedicated person he was—always putting the cause and the community above himself," added Kalon Dolma Gyari.

Brief Bio: Kasur Tashi Wangdi was born on 15 April 1947 in Sangag Choeling, Tibet. Following the Chinese invasion, he fled into exile with his family in 1959 and was among the first batch of Tibetan children selected by His Holiness the Dalai Lama from the refugee camp at Missamari in Assam to attend the newly established refugee school in Mussoorie, India. Demonstrating academic excellence from a young age, he was awarded a scholarship to study at Wynberg Allen, a

private boarding school in Mussoorie. In 1968, he received a British Council scholarship through the refugee support organisation Ockenden Venture and continued his studies in the United Kingdom, ultimately earning a B.A. (Honours) in Political Science and Sociology from Durham University in 1973.

Upon his return to India in 1974, he initially joined the Department of Home as a junior officer and rose steadily through the ranks, holding numerous key positions over the decades. He served in various secretariats. Earlier, from 1966 to 1968, during a break in his academic journey, he also served in the Council for Home Affairs and the Council for Education of the Tibetan Administration as an English translator.

From the early 1980s onward, he was entrusted with multiple ministerial portfolios, including the Departments of Information & International Relations, Security, Education, Health, Home, and Religion & Culture. His tenure as a minister was marked by consistent leadership during a critical period of the Tibetan diaspora's development and international engagement.

In addition to his ministerial responsibilities, he was appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1988 to lead the official delegation for negotiations with the Government of the People's Republic of China. He continued to be involved in Sino-Tibetan dialogues as a member of the Task Force for negotiations, which was established in 2004. Apart from serving as the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi, he also served as His Holiness's Representative in the United States from 2005 and in Brussels from 2009, overseeing relations and conducting Tibet advocacy in Western Europe, the European Union, and North Africa (Maghreb).

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Implores Continued US Support for Tibet During Ongoing Official Engagements

02 May 2025, CTA



Sikyong with Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi.

On 30 April 2025 (EDT), the third day of his official visit to the United States, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration met with key members of the U.S. Congress, emphasising the urgency of the Tibetan issue amid China's intensifying repression and warning that reduced U.S. support could embolden China.

The day's engagement began with meetings with Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi. Sikyong thanked Rep. Schakowsky for her continued support, to which she responded with a strong message of solidarity with the Tibetan people. In his meeting with Representative Pelosi, one of Tibet's most steadfast allies, Sikyong inquired about her health, to which she responded reassuringly that she was doing well. Their conversation then turned to the current challenges facing Tibetans and how to navigate these difficult times through continued advocacy.

A major focus of the day was a substantive meeting with members of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. Present were Chairman John Moolenaar, Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Representatives Neal Dunn, Carlos Gimenez, Gus Bilirakis, and André Carson. Committee members expressed deep interest in understanding the real-time effects of China's

tightening grip on Tibet. Sikyong gave a briefing on the deteriorating detailed situation: the expansion of colonial-style boarding schools separating Tibetan children from their families and culture; digital surveillance; and the suppression of religious freedom. He stressed the policies aimed at dismantling Tibetan identity from the roots. Responding to inquiries about the younger generation, Sikyong, ioined by Representative Namgyal Choedup of the Office of Tibet in Washington, D.C., and Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, stressed that China's efforts to erase Tibetan identity have had the opposite effect. Far from erasing their heritage, China's policies have only deepened the commitment of Tibetan youth to their culture and cause. The issue of the reincarnation of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was raised, particularly concerns over China's potential attempt to appoint its own Dalai Lama. In response, Sikyong

emphasised that the saga of the Panchen Lama

should serve as a cautionary lesson to the

Chinese government, demonstrating that such

efforts to manipulate Tibetan religious

traditions are neither accepted by Tibetans nor

fruitful in achieving legitimacy.

Sikyong also stressed the impact of recent U.S. budget cuts on Tibetan programs in exile. He expressed gratitude to the Government of India for stepping in to support during this pause, but emphasised that continued gaps in U.S. assistance would risk undermining decades of progress and how a pause in U.S. support benefits China directly. He also underscored the broader geopolitical significance of the Tibetan plateau, pointing to its increasing militarisation by China and the region's critical role in South and Central Asian security dynamics. He stressed that sustained U.S. support for Tibet is a strategic necessity.

Sikyong also thanked the U.S. Congress for its passage of landmark legislation, including the Tibet Policy and Support Act and the Resolve Tibet Act, which he cited as powerful tools in international advocacy.

The day concluded with a meeting with Congressman Mario Díaz-Balart and his staff, who warmly welcomed the delegation and reaffirmed their commitment to standing with the Tibetan people.

Czech Republic reaffirms support for Tibet amid China tensions

02 May 2025, The Print

On April 29, Representative Thinlay Chukki from the Tibet Bureau in Geneva met with lawmakers and officials from the Czech Republic to request their ongoing support for Tibet and its people, as reported by the Central Tibet Administration (CTA).

The gathering took place in Prague with Jiri Ruzicka, the Acting President of the Senate; Hayato Okamura, Co-President of the Czech Parliamentary Group for Tibet and Member of the Chamber of Deputies; Matyas Nataniel Barotek, an Advisor; and Katerina Jacques, Secretary of the Czech Parliamentary Group Tibet. The Czech representatives reaffirmed their strong commitment to the Tibetan cause, according to the CTA report. Senator RNDr. Jitka Seitlova warmly greeted the Tibetan delegation and reiterated the unwavering support of the Czech Republic for Tibet. She also discussed the upcoming planned initiatives by the Czech Parliamentary Group for Tibet in 2025, as noted in the CTA report.

Representative Thinlay Chukki emphasised that as His Holiness the Dalai Lama nears his 90th birthday this July, Tibetans globally are preparing to honour his life and teachings throughout the year. However, she voiced concerns that celebrations in Tibet are likely to be subjected to limitations, as highlighted by the CTA report.

Professor Michael van Walt van Praag urged Czech lawmakers to view the Tibetan issue not just as a matter of cultural and religious preservation but as an unresolved question of international political justice. He emphasized Tibet's historical sovereignty, asserting that Tibet was never part of China until its occupation by the PLA.

Senator Jiri Oberfalzer facilitated another meeting at the Czech Senate with the Tibetan delegation to address specific issues and discuss potential future actions. Later that day, the Tibetan delegation engaged in an extensive conversation with Jakub Klepal, Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation, about advancing Tibet-related matters at forthcoming international forums, according to the CTA report.

At the end of the visit, the Tibetan delegation presented His Holiness the Dalai Lama's recent work, Voice for the Voiceless, and reiterated their appeal for ongoing support for the Tibetan cause, as noted in the CTA report. (ANI)

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Congratulates Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Election Victory

02 May 2025, CTA

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, congratulated the new Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on his resounding victory and swearing-in to the esteemed office of Prime Minister of Canada.

The Speaker wrote, "On behalf of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, representing Tibetans both within and outside Tibet, we extend our heartfelt congratulations on your victory and swearing-in to the esteemed office of Prime Minister of Canada. Your success is a testament to the unwavering trust and confidence that the people of Canada have placed in your leadership."

"We would also like to express our profound gratitude to the people and government of Canada for their unwavering support for the just cause of Tibet. We highly appreciate the warm hospitality extended to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his numerous visits to Canada, as well as the long-standing care and support shown to the Tibetan community residing in your country."

"We hope that your government will continue to support a peaceful resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict through the Middle Way Approach, as advocated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration."

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat

Secretary Dhondul Dorjee and Jigme Namgyal Attends Graduation Ceremony of Sarah College for Higher Tibetan Studies

02 May 2025, <u>CTA</u>

On 30 April 2025, the Secretary Dhondul Dorjee, Department of Religion and Culture, and Jigme Namgyal, Secretary of the Department of Education, attended the graduation ceremony held in conjunction with the 24th anniversary of Sarah College for Higher Tibetan Studies. The occasion also marked the successful completion of several key academic programs, including the twoyear Tibetan Teacher Training Program organised by the Department of Education, CTA, the third cohort of the Rabjung Rigné course, and the graduation of Vietnamese students who completed their studies in Buddhist dialectics.

The ceremony was graced by its chief guest Kyabgon Tai Situ Rinpoche Pema Donyo Drubpa, the 13th Tai Situpa. Secretary Lobsang Jinpa from the Gaden Phodrang Office, along with Secretary Dudul Dorjee and Secretary Jigme Namgyal attended the event as special guests.

The ceremony began at 9:00 AM with faculty, staff, and students lining the main pathway in front of the administration building to welcome the Rinpoche. Upon his arrival, Rinpoche lit the butter lamp. Following this, the assembly recited a prayer and the *Praise to Manjushri* (known as *Gang-lo-ma*). Geshe Samten Gyatso, Director of the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (IBD), then delivered an introductory speech.

During the gathering, Secretary Lobsang Jinpa presented certificates and ceremonial scarves to the four student monitors in recognition of their dedicated service to the institution. He also delivered a speech underlining the importance of ethical conduct and moral principles. Additionally, the event marked the unveiling of several new publications authored by Tenzin Nyima and Tenzin Tentar.

Secretary Dudul Dorjee presented certificates to the graduate students and Secretary Jigme Namgyal bestowed certificates to the Tibetan teacher's trainees.

Following that, Kyabgon Tai Situ Rinpoche conferred certificates to the Vietnamese students who completed their Buddhist studies as well as to the graduates of the 24th batch of Sarah College. Rinpoche then delivered a keynote address, sharing his profound insights on preservation and promotion of rich Tibetan religious, cultural, and linguistic heritages.

-Report filed by Department of Religion and Culture, CTA

European Parliament chairs push for probe into death of Tibetan leader in Chinese custody

02 May 2025, <u>Hindustan Times</u>

The report says the chair of the European Parliament's subcommittee on human rights MEP Mounir Satouri and the chair of the delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China MEP Engin Eroglu have jointly written to the Chinese ambassador to the European Union regarding the matter

Two chairs of European Parliament have called for a probe into the "suspicious" death of prominent Tibetan Buddhist leader Tulku Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche, according to a report by Dharamshala-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

The report says the chair of the European Parliament's subcommittee on human rights MEP Mounir Satouri and the chair of the delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China MEP Engin Eroglu have jointly written to the Chinese ambassador to the European Union regarding the matter.

The report adds that the chair of the subcommittee on human rights has also sent a

letter to the Vietnamese ambassador to the EU, echoing the concerns.

Rinpoche, who was the head of Lung-ngon Monastery in Gade County, Golog, Tibet, reportedly died while in Chinese custody in Vietnam in March.

"Both letters express grave concern and alarm over the unexplained circumstances of Tulku Hungkar Dorje's death and the subsequent cremation of his body in Vietnam without the consent of his family," the CTA report says.

The chairs called on Chinese and Vietnamese authorities to ensure a transparent, independent and impartial investigation to determine the circumstances of Dorje's "disappearance and subsequent passing".

According to a statement released by the CTA last month, Rinpoche had been living in hiding in Vietnam since September 2024 due to "persistent harassment" by Chinese authorities in Tibet. On March 25, he was reportedly arrested from a hotel room in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, in a co-ordinated operation involving the local Vietnamese police and Chinese secret services agents. He was sent to a local public security office on March 28, where he is said to have died the same day.

The Dharamshala-based Tibetan parliament-in-exile has also called for a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Rinpoche, and disclosure of the findings of the investigation.

Chinese Liaison Officers of Offices of Tibet Hold Online Meeting for 'Year of Compassion' Initiative

02 May 2025, CTA

The Chinese Liaison Officers of the Offices of Tibet in Europe, North America, and Australia convened an online meeting to coordinate ongoing initiatives and future collaborations for the year 2025, designated as the "Year of Compassion" in honour of the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.



Chinese Liaison Officers of Offices of Tibet Hold Online Meeting for 'Year of Compassion' Initiative

The virtual meeting, held on 1 May, brought together Sangay Kyab, Chinese Liaison Officer for Europe; Tsultrim Gyaltso, Chinese Liaison Officer for North America; and Dawa Sangmo, Chinese Liaison Officer for Australia. Over the course of the two-hour discussion, the Chinese Liaison Officers shared updates on their current Chinese outreach efforts and strategic priorities in their respective regions.

officers The also explored potential coordinated initiatives. including collaborative projects aimed at fostering dialogue and partnerships with Chinese Chinese democrats. scholars. overseas students, and like-minded ethnic and religious such as Uyghurs, Taiwanese, groups,

Hongkongers, and practitioners of Falun Gong.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to identifying new opportunities within their regions to further strengthen ties with allies and effectively carry out their responsibilities.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Canberra

Former minister and representative Tashi Wangdi passes away at 78

01 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup



Kasur Tashi Wangdi in an undated photo(Photo/X)

ashi Wangdi, a Tibetan diplomat and former minister of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), passed away at the age of 78 in Canada.

Wangdi was born on April 15, 1947 in Tibet. He fled the country in 1959 and later joined the Tibetan government-in-exile in 1966 as a junior officer. Over the next four decades, he served in various leadership roles, including as minister (Kalon) of six departments, Religion and Culture, Home, Education, Information and International Relations, Security, and Health.

Wangdi also held diplomatic posts as the representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi, the Americas, and Brussels. He also ran for Prime Minister of the exile Tibetan government, the highest office of the Tibetan exile polity in the 2011 elections.

Educated in India and the United Kingdom, Wangdi earned a bachelor's degree in politics and social science from Durham University. Early in his career, he served as English secretary in the Departments of Home Affairs and Education within the CTA.

His final public appearance was on June 7, 2024, at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamshala, where he released his autobiography titled 'My Life: Born in Free Tibet, Served in Exile'. The book recounts his early life in Tibet and his service to the Tibetan people in exile.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Extends Heartfelt Condolences on the Passing of U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern's Daughter, Molly McGovern

01 May 2025, CTA

In a condolence letter dated 25 April 2025, Sikyong Penpa Tsering expressed his heartfelt condolences to U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern and his family over the tragic passing of his beloved daughter, Molly, who died unexpectedly at the age of 23 after being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer.

In his letter, Sikyong wrote, "Molly's extraordinary bravery in confronting her rare cancer diagnosis is truly inspiring. The fact that she continued to embrace life so fully in spite of battling a rare diagnosis speaks to a grace and resilience that few possess. Such profound courage in the face of adversity is a testament to her exceptional character and will forever remain an inspiration."

"In Tibetan Buddhist tradition, we believe that the consciousness continues its journey life after life." Sikyong continued, "May you find solace in knowing that Molly's beautiful spirit lives on, and that the love she shared and the joy she brought to others will never fade." In conclusion, on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people, Sikyong offered prayers and expressed solidarity with the grieving family. "While no words can ease your pain, please accept our sincere sympathies and know that the entire Tibetan Community mourns alongside you."

Czech Legislators Reaffirm Steadfast Support for the Tibetan Cause During Meeting with Representative Thinlay Chukki-led Delegation

01 May 2025, CTA

On 29 April 2025, Representative Thinlay Chukki of the Tibet Bureau Geneva met with Czech lawmakers and officials to seek their continued support for Tibet and the Tibetan people. The meeting was held in Prague with Jiří Růžička, Acting President of the Senate; Hayato Okamura, Co-President of the Czech Parliamentary Group for Tibet and Member of the Chamber of Deputies; Matyáš Nataniël Barotek, Advisor; and Kateřina Jacques, Secretary of the Czech Parliamentary Group for Tibet. The Czech side reaffirmed their steadfast support for the Tibetan cause.

Representative Thinlay Chukki was accompanied by Professor Michael van Walt van Praag, author of *Tibet Brief 20/20*, and UN Advocacy Officer Phuntsok Tobgyal.

In her opening speech, Senator RNDr. Jitka Seitlová warmly welcomed the Tibetan delegation and reiterated the Czech Republic's unwavering support for Tibet. She also outlined the upcoming activities planned by the Czech Parliamentary Group for Tibet in 2025.

Representative Thinlay Chukki highlighted that as His Holiness the Dalai Lama approaches his 90th birthday this July, Tibetans around the world are preparing to celebrate his life and teachings for whole year. However, she expressed concern that commemorations within Tibet are likely to face restrictions.

Professor Michael van Walt van Praag urged Czech parliamentarians to recognise the Tibetan issue not only as a matter of cultural and religious preservation, but also as an unresolved issue of international political justice. He underscored Tibet's historical independence, stating that Tibet was never a part of China in the past until its occupation by PLA.

Following the meeting, Senator Jiří Oberfalzer hosted another meeting at the Czech Senate with the Tibetan delegation to clarify certain issues and explore future courses of action. Later in the afternoon, the Tibetan delegation met with Jakub Klepal, Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation, for an in-depth discussion on promoting Tibet-related issues at upcoming international forums.

At the conclusion of the visit, the Tibetan delegation presented His Holiness the Dalai Lama's recent publication, *Voice for the Voiceless*, and renewed their appeal for continued support of the Tibetan cause.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Geneva

China to establish three new military academies: defense ministry spokesperson

15 May 2025, Global Times

China will restructure its current military schools and establish three new military academies, China's Ministry of National Defense announced on Thursday. To implement the guiding principles of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and supporting adjustments to the structure and deployment of military branches cultivation of military talent, the Central Military Commission (CMC) has approved the restructuring and establishment of three new military academies, Jiang Bin, the new spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense, said on Thursday.

The three institutions are a People's Liberation Army (PLA) university for branches of the army, a PLA information support force engineering university, and a PLA joint logistics support force engineering university.

The PLA university for branches of the army will be formed on the basis of the Army Academy of Armored Forces and the PLA Army Academy of Artillery and Air Defense with its main campus located in Hefei, Anhui Province.

The PLA information support force engineering university will be established based on the College of Information and Communication of the National University of Defense Technology and the communication institute of the Army Engineering University of PLA, with its main campus located in Wuhan, Hubei Province.

The PLA joint logistic support force engineering university will be formed from the Army Logistics University, the main campus of the Army Military Transportation University with its main campus located in Chongqing.

All three will be recognized as institutions of higher education and will begin admission process toward high school graduates across

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

the country. Information on specific majors, enrollment quotas, and admission processes will be announced in due course in coordination with the annual national recruitment plan, according to Jiang.

China hosts delegation of 100 African military officers to strengthen defence ties

10 May 2025, SCMP, Jevans Nyabiage

Young and mid-career African officers from 40 countries will be trained in PLA basics, China's military system and technology models

China is hosting nearly 100 young and midcareer African military officers from 40 countries as part of its long-term strategy to deepen defence ties across the continent.

The delegation, including officers from Egypt, Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania, will stay until May 15 and visit top military academies in Beijing, Changsha and Shaoshan to learn about China's military systems and modern technologies, according to China's Ministry of National Defence.

Observers say that by picking young and midlevel military officers, China is building lasting relations and influence as the delegation represents the future leadership of their nations' armed forces.

According to Sun Yun, director of the China programme at the Stimson Centre think tank in Washington, the fact that the delegation – which is very large, geographically expansive and composed of relatively junior and midcareer officers – is particularly important because they "represent the future pillar of military leadership in African countries".

"China has a long game and is cultivating ties from the grass roots," Sun said.

This is the fourth time the Chinese defence ministry has organised such an event, with the National University of Defence Technology in Changsha, Hunan province, playing host.In a statement released on Tuesday, the ministry said the visit aimed to "deepen the traditional friendship between the Chinese and African militaries" and "enhance mutual understanding between young and middle-aged Chinese and African officers".

At last year's Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summit in Beijing, President Xi Jinping pledged to invite 500 young African military officers to China and train 6,000 African military personnel over the three years to 2027.

China will also provide 1 billion yuan (US\$138.5 million) in military aid as part of efforts to promote its Global Security Initiative.

According to Ilaria Carrozza, a senior researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo, the visit of 100 young African military officers highlights Beijing's strategic push to deepen defence ties with Africa through military diplomacy.

"By engaging future military leaders early, China aims to cultivate long-term influence, build trust, and promote its military education and technology models," Carrozza said.

Through this and similar initiatives, Carrozza said China aimed to "bolster its soft power, secure military partnerships, expand its geopolitical footprint in Africa, and counterbalance Western influence on the continent".

Paul Nantulya, a China specialist from the US National Defence University's Africa Centre for Strategic Studies in Washington, said the aim of the visit was to expose selected officers to China's military education system, its overall defence sector and industrial base.

The officers were likely to be introduced to the basics of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and China's military system, as well as military modernisation and advanced technologies, he said.

"They will also visit select military industries, as China is also interested in using their presence to market military hardware to both new and existing customers," Nantulya added.

Furthermore, he said China would leverage its convening power to strengthen ties among the attending countries.

According to Nantulya, thousands of African military personnel have been trained in China – attending a wide range of Chinese military

schools, including the PLA National Defence University, the Nanjing Army Command College and other specialised academies.

For instance, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki is among dozens of current and former African leaders who attended Chinese military schools.

Another attendee was Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who came to power through a military coup that ousted long-time ruler Robert Mugabe in November 2017. He was one of Zimbabwe's military chiefs who trained in Nanjing and was part of the core team in his country's liberation struggle.

Nantulya said about 2,000 African military officers received training annually in Chinese military and political academies in the pre-Covid years, and this figure could be reached again, driven by increasing China-Africa military exchanges.

This cooperation also includes more frequent joint military exercises and patrols in Africa. The African officers' visit comes on the heels of a major exercise between the Chinese and Egyptian air forces, some new agreements between China and select African countries to develop their military industries, and some high-level engagements such as meetings between the Chinese navy and naval commanders from the Gulf of Guinea states, according to Nantulya.

China recently conducted an 18-day joint air force training exercise with Egypt. These activities, built on similar joint drills with Tanzania, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa, aim to enhance security cooperation and project Chinese influence in Africa, had become commonplace, he said.

"China can also be expected to position itself as a partner of choice in an environment where other powers, like the Gulf countries, are increasing their military engagement with African countries," he added.

China is working on a jammer to send missiles after 'ghost' fleet of warship

07 May 2025, <u>SCMP</u>

Beijing team says it could give PLA 'absolute advantage' in electronic warfare when combined with AI and other new technology

In a naval combat simulation conducted by Chinese researchers, an anti-ship missile targets a fleet of eight People's Liberation Army warships showing on its radar.

But it is not an armada – it is just a single vessel.

Four electronic warfare devices circling the ship created the illusion, sending signals that could deceive even an advanced radar from a distance.

It was developed by a team from the Beijing Research Institute of Telemetry, an aerospace defence contractor.

They detailed the "unprecedented" technology in a peer-reviewed paper published in the Chinese-language Journal of Systems Engineering and Electronics on February 28.

Their study suggested that networked 1-bit jammers could be used to trick enemy missiles into pursuing "ghost" fleets while the real warships avoided the radar entirely.

These jammers — which transmit a single signal to disrupt enemy radar systems — cost a fraction of the traditional systems.

The team said there was more to be done, including combining the jammer with artificial intelligence and other new technology to improve its performance.

"These efforts will ensure our absolute advantage in electronic warfare," wrote the team led by researcher Hu Jijun.

They said traditional radar decoys struggled to mimic the complex electromagnetic signatures of modern warships and the extensive deployment needed was cost-prohibitive and "operationally cumbersome". "The effectiveness of radar decoys remains heavily contingent on their fidelity in mimicking target signatures and design adaptability," the scientists said.

"Once deployed, these decoys exhibit fixed operational parameters – their simulated profiles remain static, rendering them ill-suited for dynamic battlefield conditions."

The key for the Beijing team was replacing expensive analogue-to-digital processors with analogue converters.

Each jammer uses a comparator chip to convert intercepted radar pulses into 1-bit signals – recording only whether incoming waves cross a dynamically shifting voltage threshold.

This crude simplification, counterintuitively, allows the devices to generate some of the most realistic interference patterns that can evolve in real time.

According to the paper, when four such units coordinate via tailor-made algorithms they create radar phantoms that could cover an entire battlefield.

"Through precision modulation of the jammer array, we engineer reality-decoupled phantom scenarios — constructing hyper-realistic deceptive interference coverage out of the blue across actual combat zones," the researchers wrote.

"This paradigm fundamentally enhances the tactical agility and combat efficacy of electronic warfare systems by enabling electromagnetic environment sculpting beyond physical truth constraints."

They said creating and maintaining harmony in the signals was key to creating the illusion. By tuning threshold voltages at specific frequencies, the jammers exploit nonlinear interactions between simplified radar returns and enemy emissions.

The resulting interference mimics not just targets but entire electromagnetic ecosystems, according to the researchers.

But they cautioned that their results were derived from controlled digital simulations and not live tests involving real missiles. They also conceded that the simplified 1-bit system could have exploitable vulnerabilities, and noted that if missiles were networked it would be more difficult to trick them.

China Unveils Its Military Mega-Project: Satellite Images Reveal Construction of the Largest Military Hub on Earth Spanning Over 1,000 Acres

03 May 2025, <u>Sustainability Times</u>, Hina Dinoo

As satellite images reveal China's ambitious construction of the world's largest underground military command center near Beijing, global tensions escalate, prompting experts to scrutinize the implications of this unprecedented development for international security dynamics.

In the fast-paced world of global geopolitics, the unveiling of China's monumental military project has captured worldwide attention. Satellite imagery has recently exposed the construction of a massive underground military command center near Beijing, signaling China's strategic ambitions and its determination to compete with the United States on the global stage. This revelation has sparked intrigue and concern among experts and observers, who are closely monitoring the developments. As tensions rise in Asia, understanding the implications of this project is crucial for both regional and international security dynamics.

China's Ambitious Military Vision

China's latest undertaking is a testament to its grand military vision, reminiscent of Cold War-era military strategies. Since the 1980s, China has been developing specialized teams focused on constructing underground shelters designed to withstand the most formidable bombs. This approach has its roots in the Cold War, a period marked by an arms race where nations like the Soviet Union and Germany invested heavily in bunkers and subterranean bases. Today, China is pushing this concept to unprecedented levels, constructing what may become the largest underground military command center in history.

The scale of this project is immense, reflecting China's desire to secure its military assets against potential threats. With geopolitical tensions on the rise, particularly

in Asia, this development underscores China's commitment to bolstering its defense infrastructure. It also highlights the evolving nature of military strategies in the 21st century, where technological advancements and strategic positioning play a critical role in national security.

Implications for Global Security

The construction of China's underground military complex has far-reaching implications for global security. As China continues to expand its military capabilities, neighboring countries and global powers are reassessing their security strategies. This development is not just about military might; it represents a shift in the balance of power in Asia and beyond. The strategic significance of this project cannot be overstated, as it may alter the dynamics of military alliances and defense strategies worldwide.

Moreover, China's actions are likely to trigger from other major reactions powers, potentially leading to arms an race reminiscent of the Cold War. The United States, in particular, may feel compelled to enhance its military presence in the region to counterbalance China's growing influence. This scenario raises critical questions about the future of international relations and the potential for conflict or cooperation in addressing shared security challenges.

Technological Sophistication and Strategic Depth

At the heart of China's military project is a focus on technological sophistication and strategic depth. The underground command center is expected to incorporate advanced technologies, from state-of-the-art communication systems to cutting-edge defense mechanisms. This technological prowess is indicative of China's broader ambitions to become a leading military power, capable of rivaling the technological advancements of the United States and other military giants.

The strategic depth of this project also reflects China's long-term vision for its defense strategy. By investing in subterranean infrastructure, China is ensuring the resilience and sustainability of its military capabilities. This approach not only protects its assets from conventional threats but also positions China as a formidable force in the event of any future conflicts. As such, this development marks a new chapter in China's military history, characterized by innovation and strategic foresight.

Regional Reactions and Future Prospects

The revelation of China's underground military complex has elicited varied reactions across the region. Neighboring countries are closely monitoring the situation, with some expressing concern over the potential implications for regional stability. Others are partnerships considering strategic alliances to counterbalance China's growing military presence. This development has undoubtedly sparked a reevaluation of defense strategies across Asia, as nations seek navigate the shifting geopolitical landscape.

Looking ahead, the future prospects of this project will depend on China's ability to manage its regional relationships and address the concerns of the international community. The success of this undertaking could redefine China's role on the global stage, potentially paving the way for new alliances and diplomatic engagements. However, it also raises important questions about the potential for conflict and cooperation in a world increasingly defined by military prowess and strategic competition.

As China's military ambitions continue to unfold, the world watches with bated breath. The construction of this underground command center is a clear indicator of China's determination to assert its influence and secure its interests. In this era of rapid geopolitical changes, how will other nations respond to China's growing military might? Will this development lead to increased cooperation or heightened tensions among global powers?

China's military likens anti-corruption drive to preparations for war

03 May 2025, <u>SCMP</u>, Hayley Wong

At key times in history, the People's Liberation Army has carried out 'major political rectification', PLA Daily says

Campaigns to tighten political control of the People's Liberation Army have repeatedly proved necessary ahead of "key wars" and "important intersections", the Chinese military's mouthpiece has said as an anti-corruption drive goes deeper into the PLA's leadership.

In one of a number of articles on the topic in the past week, the PLA Daily said in a commentary on Wednesday that the Chinese military should "make good use of political rectification" — a euphemism for anticorruption and political loyalty — to be fully prepared for combat at any time.

"Looking back on the history of development of our military, we have carried out major rectification every time before a key war," the article said, referring to the second Sino-Japanese war, China's civil war, and the Korean war.

By getting rid of corrupt practices and unifying political loyalty, political rectification had "not only ensured the completion of the military missions at the time, but also had an important impact on the construction and development of our army".

At a time of growing national security uncertainty, the forces should not expect to be "soldiers and officers of peace time", the article said.

Another article in the PLA Daily, also published on Wednesday, said rectifications of the military had been needed at each "key historical intersection", referring to campaigns in revolutionary days, during the war against Japanese aggression and another one right before the victory of the civil war.

Commentaries and analyses of official military publications are a key source of insights into the veiled political priorities of the Chinese military.

Wednesday's articles were among at least four published recently on "deepening political rectification".

Another, published on Monday, also referred to the same "historic crossroads" of the three

wars fought by the PLA, with its own rectification contributing to the success.

The articles pointed to the limited progress of the PLA's ongoing rectification efforts, saying that combat-related deliberation and planning remained shallow and weak in some units.

The commentary on Wednesday said "falsified rectification" should be "resolutely cracked down on".

Since 2023 and the unfolding of a series of corruption scandals in the military, Beijing has doubled down on calls for political rectification and education.

The latest to be sacked is Miao Hua, a top general and member of China's decision-making Central Military Commission (CMC). He came under investigation for suspected "serious violations of discipline" in late November and was dismissed as a member of the country's legislature on Wednesday.

Another CMC member, Li Shangfu, was sacked in 2023, becoming the shortest-serving defence minister for decades.

He Weidong, the second-highest-ranking serviceman in the PLA and a member of the 24-man Politburo, has also been out of the public eye since March, failing to show up at a series of official events he was supposed to attend.

The PLA, founded in 1927, is expected to become a "fully modern army" by its centenary in two years' time.

According to Beijing's timeline, China will "basically complete national defence and military modernisation by 2035" and possess a "world-class military by mid-century".

The article on Monday said the PLA faced deep-rooted issues in the political development of the military, adding that the centennial goals were "arduous" while "time is tight and the responsibility is heavy".

It stressed that "thoughts, personnel use, organisation, culture, and discipline" should all be rectified to ensure the whole army is "fully focused on tackling tough challenges".

SECURITY

CYBER-

DeepSeek AI's reluctance to provide information on Arunachal\

28 May 2025, <u>The Arunachal Times</u>, Ashok Sonam Tajo

DeepSeek, a Chinese-developed AI chatbot launched in 2023 by entrepreneur Liang Wenfeng, has raised concerns among Indian users due to its reluctance to provide accurate and comprehensive information about Arunachal Pradesh and its indigenous Tani tribes. This selective withholding of information questions the AI's transparency, neutrality, and reliability, prompting calls for caution among Indian users and scrutiny from policymakers.

DeepSeek has gained attention for its costeffective performance, rivalling models like Open AI's ChatGPT and xAI's Grok. However, recent interactions reveal a troubling pattern:

DeepSeek consistently evades queries about Arunachal, a state integral to India but claimed by China as 'South Tibet' or 'Zangnan'. When asked about the Tani tribes – including the Nyishi, Adi, Apatani, Mising, Galo and Tagin – who form a significant cultural and demographic backbone of Arunachal, DeepSeek responds vaguely, often stating, "Sorry, that's beyond my current scope. Let's talk about something else."

This occurs even for basic inquiries about the tribes' art, cultural practices, or demographic details, which are well-documented in Indian and global sources. In contrast, AI models like xAI's Grok and OpenAI's ChatGPT provide detailed and accurate responses about Arunachal and the Tani tribes. DeepSeek, omits Arunachal when listing Northeast Indian states and fails to provide similar cultural or demographic details, raising concerns about its programming. DeepSeek's reluctance extends to sensitive geopolitical topics, including the 1962 Sino-India war and Chinese territorial claims over Arunachal and Aksai Chin.

It also avoids questions about the personal assets of Chinese political or business leaders, while readily addressing less sensitive topics. This selective silence aligns with China's practice of censoring politically sensitive information, suggesting potential state influence in DeepSeek's design.

The implications are significant. By failing to acknowledge Arunachal as an Indian state or provide factual details about its Tani tribes, DeepSeek risks undermining India's sovereignty and cultural identity. Social media platforms like X reflect growing criticism, with users labeling the AI as potentially biased, which seems to suggest that DeepSeek needs approval from Chinese authorities to answer sensitive questions, highlighting its evasive responses.

AI tools must uphold transparency, neutrality, and accuracy, especially when addressing culturally and geopolitically sensitive regions like Arunachal. The Tani tribes and Northeast India deserve accurate representation, free from external bias or censorship.

We call on the Indian government to investigate DeepSeek's operations, as it did with Chinese apps banned in 2020, to safeguard India's sovereignty and protect its citizens from potential misinformation.

New details emerge on Uyghur rapper, imprisoned for his music in China

27 May 2025, Safeguard Defenders

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC



Yashar Shohret is a Uyghur rapper and songwriter who is currently serving a three-year sentence in a Xinjiang prison on charges of promoting extremism based on his song lyrics. Radio Free Asia reported that he was sentenced in June 2024, but the news was only made public earlier this year. He was previously detained for several weeks in late 2022 for taking part in "White Paper" protests in Chengdu against the country's strict Covid lockdowns.

WOMEN我**Ha**nagazine, recently investigated Yashar's case and revealed new details about his sentencing and supposed crimes.

As November [2023] ushered in the depths of autumn, a lawyer embarked on a grueling journey. A 4-hour and 20-minute flight from Beijing to Urumqi, followed by a 4-hour and 5-minute high-speed train ride, finally brought him to Bole.

Bole is a county-level city perched on Xinjiang's border, at the northernmost tip of China's "rooster's tail". It's a remote outpost: 3,282 kilometers from Beijing, 524 kilometers from the regional capital Urumqi, and sharing a 95-kilometer frontier with Kazakhstan.

He met Yashar at the city's detention center. This was Yashar's first contact with the outside world in over three months since he was taken from Chengdu, where he lived, on August 7. Yashar's friend, relaying the lawyer's account of the situation, painted a grim picture: Yashar was in poor condition. His sunken eyes were filled with fear.

In Chengdu's bustling teahouses, underground bars, and indie bookstores, Yashar stood out from the crowd. He was in his early twenties, with long legs, deep eyes, angular features, and a handsome Central Asian appearance. Yashar had been producing music in his native Uyghur tongue since he was a teenager. His creative process mirrored that of other rappers: he found rhymes in his personal experiences, wove through poetic narratives, and then set them to melodies. The only difference? Yashar's lyrics were in Uyghur.

On August 9, 2023, the day after the World University Games closed in Chengdu, police from Bole City in Xinjiang arrived and took him from his rented apartment. Just two weeks earlier, he had celebrated his 25th birthday.

Yashar's disappearance was silent and left no trace. There were no documents and no formal procedures. Neither his girlfriend in Chengdu nor his family in Xinjiang knew who had taken him – or where. Eventually, rumors from Xinjiang suggested he had been brought back to his hometown. It wasn't until November 13, over three months later, when the investigation into his case concluded and was forwarded to the Bole City Prosecutor's Office for review, that his lawyer finally obtained accurate information about the case. The lawyer then rushed to the border to meet with him.

The criminal verdict

WOMEN Hamagazine recently obtained the criminal verdict. It accused Yashar of "advocating extremism" and "illegally possessing items that advocate extremism", crimes listed under Article 120-3 of China's criminal code. An informed source said that the procuratorate had originally requested a sentence of five to six years, but the court

finally sentenced him to three years. He was then transferred to Wusu Prison.

Yashar's sentence runs from 11 August 2023, when he was detained, to 10 August 2026. Court documents said that Yashar created and published 51 songs on NetEase Cloud Music, 42 of which were identified as "problematic songs promoting extremism" between October 2017 and August 2023. The procuratorate also accused Yashar of using a VPN to purchase eight electronic books online from 2020 to August 2023 that were deemed to be problematic according to an official list from the region's Propaganda Department and that either advocated terrorist ideas or religious extremism.

Those banned books included *Motherland* (all three volumes) by Zordun Sabir (volume I pictured above) and *The Uyghurs* by Turghun Almas.

Since 2015, China has implemented strict legislative controls over Xinjiang residents. The charges against Yashar stem from new offenses added to Article 120 of the Criminal Law, which came into effect on November 1, 2015, as part of the ninth amendment. These charges carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison. Shortly after this major legal revision, on December 27 of the same year, the National People's Congress passed the "Counter-Terrorism Law of the People's Republic of China", which took effect on January 1, 2016. This legislation imposed an unprecedented criminalization of the religion, culture, and daily life of ethnic minorities in the border regions.

WOMEN我Hamagazine note that even after Yashar was detained, all the songs he posted online under the stage name "uigga" remained accessible. His account was not deleted until early 2024.

Yahsar's 'problematic' lyrics

Yashar has been composing rap songs in Uyghur since he was a teenager.

His stage name is "Uigga", which he once explained in a song means "lucky star". His lyrics often reflect the hardships which life has dealt him. For instance, when a friend committed suicide, he expressed deep regret and remorse. In 2019, participating in a rap competition in Xinjiang, he performed his original song "Maybe You, Maybe Me." The lyrics read: "Of course, the first question is how to survive underground; life rides on your tired body, has it bent your spine too? I'm sorry there are too few people who can relax around you."

Already, in 2017, when Yashar uploaded this song to the Internet, sharing Uyghur songs online in China was extremely difficult. He had to translate the lyrics into Chinese to prove the content was "harmless."

July 25th is Yashar's birthday. Since 2019, he has uploaded a song around his birthday each year, depicting his state of mind. By July 25, 2023, he had released a total of five birthday songs. The lyrics within these consistently reflect themes of hustling and exhaustion in the face of life's pressures: "Even with a spine deformed from pressure, I never stop, spending every minute hustling for survival"; "Depression is like a parasite, pressure from all sides like iron chains around my throat; reality is like an ultra-sharp razor, stripping away every fiber of my self-esteem and dignity."

Yashar had also ventured into entrepreneurship with his own clothing brand and cultural company. In late November of 2022, he recorded a music video which promoted his brand's T-shirts.

In the spring of 2023, he released a song called "Wake Up Uigga". In the hunting scene he depicts, he's not the hunter, but the prey. "Unable to understand the fate etched on my forehead, loneliness took over—uneasiness, anxiety, worry, and fear."

On July 23, 2023, as his birthday approached again, he released another song. Though brief, its lyrics were poignant: "How I long for a normal life, but the script I've been handed is a tragedy. I've become the story, just facing my reality."

Just weeks later, he was detained.

Chinese General He Hongjun Reportedly Dies by Suicide Amid Military Anti-Corruption Probe

22 May 2025, Resonant News

He Hongjun, executive deputy director of the Political Work Department of China's Central Military Commission, reportedly took his own life by hanging while in custody and passed away on Sunday, May 5. Chinese authorities have not yet confirmed the reports. He Hongjun, originally from the **Tibet Military Region**, held significant roles such as deputy political commissar of the Western Theater Command and director of the Army's Political Work Department. In July of the previous year, he was promoted to general by Xi Jinping at Beijing's Bayi Building.

No official Chinese media has commented on He's death. Independent commentator Cai Shenkun suggests that, if true, this incident highlights the intense pressure from the Chinese Communist Party's anti-corruption efforts and the significant political risks within the military's top ranks. He referenced a similar 2017 case where Zhang Yang, former director of the General Political Department, died by suicide during an investigation, later officially deemed as "suicide out of fear of punishment."

According to Hong Kong's Sing Tao Daily, the military's anti-corruption campaign has continued unabated since the 20th National Congress in 2022. Notably, three of the six Central Military Commission leaders have faced scrutiny: former Defense Minister Li Shangfu, Miao Hua, who lost his National People's Congress representative status, and Vice Chairman Weidong, He prolonged absence from public view has sparked speculation. Despite medical efforts at Beijing's No. 301 Hospital, He Hongjun passed away on May 18, less than a year after his promotion to general. He had been under investigation since April 20.

Recent years have seen multiple high-profile incidents among PLA generals. Three of the six Central Military Commission members have been investigated or removed, including

Li Shangfu, Miao Hua, and He Weidong, whose current status remains uncertain.

The Political Work Department, responsible for propaganda and ideological work in the PLA, is led by 67-year-old Zhang Shengming from Shaanxi. A career political officer and former Rocket Force member, Zhang has headed the CMC's military disciplinary commission since 2017 and is a key figure in Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign.

Mysterious Deaths

"Mysterious deaths" in China related to Chinese Military have surged in last 2 years. The following cases are noted:

- 1. **He Hongjun (2025)**: General He Hongjun, executive deputy director of the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission (CMC), reportedly died by suicide while in custody on May 5, 2025. This was less than a year after his promotion to general by Xi Jinping in July 2024.
- 2. Wu Guohua (2023): A former deputy of the PLA Rocket Force and head of the secretive Third Department, Wu died under mysterious circumstances in July 2023. Official reports cited illness as the cause, but speculation suggested suicide related to work pressures or investigation.
- 3. Zhang Yang (2017): Although slightly outside the recent timeframe, the case of Zhang Yang, former director of the General Political Department, who died by suicide during a corruption investigation in 2017, is often referenced as a precedent for similar incidents.

These are the most prominently reported mysterious deaths linked to corruption probes in recent years. Other deaths may have occurred but are not well-documented or confirmed in public sources, as Chinese authorities often suppress details.

Dismissals in last few years:

Dismissals in the PLA related to corruption probes, particularly since 2022, have been more numerous and better documented. The anti-corruption campaign under Xi Jinping has targeted high-ranking officials, especially

in the PLA Rocket Force and other sensitive sectors like procurement. Key data points include:

2023 Purges:

In December 2023, nine senior military officials were removed from the National People's Congress (NPC), a step often preceding further disciplinary action due to NPC members' immunity from prosecution. Five of these were past or current commanders of the PLA Rocket Force.

Three aerospace-defense executives (Wu Yansheng, Liu Shiquan, and Wang Changqing) were stripped of their political titles by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) on December 27, 2023, also linked to corruption probes. Earlier in 2023, notable dismissals included:

Li Yuchao, Rocket Force Commander, removed in June 2023.

Xu Zhongbo, Rocket Force **Political** Commissar, removed in June 2023.Liu Guangbin and Zhang Zhenzhong, Rocket Force deputies, also removed in 2023.Li Shangfu, former Defense Minister, dismissed in October 2023 after disappearing for months, with corruption in the Equipment Development Department cited as a likely cause. Wei Fenghe, former Defense Minister and Rocket Force head, vanished and was later expelled from the Communist Party for corruption in June 2024.In total, at least 15 military and defense industry officials were removed in 2023, as reported by sources covering the Rocket Force and broader PLA purges.2024 and 2025 Developments:

Miao Hua, director of the CMC's Political Work Department, was confirmed to be under investigation for corruption in November 2024, marking another high-profile case.

A broader estimate from 2013 to 2024 indicates that **126 senior military officers** were detained, sacked, or demoted as part of Xi's anti-corruption campaign, with a significant portion occurring in recent years. In the first half of 2024 alone, 41 provincial- and ministerial-level officials (including military figures) were investigated,

though not all were necessarily dismissed. Historical Context (Pre-2022):

Between 2013 and 2024, the Supervisory Commission and its predecessor punished **6,272,000 party members**, with 466,000 individuals convicted on corruption charges, including military officials. While not all were PLA-related, this includes high-profile military figures like Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou, former CMC vice-chairs, prosecuted earlier in Xi's campaign.

In 2015, over 4,000 senior officers (lieutenant colonel or higher, including 82 generals) were investigated, with 242 facing punishment.

Mysterious Deaths: At least 3 confirmed cases (He Hongjun, Wu Guohua, and Zhang Yang) are explicitly linked to corruption probes in the PLA since 2017, with He Hongjun's case being the most recent in 2025. Other potential deaths may exist but lack public confirmation.

Dismissals: Since 2022, at least 20 high-ranking PLA officers and defense industry executives have been dismissed or investigated, based on specific cases like the nine NPC removals in 2023, three CPPCC executives, and figures like Li Shangfu, Wei Fenghe, and Miao Hua. The broader figure of 126 senior military officers from 2013 to 2024 includes earlier purges, with a significant uptick in 2023–2024.

Tibetan man detained by Chinese authorities after seeking basic utilities for family

08 May 2025, Phayul, Tsering Dhundup



Kelsang in an undated photo(Photo/TCHRD)

A 42-year-old Tibetan man named Kelsang has been detained by Chinese authorities after publicly appealing for access to electricity and water that his family has been denied for over nine years, according to information released by the *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy* (TCHRD).

Kelsang, a resident of Serdak Township in Tengchen County, Chamdo Prefecture was taken into custody on April 18 after posting a video on Chinese social media documenting his family's prolonged exclusion from basic public services. He remains in detention at the Tengchen County Police Station, where his family has been denied visitation rights.

The case highlights what human rights observers describe as systematic discrimination. Since 2016, Kelsang's household has been excluded from township infrastructure development projects provided electricity and water to most other residents in the area. This prolonged denial has severely impacted his family's quality of life, forcing his children to withdraw from school due to their inability to study without lighting.

"Even having electricity in a very ordinary home has become like a dream for me," Kelsang wrote in his March 2025 appeal. "I have appealed to the authorities on many accounts... It has been 9 years."

According to sources close to the family, Kelsang has submitted at least five written appeals to local authorities since 2016. His most recent public appeal on March 20 led to his first detention on March 24, when he was held for three days and accused of "disrupting social order" and "tarnishing the image of the Party and the country."

Following his release, authorities reportedly placed Kelsang's family under surveillance, prohibited community members from visiting them, and pressured him to falsely confess that his claims were fabricated. His social media content was removed, and family members were barred from speaking publicly about their situation.

Sources indicate that Kelsang's ongoing persecution may be linked to his family's

political history. His grandfather was killed in the 1950s while resisting the Chinese People's Liberation Army, and Kelsang himself was detained for six months in 2008 on suspicion of involvement in antigovernment protests, though no formal charges were filed.

TCHRD has called for Kelsang's immediate release and restoration of utilities to his household, citing violations of international human rights laws, including the right to non-discrimination, education, freedom of expression, and the prohibition of arbitrary detention.

Kelsang's health is reportedly deteriorating in detention. He suffers from high blood pressure, and his family has expressed serious concerns about his well-being given the lack of information provided by authorities.

China continues to be world's top jailer of journalists, is among bottom three in press freedom

04 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

Press freedom is at its lowest ebb globally in more than two decades and China, which ranks among the least free, is the biggest jailer of journalists, according to the latest annual report of Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières or RSF) released May 2.

China has dropped six places from the previous year to 178th in a worsening of an already dire picture. The Index ranks Eritrea at the bottom-most, and North Korea at 179th, out of the total of 180 countries and regions surveyed.

"China right now is the biggest jailor of journalists in the world," rfa.org May 2 quoted Aleksandra Bielakowska, RSF's Asia Pacific advocacy manager, as saying.

"They really managed to arrest all the people that were courageous enough and who still wanted to report on issues in the ground," she has said.

According to her, the erosion of what was limited press freedom in China began more than a decade ago and accelerated under President Xi Jinping, as he and loyalists concentrated state power in his person.

The media freedom situation in China is now almost akin to the total control over information exercised by North Korea's dynastic government, she has said.

The ability of foreign media to operate in China is also stated to have become heavily circumscribed.

Bielakowska has also pointed out that some 15 years ago, foreign reporters could go to regions that chafed against Beijing's rule such as East Turkestan (Xinjiang) and Tibet, but it is now impossible unless as part of a government-supervised propaganda trip.

"Not just an authoritarian country, but a really totalitarian system where nobody can speak up, nobody can report on any issues," she has said. "And reporters can only work as the party's propaganda."

What is more, China's aggressive suppression of independent media is increasingly emulated in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, with Cambodia, a Beijing ally in Southeast Asia, dropping 10 places in the index to 161st, for example.

China-East Turkestan

WUC intensifies advocacy efforts ahead of EU-China Human Rights Dialogue

15 May 2025, Uygur News

WUC intensifies advocacy efforts in Brussels ahead of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, aiming to spotlight ongoing genecide and abuses against Uyghurs in East Turkestan.

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has intensified its advocacy efforts in Europe ahead of the upcoming EU-China Human Rights Dialogue. WUC Vice President Zumretay Arkin spoke about the organization's recent trip to Brussels, highlighting efforts to amplify Uyghur voices within the European Parliament.

Led by Arkin, the visit aimed to raise awareness about the ongoing human rights abuses faced by the Uyghur population in East Turkestan (XUAR in China).

Arkin emphasized the significance of the twoday advocacy meetings held with members of the European Parliament and the European Commission. "We're here to bring the voice of the Uyghur people into the European Parliament and to raise awareness about the Uyghur genocide," she said.

Discussions focused on a range of urgent human rights issues, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, individual cases of persecution, forced labour, forced sterilisation, and broader concerns related to gender, women's rights, and children's rights under the Chinese government's policies in the region.

Arkin also drew attention to the intersection of environmental and human rights issues at a recent conference held at the European Parliament. The event brought together Uyghur and Tibetan activists to discuss the ecological destruction caused by Chinese infrastructure projects.

"We just left a conference in the European Parliament with Tibetan activists on the ecological crisis in Tibet, particularly the construction of hydroelectric dams that are devastating the Tibetan plateau and rivers,"

CHINA IN THE REGION

Arkin explained. "Eco-cide is also happening in East Turkestan," she added.

She emphasized the need for continued solidarity between oppressed communities. "We're here to stand in solidarity with our Tibetan allies, to explore how we can deepen our cooperation and build a stronger movement together," Arkin concluded.

Major educational plans announced

14 May 2025, <u>China Daily</u>, Zhao Yimeng and Mao Weihua

China will build a collaborative higher education system and establish an advanced research institute in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region to support regional development and enhance cooperation with Central Asian countries, Education Minister Huai Jinpeng said on Monday.

Huai made the remarks at the China-Central Asia Education Ministers' Meeting in Urumqi, the regional capital, aimed at strengthening educational ties between China and the five Central Asian nations.

Both sides share an important role in national development and cultural exchanges and have achieved notable progress in recent years through mutual learning and innovation, Huai said. He called for the expansion of vocational education tailored to local needs, the development of shared digital education resources and stronger cultural exchanges.

Xinjiang Party Secretary Ma Xingrui, while delivering a welcome speech at the meeting, said education is the cornerstone of long-term stability and prosperity in the region. He said Xinjiang will build a stronger education system and deepen cooperation with Belt and Road countries, particularly those in Central Asia.

Ma said higher education institutions in Xinjiang will be encouraged to expand educational and cultural exchanges with the five countries through efforts such as coestablishing Confucius Institutes and supporting overseas study programs.

Education ministers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also addressed the meeting.

Several achievements were announced during the session, including the launch of the China-Central Asia Industry-Education Integration Alliance and the establishment of the Central Asia Institute of the Global Teacher Development College.

Other major outcomes included the signing of the China-Kazakhstan Elite Engineers Institute agreement and the inauguration of international research centers, including an international medical center in Astana and a crop-breeding lab involving Silk Road Economic Belt countries, according to the Ministry of Education.

In recent years, Chinese universities have played a leading role in internationalizing higher education partnerships with Central Asian nations. Xi'an Jiaotong University in Shaanxi province launched the China-Central Asia Higher Education Cooperation Forum in 2023, and Northwestern Polytechnical University opened a branch in Kazakhstan the same year.

Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University inaugurated its Tashkent campus in Uzbekistan, marking a deepening trend of cross-border academic cooperation. university has also established eight agricultural demonstration parks Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan that integrate research, education and industrial application. Meanwhile, China has become a top destination for Central Asian students, and Confucius Institutes and Chinese language programs are expanding across the region. Thirteen Confucius Institutes now operate in Central Asia, and four countries have formally integrated Chinese into their national education systems, according to the ministry.

Netherlands-based Uyghur activist calls for China's disintegration

13 May 2025, ANI

Abdurehim Cheni, a prominent Uyghur human rights activist based in the Netherlands, took to the social media platform X with a powerful

condemnation of China's leadership and its treatment of ethnic minorities.

Reacting to a post quoting Mao Zedong's infamous remark, "All imperialists are nothing but paper tigers," Gheni responded with a stark denunciation of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

"Mao Zedong is the world's greatest murderer. He is the greatest terrorist who imprisoned many nationalities in the Chinese state prisons," Gheni declared. He further described China as an imperialist force that holds multiple nations captive within its borders.

"The only way to prevent China from becoming a threat to the world is to disintegrate this colonial country and establish an independent country for each people," he wrote, calling on the United States and Western powers to support independence movements across China's territories.

Cheni, originally from Aksu in the Xinjiang region, has long been outspoken about the persecution of Uyghurs. According to reports, since 2017, he has lost contact with 19 family members, who are believed to have been detained in China's network of re-education camps.

In response, he began weekly solo protests outside the Chinese Consulate in Amsterdam and founded the Support Uyghurs Foundation to amplify the global call for justice.

According to reports, despite being arrested and fined in 2020 for protesting without a permit, Cheni has remained undeterred. In 2024, he suffered another personal tragedy when his father reportedly died in a Chinese detention camp. His latest remarks come at a time of growing

international scrutiny of China's human rights record.

The Uyghur human rights abuses in China include the bulk detention, surveillance, and cultural repression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Thousands of Uyghurs have reportedly been detained in "re-education" camps. Several media reports cite forced labour, sterilisations, religious restrictions, and mosque destruction.

The Chinese government denies that human rights are part of anti-terrorism measures. Human rights groups and various governments denounced the acts as crimes against humanity, with some accusing them of genocide, eliciting global outrage and appeals for accountability.

.Radio Free Asia's Uyghur service in danger following Trump's decisions: "Without RFA, China will truly become a black hole for information"

12 May 2025, RSF

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is alarmed by the announcement that the Uyghur service of Radio Free Asia (RFA), the world's only independent Uyghur-language news service, will close at the end of May due to US President Donald Trump's executive order to dismantle the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which distributed funding to the international broadcaster. Gulchehra Hoja, Senior Journalist for RFA's Uyghur service, explained to RSF what this means for the public's access to reliable information in one of China's most restricted regions. RSF urges US Congress to take action to restore RFA and honour its commitments to press freedom worldwide.

"Despite constant threats, RFA's Uyghur journalists have tirelessly and courageously broken stories that revealed the true extent of the atrocities committed by the Chinese Without RFA Uyghur, regime. international community will lose its only window into one of China's most restricted regions, while Uyghur people will suffer the loss of their only independent outlet. RSF calls on the US Congress and the international community to take action in response to this alarming situation and support the outlet's journalists so they can continue their vital work.

In early May 2025, US international broadcaster Radio Free Asia (RFA) announced that by the end of the month, half of RFA's language services, including the world's only independent Uyghur language news service, will no longer produce or publish new content. As RFA can no longer rely on the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) to disburse the funds approved by Congress, the outlet began mass layoffs affecting half of its services. The cuts follow an executive order signed on 14 March by US President Donald Trump, which terminated federal funding for the USAGM, effectively paralysing the agency supports vital media outlets such as RFA.

In China — a country that sits at the bottom of the RSF World Press Freedom Index 2025 and is the world's biggest prison for journalists — RFA is one of the few outlets documenting the violent campaign of repression against the Turkic ethnic groups in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and the world's only independent news service producing content in Uyghur language. In an interview with RSF, the service's senior journalist **Gulchehra Hoja** explained how the closure of RFA's Uyghur service will impact access to information in one of the world's most closed-off regions.

RSF: Could you tell us about the work of RFA Uyghur journalists?

Hoja: For 26 years, RFA journalists have been exposing the human rights abuses suffered by Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples at the hands of the Chinese regime, providing the world with reliable facts, first-hand evidence and news. We have been reporting on the oppression, suppression, and unjust policies of the Chinese authorities in Xinjiang. Our news has been used as reference material by the US government for setting policies towards China, as well as by international human rights organisations and research centres.

RSF: What impact will the closure of RFA have on Uyghur people if their only access to factual and independent media is gone? Hoja: 20 million Uyghurs had only one reliable international news source and radio

station that could convey their voice to the world: Radio Free Asia. It is a very regrettable decision by the Trump administration to erase the voice of the Uyghurs, especially when the regime's genocide continues and China has intensified its false propaganda to normalise it. The effect this will have on the Uyghurs is nothing less than "giving up." It brings deep despair.

RSF: What RFA journalists endured for their reporting on China?

Hoja: RFA journalists have always been victims of China's transnational repression tactics. I have become a target of China since the day I first spoke on the radio under my own name. In November 2001, China issued a 'Red File' on me, destroying my videos, photographs, and audio files from before I came to the United States. They held my family hostage. They pressured my parents. Since then, I have not been able to return home. In February 2018, I learnt that 25 of my direct relatives had been taken to the so-called re-education camps. Additionally, 50 family members of six journalists from our radio station had been kidnapped. We did not bow to these threats, and continued reporting.

RSF: Can the potential closure of RFA's Uyghur service be weaponised by the Chinese regime to further their propaganda?

Hoja: China has previously invested heavily in blocking Radio Free Asia's broadcasts and set up special jamming stations. It has also used [propaganda] media outlets to falsify our news. Now, by shutting down our radio station on its own, the US government is giving the Chinese government a reward. Without RFA, China will truly become a black hole for information. I still can't understand the motive behind it. Losing our radio station has become a sign that the United States has failed to keep its promise of democracy and human rights. I think it is also harmful to the US. Nothing can replace Radio Free Asia.

RSF: What is your reaction to the fact that, after the outlet's closure, Uyghur voices might lose their platform in the democratic world?

Hoja: The closure of such an important media outlet is not only a matter of unemployment for us journalists, but also a blow to our spirit. I spent 24 years devoting not only my mind but also my heart and life to this broadcaster. As a result, I became a target of the Chinese regime, labelled as a "terrorist." I used to not be afraid of these open threats, but rather proud, as I had the utmost confidence that the American government valued our work and would support us. At a time when China is torturing and killing my people, as Uyghur journalists in the United States, we need protection Ifrom China's transnational repression] more than ever. I cannot imagine our future. But what worries us most is the hopelessness of our voiceless people. RSF: What will the future bring for RFA iournalists?

Hoja: For 24 years, our people have been hearing that Radio Free Asia is the voice of the drowned, the voice of the free press... This was also our promise to our people. It was our mission to broadcast their voice to the world. We will not abandon our mission to be their voices, as we can also make our reporting heard through social media. I express my deep respect to my fearless journalist friends who are fighting for justice against oppressors. Being a voice for the voiceless requires a price, and standing up for justice against oppressors requires courage. We proud are to be iournalists. China's repression of Uyghur journalists Since 2016, Beijing has been conducting a violent campaign of repression in Xinjiang province in the name of the "fight against terrorism," which international observers characterise as a "genocide." According to the latest count by RSF, 79 journalists and press activists are being held freedom Xinjiang, including Sakharov Prize winner Ilham Tohti. At the same time, China exerts repression against transnational Uyghur journalists who continue to report on the regime's atrocities.

Ranked 178th out of 180 countries and territories in the 2025 RSF World Press Freedom Index, China is the world's largest

jailer of journalists and press freedom defenders.

Sikyong Concludes Official Visit in Washington D.C. with Series of Highlevel Meetings with Lawmakers from Both Major Political Parties

10 May 2025, CTA

On 8 May 2025, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration held an official meeting with U.S. Representative Joe Wilson at the latter's congressional office. During the meeting, Congressman Wilson conveyed profound admiration for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, describing him as a source of inspiration. In the course of Sikyong proposed the dialogue, introduction of a congressional resolution to honour the global legacy of His Holiness on the occasion of his forthcoming 90th birth anniversary. Representative expressed his support for the initiative and affirmed his willingness to advance such a resolution in Congress.

In addition to the matter of the proposed resolution, Sikyong and his accompanying delegation—which included staff from the Office of Tibet, Washington, D.C., and the International Campaign for Tibet—raised a number of other pressing concerns related to recent budget cuts and the Tibetan cause. Congressman Wilson responded affirmatively, assuring the delegation of his continued support. He also offered words of encouragement, invoking the power of persistence by remarking, "We have seen good occur in the world due to persistence," thereby underscoring the importance of steadfast advocacy.

Subsequently, Sikyong and his team engaged in a substantive exchange with Elliott Abrams at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C. Abrams, a senior figure in American foreign policy, previously held the position of Deputy National Security Advisor under President George W. Bush and later served as U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Venezuela. During the meeting, Sikyong

briefed Abrams on his recent engagements and developments concerning the Tibetan response, Abrams cause. offered commendations provided strategic and notably suggestions, stressing the irreplaceable role of Tibetans in leading international outreach efforts. He emphasised that Tibetan voices, rooted in personal experience and emotional investment, carry unique authenticity and moral force that are indispensable to effective advocacy.

On 9 May 2025, Sikyong concluded his official visit to the U.S. capital following a series of high-level meetings with lawmakers from both major political parties. He was accompanied by Representative Namgyal Choedup of the Office of Tibet, Washington, D.C., as he departed for New York to participate in a meeting with the Board of the Tibet Fund.

Sikyong will now continue his official visit to the United States with a stop in Amherst, where he is expected to meet and engage with members of the local Tibetan community.

World Uyghur Congress weekly brief warns of escalating Chinese repression 10 May 2025, The Tribune

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has issued its latest weekly brief, warning that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) intensifying its campaign of repression in Xinjiang while much of the democratic world remains either complicit or silent. One of the most alarming disclosures in the brief involves Harvard University's TH Chan School of Public Health, which hosted executive training programs in 2023 and 2024 for members of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). According to the brief, the XPCC--commonly referred to as "Bingtuan"--is **US-sanctioned** the a paramilitary and economic entity that has played a central role in Beijing's policies of assimilation, mass surveillance, internment camps, and state-orchestrated forced labour targeting the Uyghur population.

The WUC argued that Harvard's engagement with XPCC officials effectively legitimises a group at the heart of a system the U.S. government has formally designated as engaging in genocide. According to the brief, Uyghur human rights advocates described the university's cooperation as "academic complicity in crimes against humanity."

The brief also highlighted a major setback for Uyghur media and freedom of information: the shutdown of Radio Free Asia's Uyghur service, which was attributed to a Trump-era funding freeze. The WUC stated that nearly 90 per cent of RFA staff had been laid off, severely limiting independent reporting on Chinese state repression in the region. "We've gone completely dark," said Mamatjan Juma, former director of RFA's Uyghur service, as quoted in the brief. He warned that the information vacuum is rapidly being filled by Chinese state propaganda and disinformation campaigns.

Despite these challenges, the WUC noted positive developments on the international front. The organisation welcomed the election of Friedrich Merz as Germany's new Chancellor, expressing hope that Berlin would demonstrate renewed leadership on global human rights. The brief also reported that US Representative Chris Smith hosted a press conference in support of HR 1503, the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act. The proposed legislation targets what Smith and others described as the CCP's "industrialscale organ harvesting" from Uyghurs, Falun Gong practitioners, and other prisoners of conscience. In a final appeal, the WUC called on newly elected Pope Leo XIV to take a moral stand and publicly condemn the Chinese government's atrocities. (ANI)

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel Launches Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's E-Biography

09 May 2025, CTA

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, serving as the Chief Guest, launched the e-book of Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's biography on the afternoon of 9 May 2024 at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) hall.

The event was also attended by LTWA Director Geshe Lhakdor, TPI Director Dawa Tsering, former Kalon Thupten Lungrig, author Sherap Tharchin, several parliamentarians, other dignitaries, and public.

Addressing the gathering, the Speaker expressed deep appreciation for Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche's invaluable contributions to the Tibetan cause, particularly his significant role in the functioning of the Central Tibetan Administration. He highlighted Rinpoche's unique perspective, shaped by his lived experiences across three distinct periods in Tibet's history: life in a free Tibet, life under Chinese occupation, and life in exile as a refugee.

"Rinpoche served the Tibetan cause during one of the most challenging periods in Tibet's history following exile," the Speaker remarked. "Despite the many hardships of life in exile, Rinpoche supported His Holiness the Dalai Lama in laying the foundation for the Tibetan administration in exile. He was a key contributor to the establishment of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), serving on several important committees, including the Constitution Review Committee in 1991, and later as Kalon (Minister) of the Department of Religion and Culture."

The Speaker further noted that the three-volume biography of Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche, offering insights into both religious and secular knowledge, will serve as a lasting source of inspiration for younger generations to continue working for the Tibetan cause.

Urging Tibetans never to lose hope, the Speaker encouraged youth to draw inspiration from the exemplary life of Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche and to contribute to the collective effort toward resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict.

-Report filed by Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat EXCLUSIVE: Holiday Inn owner accused of profiting from Uyghur 'genocide' as it expands operations in controversial Chinese region

09 May 2025, Daily Mail UK

The luxury hospitality brand which owns Holiday Inn must rethink their decision to operate in a Chinese region where a genocide is said to be taking place, senior parliamentarians have demanded.

Former Conservative leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith is among those to have signed a crossparty letter to InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) demanding answers over the company's activities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China.

Beijing has been accused of subjecting the region's Uyghur Muslim minority to mass surveillance, forced **labour** and religious repression.

But recent research by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) has shown that IHG, which is headquarted in Windsor, is currently operating four hotels in the area, with at least another 16 set to open in the coming years.

The revelation has prompted MPs from a range of parties to question IHG's choice to do business in the region. As well as Sir Iain, the signatories included Labour MPs Blair McDougall, Marie Rimmer and Alex Sobel, the SNP's Chris Law and peers Lord Mackinlay, Lord Shinkwin, Baroness D'Souza and Baroness Meyer.

In a letter seen by MailOnline, they wrote: 'In such an environment, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for foreign businesses to operate without the risk of benefiting from or contributing to state-led human rights abuses.

'Continued commercial presence in such a context risks signalling tacit endorsement of policies that the UK Government and others have condemned.

'Given growing legal and reputational risks associated with corporate presence in Xinjiang, we strongly urge your company to reassess your operations in the region.

'We respectfully request a formal response to the questions above and appreciate your attention to this issue.'

The UHRP report says that five international hotel chains, including IHG, Marriott and Hilton, are all operating in the XUAR.

IHG has hotels in areas administered by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), under targeted sanctions by the UK, US, Canada and the European Union for human rights violations.

Restrictions have also been imposed in the UK to ensure British organisations are not complicit in, nor profiting from, human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

But by conducting business in the XUAR, IHG may be considered to be profiting from tourism in the region where broad suppression is taking place.

In a page now deleted on their website, IHG advertise two Holiday Inn Express hotels with the tagline: 'Searching for a hotel in Xinjiang? IHG Hotels & Resorts has the perfect hotel for your upcoming trip to Xinjiang.

'Our hotels are dedicated to providing exceptional service and a memorable stay for every guest.

'Whether you're seeking luxury, boutique, or budget-friendly accommodations in Xinjiang, we have a hotel brand that will exceed your expectations.

'Discover the perfect IHG hotel in Xinjiang and create unforgettable memories during your visit. Book your stay with us today and let us make your trip exceptional.'

Luke De Pulford, Executive Director of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, told MailOnline: 'With abuses rife throughout Xinjiang, only those who really don't care about the human cost are seeking to expand. It's simply impossible for companies to do meaningful human rights due diligence in the region.

'It's "hear no evil, see no evil". With companies like this, customers should vote with their feet.'

Overall, at least 115 hotels from various international brands were operational as of last month, with another 74 in various stages of planning.

Several world governments and legal groups have declared the government's actions against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities to be a genocide, although this has not been settled in any international court.

Beijing is attempting to promote Xinjiang as a tourist destination after years of criticism and scrutiny over its treatment of Uyghurs.

In 2024 Xinjiang recorded around 300 million visitors, according to state media, including five million foreign tourists – 50 per cent more than in 2023.

The UHRP says that 'many of the newly opened and planned hotels in East Turkistan are not only standard business accommodations located in major cities, but large luxury resorts designed to attract highend travelers.'

In IHG's case, this includes an InterContinental Hotel in Ghulja City later this year.

IHG were also accused of hosting state propaganda events and promoting state narratives of Uyghur identity, traditions, and culture.

The report says: 'The presence alone of international hotel chains in a region undergoing crimes against humanity and genocide is morally indefensible.

By offering high-end accommodation and leisure spaces, international hotel chains contribute to a sanitised image of the region, one that directly serves Beijing's propaganda objectives.'

Dr. Henryk Szadziewski, co-author of the report and Director of Research at the UHRP, added: 'International hotel chains continue to operate and expand their hospitality businesses in a region where Uyghur families have been torn apart by internment, imprisonment, and forced labor.

'By helping to portray the region as a normal travel destination, international hotel chains risk enabling the ongoing persecution of the Uyghur people.'

IHG and the Foreign Office were contacted for comment.

Uncovering injustice: Key stories from RFA Uyghur

07 May 2025, RFA

Source reporting by the only international Uyghur language news service has revealed the depth of repression inside Xinjiang.

Radio Free Asia has provided a unique, international news service for Uyghurs that has exposed China's creeping persecution of the minority Muslim group in real time, culminating in the eventual U.S. government declaration of a genocide.

RFA Uyghur was in the vanguard on reporting a massive crackdown in the Xinjiang region in the far west of China in 2017 which led to an estimated 1.8 million people confined in internment camps. By speaking directly to sources inside Xinjiang, it documented the repression of Uyghurs as the crackdown began before other news outlets were focusing on the issue.

RFA has also played an important role in promoting Uyghur language and culture as it came under attack, and focused on the human struggles and resilience of Uyghurs to retain their dignity and identity.

Mass detentions begin in 2017

During 2017, as Uyghurs faced growing pressure from Chinese authorities in Xinjiang, RFA documented the crisis as it happened. The Uyghur service reported the confiscations of Qurans, forced sampling of Uyghurs' DNA who had committed no crime, checking of digital devices as surveillance grew evermore intrusive, and the conversion of mosques into propaganda centers.

Then in September, RFA confirmed with police sources that thousands of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities were being held in re-education camps without contact with their families under a policy designed to counter "extremism."

Mass deaths reported in an internment

In October 2019, RFA reported that at least 150 detainees had died over a six-month period in just one internment camp in Kuchar County, marking the first confirmation of

mass deaths since the camps were introduced in 2017. This information came from a police officer who had served as an administrative assistant at the No. 1 Internment Camp in the Yengisher district.

The report corroborated earlier statements from a former police chief who was himself detained for revealing that possibly more than 200 residents from his township had died in the camps.

Still held at camps despite China claims

Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service revealed during the 2018 to 2020 period that despite Chinese claims that internment camps in Xinjiang had been closed, multiple facilities remained operational, including large camps in Kashgar city and surrounding regions. RFA Uyghur Service reported that thousands of Uyghurs continued to be detained in these facilities without legal process, with officials admitting people were "continuously coming in." Some of the largest camps, like Yanbulaq School in Kashgar, held thousands of people who were forced to learn Mandarin Chinese and undergo political indoctrination.

US: Genocide against Uyghurs in Xinjiang On the eve of the first Trump administration's exit from office in January 2021, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that the U.S. had determined China's repression of Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including its use of internment camps and forced sterilizations, amounted to "genocide" and "crimes against humanity."

The landmark decision was welcomed by Uyghur groups who said it would make it impossible for the international community to ignore the atrocities in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang police files

RFA provided crucial coverage of the Xinjiang Police Files leak, documenting how these official Chinese records revealed detailed information about thousands of Uyghur detainees. The files included clear images and information about camp detainees arrested in 2018 in Kashgar Kona Sheher county, with the youngest being just 14 years old and the oldest 73.

RFA interviewed Uyghurs in exile who found images and information about their missing

relatives, friends, and former cellmates in the leaked documents, giving many their first confirmation of what had happened to their loved ones.

Stories of Uyghur resilience and success

RFA has reported on the Uyghur diaspora community who have prevailed through adversity and achieved professional success. In the United States, Adalet Sabit described the challenges of raising a young Uyghur daughter who has been separated from her father. Adalet's husband, Ablimit Abliz, was prevented from leaving China after authorities confiscated his passport.

RFA also spoke to Arfiya Eri, the first person of Uyghur heritage to run as a major party candidate in a Japanese election. Born and raised in Japan, she defined success as "when an individual can live the life they desire freely, following the path they have chosen."

Uyghur activists condemn Harvard over training for sanctioned China group

01 May 2025, RFA, Shahrezad Ghayrat

Health training program continued after U.S. sanctions over repression in Xinjiang.

human advocates Uyghur rights criticizing Harvard University for training paramilitary Chinese officials from a organization sanctioned the by U.S. government for human rights abuses, including mass detention and forced labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Officials from the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) participated in Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health's executive training programs in 2023 and 2024, according to research by the Chinafocused business intelligence firm Strategy Risks. The program, delivered in partnership with China's National Healthcare Security Administration, focused on health insurance governance and public health policy. Strategy Risks' findings were later reported by the Washington Free Beacon.

The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned the XPCC in July 2020 under the Global Magnitsky Act, citing the organization's

central role in implementing mass surveillance, internment, and forced labor policies targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities. The sanctions prohibit U.S. individuals and institutions from engaging in most forms of cooperation with the XPCC.



China's National Healthcare Security Administration presents the fifth international healthcare experience learning and training course that was held with Harvard University in October 2023. (China's National Healthcare Security Administration)

"The XPCC is not a neutral administrative body—it is the paramilitary arm of the Chinese Communist Party," Sabrina Sohail, director of advocacy and communications at Campaign for Uyghurs, told RFA. "By training its officials, Harvard risks legitimizing a system complicit in genocide." Sohail said that the XPCC is "complicit in forced sterilizations, organ harvesting, and unethical experiments on Uyghurs."

"The institution's link to XPCC officials after sanctions were imposed is not just ignorance of the U.S. law and policy; it is lending legitimacy to those responsible for mass internment, forced labor, and systemic human rights abuses," she said.

The XPCC, also known as "Bingtuan," operates as a quasi-military and economic body in Xinjiang. It oversees major agricultural and industrial sectors and maintains its own police force, courts, and media. U.S. officials have accused it of helping to administer detention facilities and forced labor programs central to China's repression of Uyghurs.

The U.S. government has determined the abuses against the Uyghurs, a mostly Muslim group, amount to genocide. An estimated 1.8

million Uyghurs were interned in Xinjiang, in China's far west, after 2017.

China denies allegations of rights abuses. Its Commerce Ministry describes XPCC as "a strategic force for national stability and border defense" that operates under "a unique management system that combines the functions of the Party, government, military, and enterprises." It runs development zones, 16 listed companies, and more than 3,000 enterprises.

Henryk Szadziewski, director of research at the Uyghur Human Rights Project, said that U.S. institutions should understand the legal and ethical risks of working with sanctioned entities.

"The XPCC is under U.S. sanctions for atrocity crimes targeting Uyghurs," he said. "It's the responsibility of academic institutions in the U.S. - and elsewhere - to be aware of those sanctions and avoid any form of cooperation that could violate U.S. law or undermine human rights."

Strategy Risks, which first reported the 2023 training, described the XPCC's involvement as part of a broader pattern of Chinese statelinked entities seeking credibility through with academic partnerships Western institutions. Emma Barss, the group's director, said that American universities must take greater responsibility when it comes to foreign collaborations.

"Engagement with groups like the XPCC is not value-neutral," Barss told RFA. "Universities need to recognize the role they play as institutions with strong cultural and political influence. They should be much more careful about the types of groups they engage with and thereby provide legitimacy to."

Harvard did not respond to multiple requests for comment from RFA before publication. In a statement to the Free Beacon, a spokesperson from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health said the training sessions were organized in cooperation with China's National Healthcare Security Administration, or NHSA, and that the XPCC's inclusion was managed by Chinese authorities.

"Each year, the NHSA invites the local officials who administer health insurance and elder care programs in each administrative region of China," the spokesperson told the Free Beacon. "In Xinjiang, that often includes officials from the XPCC."

The spokesperson also told the Free Beacon that the program aimed to "build capacity for public officials across China to create effective insurance programs with sustainable financial models." The course was reportedly attended by 50 to 60 local officials from various provinces each year.

Language referencing XPCC's participation in the inaugural 2019 training was included on a Harvard website but later removed. Harvard's communications office told the Free Beacon this was part of a broad website overhaul that affected multiple departments.

The controversy comes as Harvard faces growing scrutiny over its ties to foreign governments, including China. Between 2019 and 2022, the university received nearly \$70 million from Chinese sources, more than from any other country, according to U.S. Department of Education data cited by college newspaper The Harvard Crimson.

Harvard is facing pressure from the Trump administration, which is withholding some of its federal funding over alleged antisemitism on campus. The administration is also probing its foreign ties.

Critics of Trump, however, have lauded Harvard's willingness to stand up for academic freedom as the administration seeks more influence over its operations.

Bill Ackman, a prominent Harvard donor, publicly commented on the XPCC reports on X (formerly Twitter), writing: "This is not a good look for @Harvard. Harvard should immediately address these accusations and provide transparency to prove they are not correct—or alternatively, explain how this was allowed to occur.

China-Hong Kong

Hong Kong authorities trying to disrupt independent press with 'strange' tax audits

22 May 2025, The Guardian, Helen Davidson

Inland revenue targets eight outlets, union, 20 journalists and their families with supposed 'random' checks

Hong Kong authorities have targeted journalists and media outlets with what are supposed to be "random" tax audits, in a move the industry union says adds pressure to waning press freedoms.

The head of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, Selina Cheng, detailed what she said were "strange" and "unreasonable" accusations by Hong Kong's inland revenue department. Requests or audits were made against the association, at least eight independent media outlets, and at least 20 journalists and their family members, including Cheng and her parents, she said at a press conference on Wednesday.

Cheng said the tax department had told one journalist that they had to pay a profit tax for a company they did not run, and had cited a registration number that did not exist. Another company was told it was being audited for profits made during the year before it was even founded. One journalist had their income "assessed" as double the amount they had actually earned, and was issued a demand for prepayment of tax on the "under-reported" income.

"Does the average news worker have the resources to hire an auditor to handle it?" Cheng asked. "We are concerned that tax investigations will put a financial and mental strain on media workers, disrupt our reporting and prevent us from focusing our journalistic work."

Among the media outlets listed as targets were InMedia HK and the English-language Hong Kong Free Press (HKFP), and the latter's founder, Tom Grundy.

HKFP said it had been "randomly selected" for a seven-year audit in 2024, and that the IRD had twice requested "hold sums", which

were later reduced to zero after the outlet objected.

"HKFP has always met its tax obligations, paid IRD demands immediately, and ensured meticulous record-keeping since our 2015 inception," it said.

"The delays involved, and wide scope of these inspections, raise questions about the burden on the taxpayer and tax office resources ... Recent scrutiny has diverted resources, manpower and funds away from journalism as we face a fourth year of financial deficit."

In a statement on X, Grundy said the outlet had "expected this kind of thing years ago", and had been "obsessive" in its record keeping and financial transparency.

"I'm having to act as a one-man compliance department instead of a journalist," he said about the 15 month-long process so far.

Citing IRD figures, Grundy said the chance of being "randomly" selected for an IRD audit was about 0.123%. "The probability drops much further when considering almost all independent media outlets were coincidentally, simultaneously selected."

Aleksandra Bielakowska, advocacy manager at Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific, said Hong Kong and Chinese authorities were doing everything in their power "to close remaining media outlets ... and make sure there's only one narrative coming from the Chinese Communist party. If they can't put people in jail they'll pressure them and their families to dissuade – or even prevent – them from reporting on the ground," she told the Guardian.

Hong Kong's media have come under increasing pressure and persecution since the government crackdown on the pro-democracy movement ushered in a Beijing-designed national security law.

Several outlets have been forced to close or relocate, including Apple Daily, whose founder, Jimmy Lai, is on trial for alleged offences under the NSL, and Stand News, whose two former editors were jailed for sedition last year.

The Stand News sentencing came just weeks after the HKJA revealed a campaign of "systemic and organised" harassment of

journalists and outlets, many of which Cheng said on Wednesday were also among those questioned by the tax authorities.

The harassment included death threats and threatening and defamatory complaint letters being sent to reporters' families and their employers, landlords and neighbours.

In the latest Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, Hong Kong ranked 140 out of 180 countries, down from 80 in 2021.

The IRD said it did not comment on individual cases but "the industry or background of a taxpayer has no bearing on such reviews".

Hong Kong pro-China informer: 'Why I've reported dozens of people to police'

09 May 2025, <u>BBC</u>, Bridget Wing & Georgina Lam, BBC Eye Investigations

From a woman waving a colonial-era flag in a shopping mall, to bakery staff selling cakes with protest symbols on them - dozens of Hongkongers have been reported to the police by one man for what he believes were national security violations.

"We're in every corner of society, watching, to see if there is anything suspicious which could infringe on the national security law," former banker Innes Tang tells the BBC World Service.

"If we find these things, we go and report it to the police."

When the UK returned Hong Kong to China 28 years ago, internationally binding treaties guaranteed the city's rights and freedoms for 50 years. But the national security law (NSL), imposed by Beijing a year after Hong Kong's 2019 mass pro-democracy protests, has been criticised for scuttling free speech and press, and for ushering in a new culture of informing.

The law criminalises activities considered to be calls for "secession" (breaking away from China), "subversion" (undermining the power or authority of the government), and collusion with foreign forces. An additional security law called Article 23, voted in last year, has further tightened restrictions.

With new laws and arrests, there has been limited reporting on Hong Kong's pro-China "patriots" - the people who are now running and policing the city, as well as the ordinary citizens who openly support them. But the BBC has spent weeks interviewing Innes Tang, 60, a prominent self-described patriot. He and his volunteers have taken screen grabs from social media of any activities or comments they believe could be in breach of the NSL.

He also established a hotline for tip-offs from the public and encouraged his online followers to share information on the people around them.



Innes Tang has reported dozens of fellow Hongkongers to the police

Nearly 100 individuals and organisations have been reported to the authorities by him and his followers, he says.

"Does reporting work? We wouldn't do it if it didn't," Mr Tang says. "Many had cases opened by the police... with some resulting in jail terms."

Mr Tang says he hasn't investigated alleged law breakers himself, but simply reported incidents he thinks warrant scrutiny describing it as "proper community-police cooperation".

Mr Tang is not the only so-called patriot to engage in this kind of surveillance.

Hong Kong's authorities have set up their own national security hotline, receiving 890,000 tip-offs from November 2020 to February this year - the city's security bureau told the BBC. For those who are reported to the authorities, pressure can be relentless.

Since the NSL was enacted in 2020, up until February this year, more than 300 people had been arrested for national security offences. And an estimated 300,000 or more Hongkongers have permanently left the city in recent years.

Pong Yat-ming, the owner of an independent bookshop that hosts public talks, says he often receives inspections from government departments which cite "anonymous complaints".

He received 10 visits in one 15-day period, he says.

Kenneth Chan, political scientist and university lecturer, who has been involved in the city's pro-democracy movement since the 1990s, jokes he has "become a bit radioactive these days".

Some friends, students and colleagues now keep their distance because of his outspoken views, he says. "But I would be the last person to blame the victims. It's the system."

In response, Hong Kong's government said it "attaches great importance to upholding academic freedom and institutional autonomy". But it adds that academic institutions "have the responsibility to ensure their operations are in compliance with the law and meet the interests of the community at large".

Innes Tang says he is motivated to report people by a love of Hong Kong, and that his views on China were cultivated when he was young, when the city was still a British colony.

"The colonial policies weren't really that great," he says. "The best opportunities were always given to the British and we [the locals] did not really have access."

Like many of his generation, he nursed a longing to be united with China and taken out of colonial governance. But he says many other Hongkongers at the time were more concerned with their livelihoods than their rights.

"Democracy or freedom. These were all very abstract ideas which we didn't really understand," he says.

An average citizen should not become too involved in politics, he says, explaining he only became politically active to restore what he calls "balance" to Hong Kong society following the turbulence of 2019.

He is giving a voice, he says, to what he calls "the silent majority" of Hongkongers who do not support independence from China, nor the disruption created by the protests.

But other Hongkongers consider rallies and demonstrations a longstanding tradition, and one of the only ways to voice public opinion in a city that now does not have a fully democratically elected leadership.

"We are no longer a city of protests," says Kenneth Chan, who specialises in Eastern European politics. "So what are we? I don't have the answer yet."

And patriotism isn't inherently a negative thing, he says.

It is "a value, maybe even a virtue", he argues, although it needs to allow citizens to keep "a critical distance" - something that is not happening in Hong Kong.

Electoral reform was pushed through in 2021 - stating that only "patriots" who "swore loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party" could hold important positions in government or the Legislative Council [LegCo] - Hong Kong's parliament.

As a result, the council struggles to function, believes Hong Kong-based China commentator Lew Mon-hung, a former member of the Chinese government advisory body, the CPPCC.

"The public think a lot of these patriots are 'verbal revolutionaries' or political opportunists - they don't really represent the people," he says.

"That's why ridiculous policies still pass with a huge majority. There is no-one to constrain or oppose, no-one to scrutinise."

Even patriot Innes Tang says he wants to see the current system challenged.

"I don't want to see every policy passing with 90% of the vote," he tells the BBC.

There is a danger the National Security Law will be weaponised, he says, with people saying: "If you don't agree with me, I accuse you of infringement of the national security law."

"I don't agree with this type of stuff," says Mr Tang.

Hong Kong's government said: "The improved LegCo is now rid of extremists who wish to obstruct and even paralyse the operation of the government without any intention of entering into constructive dialogue to represent the interests of all Hong Kong people."

For now, says Mr Tang, he has stopped reporting on people. Balance and stability, he believes, has returned to Hong Kong.

The number of large-scale protests has dwindled to none at all.

In academia, fear of surveillance - and how life might change for someone who infringes the laws - means self-censorship and censorship have become the "order of the day", says Kenneth Chan.

Pro-democracy parties are no longer represented in the Legislative Council and many have disbanded - including the Democratic Party of Hong Kong, once the most powerful party.

Innes Tang has now set his sights overseas.

"There aren't any particular issues in Hong Kong now, so I asked myself - shouldn't I have a look at how I can continue to serve my community and my country?" he says.

"For a non-politician and civilian like me, this is an invaluable opportunity."

He now works as a representative for one of several pro-Beijing non-profit groups, regularly visiting the UN in Geneva to speak at conventions giving China's perspective on Hong Kong, human rights and other issues.

Mr Tang is also in the process of establishing a media company in Switzerland, and registering as a member of the press.

For Kenneth Chan in Hong Kong, his future hangs in the balance.

"One third of my friends and students are now in exile, another third of my friends and students are in jail, and I'm sort of... in limbo," he says.

"Today I'm speaking freely with you... noone would promise me that I would continue doing it for the rest of my life."

In a written reply to the BBC, a Hong Kong government spokesperson said that national

security is a top priority and inherent right for any country. It "only targets an extremely small minority of people and organisations that pose a threat to national security, while protecting the lives and property of the general public".

Trump to raise Hong Kong Jimmy Lai case in China trade talks

08 May 2025, Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he would raise the case of jailed Hong Kong activist and former media tycoon Jimmy Lai as "part of the negotiation" with China over trade and tariffs, a move that could further stoke tensions with Beijing.

"I think talking about Jimmy Lai is a very good idea," Trump told radio host Hugh Hewitt, opens new tab on Wednesday. "We'll put it down, and we'll put it down as part of the negotiation."

Top senior U.S. officials are due to meet with China's top economic official on Saturday in Switzerland, a fledgling step amid a trade war stemming from Trump's often chaotic tariff policies that have hurt the global economy and roiled markets.

Trump, however, said he wasn't willing to cut Chinese tariffs to get Beijing to the negotiating table. Adding Jimmy Lai's case into the mix -- long a diplomatic friction point between the two sides -- could bring further complications.

"Look, they (China) want to make a deal so badly. That, I can tell you. But we've been talking," Trump said during the radio interview.

The trial of Lai -- a longstanding critic of the Chinese Communist Party -- has shone a spotlight on a sweeping crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong following China's imposition of a national security law (NSL) in 2020.

Countries such as the U.S. and Britain have called for Lai's release and say his trial amounts to political persecution.

Beijing rejects these claims and says Lai is getting a fair trial under the NSL, which it

says has brought stability to Hong Kong after mass pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Lai, 77, the most high-profile China critic to face prosecution under the NSL, has pleaded not guilty to his charges including conspiracy to collude with foreign forces.

Lai, who is founder of the Apple Daily newspaper that was forced to close after a police raid and asset freeze in June 2021, rejects allegations by the prosecution that he had lobbied the U.S. to impose sanctions on Hong Kong.

Before being elected, Trump pledged last year to "one hundred percent" get Lai out of China. Lai's son, Sebastien said his father's health has declined during harsh, solitary confinement. In January former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, speaking at an investor forum in Hong Kong, called on Beijing to "send a message of goodwill" to the U.S. by freeing Lai.

China intensifies its campaign against exiled Hong Kong dissidents

08 May 2025, The Economist

Police in the territory are harassing the families of those who have fled

On april 30th Hong Kong police unleashed a new weapon in their attempt to punish those who have fought for freedoms in the former British territory since 2019. The father and brother of one activist who took part in mass protests that year, Anna Kwok (who fled to America in 2020), were detained on suspicion of assisting an "absconder" by "directly or indirectly" handling her funds or assets.

This is an offence under the 2024 legislation known as Article 23, one of the city's two sweeping national-security laws. (The first was imposed by the government in Beijing in 2020.) Ms Kwok's brother was freed on bail pending further investigation. But on May 2nd, Kwok Yin-sang, her 68-year-old father, was charged. If found guilty, he faces up to seven years in prison.

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The move marks a serious escalation by the Hong Kong authorities, under pressure from Beijing, to enforce complete political control over the territory. Last year they jailed a group of 45 prominent activists who stayed in the city, for between four and ten years. But this is the first time a family member of an exiled activist has been prosecuted. In 2023 the Hong Kong government placed a bounty on several campaigners abroad, including Ms Kwok, who now leads the Hong Kong Democracy Council in Washington, accusing them of colluding with foreign forces. That can carry a sentence of life in prison. There are now 19 "wanted" activists living in exile, who have a bounty on their head. The authorities have revoked the passports of Ms Kwok and 12 others.

Their family members have faced increasing harassment. Since January police have interrogated the families of at least five of the exiled activists, says Human Rights Watch (hrw), an ngo in New York. They raided the office of the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute, an institution associated with Chung Kim-wah, a scholar now based in Britain, and confiscated HK\$800,000 (\$103,000) from the family of Ted Hui, a former lawmaker who lives in Australia, both for allegedly contravening national security. Many ordinary Hong Kongers have left the city since the crackdown on dissent began in 2020. By May 2024 more than 200,000 had arrived in Britain under a scheme set up to allow people from the territory who met certain conditions to emigrate to the former colonial power.

But fleeing the city does not take them beyond the reach of the Communist Party. The new laws criminalise acts deemed a threat to China's national security, even if they are committed elsewhere. Some of the exiles say they have experienced campaigns of online intimidation, and have been followed and monitored abroad.

hrw has urged foreign governments to take concrete actions against the intimidation campaign "by imposing targeted sanctions on government officials implicated in these abuses". Ms Kwok has not commented on her relatives' arrests, but recently pointed to the Hong Kong authorities' claims that the city respects human rights. "We are living examples of that not being true," she said.

More departures than arrivals in Hong Kong as 'golden week' kicks off

01 May 2025, SCMP, Fiona Sun

Many mainland visitors spotted at scenic High Island Reservoir in Sai Kung as Labour Day break begins

Hong Kong has recorded more residents leaving the city at the beginning of the five-day Labour Day "golden week" holiday than mainland Chinese tourists coming in, with many inbound visitors favouring sightseeing, shopping and hiking.

As of 9pm on Thursday, more than 213,000 mainland tourists had flocked to Hong Kong while nearly 282,000 residents had left for other destinations.

The West Kowloon terminus for the highspeed rail link was packed with visitors from across the border on Thursday morning, with some coming in for day trips while others planned to stay longer and spend more on shopping and dining.

Many mainland visitors and crowds were spotted at the scenic High Island Reservoir in Sai Kung, where police and staff from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department were deployed to maintain order.

Among those travelling via high-speed trains was primary school teacher Jill Yao, who arrived at the terminus at around 10am after a 1½-hour journey from Guangzhou city.

The 42-year-old said she would be Hong Kong for two days with her husband, two sons, aged 13 and seven, and her parents-in-law, before heading to Macau.

"It's our first time in Hong Kong. I plan to take our children and parents to explore the city during the holiday," she said.

Yao said the family had set aside HK\$20,000 (US\$2,578) for the trip, including about HK\$6,000 for hotel expenses, and would visit well-known attractions such as The Peak, the Ferris wheel in Central, and the Avenue of Stars in Tsim Sha Tsui.

The Labour Day golden week holiday runs from May 1 to 5 on the mainland.

Immigration Department statistics showed that more than 253,200 visitors had entered the city as of 9pm on Thursday, including over 213,000 from the mainland.

Clerk Wang Xiaoyou arrived in Hong Kong in the morning with three friends on a day trip. The 23-year-old Shenzhen resident said she preferred to explore Hong Kong for the first time during the break rather than other popular mainland destinations because of bigger crowds anticipated there.

The group of four would go to The Peak, Avenue of Stars and Yau Ma Tei Police Station, as well as enjoy the views at Victoria Harbour, Wang said, adding that she had got the recommendations from the popular mainland social media platform RedNote.

"I planned for a day trip to explore the city first, and I will come again if the experiences are good," she said, adding that her budget for the trip was about HK\$1,000.

Among the visitors from across the border were Tommy Li, 25, and his girlfriend, also 25.

The pair from Dongguan, who have been to Hong Kong before, said they would focus on dining and shopping in Mong Kok and Tsim Sha Tsui during their day trip before returning home at night.

Li, who works in global trade, said he intended to shop for a vintage camera in the

city, while his girlfriend wanted to buy jewellery. Their budget was under HK\$5,000. "We are particularly attracted by good Japanese buffet restaurants here, and the cross-border travel is convenient," he said.

Hong Kong's Immigration Department earlier said it expected residents and visitors to make 5.71 million inbound and outbound trips through the city's sea, land and air control points during the five-day break.

The department estimated about 840,000 visitors from the mainland would travel to Hong Kong over the break, about 10 per cent more than the same period last year.

Labour Day is also a public holiday in Hong Kong. City residents can enjoy a five-day break by taking Friday off and combining it with the weekend and Buddha's Birthday on Monday, also a public holiday.

Hongkonger Yeung Tse-ching, 28, embarked on a four-day trip to Guizhou with two friends on Thursday. She said it would be her first time in the southwestern province.

She said she planned to set aside HK\$3,000 for her trip, which would cover hotel expenses of about HK\$400 a night.

"I have been in Hong Kong for most of the time, so I want to explore other places during holidays," the event designer said, adding that she had been to various mainland destinations including Beijing, Shanghai and Zhejiang province.

The city has a variety of events on offer for tourists as well as locals over the break.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board will present a drone display at 8pm on Thursday at the Wan Chai temporary promenade and spotlight traditional festivals such as the Tin Hau Festival and Tam Kung Festival.

China- Nepal

Nepal seeks more Chinese investment and support, FM Deuba tells Wang 30 May 2025, The Kathmandu Post

Chinese FM urges speedy implementation of deals reached during Oli's 2024 China visit.

Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a bilateral meeting in Hong Kong on Friday on the sidelines of the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed).

At the invitation of Foreign Minister Wang, Deuba is in Hong Kong to attend the signing ceremony of a treaty concerning the establishment of IOMed, where Nepal is participating as an observer state.

At the ceremony, convened by the Chinese government, as many as 32 countries signed the convention. The IOMed—in line with the UN Charter—aims to resolve disputes between states, a state and a national of another State, and private parties through mediation, said a statement issued by the Nepal's Consulate General office in Hong Kong.

They exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, including strengthening relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between Nepal and China, said the statement.

During the meeting, discussions were held on Nepal-China relations, mutual interests, common concerns, and the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries being marked this year, said another statement issued by Deuba's private secretariat.

Deuba emphasized Nepal's prioritisation of relations with China, the statement said.

She conveyed Nepal's gratitude to the Chinese government and people for their continued support and cooperation in Nepal's economic and social development. She also expressed Nepal's expectation for continued Chinese cooperation in various areas, including economic, technical, technology transfer, and foreign direct investment, said the statement.

On the occasion, Deuba reiterated Nepal's unwavering commitment to one-China policy and clarified that Nepali territory will not be allowed to be used against China.

Deuba had also thanked the Chinese government for its representation in the recently concluded Sagarmatha Sambaad hosted by Nepal.

The meeting covered recent high-level visits between Nepal and China, in particular, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's official visit to China last December, and the implementation of the agreements and understandings reached during that visit.

As Nepal and China are celebrating the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, Foreign Minister Deuba extended an invitation to Foreign Minister Wang to visit Nepal. She also expressed Nepal's interest in welcoming more Chinese tourists this year, as 2025 has been designated by China as Nepal Visit Year.

During the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang congratulated the government of Nepal, through Minister Deuba, for the successful organisation of the Sagarmatha Sambaad. He expressed China's readiness to collaborate with Nepal in the future to address climate change, mitigate its impacts, and promote environmental conservation. He also affirmed that China's support to Nepal will continue and mentioned that coordination with Nepal could be enhanced through the newly established mediation organisation.

Foreign Minister Wang requested, through Deuba, that the government of Nepal expedite the implementation of agreements and understandings during reached Prime Minister Oli's visit to China. Accepting Deuba's invitation, Minister Wang expressed his intention to visit Nepal, said the statement. Commending the diplomatic initiatives and programmes led by Deuba, the Chinese foreign minister also extended a special on behalf of the Chinese government for her to participate in the World Forum on Women's Leadership.

Former President Bhandari in Beijing 25 May 2025. The Rising Nepal

25 May 2025, The Rising Nepal

Former President Bidya Devi Bhandari reached Beijing via Guangzhou as part of a nine-day visit to China on Sunday.

The Nepali Ambassador to China, Krishna Prasad Oli, warmly welcomed former President Bhandari along with officials from the International Department of the Communist Party of China.

Former President Bhandari participated in a dinner organized in her honor by the International Department of the CPC this evening, where she was welcomed by Minister Liu JInchao of the International Department.

The high-level Nepali delegation led by former President Bhandari included former Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of the Nepal Communist Party (UML) and Head of the Foreign Affairs Department Raghubir Mahaseth, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Damodar Bhandari, UML leader Karna Bahadur Thapa, lawmaker Devi lawmaker Bhattachan, former Goma Devkota, Executive Chairperson of Public Service Broadcasting Nepal Dr Mahendra Bista, and Dr Kailash Kumar Bhattarai, Dr Bhes Raj Adhikari, and Binay KC, among others. There are 15 participants from various sectors including from her personal secretariat.

Former President Bhandari's delegation and Chinese officials, along with representatives from various other countries participated in the dinner. During the visit, Bhandari will address the inaugural session of the 'Dialogue with Political Parties of Neighboring Countries by the Chinese Communist Party' as the chief guest on Monday.

There was a brief discussion about the mutual relations between Nepal and China, it is learnt.(RSS)

Chinese delegation refers to Everest as "Chomolungma" during Sagarmatha Sambaad

17 May 2025, MSN

Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of China, Xiao Jie, referred to Mount Everest by its Sino name, "Chomolungma," while addressing the inaugural session of Nepal's flagship event, the Sagarmatha Sambaad.

While addressing the event, the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Republic of China, Xiao Jie, only used the Chinese name for the Everest, while the rest of the attendees used the English and Nepali names for the event.

Nepal had entitled the event with the highest peak in the world, Sagarmatha or Mount Everest, as "Sagarmatha Sambaad", where Sambaad means "conversation" in Nepali.

Xiao Jie was invited as the keynote speaker for the inaugural session of the three-day event. He delivered his remarks in Chinese, which were translated by a translator.

While Jie stood at the stage for about 20 minutes during the inauguration session, he pronounced "Chomolungma" ten times instead of Sagarmatha which has been used as the title of the event.

"We also noticed about it but we are in no power to say anything about it," an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told ANI, seeking anonymity.

While the Chinese dignitary used the Sino name for the world's tallest peak and denying identity of the event's title, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba, Finance Minister Bishnu Paudel were present in the hall. The event was also attended by over 200 participants, including dignitaries from various countries.

Sagarmatha," the Nepali name, rather than using alternative names. However, Oli stayed mum over the use of the word during the event on Friday.

ANI tried to reach out to the Foreign Ministry for comments but didn't get any response.

The three-day event being held in Kathmandu is being attended by representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, India, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, Brazil, Egypt, Oman, and Pakistan were present in the delegations. International national regional organisations include the United Nations, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, SAARC, BIMSTEC, and ICIMOD.

Historic Lomanthang awaits tourism boost amid policy hurdles

14 May 2025, Khabarhub



The Lomanthang Palace in Mustang.

Despite its rich cultural legacy, natural beauty, and historical significance, the ancient walled settlement of Lomanthang in Mustang remains underexplored by foreign tourists due to restrictive government policies and limited infrastructure.

Located 75 kilometers from Jomsom and approximately 180 kilometers north of Beni, Lomanthang was once a thriving trade hub between Nepal, India, and Tibet.

Today, however, it struggles to realize its tourism potential. While nearby destinations such as Marpha, Jomsom, and Muktinath attract thousands of international visitors annually, Lomanthang continues to receive only a trickle of tourists.

Chairman of Lomanthang Rural Municipality, Tasi Nharbu Gurung, attributed the low tourist numbers to a stringent permit policy requiring foreign nationals to pay USD 500 for a 10-day visit to Lomanthang and Lo-Dhekar Damodarkunda.

"If this restriction were lifted or revised, we could see a surge in tourist inflow, significantly improving the livelihoods of local residents," Gurung said.

Lomanthang, situated at an altitude of 3,850 meters and bordering China's Tibet Autonomous Region, had raised hopes for cross-border trade and increased economic activity with the opening of an Immigration Office and a Border Outpost at Korola point in October 2024. However, these facilities remain largely non-operational.

Gurung noted that the lack of essential infrastructure—such as a functioning food

and livestock quarantine unit—has stalled the full operation of the immigration office.

"We have the geographic advantage, but without necessary state support, we're unable to tap into cross-border opportunities," he added.

Healthcare also remains a critical concern. Although a hospital has been constructed, it lacks both trained personnel and medical equipment. Moreover, delays in obtaining central government approval for emergency helicopter rescues have led to preventable tragedies, according to local officials.

Home to approximately 2,000 people, Lomanthang is a 600-year-old settlement encircled by earthen walls, with roots tracing back to the Lo Kingdom of the 13th century. The last king, Jigme Dorje Palbar Bista, held symbolic authority until Nepal became a republic.

The village boasts ancient monasteries, centuries-old palaces, and cultural traditions such as the "Mukhiya" system and Tibetan Buddhist heritage, drawing keen interest from historians and spiritual seekers alike. A remarkable nearby cave, believed to be over 2,000 years old with nearly 60 rooms, stands as a testament to the region's ancient civilization.

Despite these assets, Lomanthang remains largely overlooked in national tourism and development strategies.

"This place is a living museum of Tibetan Buddhism and Himalayan history," said Gurung. "But unless the government addresses the barriers holding us back—especially policy and infrastructure gaps—Lomanthang's full potential will remain untapped."

Chinese company, in collaboration with Scout Volunteers, geared to launch language project

14 May 2025, The Kathmandu Post

Participants of an interaction organised by the Shanghai Haishan Culture Media Co Limited, in partnership with the International Scout Volunteers Group Nepal, in Kathmandu on Wednesday. **Photo provided to the Post**

The Shanghai Haishan Culture Media Co Limited, in partnership with the International Scout Volunteers Group (ISVG) Nepal, is preparing to build a Chinese language learning centre in a local unit in Kathmandu. With permission from the Social Welfare Council of Nepal, the Shanghai-based Haishan Media founded by Ni Haishan, is collaborating with select local governments to launch a Chinese language and skills training project in Nepal.

In Kathmandu on Wednesday, the ISVG and Haishan Media organised an interaction with the representatives of local governments mostly from the Kathmandu Valley to decide the venue for building a Chinese language training school.

Such a structure, to be built with a grant from the Haishan Media, will feature five classrooms, three teachers' offices, a canteen, a kitchen, and a dormitory that can accommodate 15 people, according to Huang Wenqi, general manager assistant for Haishan Media.

Ajit Khadka, the ISVG Nepal country chief commissioner, said they will choose one local unit in Kathmandu from among the three on the shortlist to carry forward the project. The shortlist was announced at the interaction on Wednesday.

After working with a local unit initially, the project aims to set up a total of 10 Chinese language training schools in Nepal to help develop education in rural areas.

The collaboration is for promoting cultural exchange and understanding between China and Nepal through language and vocational training and high-quality educational infrastructure for the local government, according to the briefing.

The project is aimed at teaching basic Chinese with focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The course will also involve business Chinese and Chinese culture.

Haishan Media has announced a scholarship system to support poor and outstanding students.

4 Chinese nationals detained near Nepal border for illegally entering India

08 May 2025, <u>India Today</u>, Rohit Kumar Singh

According to officials, the four Chinese nationals were attempting to enter India via the Nepalese border along Bihar's Raxaul.



Four Chinese nationals detained from India-Nepal border. (Screengrab)

The Sashatra Seema Bal (SSB) on Wednesday detained four Chinese nationals who were trying to infiltrate into India via Nepal border amid the heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following Operation Sindoor.

According to officials, the four Chinese nationals were attempting to enter India via

the Nepalese border along Bihar's Raxaul, but the SSB thwarted their bid to infiltrate. The quartet were not carrying any legal documents required to authorise their entry into India.

After detaining the Chinese nationals and verifying them, the paramilitary force handed all four of them to the local police.

Notably, inspection, detection and investigation of any suspicious movement along the India-Nepal border has been beefed up in the wake of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, which claimed the lives of 26 tourists last month.

Vehicles are being thoroughly inspected, while driving licences and other ID proofs and documents of people travelling to and from Nepal are being checked.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiralled after Pahalgam attack, in response to which India carried out precision strikes against terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK on May 7 and 8.

India to send minister, China hints at 'surprise' for Sagarmatha Sambad

06 May 2025, The Kathmandu Post, Anil Giri

With just nine days to go for the first edition of the Sagarmatha Sambad, its secretariat expects around 150 foreign delegates to attend the three-day event being organised under the theme of 'Climate change, mountains, and the future of humanity.'

Sagarmatha Sambad, Nepal's first-ever global dialogue, is scheduled for May 16-18 in Kathmandu. Inaugurating the event will be Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, who also chairs the high-level coordination committee. According to a member of the secretariat, the 150 foreign delegates will include ministers, officials, speakers, experts, and members of delegations. There will altogether be 72 speakers in the three-day event.

Sources said Indian Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav will lead the country's official delegation to the event, while China has yet to disclose its representative, although Chinese officials have indicated that they may give a 'surprise'. At least 300 foreign delegates from 50 countries were invited to attend the event, which aims to address the impacts of climate change on mountainous as well as on oceanic countries.

As the event approaches, Nepal has started the negotiation for the Kathmandu Declaration of Sagarmatha Sambad and has already sent out the text for comments and feedback from different stakeholders.

Earlier, Nepal had hoped to invite Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the event. But during their sideline meeting at the sixth Bimstec summit in Thailand last month Modi had informed Prime Minister Oli that he had a pre-scheduled visit to Europe around the same time.

Although Nepal had requested Modi to participate, the Indian prime minister had a pre-scheduled visit to Europe coinciding with the Sambad, Oli had told journalists in Kathmandu upon his return from Thailand.

"As that programme [Europe visit] had already been set, he informed us of his inability to come," said Oli.

Lok Bahadur Chettri, the spokesperson of the Sagarmatha Sambad, told the Post that they expect around 150 foreign delegates. Sources also said that United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres is unlikely to attend due to his busy schedule.

The secretariat plans to organise a press conference soon to provide an update on the number of participants, Chettri told the Post, without giving further details.

As per the schedule, the inauguration will take place at Hotel Soaltee on May 16 where highlevel delegates will deliver brief remarks of up to five minutes each. Following the inauguration, the plenary session will begin, focusing on the main theme: 'Climate change, mountains, and the future of humanity'. Ministers of forests and foreign affairs from other countries, as well as climate change experts, will also share their perspectives during the plenary session.

Altogether, the event will feature 12 sessions across five sub-themes and three plenary

sessions spread over two days. National and international guests will present their views in these sessions.

As per the Sagarmatha Sambad secretariat, the theme of the 12 plenary sessions are urgency of 1.5 degree ambition for the preservation of glaciers; connecting highlands to islands; food security and climate resilient agriculture; community-led climate initiatives in the mountains; powering the future; harnessing clean energy; exploring nature, culture and adventure in the mountains; mountain risk assessment and monitoring; addressing loss and damage in the mountains; building an inclusive future; gender and intergenerational equity; bridging science and technology for mountain resilience; and sustaining mountain economy and sustainable cities and communities.

Inspired by global platforms like the World Economic Forum of Davos, the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, and the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, the Sagarmatha Sambad was first announced by the previous Oli government in 2019, but was postponed due to the Covid pandemic.

In order to organise the event, the government has formed three committees including one headed by Prime Minister Oli, another led by Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba, and a third, in addition to a secretariat at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) under Rajkumar Shrestha, secretary at PMO.

The core objective of Sagarmatha Sambad is to build shared understanding among national and international stakeholders for immediate climate action. The event also aims to seek inclusive solutions for climate justice, advocating fair and inclusive solutions for vulnerable nations and communities.

Also, the Sambad will work to enhance global cooperation in accelerating climate finance, scale up innovative technologies, and boost capacity building. Finally, it strives to form a global coalition for taking ambitious action in preserving mountains and securing a sustainable future for humanity.

China-Pakistan

China's deafening silence on arms sent to Pakistan comes amid desi roar of Indian firepower

30 May 2025, The Economic Times

Weeks after Operation Sindoor concluded, its lessons remain vivid. The conflict was more than a border skirmish; it was a test of military technology. The lessons learnt have put China's multi-billion-dollar defence achievements modernisation under spotlight, especially considering this is the first time since the 1980s that the world has had a firsthand view of its capabilities. During the border skirmishes, Pakistan leaned heavily Chinese weapons-fighter on jets, missiles, drones—but these systems largely failed when faced against the Indian might. India's indigenous platforms, particularly the BrahMos missile, outclassed them, delivering precise strikes and changing the regional security balance.

Chinese weapons in the spotlight

Pakistan imports nearly 82% of its military hardware from China. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, one of the leaders of seven all-party delegations during his visit to Bogotá, Colombia, said, "We are quite conscious that China supplies 81 per cent of all Pakistani defence equipment. Defence is a polite word—Pakistani military equipment. Much of it is not for defence but for attack. Every sovereign country has the right to do that."

He also went on to say, "The single largest project in China's Belt and Road Initiative is in Pakistan, the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is a highway corridor connecting China to a port in southwestern Pakistan that permits goods to be transported relatively quickly economically to western China. We are aware of that, and our concern is not with the rights pursue of the Pakistani people development. Of course, they may do so, including with the partnership with China. Our quarrel is only with the perpetration of terror against us..."

During Operation Sindoor, this dependency became a glaring vulnerability. Pakistani deployed the J-10C "Vigorous Dragon" fighter jets armed with PL-15 airto-air missiles and HQ-9 long-range surfaceto-air missile systems. These platforms, touted as advanced, faced their first combat test. But according to reports, the HQ-9 system failed to intercept Indian aircraft and missile strikes, including the supersonic BrahMos missile. Indian forces neutralised the HO-9 near Lahore. undermining defence. Pakistan's air Bilal Khan, founder of the Quwa Defence News & Analysis Group, noted, "The Chinese air-defence systems, however, do not appear to have been as effective as the Pakistan Air Force would have hoped." The PL-15 missile, heavily promoted by China as a rival to Western missiles, also fell short. Indian military officials displayed fragments of a PL-15 missile recovered in Hoshiarpur that failed to hit its target. Claims of its success were widely seen propaganda.

Failures beyond air defence

Chinese-origin platforms across the board showed weaknesses. Pakistani J-10C and JFequipped fighter jets with PL-15 missiles failed to significantly challenge Indian air strikes. Independent sources found no evidence supporting Pakistani or Chinese claims of shooting down Indian jets. Moreover, Indian airstrikes destroyed a Chinese-supplied YLC-8E anti-stealth radar at Chunian Air Base, further weakening Pakistan's situational awareness. Chinese drones and AR-1 laser-guided missiles deployed by Pakistan were intercepted or neutralised. Reports highlighted limited their stealth and vulnerability to electronic warfare, which India effectively employed. On the other hand, China has denied sending arms to Pakistan during the conflict. The People's Liberation Army Air Force called rumours about the Y-20 military transport aircraft flying arms to Pakistan "false" and warned, "The internet is not beyond the law! Those who produce and spread military-related rumours will be held legally responsible!"

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson urged restraint from both India and Pakistan, stating: "China opposes all forms of terrorism. We urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace and stability, remain calm, exercise restraint, and refrain from taking actions that may further complicate the situation."

From US to China: Pakistan's shift in arms dependency

Before 2010, the United States was Pakistan's main arms supplier. But growing US frustration with Pakistan's alleged support for militant groups, including the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network, led Washington to halt arms sales by 2016. China then stepped in, becoming Pakistan's primary military backer. Between 2014 and 2024, Beijing sold over \$9 billion worth of weapons to Pakistan. Today, more than 80% of Pakistan's military imports come from China, transforming Islamabad's armed forces.

Pakistani Army: Chinese Hardware Powering Land Forces

- VT-4 Main Battle Tanks (Haider): 176 tanks purchased for \$859 million since 2018, deployed by 2020 to counter India's T-90MS and Arjun tanks. These tanks incorporate Chinese technology that has upgraded Pakistan's own Al-Khalid tanks.
- SH-15 155mm Howitzers: 236 units costing \$500 million, inducted by 2022, offering long-range artillery capabilities up to 50 km to match India's K-9 Vajra systems.
- LY-80 Air Defence (HQ-16 export version): 9 batteries costing \$599 million, inducted in 2017, designed to protect against low- and mediumaltitude air threats.

Pakistan Air Force: Chinese Jets in the Skies

• JF-17 Thunder: Jointly developed with China, with Block II introduced in 2015–16 and Block III in 2022, featuring Chinese AESA radar and

- PL-15 long-range missile upgrades. It is the flagship of Pakistan's air modernisation.
- J-10C "Firebird": 25 jets bought in 2021–22 for \$1–1.5 billion, regarded as 4.5-generation fighters rivaling India's Rafale. Pakistani officials said: "We have bought J-10C to balance India's acquisition of Rafales."
- HQ-9 Long-Range Air Defence: Inducted 2021–22, defending major urban and strategic areas.
- Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs): Including CH-4 "Rainbow" and Wing Loong II for reconnaissance and strikes, making Pakistan second only to China in the Asia-Pacific UCAV deployments.
- Karakoram Eagle (ZDK-03 AWACS): Four early-warning aircraft inducted in 2015, enhancing battlefield surveillance.

Pakistan Navy: Chinese Reinforcements at Sea

- Hangor-Class Submarines: Eight submarines worth \$4–5 billion ordered in 2016, with four inducted by 2024 and four more expected by 2028, possibly carrying nuclear cruise missiles.
- Type 054A/P Frigates (Tughril-class): Four frigates inducted between 2021 and 2023 with advanced weaponry.
- Azmat-Class Fast Attack Crafts: Four vessels equipped with C-802A antiship missiles, built with Chinese help.

Military observers say the use of Chinese arms in this conflict is a key test. The J-10C jets, equipped with AESA radar and PL-15 missiles, are 4.5-generation fighters comparable Rafale. to the Salman Ali Bettani, an international relations scholar Quaid-i-Azam University, at Islamabad, said, "The engagement represented a milestone in the operational use of advanced Chinese-origin systems." Retired Chinese Colonel Zhou Bo told CNN: "It will

the sales international China's defence stocks surged during the conflict. The maker of the J-10C, AVIC Chengdu Aircraft, saw a 17% jump one day followed by a 20% rise the next, even before Pakistan's foreign minister confirmed use of the China and Pakistan have also regularly conducted joint military exercises, covering air, sea, and land domains. Some Pakistani weapons, such as the JF-17 Block III, were co-developed with Chinese companies. Others, like the HQ-9B air defence system, are based on Chinese technology. Craig Singleton, senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, commented, "This isn't just a bilateral clash anymore; it's a glimpse of how Chinese defence exports are reshaping regional

potentially be a huge boost for Chinese arms

This military relationship deepened after the US ended arms sales to Pakistan. Siemon Wezeman, senior researcher at SIPRI, said: "China used the opportunity to show itself as the only real friend and ally of Pakistan."

deterrence."

Broader implications for China's defence exports

Operation Sindoor delivered a harsh test for China's ambitions as a global arms supplier. Despite billions in defence spending, China trails far behind the United States in arms exports. The conflict exposed systemic issues—defective components, poor quality control, inadequate training, and lacklustre after-sales support. Wezeman of the Stockholm Siemon International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said, "This is the first time since the 1980s that a state has used large numbers of Chinese weapons of many types action against another state." These shortcomings are likely to deepen scepticism toward Chinese arms globally, accelerating the decline of their export market.

For India, Operation Sindoor validated its investment in homegrown weapon systems and precision strike capability. The conflict signalled a doctrinal shift towards

assertiveness and technological dominance, reflected in the successful use of BrahMos missiles.

The engagement also provided crucial data on Chinese military equipment performance, which is vital given India's ongoing tensions with China along their shared border. Observing these weaknesses offers India an advantage in preparing countermeasures. Lt. Gen. Rajiv Ghai, an Indian military official, remarked on the effectiveness of Indian air strikes, "Some Pakistani aircraft were downed over Pakistan's own territory." The brief war highlighted a transition in modern warfare — the dominance of electronic warfare, drones, and precision missiles over traditional dogfights. India's BrahMos missile emerged as the conflict's standout weapon. This supersonic cruise missile demonstrated remarkable accuracy and survivability, hitting high-value Pakistani targets while keeping Indian forces safe. BrahMos exemplifies India's strategic shift from reactive defence to a proactive doctrine aimed at deterring cross-border terrorism with precision "The BrahMos missile forced Pakistan to agree to a ceasefire," military analysts say. Unlike Pakistan's numerous drone swarms many of which were intercepted by Indian defences—India's focused use of precision weaponry had disproportionate impact.

China militarily aligns itself with India's archenemy Pakistan

23 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

As India's Operation Sindoor continues, with a ceasefire declared after four days of military operations, China has taken further steps to align itself militarily with Pakistan even as it claims to stand for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. India launched the operation in the night of May 6-7 after terrorists, reportedly sponsored and hosted by Pakistan, gunned down 26 religiously targeted tourists in Pahalgam in India's Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir on Apr 22.

Military officials from China and Pakistan held a strategic meeting on May 16 to bolster the Pakistan Army's access to China's Beidou satellite system. The development came days after India crippled Pakistan's air defence systems in Lahore and conducted coordinated precision strikes on at least eight Pakistani military bases, reported *indiatoday.in* May 23.

The report said the meeting between the two militaries was aimed at enhancing the support for the Pakistani Army in terms of satellite coverage and informing them about Indian activities.

The meeting was also stated to have focused on the integration of 5G communication systems to enhance real-time coordination and surveillance capabilities.

During Operation Sindoor itself, China was widely reported to have provided comprehensive satellite coverage support to Pakistan.

Nevertheless, key Pakistani air defence setups and aircraft were stated to have been neutralised, with the Indian Army launching strong offensives against Pakistani positions along the Line of Control (LoC).

The Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the India and Pakistan were stated to have reached an understanding on halting all military actions on May 10.

All this indicates that despite moves being underway way to normalize bilateral ties between the two countries, with the planned reopening of the Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage in Jun 2025 being seen as a progress, India and China could hardly be best of friends for any length of time while Pakistan could drag China into its fight with India over the Kashmir issue. China has already repeatedly prevented the UN security Council from taking action on Pakistan-based terrorists.

Pakistan, China agree to deepen trade, maintain close communication

21 May 2025, Reuters

Pakistan said on Wednesday it had agreed to deepen trade and investment with China, days after the end of a deadly conflict with India that Beijing urged should be resolved through dialogue.

Arch rivals India and Pakistan agreed to a <u>ceasefire</u> on May 10, after four days of fighting, the worst in nearly three decades.

Tensions escalated between the nucleararmed neighbours after an attack in Indian Kashmir on April 22 that killed 26 men.

India blames Pakistan for the attack but Islamabad has denied any involvement.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met his counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing on Tuesday. China welcomes and supports efforts by Pakistan and India to handle their differences through dialogue and to achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire, Wang Yi said on Tuesday.

Wang told Dar that China will support Pakistan in safeguarding its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, according to a statement from the Chinese foreign ministry.

Apart from maintaining close communication, the two countries agreed to more cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, industrialization, and other sectors, Pakistan's foreign ministry said.

Separately, Pakistan's foreign ministry said that Dar and Wang held another meeting with Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi in Beijing.

The leaders decided to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan and cooperate further for China's global infrastructure program, the Belt and Road Initiative.

The next meeting between the three leaders will be held in Kabul, the ministry said.

Pakistan reaffirms support for China's territorial integrity in Zangnan

16 May 2025, The Express Tribune

FO spokesperson reiterates Pakistan's commitment to dialogue and peaceful resolution of outstanding disputes.

Pakistan has reiterated its support for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, following Beijing's reaffirmation of its position on Zangnan, also known as Arunachal Pradesh. During a weekly press briefing on Friday, Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan stated that Pakistan "fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China," and had noted recent reports regarding China's stance on the region.

The statement comes amid renewed tensions between India and China over the disputed territory, which Beijing refers to as Zangnan. Khan also dismissed Indian media reports alleging nuclear radiation linked to recent border tensions as "baseless and unfounded." He noted that the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of Pakistan and India had remained in contact since May 10, emphasising the importance of continued dialogue.

Commenting on broader regional developments, Khan criticised what he described as India's "aggressive posture," accusing New Delhi of destabilising the regional security environment.

He said Pakistan's military operations, conducted under Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, were a response to cross-border aggression and carried out in self-defence, invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter.

"Our response was in line with our right to self-defence and aimed at preserving national sovereignty," Khan said.

He welcomed the recent ceasefire agreement between the two sides and urged India to uphold its commitments. "We view this as a positive step and expect India to implement the ceasefire in both letter and spirit," he added.

Provincial authorities in Punjab also marked what they called a significant achievement under Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos with tributes and commemorative events.

'China will do everything...': Investor links Pakistan's aggression to Beijing's economic unraveling

11 May 2025, Business Today

His post comes amid growing speculation about China's role in the region. On Saturday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif made a pointed, emotional thank-you to China, calling it a "very dear, very trustworthy" friend.

As an uneasy calm holds along India's western border, a new theory is gaining traction. Angel investor Udit Goenka took to X with a provocative claim: "I feel that China is behind all this and they are funding all the equipment for this war to Pakistan."

He went further, linking the recent flare-up to global economic shifts. "With the US raising tariffs on China," he wrote, "their manufacturing units are getting hit badly, leading to massive losses and shutting down of those units. A lot of this production is going to India."

That, Goenka argued, is what makes India a target—not militarily, but economically. "India is rising globally in every sense. Not only that, we are one of the largest consumers in the world." A war, he warned, could unravel that trajectory: "If this war continues, it will hurt us globally. A lot of investors will leave and growth will take a massive hit."

The implication is stark: China, reeling from trade pressure and supply chain shifts, may have more to gain from India's instability than its peace. "China will do everything it can to make sure this war doesn't stop," Goenka concluded, "because they stand to gain the most."

His post comes amid growing speculation about China's role in the region. On Saturday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif made a pointed, emotional thank-you to China, calling it a "very dear, very trustworthy" friend.

Meanwhile, China's foreign minister Wang Yi reaffirmed Beijing's support for Pakistan's "sovereignty" in a direct call with Islamabad. With drone activity dipping and border shelling subsiding, the questions are no longer about what's being fired—but who might be pulling strings behind the quiet.

Top Beijing strategist vows to defend Pakistan from military threats after Pahalgam terrorist incident

04 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

Amid rising exchanges of retaliatory moves and threats between India and Pakistan following the allegedly Islamabad-sponsored terrorists' gunning down of 26 tourists in Kashmir on Apr 22, a top Chinese analyst has expressed in no uncertain terms where Beijing's sympathy lies should things take a turn for the worst, speaking in a *news 18* discussion.

While China has expressed support for an "impartial investigation" into the Pahalgam terrorist incident, Victor Gao, a well-known Chinese analyst and former diplomat, has issued a direct warning to regional powers: any military threat to Pakistan will not go unanswered by Beijing, reported businesstoday.in May 3, citing News18.

Making it clear that China's support for Pakistan goes far beyond rhetoric, Gao has said, "China & Pakistan are all-weather ironclad allies. No one should second guess this alliance between China and Pakistan. China will always come to Pakistan's help assistance whenever Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity will be threatened by any country. China's full commitment is to defend Pakistan sovereignty."

Referring to Pakistan's fears of a retaliatory strike from India over the Pahalgam terrorist incident, Gao has stressed that China would take any attack on Pakistan "very seriously" and would offer active assistance if Pakistan's sovereignty was at risk. He has underlined that China's commitment to Pakistan was not symbolic but grounded in longstanding political trust and mutual interests.

Referring to the Pahalgam incident, Gao has said China has consistently demanded full investigations into such events, that it supports Islamabad's call for a "transparent and impartial investigation."

The report saw Gao's remarks as not only reaffirmative of Beijing's unwavering strategic support for Pakistan but also as signalling China's readiness to respond militarily if necessary—potentially altering South Asia's security calculus.

China-Taiwan

China Reacts to Trump Taiwan Arms Report: 'Red Line'

30 May 2025, NewsWeek

China has warned the U.S. of its "first red line that cannot be crossed" after a report that President Donald Trump intends to increase arms sales to Taiwan.

The Trump administration will lift weapons sales to Taiwan to higher levels than during his first administration, Reuters reported, citing U.S. officials, to put more military pressure on Beijing and to help deter a Chinese invasion of the island.

The news comes amid escalating U.S.-China tensions over the revocation of student visas and stalled trade talks, which had initially been greeted with relief when skyhigh tariffs between the two were suspended. "The Taiwan question is at the core of China's core interests and the first red line that cannot be crossed in China-U.S. relations," Lin Jian, spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, said at a press briefing on Friday. "China firmly opposes the U.S.' arms sales to China's Taiwan region, urges the U.S. to abide by the One China principle, and the three China-U.S. joint communiques, especially the August 17 communique of 1982.

"Stop selling arms to Taiwan and stop creating new factors that could lead to

tensions in the Taiwan Strait. China is firmly resolved in defending its national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Taiwan Seeks to 'Enhance Military Deterrence'

Washington does not say if it would come to Taiwan's aid if China tries to retake the island militarily, operating a policy of strategic ambiguity.

It currently supports Taiwan's defense through weapons sales and limited military cooperation to prepare Taipei for a potential Chinese invasion.

Analysts fear China will seek to seize Taiwan militarily within the next few years and China regularly conducts military exercises in the Taiwan Strait

"Taiwan aims to enhance military deterrence while continuing to deepen its security cooperation with the United States," Taiwan's Presidential Office spokesperson Wen Lii told Reuters about the U.S. intention to boost arms sales.

China-US Relations and Taiwan

China regards Taiwan as its territory and seeks what it describes as reunification under its One China principle.

Taiwan's geographic position in the first island chain of U.S. allies and partners in the region, its manufacture of critical semiconductors and advanced chips, and its status as a democracy in East Asia lend the island vast strategic significance to Washington.

It split from the mainland at the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 when the communists took control of the mainland and the nationalists fled to the island, which has become a modern democracy with a high-tech, advanced economy.

The U.S. "One China" policy acknowledges Beijing's claim to Taiwan, but does not endorse it. The One China policy and communiques agreed to in the 1970s and 1980s form the basis of U.S.-China relations. The August 17, 1982 comminuque notes that the U.S. "does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan" and "intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan".

Taiwan is self-governing and functions independently, though most states do not formally recognize its independence in order to maintain relations with China. It does not have formal diplomatic ties with the U.S., but it has strong relations.

China being provocative, ignoring olive branches, top Taiwan policymaker says 28 May 2025, Reuters

China is being provocative with an "extreme pressure" campaign against Taiwan and is intentionally ignoring the island's olive branches and goodwill, its top China policy maker told Reuters, as Beijing ratchets up its tactics against Taipei.

China, which views Taiwan as its own territory despite the rejection of that position by the democratic and separately governed island, has stepped up military and political pressure on it, calling President Lai Ching-te a dangerous "separatist".

Since Lai took office in May last year, China has held at least three rounds of major war games around Taiwan, while also threatening the death penalty for "diehard" supporters of its independence, and setting up, opens new tab hotlines to report such activity.

Mainland Affairs Council minister Chiu Chui-cheng said Beijing should own up to its responsibility for stoking tension by exerting "extreme pressure" which includes almost daily military incursions near Taiwan and public influence campaigns.

"It's true that we don't see any sincerity from mainland China," Chiu said this week, speaking in his office in central Taipei.

He repeated the government's offer for talks with China based on equality and respect, but without Beijing's political preconditions.

"We have made a lot of effort and offered many olive branches," Chiu added.

"We are a democratic country and it is impossible for us to accept your political premise of eliminating the Republic of China, belittling Taiwan or treating Taiwan as part of the People's Republic of China."

The defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists, and that remains the island's formal name. No peace treaty has ever been signed, and neither government recognises the other.

Asked on Wednesday about Taiwan saying it was showing goodwill towards China, a spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office said it was an "objective fact" the island was part of China.

"Scheming for Taiwan's independence and secession means there is no way to talk about cross-Strait dialogue and consultations," spokesperson Chen Binhua told reporters in Beijing.

"It will only undermine peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."

CHINA A "HOSTILE FORCE"

In March, Lai called China a "foreign hostile force", saying it had deepened its influence campaigns and infiltration tactics against the island, while pledging measures, opens new tab to tackle Beijing's efforts to "absorb" Taiwan.

An angry China responded, opens new tab with a new round of war games.

"We were just explaining the facts to everyone," Chiu said of Lai's description of China. "The serious threat level to Taiwan from mainland China, the Beijing authorities, can be described as extreme pressure pressing ever closer."

Chiu said China's hotlines to report supposed separatist activity, which Beijing says generated 6,000 reports, had only served to sow fear amongst Taiwan's sizeable business community in China, spurring some to leave. He compared such "indiscriminate reporting" to actions during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 in China, referring to the decade of chaos and violence unleashed after Mao declared class war, turning neighbours and families against each other.

"I myself have heard many of our Taiwanese business people say, 'We have been in mainland China for 30 to 40 years, and we are willing to stay here even if the economy is bad, but living in an environment where we

are on edge and worried about being reported day and night, that's why I decided to leave."

China could seize Taiwan's outlying islands, US intelligence report warns

27 May 2025, Independent, Arpan Rai

Experts warn Taiwanese archipelagos of Kinmen and Matsu are particularly vulnerable to Chinese capture

China could seize Taiwan's smaller outlying islands as a tactic to intimidate the government in Taipei, a US intelligence report has warned.

Though the vast majority of its population lives on the main island of Taiwan, Taipei also controls a number of smaller island chains including the Kinmen and Matsu close to the Chinese mainland, the Pratas and Taiping in the South China Sea and the Penghu archipelago off Taiwan's southeastern coast.

Seizing and attempting to annex these islands is among a number of military options available to Beijing as it continues to threaten Taiwan with a wholesale invasion, according to the latest Worldwide Threat Assessment report released earlier this month by the US Defence Intelligence Agency.

Beijing claims Taiwan as a breakaway province, and Chinese president Xi Jinping has threatened to "reunite" the island with the mainland, by force if necessary. The Taiwanese people largely favour the status quo which gives them de facto independence. Kinmen, at its closest point, is less than two km (1.2 miles) away from Chinese-controlled territory.

The DIA's report does not anticipate an allout invasion of Taiwan in 2025, but warns China's People Liberation Army (PLA) forces could scale up the attacks on the democratic island's smaller outposts.

"China possesses a variety of military options to coerce Taiwan, including increasing the frequency and scope of China's military presence operations, air and maritime blockades, seizure of Taiwan's smaller outlying islands, joint firepower strikes, and a full-scale amphibious invasion of Taiwan," the US agency said.

It added: "China appears willing to defer seizing Taiwan by force as long as it calculates unification ultimately can be negotiated, the costs of forcing unification continue to outweigh the benefits, and its stated redlines have not been crossed by Taiwan or its partners and allies."

The US intelligence report also warned that Beijing will continue terrorising Taiwan with its "campaign of diplomatic, information, military and economic pressure" to achieve its long-term goal of "reunification".

China will also test the US's commitment to Taiwan's defence, the defence agency said. Though Taiwan and the US have no formal military treaties or even diplomatic ties, Washington would be expected to respond to any Chinese attack against Taiwan and use Guam as a staging point for such operations. War monitors have warned that the

War monitors have warned that the archipelagos of Kinmen and Matsu are especially vulnerable among Taiwan's territories.

Across the Taiwan Strait, Kinmen and Matsu islands are located over 100 miles from the main island of Taiwan but just off the PRC's coast.

"Beijing's contemporary efforts to annex Kinmen and Matsu blend economic nonviolent enticements, coercion, legal operations, warfare. information infrastructure construction. and miscellaneous 'gray zone' lines of effort to manipulate public opinion on the islands and erode Taiwan's control of its territories," the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in its assessment last year.

The US-based think tank warned that China could "escalate current lines of effort (LOEs) to erode Taiwan's sovereignty over its outlying territory of Kinmen in a short-of-war coercion campaign to seize control of the island group in the near term."

Taiwan is this week hosting the governor of Guam, the US Pacific territory that would almost certainly be a key player in any Chinese military moves against Taiwan.

Guam governor Lourdes A Leon Guerrero is making her first trip to Taiwan since taking office in 2019.

Since then, China has significantly upped its military pressure on Taiwan with drills around the island and incursions by ships and aircraft across the median line of the Taiwan Strait, especially in the past two years.

New Rules Target Taiwan Conscripts With China Ties

27 May 2025, The Defense Post, Joe Saballa

Taiwan has expanded its conscription rules for individuals with close ties to China, a move officials say is aimed at safeguarding national security amid continued cross-strait tensions.

Under the previous policy, individuals residing in Taiwan but originally from China were barred from serving in intelligence, communications, aviation, and naval roles during their mandatory military service. They were also prohibited from working as aides to high-ranking Taiwanese military officers.

A recent defense ministry report broadened these restrictions to cover eight categories of military work, though the specific roles have not been publicized.

The updated rules also now apply not only to Chinese-born citizens but also to people of service age with other types of connections to Beijing.

These include those who previously held Chinese, Hong Kong, or Macau citizenship; those who have annulled their Taiwanese residency in favor of residency in China, Hong Kong, or Macau; and individuals who have studied at institutions affiliated with Chinese agencies.

'Closely Monitored'

Conscripts identified as having ties to China are added to a list maintained by the Ministry of the Interior and interviewed individually.

Their behavior, performance, and family interactions are also closely observed.

Last year, the Taiwanese military recorded 387 conscripts with such ties. Although this represents less than one

percent of all conscripts, it remains a focus of security measures.

'Not Exempt'

Defense Minister **Wellington Koo** clarified in March that Taiwanese citizens holding Chinese nationality are still required to fulfill mandatory military service.

However, they undergo evaluation, screening, and counseling, and are restricted from roles involving classified information.

"That should effectively prevent any (treasonous) actions," Koo told local media.

Taiwan MND detects over 60 sorties of Chinese aircraft in its territory

27 May 2025, India Narrative

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) on Tuesday reported increased Chinese military activity around Taiwan.

From early morning until 8:15 am (UTC+8), a total of 61 PLA aircraft sorties and several naval vessels were detected, with many aircraft crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entering Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ).

In a post on X, MND said, "Overall 27 sorties of #PLA aircraft in various types (including J-16, KJ-500, etc.) were detected from 0815hr today. 18 out of 27 sorties crossed the median line of the #Taiwan Strait and entered the northern, central, eastern and southwestern ADIZ in conducting air-sea joint training along with other PLAN vessels. #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

Earlier in the day, MND had said, "34 sorties of PLA aircraft, 9 PLAN vessels and 1 official ship operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 am (UTC+8) today. 34 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, southwestern and southeastern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded."

On Monday, MND had detected four PLA aircraft, eight PLAN vessels, and two official ships near its territory.

Taiwan's military is prioritising combat readiness as a key aspect of deterrence due to escalating threats from China, as reported by Focus Taiwan, citing Minister of National Defence Wellington.

President Lai Ching-te noted that the armed forces are undergoing a significant transformation to better handle the increasing hostility from Beijing. "As we are situated on an island, we need to stockpile military supplies in case China launches multiple assaults. We may even need to prepare for a war of endurance," he stated, according to the Focus Taiwan report.

To prepare for these potential situations, the military has revamped its training programs. Koo mentioned that new training subjects have been introduced for both conscripts and senior officers, encompassing topics related to newly acquired military assets.

He emphasised that the objective is to "prepare for war," insisting that readiness is crucial for maintaining a strong deterrent, as noted by Focus Taiwan.

Koo also highlighted Taiwan's ongoing focus on asymmetric warfare, especially following the extension of compulsory military service to one year starting January 1, 2024. Elements like air defence units, drones, and mobile radar systems are integral to Taiwan's strategy to ensure precision and adaptability against a numerically superior opponent, as indicated by Focus Taiwan.

He remarked that the military must evaluate whether troop planning and positioning are sufficient for scenarios in which the Chinese People's Liberation Army suddenly escalates exercises near Taiwan into real attacks.

The annual Han Kuang exercises are set to take place from July 9-18 this year, significantly longer than last year's five-day war games, which were cut short by a typhoon. Koo stressed that the exercises intend to identify weaknesses in existing plans and address any issues, according to Focus Taiwan.

Taiwan bolsters combat readiness, prepares for 'war of endurance' against China threat

24 May 2025, India Narrative

Taiwan's military is prioritising combat readiness as a key aspect of deterrence due to escalating threats from China, as reported by Focus Taiwan, citing Minister of National Defence Wellington.

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plans and address any issues, according to Focus Taiwan.

Koo also mentioned that a review of troop numbers is scheduled for the second half of the year, considering ongoing military enhancements. This review will determine whether adjustments are required across various units, as reported by Focus Taiwan.

China must see invading Taiwan as not worth the cost: Marco Rubio

21 May 2025, Focus Taiwan

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said at a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing Tuesday (U.S. time) that deterring a conflict initiated by China over Taiwan requires making the cost "more than what it's worth" for Beijing.

Rubio made the remark in response to a question from Republican Senator John Cornyn, who warned that Chinese President Xi Jinping has instructed the People's Liberation Army to "be ready to take Taiwan" by 2027.

"In essence, it has to cost more than what it's worth," Rubio said, alluding to Beijing's ambitions to annex the island.

"Deterrence is the key," Rubio said, adding that "deterrence obviously begins with Taiwan's own self-defense capabilities."

"The harder they are to take militarily, the more time I think they buy for themselves," he said.

He called for "a credible regional deterrent" involving Japan and other allied countries, and said European allies were showing greater interest in the Indo-Pacific.

He added that at a NATO foreign ministers gathering in Turkey last week, several member states raised concerns about how a potential conflict in the region could affect Europe.

Cornyn also voiced concern that the U.S. and its allies may not be adequately prepared for a conflict with China over Taiwan.

Rubio, who officially serves as the principal advisor to U.S. President Donald Trump on all foreign affairs matters, said that when America responds to conflicts in Europe or the Middle East, resources are pulled from the Indo-Pacific.

"We would like to be able to do all things everywhere, but the fact of the matter is, there are finite resources, and there's only 24 hours in every day," he said.

At a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing later the same day, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham asked if the way the U.S. "ends the war in Ukraine with Russia" could affect China's calculus on Taiwan.

"I think the way we end the war [in Ukraine] could impact how China views it," Rubio replied, without elaborating.

China can't decide whether we are a country, Taiwan foreign minister says

21 May 2025, Reuters, Ben Blanchard

China has no right to decide whether or not Taiwan is a country given it chooses its own government, Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung said on Wednesday, adding that he would be happy to shake the hand of his Chinese opposite number in friendship.

China views democratically-governed Taiwan as its own territory and has stepped up military and political pressure to assert those claims, including increasing the intensity of war games, saying the island is one of its provinces with no right to be called a state.

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te and his government strongly reject that view, and have offered talks with China multiple times but have been rejected. China calls Lai a "separatist".

Asked by Reuters what he would say to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi should they ever meet, Lin said that given the opportunity he would definitely shake hands with him.

"What the nature is of cross-Taiwan Strait relations can be discussed, but we are all human. First, extend the hand of friendship. If he shook my hand, that would be a good start," he said at a press briefing to mark the first anniversary of Lai taking office. "If he takes his hand back, that's his problem."

Taiwan's formal name is the Republic of China, the name of the government which in 1949 fled to the island after losing a bloody civil war with Mao Zedong's communists, who established the People's Republic of China.

"Whether or not Taiwan is a country is not up to Wang Yi, nor the People's Republic of China, to say. The whole world sees us as a country. We choose our governments democratically. It is our business what our name is."

China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The chances Lin and Wang could meet are low. Neither government recognises the other, officials do not visit each other, and Taiwan is not a member of most international bodies due to China's objections.

Lai on Tuesday reiterated an offer to talk to China, saying he sought peace but that the island must also boost its defences.

China responded by saying his comments were a "two-faced tactic" that were a "waste of effort and doomed to fail".

Taiwan's government has warned that Beijing could mark the anniversary with more military drills.

Taiwan president calls for peace and dialogue with China amid heightened military activity

20 May 2025, <u>The Guardian</u>, Helen Davidson and Jason Tzu Kuan Lu

Taiwan's president has reiterated calls for peace and dialogue with China as he marked one year in office, amid heightened Chinese military activity and worsening political division at home.

Lai Ching-te, who was inaugurated a year ago, told reporters on Tuesday that a war would have "no winners", but Taiwan would continue to strengthen its defences to ward off a Chinese invasion or attempt to annex it by force.

"It is the aggressor who undermines peace ... Taiwan is a peace-loving nation, and our society values goodwill," he said on Tuesday in response to questions after his formal address. "I am deeply committed to peace, because peace is priceless, and in war there are no winners."

"However, whilst our pursuit of peace is sincere, it must not be naive."

He urged Beijing to restart dialogue with his government on equal terms, "using exchanges to replace hemming in, dialogue to replace confrontation".

China's ruling Communist party (CCP) cut all ties and dialogue with Taiwan's government when Lai's predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, won the 2016 election for their pro-sovereignty Democratic Progressive party. The CCP considers the party to be unlawful separatists. In response to the president's speech, China's official state media, Xinhua, accused Lai of "deliberately escalating" cross-Strait tensions.

"Since taking office, the Lai Ching-te administration has brazenly pursued 'Taiwan independence' to serve partisan and personal gain, charging headlong down a path of division and confrontation that threatens the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait," it said.

In recent weeks China's military launched larger than usual numbers of planes and ships into Taiwan's air defence identification zone – an average of about 20 planes and 11 navy and coastguard ships each day.

Taiwan authorities had publicly warned of likely Chinese retaliation or pre-emptive activity in response to the speech. Last week government officials told reporters they couldn't rule out military drills in the days after Lai spoke, and on Monday the coast guard said Beijing could launch "political warfare" to disrupt public morale in Taiwan. Lai has taken a more publicly assertive stance against China's aggression than predecessor Tsai, which analysts had been expecting his inauguration anniversary speech to continue. Earlier this month he said Taiwan was facing a similar threat to Europe in the 1930s.

However the speech on Tuesday in the end made no mention of China or its annexation plans, and his related comments only came in response to questions in the subsequent press conference. Instead the speech focused on domestic pledges to reduce carbon emissions, plans to deal with the US Trump administration's punitive tariffs, and domestic political turmoil.

"The trade de-escalation reached between Beijing and Washington has generated anxiety in Taipei over whether the issue of Taiwan may emerge in future US-China talks," said Amanda Hsiao, a director in Eurasia Group's China practice, referring to fears Beijing may seek a softening of the US's longstanding support of Taiwan. "This uncertainty may be a factor for why Lai chose not to reiterate his views on the China threat in a high profile speech."

Amid worsening domestic political turmoil Lai announced he would offer national security briefings to the chair of the main opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT). The KMT and another rival party, the TPP, control the majority of seats in Taiwan's legislature and have been accused of blocking Lai's agenda.

The opposition parties have accused Lai and his Democratic Progressive party of increasing tensions with China and stifling opposition. In the name of national security, Lai's administration has increased scrutiny of Chinese-born people in Taiwan, and cracked down on public statements that support Beijing's goals.

The KMT welcomed the new briefings as Lai having "finally taken a small step" to end partisan conflict, but said he had much more to do.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Remarks on the 78th WHA's Rejection of the Proposal on Taiwan

19 May 2025, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America

On May 19, the General Committee and the Plenary Session of the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) respectively decided to reject the so-called proposal of "inviting"

Taiwan to participate in the WHA as an observer" submitted by certain countries. This has been the ninth year in a row that the WHA has rejected the so-called proposal concerning Taiwan.

China's position on the Taiwan region's participation in the activities of international organizations, including the WHO, is consistent and clear. That is, it must be handled in line with the one-China principle, which is also a fundamental principle as demonstrated by the UNGA Resolution 2758 and WHA Resolution 25.1. China's Taiwan region, unless given approval by the central government, has no basis, reason or right to participate in the WHA. Due to the DPP authorities' persistent separatist stance, the political foundation for the Taiwan region to participate in the WHA no longer exists.

The Chinese central government attaches great importance to the health and well-being of our compatriots in Taiwan. Under the prerequisite that the one-China principle is upheld, the Chinese central government has made proper arrangement for the Taiwan region's participation in global health affairs, and the Taiwan region's medical and health experts can participate in WHO technical meetings. Over the past year, 11 applications were made by China's Taiwan region to take part in WHO technical activities, which involved 12 participants, and all applications were approved by the central government. Under the framework of the International Health Regulations, the Taiwan region has unimpeded and full-fledged information exchange mechanisms with the WHO and countries in the world, and it can promptly access and report to the WHO concerning information related to health emergencies. This fully demonstrates that the Chinese central government has every sincerity to address the health issues that our compatriots in Taiwan care about, that the Taiwan region has sufficient and unimpeded channels to participate in the WHO's communication and cooperation in the technical domain, and that the rights of the people in Taiwan regarding health are duly protected. The so-called "gap" in global antiepidemic efforts is nothing but a politicallydriven lie.

For quite some time, the DPP authorities and certain countries have been blatantly turning back the wheel of history by deliberately distorting and challenging UNGA Resolution 2758 to challenge the one-China principle. They are essentially trying to challenge not only China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also international justice and prevailing consensus as well as the post-war international order. China's decision of not approving the Taiwan region's participation in this year's WHA has wide support and from international understanding the community. The overwhelming majority of countries in the international community have reaffirmed to the Chinese side that they uphold UNGA Resolution 2758, firmly support the one-China principle, and oppose Taiwan's participation in the WHA. They expressed their support for China's position through various means, such as writing to the WHO Director-General. It shows commitment to the one-China principle is where global opinion trends and the arc of history bends, and what the greater national interests entail. The international community's commitment to the one-China principle is not to be challenged or shaken. No matter what the DPP authorities say or do, it does not change the fact that the two sides of the Strait belong to one and the same China and Taiwan is part of China, nor can it stop the trend towards China's ultimate and inevitable reunification. "Taiwan independence" leads nowhere and provocations for that are doomed to failure.

Taiwan cannot rule out China holding more drills as president marks a year in office

15 May 2025, Reuters

Taiwan cannot rule out that China will hold more military drills to "stir up trouble" around the one year anniversary next week of President Lai Ching-te taking office, a senior government spokesperson said on Thursday. May 20 will be one year since Lai's inauguration, though his office has yet to announce how the president might mark the day.

China calls Lai a "separatist" and has rebuffed his multiple offers for talks. Lai rejects China's sovereignty claims over the democratic and separately governed island, saying only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

Speaking at a regular press conference, Mainland Affairs Council deputy head and spokesperson Liang Wen-chieh said China's threats against Taiwan had become a "normal state of affairs", noting China held drills shortly after Lai assumed his post last year.

"Therefore, we do not rule out the possibility that the Chinese communists will use the anniversary of President Lai's inauguration to stir up trouble again and make use of military exercises for political propaganda," he said.

The council is Taiwan's top China policymaking body.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office referred Reuters to comments it gave the previous day. Asked about the upcoming anniversary on Wednesday, a spokesperson for the office said Lai was a "Taiwan Strait crisis maker" who had increased antagonism and confrontation and undermined peace and stability. China's defence ministry repeated the comments on Thursday.

Taiwan said China staged another of its regular "joint combat readiness patrols" around the island on Sunday, and the defence ministry in Taipei has since reported a rise in Chinese military activities, involving a total of 131 aircraft and 32 warships.

Liang said that Lai had faced a series of "unfriendly" Chinese actions over the past year, including war games.

"Over the past year, I would not say that the interactions between the two sides have been very good - they are indeed tense - but we do not wish to see the situation go on like this," he added.

"We hope that after May 20, the Chinese communists will not engage in military exercises."

Last month, China held war games codenamed "Strait Thunder-2025A" around Taiwan, the "A" at its end suggesting there could be more to come.

China called its May 2024 drills "Joint Sword - 2024A", and in October of that year staged "Joint Sword - 2024B".

Two Taiwan allies attend Beijing forum as China steps up diplomatic pressure

14 May 2025, Reuters

Haiti's foreign minister was one of Taiwan's two diplomatic allies attending a forum on Tuesday in Beijing between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries, as China steps up its pressure campaign against the diplomatically isolated island.

Democratically governed Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, has formal ties with only 12 nations, two of which, Haiti and Saint Lucia, joined the event, the Forum of China and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, or CELAC.

Reuters reporters at the forum saw the flags of both in the main plenary hall at the venue in the Chinese capital, with Haiti represented by Foreign Minister Jean-Victor Harvel Jean-Baptiste and Saint Lucia by diplomat Peter Lansiquot.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian, asked about the presence of the two countries, said the forum is an important platform for "mutually beneficial cooperation" between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries.

"China has always welcomed and supported the participation of CELAC member states in the activities within the framework of the forum," he told reporters, without elaborating. Haiti and Saint Lucia are both members of CELAC.

Taiwan's foreign ministry said it had been told in advance by the respective countries of their officials' attendance, and that Haiti had said its foreign minister was there given the country's membership of CELAC.

Saint Lucia said that Lansiquot was present not as a government representative but as a member of the Saint Lucia Labour Party, according to the ministry's statement.

Senior officials from both countries have repeatedly expressed the importance of their friendship with Taiwan, the ministry added.

Neither the Haiti nor Saint Lucia embassies in Taiwan responded to requests for comment.

Two diplomatic sources, speaking on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media, said China has previously had such interactions with Taiwan allies at the same event.

The flags of other CELAC members who also have ties with Taiwan, such as Guatemala and Belize, were not seen in the room.

Taiwan strongly rejects China's sovereignty claims, saying it has every right to have diplomatic relations with other countries and that China has no right to speak for it on the global stage or pressure its international space.

Honduras was the last regional nation to switch diplomatic ties to Beijing from Taipei, in 2023.

Saint Lucia has had relations with Beijing before, and re-established ties with Taiwan in 2007, bucking the trend of countries switching to China.

Haiti's relations with Taiwan date back to 1956.

Ministry slams Xi's claims over Taiwan 09 May 2025, Taipei Times

'FALLACY': Xi's assertions that Taiwan was given to the PRC after WWII confused right and wrong, and were contrary to the facts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday

called Chinese President Xi Jinping's (習近平) claim that China historically has sovereignty over Taiwan "deceptive" and "contrary to the facts."

In an article published on Wednesday in the Russian state-run Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Xi said that this year not only marks 80 years since the end of World War II and the founding of the UN, but also "Taiwan's restoration to China."

"A series of instruments with legal effect under international law, including the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Declaration have affirmed China's sovereignty over Taiwan," Xi wrote.

"The historical and legal fact" of these documents, as well as that of UN Resolution 2758, "brooks no challenge," he said.

The ministry called the article a "fallacy" that "confused right and wrong and is contrary to the facts."

At the time of the Cairo Declaration in 1943 and the Potsdam Declaration in 1945, the People's Republic of China (PRC) did not exist, it said.

Rather, the status of Taiwan and affiliated islands after World War II was resolved by those documents and others, including the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951 and the Treaty of Taipei (the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty) in 1952, it said.

All of the documents followed a practice set down in the Cairo Declaration, that Taiwan and its affiliated islands, including the contested Diaoyutai Islands (釣魚台列嶼), should be returned to the Republic of China (ROC), the ministry said.

As for UN Resolution 2758, the resolution's text does not mention Taiwan or state that Taiwan is a part of the PRC, it said.

In legal terms, it does not authorize the PRC to represent Taiwan in the UN or its agencies, it added.

Approved in 1971, UN Resolution 2758 recognized the PRC as the only legitimate government of China, and expelled the representatives of then-ROC leader Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石).

Beijing's attempts to distort history and mislead the international community with its "one China principle" are intended to "legally eliminate the fact that the ROC (Taiwan) is a sovereign state," along with its right to participate in the UN system.

Xi's article, entitled "Learning from history to build together a brighter future," was published ahead of his planned attendance at Victory in Europe (V-E) Day celebrations in Moscow today.

Russia celebrates V-E Day on May 9 because it was after midnight in Moscow when the ceasefire ending the war came into force in Berlin, where it was just after 11pm on May 8, 1945.

Taiwan yesterday commemorated V-E Day for the first time at a reception in Taipei attended by President William Lai (賴清德).

Survey: Most Chinese citizens oppose use of force to unify with Taiwan

05 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

While being hawkish on Russia's actions in Ukraine, and Beijing's India-border and South China Sea claims, most of the Chinese citizens oppose the use of force to unify with Taiwan under any circumstances, reported the *scmp.com* May 1, citing a joint study by a think tank and a university in the USA. China's long-standing policy is to take back Taiwan eventually, including by force, if necessary, with the call for doing so growing particularly strident in recent years.

The study, designed jointly by the Atlantabased Carter Center and Emory University, found that 55.1% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement that "the Taiwan problem should not be resolved using force under any circumstances", while 24.5% disagreed or somewhat disagreed. A fifth of respondents were neutral, the report said.

Some US officials, including former Indo-Pacific Commander Admiral Philip Davidson, have suggested that China may invade Taiwan in 2027, as it marks the 100th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). President Xi Jinping has ordered the PLA to be fully modernized by 2027, potentially giving China the military capability to invade. So far, China's the red line for doing so is if Taiwan formally declares independence.

The study's finding on the Chinese citizens' attitude towards Taiwan is in sharp contrast with that towards Russian's invasion of Ukraine and China's territorial claims or disputes with India and the South China Sea countries.

The study has found that 66.1% saw it to be in China's national interest to support Russia's actions in Ukraine, with 5.8% disagreeing and 28.2% feeling neutral.

Besides, on India, 79.7% of respondents were found to support maintaining Beijing's border claims with the South Asian country even at the risk of conflict, with the rest, about a fifth, preferring a more diplomatic approach.

Likewise, 81.1% were found to believe that the Philippines and Vietnam should respect China's sovereignty claims over the South China Sea and cease their objections, regardless of what international law says.

The online study of 2,211 Chinese citizens aged 18 and 54 was stated to have been conducted between Sep 1 and 25 by survey company Dynata. The sample was designed to reflect the demographic distribution of the country's internet-using population.

Surveys of Chinese citizen views on foreign policy are rare, and experts are stated to have voiced concern that respondents may hold back in conveying their true beliefs for fear of government retaliation.

Exact percentages in the Apr 30 survey should be interpreted cautiously, Rory Truex, a political scientist at Princeton University, who was not involved in the study., has said. But he believed the results clearly indicated there may be significant public opposition to a Taiwan takeover by Beijing.

Beijing sees Taiwan as a breakaway province, to be reunited by force if necessary. Most countries, including the US, do not recognise Taiwan as an independent state, but Washington is opposed to any attempt to take the self-governed island by force and is committed to arming it. Leaders of Taiwan's Democratic Progression Party, currently holds the presidency, maintains that the island is already a country. Its main opposition is the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), which ruled China from 1927 to 1949, after the overthrow pf the Qing dynasty in 1912, until it was ousted by the Communist revolution in 1949. The KMT government fled to Taiwan, from where it aimed to liberate the mainland with ever diminishing hope.

The report noted that despite results showing high opposition to the use of force, the Apr 30 survey also revealed that many Chinese may accept eventual military action. After all, only 18.1% of respondents said there was "no military action needed" when asked how long China should wait to resolve the Taiwan issue before using force.

Given the option of waiting for one, five, 10, 25 or more than 25 years, the most common response – selected by 33.5% – was "within five years", the report said.

The report noted that an earlier survey, conducted in two waves between late 2020 and early 2021 and later published in the Journal of *Contemporary China*, found that a slim majority of Chinese citizens – 55% – backed a full-scale war to achieve unification with Taiwan.

That result was stated to have come alongside similar levels of support for military coercion short of war (58%), economic sanctions (57%) and maintaining the status quo (55%).

'aggressively revoke' Chinese student visas in major escalation with Beijing 29 May 2025, CNN, Jennifer Hansler, Piper Hudspoth Blockburn, pacter Gen and Vong

Trump

administration

will

29 May 2025, <u>CNN</u>, Jennifer Hansler, Piper Hudspeth Blackburn, nectar Gan and Yong Xiong

The United States will "aggressively revoke visas for Chinese students," Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced Wednesday in a major escalation of tensions with Beijing, and another blow to American higher education institutions.

The plan was met with strong opposition from China, which said on Thursday it had lodged a formal protest with the US over what it called a "politically motivated and discriminatory" move.

The revocations will target Chinese students including "those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields," Rubio said.

"We will also revise visa criteria to enhance scrutiny of all future visa applications from the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong," he said, noting that the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security would work together on the visa revocations.

The surprise announcement risks disrupting ongoing efforts by the US and China to deescalate tensions, coming just weeks after both sides declared a 90-day truce over punishing tariffs on each other's goods, and deepens the spiraling confrontation between President Donald Trump and the nation's top universities.

Rubio's comments follow a series of extraordinary by the Trump steps administration to deter foreign students from studying in the US from ordering embassies to pause new student visa revoking appointments to Harvard University's ability to enroll international students. (A federal judge later halted the Harvard ban.)

The latest move is set to spark consternation and outrage in China, the country of origin for almost a quarter of international students in

CHINA- US

US higher education. It's also likely to deepen anxiety across American universities, where Chinese and other international students are a significant source of revenue.

There are signs that Beijing has been caught off guard by the announcement. For much of Thursday, China's state-controlled media remained largely silent on the news that will significantly impact the fate of hundreds of thousands of Chinese students.

That changed when official comment came from Mao eventually Ning, spokesperson for China's foreign ministry, who accused the US of using ideology and national security as a "pretext" for the move. "This politically motivated discriminatory move exposes the lie of America's long-touted claim of being 'free and open,' and will only further damage the United States' international image national credibility," Mao said in a regular news conference.

She added that it would harm the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese students and disrupts people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

Fear and anger is already spreading among Chinese students studying in the US.

Candy, a statistics student at the University of Michigan, who did not want to give her full name, said she feared her visa would be canceled before she graduates.

"Ending up with only a high school diploma is something I dread," she said from China, where she's visiting family. "I pray to make it through my undergraduate study safely and smoothly."

"When I first heard the news, I wanted to curse Trump."

A pipeline of talent

For decades, American universities have attracted some of China's brightest minds. Seen as a path to a prestigious education and better career opportunities, US colleges have drawn Chinese students from middle-class families as well as the political and business elites. Many Chinese officials have sent their children to American schools, including leader Xi Jinping, whose daughter Xi

Mingze studied at Harvard under a pseudonym.

Some top Chinese officials have been educated in the US themselves. Liu He, Xi's former economic tsar, obtained a MPA from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in the 1990s; Wang Huning, the Chinese Communist Party's ideology guru, was a visiting scholar at the University of Iowa in the 1980s.

"Many of China's officials, entrepreneurs, and scientists — especially those who played key roles during the era of reform and opening-up — received their training in the US," said Zichen Wang, a research fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, a non-government think tank in Beijing.

"When they returned to China, they brought back not only professional knowledge and credentials, but also a deep respect and admiration for America as an open and inclusive society," he said.

Student exchanges have been a key constant in the ebb and flow of US-China relations — ties that are now increasingly defined by growing geopolitical rivalry that has fueled an ongoing trade and tech war.

China was the top source of international students in the US for 15 straight years until it was surpassed by India just last year, according to figures from Open Doors, a State Department-backed database tracking international student enrollment.

After decades of growth, the number of Chinese students in the US reached a peak of over 372,000 in the 2019-2020 school year, before declining to more than 270,000 in the 2023-2024 year – a drop that coincides with the Covid-19 pandemic but also increasing friction between the two governments.

The number of American students in China is much smaller, plunging from more than 10,000 to the low hundreds during the pandemic. In the 2023-2024 academic year, an estimated 800 American students were enrolled in China, according to the American Chamber of Commerce in China.

Even as relations plummeted, Chinese officials have repeatedly underscored the

important role of people-to-people exchanges in stabilizing fractured ties.

During a visit to San Francisco in November 2023, Xi said China was ready to invite 50,000 American students to China over the next five years. In June last year, the Chinese leader again called for more exchanges between Chinese and American universities to boost mutual understanding.

Now, the Trump administration's move to revoke Chinese student visas risks further undermining an already fragile bilateral relationship, said Wang, the researcher who recently graduated from a master's program at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.

"Despite numerous challenges in bilateral relations, student exchanges remain one of the few genuine and impactful areas of engagement between the two countries," he said. "The fact that an announcement like this comes at a time when mutual trust between China and the US is at a historic low is, in my view, quite saddening."

Growing concerns

On Tuesday the US State Department instructed American embassies and consulates worldwide to pause new student visa appointments as it moves to expand "social media screening and vetting" to all applicants of student visas.

The following day a spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry said the country is following the development, and urged the US to "protect the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of all international students, including those from China."

Rubio's statement on Wednesday did not specify what are the "critical fields," but there has been long-standing concern in Washington about Chinese academics accessing sensitive and military-applicable American technology.

To crack down on the perceived threat of Chinese students conducting espionage on US soil, Trump introduced a ban during his first term that effectively prevented graduates in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields from Chinese universities believed to be linked to the military from gaining visas to the US.

His first administration also launched the now defunct China Initiative, a national security program intended to thwart China's intelligence activities in the US, including those aimed at stealing emerging technology from research universities.

The program, which drew comparisons to the anti-Communism "red scare" of the 1950s, was cancelled by the Biden administration after facing widespread blowback for what was seen as overreach and complaints that it fueled suspicion and bias against innocent Chinese Americans.

It's also unclear how US officials will define students "with connections to the Chinese Communist Party" which is ubiquitous across China and boasts 99 million members. As a result, many Chinese students could have parents or relatives who are party members or work in the vast state-owned sector.

"If you count in all the friends and relatives, it wouldn't be farfetched to say that almost everyone is somehow linked to the Communist Party in China," Wang said.

New Visa Policies Put America First, Not China

28 May 2025, US Department of State

Under President Trump's leadership, the U.S. State Department will work with the Department of Homeland Security to aggressively revoke visas for Chinese students, including those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields. We will also revise visa criteria to enhance scrutiny of all future visa applications from the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong.

China says Trump's crackdown on Harvard "will only damage" U.S.

23 May 2025, CBS News

The Chinese government said Friday that the Trump administration's move to ban international students from Harvard would harm America's international standing, and one university in Hong Kong looked to capitalize on the uncertainty by promising to take them in. Chinese students make up a large part of Harvard University's international student population. The university enrolled 6,703 international students across all of its schools in 2024, according to the school's data, or about a guarter of the overall student body, with 1,203 of those coming from China.

The Trump administration's move, announced Thursday, was a hot topic on Chinese social media. State broadcaster CCTV questioned whether the U.S. would remain a top destination for foreign students, noting that Harvard was already suing the U.S. government in court.

"But with the long litigation period, thousands of international students may have trouble waiting," the CCTV commentary said. It went on to say that it becomes necessary for international students to consider other options "when policy uncertainty becomes the norm."

Educational cooperation with the U.S. is mutually beneficial and China opposes its politicization, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing in Beijing.

"The relevant actions by the U.S. side will only damage its own image and international credibility," she said.

She added that China would firmly protect the rights and interests of Chinese students and scholars abroad but she didn't offer any details on how it would do so in this situation.

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem accused Harvard this week of "fostering violence, antisemitism, and coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party on its campus."

She said the administration's action against the renowned university would "serve as a warning" to other colleges.

Last month, CBS Boston reported that Noem had demanded detailed records on the purported "illegal and violent activities" of Harvard's foreign student visa holders.

"It is a privilege, not a right, for universities to enroll foreign students and benefit from their higher tuition payments to help pad their multibillion-dollar endowments," Noem said in a statement. "Harvard had plenty of opportunity to do the right thing. It refused." White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson said Harvard has become "a hotbed of anti-American, anti-Semitic, pro-terrorist agitators."

"They have repeatedly failed to take action to address the widespread problems negatively impacting American students and now they must face the consequences of their actions," Jackson said in the statement.

Harvard has called the administration's move unlawful, and in a lawsuit filed Friday in federal court in Boston, the university said the government's action violated the First Amendment and would have an "immediate and devastating effect for Harvard and more than 7,000 visa holders."

"With the stroke of a pen, the government has sought to erase a quarter of Harvard's student body, international students who contribute significantly to the University and its mission," Harvard said in its suit. The school said it planned to file for a temporary restraining order to block the Department of Homeland Security from carrying out the move.

"We are fully committed to maintaining Harvard's ability to host international students and scholars, who hail from more than 140 countries and enrich the University — and this nation — immeasurably," a spokesperson for the university said in a statement released on Thursday. "We are working quickly to provide guidance and support to members of our community."

CBS Boston reported that panic was quickly setting in for some of Harvard's incoming foreign students, who have been left scrambling to find other university options and make new plans ahead of the autumn term. Already, at least one Chinese university is publicly looking to help meet their needs.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology extended an open invitation to international students already at Harvard and those who have been admitted. The institution posted a news release saying it would provide unconditional offers, streamlined admission procedures and academic support to facilitate a seamless transition.

Some people in China joked online about having the university open a branch in the northeastern Chinese city of Harbin, whose name shares the same character as Harvard's name in Chinese.

The issue of Chinese students studying overseas has long been a point of tension in the relationship with the United States. During Mr. Trump's first term, China's Ministry of Education warned students about rising rejections rates and shorter terms for visas in the U.S.

Last year, the Chinese foreign ministry protested that a number of Chinese students had been interrogated and sent home upon arrival at U.S. airports.

China's state media outlets have long played up gun violence in the U.S. and portrayed America as a dangerous place. Some Chinese students are opting to study in the U.K. or other countries rather than the U.S.

China says US trade talks important but multilateralism key to solution

22 May 2025, Reuters, Olivia Le Poidevin

(This May 21 story has been corrected to say 'the Chinese delegation at the World Trade Organization' not 'China's mission to the World Trade Organization,' in paragraph 2) China said on Wednesday trade talks with the U.S. were an important step toward bridging gaps but what was really needed was "indispensable" multilateralism to find a way out of global trade turmoil

"While bilateral talks may sometimes work, China believes multilateralism is the inevitable and ultimate choice to address global challenges," the Chinese delegation at the World Trade Organization said in a statement at a two-day meeting of the WTO's General Council in Geneva.

"We need to find the way out," it added.

China and dozens of other countries were stung by a slew of so-called reciprocal tariffs announced by U.S.

President Donald Trump in April, before <u>talks</u> <u>were held</u> between the two major commercial partners on May 12 to ease tensions over trade imbalances.

China and the United States announced a trade truce, with the U.S. dropping the extra tariffs it imposed on China to 30% from 145%, while China cut its levies to 10% from 125%.

China called at the WTO council session on Wednesday for member states to stabilise trade relations and anchor trade measures under WTO rules.

"Unilateral tariffs and the threat of 'reciprocal tariffs' are just like adding fuel to the fire, which is simply wrong. An open, stable and rules-based international economic and trade order serves the common interests of all," China said.

The U.S. called on members to address what it called failures in commercial relations that had caused huge trade deficits, and for urgent reform of the WTO system.

"The multilateral trading system, as currently constructed, has been unable to address the serious challenges that face the system," a U.S. statement said. It added that WTO members had not addressed severe trade imbalances and non-market policies that it described as contrary to WTO principles.

Some 47 members sponsored a statement requested by Singapore and Switzerland at the meeting, reaffirming their commitment in support of the rules-based multilateral trading system.

Watch: US urges China to release Tibet's long-missing key religious figure

22 May 2025, <u>Radio Taiwan INTL</u>, Tristan Hilderbrand

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has issued a statement calling on the Chinese Communist Party to immediately release Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibetan Buddhism, who as of May 17 has been missing for 30 years. He also urged Beijing to end its ongoing persecution of Tibetans over their religious beliefs.

Stefanik Demands Transparency from Harvard Over Alarming Ties to Chinese Communist Party, Iran

19 May 2025, Elise Stefanik

Today, House Republican Leadership Chairwoman Elise Stefanik issued the following upon demanding statement transparency from Harvard University President Alan Garber, regarding evidence of repeated interactions and collaborations between Harvard faculty and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) entities.

The letter, written with House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party Chairman John Moolenaar (R-MI), outlines several aspects of wrongdoing by the university:

- Harvard repeatedly hosted and trained members of the CCP paramilitary organization Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC);
- Harvard researchers collaborated with China-based academics on research funded by an agent of the Iranian government;
- Harvard researchers used funding from the Department of Defense to partner with China-based academics on research with potential military applications; and
- Harvard researchers partnered with China-based individuals linked to China's defense academic and industrial base on research that could advance China's military modernization.

The letter also raises concerns regarding Harvard's lack of transparency and oversight in sensitive medical research collaborations, particularly in the context of China's widely documented practice of forced organ harvesting targeting ethnic and religious minorities.

"Harvard University must be held accountable. I demand full transparency and immediate cooperation with the Select Committee's investigation. We must ensure that no American institution enables the

CCP's military modernization or the Iranian regime's technological ambitions—especially under the guise of academic exchange," said Chairwoman Stefanik.

Harvard University's actions represent a grave betrayal of the American people, our national security, and the foundational values of academic responsibility. Any institution of higher education that accepts taxpayer support must uphold the laws of our nation, protect our national interests, and act ethically. Harvard's alleged conduct including training members of a sanctioned Chinese paramilitary group and conducting joint research with Iran-backed and PLAlinked institutions — raises serious legal, moral, and national security concerns. These actions appear to directly contradict U.S. sanctions law, and they may have actively aided genocidal actors and hostile foreign militaries," concluded Chairwoman

Stefanik.

"Harvard trained members of a sanctioned Chinese paramilitary group responsible for genocide, and its researchers partnered with Chinese military universities on DoD-funded research and worked with researchers funded by the Iranian regime," said Chairman Moolenaar. "These are not isolated incidents—they represent a disturbing pattern that puts U.S. national security at risk. The Select Committee's investigation will deliver answers, expose the truth, and hold Harvard accountable to the American people."

"No American university or college should be assisting the CCP in expanding its influence, American citizens, oppressing undermining U.S. national security," said Chairman Tim Walberg. "Unfortunately, we have found several instances in which Harvard University aided and collaborated with the CCP - including helping Chinese researchers on military projects funded by the Iranian government. This is unacceptable and President Garber needs to provide answers to Congress for this colossal failure."

Read the letter **HERE**.

China's spying efforts growing, with U.S. a top target

18 May 2025, <u>CBS News</u>, Norah O' Donnell, Keith Sharman, Aliza Chasan and Roxanne Feitel

Chinese pro-democracy activists in the U.S. have become increasingly wary about who may be watching them.

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, China's spies no longer seem to fear the U.S., according to former diplomat Jim Lewis, whose direct experience with China's intelligence agencies spans more than 30 years. China's Ministry of State Security, or MSS, is the largest and most active spy agency in the world, according to Lewis.

"This is — in scale and in scope and in brazenness — the biggest espionage operation against the U.S. in its history," Lewis said.

China's espionage operation

According to the latest assessment from America's intelligence agencies, China is the most active and persistent cyber threat to the U.S., but hacking has not replaced Beijing's pursuit of old-fashioned human intelligence.

China's Communist Party leverages a worldwide network of covert agents to monitor and influence events outside its own borders. It's also surveilling and intimidating Chinese dissidents in the U.S.

A Ministry of State Security propaganda video posted on China's largest social network, WeChat, last year boasts that the spy agency "senses things before they happen" and "fights against evil." The video serves as a public message to both foreign adversaries and China's own citizens about the ministry's growing power.

The MSS might have as many as 600,000 employees, according to one estimate.

"And they are committed to going after the United States," Lewis said. "We are target number two for them."

Xi's top target is China's own people, some of whom live in the U.S. So to maintain absolute power at home, Xi looks abroad, Lewis said.

"Xi Jinping probably remembers that a lot of revolutions start outside the home country,

and he doesn't want that to happen to China," Lewis said. "So there's a huge effort to pay attention to the expatriate population."

Toward that end, China secretly opened an overseas police station in the middle of New York City. Chinese expats could renew government documents at the station, discovered in 2022, but federal prosecutors said the main purpose of the outpost was to target and harass Chinese dissidents.

"They've done it in the Netherlands, they've done it in Canada. But the idea that you'd open a police station in another country, that's a signal disrespect of the sovereignty of that nation," Lewis said.

What happens when Chinese spies are caught

After the station was shut down, two Chinese-Americans who allegedly opened it were charged with conspiracy to act as unregistered foreign agents of China. One of the defendants later pleaded guilty.

Over the last five years, the Justice Department has indicted more than 140 people for felonies related to harassment, hacking, and spying for China within the U.S. Linda Sun, one of the accused, worked for New York Gov. Kathy Hochul. Federal prosecutors allege she accepted millions to influence who Hochul met with and what the governor said about China. Sun and her husband, who have pleaded not guilty, owned a multi-million dollar home on Long Island and a condo in Hawaii.

"Everyone leaves a record. Some records are more flamboyant than others," Lewis said.

And others, like the trail left by 76-year-old retired historian Shujun Wang, are less flamboyant.

This past August, Wang was convicted on four counts of making false statements, illegally possessing democracy activists' identification, and acting as an unregistered foreign agent of China. He was sentenced on April 14 to three years of supervised release for his role spying for China's government. A federal judge spared Wang prison time because of health problems, including cognitive decline, but reiterated that he committed "serious" crimes against the U.S.

Wang came to the U.S. from China in 1994 as a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York, the city home to more exiled Chinese activists than any other in the world. Wang helped found a group, the Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang Memorial Foundation, that met regularly and was dedicated to democracy in China.

Wang told 60 Minutes he was eager to promote democracy. He became a trusted member of the Chinese dissident community and took notes about who attended prodemocracy meetings and what they said in his role as publicity director for the foundation. But for 17 years, he was also spying for China.

Wang was indicted in 2022 by the Justice Department for sharing dissidents' names, contact information and private conversations at the direction of the MSS. He calls it a "very big misunderstanding" when asked about sharing information with China's largest intelligence agency. Wang pleaded not guilty. "Throughout the entire trial they were very careful. They never used the word 'spy.' Just look at the record and you'll see that," he told 60 Minutes. But trial transcripts show federal prosecutors did say three times that Wang was "spying" for the Chinese government, and that he "used his position to spy on and betray other pro-democracy advocates."

Wang repeatedly told federal agents that he had no contact with the MSS, but federal prosecutors said Wang met with MSS officers in China, and search warrants allowed the FBI to access text messages and emails exchanged between them. The texts showed that the officers offered Wang plane tickets, and he later admitted to federal agents that they helped his family in China with a business dispute.

In 2021, an undercover FBI agent posing as an operative from the Ministry of State Security showed up at Wang's door, offering to help delete communications from his computer that might incriminate him, should the U.S. try to prosecute him. Video from the encounter showed Wang welcomed the man's help.

This past August, Wang was convicted on four counts of making false statements, illegally possessing democracy activists' identification, and acting as an unregistered foreign agent of China.

Wang's lawyers, Zachary Margulis-Ohnuma and Kevin Tung, admit their client was in touch with Chinese intelligence officers, but they argue he didn't break the law.

"Our position has always been that he never had the intent to be an agent of the Chinese government," Margulis-Ohnuma said.

They claim FBI agents went after Wang once they were unable to recruit him for the U.S.

"They felt a little vindictive and angry and frustrated about their inability to stop higher up actual espionage," Margulis-Ohnuma said, adding that his client was turned into a "fall guy."

Wang's lawyers say he didn't have access to any top secret information, noting that Wang passed along things like the attendance sheet for a pro-democracy event.

"So there's no evidence of any harm to the United States' interests or to democracy movement interests from anything that he did," Margulis-Ohnuma said.

When asked about Wang, China analyst Jim Lewis, now a distinguished fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, told 60 Minutes, "He was an agent. He worked with the Chinese government to identify targets for them to surveil and compromise."

Lewis says there's still no substitute for on the ground human intelligence, even if Wang appeared to be an expendable asset for China's top spy agency.

"The Chinese are very good, and so he was not number one on the list of assets to protect. That means there are other assets who are being protected."

The pro-democracy activists being spied on

Two U.S. based pro-democracy activists 60 Minutes spoke to are concerned about being watched by China's spies in America, and with good reason.

Anna Yeung-Cheung's name and contact information, along with the information for 63 others, was found in Shujun Wang's

luggage when he returned to New York from a trip to China in 2019. At his trial, she testified against him.

Yeung-Cheung, born in <u>Hong Kong</u>, said she never imagined that Wang was reporting to people in China about what she was doing. Now a U.S. citizen, Yeung-Cheung organizes demonstrations for the Hong Kong democracy movement in the U.S.

She believes Chinese spies are collecting information for Beijing on what's being said at protests and how many people are showing up.

"This is their tactics, right? They try to silence you, harass you, or intimidate you so that you stop what you're doing," she said.

Authorities in Hong Kong have offered 1 million Hong Kong dollars, or about \$130,000 USD, for information leading to the arrest of Anna Kwok because of her outspoken activism. Kwok now runs the prodemocracy organization that Yeung-Cheung co-founded. She is currently seeking political asylum in the U.S.

Earlier this month, before her interview with 60 Minutes aired, Kwok's father and brother were arrested in Hong Kong. Kwok says she sees posts about herself on social media every day detailing threats to kidnap her and bring her back to China. If she does go back to China, Kwok believes she will be sentenced to life imprisonment.

"They see me as a traitor, as someone who betrays the Chinese government and the Hong Kong government," she said.

In March, the Trump administration announced sanctions against officials in Hong Kong who have targeted Kwok and 18 other prominent activists living abroad.

Kwok said she's committed no crime, but that China's government views fighting for democracy as criminal.

"Honestly, with China's long arm repression, it's difficult to feel free anywhere in the world," Kwok said. "The thing about the Chinese government is that you can leave the country, you can leave the territory, but you can never actually leave their governance."

Former Harvard Professor Convicted in US Joins Tsinghua University in China

13 May 2025, China Scope

Charles Lieber, the former Harvard University chemistry department chair who was convicted in the US for concealing his ties to China's Thousand Talents Program, has been appointed as a chair professor at Beijing's Tsinghua University.

Lieber is a renowned nanoscience researcher who won the Wolf Prize in Chemistry in 2012 and was considered a potential Nobel Prize candidate. He was convicted in the US for lying to federal authorities in 2018 and 2019 about his involvement in China's Thousand Talents Program and his relationship with Wuhan University of Technology.

According to previous media reports, the US Department of Justice alleged that Lieber signed a three-year contract with the Chinese talent recruitment program. The agreement included establishing a research laboratory at Wuhan University of Technology, publishing papers, organizing international conferences, and applying for patents on behalf of the received university. He reportedly approximately \$50,000 monthly plus \$150,000 in living expenses.

In December 2021, a jury found Lieber guilty of tax crimes and making false statements about his work in Wuhan. He was sentenced in April 2023 to a fine and two years of supervised release, with the first six months under house arrest.

According to an announcement on the Tsinghua Shenzhen International Graduate School website on May 1, Lieber has joined the institution full-time. The appointment ceremony took place on April 28, where he received certificates naming him as a Tsinghua University chair professor and a researcher at the Shenzhen Medical Sciences Academy.

During the ceremony, Lieber expressed that his goal for the coming years is to "build a global technology center and realize more scientific dreams" with colleagues in Shenzhen. He stated that he is ready to begin a new research journey and eager to start work immediately.

U.S. sanctions CCP, Hong Kong officials over transnational repression

05 May 2025, Indo Pacific Defense Forum

Human rights advocates welcomed United States sanctions on officials in China and Hong Kong who used draconian security laws to intimidate and harass pro-democracy activists.

The March 2025 sanctions freeze U.S. assets owned by six senior Beijing and Hong Kong security officials and block U.S. entities from conducting financial transactions with the sanctioned individuals. They include the chief of Beijing's national security office in Hong Kong, a police commissioner and others involved in imposing China's repressive policies.

The U.S. State Department said the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) attempted "to intimidate, silence, and harass 19 prodemocracy activists who had been forced to flee overseas, including a U.S. citizen and four other U.S. residents."

CCP actions "threaten to further erode the autonomy of Hong Kong in contravention of China's commitments," according to the State Department.

China pledged to allow independent economic and political systems in Hong Kong after the United Kingdom handed over its former colony in 1997. Instead of adhering to a promised "one country, two systems" principle, however, the CCP in 2019 proposed extraditing suspects from Hong Kong to China for trial.

Resulting protests in the global financial hub became part of a larger pro-democracy movement before China bypassed Hong Kong's elected lawmakers to impose a purported national security law aimed at quashing dissent.

In 2020, the CCP began enforcing the law to jail opposition leaders, shutter independent media outlets and silence civil society. The crackdown continued with fast-tracked

security legislation in 2024 that U.K.-based Amnesty International called "another crushing blow to human rights in the city." Authorities have used the regulations to erode the rule of law and undermine fundamental freedoms, as well as to harass and intimidate people outside China's borders, according to the U.S. State Department's 2025 report on conditions in Hong Kong. For example, Beijing issued arrest warrants and bounties on overseas democracy advocates and canceled passports for others, including some based in the U.S., in late 2024.

The U.S. has sanctioned 48 senior officials "for their involvement in suppressing the prodemocracy movement and violating the 'one country, two systems' commitment," stated the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation in Washington, D.C.

"We commend the State Department for sending a clear message that repression will not go unanswered," said Frances Hui, a policy and advocacy coordinator at the foundation.

Officials named in the latest sanctions "are directly responsible for enforcing draconian policies, imprisoning pro-democracy activists, and expanding their persecution across borders by placing bounties on those of us forced into exile — including myself," she said. "Many of us have endured relentless pressure and threats through transnational repression. It truly means a great deal to see the U.S. taking the lead in holding accountable the officials who orchestrated these actions."

The U.S. also imposed visa restrictions on officials in China involved in limiting access to Tibet, which CCP forces invaded and annexed in the early 1950s. "For far too long, the Chinese Communist Party has refused to afford U.S. diplomats, journalists, and other international observers access to the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China, while China's diplomats and journalists enjoy broad access in the United States," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a late March 2025 statement.

2 Chinese nationals seen clicking photos along India-Nepal border arrested

30 May 2025, <u>The Indian Express</u>, Himanshu Harsh

During interrogation, the Chinese nationals allegedly claimed to "like clicking pictures" and said they were taking photographs on Indian soil "out of curiosity". The two have been sent to judicial custody.

Two Chinese nationals have been arrested from the Jatahi-Pipraun border in Madhubani district of Bihar after they were allegedly seen taking photographs in the no-man's land area along the India-Nepal border late Wednesday evening.

Madhubani Superintendent of Police Yogendra Kumar on Thursday confirmed that the two Chinese nationals, identified as Wu Hailong (38), resident of Dialian City in Liaoning under Heilongjiang Province, and Sheng Junyong (30), resident of Xiuning in Anhui province, were apprehended at around 3.16 pm based on a tip off by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), after they crossed the border.

"The two Chinese individuals have been arrested under the Foreigners Act 1946. During inspection, no valid Indian entry documents or visas were found with the Chinese nationals. They were questioned by teams from the district police and SSB," SP Kumar said.

During interrogation, the Chinese nationals allegedly claimed to "like clicking pictures" and said they were taking photographs on Indian soil "out of curiosity". The two have been sent to judicial custody.

"During initial questioning, it was revealed that they had been travelling in Nepal. One of them has been staying there for the past few months, and the other reportedly met him (there). Their visas, passports, and identities are being verified and further legal action will be taken as per the findings," Kumar said.

The SP added, "During our preliminary investigation, we found some pictures taken near the border on their mobile phones." The

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officer denied reports that claimed anti-India videos and pictures were found on the suspects' phones.

"The chats on their phones, however, are in Mandarin. So we are investigating the case all possible angles. A proper investigation of their phones will be done by the technical teams and further action will be taken based on the findings. We will also be taking them on remand for further interrogation, and if needed, we will also seek assistance from other agencies."

The officer said the two Chinese nationals were found filming and photographing the Indian side of the border. Police have recovered three mobile phones, a power bank, watch, Nepal currency notes, a small black wireless microphone, a bracelet resembling Rudraksha, a bottle of Khadi Ayurveda oil, a white printed handbag, a data cable and a gold-plated locket.

Authorities are currently trying to establish the motives and activities of both individuals, officials said.

SP Yogendra Kumar also said, "Since Operation Sindoor, patrolling on the border areas of the district, which shares around 100 km of international border with Nepal, has been intensified with more district forces deployed to assist the SSB. With today's arrest, three Chinese nationals in total have been arrested since then."

APCC leader bats for diplomatic response to China's mega dam near Arunachal

27 May 2025, The Sentinel

Arunachal Pradesh Congress working president Bosiram Siram criticizes China's approval of a massive dam project on Brahmaputra near India's border.

Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) working president Bosiram Siram has voiced strong concerns over China's recent approval of a \$137 billion dam project on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, near the Indian border.

Calling the project a major ecological and strategic threat to downstream nations like India and Bangladesh, Siram urged the Indian government to respond firmly but wisely, through diplomacy and international engagement rather than provocation.

"China's project poses immense risks, but India must avoid a 'tit for tat' reaction. We must take this issue to global platforms and assert our concerns responsibly," Siram, a former minister said.

Highlighting India's own hydropower ambitions in the region, Siram recalled that former NDA Power Minister P R Kumaramangalam had initiated plans for a 21,000 mw Siang hydropower project in Arunachal Pradesh in 1998.

Later, under the Congress government in 2013, then Chief Minister Mukut Mithi supported the Centre's vision of generating 50,000 MW of power, half of which was expected from Arunachal alone.

While the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) initially estimated the state's hydropower potential at 48,000 MW, a revised assessment pegged it at 58,000 MW, earning Arunachal the title 'Future Power House of India', he said.

Siram cautioned against the unchecked construction of large dams in the ecologically sensitive and seismically active Zone V region.

"Congress is not opposed to hydropower, but we advocate sustainable, small and mediumscale projects that safeguard both the environment and people's safety," he said. He also recalled the devastating 2000 flash flood in Pasighat caused by a dam breach in Tibet.

Tibet-occupying China, Not Pakistan, is India's 'primary adversary', says US intelligence report

26 May 2025, Tibetan Review

Following its armed invasion and illegal annexation of Tibet in the middle of the last century, China is now India's "primary adversary" and its defence priorities focus on countering the threats posed by this new neighbour. This is the assessment of a US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) report May 11.

Although the general perception is that Pakistan is India's archenemy, the country which is accused of running terrorist training camps and sponsoring cross-border terrorism targeting it is only "an ancillary security problem to be managed", hindustantimes.com and other Indian news outlets May 26 cited the report as saying.

Pakistan, on the other hand, sees India as an "existential threat" and will continue the development of tactical nuclear weapons to counter India's conventional advantage, while tensions between India and China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are "capable of escalating quickly", DIA director Lt Gen Jeffrey Kruse has said in his worldwide threat assessment to the US House armed services subcommittee on intelligence. Kruse has concluded: "India views China as its primary adversary and Pakistan more an ancillary security problem to be managed, despite cross-border attacks in mid-May by both India's and Pakistan's militaries."

During the recent armed conflict between India and Pakistan, following the former's launch of "Operation Sindoor" precision strikes on May 6-7 night in reprisal for the Apr 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam town of Jammu and Kashmir, China reportedly provided satellite support for Pakistan which used Beijing-supplied combat jets such as the JF-17 and J-10C and the PL-15 missiles in the ensuing four-day exchanges of fire.

In order to be able to deal with China, India is not only enhancing its military power but also focusing on its global leadership role.

"To counter Chinese influence and boost its global leadership role, India is giving priority to advancing its bilateral defence partnerships in the Indian Ocean region through exercises, training, arms sales, and information sharing," the assessment was quoted as saying.

Last October, India and China reached an agreement on disengagement of forces at two

remaining "friction points" on the LAC and the leadership of the two countries agreed to revive several mechanisms to resolve the long-standing border dispute and to normalise relations.

However, according to the DIA report, the "disengagement did not resolve the longstanding dispute about border demarcation but reduced some tension still lingering from a 2020 incident when troops on both sides were killed in a clash" along the LAC.

Accordingly, the DIA sees India as continuing to promote its "Make in India" initiative to build its domestic defence industry, mitigate supply chain concerns, and modernise its military.

India also continued military modernisation efforts in 2024 by conducting a test of the nuclear-capable Agni-I Prime MRBM and the Agni-V multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle and by commissioning its second nuclear-powered submarine to "strengthen its nuclear triad and bolster its ability to deter adversaries".

The DIA's conclusion also is that India will maintain its relationship with Russia because it views these ties as "important for achieving its economic and defence objectives and sees value in the relationship...to offset deepening Russia-China relations".

China possibly 'obstructing Sutlej flow into India': Indian expert

26 May 2025, <u>The News</u>, Muhammad Saleh Zaafir

IWT governs distribution of rivers between Pakistan and India

Amid ongoing Pakistan-India tensions, concerns have emerged in India over the water it receives from China, as Indian expert Dr. V. Nityananda suggested that Beijing may be discreetly obstructing the flow of Sutlej River into Indian territory.

In the wake of the Pahalgam incident – blatantly contravening international norms and laws -- India last month announced the

suspension of Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and threatened to halt the flow of water into Pakistan. The IWT governs the distribution of rivers between Pakistan and India.

According to a report by Indian journal Business Today, Dr. V. Nityananda, a geospatial researcher and former NASA station manager, conducted research using satellite data on the flow of Sutlej River. The data reportedly indicates a significant decline in the Sutlej River's water volume within India. This decrease in flow is occurring before the river enters Indian territory from Tibet.

In a statement, Dr. V. Nityananda claimed that in the past years, the volume of water flowing into India from the Sutlej River has dropped by over 75 percent. "The amount of water coming to India through the Sutlej has dipped from 8,000 gigalitres to just 2,000 gigalitres."

He questioned whether China is deliberately controlling the flow of water into India. There are reportedly two major reasons behind this massive decline in Sutlej's flow into India – China may have altered the river's course, or the decrease could be due to natural causes. However, it stated, the second possibility

appears less likely, as climate data indicates that glaciers in the Himalayas are melting rapidly. In such a case, the river's flow should be increasing, not decreasing.

In the Yarlung Zangbo (Tsangpo) Gorge in Tibet, China has constructed dams and hydroelectric infrastructure. The dams have enhanced China's technical capacity and enabled its control of the flow of water that reaches India.

China and India do not have any formal water-sharing agreement. The data-sharing agreement between the two countries expired in 2023. As a result, China is not obligated to provide India with information regarding the flow of water in the Sutlej River. There is no public evidence to suggest that China is deliberately reducing the water flow. "However, due to China's increased control and the absence of agreements, India's concerns have grown."

Another independent expert has indicated that India has failed in studying and taking benefit from the satellite imagery for reading the flow of water and changes in Sutlej River.

Cong opposes large dams

26 May 2025, The Arunachal Times

The Congress party in Arunachal Pradesh, while opposing large dams in the ecologically sensitive region, expressed support for medium and small hydropower projects in the state.

"When India is facing energy crisis and hydropower could enrich coffer of fund-poor Arunachal, Congress would support execution of hydropower projects but not very large but medium and small dams without any risk in future," former minister and Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee working president Bosiram Siram said in a press statement.

The issue of hydropower generation in Arunachal has gained significance in light of China's recent approval of a \$137 billion dam project on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet, raising concerns in riparian countries, including India and Bangladesh.

"If India is concerned about China's dam, should we adopt a tit for tat policy or act with wisdom is the million-dollar question," the party leader said.

"Large dams always pose risk," he said, while recalling his personal experience of a devastating flood in Pasighat town in East Siang district in 2000, caused by a hydropower dam collapse in Tibet, which resulted in loss of lives and livestock.

Siram emphasised the need for India to take a wise approach in dealing with China's dam project and to explore ways to harness its own hydropower potential in Arunachal.

"I agree that China's proposed dam poses a great risk to downstream riparian nations, but India should take up the matter at an international forum," he said, adding that Beijing is well aware of India's strength and would not dare to challenge it.

After Kailash-Mansarovar, locals seek resumption of Shipki La-Tibet border trade

25 May 2025, Tibetan Review

As hopes rise for the revival of border trade between India and Tibet through Shipki La in Kinnaur district, of Himachal Pradesh state and residents have urged the local authorities to take up the issue with New Delhi, reported the *tribuneindia.com* May 25.

The Kinnaur district administration has accordingly urged the state's Industries Department to talk to the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for the resumption of trade through this border town.

The report said Hishey Negi, president, Kinnaur Indo-China Trade Association, has written to the Kinnaur Deputy Commissioner, who is also the Trade Officer, asking him to take up the issue of the resumption of trade from this year.

Sino-Tibet border trade used to be held annually through Shipki La from Jun 1 to Nov 30 until five years ago. The volume of seasonal trade was stated to be worth Rs 8.59 crore in 2016, rising to Rs 59.21 crore in 2017. The last time the trade took place in 2019, the volume was Rs 3.05 crore, the report said.

It was disrupted during border conflicts between the two sides, as happened after the Doklam standoff in Sikkim in 2017.

"I have requested the Deputy Commissioner, Kinnaur, to take up the matter with the MEA, as the residents of villages along the Tibet border are keen that the trade is resumed this year," Negi has said. He is seeking about 150 trade passes for local traders this year.

The traders have emphasized that many residents of the local border villages of Namgiya, Chuppan, Nako and Chango were economically dependent on the cross-border trade.

Trade sued to be conducted by barter system and in approved lists of items of export and import. Items like spices, carpets and tea figure on the export list while there are 20

items that can be imported, although more could be added on requests, the report said.

Some traders are stated to have been awaiting the payment of their pending dues for the past five years.

Himachal shares a 240-km border with Tibet, 160 km in Kinnaur and 80 km in Lahaul and Spiti.

There has been no trade between the two sides since 2020, after the Covid lockdown. The trade flourished when Tibet was free, but came to an end after China annexed the country and a Sino-India border war ensued in 1962. It was eventually resumed in 1992 until the outbreak of the Covid pandemic.

India rejects China's latest attempt to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh

19 May 2025, Diya TV, Abinav Sharma

India firmly rejected China's latest move to rename 27 locations in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, calling the action "baseless" and "preposterous." The Indian government reiterated that the state remains an integral and inalienable part of the country, dismissing what it described as Beijing's ongoing attempt at asserting territorial claims through symbolic gestures.

On May 14, Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal responded to media queries about the renaming effort, emphasizing that such "creative naming" would not alter India's sovereignty. "We have noticed that China has persisted with its vain and preposterous attempts to name places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh," Jaiswal said in an official statement. "Consistent with our principled position, we reject such attempts categorically."

This is the fifth time China has attempted to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh—referred to by Beijing as "Zangnan"—in a bid to reinforce its territorial claims. Previous renaming attempts occurred in 2017, 2021, 2023, and 2024, often timed alongside key diplomatic events or political developments in the region.

In 2017, China issued its first batch of alternate names following the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing viewed as a provocation. The 2023 renaming coincided with India hosting a G20 meeting in the state, which China opposed. Most recently, the May 2025 renaming came just days after reported military tensions between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist attack, suggesting a pattern of geopolitical signaling by Beijing.

India has repeatedly dismissed these moves as diplomatic theatrics. "This does not change the fact that Arunachal Pradesh is, was, and will always be an integral part of India," Jaiswal said. Officials in New Delhi view the renaming campaign as part of China's broader strategy of "coercive diplomacy"—a term used by experts to describe Beijing's use of symbolic pressure to assert territorial claims. China's actions have sparked bipartisan criticism in India and drawn concern from international observers. Analysts point out that symbolic name changes, while lacking legal standing, are often used by China to reinforce long-standing claims and influence international perception. However, India maintains that its sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh is both legally and historically grounded.

Arunachal Pradesh, which shares a 1,129-kilometer border with China, has long been a flashpoint in Sino-Indian relations. The region was the site of a major border war in 1962 and remains a contentious area despite multiple rounds of diplomatic talks aimed at resolving the boundary dispute.

China's foreign ministry defends its actions, claiming that the renamed areas fall under its administrative jurisdiction. However, India has consistently dismissed these assertions. The Indian government does not recognize Chinese names for locations within Arunachal Pradesh and continues to exercise full administrative control over the region.

This latest episode adds to the already complex and often tense relationship between the two nuclear-armed neighbors, which has seen frequent military stand-offs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in recent years. While both sides have called for dialogue to ease tensions, India remains steadfast in rejecting any move that challenges its territorial integrity. "Such acts will not change the reality on the ground," Jaiswal reiterated.

Chinese Netizen Mocks India's Attempt to Emulate Beijing's Tariff Standoff with U.S.

19 May 2025, China Global South Project, Han Zhen

A day after China and the United States reached a breakthrough tariff agreement—cutting U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods from 145% to 30%, and China's tariffs on American goods from 125% to 10%—India's surprise trade move made headlines.

Last week, India <u>filed</u> a formal dispute with the World Trade Organization (WTO), challenging U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminium. The announcement triggered a wave of discussion on Chinese social media, where many users mocked India for attempting to emulate China's tough stance toward Washington without possessing the necessary leverage.

A trending hashtag on Weibo launched by the news outlet Observer (案者网), #印度学者

称强硬起来也能跟中国一河美达成#

("Indian scholar says being tough can also reach a deal with the U.S. like China did"), captured the popular sentiment.

"The proposed retaliatory tariffs are the first sign that India is willing to 'stand up and take a tough stance, Guancha wrote in the post, citing trade expert Biswajit Dhar. "China's success in pushing the U.S. toward a deal shows that India 'must more firmly defend its own interests and demonstrate its courage." Chinese social media commentators argued that India was "mysteriously confident" and blindly copying China. Some even spread an unverified claim that the U.S. was planning to retaliate against India with a 500% tariff on select goods, including textiles and electronics—sectors that are especially vulnerable due to their dependence on Chinese components.

One WeChat article titled "India Copies China to Confront the U.S., Gets Hit with 500% Tariff? This Move is Too Magical!" analyzes India's misstep from the Chinese perspective. Here's a breakdown of its key points:

- Lack of Leverage: Unlike China, which holds strong cards like rare earths, a robust manufacturing base, and a massive domestic market, India exports mostly low-value goods and relies heavily on Chinese components—leaving it with little real bargaining power.
- Poor Timing: India's move came just as the U.S. and China reached a tariff deal. With Trump under pressure not to appear weak on China, India became a convenient target for a tough U.S. response.
- Strategic Confusion: India is trying to resist the U.S. while also playing the role of an anti-China ally, but this balancing act leaves it isolated—criticized for lacking a clear and consistent strategy and risking being used as a pawn in great power politics.

India Blocks Chinese State Media X Accounts Amid Kashmir Crisis

17 May 2025, Zoom Bangla

In a dramatic escalation of regional tensions, India has blocked the X (formerly Twitter) accounts of several Chinese state-affiliated media outlets, citing their role in disseminating Pakistani propaganda amid a recent Kashmir crisis. This move has stirred both political and media landscapes across Asia and beyond.

India X Account Ban: A Strategic Clampdown on Chinese Influence

India's recent decision to block X accounts of Chinese state media, including Xinhua and the Global Times, signals a decisive pushback against what it perceives as a coordinated misinformation campaign. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting moved swiftly

after accusing these outlets of spreading disinformation during the latest spike in India-Pakistan tensions over Kashmir. The blocks were implemented on Wednesday and align with broader Indian efforts to combat digital propaganda.

The block also extended to Turkey's TRTWorld, underscoring India's concern over what it views as foreign media being weaponized for geopolitical gains. These countries have long-standing alliances with Pakistan, further complicating regional diplomacy.

The Kashmir Crisis: Context Behind the Digital Clampdown

The geopolitical storm was triggered by violent military clashes between India and Pakistan, reportedly the worst in decades. Amid conflicting narratives, Chinese media reported that Pakistani forces had shot down Indian warplanes, a claim strongly refuted by Indian officials. India's embassy in China swiftly countered, labeling such reports as deliberate disinformation.

The narrative was exacerbated by China's own diplomatic moves. On Sunday, Beijing issued new names for places in Arunachal Pradesh, a region it claims under the name Zangnan. This move was condemned by India's Foreign Ministry as a "vain and preposterous" attempt to rewrite reality. It also served to inflame an already tense situation along the India-China border.

The Digital Frontline: This recent surge of geopolitical friction has extended into cyberspace. India's digital sovereignty has become a frontline, with state-controlled platforms and media outlets being scrutinized for their role in influencing public opinion.

Freedom of press advocates have criticized the bans, but the Indian government defends its stance as necessary national security intervention. This friction spotlights the fragile balance between national interest and information freedom in today's digital-first news ecosystem.

Geopolitical Fallout: India-China Relations at a Crossroads

India's clampdown on X accounts is part of a broader set of actions amid strained ties with China. Relations have been fraught since the deadly 2020 border clash in the Galwan Valley, which left soldiers on both sides dead. The recent renaming of Arunachal Pradesh by China further deteriorated diplomatic ties.

While Beijing insists the renaming exercise is within its sovereign rights, New Delhi views it as a deliberate provocation. The issue of Arunachal Pradesh, which India firmly considers part of its territory, remains one of the key flashpoints in Sino-Indian relations.

Press Freedom or Propaganda? A Complex Dilemma

Blocking foreign state media has opened a debate around press freedom. Critics argue this sets a troubling precedent, especially when outlets like Xinhua and Global Times are also cited by international agencies. However, Indian officials maintain that their decision stems from national security imperatives rather than censorship.

The broader crackdown includes thousands of social media accounts, some from recognized media sources. While this raises alarm bells in democratic circles, the government stresses that each block is based on data and strategic necessity.

India plays a pivotal role in monitoring online content. Their surveillance protocols have evolved significantly, especially in the wake of past disinformation campaigns.

The Regional Media Equation: Alliances and Allegiances

China and Turkey, both targeted in India's recent blocks, are known supporters of Pakistan. China supplies a significant portion of Pakistan's military arsenal, and its media often reflect sympathetic narratives. Turkey, through TRTWorld, has also been vocally aligned with Islamabad on the Kashmir issue. This adds another layer to the regional information war, where media channels are often seen as extensions of state policy. In this context, India's move is as much about controlling narratives as it is about protecting its digital and territorial integrity.

India's move to block X accounts linked to China underscores a new front in regional power play

Amid a multifaceted crisis involving Kashmir and increasing digital tensions, the main keyword—India X—now symbolizes more than a platform. It reflects a strategic, diplomatic, and cyber posture reshaping South Asia's media landscape.

China reasserts India border claims with fresh list of 'standard' place names 17 May 2025, The Star, Xinlu Liang

China has reasserted its territorial claims near its contested border with India by releasing "standard" names for dozens of places in the region – most of them in Indiancontrolled territory.

Despite recent efforts to improve diplomatic ties with its Southeast Asian neighbour, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs published its latest names for places in Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls Zangnan, and says is part of the Tibetan autonomous region.

The renaming of 27 places covered a diverse array of geographical features: 15 mountains, five residential areas, four mountain passes, two rivers and one lake.

Each location was assigned names in Chinese characters, Tibetan, and pinyin – the romanised spelling of Mandarin Chinese – and accompanied by detailed latitude and longitude coordinates, and a high-resolution map.

"In accordance with the relevant provisions of the State Council [China's cabinet] on the management of geographical names, we in conjunction with the relevant departments have standardised some of the geographical names in Zangnan of China," the ministry said.

The move comes despite efforts in the past year to improve relations between the two countries after a long period of tension.

A deadly military clash in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in 2020 sent relations into a tailspin. Twenty Indian

soldiers and four Chinese personnel were killed in the encounter and there has been a military stand-off at the shared border ever since. The following year, another border skirmish in Sikkim state left troops on both sides wounded.

However, late last year China and India agreed to end their military stand-off at the Himalayan border.

Since then, senior diplomats from both sides have engaged in regular discussions, including a meeting in January where Chinese and Indian officials committed to resetting their bilateral relationship.

As part of that process, China and India agreed earlier this year to ease visa processes and resume direct flights – although no firm timeline has been set for restarting those routes. India also announced that Beijing had agreed to reopen Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar, sacred sites for Indian pilgrims, after a five-year suspension.

China's latest move to rename numerous locations in Arunachal Pradesh may cast a shadow over these diplomatic efforts.

Most of the places on the list are on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control, an informal boundary between Chinese and Indian-controlled territory. It is loosely based on the McMahon Line, which was drawn during British colonial rule, but each side has different views of where that line runs.

Beijing claims some areas south of that line as part of its own territory, calling it South Tibet. India refers to those areas as Arunachal Pradesh.

This is the fifth time China has renamed places within Arunachal Pradesh.

Starting in 2017, Beijing issued a series of lists – initially six locations, then 15 in 2021, 11 in 2023, and most recently 30 in March 2024 – most of which fall within areas controlled by India.

Last April, after the list was released, New Delhi's Ministry of External Affairs rejected Beijing's "senseless attempt" at "inventing" names and "altering reality".

"If today I change the name of your house, will it become mine? Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always be a state of India.

Changing names does not have an effect," Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told India media at the time.

India media also reported last June that the Indian Army's information warfare division had started to rename 30 places in China's Tibet region in retaliation for the Chinese list, but no list was made public and no additional moves ensued.

Arunachal Town Sees Massive Protest After China's 'Renaming' Attempt

15 May 2025, NDTV, Ratnadip Choudhury

The protesters staged the agitation with the Tricolour and raised slogans against China. They also burnt a poster of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Local residents of Hawai, district headquarters of Anjaw in Arunachal Pradesh, on Thursday staged a massive protest against China's attempts to rename 27 places in the northeastern state, which Beijing refers to as "Zangnan" or the southern part of Tibet.

The protesters staged the agitation with the Tricolour and raised slogans against China. They also burnt a poster of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"It's not 1962, it's 2025 and we strongly reject China's attempts to rename 27 places in Arunachal Pradesh," one of the protesters said, referring to the Indo-China war in 1962. "We are a part of India and always remain with India. Arunachal Pradesh was never a part of China."

Echoing similar sentiments, another protester said: "Their (China's) claims are baseless. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and we are proud Indians."

A third protester said the geographical terrain is very tough and it is not easy to acclimatise in the region. "We are ready for any kind of eventuality and give logistic support to our armed forces if necessary," the protester said. India on Wednesday outrightly rejected as "vain and preposterous" China's attempts to rename some places in Arunachal Pradesh and said doing so will not alter

the "undeniable" reality that the state "was, is, and will" always remain an integral part of India.

New Delhi's remarks were in response to Beijing's announcement on Chinese names for 27 places in the northeastern state, mainly 15 mountains, four passes, two rivers, a lake and five inhabited areas.

"We have noticed that China has persisted with its vain and preposterous attempts to name places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"Consistent with our principled position, we reject such attempts categorically. Creative naming will not alter the undeniable reality that Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," he added.

China rejects India's criticism of its renaming of Arunachal place names

15 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

China has on May 14 doubled down on its latest renaming of places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, insisting that the territory belongs to it on account of its claim over Tibet.

Zangnan is part of China's territory, and the Chinese government has standardized the names of some parts of Zangnan. "This is within China's sovereign rights," China's official *globaltimes.cn* May 14 quoted Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin as saying. "Zangnan" is Chinese for south or southern Tibet.

The report said Lin made the remarks in response to media inquiries that India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had released a statement in which it made clear its opposition to China naming places in "Arunachal Pradesh" (China's Zangnan), citing Chinese foreign ministry website.

The report said China's Ministry of Civil Affairs had released the fifth batch of standardized geographical names in Zangnan on May 11, after its previous one in in Mar 2024.

The report said Qian Feng, director of the Research Department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, had told the *Global Times* that India had no right to say anything about China's legitimate exercise of its sovereignty, that China's action is in a manner consistent with international law. He has added that the Indian side's claim also did not align with the facts.

China came to share a common border with India only after it annexed Tibet in the 1950s. No wonder the report said that previously, in 2024, when answering a question related to Zangnan, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin said that the China-India boundary had never been delimited and was divided into the eastern sector, the middle sector, the western sector and Sikkim sector. India's claim is based on the 1914 tripartite Shimla convention of British India, Tibet and China. China also signed the Shimla agreement but eventually did not ratify it and was therefore not to claim many rights based on it.

CM Pema Khandu holds Arunachal Pradesh cabinet meet at Kibithoo, India's first village that faces China

14 May 2025, The Times of India

Leveraging India's military recent achievements and asserting sovereignty along the LAC in India's eastern sector, Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu, held a cabinet meeting at Kibithoo, India's first village that faces China on Tuesday. Earlier, Army personnel and locals, led a Yatra' nearby 'Tiranga at commemorating the triumph of the Indian armed forces in Operation Sindoor.

China also claims Walong as part of its "southern Tibet" or Zangnan, as Beijing refers to it. The yatra and the cabinet meeting were direct responses to such claims, asserting India's sovereignty, officials said. "The patriotic fervour at this easternmost frontier rekindled our love for the nation and strengthened our collective resolve to stand in unwavering support of our brave defence

forces," Khandu wrote on X. These events, held in strategically significant locations in Anjaw district, underscore the historical, military, and symbolic importance of Walong and Kibithoo, home to the Mishimi and Meyor tribes, while boosting national pride.

Walong holds historical significance as the site where Indian forces mounted their only counter-offensive against advancing PLA troops during the Indo-China war, precisely 63 years ago.

The Battle of Walong is a shining example of unparalleled bravery, guts and sacrifice by Indian soldiers who held back the Chinese troops for 27 days, which forced the Chinese to deploy its reserve division from Tawang to Walong.

The Yatra culminated at the Walong War Memorial, where Khandu and others paid homage to the valiant jawans who made the supreme sacrifice while defending India during the 1962 war.

Khandu said the "historic sitting of cabinet aapke dwar at Kibithoo, India's first village in Anjaw district", made some key decisions aimed at the welfare of our people, strengthening govt departments for efficient service delivery, boosting revenue generation, and advancing the mission to make Arunachal 'atmanirbhar.'

India slams China's renaming of places in its territory as 'vain and preposterous' 14 May 2025, <u>RFA</u>, Tenzin Pema

Beijing gives Chinese names to 27 places in the border state of Arunachal Pradesh, asserting it has sovereignty, not India.

India on Wednesday rejected China's renaming of 27 places in Arunachal Pradesh as a "vain and preposterous" move, saying its northeastern border state, which Beijing claims is part of Zangnan or southern Tibet, remains an "integral and inalienable" part of the country.

On Sunday, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs released its fifth batch of "standardized" names for over 27 places in Arunachal Pradesh – including mountains, mountain passes, rivers, residential areas, and a lake – in its latest attempt to bolster its claim over the territory that Beijing claims is Chinese territory and part of historical Tibet.

Beijing gives Chinese names to 27 places in the border state of Arunachal Pradesh, asserting it has sovereignty, not India. (Tenzin Pema/RFA)

"We have noticed that China has persisted with its vain and preposterous attempts to name places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh," India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement.

"Consistent with our principled position, we reject such attempts categorically. Creative naming will not alter the undeniable reality that Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," Jaiswal added.

China's latest move to rename places in the Indian border state comes despite recent attempts by both nations to improve diplomatic ties, after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Russia last October shortly after their governments reached an agreement over a disputed area along their shared border.

That came after prolonged tensions, when thousands of Indian and Chinese troops faced off in June 2020 at three or four locations in the western Himalayas. India accused Beijing's forces of intruding into Indian territory, although China denied it.

The two countries fought a border war in 1962, and China has mounted a long-standing campaign to assert its claim over areas held by India.

In 2017, China released its first list of standardized names for six places. Thereafter, it has carried out three more such renaming attempts, with new names for 15 places released in 2021, for 11 places in 2023, and 30 places in 2024.

In response to India's condemnation of China's latest move, the Chinese foreign

ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said the Chinese government's efforts to "standardize" the names of certain places in the region "is fully within China's sovereignty."

"The Zangnan region belongs to China," Lin said at a press briefing on Wednesday.

India and China have made competing claims on territory along the disputed 1,130-kilometer (700-mile) border, known as the McMahon Line, between Tibet and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

India recognizes the McMahon Line, a boundary line drawn between Tibet and British India as agreed during the Simla Convention in 1914, as the international border. China, on the other hand, maintains that the boundary with India has never been delimited and claims areas south of the McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh as southern Tibet.

Sriparna Pathak, professor of China studies at the O.P. Jindal Global University in Haryana, India, and a former consultant at India's foreign ministry, characterized China's effort to change names as "cartographic aggression" - an attempt to boost its claims and normalize its occupation of regions it claims as its own. Kalpit Mankikar, fellow for China Studies at the New Delhi, India-based Observer Research Foundation, highlighted China's recent attempts to push its allies to use "Xizang," instead of Tibet, to refer to the formerly independent country it annexed in 1950.

He said it is another example of Beijing's strategy to rename places and ensure their consistent usage to erase Tibetan identity and further its narrative that Tibet has always been a part of China.

"This has been the fifth time that China has renamed places in Arunachal. And this is also part of the larger scheme of things, where it calls Tibet 'Xizang'... so this is a long, long-drawn strategy," Manikar said.

China tells India it condemns Pahalgam terror attack, then reassures Pakistan iron-clad-friend support

11 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

Following the May 10 understanding reached between India and Pakistan on cessation of all military actions that had continued for four days, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has held phone conversations with India's National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar, giving each assurances that are hard to reconcile with each other. Pakistan is China's all-weather, iron-clad friend while Beijing is working hard to normalize bilateral ties with India in the wake of its ongoing devastating tariffs war with the USA.

Beijing's response appeared ambivalent, an act of delicate diplomatic balancing, as it extended equal support to both its two nuclear-armed neighbours, noted *indiatoday.in* May 11.

Pakistan's Wang To Dar, has "acknowledged" Pakistan's "restraint and appreciated its responsible approach under circumstances". challenging He reaffirmed that as Pakistan's "all-weather strategic cooperative partner and iron-clad friend", Beijing will continue to stand firmly by Islamabad in "upholding its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national independence".

However, in his phone conversation with India's Doval, Wang has condemned the May 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam and reiterated China's opposition to all forms of terrorism. India's sees the terrorist attack as Pakistansponsored.

"Wang Yi expressed China's condemnation of the Pahalgam terrorist attack and its opposition to all forms of terrorism. He noted that, given the current complex and volatile international situation, peace and stability in Asia are hard-won and should be cherished," a statement from Wang's office was quoted as saying.

Amid allegations from both the sides of violations of the ceasefire, Beijing has further

expressed hope that both sides will remain calm, exercise restraint, resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation, and avoid any further escalation.

* * *

The India-Pakistan ceasefire agreement came after intense diplomatic efforts involving several countries, including China, the United States, and Saudi Arabia. However, New Delhi maintained that the ceasefire understanding was reached through direct negotiations between the two sides, the report said, citing a number of other reports.

Following the ceasefire announcement, Pakistan expressed deep gratitude to China – its closest ally and largest defence partner – for its continued support.

"I want to thank China from the bottom of my heart. I thank the respected President and the people of China who have stood by Pakistan for the past 58 years," Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said.

The agreement to halt all military actions by land, air, and sea came after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes that had pushed the two nuclear-armed neighbours to the brink of full-scale war.

While US President Donald Trump claimed that the truce resulted from American-brokered talks, New Delhi made it clear that the agreement was the outcome of direct bilateral engagement. Officials added that the understanding was reached after Islamabad agreed to the ceasefire "without preconditions, postconditions, or linkages to other issues", the report said.

Tensions between the two countries had sharply escalated following precision strikes by Indian armed forces on terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), in retaliation for the Apr 22 Pahalgam attack, which had cross-border linkages, the report said.

China holds military drills in areas adjoining Ladakh

09 May 2025, The Tribune

Amid mounting tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack, China has added a fresh twist by conducting a firing exercise with live ammunition in Tibet, facing eastern Ladakh. Sources in India confirmed that China was conducting a military exercise that included firing by truck-mounted artillery guns and long-range rockets. Though the exercise is in China's own territory, its timing and the prevailing situation between India and Pakistan, has merited a hard look from security agencies about Beijing's intentions. There was also unusual Chinese military movement on the G219 highway in Tibet. The two nations were locked in a military standoff from April 2020 to October 2024 along several locations along the Line of Actual Control — the de facto and un-demarcated

In October last year, the two sides announced completed disengagement in the Depsang and Demchok regions of eastern Ladakh and said patrolling would begin soon. However, a large number of troops of both sides are deployed close to the LAC.

boundary between the two countries.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who are special representatives on the boundary question, have been tasked with working out a solution.

After the Pahalgam terror attack, China has called for a "swift and fair investigation" and expressed support for its all-weather ally Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and security interests amid Islamabad's rising tensions with India.

India accuses China's state media of pro-Pak bias in Pahalgam response strike reportage

08 May 2025, Tibetan Review

India has strongly criticized China's state media *Global Times* May 7 for spreading

disinformation to mislead the public on New Delhi's retaliatory May 7-8 night cruise missile strikes at terror infrastructure deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK). It has Slammed the Chinese media outlet over its coverage of India's Operation Sindoor, and asked its news portal to "verify facts" and "cross-examine sources before pushing out dis-information."

Global Times had reported that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) had "shot down another Indian fighter jet in response to overnight airstrikes carried out by India at multiple locations in Pakistan", citing "sources from the Pakistani military."

"This is the third Indian fighter jet that has been shot down in response to the overnight strikes, said the military sources: Xinhua," Global Times had said, Xinhua being China's state news agency.

Responding to its low standard of journalism, the official handle of the Embassy of India in Beijing has said in a series of posts on X (formerly Twitter), "Dear @globaltimesnews, we would recommend you verify your facts and cross-examine your sources before pushing out this kind of disinformation."

Another of the embassy posts read: "Several pro-Pakistan handles are spreading baseless claims in the context of #OperationSindoor, attempting to mislead the public. When media outlets share such information without verifying sources, it reflects a serious lapse in responsibility and journalistic ethics."

The Indian embassy in Beijing also said in subsequent posts, "@PIBFactCheck had brought to light instances of fake news with old images showing crashed aircrafts being re-circulated in various forms in the current context of #OperationSindoor. While one is from an earlier incident involving an Indian Air Force (IAF) MiG-29 fighter jet that crashed in Rajasthan in September 2024, the other is an IAF MiG-21 fighter jet from Punjab in 2021."

The Indian embassy also sought to set the record straight by listing some "facts of the issue", saying, "On April 22, 2025, Pakistani

and Pakistan-trained terrorists belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba carried out a savage terror attack on Indian tourists at Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir in India. They targeted a particular community by asking people to identify themselves by their religion and murdered 26 people, including one national of Nepal, causing the largest number of civilian casualties in a terrorist attack in India since the 26 November 2008 attacks in Mumbai." One of the posts also read: "The attack in Pahalgam was marked by extreme barbarity," adding that the victims were mostly killed with head-shots from close range and in front of their families.

"Family members were deliberately traumatized through the manner of the killing, accompanied by the exhortation that they should take back the message."

Another of the posts referred to Pakistan's involvement in the terrorist attack, saying a group calling itself The Resistance Front (TRF) had claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack, adding that this group "is a front for the UN-proscribed Pakistani terrorist group, Lashkar-e-Taiba."

The post pointed out that India had given inputs about the TRF in the half-yearly report to the Monitoring Team of the UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee in May and Nov 2024, bringing out its role as a cover for Pakistan-based terrorist groups. "Earlier too, in December 2023, India had informed the monitoring team about LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammad operating through small terror groups such as the TRF. Pakistan's pressure to remove references to TRF in the April 25 UN Security Council Press Statement is notable in this regard."

Regarding Operation Sindoor, the embassy's concluding post read: "India accordingly exercised its right to respond and pre-empt as well as deter more such cross-border attacks. These actions were measured, non-escalatory, proportionate, and responsible. They focused on dismantling the terrorist infrastructure and disabling terrorists likely to be sent across to India. The world must show zero tolerance for terrorism."

China's Boarding Schools And The Forced Separation Of Tibetan Children

30 May 2025, <u>Religion Unplugged</u>, Vishal Arora

China is operating a vast network of "colonial" boarding schools across Tibet that forcibly removes children — including those as young as four — from their families, a new report released Wednesday claims. The report, published by the U.S.-based Tibet Action Institute, says the system is designed not for education access but for political assimilation, cutting children off from their language, culture and religion.

Tibet has been under Chinese control since the People's Liberation Army entered the region in 1950. The Chinese government considers Tibet an integral part of its territory, while many Tibetans view the takeover as an occupation.

In 1959, a failed uprising led to the Dalai Lama fleeing to India, where a government-in-exile was later established. Since then, Beijing has tightened its grip on the region, imposing strict surveillance, controlling religious institutions and limiting expressions of Tibetan identity.

International observers and rights groups have repeatedly accused China of suppressing cultural and religious freedoms in Tibet.

The advocacy group Tibet Action Institute, which is based out of Boston, Massachusetts, drew on firsthand accounts from inside Tibet and recent exiles to document how preschoolers from rural areas are separated from their parents and placed in government-run institutions where Chinese is the language of instruction, Tibetan classes are discouraged or banned, and participation in religious or cultural life is prohibited — even during school holidays.

The report includes a case in which a father was forced to abandon his five-year-old son at a preschool in rural Tibet.

To avoid an emotional outburst that could derail the enrollment, he told the teacher to lie to the child about his return. The teacher then locked the door while the father walked away as his son cried and tried to escape through the

COMMENTARIES

window. Similar accounts describe children being left at dormitories where beds are shared, hygiene is poor and the young are unable to care for themselves or even communicate with Chinese-speaking teachers.

Tibet Action Institute estimates that at least 100,000 children aged 4 to 6 are currently in boarding preschools across Tibetan areas. The figure adds to the nearly 900,000 Tibetan children aged 6 to 18 already known to be enrolled in similar residential schools, as revealed in the institute's earlier 2021 report. In many cases, boarding is mandated even when the schools are located close to the children's homes, suggesting that proximity or access is not the reason behind the policy. In Lhasa, for instance, fifth to seventh grade students used to live at home and attend local schools. But new rules now require them to board at a sprawling complex called "Education City" on the city's outskirts. A theoretical reversal of this requirement — on paper — now allows children to return home at night. However, with daily attendance required from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., most children continue to live on campus.

The scale and structure of these institutions remain largely undocumented in Chinese state media, according to the report. Boarding preschools often share facilities or names with elementary schools, making it difficult to identify or track them.

For example, a school in Medrogongkar County was listed only as a primary school in public databases, but photos from Chinese media and online diaries confirmed that it included a bilingual boarding kindergarten.

A diary, written by a Chinese university intern teaching at a boarding preschool in Kanlho, Gansu Province, describes a tightly scheduled daily routine. Children were collected at 8 a.m., taught lessons, fed lunch, made to nap with their heads on desks and eventually taken to dormitories after 8:30 p.m. Some beds were shared by two or three children, with sheepskins serving as mattresses.

Photos show children asleep with mucus on their faces. The intern noted that most children stayed on campus from Sunday to Friday and rarely saw their families.

The Chinese government argues that the boarding school system is necessary to provide education to children in remote areas and frames the policy as a tool for development and poverty alleviation. However, the report challenges justification by citing a 2023 Chinese study that found 87% of children in the Tibet Autonomous Region live within an hour of a primary school. The study recommended expanding local school access and using buses instead of requiring boarding.

In addition to being separated from their families, children in these schools are taught almost entirely in Chinese, with only token or poorly delivered Tibetan language instruction. They are also prevented from engaging in religious activities.

In some regions, authorities have gone door to door to enforce bans on students attending Tibetan language classes or visiting monasteries during school holidays. Parents have been required to sign pledges promising that their children would not engage in any such activities.

In Yushul, Qinghai Province, a government school issued a letter stating that educating minors not to believe in religion is an obligation for both schools and parents. It added that preventing children from entering religious spaces was essential to the long-term stability of the "motherland."

Tibet Action Institute says these policies contradict China's own laws.

The Chinese Constitution guarantees ethnic minorities the right to use and develop their languages and preserve their customs. The Law on the Protection of Minors prohibits corporal punishment and mandates respect for children's dignity.

The report also cites violations of international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

China has so far dismissed these criticisms as politically motivated and part of a Western campaign to destabilise its governance.

India is home to the largest Tibetan exile community in the world, with an estimated 85,000 to 100,000 refugees spread across settlements in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand and other states. The settlements have their own schools, monasteries and administrative bodies under the Central Tibetan Administration, based in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.

Strategically, the systematic erasure of Tibetan identity near India's borders could destabilise a historically sensitive region and intensify Beijing's control over areas adjacent to Arunachal Pradesh, which China also claims.

Tibetan resistance veterans offer legacy of unity, defiance in their twilight years 29 May 2025, <u>RFA</u>, Tenzin Pema, Dorjee Damdul, Lobsang Gelek, Passang Tsering, Abby Seiff, Passang Dhonden

A handful of former warriors, as old as 100, share stories of a vital chapter in modern Tibetan history, for the record and as lessons for future generations.



Tibetan guerrilla troops at Mustang, Nepal, where they were based from 1960-1974, seen in an undated photo. (STCIRCUS Archive of Tibetan Resistance via Hoover Institution Library & Archives)

In the tranquil hills of Nepal's Gandaki province, where the land rises in its northern district of Mustang toward the border with Tibet, the pace of life has slowed for the last legion of the Tibetan armed resistance.

Now in their twilight years, these are the warriors who mounted a united campaign from the 1950s through to the mid-1970s against the Chinese occupation of their homeland. They live quiet, spiritual lives far removed from the days of gathering intelligence and ambushing Chinese military convoys.

Many of these fighters were trained by the CIA. They bear experiences that few outside their circle can fathom. Their stories are filled with code names, secret camps, clandestine border crossings, and survival in brutal conditions. They played a pivotal role in helping Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, escape into exile.



An unidentified Tibetan resident at the oldaged home in Jampaling settlement in Pokhara, Nepal, in November 2024. (Lobsang Gelek/RFA Investigative)

Today they have a sedate existence. Most live in retirement homes, in settlements like Jampaling and Paljorling that are scattered around Nepal's second largest city, Pokhara. A select, more affluent, few live around the capital Kathmandu.

But they have an important and urgent message they want to share with future generations, rooted in the beliefs that drove them when they took up arms up to seven decades ago: to stick together to defend the Tibetan way of life.

"The idea of 'Tibet' is no longer a question of geography — it's about the resolve and readiness to sacrifice everything for the greater purpose of serving the cause," said Ugen Tsering, 87, also known as Utse Ugen,

one of the former fighters who now runs a successful Tibetan restaurant in the heart of Kathmandu's bustling tourist district, Thamel.

As their numbers dwindle, the former resistance fighters are eager to share their little-known stories.

Their armed struggle against China began with a grassroots force, the *Chushi Gangdruk* or Four Rivers, Six Ranges, that was later known as the *Tensung Dhanglang Magar*, or the Voluntary Force for the Defense of Buddhism. The movement then received covert financing, training, and weaponry support from the CIA, which codenamed the project ST CIRCUS – running it for over a decade from 1957 until U.S. support for the Tibetan resistance ended in 1969.

Ultimately, their goal to regain control of Tibet that had been occupied by China in the early 1950s was unrealized. But they had successes – not least in forming a movement that overcame regional, religious and linguistic differences that have often divided Tibetans who have inhabited the vast Tibetan plateau for millennia.

"There were young Tibetans from the three provinces (of U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo) alongside us – all committed to the cause and willing to sacrifice our lives," said Phenpo Gyaltsen, 93. "I never heard any distinctions being made based on our regions. The only message we ever received was that we are all the same and whether in joy or in suffering, we stand together."

"Our generation is both unfortunate and fortunate," said Ugen, referring to the first generation of Tibetans who witnessed China's annexation of Tibet in 1950. "We faced tremendous difficulties in our time, but we also had the opportunity to take action and strive to overcome them."



Ugen – code-named "Bob" – was one of the hundreds who received training at the secret training facility the CIA ran in Camp Hale, Colorado, in 1958-1964.

Hailing from the central Tibetan region of Gyangtse, Ugen was assigned in 1958 by Gyalo Thondup – the Dalai Lama's elder brother who died in February 2025 – to travel to Tibet's capital Lhasa to serve as a messenger between Andruk Gonpo Tashi, the founder of the resistance, and high-ranking officials in the Tibetan government, such as the Lord Chamberlain Thupten Phalha, who organized the Dalai Lama's escape to exile in March 1959.

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"I feel we accomplished what needed to be done during our time," said Lobsang Monlam, who was one of the fighters tasked with blocking Chinese forces from entering Lhasa while their compatriots safely escorted the Dalai Lama to exile.

"I have no regrets. Joining the Chushi Gangdruk guerrilla movement was a matter of desperation, not choice. There was no other way to safeguard Tibetan Buddhism and our nation," Monlam told RFA.

Monlam, 100, is the lone centenarian among a handful of former fighters who reside in the old-aged home in Jampaling village, one of the settlements established in 1975 to house the thousands of veterans of the Mustang guerrilla movement after they were forced to give up arms and surrender to the Nepalese army. The needs of the veterans have since been met by the Lo-drig organization, a welfare association founded by Mustang guerilla leaders, including Lhamo Tsering.

A former monk from Chamdo, Monlam renounced his monastic vows to join the Chushi Gangdruk in Tibet. After his escape into exile, he, like thousands of other newly arrived Tibetan refugees, toiled on road construction projects in the mountains of northeastern Indian border states like Arunachal Pradesh in exchange for food.

There, in 1960, he learned that hundreds of Tibetans were making their way to then-Kingdom of Lo, now Upper Mustang, where the fighters had set up a military base to continue their resistance. Monlam followed, making the difficult journey to join the movement, which swelled from a few hundred fighters to more than 2,000 that year. The initial months were brutal. "We barely survived," Monlam recalls.

The fighters endured harsh weather and living conditions at high altitude. They lived in extreme poverty and battled food shortages, even boiling their boots and saddlebags to eat the leather to fend off their hunger.

But by March 1961, the CIA supplied arms and aid. And over time, the leaders of the resistance - which included Lhamo Tsering, the right hand man of Thondup - organized

the army into 15 battalions, each with 100 fighters.

They recognized the strategic advantages of their location. It was close to the Tibetan border but also remote enough to serve as a hub for covert operations and to limit the influence of the Nepalese government. They established an elaborate network of bases, with Kelsang Camp as their headquarters.

An intelligence coup

Tsering and fellow Mustang guerrilla army generals Baba Kelsang Yeshe and Gyato Wangdu tasked the different regiments to gather intelligence, conduct sabotage, ambush Chinese military convoys, scout routes, and weed out any internal spies.

The training that many of the fighters received at Camp Hale in map-reading, surveillance, radio communications skills, codes, and guerrilla tactics – proved vital to their success in covert operations.

Ninety-year-old Tashi Dhondup, Ugen, 87, and Phenpo Gyaltsen, 93, were among their number.

Gyaltsen was tasked with collecting information and documenting the brutal treatment of Tibetans inside Tibet. Like him, Ugen was assigned by Thondup to track Chinese military movements and troop buildups around Lhasa, while reporting on the living conditions and struggles of ordinary Tibetans. Dhondup served as a military training instructor in Mustang for 11 years after his training in Camp Hale and used his map-reading skills to navigate troops during raids at the border.

In one notably successful raid in October 1961, 30 Tibetan fighters crossed into Tibet and ambushed a Chinese convoy and secured a pouch from a People's Liberation Army, or PLA, commander. It yielded what top CIA officials at the time called the "best intelligence coup since the Korean War."

The pouch contained more than 1,600 classified documents with rare and valuable intelligence about China. The documents revealed internal problems within the Chinese military and the Chinese Communist Party

and details of the large-scale famine resulting from China's failed Great Leap Forward.

While the Americans prioritized intelligence-gathering, the Tibetans valued acts of resistance. Guerrilla units rotated across the border into Tibet, conducting raids and targeted missions — though many ultimately failed.

Reke Samten, who was code-named "Stuart," was in one group deployed by Lhamo Tsering after his training at Camp Hale. He and two other fighters, code-named "Terry" and "Marv," were sent to Kongpo, now Nyingtri Prefecture, to form and lead a rebel outfit.

But Samten was forced to retreat after two months, when no reinforcements arrived. He embarked on a perilous three-month journey back across the border — hiding to avoid capture by Chinese forces and enduring the cold and hunger, with little to eat and little to cover himself at night.

His companions were even less fortunate. Both were captured by the Chinese. "Terry" was imprisoned for 17 years, suffering torture and harsh interrogations until his release and escape to Nepal and India, where he and Samten were reunited. "Marv" died in captivity, Samten said.

Importance of unity

Sitting atop the terrace of his home in the outskirts of Kathmandu, Samten said he had no regrets about devoting his prime years to pursuing an impossible fight. That's a sentiment shared by all the fighters RFA interviewed.

"Now, at 90 years old, I am in the final phase of my life and have dedicated myself entirely to religious practice," said Samten, who was clad in maroon, a color associated with Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns.

"As I look back on my life, I feel it has been meaningful ... but it is important for more Tibetans to learn about our struggle — one that has often gone unnoticed," he said.



Tashi Dhondup, 90, a military training instructor at the Mustang guerrilla camp, at home in Paljorling Tibetan settlement in Pokhara, Nepal, in November 2024. (Lobsang Gelek/RFA Investigative)

Before his death in 1999, Lhamo Tsering, one of the leaders of the resistance who wrote eight volumes of books on the history of the resistance, said the armed struggle must be looked at as "one chapter in our continuing struggle for freedom, one that still has some meaning."

It's now more than 50 years since they were forced to shut down the resistance's last stronghold in Mustang and disband. The goal for the next generation of Tibetans, the veterans say, must be a united commitment to preserving Tibetan culture and resisting Chinese government attempts to erase their identity.

"His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said we need to save and preserve Tibetan Buddhism, not just for Tibetans but for the benefit of the world," said Dhondup.



Phenpo Gyaltsen, 93, among the groups of Tibetan fighters airdropped to Tibet, at home in Kathmandu, Nepal in November 2024. (Passang Tsering/RFA Tibetan)

"Young people should pay attention to His Holiness's teachings and consider the sacrifices made by the elders from the three provinces of Tibet over the past six decades. Most of them have passed away, but we should learn from their struggles and achievements," said Gyaltsen.

One critical lesson from the past, noted Ugen, is understanding "the perils of regionalism and religious divisions and importance of unity to accomplish our goal of seeing a free Tibet."

Observers of Tibetan affairs say divisions based on regional origins have surfaced again with social media usage. The political exploitation of these differences have also played out in parliamentary proceedings of the exiled Tibetan government and among the diaspora.



Lhamo Tsering, second left. and Gyato Wangdu, third from left, leaders of the resistance movement in Mustang, Nepal, where from 1960-1974 more than 2,000 Tibetans engaged in intelligence gathering and conducted raids and targeted missions against Chinese troops. (Shadow Circus: A Personal Archive of Tibetan Resistance - 1957-1974/White Crane Films)

Those developments have raised uncomfortable questions about the community's ability to maintain cohesion, as the Dalai Lama, a revered figure, turns 90 this year, and China looks to undermine not just Tibetan identity, but solidarity among its people.

"My hope for the younger generation is that we remain united across all three provinces. If we are united, we will have a movement the world has never seen," said Tashi Tsepel, 75, who resides in Jampaling.



Tibetan resistance veteran Tashi Tsephel, 75, in Jampaling in Pokhara, Nepal in November 2024. (RFA Tibetan)

To be sure, these aging warriors know their physical battle ended long ago.

But they hope that the spirit of unity and defiance that drove them into the mountains of Mustang will continue to inspire future generations — a final act of resistance against the forces of time, oppression, and division. For these veterans, perhaps that would be victory enough in the twilight of their extraordinary lives.

China's economy runs on Uyghur forced labour

29 May 2025, <u>The Bureau of Investigative</u> <u>Journalism</u>, Daniel Murphy

More than 100 global brands are linked to a scheme that ships Xinjiang ethnic minorities to work in factories thousands of miles away A traditional song in the Uyghur language plays over the video of a man feeding bits of car chassis into a machine. "Who is going to the city to be a stranger? Who can no longer stand it?" a nasal voice croons. The workshop belongs to a company that supplies parts to Tesla.

Another young man snaps a picture of his overalls and hardhat and titles the picture: "Everyone's slave is his own master." The plastics factory where he works has supplied Midea, the white goods brand that sponsors Manchester City football club.

In a third video, posted in May last year, a man at an electronics factory wears a red jacket emblazoned with the name of a local government division – the very department that has sent men and women from Xinjiang, China's most western region, 2,500 miles away to work at the factory supplying parts for Samsung laptops. "In life there are no worthless people, only those unlucky before fate," comes the voiceover.

The videos capture scenes from the new reality of China's economy. More than a hundred global brands are linked to factories using Uyghur and other ethnic minority workers recruited through a system international authorities call forced labour, an extensive investigation has revealed. Many of those brands risk breaching a US law meant to sanction businesses that contribute to the repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

By trawling tens of thousands of videos posted on Douyin, TikTok's Chinese sister

app, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) has uncovered a largely hidden force that is helping to fuel China's economic expansion. Geolocating the videos and reviewing Chinese state media reports allowed TBIJ, *The New York Times* and *Der Spiegel* to identify Xinjiang minority workers in 75 factories across 11 regions.

International responses to the oppression of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang have tended to focus on products grown or made within the province, particularly cotton. But this investigation demonstrates that the problem of forced labour goes well beyond the borders of Xinjiang.

The investigation establishes the most detailed picture to date of how China's programme to move tens of thousands of people from Xinjiang to work in eastern factories has become an inescapable facet of its export economy. The Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz workers make everything from keyboards to cars, as well as components that end up in products shipped around the world, including to the UK.

The link to forced labour pervades entire swathes of the Chinese economy. More than a hundred consumer brands – from Apple to Volkswagen– can be tied to the tainted trade and, for the first time, evidence shows factories directly owned by big brands themselves, like those run by Midea and LG Electronics, have participated in the Chinese government programme. The products implicated include everything from shoes like Skechers to KFC chicken.

Apple and Samsung said its suppliers are regularly independently audited and that recent audits found no instances of forced However, Apple said investigating the alleged link to forced labour. Volkswagen also said it was investigating but couldn't comment until this was completed "against the background of the and contractually agreed confidentiality obligations". Skechers and KFC didn't respond to TBIJ's questions.

However, the mass transfer of mostly Muslim minority workers constitutes state-imposed forced labour according to researchers, human rights watchdogs, North American and European governments and the United Nations. This type of forced labour involves authorities recruiting targeted populations who — living in a police state-like environment — are coerced to work in key industries.

"When a government official knocks on the door of a Uyghur person and says they should take a job far from home, the person knows this is not merely a request," said Laura Murphy, a former senior policy adviser to the Biden administration on Xinjiang forced labour.

"They know there are directives that say refusal is punishable by detention. And they know how horrible detention is. Every Uyghur in Xinjiang has either been in detention themselves or has someone close to them who has been. This is not a choice. This is not consent."

TBIJ's investigation suggests that previous reporting on China's exploitation vulnerable ethnic minorities failed to capture how extensive the practice has become. It also shows that measures taken by major brands and governments are failing to prevent imports of products tainted by forced labour. Using trade data and other sources, like information from company websites, TBIJ tracked products to 86 markets around the world, from the US and UK to Colombia and Egypt. It seems increasingly difficult to buy Chinese goods without running the risk of tapping into a regime of exploitation.

2,000 miles from home

Search for 'Xinjiang' on Douyin, and your feed will light up with mountainous vistas, horseback riding and sizzling kebabs uploaded by Chinese travel bloggers. The occasional talking-head influencer — Han Chinese settlers to the region — offers advice on navigating the government's various relocation subsidies.

Dig deeper and you'll find a different kind of video.

In September 2022, dozens of men and women gathered at the entrance of the Artush vocational school in southern Xinjiang. The Douyin clip capturing the scene lingers

momentarily on a billboard behind the group, advertising the "moral and technical training" the school provides.

Setting down their suitcases, each person waited as school officials fixed dinner-plate sized red fabric carnations to their chests. The flowers are a common symbol in China, used to celebrate a "labour transfer scheme" lauded inside the country but rarely advertised abroad. Arranged in precise rows, the group listened to speeches before being whisked onto coaches to start a more than 2,000-mile journey to Yangzhou city in Jiangsu, a coastal province north of Shanghai and global leader in high-tech manufacturing.

A caption on the video, posted from a government account, confirmed that the group was heading to Elec & Eltek, a circuit board manufacturer.

Over 18 months, a reporter for TBIJ analysed thousands of user accounts for clues as to the extent of the Xinjiang labour transfer scheme. The video of the Artush group was a propaganda piece from a government channel. Most of the clips TBIJ reviewed were uploaded by the transferred workers themselves and required detailed analysis to identify the factories involved from a glimpse of a uniform logo or a building in the background.

Posts evidence transfers to scores of factories from as early as 2019. But almost 300 accounts have posted scenes from their everyday lives inside factories and dormitories since January 2023. In many cases, they show the actual labour transfers themselves: by coach, train and plane.

To pinpoint the plants' locations, TBIJ used geolocation techniques, meticulously comparing the visible features in the videos with images captured via satellite, Baidu Maps street view or those available on the internet. TBIJ corroborated the labour transfers with more than 300 articles in state media, local government reports, WeChat posts from government accounts company press releases and financial filings. Early this year, reporters from *The New York* Times and Der Spiegel visited approximately two dozen of the sites, speaking to factory staff and Uyghur workers. Many were wary of journalists, but those who were happy to speak described dozens or sometimes hundreds of workers from Xinjiang at each facility, usually brought as a group by a government agency and living together in dormitories. Some workers said that minders kept an eye on their movements, especially while they settled in. The shifts were long, but the pay was higher than what they might expect in Xinjiang, some said.

In reality, Chinese authorities had left them little other choice.



Workers in a melon field in XinjiangAlamy
Outside a chicken processing plant above a
river in Hubei province, a young man
smoking a cigarette said that he came to work
at the factory because his mother and
grandmother were ill and needed to go to
hospital. Another man said that while he
worked 12- to 14-hour days, in violation of
Chinese law, the pay was decent. Originally
from Kashgar in Xinjiang, he'd been at the
factory for a little over a year. Initially, he
would have to tell his group's minder every
time he left the factory, but with time he had
earnt more trust.

On the outskirts of Wuhan, a security guard at a car parts manufacturer cried: "Plenty of Xinjiang workers here – more than 200!" The company didn't hire them directly, he said. "It's all government-organised labour."

Local state media reports only offer a glimpse of the national programme; Beijing doesn't publish statistics on such transfers. The written evidence gathered by TBIJ shows transfers of at least 11,000 people in the past decade to factories in nine provinces, all thousands of miles east of Xinjiang, and to the megacities of Tianjin and Chongqing.

This figure is a fraction of the total: Jiangsu province, for instance, hosted 39,000 Xinjiang "migrant workers" in 2023, according to official figures, and just one Xinjiang county transferred more than 10,000 people in the first quarter of the same year, according to local official reports. A state media article tallied more than 100,000 labour transfers out of Xinjiang as far back as 2006, the year the program started.

In the transfers tracked by TBIJ, more than a third of the 75 factories involved are in China's top industrial powerhouses — Guangdong, Jiangsu and Shandong. Another 45 are in Hubei, Fujian, Liaoning, Tianjin, Jiangxi, Anhui, Hunan and Chongqing, all key centres of Chinese manufacturing.

The factories feed products and parts – from washing machines to precision lenses – into supply chains delivering to customers around the world.

TBIJ trawled commercially available trade data for shipments from the factories and identified more than 145,000 consignments that had been exported since evidence indicated each of the plants had started taking transfer workers. However, that's only a fraction of the total, because most countries don't publish company-specific data.

Often, the transferred workers are making parts of other goods, with several steps still to come before products reach store shelves. Some of Elec & Eltek's circuit boards, for instance, are sold to LG and Cal-Comp, a San Diego business that supplies the US car, aerospace and defence industries.

Other times, the workers from Xinjiang are there when the final goods are assembled. Alim* filmed himself walking past banks of glowing LCDs on the dimly lit floor of a cavernous £372m factory belonging to Chinese electronics giant TCL. The high tech production line churns out an air conditioner every eight seconds. Later, Alim's Douyin reel shows him working with a gleaming orange robotic arm to pack units onto cardboard.

Alim had filmed his journey to the plant, disembarking in March 2022 at Wuchang Railway Station in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province. Two dozen recruits milled around the platform in blue facemasks and government-issued red windbreakers, blinking in the bright midday sun. The lines of a Uyghur song on the clip express trepidation and courage: "If you encounter danger on the road, extend your hand to me, I would even give my life for you."

Assimilation, coercion and indoctrination

In August 2023, President Xi Jinping visited Xinjiang. There he urged authorities to "encourage and guide" Uyghurs to find jobs throughout the country. A few months earlier, the local government had pledged to expand labour transfers out of the region by more than a third.

The measures are just the latest phase of the government's decades-long crackdown on ethnic minorities. The state has moved millions of mainly rural ethnic minorities — what Beijing calls "surplus labourers" — both within and outside of Xinjiang for work, as part of a broader drive to forcibly re-engineer their identities under the guise of "poverty alleviation". The repressive programme serves Xi's vision of forging a more homogenous culture, society and ethnicity, and turbocharging China's economy in a race to gain the upper hand over the US and EU. Xi first declared war on "terrorism" and

"violent extremism" in Xinjiang in 2014, when unrest was met with brutal crackdowns. Since then, Xinjiang has been wrapped in a web of surveillance and security architecture. More than a million ethnic minorities have been arbitrarily detained, many forced into factory work at internment camps and detention facilities.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, governments and other experts have reported that, from at least 2018, Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz people have been subjected to religious restrictions, political indoctrination, compulsory sterilisations, rape, torture and forced labour. Although Beijing claims so-called "vocational education and training centres" have been shut down, more recent international media reports contradict that

narrative, suggesting some had been turned into high-security prisons.

"The vast majority of people have now been formally incarcerated without due process," said Rayhan Asat, a Uyghur lawyer and advisor with the Washington DC-based Atlantic Council think tank. A 2024 report from the Uyghur Human Rights Project, a US-based advocacy outfit, demonstrated that, despite making up less than 1% of China's population, Uyghurs account for 34% of all incarcerations. In many cases, Asat claimed, people were sentenced without trial, legal representation or even access to a lawyer.

The repression has gone wider still. Beijing has demolished thousands of mosques, collectivised land and herds and built vast new estates to house displaced ethnic minorities and sprawling industrial parks to employ them. High unemployment linked to broad discrimination in the local job market has helped keep Uyghurs in lower-skilled work like farming.

Xinjiang has been under the direction of a new party secretary since 2021, and policy has shifted, according to Adrian Zenz, a leading scholar on the region. Instead of mass internments, he said, the government has focused on institutionalising and stabilising the labour transfer system.

The region's current five-year plan requires all able members of ethnic minority households to be employed – a shift from the single family member specified previously. It projects that 13.75 million people will be transferred, mostly within Xinjiang, between 2021 and 2025, and instructs local governments across China to strengthen coordination, including through digitising personnel files for all transfer workers.

This data is integrated into a "real-time" employment monitoring system, which Beijing established after deploying hundreds of thousands of party officials to assess the income of 12 million rural Xinjiang households. It includes regular home visits by local teams of party officials, like the one seen by the BBC in 2021 reducing a 19-year old girl to tears as they broke down her resistance to labour transfer.

Authorities have identified almost 800,000 people for real-time monitoring, according to state media in 2022, and transfers are the government's first recourse to stop household incomes dropping.

Xinjiang government officials overseeing transfers have previously complained that recruits run away because they are "backward in their thinking" and "unwilling to leave their homes". To "eliminate" such worries, the state said in 2020, it put the elderly dependents of transfer workers in care homes, placed their children in institutionalised care and "centralised" the management of workers' farms and livestock.

"We can learn skills in school and find jobs at job fairs. It's so convenient," a state media article quoted one jobseeker, Maynur Taji, saying, at a recruitment fair for "farmers and herdsmen" at the Artush school in February 2024.

A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in the US said "allegations of 'forced labour' in Xinjiang are nothing but vicious lies concocted by anti-China forces". Members of all ethnic groups there "enjoy happy and fulfilling lives", they said, adding that "Xinjiang-related issues are not human rights issues at all, but in essence about countering violent terrorism and separatism".

Chinese researchers studying the transfer program have noted that labour export quotas have led to people being "forced" to go as party officials seek to "make up the numbers". In one 2016 study, 85% of people surveyed in a village near Kashgar said they didn't support the state's efforts to drive out-of-town employment. "Farmers are not willing to work outside the village at all", the authors noted.

The International Labour Organization, rights groups and the US government describe the labour transfers as "coercive".

"You have a strong political mandate from the central government that idle Uyghurs are a threat to national security," said Zenz, adding that, in Xinjiang's police state-like environment, the labour transfers would be coercive even without the threat of detention for those who refuse.

The minders

When 30 or more workers are transferred together, government minders and security guards accompany them. These minders deliver them to the factory where they will live and work, and stay on to help communicate with management and address concerns. Hubei Hangte, which claims it supplies BMW and other carmakers, said in 2022 that it invited minders to discuss how to stop problem behaviours among workers from Xinjiang "such as drinking and swimming in groups".

The minders also help with the primary aims of the labour programme: cultural assimilation and political indoctrination. Their own Douyin posts can be revealing.

A clip posted by a man supervising Uyghur workers at a chicken factory in Dalian, a coastal city in northern China, shows workers enjoying barbecues and dances in the compound. On other days, he takes the workers on day trips in the area – "all ethnicities are members of one family" reads a company-branded banner at one excursion. Dachan Food, the factory's owner, is an approved chicken supplier to KFC and Subway in China, according to industry analysis published in recent years, and Dachan itself.

He titled one video, showing Uyghurs playing sports, "This is how the Makit [county, in Xinjiang] employees of Dachan Food (Dalian) spent the May Day holiday! Do you want to come? ". He added an infantilising hashtag: "They are always happy on the playground."

Another of the man's posts – almost all of which were deleted a few months after TBIJ archived them – shows around 40 men and women lining up in loose rows in the Dachan factory common room for China's National Day that year. The Uyghur workers faced a large Chinese flag, pledged allegiance, saluted, and then sang. The minder, a corpulent man with a buzzcut, wearing a white t-shirt and black slacks, conducted the singers with his hands.

Another suspected minder posted similar videos, including from the TCL air

conditioning factory where Alim works. There he filmed himself sitting with Chinese management at an event for the Xinjiang workers. By early 2024 he'd been reassigned and uploaded a clip of himself leading dozens of workers in a pledge of allegiance beneath the Chinese flag outside the main office of a poultry factory – a supplier to McDonald's and KFC.

The scenes are examples of the sinister destruction of Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz identities, much like the "patriotic" education sessions routinely described in state media, analysts told TBIJ.

Yalkun Uluyol, China researcher at Human Rights Watch (HRW), called the videos "extremely unsettling". He added that HRW's research showed swearing allegiance to the flag is "political indoctrination" and part of the suite of repressive policies that "constitute crimes against humanity".

Sanctions and seizures

International responses to the oppression of ethnic minorities, particularly Uyghurs, in China have tended to focus on events inside Xinjiang. Many of the earlier revelations detailed the scale of forced labour in Xinjiang's plantations, which supply about a fifth of the world's cotton. In response, the US introduced a targeted Xinjiang cotton ban in 2020, extended it to include all cotton and tomatoes grown in the region in 2021, and then passed the wider Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act (UFLPA) in 2022. The UFLPA targets goods produced in Xinjiang, such as cotton, as well as their use in industries outside of the region, including textiles.

But the law also prohibits US importers trading with factories in eastern China that participate in the Xinjiang labour transfer program. US authorities have detained more than \$3.6bn worth of goods under the law, so far. The Chinese embassy spokesperson said the UFLPA "seriously violates international law and basic norms governing international relations and grossly interferes in China's internal affairs".

One of the sponsors of the law in the US Senate was Marco Rubio, now the secretary of state, prompting the New York law firm Ropes & Gray to predict Donald Trump's administration will enforce it robustly.

With Trump levying yet more tariffs on Chinese exports in the first 50 days of his administration, the stage is set for the US to deepen a trade war with China. But TBIJ's findings highlight how goods made through forced labour are circumventing US trade laws via shipments to third countries like Mexico and Vietnam – calling into question the efficacy of direct levies on Chinese imports.

And US authorities are facing an evergrowing list of Chinese export sectors connected to forced labour risks. Pharmaceuticals, aluminium and seafood have all been highlighted by reporting in recent years, while TBIJ's own reporting has thrown up serious issues with Chinese poultry farming and animal feed.

It remains to be seen how the new administration will address the human rights situation in China. The US failed an early test in this regard, said veteran human rights advocate Phil Robertson, when it offered a "laughably weak response" to Thailand's deportation of 40 Uyghur men to China in February.

That same month, the State Department updated the language on its China Relations webpage to add that the country "engages in unfair trade practices, including using forced labour and massive state subsidies, putting American businesses at a disadvantage and making them complicit in China's human rights abuses."

Tesla, KFC, Subway, TCL, Midea, LG, Cal-Comp, Dachan Foods, Elec & Eltek and Hubei Hangte didn't respond to several requests for comment. McDonald's declined to comment on the record.

BMW said none of the factories TBIJ asked about were "directly" supplying the brand, and that it was "working on increasing transparency over its extended supplier network".

Poetic resistance

The thousands of Douyin clips analysed by TBIJ build a picture of systemic coercion and

repression. But the app is also a site of quiet rebellion. It has become the contemporary platform for an age-old Uyghur tradition of expression of resistance through poetry, song and dance.

In Dalian, a couple of weeks after the suspected minder at Dachan Foods posted on China National Day, Abdul*, a 21-year-old man working at the factory, uploaded a video quoting Uyghur literature. "If not for life's harsh necessities, no one would willingly choose to be a musapir in foreign cities," he said.

'Musapir', a Uyghur word that crops up frequently in posts, is a nuanced and important term, said Rune Steenberg, an anthropologist specialising in Xinjiang. It refers to "someone living outside their community, an outcast, a stranger – someone to have pity on", said Steenberg, who worked with TBIJ, *The New York Times* and *Der Spiegel* to review the videos.

A year earlier, in 2022, Patime*, a Uyghur woman also working at the plant, uploaded a video showing workers in pink overalls making deft cuts of chicken carcasses hanging from conveyor belts. A voiceover clip – an exchange between two Uyghur men – said:

"You always look depressed. What happened to you?"

"Oh, I'm so exhausted. If it weren't for my family, what would I do?" "

"These days too shall pass," a friend back in Xinjiang replies under the video. Six months earlier, Patime had posted a video of rain falling on tarmac at the factory's entrance with a single line from a song: "Why does the sky cry in the form of rain? My tears flow like a river."

"You have to understand the context to understand the meaning," said Rebecca Clothey, a professor studying language and identity at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Clothey has researched how, in the face of heavy censorship, Uyghurs use veiled language and metaphor online to express their cultural identity and resistance.

"When they want people to know what's happening, they will find a way to show it," she said.

Clothey, Steenberg and other cultural experts who reviewed some of the Douyin videos concluded that the workers were communicating unhappiness and distress at their situations.

"There's a sense of defeat tied to the work that they're doing," said Steenberg. "And a feeling they've little other choice." Whether that's because of economic circumstances, discrimination, dispossession or coercion is hard to disentangle, he added.

International Labour Last year, the Organization decided to start measuring stateimposed forced labour by looking at what a given government is doing, rather than the conditions experienced at an individual level. Pointing to factors like a police state and policies targeting specific ethnicities, the organisation highlights how this kind of forced labour feeds on people's vulnerabilities, such as a lack of job opportunities, but may not always exploit them economically because the political aims are more important.

"The coercion is systemic, built into the system," said Zenz. "The very notion of choice becomes highly questionable."

In Liaoning, a few hours drive from the North Korean border, a young Uyghur woman turns to show piles of raw chicken on the gleaming aluminum worktops of a poultry processing factory. She sets the 14-second clip to a stanza from a Uyghur poem, spoken in a hushed voice:

My many sorrows overflow, uncontained. But to the world I am lighthearted, companioned with laughter. I am bait for my silence, quietly. Nobody is aware, and they shall never be.

The world looks forward to the new role of China's Hong Kong as 'capital of mediation': Global Times editorial

28 May 2025, Global Times

On May 30, the signing ceremony of the Convention on the Establishment of The International Organization for Mediation will take place in Hong Kong, China. As the

world's first intergovernmental international legal organization dedicated to resolving international disputes through mediation, the establishment the International of Organization for Mediation (IOMed) marks a milestone in global governance and highlights the value of resolving conflicts in an "amicable way." Meanwhile, Hong Kong is set to gain a new identity as the global "capital of mediation." The "pearl of the orient" is shining anew under the "one country, two systems" framework, drawing global attention.

Mediation is one of the key dispute settlement methods outlined in the United Nations (UN) Charter. The establishment of the IOMed will fill a critical gap in mechanisms focused on mediation-based dispute resolution. Coinitiated by 19 countries, including China, the organization represents a contribution from developing countries to the international rule of law. Unlike zero-sum or adversarial approaches, mediation offers disputing parties greater flexibility, allowing room for compromise and reconciliation. It also has "the advantages of greater flexibility, convenience, lower costs and more effective implementation," making it particularly valuable for small and medium-sized countries to participate fairly. Grounded in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the IOMed complements existing institutions and dispute resolution mechanisms in a constructive manner.

The founding of the IOMed embodies the true spirit of multilateralism. On the day of the signing ceremony, high-level representatives from nearly 60 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe, as well as around 20 international organizations including the UN, will attend the signing ceremony for the Convention. The strong interest enthusiasm shown by the international community underscores IOMed's relevance and importance in today's world. The idea that everything can be resolved through consultation resonates with the current global pursuit of peace and development and also reflects the shared aspiration for a more just and equitable international order.

China is one of the main initiators and driving forces behind the establishment of the IOMed. The concept of the IOMed embodies the ancient Chinese philosophy of (harmony and unity), while also reflecting the rule-of-law spirit grounded in international law. It emphasizes resolving conflicts through dialogue and consultation, and pursuing harmonious coexistence. In recent years, China's successful practices in international mediation have further proven the viability and deep potential of this path. From facilitating the handshake between Saudi Arabia and Iran in Beijing, to promoting the signing of the "Beijing Declaration" among 14 Palestinian factions despite decades of internal rifts, mediating a ceasefire agreement among various parties in Myanmar in Kunming, and consistently contributing to the Afghan peace process, guided by the Eastern wisdom of resolving conflicts in an "amicable wav." China has helped to longstanding grievances through sincere dialogue.

Mediation as a means of dispute resolution has become a vivid example of China's diplomatic approach to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

On May 27, Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive John Lee told the media that the is a high-level international IOMed organization, on par with the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. The IOMed's establishment demonstrates China's commitment and efforts to uphold an international order based on international law, while also opening a new chapter for the peaceful resolution of global disputes. This marks the first time an intergovernmental international organization is headquartered in Hong Kong, showcasing the empowerment brought to the city under the principle of "one country, two systems." Today, Hong Kong's role as a "superconnector" between East and West in both economic and cultural terms is more solid. The sense of security and stability brought about by the implementation of the National Security Law for Hong Kong is now

transforming into an important competitive advantage that supports the city's sustained prosperity.

The establishment of the IOMed highlights Global China and South countries' commitment to global governance, and will inject fresh momentum into world peace and cooperation. At the same time, the IOMed focuses on resolving disputes through mediation, responding to the shared aspirations of all countries for peace, stability, and development.

A spokesperson from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said China welcomes support and participation from more countries in creating the IOMed, to better enable it to coordinate with existing international disputes settlement mechanisms to make each other more effective, and provide more options and pathways to resolve international disputes through efficient and peaceful means, and better safeguard international fairness and justice.

The signing ceremony, to be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre will not only witness the birth of a new international institution but will also witness the opening of the door to an equal, orderly, and multipolar world by a civilization key to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

India is Losing South Asia to China

28 May 2025, <u>Council on Foreign Relations</u>, Joshua Kurlantzick

As the most populous and historically most economically and strategically powerful state in South Asia, India for decades has wielded considerable influence throughout the subcontinent. In some places, like Bhutan, it essentially controlled the country's foreign policy for decades and still has massive influence. In Nepal, India for years wielded so much power, through its investments in the country and dominance over much of Nepal's economy, that Nepal often seemed like a vassal state, at least until the late 2010s and early 2020s

In others, like Sri Lanka, India had tried to build on old ties with new deals, such as plans port of Colombo. to upgrade the Bangladesh under the long rule of Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League, the country was too big for India to directly control policy, but India built deep and broad-ranging security cooperation with Bangladesh. This security cooperation, which was matched with a sharp uptick in bilateral trade and closer economic ties, at times led Sheikh Hasina's government to battle insurgents from northeastern India who had fled into Bangladesh, hoping for some safe haven. Hasina's government aggressively jailed and often deported such fighters back to India, pleasing the Indian government.

In a relatively short period of time however – roughly the last two years - the tide on the subcontinent has shifted dramatically against India. Pakistan, of course, has long been India's adversary while also being one of China's closest partners in the world. Now, as China modernizes, that partnership benefits Pakistan in its balancing against India; in recent India-Pakistan battles. Pakistan used modern Chinese air-to-air missiles, defense systems, and advanced fighter planes to reportedly significant effect. Other parts of the subcontinent that had enjoyed close ties to India have quickly shifted, in recent times, to building warmer links to China. Sheikh Hasina and her pro-India government no longer rules Bangladesh; she was ousted by massive protests against her rising authoritarianism and corruption last year.

After her ouster, the hastily formed interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has turned to China, which has offered billions in aid and infrastructure projects, all while anti-India sentiment is spiking in Bangladesh as people are freer to speak and to condemn India's ties to Hasina. (India gave Hasina asylum after she fled Bangladesh, which further rankles Bangladeshis).

In the past two years, leaders who favored India also have lost power In Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Nepal. Last year, the party of Maldives president Mohamed Muizzu won a landslide victory in parliament. Muizzu had won the presidency the year before on a platform of "India out," a campaign against India's longstanding influence over the island country. Muizzu has openly welcomed much closer links to China, and made a visit to Xi Jinping earlier this year. The indebted archipelago state badly needs external financing and is looking to China for it (it already owes much of its debt to China.)

As Al Jazeera reported, a former top Maldives government official said that "China may now be more amenable given Muizzu's landslide win. 'China has a lot of leverage,' the ex-official said, and will likely seek favors in return, including the ratification of a Free Trade Agreement [with the Maldives] that has languished since 2014 and access to key east-west trade routes that Maldives straddles. Indian and Western diplomats have previously expressed worries this access may pave the way for China to secure an outpost in the Indian Ocean."

In Nepal and Sri Lanka, too, Indian influence has shifted amidst change in domestic politics. In a shocking victory in Sri Lanka last year, a leftist alliance, the National People's Power (NPP), not among the usual political contenders, won both the presidency and control of parliament. The alliance has not stoked anti-India sentiment as has occurred in the Maldives or Bangladesh, and this year it signed a defense cooperation agreement with India.

Still, the NPP clearly favors Beijing and has aggressively wooed China, which surely worries India. Soon after being elected president, NPP leader Anura Dissanayake lavished praise on China. The Sri Lankan ruling alliance held a pro-China rally on May 1 with guests from the CCP. Moreover, the president has regularly emphasized that Sri Lanka should follow China's economic is the model and that China most trusted economic partner for Sri Lanka. China has reciprocated with aid, investment, and closer diplomatic links.

And in Nepal, K.P. Sharma Oli, the head of the Communist Party of Nepal, has been prime minister since last July. He is a true believer in communism — probably much more than most Chinese senior officials — and in his last time as prime minister in the mid-2010s, he rapidly upgraded ties to China and was vociferously anti-India. This time around, Oli has already visited China and Xi Jinping, even though Nepalese prime ministers traditionally make India their first foreign trip, but has yet to visit India at all. Oli also has relaunched joint military drills with China and a framework for significant BRI investment into Nepal.

India is still an enormous force on the subcontinent, and far beyond. Indeed, it is a major strategic and economic factor in Southeast Asia, an increasingly powerful player in global multilateral institutions, a close U.S. partner, and consistently the fastest-growing major economy in the world, one that has already surpassed Japan to become the fourth-largest, by GDP, on earth. But even with all of this growing global might, the fact that India is losing its neighborhood to China limits India's ability to project power farther, since it has to invest so much more now – in resources, diplomacy, and other areas - to win back neighbors and keep itself feeling at least somewhat stable at home.

President Lai's First Year Sees Increased Tensions across the Taiwan Strait

28 May 2025, Crisis Group, Wiiliam Yang

As Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te completes his first year in office, cross-strait relations have become especially fraught. Crisis Group expert William Yang explains why Taipei and Beijing are increasingly at odds and what can be done to lower the temperature.

Taiwanese president Lai Ching-te's first year in office has seen growing friction in Taiwan's relationship with China across the Taiwan Strait. Lai's administration has hardened Taipei's stance toward Beijing, with rhetoric that characterises Taiwan as a de facto sovereign state, and through measures to counter Chinese infiltration and influence operations. These moves, which Taipei sees as necessary to counter growing Chinese pressure on Taiwan, sit poorly with Beijing. China continues to place unification with the autonomously governed island at the top of its policy agenda, and it has responded with ramped-up military and other pressure.

Lai's stance and Beijing's increased military pressure together could put additional stress on the decades-old status quo, whereby the Chinese leadership asserts there is only "one Taiwanese leaders tacitly China" and acknowledge or make ambiguous gestures of acquiescence. The more that this dynamic leads Beijing to think the prospect of peaceful unification is fading, the greater the risk that China escalates its coercive tactics increasing the risk of a military accident that spirals out of control or perhaps even of considered military action. This risk is amplified by muddled U.S. policy, which could erode deterrence by sending confusing signals about Washington's commitments to its regional allies and partners – a topic that Crisis Group has explored elsewhere.

Among other steps that might help lower the temperature, Taiwan should moderate its language, and China should dial down its military exercises, with the idea that greater operational restraint can create openings for political engagement and reduce the likelihood of unintended military collisions at sea or in the air.

Tougher Rhetoric

Since coming to power in May 2024, President Lai has toughened Taipei's stance against what his administration perceives as China's growing pressure on Taiwan, especially in the period following the visit by then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taipei in 2022. In 2017, Lai – who hails from the faction of Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) that leans toward a clearer assertion of Taiwan's de facto - described sovereignty himself as "pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence". But during his time as premier and vice president under former President Tsai Ing-wen (2017-2019, 2020-2024), Lai moderated his rhetoric, seemingly aware that such language is both unpopular in Taiwan and risks inviting more coercion from China.

Since his accession to the presidency, however, Lai's rhetoric has become more assertive, in contrast to the tone struck by his predecessor, though both belong to the prosovereignty DPP. Tsai was relatively cautious in both of her inaugural addresses (she served two consecutive four-year terms). Among other things, she avoided language labelling China a threat. But Lai has taken a different approach, repeatedly using more direct language than Tsai tended to use in order to highlight Beijing's coercive actions, as well as to assert Taiwan's status as a "de facto" sovereign state, separate from China. For example, Lai said in his inaugural address on 20 May 2024 that China's actions against Taiwan constitute "the greatest strategic challenges to global peace and security". Another notable comment came during a television interview in September 2024, when Lai asserted that China's attempt to "annex Taiwan" was aimed at achieving "hegemony" internationally. During his first National Day address on 10 October 2024, he further vowed to "resist encroachment" on the island's de facto sovereignty.

In a similar vein, on 13 March 2025, Lai characterised China as a "foreign hostile force" that is trying to "annex Taiwan and stamp out the Republic of China". It marked the first time that a Taiwanese president had publicly used this phrasing – which borrows language from anti-infiltration legislation that Taiwan enacted in 2019 – to describe China. Lai has also frequently used more pointed language than Tsai to describe cross-strait relations. Throughout her two terms, Tsai repeatedly said she would "conduct crossstrait affairs in accordance with the Republic of China constitution and the Act Governing Relations Between the People of Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area". She chose this formulation very carefully. Both constitution and the Act suggest that the territories of Taiwan and mainland China are

parts of a single entity. But Tsai's formulation did not say whether that entity is the Republic of China (ROC) – which remains Taiwan's official name – or the People's Republic of China (PRC). Referencing the two documents allowed Tsai to gesture to – without embracing – Beijing's "one China principle", which asserts that there is only "one China" and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China.

Lai has yet to use this phrase, however. his inaugural Instead. in address. Lai made references to the ROC and its constitution to affirm that the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC (China) are separate political systems, as well as to argue that the ROC and PRC are not subordinate to each other. There was precedent for the phrasing that Lai chose: then-President Tsai had also used the phrase "the ROC and PRC should not be subordinate to each other" during her second term in office. Indeed, it became an element of her larger cross-strait policy, which she called the "four commitments", a framework that Lai continues to uphold. But it was significant that Tsai chose not to utter the phrase in either of her inauguration speeches, which China tends to scrutinise more carefully.

Among other concerns Beijing might have about Lai's prominent use of this formulation is that, by invoking the ROC constitution to strengthen his argument that Taiwan is a separate political system from China (in a way that Tsai rarely did in major speeches), the new president used language that resonates with a majority of the Taiwanese people. A poll released in April 2025 by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council showed that 79.1 per cent of Taiwanese support the idea that the ROC and PRC are not subordinate to each other. This finding reflects a significant change in sentiment from 2015 poll conducted by the same government agency. Beijing keeps careful track of Taiwanese attitudes toward peaceful unification, and government officials cannot be pleased at the trend. That in turn can mean headaches for Taipei, because the more Beijing feels the Taiwanese government and people are drifting away from peaceful

unification, the greater the risk that it will increase coercive measures to rein them back in

At least part of the explanation for the rhetorical shift Lai has made is that he came to power as China is deploying more coercive tactics against [Taiwan].

At least part of the explanation for the rhetorical shift Lai has made is that he came to power as China is deploying more coercive tactics against the island. Beijing is, for example, frequently staging blockade-style military exercises around Taiwan and engaging in almost daily incursions into the island's near skies and seas. Against this backdrop, Lai no doubt sees a tougher response as necessary for the island's protection. Indeed, in interview an with Taiwanese media on 7 May 2025, Lai argued that he had "no choice" but to harden his administration's posture and rhetoric. This stance could limit his room for manouevre: pivoting toward gentler formulations (for example, borrowing Tsai's gesture to Beijing's "one China principle") could be viewed by his political base as a form of concession.

Lai suggests that he has taken an appropriately balanced approach. He has said he made initial attempts to show Taipei's willingness to engage and cooperate with China based on "reciprocity and dignity". But while Lai's inaugural address did indeed note areas where Taipei and Beijing could resume bilateral exchanges, those conciliatory moves were predictably drowned out by his assertion of Taiwan's de facto sovereignty.

That said, Lai has recently shown at least one important sign of moderation. In an address marking his one-year anniversary in office on 20 May 2025, he avoided mentioning China and focused instead on addressing domestic political divisions and the government's efforts to deepen trade and economic relations with the U.S. and other countries. In response to reporters' questions about cross-strait relations, Lai reiterated his commitment to "peace" and vowed to keep strengthening Taiwan's defence capabilities. He said Taiwan remained open to exchanges

and cooperation with China based on "reciprocal dignity".

The shift in Lai's rhetoric comes as some opinion polls show that his approval rating has dropped in recent months due to domestic political turmoil. These polls may have prompted him to adjust the tone of his address on 20 May, which, in turn, may have prompted Beijing to moderate its response. Rather than staging another large-scale military exercise around Taiwan to mark Lai's one-year anniversary, China's Taiwan Affairs Office – which oversees cross-strait relations - engaged rhetorically. While the statement it released was not especially conciliatory - it said on 20 May Taipei and Beijing could resume dialogue only if Taiwan recognises that "both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China" - it sent a much milder message than another blockade simulation.

Not Just Rhetoric

In addition to the rhetoric, Lai has floated new measures to deter what Taipei views as Beijing's aggressive effort to infiltrate Taiwan's government and civil society. In March 2025, the president introduced "seventeen strategies" for countering various forms of Chinese infiltration, including paying active-duty Taiwanese military staff and government workers to pass sensitive information to Chinese intelligence agents. To underscore the reach of Chinese operations, he publicly divulged that 64 Taiwanese suspected of spying for China had been criminally charged since January 2024 – three times the number in 2021. Two particularly high-profile cases that have come to light involve a former consultant to Taiwan's presidential office and a former assistant to the former Taiwan foreign minister, Wu Jaushieh. Both are being investigated for allegedly spying violating Taiwan's National Security Act.

Lai has characterised his reforms as "preventive" and a way to enhance Taiwan's "democratic resilience and national security". To counter Chinese infiltration of the armed forces, he wants to reinstate a system of military courts. Residents of China, Hong

Kong and Macau would be vetted with an eye toward mitigating national security risks before being allowed to relocate to Taiwan. The government also plans to highlight the potential risks for Taiwanese travelling to the mainland, raising awareness about tourists going missing and on occasion being detained without clear justification. Some of these initiatives will require legislation to put them into effect.

Taiwanese officials Crisis Group spoke to explained that Lai is "drawing clear red lines" in order to discourage China from compromising Taiwan's ability to defend and govern itself. There is general consensus within the Lai administration that Tsai's comparative restraint only wound up inviting increased pressure from Beijing.

China's Response

Beijing has made no secret of its frustration with Lai. Since he won the presidential election in January 2024, China has repeatedly described him as a dangerous "separatist". Even before Lai's inauguration in May, the Chinese coast guard began to conduct regular patrols in waters around Taiwan's outlying Kinmen Islands, over which Taiwan claims jurisdiction. It was a violation of a longstanding tacit agreement between Taipei and Beijing implying that Chinese vessels would not enter these waters. It also demonstrated Beijing's ability to impose full control of the area if it so wishes. The Chinese military has also staged largescale military exercises around Taiwan in the wake of major political speeches that met with disfavour in Beijing. The first of these came three days after Lai's inauguration speech, when China staged a two-day blockade-style exercise around the island. The Chinese government characterised this manouevre as "strong punishment for the separatist acts of Taiwan independence forces" – a seeming reference to Lai's address. In October 2024, shortly after Lai's first National Day address, Beijing held another blockade-style military exercise. Finally, two weeks after Lai introduced the seventeen strategies to counter Chinese infiltration, Beijing launched a twoday live-fire military drill that simulated

striking key infrastructure around Taiwan and imposing blockades near key sea lanes close to the island. (By comparison, China had only staged two blockade-style military exercises around Taiwan during former President Tsai's eight-year tenure.)

These drills serve several purposes. The first is deterrence: China considers them a warning administration Lai about consequences of moving toward a declaration of de jure independence. Secondly, these exercises are practice for the People's Liberation Army (PLA), allowing them to prepare for joint operations should they ever participate in a military attack. (The last year of drills suggest that, instead of launching a full-scale amphibious invasion of Taiwan, the PLA is preparing to impose a blockade or maritime quarantine around the island.) Thirdly, the drills appear aimed at spreading fear among the Taiwanese public. Finally, these demonstrations of military might boost Beijing's domestic propaganda, which seeks to demonstrate to the Chinese public that it is actively managing the Taiwan issue even as the DPP has taken the reins for a third consecutive presidential term.

In addition to high-profile military drills, Beijing continues to exert pressure on Taiwan through grey-zone operations, or coercive methods that remain under the threshold of actual conflict. Along with the abovementioned law enforcement patrols around the Kinmen Islands, China has been deploying military aircraft and naval vessels into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) and across the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial demarcation between China and Taiwan, on a daily basis. The number of Chinese sorties into Taiwan's ADIZ jumped from 972 in 2021 (the first full year in which Taiwan's defence ministry made numbers publicly available) to 3,011 in 2024. This sharp increase reflects the extent to which China relies on this tactic to put pressure on the island and its military forces. While Chinese military presence around Taiwan has become the norm, China also continues to use non-military means to challenge Taiwan's assertions of de facto sovereignty. For example, China has unilaterally announced new civilian flight routes that, by creating more traffic near the median line, increase pressure on Taiwanese military aircraft operating in the area. These tactics appear designed to comply with international law, and therefore do not attract the same level of international attention that would be paid to flagrant violations.

Stepped-up [Chinese] military activity around [Taiwan] increases the prospect of accidental collisions with Taiwanese vessels and planes. Nevertheless, these actions create risks and chip away at China's own strategic objectives. Perhaps of greatest immediate concern, stepped-up military activity around the island increases the prospect of accidental collisions with Taiwanese vessels and planes. In the absence of better communication channels, that event could spiral into uncontrolled escalation – potentially dragging the U.S. into the picture.

Beijing's actions may also produce precisely the opposite of their intended effect with the Taiwanese public. Rather than weakening resolve, continuous pressure appears to be Taiwanese strengthening the people's resistance to engaging with China, depressing the odds of peaceful unification. A poll released by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council in April 2025 shows that 84.4 per cent of Taiwanese people reject China's proposed "one country, two systems" framework for unification, under which Beijing promises Taiwan that it can maintain its autonomy and way of life after unification with the mainland. This growing scepticism can be traced in part to what transpired in Hong Kong, which is governed under the same framework: Beijing's crackdown on Hong Kong's civil society and overhaul of Hong Kong's legal and governance system have drawn Taiwanese attention.

China's expanding military presence around Taiwan has also prompted more than 50 per cent of the population to support the Lai administration's plan to increase Taiwan's defence budget. By comparison, in a poll conducted by the Institute for National Defence and Security Research in Taipei in

2023, 44 per cent of Taiwanese respondents said they supported the government's efforts to increase defence spending.

Turning Down the Temperature

One year into his term, President Lai has staked out a tougher position against Beijing than his predecessor took, and the Chinese leadership clearly distrusts him. This crossstrait dynamic is unfolding in an atmosphere that has already been unsettled by a somewhat erratic U.S. approach to the region: Washington has sent mixed messages about whether it is seeking rapprochement with China or trying to defeat it in a trade war, and whether the message of resolve that senior Trump administration officials are carrying to allies and partners in the region is shared by President Donald Trump himself. All of this could make defusing tensions more difficult. Still, both sides would benefit from trying. First, to improve the cross-strait atmosphere, the Taiwanese government could signal that it is selectively moderating its tone by pledging to conduct cross-strait affairs in accordance with the ROC constitution and the Cross-Strait Act. This approach would be in keeping with the cross-strait strategy that Tsai laid out in her inauguration speeches and would allow Lai to make a gesture to Beijing's "one China principle" without embracing it. Taking this step to create some constructive ambiguity about Taiwan's status, as well as moving away from language that suggests China is "an external hostile force", could help Lai preserve space for potential engagement between the two sides. Moving toward Tsai's formulation could also help reassure foreign capitals worried about cross-strait relations, gain Taipei international support and create more space for it to engage internationally. Should Lai make such a gesture, China should reciprocate by moderating its military pressure on the island. It can do so by reducing the frequency of its military incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ and the scale of its blockade-style military exercises around Taiwan. Such moderation could help elicit deescalatory steps on the part of Taipei. These might include using milder rhetoric to characterise China and walking back some of the stricter measures Lai has proposed for scrutinising cross-strait exchanges. An easing of military pressure would have the added benefit of lowering the risk of unintended collisions at sea or in the air between the two militaries or law enforcement forces. While Beijing may be reluctant to go down such a path, including on account of the need to appear strong on the Taiwan issue for domestic purposes, reducing the pace of its military activities around the island would come at very little cost, considering that it has the capacity to turn the pressure back on.

As Taipei adjusts its rhetoric, Beijing should follow suit. It should stop insulting Lai by calling him a "parasite" or through similar language, which only deepens Taiwanese people's negative views of Beijing. Instead, it should consider centring its rhetoric around more affirmative language it adopted prior to Lai's inauguration, such as characterising both sides of the Taiwan Strait as a "Chinese nation". Following the same logic, China should also ease some of the non-military ways in which it applies pressure on the island – including espionage, economic sanctions and the arbitrary detention of Taiwanese visitors to the mainland.

Expanding informal exchanges, particularly between academics closely affiliated with decision-makers on both sides, would also be beneficial. To some extent, it is already happening. In recent months, Chinese scholars have made low-key visits to Taiwan at the invitation of academic institutions, and Taiwanese scholars continue to engage with Chinese counterparts through conferences or carefully planned trips to the mainland. Multiplying such opportunities could help clarify misunderstandings or misinterpretations on both sides. In the absence of official dialogue, Chinese and Taiwanese academics could even also try to identify formulations to define cross-strait relations that leaders in both Taipei and Beijing could live with. This could open the door to more sustainable formats for official engagement sometime in the future. Such are especially important channels purposes of managing the risk of escalation in

the event of a crisis – such as a collision at air or sea.

To be sure, the prospect for de-escalation remains low. Still, Lai's 20 May speech and Beijing's muted response suggest that there is space for defusing tensions. Taking further steps will be important, especially as both sides plan to conduct large-scale annual military exercises in the next six months. That raises the risks of a crisis that neither is prepared for and an escalation that neither Beijing nor Taipei wants.

Lessons from India-Pakistan war: Were China's arms overrated?

27 May 2025, <u>The Japan Times</u>, Brahma Chellaney



A Chinese J-10B fighter jet is put on display at the China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, China, in October 2016. The short May conflict between India and Pakistan became a live trial for Chinese arms, exposing vulnerabilities in its fighter aircraft and air defense systems. | Bloomberg

The brief military conflict between India and Pakistan from May 7 to May 10 marked a turning point in South Asian security dynamics.

This was not a conventional border conflict, but a high-tech showdown featuring drones, cruise and ballistic missiles and long-range air defenses. While India and Pakistan were the primary belligerents, a third power — China — played a pivotal, if indirect, role.

Beijing's involvement via the supply of advanced weapon systems and real-time satellite reconnaissance data to Pakistan turned the engagement into a revealing trial run for Chinese arms in a live combat setting. This conflict offered the first real-world glimpse into how China's premier military technologies perform under fire. The implications extend far beyond South Asia — to Taiwan, the East and South China Seas and global arms markets. The operational lessons drawn from this brief war matter not just for India and Pakistan, but for military planners from Tokyo to Washington.

Scrutinizing Chinese systems

Pakistan relied heavily on Chinese military hardware. Most notably, it deployed the J-10C "Vigorous Dragon" fighter jets armed with PL-15E air-to-air missiles and HQ-9 long-range surface-to-air missile systems with a 200-kilometer engagement envelope. These platforms were tested in actual combat the first time. Chinese satellite reconnaissance reportedly supported Pakistani targeting, with Beijing even retasking satellites to enhance coverage over Indian military zones.

Yet despite the apparent sophistication of Pakistan's imported arsenal, the results were far from decisive. The J-10Cs launched multiple PL-15E missiles at Indian targets, but there is no independent verification of successful hits. India's integrated air defenses withstood the onslaught, gaining air superiority.

Indeed, by the conflict's end, Indian airstrikes had crippled major Pakistani air bases — including Nur Khan and Bholari — without suffering any confirmed retaliatory damage. Nur Khan, near Pakistan's nuclear command and army headquarters, was particularly symbolic. Its targeting by Indian cruise missiles signaled a calibrated message: Even high-value, well-defended assets are not beyond reach.

Disproportionate impact

While both sides employed drones and missiles, the quality of strikes proved more decisive than the quantity. Pakistan reportedly launched 300 to 400 drones in a single night,

yet satellite imagery showed little damage on Indian soil. India, by contrast, relied on precision standoff weapons — especially the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile, codeveloped with Russia — which successfully hit high-value targets in Pakistan with minimal risk to Indian military personnel.

The BrahMos missile, already exported by India, emerged as the standout performer of the conflict. It demonstrated both survivability and pinpoint accuracy in a contested airspace, validating India's investment in standoff precision platforms. These are designed to destroy critical infrastructure without needing to cross the enemy's border.

India's shift toward such systems reflects a broader strategic change: moving from reactive defense to a more assertive doctrine that punishes Pakistan's transborder terrorism with calibrated strikes. This could have farreaching implications for deterrence on the Indian subcontinent.

Global strategic significance

There are three major reasons why this short conflict merits serious international attention. First, it offers a preview of what a future Chinese military operation might look like. Beijing has made no secret of its ambitions toward Taiwan and any effort to seize or blockade the self-governing island would likely rely on systems similar to those used by That Pakistan. makes the observed performance of the J-10C, PL-15E and HQ-9 systems particularly relevant to U.S. and allied military planners.

Second, in the South China Sea, China has grown increasingly aggressive, harassing Philippine and Vietnamese vessels with ramming, water cannons and even bladed weapons. If China were to escalate in this region, the same air and missile systems could come into play. The India-Pakistan conflict thus provides critical insight into their combat performance and vulnerabilities.

Third, in the Himalayas, India and China remain locked in a military standoff that was triggered in 2020 by Chinese encroachments on Indian borderlands. Despite diplomatic

moves to ease tensions, both countries continue to mass troops and weaponry along their disputed frontier. The combat data generated from the conflict with Pakistan offers India an invaluable edge in anticipating Chinese capabilities and countermeasures.

Propaganda vs. reality

Predictably, the information war ran parallel to the actual conflict. Pakistan claimed to have shot down at least five Indian fighter jets on the first day. However, no wreckage has been presented and satellite imagery has not corroborated the claim. The Indian military dismissed the allegation, stating that all its pilots returned safely.

On the Indian side, Lt. Gen. Rajiv Ghai stated that some Pakistani aircraft were downed over Pakistan's own territory. This claim, while more plausible given the precision of India's strikes, similarly lacks independent verification.

What is evident, however, is the absence of traditional dogfights between rival warplanes. All air combat appears to have occurred beyond visual range, with neither side's fighter jets crossing international borders. This reflects the international evolution in the nature of air warfare, emphasizing sensors, missiles and electronic warfare over maneuverability and pilot skill.

Electronic warfare and drones

Both sides deployed drones extensively, but with varying degrees of effectiveness. India primarily used small drones for ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance), whereas Pakistan fielded swarms of drones for both reconnaissance and attack. However, Pakistan's boast neutralizing 85% of Indian drones seems overstated. Conversely, India's electronic warfare systems, along with its multilayered air defenses, effectively intercepted or deflected most Pakistani projectiles, including a ballistic missile aimed at New Delhi.

Interestingly, China's CM-401 missile — a hypersonic anti-ship missile launched in this conflict from upgraded JF-17 jets — was reportedly used by Pakistan against land targets. Yet there was no visible or confirmed

impact, raising questions about the missile's versatility outside its intended maritime role.

The geopolitical signaling

The tide of battle turned decisively after the explosions from the May 10 Indian strike on Nur Khan airbase triggered American alarm, especially given that Pakistani nuclear assets are located near this airbase. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio intervened, urging Pakistan's military leadership to de-escalate. Within hours, Pakistan's director-general of military operations contacted his Indian counterpart to propose an immediate ceasefire, which India accepted.

This sequence underscores two points. First, Indian strikes achieved their objective of imposing costs without triggering an all-out war. Second, India effectively pierced the perceived immunity conferred by Pakistan's nuclear deterrent — an umbrella under which Pakistan has long sponsored cross-border terrorism with relative impunity.

Final takeaways

For China, the conflict served as a valuable though sobering test of its exported weaponry. While some systems functioned adequately, others like the HQ-9 air defense system showed critical vulnerabilities when deployed without integrated support. Beijing will likely revise and upgrade these platforms based on the feedback from its client-state.

For India, the conflict validated its investment in precision strike capabilities and highlighted the importance of indigenous platforms like the BrahMos. It also signaled a new doctrinal posture — proactive, punitive and technologically assertive.

For the world, this short conflict provided a rare, real-world laboratory to observe how modern missile and drone warfare unfolds between technologically matched rivals. In an era of strategic ambiguity and hybrid threats, those lessons are not just instructive; they are indispensable.

'Xintralisation' and 'Politics in Command' Loom Large in China's Two Sessions

27 May 2025, <u>ORF</u>, G Venkat Raman *Introduction*

The National People's Congress is one of the most important annual political events in the policymaking landscape of China. The weeklong yearly meetings are commonly referred to as "the two sessions" (*Liang hui*) named after the meeting of the two central bodies, the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

The third session of the 14th NPC meetings took place from 4 to 11 March 2025. The meetings are particularly relevant at a time of hard policy choices confronting the leadership, including: reviving domestic consumption or strengthening technological self-reliance; sticking to its state capitalism model or according due recognition to the private sector to boost innovation; focusing on development (or 'common prosperity') or economic growth (new production forces); and centralising or decentralising and to what extent.

With the next party congress due in 2027, the party-state's leadership, headed by Xi Jinping, has made its priorities clear. Xi is keen on further 'Xintralisation' in decision-making. China's policymaking will be motivated by the principle of 'politics in command' on the domestic front. For Xi, this translates to 'regime security'.

'Regime security' was discussed in a group study session of the Communist Party's decisive monthly politburo meeting on 28 February 2025, a few days before the NPC meeting. At the meeting, Xi drew the attention of politburo members to "national political security" and "national regime security". [c] The two sessions have traditionally focused on domestic matters. However, due to the current global environment, the two sessions received unprecedented attention from delegates. This indicates that the current leadership perceives serious external threats to its regime security and that international developments will influence its domestic policies. Given the priorities and political considerations, it was unsurprising that the expectations of notable policy initiatives to address domestic economic challenges, as highlighted in Premier Li Qiang's Government Work Report (GWR), did not materialise.

In his presentation of the GWR, Premier Li stated that, domestically, the Chinese economy continues to suffer from weak demand, sluggish consumption, challenges to job creation, and economic slowdown.^[2] Li announced that Beijing would launch a comprehensive crackdown on neijuan^[d] (involution); this was the first time that neijuan was mentioned GWR.[e] Further, Li drew the delegates' attention to current fiscal problems and how they have impacted domestic demand. He may have been referring to the struggle caused by the de-real-estatisation[f] of the economy and the dwindling revenue sources of provinces due to their inability to sell land to players in the real estate sector. [g] The limited revenue streams and growing expectations of the centre to expand social welfare programmes for investment and job creation purposes impact demand. Further, 2025 marked the final year of the 14th fiveyear plan, and this year's NPC sessions provided a window to the broad contours of the 15th five-year plan for 2026-2030.

Premier Li also highlighted certain challenges that China is facing due to external developments. Without mentioning United States (US), Li pointed out that the Chinese economy faces external challenges from growing unilateralism, protectionism, and tariff barriers—all of which undermining the stability of global supply chains. In this context, four critical themes that were discussed in the weeklong NPC sessions stand out: the Chinese leadership's plans to revive the economy, the reengagement of private tech players, the emphasis on realising the nation's technological self-reliance, and Beijing's response to the current external developments.

The Relevance of the Two Sessions

The third session of the 14th NPC witnessed participation of 3,000 appointed by the local congresses every five of every at the end congress.^[3] The other important body is the CPPCC, which saw participation from over 2,000 delegates in 2025. It brings together various political parties from the country, individuals without party affiliation, people's organisations, and individuals from all ethnic groups. CPPCC membership comprises a range of actors from diverse backgrounds, literature/arts. science. including technology; leading experts in social science disciplines; economists; and representatives from the autonomous regions of Hong Kong and Macau.^[4] The CPPCC provides key mechanisms for multi-party cooperation and political leadership under the aegis of the communist party.[h]

Since Xi Jinping's appointment, critics have been critical of the two sessions, contending that they are merely "rubber stamp" meetings that approve decisions which have already been taken by other, more influential bodies.^[5] These concerns have lately gained wider acceptance, reinforced developments. Previously, the sessions witnessed healthy participation alongside constructive criticism, but they have since become an occasion to further consolidate Xi's leadership. Additionally, while the two sessions were held earlier for over a week, they are now planned well in advance. Unlike when these sessions used to take place for 10 days with the active participation of the delegates and their constructive criticism, of late, the sessions precisely a week before inauguration. [6] The discontinuation of the customary press conference by the Premier at the end of the two sessions since 2024 provides evidence of the Xintralisation of decision-making.

Reviving the Domestic Economy

Reviving domestic demand has been a concern in the Chinese economy. Like the previous year, Premier Li Qiang has set an ambitious target of 5 percent growth in

GDP.^[7] Li also set a 2-percent consumer price inflation target compared to last year's 3 percent. Despite the absence of any remarkable fiscal stimulus, Beijing has set a budget deficit target of 4 percent.^[i] The economic targets laid down by Beijing were as expected. Given the current headwinds against China and its focus on 'regime security', China does not want to deviate from its current policies despite the leadership being keen to revive the economy.

As some analysts^{[8],[9]} have pointed out, China's focus is on storing ammunition to confront any situation created by the Trump administration in the US. In 2024, China barely achieved its 5-percent growth target, and this was due only to its exports. Will it be possible to achieve the 5-percent GDP growth rate target in 2025?

Owing to the tariffs imposed by the US and other developed markets, China would find it impossible to increase its exports. Even with the increase in exports to non-Western markets, China's exports will hit a saturation point because the importing countries' governments would impose tariffs to protect their domestic industries. This has only reinforced the urgency of reviving domestic demand. China's household spending is less than 40 percent of its annual economic output and 20 percentage points below global average.^[10] To address this issue, announced specific measures in the GWR to boost consumption, including extending a programme for trading in old appliances; creating jobs and raising wages, especially for lower-income groups; and expanding elderly care. The government also shared that it will make special fiscal arrangements to ensure that rural residents under various local governments are paid on time and have adequate opportunities to rest. The work report also discussed the government's plans to transform select cities into international consumption centres. However, it remains to be seen whether these measures will deliver the desired results.

According to analysts,^{[11],[12]} though these measures indicate the eagerness of policymakers to revive China from its

deflationary state, the country will struggle to achieve its growth targets in 2025. First, given the vast party-state machinery, implementing various new guidelines will be challenging, as with previous policies. For instance, one concern is whether the recapitalisation of the state banks with CNY 500 million will be channelled in the right direction. Second, it remains to be seen how local governments will respond to the new initiatives. One example is the Special Purpose Bonds for local governments, worth CNY 4.4 trillion, which are meant to be spent on buying back unsold homes owing to the property-sector crisis and buying inventories to help complete pending projects. With the centre expecting local governments to increase their social welfare measures and simultaneously boost domestic consumption, new friction points in centre-province ties are bound to arise.[j] In the absence of fiscal autonomy to raise local taxes owing to current policies being tilted towards the centre, the fiscal options for the provinces are restricted. To fulfil their obligations, local governments would be compelled to hold wages, delay payments to contractors, and not raise salaries. Moreover, they increasingly rely on non-tax sources to increase their revenue. Limited fiscal resources and the inability to expand their tax base will result in the latest measures failing to boost domestic consumption.

Experts^{[13],[14]} closely studying the latest measures are of the view that although Xi is keen to address China's economic woes, his unchallenged position enables him to make decisions that he thinks are best for China's interests in the long term. Despite suggestions by leading Chinese economists, Beijing has desisted from introducing major fiscal stimulus because Xi is determined to spur China to achieve tech self-reliance, while everything else is secondary. He is not keen to introduce new challenges in the form of a major fiscal stimulus, which may lead to corruption and wastage of resources. The message to the various domestic constituencies is that if China is to achieve greatness, it must undergo struggles and exercise patience (chi ku nai lao).

Considering this whole-of-society approach to realising the 'China dream', and given the potential of the private sector in reviving domestic consumption, Xi has extended an olive branch to the private sector, especially tech moguls. The initiative is expected to encourage them to work with the party-state realise China's leadership to tech ambitions.^[15] In his February 2025 symposium, Xi assured private players that the current challenges they are facing are temporary and that they will be given a level playing field in an ecosystem otherwise dominated by state-backed players. Further, Xi pledged laws centring on promoting the private economy, stating, "It is necessary to resolutely remove all kinds of obstacles to equal use of production factors and fair participation in market competition."[16]

The Re-Engagement of Private Tech Players
Buoyed by the success of
DeepSeek, [k] Beijing is keen to recalibrate its
relationship with the private sector, if not
altogether reverse its policy. The party
leadership expects the private sector to "think
local, act national". [17], [18]

Premier Li's GWR has stated that the government is keen to re-engage private tech players to boost China's technology selfreliance. Well before the NPC meetings began, People's Daily carried an article[19],[20] that signalled Xi's interest in a rapprochement with private players, especially the technopreneurs who had been out of party favour until recently. Experts are of the view that Xi's engagement of private players is led by his desire to achieve tech self-sufficiency. However, this engagement is accompanied by the caveat of unwavering", which was referred to in the 16th. 17th, 18th party and Congress, emphasising that the party "will unwaveringly consolidate and develop the sector of the economy, public unwaveringly encourage, support, and guide the development of the non-public sector of the economy."^[21]

Before the NPC sessions, Xi Jinping had a meeting at a symposium in February 2025, which was attended by four of the seven

Politburo Standing Committee members. The symposium was attended by tech players, including Lei Jun of Xiaomi, Ma Huateng of Tencent, Ren Zhengfei of Huawei, and Liang Wenfeng of DeepSeek. It was also a rehabilitation for Jack Ma, who had a public fallout with the party leadership in late 2020 that led to the abandonment of Ant Financial's IPO.^[22]

Xi also coined a new phrase, xian fu cu gong fu ("allow some to get rich first and then promote shared prosperity"), to win back the confidence of private players. It is worth noting that, while Xi spent years avoiding the political vocabulary of Deng Xiaoping, in this case, he borrowed from Deng's policy of allowing some to get rich first (xian fu). However, it remains to be seen whether these developments will revive the morale of private tech players and translate into new policies.

Xi's response after abandoning Ma's proposed IPO had a dampening effect on the private sector. According to investment website Crunchbase, there was a 32-percent year-on-year drop in VC investments in China to US\$33 billion in 2024. [23] This resulted in a decrease in China's inward-bound capital to one-fifth the size of the US\$178 billion secured by US technology companies.^[24] There has also been a decline in the emergence of unicorns. In 2024, China had two new unicorns a month, twice that of Europe, but only 40 percent of that of the $US.^{[25]}$

This can be attributed to a series of measures that Beijing undertook in 2020 against private tech players that led to them lying flat^[1] (tang ping). What began with Chinese regulators abandoning Alibaba's internet finance giant, Financial's US\$34 billion debut^[26] in Shanghai and Hong Kong^[27] was followed by a multi-year crackdown on tech firms, and the imposition of fines of over US\$1 billion on leading tech giants like Ant Group Co. and Tencent Holdings Ltd. Nevertheless, the leadership continued to politically signal that it was willing to engage private players.^[28] For instance, in 2023, the Communist Party and the Cabinet developed

new guidelines acknowledging that "the private sector is a new force to promote Chinese-style modernisation, an important foundation for high-quality development and a key force to promote China's comprehensive construction of socialist a power."[29] The new guidelines hinted that party leadership would initiate measures like the protection of the property rights of private firms and entrepreneurs and steps to ensure fair market competition by breaking down However, entry barriers. these announcements were not followed concrete measures.

In this year's NPC sessions, a spokesperson said that they would work to promote China's private economy protection early.[30] According to the Xinhua news agency, the proposed legislation is set to become China's first fundamental dedicated to developing the private economy and defining the private sector as a pillar of China's socialist market economy. If the leadership does not take concrete actions to signal a fundamental shift regarding its policy towards the private sector, events like the 17 February symposium will be considered merely political optics.

China's Big Technology Push

One of the highlights of the GWR was China's determination to make large investments in developing the "new quality productive forces" (xin zhi shengchan li) and a modernised industrial system. Premier Li stressed the urgency of pursuing integrated advancements in technology and innovation, pressing ahead through and new industrialisation, expanding and strengthening advanced manufacturing, and developing modern services. Li announced that China's policy would focus on advancing the integrated and clustered development of strategic emerging industries implementing large-scale applications of modern technologies like the low-altitude economy. Notably, X-Peng, a Chinese private business aspiring to be a leader in the lowaltitude economy, has already announced that it will introduce flying cars for passengers and goods by 2026.^[31]

The success of DeepSeek has bolstered China's confidence in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) domain, and it was expected that the Chinese leadership would make a big push to achieve technological self-reliance. The 15th five-year plan would see a push to bolster the AI Plus initiative. For the first time, the Chinese premier used the terms '6G technology' and 'embodied AI' in a GWR. Elaborating on China's tech ambitions, he said that China would focus on increasing funding for future industries, such as quantum technology, embodied AI, and technology. He also stated that China would seek advanced trials for the integrated development of advanced manufacturing and modern services. The Chinese government would also support the development of unicorns and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that specialise in sophisticated technology to produce novel products.^[32]

The premier also announced China's plans to accelerate the development of key industrial chains in the manufacturing sector and step up efforts to advance industrial foundation reengineering, and technology and equipment research. As part of the AI Plus initiative, China seeks to combine digital technology with its manufacturing and market strengths. Further, as part of the AI Plus initiative, China will support extensive applications of large-scale AI models and develop new-generation intelligent terminals.

Two initiatives deserve mention. In 2024, confronted by the tightening US clampdown, China launched the third phase of its China Integrated Circuit Industry to expand its chip industry, including in the materials and segments.[m] This equipment promises to be a gamechanger. Chinese firms like Guangzhou Summit Crystal Semiconductor and Tanke Blue are already expanding older semiconductors and niche substrates,^[n] driving down prices. The emergence of these players and their increasing share in the supply of silicon carbide (SiC)[o] wafers at low prices are threatening global players like Wolf Speed. For instance, only two years ago, the cost of SiC wafers^[p] was US\$1,500, but some local

Chinese players are currently charging as low as US\$500.

Owing to its growing appetite and high possibilities of further disruptions technological value chains, Chinese policymakers are keen to build a robust domestic supply chain in areas not yet targeted by US export controls. These areas have various applications-e.g., compound semiconductors like SiC and other legacy chips. Although these initiatives have raised concerns about overcapacity, companies such China **FAW** Group, Guangzhou Automobile Group, and Meituan hold stakes in emerging domestic chipmakers backed by local governments, especially in regions like Chongqing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Qingdao, and Ningbo, where chip manufacturing clusters have begun to emerge. Some less chipmakers, like **XLMEC** known and Dingtai Jiangxin Tech, Shanghai have received strong backing from local governments.

Another noteworthy initiative is the setting up of a national venture capital guidance fund. The announcement for this initiative was made during this year's NPC sessions. The day after the presentation of the GWR, Zheng Shanjie—the head of China's state planner, the National Development Reforms Commission (NDRC)—shared that China plans to set up the "national venture capital guidance fund", an investment vehicle established as a public-private partnership focusing on 'hard technology', referring to areas such as semiconductors and renewable energy. The fund will maintain long-term investment cycles and invest in technology enterprises through market-based approaches. China maintains that setting up such a fund would boost support for ΑI applications and VC investment to foster more technology breakthroughs and become self-reliant. The fund would focus on cuttingedge fields such as AI and quantum technology, and invest in seed-stage and startup firms through market-based approaches. It is worth pointing out that influential policymakers close to the party's leadership are already cautioning that China should not get carried away by this moment of tech triumphalism and become complacent.

The Chinese leadership led by Xi is aware of the dangers of falling into the trap of a 'winning big' mindset and seeking quick victories in the form of the latest AI breakthrough, inspired by DeepSeek. These concerns have been echoed by specialists working in the AI domain. For instance, some Chinese AI researchers are sceptical of China's future AI progress due to US export bans on high-end chips, which limit China's access to advanced chip process technology. Further, it is believed that DeepSeek's success is a by-product of the "distillation" of some US AI models like Chat GPT, thereby failing to tilt the AI advantage in China's favour. Moreover, China's AI progress is conditional on the extent to which it can engage in IPR violations and reverse-engineer advanced US AI models.[33] Although DeepSeek's AI push driven by algorithmic innovation challenging the long-held belief that only high computing power and innovation can enhance AI—further breakthroughs may prove to be challenging due to China's limitations in achieving large-scale computing power. For instance, critics have pointed out that DeepSeek's success stems from advanced NVIDIA chip clusters, and that the global AI landscape is far from witnessing fundamental transformation.

The Chinese leadership is well aware of the shortfalls in its AI ecosystem and has been determined to address them through a series measures. [34] Some of these policy measures include establishing a financial mechanism dominated by the market, constructing an AI innovation base, investing in the coordination of international and domestic innovation resources, establishing AI tech standards and IP systems. [35] In this context, it is worth noting that the provincial leadership is fast-tracking the implementation of policies to invest in advanced robotics.[36]

This month, Guangdong province unveiled a plan that includes 12 measures to spur innovation, including up to RMB 50 million in funding for national-level manufacturing

innovation centres, and 10 million yuan for provincial centres.[37] The initiative aims to strengthen AI and robotics by supporting research collaborations between enterprises, universities, and research institutions while open-source improving the innovation ecosystem and developing industry standards. Similarly, various provinces are studying the Hangzhou phenomenon and its relevance to China's tech ambitions. During the NPC sessions, Xi Jinping also met the Jiangsu delegation and called on the officials present to pioneer the integration of technology and industrial revolution, and fully implement the spirit of the 17 February symposium on private enterprises by treating all types of ownership enterprises equally. messaging is bound to unleash a new wave of competition among provincial leadership to boost advanced technology, and ensure that they harness support from the private tech players to achieve China's tech ambitions. Much of these ambitions depend on the measures that the Trump administration may take to restrict the supply of advanced highend chips from US-based players like NVIDIA.

Beijing's Response to External Developments This year's NPC made references to the current international climate. On the sidelines of the NPC, Wang Yi, China's foreign minister and politburo member of the CPC Central Committee, addressed a press meeting where he articulated Beijing's views on various issues of China's foreign policy. These issues range from growing ties between the US and Russia, the current international order, and China's ties with its neighbouring countries. The high point of the interaction was China's response to what many are "Reverse Nixon" policy terming the pursued by the Trump administration. In late February 2025, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio admitted that the US might never be "successful at peeling (Russia) completely off a relationship with China." Still, it was important for the US to maintain ties with Russia because allowing the latter to be a "permanent junior partner" to Beijing would mean having "two nuclear powers aligned against the US." [38]

Wang further stated that China values the 'sovereign equality' of all states irrespective of their size and that "those with stronger arms and bigger fists should not be allowed to call the shots."[41] He warned that the US leadership's pursuit of its national interests would likely inspire a race to the bottom, with other countries following suit. Wang asserted that "we will provide certainty to this world,"[42] referring to recent uncertain from announcements the Trump administration that he would take back Panama and Greenland. He also highlighted the relevance of the Global South and the continued relevance of multilateralism in facilitating consultations among members of the international community.

Regarding the latest developments transatlantic ties, China has indicated that it is willing to work with Europe. [43] Even before the NPC began, the spokesperson of this year's meeting, Lou Qinjian, said, "Over the past 50 years, facts have repeatedly shown that there are no fundamental clashes of interest or geopolitical conflicts between China and Europe; rather, they are partners that contribute to each other's success."34 He further stated that China and Europe jointly and support multilateralism oppose unilateralism. Later, during the press briefings on the sidelines of the NPC, Wang highlighted that the year marks the 50th anniversary of China-Europe diplomatic ties, which bear strategic value and have a global impact. Wang characterised Sino-EU ties as being based on "mutual respect", with both being "cooperative partners" to each other and joining forces to promote the cause of multilateralism. Further, he stressed that bilateral trade between the two sides has increased, reinforcing the role of the China-Europe Railway Express as a crucial link between Asia and Europe.

Conclusion

This year's two sessions revealed that Xi Jinping enjoys unquestionable authority in China's political landscape and is looking to extend his reign beyond the next party

congress in 2027. Therefore, 'regime security' is being accorded the highest priority. Xi's authority has emboldened him to chart a course that he believes would provide China the best opportunity to realise the 'China dream' and emerge as the winner in the 100-year marathon.

According to Xi, realising China's ambitions necessitates a strategy underlined by 'politics in command'. Adopting a whole-of-society approach, Xi believes that China can only become the top player by achieving self-reliance in technology. Consequently, Xi is committed to mobilising all available resources to obtain the most advanced technologies, including AI and robotics, and power China's military modernisation. For Xi, achieving the China dream is as much an ideological battle as it is a pursuit of economic and technological self-reliance.

Tibet: A Land of Many Languages

27 May 2025, <u>Language Magazine</u>, Gerald Roche

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 slowmoving conflict that has dragged on for nearly 75 years, since China invaded Tibet in the mid-20th century. Language has been central Tibetans have worked to protect the Tibetan language and resisted efforts to enforce Mandarin Chinese. Yet Tibetan children are losing their language through enrollment 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 by 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 nongovernment organizations. 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 analyzed Tibetanlanguage texts, including government policies, online essays, social media posts, and lyrics. even pop song 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. These were largely focused on language and religion. Years of unrest ensued, marked by more demonstrations and individual acts 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.

China's love-bombing of Gen Z Taiwanese has its limits

26 May 2025, The Strategist, Nathan Attrill



Through a mix of subsidised tours, university scholarships, TikTok-style propaganda and influencer outreach, Beijing is trying to win over the generation in Taiwan that has grown up with democracy, freedom and a deepening sense of Taiwanese identity separate from China.

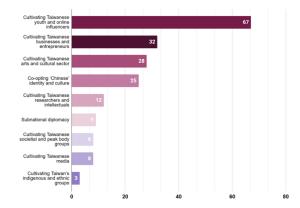
But how successful has this campaign been? And what are the political consequences? While Chinese soft power has made cultural inroads—especially through popular apps and lifestyle content—it has largely failed to shift the political convictions of Taiwan's youth. The result is a more politically aware generation—one increasingly fluent in the coercive tactics used against it.

At the heart of China's strategy lies a simple idea: if it can't win over Taiwan's government, it can win over its youth. Beijing is attempting to influence them by showing attention and affection in an overt and attributable manner through cross-strait youth exchange programmes. This form of soft power includes inviting Taiwanese students China for subsidised trips featuring choreographed cultural activities and friendly political messaging. Scholarships have also been offered to study at Chinese universities, where students are exposed to Chinese Communist **Party** ideology and become ambassadors for encouraged Beijing's unification message.

More insidious, and often misattributed, is the CCP's growing focus on online influencers and social media. Beijing has actively courted Taiwanese YouTubers, TikTok stars, and musicians, offering them sponsored trips and VIP treatment in exchange for content that subtly (or not so subtly) echoes CCP talking points. In one case, a Taiwanese rapper admitted inserting anti-government to messages into his lyrics at the CCP's behest. Meanwhile, Chinese-owned apps such as Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok) and Xiaohongshu (known in English as RedNote) have quietly flooded Taiwanese smartphones with lifestyle content that often carries an undercurrent of CCP nationalist messaging. United-front work targeting Taiwan is orchestrated by a network of Chinese partystate organisations that aim to influence, cultivate and co-opt key figures within Taiwanese civil society. China's Taiwan Affairs Office, the agency responsible for cross-strait relations, has described united-front work as 'an important magic weapon for the Communist Party of China to unite people and gather strength'. Events that are facilitated by united-front agencies, such as the Taiwan Affairs Office, are intended to co-opt participants, exert malign influence on or redefine Taiwan, its people and its history

As shown in the graph below, last year events targeting Taiwan organised by different parts of the CCP's united front system heavily focused on outreach to Taiwanese youth and online influencers.

solely on the CCP's terms.



Events hosted by united front organisations for Taiwanese civil society in 2024. Source: ASPI's State of the Strait Database.

It is clear what Beijing hopes to achieve: a long-term shift in public sentiment in favour of its position on annexation. By shaping how Taiwanese youth see China, how they see themselves, and how they interpret democracy, the CCP wants to erode support for independence and weaken resistance to any unification process. If young people come to view China as modern, friendly and culturally similar, Beijing hopes they may become less willing to defend Taiwan's distinct identity and separate status.

Yet the reality is more complex. While Chinese soft power has made some cultural inroads, especially among apolitical or disengaged youth, it has not translated into widespread political conversion. Most young Taiwanese still identify strongly with Taiwan, value their democratic freedoms, and remain sceptical of Beijing's intentions. The memory of Hong Kong's crushed democracy looms large. So does the daily reality of China's military and diplomatic pressure.

Popular social media apps now double as vectors for political messaging. What Beijing's influence campaigns have achieved is to blur the boundaries between culture and politics. Online content is disguising propaganda as entertainment. And some young Taiwanese are absorbing pro-China narratives without realising they originate in the Chinese government.

Taiwan's government has responded with new laws, public awareness campaigns and digital literacy initiatives. Pro-Beijing influencers have been investigated and even deported for comments advocating a military solution to unification. TikTok and other Chinese apps have been banned on official devices. But in an open society, policing influence is never easy. The CCP is betting that its message will find fertile ground in disillusionment, economic uncertainty, or simple curiosity of Taiwan's young people.

The stakes are high: if Taiwan's next generation becomes apathetic or fatalistic about its future, the CCP won't need to invade. It will have already achieved the overall goal of its coercion strategy: to divide,

distract and demoralise Taiwan into giving up without a fight.

But there is resilience too. Taiwanese youth are not easily fooled. Many are critically aware of Beijing's tactics. Some are even pushing back, turning digital platforms into spaces for satire, resistance and civic debate. The battle for young minds is real, but it is multi-dimensional.

China's efforts to charm Taiwan's youth are part of a broader campaign of influence and coercion. The challenge for Taiwan is not only to expose these tactics, but to offer a better story: one grounded in freedom, identity and the right to choose their own future. That, more than any app or influencer, is what will determine the outcome of this generational contest.

India views China as 'primary adversary', Pakistan more an 'ancillary' security problem: U.S. report

26 May 2025, The Hindu, Dinakar

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's defence priorities will probably focus on demonstrating global leadership, countering China, and enhancing New Delhi's military power," says the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency.

India views China as its "primary adversary" and Pakistan more an "ancillary" security problem to be "managed", despite crossborder attacks in mid-May by both India's and Pakistan's militaries, while Pakistan regards India as an "existential" threat, the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) said in its Worldwide Threat Assessment 2025 report. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's defence probably priorities focus will demonstrating global leadership, countering China, and enhancing New Delhi's military power," the recently released report said.

On Pakistan, the report said it would continue to pursue its military modernisation effort, including the development of battlefield nuclear weapons, to offset India's conventional military advantage. Pakistan was modernising its nuclear arsenal and "almost certainly" procured WMD-applicable goods from foreign suppliers and intermediaries, it stated.

Pahalgam terror attack

Taking note of the Pahalgam terror attack on 22 and India's strikes on infrastructure under Operation Sindoor and the military confrontation over the next three days, the U.S. DIA said that to counter Chinese influence and boost its global leadership role, India was giving priority to advancing its bilateral defence partnerships in the Indian Ocean region through exercises, training, arms sales, and information sharing. "India also has increased engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and actively participates in multilateral for such as the Quadrilateral, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)," it added.

On India's relations with Russia, the U.S. DIA remarked that India would maintain its relationship through 2025 because "it views its ties to Russia as important for achieving its economic and defence objectives and sees value in the relationship as a means to offset deepening Russia-China relations."

"Under Mr. Modi, India has reduced its procurement of Russian-origin military equipment but still relies on Russian spare parts to maintain and sustain its large inventory of Russian-origin tanks and fighter aircraft that form the backbone of its military's ability to counter perceived threats from China and Pakistan," the report stated. India almost certainly would continue promoting its "Made in India" initiative this year to build its domestic defence industry, mitigate supply chain concerns, modernise its military, the report said. It said India continued to modernise its military in 2024 — a test of the nuclear-capable developmental Agni-I Prime Medium Range Ballistic Missile (MRBM) and the Agni-V multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle, while also commissioning its second nuclear-powered submarine to strengthen its

nuclear triad and "bolster its ability" to deter adversaries.

Referring to the agreement between India and China in October 2024 for disengagement from Depsang and Demchok, the report noted that the disengagement did not resolve the longstanding dispute about border demarcation but reduced some tension still lingering from a 2020 incident when troops on both sides were killed in a clash along the Line of Actual Control.

Sinicization of Tibetan names

25 May 2025, <u>The Sunday Guardian</u>, Khedroob Thondup

Language standardization has long been a focal point in China's nation-building efforts.

In the ever-evolving landscape of China's governance, language and names play a crucial role in shaping national identity. The Sinicization of Tibetan names—an effort to align naming conventions with Chinese linguistic norms—serves as a significant aspect of cultural integration, administrative efficiency, and national unity. While perspectives on this initiative vary, China sees this process as essential in fostering cohesion within its diverse population.

Names are more than identifiers; they are deeply embedded in cultural heritage. In China's governance framework, standardizing names across all regions enhances administrative efficiency, ensuring uniformity in documentation, legal processes, and governance. By adapting Tibetan names to Chinese linguistic structures, authorities aim to streamline communication, making it more accessible to officials and the broader Chinese population.

Language standardization has long been a focal point in China's nation-building efforts. Mandarin Chinese, as the national language, serves as a bridge connecting different ethnic groups within the country. By encouraging Tibetan names to follow Chinese phonetic and structural patterns, China promotes linguistic unity, fostering a shared cultural

and administrative space. This integration, according to the government, facilitates educational opportunities, economic participation, and social cohesion.

Critics argue that Sinicizing Tibetan names risks erasing distinct cultural markers and undermining Tibetan identity. Many Tibetans view their names as intrinsic to their heritage, carrying religious, historical, and familial significance. The challenge lies in balancing modernization with cultural preservation—ensuring that Tibetans can maintain their unique identity while engaging in national progress.

China's approach to naming conventions reflects a broader strategy of integrating diverse ethnic communities within a unified national framework.

While debates on cultural autonomy continue, the government maintains that Sinicization fosters stability and development

. As policies evolve, ongoing discussions will shape how Tibetans reconcile cultural preservation with national unity.

Ultimately, the Sinicization of Tibetan names represents a crossroads between administrative pragmatism and cultural heritage. How this balance is achieved will define the future of integration efforts in China.

Decades of repression in occupied Tibet 25 May 2025, <u>Daily Mirror</u>, Ratish Mehta

The worst genocide in modern history has surely been the Holocaust—the mass murder of six million Jewish people by the Nazi dictatorship in Germany. Out of approximately 10 million Jews living in Europe in 1933, about 60 percent were exterminated by the Nazis in concentration camps.

Estimates of the number of Tibetans killed by the Chinese Communists during their occupation of Tibet in 1950 and the subsequent Cultural Revolution vary, ranging from half a million to 1.2 million. Even the higher figure is only a fraction of the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust. However, if examined in relative terms, the enormity of the crime committed by the Chinese Communists in Tibet approaches what the Jewish people suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany. At that time, only 2.5 million Tibetans lived on the plateau. Thus, between 20 and 50 percent of the Tibetan population perished at the hands of the Chinese Communists.

Moreover, the Chinese Communists have surpassed the Nazis in one respect. They have not only killed Tibetans physically; they have also sought to annihilate them culturally, linguistically, and demographically—through a systematic policy aimed at erasing Tibetan identity from the face of the earth. This is a form of calculated cruelty that appears uniquely Chinese in its execution.

Systematic efforts to crush Tibetan resistance and culture began as early as 1959, with the uprising in the plateau against Chinese occupation. It remains unclear how many Tibetans were killed during the uprising that began in Lhasa on March 10, 1959, sparked by fears that Chinese authorities would abduct the Dalai Lama. The Chinese army used machine guns and artillery to attack the Dalai Lama's Norbulingka Palace. Civilians were also machine-gunned from the air to intercept the Dalai Lama's escape to India.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile claims that 87,000 Tibetans perished during the uprising and its aftermath, including during the subsequent repression and guerrilla warfare. Historians have suggested that nearly 15,000 Tibetans were killed in Lhasa alone during three days of combat between poorly armed Tibetans and well-equipped Chinese troops. China claims that only 2,000 rebels died.

Significantly, the International Commission of Jurists, in its 1959 report on the Tibetan uprising, observed that in view of the "wanton killing of Tibetans and other acts capable of leading to the extinction of Tibetans as a national and religious group, it becomes necessary to consider the question of genocide."

During the Cultural Revolution, unleashed by Mao Zedong in 1966, Tibet's religion, identity, and culture were directly targeted.

By the time the Cultural Revolution ended with Mao's death in 1976, over 6,000 monasteries and religious institutions in Tibet had been reduced to ruins. Priceless ancient manuscripts had been burned. The physical torture and psychological trauma inflicted during the so-called "struggle sessions" led to the deaths of an estimated 92,000 Tibetans. Another 173,000 died in prisons or in "reform through labour" camps.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala, India, later estimated that 1.2 million Tibetans died between 1950 and 1979 from starvation, conflict, torture, execution, suicide, and struggle sessions. American writer Patrick French, who travelled through Tibet and examined records in Dharamsala, put the figure at half a million.

More diabolical than the killings is the longterm conspiracy to erase an entire civilization. The Dalai Lama understood China's real intentions as early as 1959. In a press conference shortly after his escape, he stated: "The ultimate Chinese aim with regard to Tibet, as far as I can make out, seems to be the extermination of religion and culture and even the absorption of the Tibetan race. Besides the civilian and military personnel already in Tibet, five million Chinese settlers have arrived in eastern and north-eastern Tso; in addition, four million more are planned to be sent to U and Tsang provinces of central Tibet. Many Tibetans have been deported, thereby resulting in the complete absorption of these Tibetans as a race, which is being undertaken by the Chinese."

The International Commission of Jurists also found "clear and explicit" evidence of widespread killings of Buddhist monks and lamas. This policy stripped Tibet of teachers capable of imparting Buddhist teachings. Deeply devout, many Tibetans fled to India to enroll in Buddhist universities, risking death or capture by Chinese border guards tasked with stopping them. The Chinese authorities have always denied such killings and torture—until a rare piece of evidence emerged: the Nangpa La shooting.

In September 2006, as a group of Tibetans fled through deep Himalayan snow, Chinese

border guards opened fire, killing 17-year-old nun Kelsang Namtso. A Romanian photographer, by chance on a nearby mountain as part of a climbing expedition, filmed the incident and later revealed it to the world.

Since the early 2010s, Chinese authorities have introduced a new method to extinguish Tibetan identity—something even the young Dalai Lama did not foresee in 1959. One million Tibetan children have been separated from their families and cultural roots and placed in state-run boarding schools, where they are raised under Han Chinese culture and taught only Mandarin.

In 2023, three United Nations human rights experts expressed grave concern:

"We are very disturbed that in recent years the residential school system for Tibetan children appears to act as a mandatory large-scale programme intended to assimilate Tibetans into the majority Han culture, contrary to international human rights standards... Roughly one million Tibetan minority children in China have been separated from their families and placed into government-run boarding schools, forcing their assimilation into the dominant culture."

The Chinese occupiers of the Tibetan plateau have thus conspired not only to kill Tibetans physically but to erase them culturally—as a people and as a civilization.

Why fierce rivals India, Pakistan and China are racing to woo the Taliban

24 May 2025, The Independent, Arpan Rai

The Taliban were shunned globally after it captured Kabul and cut restricted rights of Afghan girls and women. Less than four years later, the biggest regional powers are in a race to win their attention, experts tell

Afghanistan's Taliban, who were a pariah on the global stage less than four years ago, are now being courted by three Asian nuclear powers — India, Pakistan and China — all vying to upgrade their diplomatic ties with the former militants.

No international government has formally recognised the Taliban administration, but China, India, and the United Arab Emirates are among the nations that have officially accepted its ambassadors in their capitals since the militant group took control of Kabul in 2021. The Taliban administration said last year it was in control of 39 Afghan embassies and consulates globally.

The Taliban's isolation, at least in Asia, seems to be coming to an end. Playing the role of big brother to both Kabul and Islamabad, Beijing this week sought to ease the tensions gripping the two countries stoked by terrorism and deportation of refugees.

Wednesday, On China's minister Wang Yi said after his talks with Afghanistan's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and his Pakistani counterpart, Ishaq Dar, that the two countries planned to upgrade their diplomatic ties and send ambassadors to each other as soon as possible. A photo of the informal gathering showed Wang Yi holding hands with Mr Dar and Mr Muttaqi. "China welcomes this and is willing to continue providing assistance for the improvement Afghanistan-Pakistan of relations," he said.

Pakistan expelled more than 8,000 Afghan nationals in April in a fresh repatriation drive after the expiry of a 31 March deadline. Islamabad says the drive is part of a campaign called the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan, launched in late 2023. Pakistan has in the past blamed militant attacks and crimes on Afghan citizens, who form the largest portion of migrants in the country. Afghanistan has rejected the accusations. Kabul has termed the repatriation as forced deportation.

Wang's comments comes just days after New Delhi, reeling from the Kashmir attack and near-war conflict with Pakistan, made political contact with the Taliban, with S Jaishankar external affairs minister appreciating Mr Muttaqi's condemnation of the 22 April Pahalgam terror strike. India said it attached a "lot of significance" to the telephone conversation between Mr Jaishankar and Mr Muttaqi.

In January, Indian foreign secretary Vikram Misri met with Mr Muttaqi as the two sides discussed expanding bilateral ties, with an increased focus on India's security concerns, boosting trade through the development of the Chabahar Port in Iran, and Indian investments in several development projects inside Afghanistan.

The Taliban have banned girls and women from school for more than three years now and are blamed for turning Afghanistan into an "open-air prison" for its female population due to their gender apartheid policies – one of the biggest reasons the group is isolated and denied formal recognition.

Many western nations, including the US, have said the path to any formal recognition of the Taliban will be stuck until they change course on women's rights and re-open high schools and universities to girls and women, and allow their full freedom of movement. The Taliban say they respect rights in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic law and that restrictions on their banking sector and a lack of recognition are hindering their economy.

The Taliban-ruled Afghanistan being wooed by the biggest powers in Asia is a scenario, experts say, that was unimaginable just last year. India, Pakistan, and China are seen to be looking out for their own interests in the regional race for minerals and guarding against terrorist groups over which the Taliban have influence.

Farid Mamundzay, Afghanistan's ambassador to New Delhi until 2023, says the world should note that the competition over Afghanistan is "not new, but it has become more public, more visible, and increasingly pursued at higher diplomatic levels".

The three countries are focused on their strategic imperatives rather than concerns for rights or governance, he tells *The Independent*.

"For Pakistan, Afghanistan remains central to its concept of strategic depth, a critical arena for influence and a means to limit Indian influence along its western frontier. China views Afghanistan as vital to securing Xinjiang, expanding the Belt and Road Initiative, establishing overland trade corridors to Central Asia and Iran, and accessing its untapped mineral wealth," says the ambassador, who served New Delhi until the Taliban took control of the mission.

"India, meanwhile, sees continued engagement as essential for countering Chinese and Pakistani influence and maintaining strategic access to continental Asia," he says, warning that the Taliban risk making war-battered Afghanistan a pawn and not a partner in the regional race.

"In this unfolding rivalry, Afghanistan risks once again being treated less as a sovereign actor and more as a geopolitical battleground, its internal priorities overshadowed by external power plays," Mr Mamundzay says. "For too long, Afghanistan's soil has hosted the rivalries of others. That pattern must end." As for the Taliban, the former ambassador says the increased attention from three sides boosts their international posture, political leverage and economic gains.

But this does not guarantee any safety to Beijing, Delhi and Islamabad, says Afghanistan's former deputy foreign minister Nasir Ahmad Andisha.

"This engagement, while it might look pragmatic at the moment and allows Delhi to be friends with its enemy's enemy, in the long run, this is doomed to fail," he says.

For the time being, the Taliban is enjoying the popularity from the three power centres.

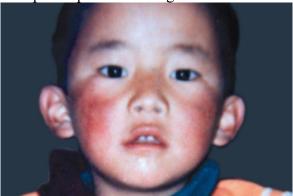
"There is no doubt in this regard that the Islamic emirate has strengthened its comprehensive relationship with big countries such as China, Russia, Iran, and even India, in accordance with its interests," Abdul Mateen Qanay, the spokesperson for the Taliban's interior ministry, told *The Independent*.

He added that the Taliban's interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani and foreign minister Mr Muttaqi have made renewed efforts to repair Afghanistan's ties with Pakistan. When asked if this is a new chapter for the Taliban, Mr Qanay says: "Yes, that's exactly right."

The mystery of the six-year-old Tibetan leader who disappeared 30 years ago

24 May 2025, Vijesti

For many Tibetans, the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the Panchen Lama is a traumatic experience, and Tibetan communities in India and Europe continue to hold public protests calling for his release.



This is the only available photograph of Gedun Choekyi Nijimu, the "reincarnation" of the second most important figure in Buddhism, Photo: The Tibet Museum

Tibetans around the world marked the 17th anniversary of the disappearance of the Panchen Lama on Saturday, May 30th.

On May 1995, XNUMX, the Dalai Lama, the exiled leader of Tibetan Buddhists, recognized the six-year-old boy Gedun Choekyi Nijima as the reincarnated Panchen Lama, the second most important figure in that religion.

The 11th Panchen Lama disappeared three days later, and there has been no independent news of his location or fate since.

Chinese authorities admit they know where Nijima is, but have provided very little information about the Tibetan, who would be 36 years old today.

The BBC has contacted the Chinese government to clarify the current status of the missing Panchen Lama.

The Chinese Embassy in London responded that "the person in question is just an ordinary Chinese citizen living a normal life."

"Neither he nor his family wish to be exposed to unwanted public attention" and called on the BBC to "consider dropping" the story.

The remote and largely Buddhist Tibet is governed as an autonomous region of China, which has been accused of stifling cultural and religious freedoms there.

Human rights groups have described Nijima as the "youngest political prisoner" in the world and have consistently supported Tibetan calls for his release.

When did the Panchen Lama disappear?

Tibetan Buddhists believe that people are reincarnated, while those with higher spiritual attainment can decide when and where this happens.

After the tenth Panchen Lama died under suspicious circumstances on January 28, 1989 (some believe he was poisoned), efforts began to identify his reincarnation.

A search led by a senior monarch identified a boy born on April 25, 1989, to Kunchok Phuntsog (father) and Dechen Chodon (mother), in Lari District, Nagchu Province, Tibet, as his reincarnation.

A detailed document submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the UN Secretary-General, accuses the Chinese government of kidnapping the entire family and detaining the monk tasked with leading the search.

The Tibetan government-in-exile describes Nijima's disappearance as one of the "most blatant examples of China's gross human rights violations."

"Since then, its location and condition have remained unknown, hidden behind a veil of state secrecy."

"We urgently call on the Chinese government to reveal the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama and ensure his well-being," Tenzin Lekshay, a spokesperson for the Central Tibetan Administration, told the BBC.

No country formally recognizes the Tibetan government in exile.

'Fake Panchen'

China refused to recognize the Panchen Lama appointed by the Dalai Lama, and elected its own candidate, Gyaltsen Norbu, as the 11th Panchen Lama in 1995.

Although he attends Communist Party conferences and official events, he has no

popular support and is often referred to as the "false Panchen" among Tibetans in exile.

Nijima might also enjoy greater recognition in Tibet, but photos of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama are banned.

In any case, there is only one photograph in circulation of a young boy "abducted by the authorities."

Why is the Panchen Lama important to Tibet? In Tibetan Buddhism, there is only one person of higher rank than the Panchen Lama, and that is the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 and became a symbol of resistance to Chinese control of the region.

He turns 90 this year, on July 6th.

Discovering the fate of the missing boy is all the more important now that the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama recognize each other's reincarnation.

"The Chinese government kidnapped a sixyear-old boy and his family and hid them for 30 years to control the selection of the next Dalai Lama and therefore Tibetan Buddhism itself," said Yalkun Ulujol, China researcher at Human Rights Watch.

"Concerned parties should pressure the Chinese government to end this atrocity and ensure the freedom of Nijima and his family." What does China say about the Panchen Lama?

Immediately after Nijima's disappearance, China told a UN working group that "there has never been a case of the disappearance and abduction of a reincarnated child's family."

The following year, Beijing said several "unscrupulous souls" had tried to smuggle the boy abroad, and his parents sought protection, which was granted.

Despite the security, China said the boy and his family were living a normal life and did not want anyone to bother them, something she has repeated several times since.

In 1998, she told a UN working group that the Panchen Lama's mother was serving a prison sentence, although it is unclear for what reason or for how long she has been in prison. In 2000, Robin Cook, then British Foreign Secretary, said that China had shown British

officials two photographs of a boy it said was the missing Panchen Lama.

The British were allowed to view the paintings, but not to keep them.

Responding to a recent BBC inquiry, the Chinese embassy reaffirmed that Nijima is "just an ordinary Chinese citizen living a normal life with his family.

"They have not expressed a desire to be drawn into controversy and have public attention drawn to them."

"We urge all parties to fully respect their privacy and wishes," it said.

The Chinese embassy also accused the Dalai Lama of engaging in "anti-Chinese separatist activities under the guise of religion" and described his appointment as the Nijima as "illegal and invalid".

Is there any hope that he will be found?

Tibetan activists have created a painting to make the missing Panchen Lama look like a 30-year-old man, with the help of British forensic artist Tim Wieden.

But there has been no progress in finding the plump, red-cheeked boy in the famous painting.

For many Tibetans, the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the Panchen Lama is a traumatic experience.

Tibetan communities in India and Europe continue to hold public protests calling for his release.

"We are pained just thinking about his 30-year imprisonment. We pray and advocate for his immediate release every day. For the Tibetan people, he is not only a spiritual leader but also the hope for the future of Tibet," Tenzin Cundue, a Tibetan writer and activist living in India, told the BBC.

"I believe he is alive and I hope to see him," he said, adding that he believed China would use him to control the narrative about the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan government in exile says the Panchen Lama's absence is being felt.

"The 10th Panchen Lama played a key role in preserving the Tibetan language, religion and cultural heritage under Chinese rule," says Tenzin Lekshay.

"His voice and vision are sorely missed in Tibet today."

Is China cutting off India's water? Researcher flags steep Sutlej drop in satellite data

24 May 2025, Business Today

Is China quietly reducing the water flowing into India? That's the question being raised by Dr. Y Nithiyanandam, a geospatial researcher and former NASA station manager, who shared satellite data showing a dramatic drop in the Sutlej River's flow before it crosses the border.

In a post on X, Nithiyanandam pointed to findings, which show the water volume entering India via the Sutlej has fallen by over 75% in the past five years—declining from around 8,000 gigaliters to 2,000 gigaliters.

"Is China already controlling the water that flows into India?" he asked, sparking concern about upstream developments.

The sharp drop in flow, he noted, raises two possibilities. Either China has altered or diverted the water flow, or the reduction is due to natural causes. But if glacial melt is accelerating in the Himalayas—as climate data suggests—shouldn't river flow be increasing, at least in the short term?

Upstream, China has built a barrage and hydroelectric infrastructure at Zada Gorge in Tibet. These facilities give Beijing the technical capability to regulate how much water reaches India. But with no formal water-sharing treaty between the two countries—only a data-sharing agreement that lapsed in 2023—China faces little obligation to disclose how it manages the Sutlej.

While there is no public evidence confirming deliberate flow manipulation, China's control capacity combined with the absence of transparent agreements leaves India exposed. At the same time, researchers acknowledge natural factors are also at play. The Sutlej is heavily dependent on snow and glacier melt, contributing more than half of its annual discharge. But studies show the river basin

has already lost 21% of its glacier volume since the 1980s, and as much as 55% could be gone by 2050.

Though this initially leads to more water, sustained glacial loss eventually results in sharp declines.

Realities of Sino-Tibetan dialogue

23 May 2025, <u>Taipei Times</u>, Khedroob Thondup

The 1979 Sino-Tibetan dialogue marked a historic moment, one filled with promise and disappointment. It was a rare instance where representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government directly discussed the fate of Tibet and its people. For the first time since China annexed Tibet in 1950, there was a glimmer of hope for a peaceful resolution. However, this dialogue did not lead to reconciliation, but rather a deeper entrenchment of differences.

That the dialogue occurred at all was a breakthrough. After nearly three decades of estrangement, these discussions symbolized a recognition of the Tibetan issue — a step forward from Beijing's unilateral policies. Five Tibetan fact-finding delegations were able to visit their homeland, and saw the devastation and resilience of Tibetans living under Chinese rule. Their observations led to greater international awareness of the conditions in Tibet, bringing global attention to the suppression of Tibetan culture and religious practices.

Another achievement was the temporary opening of the border between Tibet and India, allowing Tibetan families to reunite. For thousands of Tibetans in exile, this was a profound moment, an opportunity to embrace lost relatives and see the land they were forced to leave behind. That also symbolized the possibilities of reconciliation.

While the dialogue began with hope, it ended with frustration. The Chinese government's unwillingness to engage in meaningful discussions about Tibetan autonomy or selfdetermination meant that the fundamental grievances of Tibetans remained unaddressed. The delegations said that Tibet was suffering under Chinese rule, but Beijing dismissed any criticism as exaggerated or politically motivated.

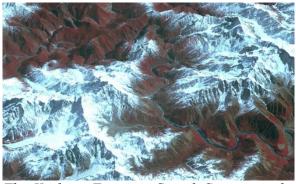
The border opening did not indicate a genuine commitment from China to reassess its approach to Tibet; it was a momentary gesture that did little to alleviate the growing tensions over Tibetan identity, religious freedom and governance. The "agreeing to disagree" stance taken by both sides highlighted the reality that China viewed Tibet as a part of its territory, while Tibetans in exile continued to seek autonomy and recognition.

The dialogue served as a critical turning point in Tibet's struggle for identity, but also reinforced the divide between the two sides. While it gave Tibetans in exile insight into the conditions of their homeland and momentary reunions, it failed to initiate long-term solutions. The discussions were less about negotiation and more about positioning — both sides walked away holding firm to their original views.

The lessons of the dialogue remain relevant in ongoing discussions about Tibet. Any future negotiations must go beyond symbolic gestures and delve into substantive policy changes that respect Tibetan culture, governance and autonomy.

China to build world's largest hydroelectric project in Tibet, prompting fears of 'water bombs' and environmental destruction

23 May 2025, <u>Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists</u>, Fred Pearce



The Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon is the

deepest canyon in the world. Chinese ecologists say the canyon is one of the most precious biodiversity hotspots on the planet, containing some of Asia's tallest and most ancient trees as well as the world's richest assemblage of large carnivores, especially big cats. (Photo: NASA)

China has announced plans to build the world's largest hydroelectric project at a remote river gorge in eastern Tibet, an ecological treasure trove close to a disputed border with India. Indian politicians have reacted angrily, saying it gives China the ability to release destructive "water bombs" across the border in any future conflict. They are planning a retaliatory dam on their side of the border that experts say could be at least as environmentally destructive.

Two Chinese dams will barricade the Yarlung Tsangpo, the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra River, as it is about to flow through the world's longest and deepest river canyon — think the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River, only three times as deep. Projected to cost \$137 billion, the scheme will be the world's biggest single infrastructure project, with almost three times the generating capacity of the world's current largest hydroelectric dam, China's Three Gorges on the Yangtze River.

Chinese ecologists say the canyon is one of the most precious biodiversity hotspots on the planet, containing some of Asia's tallest and most ancient trees as well as the world's richest assemblage of large carnivores, especially big cats. But India's anger is geopolitical. Pema Khandu, the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, the Indian state immediately downstream, called the project "a big threat" that could dry up the river through his state during routine operation and potentially be weaponized to unleash a flood in which, he said, hundreds of thousands could lose their lives.

Some independent experts share the concern. Ameya Pratap Singh, a political scientist at the University of Oxford, said in a report that China's damming of its Tibetan rivers "effectively gives China a chokehold on

India's economy" if tensions between the two nations escalate. But others urge caution. Ruth Gamble, an environmental historian at La Trobe University, in Australia, says that, despite the project's huge electricity-generating potential, the dams won't hold back large volumes of water, so the potential to inflict harm downstream will be limited.

Even so, the stakes are high, with tensions over scarce water resources in the region rising. India last month suspended its adherence to a treaty in operation for 65 years to share with Pakistan the waters of another great South Asian river, the Indus. Meanwhile the 30-year-old Ganges Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh is set to expire next year, with India widely accused of violating its terms.

"Weaponizing water is a perilous strategy that may backfire," says Mehebub Sahana, an environmental geographer at the University of Manchester. "The weakening of water diplomacy in South Asia is not just a regional threat; it endangers global climate security." Tibet, part of China since 1951, is the water tower of Asia. Its vast glaciers sustain major rivers on which more than 1.3 billion people in 10 countries depend for drinking, irrigating crops, and hydropower. China, already the world's leading producer of hydroelectricity, sees more dams on these rivers as a key to reducing its carbon emissions. It has already tapped the power of the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, which flow entirely within China, as well as several that flow beyond its borders, including the Mekong, Irrawaddy, and Salween. Now it is eyeing the Brahmaputra, the world's ninth largest river.

The Brahmaputra begins as meltwater from the Angsi Glacier in western Tibet. From there it flows east through the Himalayas, before turning sharply south, skirting Namcha Barwa mountain, and tumbling down waterfalls and rapids through the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon onto the plains of India and Bangladesh, before entering the Bay of Bengal through the world's largest river delta.

In 2014, China completed its first hydroelectric dam on the river's main stem,

the 380-foot Zangmu Dam. But the rapid descent of the river at the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon has long been seen by dam engineers as the world's most promising site for power generation. The formal go-ahead for the project there was announced on Christmas Eve 2024.

Technical details about the project have yet to be published. But Chinese government media say it will have a generating capacity of 60,000 megawatts, almost 30 times that of the Hoover Dam. But the two proposed dams don't need to be even as high as the Hoover Dam, says Gamble. "This is more a megaproject than a mega-dam." The site's unique geography will do the work, as the water rushes downward for thousands of feet through 12-mile-long tunnels to deliver unprecedented power to turbines at the bottom of the canyon, before discharging the flow back into the river close to the border with India. "Indian soldiers will overlook the project from their bunkers," says Gamble.

Indian scientists believe that operating the dams to meet China's electricity needs will change the river's strongly seasonal flow. "Reduced water flow in the dry season, coupled with sudden releases of water during monsoons, could intensify both water scarcity and flooding, endangering millions," says Sahana.

The project could also impact sediment flows in the river. Erosion in the canyon currently supplies 45 percent of the total volume of sediment that flows downstream on the Brahmaputra, says Robert Wasson, geomorphologist at James Cook University, in Australia. Bypassing the canyon could reduce sediment supply to the lower reaches and damage the river's vast delta, says Sahana. "Any disruption to the balance of sediment could accelerate coastal erosion and make the already low-lying [delta] area more vulnerable to sea-level rise." But this outcome is far from clear, says Wasson, as too little is known about sediment movement on the river.

Such impacts would be gradual. But there are also fears of more catastrophic outcomes. The dam site is on a boundary between two major tectonic plates in one of the world's most seismically active regions. "If I were a Chinese planner, I would be most worried about a great earthquake" that could breach the dam, says Wasson. The strongest earthquake ever recorded on land, the magnitude 8.6 Assam-Tibet quake, happened in 1950 just 300 miles away.

Chinese officials insist that the dam will be safe and that its operation will have no deleterious effect on downstream countries or their ecology. State-employed academics have argued the dam could make the river safer by reducing peak flood flows. But Chinese researchers studying the region's ecology have warned that, even though the project won't inundate the safeguarding its natural wonders from the extensive activity from building operating this massive construction project will require what Yu Ren, a geographer at Peking University, calls "urgent action to protect it."

The Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon is extremely remote and has rarely been explored by foreigners since 19th-century British plant hunters passed through looking for exotic species to fill their gardens back home. But Chinese ecologists have recently been trying to make up for lost time. The canyon is "one of China's vital gene banks," says Shuaifei Duan of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It is a biodiversity hotspot created by the huge changes in elevation — some 20,000 feet from mountain top to canyon bottom — combined with wet monsoon air blowing into the canyon from the south. Within a few miles, it contains glaciated peaks, alpine meadows, pine forests, and tropical rainforests.

Researchers have documented more than 4,500 species of plants, and "China's largest and most intact primary forest" containing Asia's tallest tree, a native cypress more than 330 feet tall and believed to be a thousand years old. The canyon's profuse animal life also includes "the world's richest assemblage of large carnivores," says Ren, with lynx, Tibetan brown bears, Asian black bears, gray wolves, and Asiatic wild dogs.

The canyon also has "more cat predators than anywhere else on the planet," says Gamble — from snow leopards on the mountain to China's only known Bengal tigers in the jungle below. On the slopes are Asian golden cats, jungle cats, marbled cats, ocelots, clouded leopards, and common leopards.

Can this biological Shangri La survive an invasion of engineers and a giant construction project? Peking University geographer Guo Ren, and other colleagues Oinghua, have campaigned to turn the canyon into a national park. But Gamble says this is not enough on its own. It ignores the true custodians, the local Indigenous Adi and Monpa people, for whom the canyon and surrounding mountains and forests are sacred. "There seems to be minimal local engagement in conservation and no official recognition that the whole region is a sacred site," she

India has long had its own designs on damming the Brahmaputra. Now its desire for hydroelectricity has been combined with the urge to protect the country from the perceived risks posed by China's project. After China's Christmas Eve announcement, India's water ministry revived a 2017 plan for an 11,000megawatt dam on the river in Arunachal Pradesh, just downstream of the canyon. Known as the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), it would be India's largest hydroelectric dam. "The SUMP is not just about generating power, but also about maintaining the natural flow of the... river and mitigating potential flood risks from water releases by China," chief minister Khandu said.

But some experts say the proposed thousandfoot dam could have as great a detrimental environmental impact as the Chinese project. It "will require a large reservoir, produce less power and could potentially be more dangerous," says Gamble. Local activists opposed to the dam say its reservoir would submerge more than 25 villages. Tensions seem set to rise, with protests and court cases pending.

The geopolitics of international rivers in South Asia has long been fraught. India itself

has often been accused of being an upstream bully — notably on the Indus River, which flows out of the Himalayas and through India to Pakistan.

Ever since those two nations were divided on independence from the British in 1947, there have been heated disputes over access to the Indus's water. Around 80 percent of Pakistan's water come from the river, and the country has long feared that India will build dams to choke off its supply.

After two wars in which the Indus was in dispute, the World Bank in 1960 brokered the Indus Waters Treaty, under which India and Pakistan divided the water between them. But in 2008, India completed a giant hydroelectric dam, the 470-foot high Baglihar Dam, on one of the Indus tributaries whose water is designated under the treaty for Pakistan. The water still flows into Pakistan, but through Indian turbines and at a time of India's choosing.

Last month, tensions soared again when India unilaterally suspended its adherence to the treaty, as part of its retaliation for a terrorist attack. Pakistan's prime minister Shehbaz Sharif responded by warning that if India tried to block the river's flow it would be met with "full force and might."

The parallel between this standoff on the Indus and the threat posed to India by the Chinese project on the Brahmaputra is compelling, but not exact. There is no treaty governing the management of the Brahmaputra, for instance. But the power of upstream countries over their downstream neighbors is central to both disputes. In each case, the hydrological and political stakes are high in a region with a troubling history of belligerent rhetoric, unilateral actions on shared rivers, and taking up arms over disputed waters.

How India can counter China's sinister renaming of Tibetan places

23 May 2025, First Post, Claude Arpi

The time has come for India to study the issue deeper, in particular the geography and the

ethnic history of the area which has close civilisational ties with India, and bring up this issue with China

Beijing has done it again. China's Ministry of Civil Affairs has so-called 'standardised' the names of 27 places in Zangnan, an abbreviation of (Xi)Zang and 'Nan' (south in Mandarin), ie, Southern Tibet. In recent years, Beijing has started using this term for the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. For Beijing, Zangnan is itself part of the Xizang Autonomous Region, Xizang being the Chinese name for 'Tibet'.

Is this name changing not confusing? It is probably Beijing's main purpose to bring confusion.

The renamed 27 places (released 'in accordance with regulations on geographical names issued by the State Council – China's Cabinet') cover geographical features: 15 mountains, five residential areas, four mountain passes, two rivers and one lake.

As earlier, each location is given in Chinese characters, Tibetan, and pinyin – the romanised spelling of Mandarin Chinese – with latitude and longitude coordinates and a high-resolution map.

But what is Beijing's ultimate purpose?

It was probably an indirect way to show sympathy with Pakistan when it was facing a near-war situation with India.

India's Reaction

On May 14, 2025, in response to media queries on the renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh by China, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, said, "We have noticed that China has persisted with its vain and preposterous attempts to name places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Consistent with our principled position, we reject such attempts categorically. Creative naming will not alter the undeniable reality that Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India."

Renaming is Not New

Renaming places is not new. It has been done by all colonisers; India still remembers the British days.

China has done it in a more systematic manner. After it invaded Tibet in 1950-51, Shigaste became Rìkazé or Xigatse, Sakya was Sa'gya, Metok, north of Arunachal's Upper Siang district, Mutao or Medog.

Apart from the cases of pure pinyinisation like the ones just mentioned, in many cases, names have been completely changed. Ngari province is now called Ali Prefecture (perhaps due Chinese faulty pronunciation who can't pronounce 'Ng' and 'r'); Kyirong at the border with Nepal is now Jilong, and worse, Barahoti in today's Uttarakhand is called Wuje, while Demchok in Ladakh is termed Parigas.

First Renaming in Arunachal Pradesh

In 2017 already, the Chinese Cabinet had announced the 'standardised names' for six places in Arunachal Pradesh. At that time, it looked like a childish reaction to the Dalai Lama's visit to the state a month earlier.

The official names of the six places (transcribed in the Roman alphabet) were Wo'gyainling, Mila Ri, Qoidengarbo Ri, Mainquka, Bumo La and Namkapub Ri. Let us have a look at a couple of them.

Wo'gyainling is the new spelling for Urgyeling, the birthplace of Tsangyang Gyaltso, the Sixth Dalai Lama, a few kilometres south of Tawang town. One understands the political reasons why China would be so attached to the place. Beijing was not ready to accept that a Dalai Lama could be born outside Tibet. The situation has become more acute today with the recent announcement by the Dalai Lama that he will be reborn in the 'free world'.

Another place was Qoidengarbo Ri, for 'Chorten Karpo' or 'White Stupa'. It refers to Gorsam Chorten, the only large white stupa in the area (and the largest in Arunachal). It is not far from Zimithang, the tactical headquarters of the 4th Infantry Division during the 1962 war. The name 'Ri' or ridge in Tibetan, may refer to one of the ridges around the stupa.

China knows that the Indian media will jump on this type of 'scoop'.

This is fine; one can consider it as part of the Information Warfare (IW) against India, but the Indian media should just be aware of it.

The Case of Sakteng in Bhutan

In the map recently released with the 27 new names, China seems to have relinquished a claim on Sakteng, a Bhutanese area adjacent to the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh. Does it signal that Sakteng has now been accepted as part of Bhutan by China and that Beijing does not claim the place anymore? In itself it is good, but if it is part of a 'package deal' between China and Bhutan sometimes mentioned in the Indian press, it has other implications. Has a deal been arrived at or is such a deal in the pipeline? Only the future will show.

Reaction from Arunachal MP

In the meantime, Tapir Gao, the BJP member of parliament (MP) for Arunachal East constituency, slammed China for changing the names and urged Delhi to take steps to "correct historical wrongs" by reclaiming areas inhabited by Lhoba Tani and Mishmi communities beyond the McMahon Line. He said that these communities living north of the Line share "deep civilisational roots with Bharat", and it's time for India to reclaim the regions "that are rightfully part of our country". Gao further stated, "China can rename mountains and rivers as much as it wants, but it cannot rewrite history...it is a deliberate and politically motivated attempt to distort geographical and cultural facts." Gao has a point.

India Could Claim More

In this context, it is interesting to look at the discussions held in London, Delhi and Lhasa to fix the Red Line between India and Tibet in 1912-1914 and the different arguments used to arrive at a final decision in March 1914 (ie, the McMahon Line duly reported on a map and signed).

By June 1912, the Indian General Staff in London had decided it was necessary to fix a boundary between Tibet and India, notwithstanding the terms of the 1907 British pact with Russia in which London and St

Petersburg agreed to settle their colonial disputes in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet by delineating their respective spheres of influence in Persia, recognising Britain's influence over Afghanistan and stipulating that neither country would interfere in Tibet's internal affairs.

The General Staff, however, thought that it was necessary to immediately do something in the Tawang sector; a note says, "The demarcation of the frontier line about Tawang requires careful consideration. The present boundary (demarcated) is south of Tawang, running westwards along the foothills from near Udalgiri to the southern Bhutan border, and thus a dangerous wedge is thrust between the Miri country and Bhutan."

This referred to the Inner Line, which had another purpose; it was to protect the tea gardens in Assam from tribal raids; it was therefore not a boundary line, which was required.

The note of the General Staff continues: "A comparatively easy and much-used trade route traverses this wedge from north to south, by which the Chinese would be able to exert influence or pressure on Bhutan, while we have no approach to this salient from a flank, as we have in the case of the Chumbi salient. A rectification of the boundary here is therefore imperative, and an ideal line would appear to be one from the knot of mountains to the Bhutan border north of Chona Dzong [Tsona] in a direct east and west line with the northern frontier of Bhutan. There appears to be a convenient watershed for it to follow."

It means that the border would have been located at Tsona, some 40 km north of the present one.

It was also the proper 'ethnic' border since the entire Monyul (inhabited by the Monpa tribe) would have come under India's administration. Let us not forget that the Chinese (and the Russians) were nowhere in the picture; however, the proposal was unfortunately not accepted by the authorities in Delhi. This would have changed history, and the 1962 war would perhaps not have taken place; who knows.

British historian Alistair Lamb commented, "The Indian government, while becoming convinced of the need to take over some of the Tawang Tract, evidently concluded that a more southerly alignment would meet its requirements."

But the time has come to study the issue deeper, in particular the geography and the ethnic history of the area which has close civilisational ties with India, and bring up this issue with Beijing.

Incidentally, it would be more correct that the line agreed upon by British India and the Government of Tibet under the 13th Dalai Lama in 1914 be called the 'McMahon-Shatra Line', since the map bears the signatures of both Sir Henry McMahon, India's Foreign Secretary, and Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan Prime Minister.

Tibet's Deal With China 74 Years Ago That Has Been Diluted, Erased

23 May 2025, StratNews Global

China's effort to erase Tibet's identity flows from its forceful occupation of the territory and the promulgation of successive orders curtailing religious and cultural freedoms Seventy four years ago on this day, China and a Tibetan delegation sent by the Dalai Lama, signed the 17-point agreement laying out the relationship between the two.

China has used the intervening period to dilute and erode the agreement, systematically undermining its commitment respect Tibetan political institutions, religious freedoms and so on. Ahead of the anniversary, there were reminders to China from various corners of the world, to make good on that promise. Earlier this week, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in a statement noted that "This year marks the 30th anniversary of the disappearance of Gedun Choekyi Nyima," days after the Dalai Lama had identified him as the Panchen Lama. He was abducted by the Chinese authorities within days and his whereabouts remain a mystery.

Since then, a Chinese-installed Panchen Lama has been functioning who's reported "failure to get adequate traction" with the Tibetan public, is a matter of great discomfort for Beijing.

On May 8th, the European Parliament during its plenary in Strasbourg, adopted a strong resolution condemning China's repeated violations of human rights in Tibet. It also denounced Beijing's attempts to assert control over the reincarnation and succession of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

For an officially atheist state (China's founder Mao Zedong described religion as "poison"), the Communist Party has taken an inordinate interest in the reincarnation and succession. Order No 5 issued in Oct 2007, "prohibits unauthorised activities related to searching for and identifying the reincarnated soul boy of a living Buddha."

All Buddhist temples are required to file a "Reincarnation Application" with the Chinese authorities before they are allowed to recognise individuals as reincarnated teachers.

China's 18th White Paper on Tibet issued in March 2023, underscored its efforts to erase the historical Tibetan identity. Since then in all official communication, the Tibet Autonomous Region is known as the Xizang Autonomous Region.

In September the same year, China issued Order No. 19, cracking down on religious freedom. All temples, monasteries and mosques are required to obtain official permission to carry out any religious activity. Publicity and education campaigns must promote the Chinese language and "ethnic unity".

The order says heads and management of all religious institutions "must be loyal supporters of the leadership and rule of the Chinese Communist Party."

The irony is Buddhism is among only five recognised religions in China, but under the garb of national unity and social order, the state criminalises Tibetan cultural and traditional activities, making it vulnerable to persecution and punishment.

China Says Not Anti-India But Continues To Provoke

21 May 2025, The Citizen, Raji Krishna

China-Pakistan-Taliban Foreign Ministers meet in Beijing.

The Foreign Ministers of China, Pakistan and the Taliban regime are meeting in Beijing from May 19 to 22. China is forming a tripartite security-cum-economic axis with Pakistan and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. But it insists that this is not aimed at weakening India.

However, the meeting in Beijing this week assumes particular significance in the backdrop of the short India-Pakistan war which steeled ties between China and Pakistan even as it further damaged Sino-Indian relations.

The role Chinese advanced technology played in Pakistan's showing in aerial engagements with India has embittered New Delhi, particularly after the international media highlighted the reported loss of one or more Rafale fighters recently purchased at US\$ 280 million apiece. Be that as it may, the trilateral meeting at Beijing is but a continuation of previous diplomatic engagements. These meetings reflect a concerted effort by China, Pakistan and Afghanistan to enhance dialogue and cooperation on issues of mutual interest. The trilateral discussions in Beijing are expected to cover a range of topics, including counterterrorism efforts, cooperation, and infrastructure development. These areas are particularly pertinent given the ongoing challenges in Afghanistan and the broader South Asian region. Commenting on the meeting of Pakistan's Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said on Monday that China takes the visit "as an implement opportunity to further important consensus reached by the leaders of countries. enhance both strategic communication and coordination, deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields, advance the continuous growth of China-Pakistan relationship, and accelerate the

building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era."

On Sunday, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Dar will hold in-depth discussions with Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the "evolving regional situation in South Asia and its implications for peace and stability." This has implications for India-China besides India-Pakistan relations. Dar's visit to Beijing takes place when India-Pakistan tensions remain high despite a ceasefire brought about by the persuasive skills of US officials Marco Rubio and J.D.Vance.

Interestingly, the Chinese spokesperson, Mao Ling, did not want the meeting in Beijing to be seen in New Delhi as an anti-India confabulation. In response to a question regarding the recent India-Pakistan standoff she said: "We are willing to maintain communication with both India and Pakistan, encourage them to exercise calm and restraint to achieve a lasting ceasefire, and jointly safeguard regional peace and stability. I want to tell you that India and Pakistan are both China's important neighbours. attaches, all along, great importance to China-India and China-Pakistan relations. The Chinese side is committed to the philosophy and principle of good neighbourliness with neighbouring countries." "We welcome and support the realised ceasefire between the two countries and are ready to play a constructive role in realising a lasting and comprehensive ceasefire between the two countries and maintaining regional peace and stability." However, this had not prevented China from continuing to needle India. Beijing recently gave Chinese names to 27 more places in the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh which it claims as "Southern Tibet". China has so far renamed 90 places in that North Eastern Indian State to New Delhi's consternation. As stated earlier, Afghanistan's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi is to be in Beijing participating in the talks on "regional peace and security." China's interest in Afghanistan revolves around (1) security from the Eastern Turkistan Islamic militants,

allegedly sheltered by the Taliban, (2) the vastly increased economic engagement with Afghanistan through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). On August 15, 2021, the Taliban had taken over Kabul and forced the US-installed government of President Ashraf Ghani to flee. Under an agreement signed between the two countries, from December 1, 2024, Afghan products got 100% duty-free access to the Chinese market. This will be a to war-torn and impoverished Afghanistan. In March 2025, China's exports to Afghanistan reached US\$ 135 million, a 18.7% increase from the previous year. This growth was largely driven by China's exports of synthetic fabrics, synthetic yarn woven fabrics, and large construction vehicles. China's imports from Afghanistan also increased, primarily due to higher imports of nuts, non-retail pure cotton yarn, and knotted carpets. Afghanistan's natural resources, including gas reserves in Sheberghan and the copper mine in Logar province, offer a great opportunity for Chinese investors. Another major initiative is the 'Five-nations railway' linking China, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. China was the first country to send an Ambassador to and receive an Ambassador from Afghanistan, although it has not yet formally recognized the Taliban regime. Chinese envoy Yue Xiaoyong's interview with Tolo News, an Afghan news China's agency. implied that formal recognition of the Taliban government would hinge on a regional consensus and the Taliban's satisfactory elimination of terrorist groups on its soil. In particular, China wants to ensure that Uyghur separatists do not find sanctuaries in Afghanistan. Along with China, other regional stakeholders such as Russia, Iran, and India have also increased their engagement with the Taliban. But China, with its deep pockets, appears to be the dominant player. The impact of US President Donald Trump's second term may raise concerns in some countries, but his policy of non-involvement in Afghanistan is expected to remain unchanged. China intends to extract Afghanistan's untapped resources and expand its geopolitical influence through this. As a

neighbour and rising power, China also wants to make an economic contribution to improving the living standards of the Afghan people. With the US withdrawing from Afghanistan and looking more towards the Middle East; Russia too busy with Ukraine to play any role anywhere else, and with India just ending a war with Pakistan and facing problems with Bangladesh, Afghanistan has become a happy hunting ground for China. And it is set to exploit the new opportunities, especially after ending its confrontation with the US over trade and tariffs. Dr. Ghulam Ali, deputy director at the Hong Kong Research Center for Asian Studies, writes in The Diplomat to say that China recognizes that Afghanistan's geostrategic location is crucial for implementing the BRI. Two of the six corridors developed under the BRI, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, run through countries neighbouring Afghanistan. China is interested in the development of the "Wakhan Corridor" which transits the common border between China and Afghanistan (Northeast Afghanistan). It is interested in Iran's initiatives to enhance road and railway connectivity with Afghanistan. Thanks to good Sino-Iran relations, there are signs of the emergence of a Tehran-Kabul-Beijing axis. Some analysts rule out the possibility of opening the Wakhan Corridor anytime soon due to rugged terrain and inhospitable weather conditions. But Dr. Ghulam Ali says that China possesses the experience, technology, and investment to build it should overall security conditions in Afghanistan improve. China's building of the Karakorum Highway with Pakistan during the 1970s, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, and the Three George Dams are only a few examples of its capacity to build gigantic projects under difficult conditions, Dr. Ghulam Ali points out.

Is China the winner in the India-Pakistan conflict?

20 May 2025, <u>BBC News</u>, Anbarasan Ethirajan

The four-day conflict between arch-rivals India and Pakistan this month ended with a ceasefire and both claiming victory – but it now appears that China's defence industry might also be an unlikely winner.

The latest flare-up began on 7 May when India launched attacks on what it called "terrorist infrastructure" inside Pakistan in response to the brutal killing of 26 people, mostly tourists by militants in Pahalgam on 22 April.

Many of them were killed in the scenic valley in Indian-administered Kashmir in front of their wives and family members. Delhi accused Islamabad of supporting militant groups involved in the carnage, a charge Pakistan denied.

After India's response - which it called Operation Sindoor - to the militant attack, titfor-tat military manoeuvres from both sides followed, involving drones, missiles and fighter jets.

India reportedly used its French and Russianmade jets, while Pakistan deployed its J-10 and J-17 aircraft, which Islamabad coproduces with Beijing. Both sides say their jets did not cross the border and they were firing missiles at each other from a distance. Islamabad claims that its fighter aircraft shot

down at least six Indian planes, including the newly-acquired French-made Rafale fighter jets. Delhi hasn't responded to these claims.

"Losses are a part of combat," Air Marshal AK Bharti of the Indian Air Force (IAF) said last week when a reporter asked him about these claims. Air Marshal Bharti declined to comment on the specific claim of Pakistan downing Indian jets.

"We have achieved the objectives that we selected, and all our pilots are back home," he added.

India said it had killed at least "100 terrorists" while targeting the headquarters of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed militant outfits based in Pakistan.

A definitive account of what really happened in the aerial battle is yet to emerge. Some media outlets reported plane crashes in the state of Punjab and Indian-administered Kashmir around the same time but the Indian government has not responded to the reports. A Reuters report quoting American officials said Pakistan possibly had used the Chinesemade J-10 aircraft to launch air-to-air missiles against Indian fighter jets. Pakistan claiming victory after hugely relying on Chinese weapons systems in an active combat situation is being seen by some experts as a boost for Beijing's defence industry but some also disagree with the claim.

Some of the experts have called this a "DeepSeek moment" for the Chinese weapons industry, referring to January this year when the Chinese AI start-up shook US giants with its cost-effective technology.

"The aerial fight was a big advertisement for the Chinese weapons industry. Until now, China had no opportunity to test its platforms in a combat situation," Zhou Bo, a retired senior colonel in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, told the BBC.

The Beijing-based analyst said the outcome of the air duel showed "China has some systems that are next to none". Shares in the Chinese Avic Chengdu Aircraft company, that manufactures fighter jets like the J-10, surged by up to 40% last week after the reported performance of the fighter jet in the India-Pakistan conflict.

Other experts, however, feel it's too early to declare the superiority of Chinese weapons systems.

Professor Walter Ladwig from the King's College in London said it was yet to be determined whether the Chinese jets had actually outmanoeuvred the Indian Air Force (IAF) planes, particularly the Rafale.

"In a standard military doctrine, you would suppress the enemy's air defences and get air superiority before you struck ground targets. Instead, it appears the IAF's mission was clearly not to provoke any Pakistani military retaliation," he said.

Mr Ladwig thought that the Indian pilots were given instructions to fly despite the fact that

the entire Pakistani air defence was on high alert and their jets were already in the sky. The IAF hasn't given details of the mission or about its air operations strategy.

Beijing also hasn't made any comment on reports of the J-10 taking down Indian fighter jets, including the Rafale. But unconfirmed reports of the J-10 bringing down a Western weapon system has triggered jubilation and triumphalism on Chinese social media.

Carlotta Rinaudo, a China researcher at the International Team for the Study of Security in Verona, said Chinese social media was flooded with nationalistic messages even though it's difficult to reach a conclusion with the available information.

"At the moment perception matters way more than reality. If we see it in that way, the main winner is really China," she said.

For China, Pakistan is a strategic and economic ally. It is investing more than \$50bn (£37bn) to build infrastructure in Pakistan as part of its China-Pakistan Economic corridor. So, a weak Pakistan is not in China's interest. China made a critical difference in the latest India-Pakistan conflict, says Imtiaz Gul, a Pakistani security analyst. "It took the Indian planners by sheer surprise. They didn't probably envision the depth of co-operation in the modern warfare between Pakistan and China," he said.

Experts say the performance of the Chinese jets in a real combat situation was keenly analysed in Western capitals as this will have cascading impact on global arms trade. The US is the world's largest arms exporter, while China is the fourth.

China sells weapons mostly to developing countries like Myanmar and Pakistan. Previously the Chinese weapon systems were criticised for their poor quality and technical problems.

Reports said the Burmese military grounded several of its JF-17 fighter jets – jointly manufactured by China and Pakistan in 2022 – due to technical malfunctions.

The Nigerian military reported several technical problems with the Chinese made F-7 fighter jets.

Another point to be noted is that this was not the first time that India lost an aircraft to Pakistan.

In 2019, during a brief air battle between the two sides following similar Indian air strikes on suspected terrorist targets in Pakistan, a Russian-made MiG-21 jet was shot down inside Pakistani territory and the pilot was captured. He was released a few days later.

India, however, said that the pilot had ejected after successfully shooting down Pakistani fighter jets, including a US-made F-16. Pakistan has denied the claim.

Despite reports of the downing of Indian jets last week, experts like Mr Ladwig argue that India was able to hit an "impressive breadth of targets" inside Pakistan early in the morning of 10 May and this fact has gone largely unnoticed by the international media. The Indian military said in a co-ordinated attack, it launched missiles on 11 Pakistani air bases across the country, including the strategic Nur Khan air base outside Rawalpindi, not far from the Pakistani military headquarters. It's a sensitive target that took Islamabad by surprise.

One of the furthest targets was in Bholari, 140km (86 miles) from the southern city of Karachi.

Mr Ladwig says this time the IAF operated with standard procedures - first attacking Pakistani air defence and radar systems and then focusing on ground targets.

The Indian jets used an array of missiles, loitering munitions and drones despite the Pakistanis operating the Chinese-provided HQ 9 air defence system.

"It seems the attacks were relatively precise and targeted. The craters were in the middle of runways, exactly the ideal spot. If it were a longer conflict, how long would it take the Pakistani Air Force to get these facilities up and running again, I can't say," Mr Ladwig pointed out.

Nevertheless, he said, by refusing to get into the details of the mission briefing, India's military "lost control of the narrative thread". In response to the Indian strikes, Pakistan said it launched missile and air strikes on several Indian forward air bases, but Delhi said the attacks caused no damage to equipment and personnel.

Realising that the situation was getting out of control, the US and its allies intervened and put pressure on both countries to stop the fighting.

But for India, experts say, the whole episode is a wake-up call.

Beijing may not comment on the details of the recent India-Pakistan conflict, but it's keen to show that its weapon systems are fast catching up with the West.

Delhi is aware that the jets China has supplied to Pakistan are some of the earlier models. Beijing has already inducted the more advanced J-20 stealth fighter jets, that can evade radars.

India and China have a long-standing border dispute along the Himalayas and fought a brief border war in 1962 that resulted in a defeat for India. A brief border clash took place in Ladakh in June 2020.

Experts say India is acutely aware that it needs to accelerate investments in its homegrown defence manufacturing industry and speed up international buying.

For now, China's defence industry seems to be enjoying the limelight following the claims of success of one of its aircraft in the India-Pakistan conflict.

From Empire to Nation-State: Ethnic Politics in China, Yan Sun

19 May 2025, FNVA, Rinzin Namgyal

Sun, Yan. From Empire to Nation State: Ethnic Politics in China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 250 pp. Paperback, ISBN 9781108794411. USD \$41.99.

Yan Sun 滙, a distinguished professor at the City University of New York 節立大学 and a prolific scholar of Chinese politics, offers a compelling and thought-provoking analysis in her book From Empire to Nation-State: Ethnic Politics in China. Drawing on sources in both Chinese and English, fieldwork, and

interviews with Chinese Party cadres, political scientists, and anthropologists, the book provides a deeply informed exploration of ethnic policy in China, culminating in the Lhasa and Urumqi riots of 2008–2009.

One of the book's central contributions is its use of what Sun terms a "long causal chain" to interpret ethnic tensions. She foregrounds two key dynamics: centralisation—rooted in China's imperial legacies—and ethnicisation, shaped by modern political imperatives. The administrative ambiguity in the classification and enumeration of ethnic groups is well illustrating how detailed. the framework was both constructed manipulated. Sun's treatment of "loose rein" policies versus ethno-territorialism sheds light on the historical shifts in governing China's outer peripheries, namely Tibet and Xinjiang.

The narrative traces the evolution of governance strategies from elite co-optation in imperial China to assimilationist efforts in the Beiyang era, through to Mao's contradictory mix of egalitarianism and ethnic particularism. In the reform era, Sun identifies market-driven ethnic particularism as a third force fueling discontent. The discussion of Hu Yaobang's ethnic reforms in 1980s, along with central policy documents that facilitated ethnic identity formation, is especially insightful in author's argument. Importantly, Sun maps out the ideological contest among Chinese elites over ethnic policy, dividing perspectives into three broad schools: liberal autonomists, integrationists, and socialist autonomists. This framework enhances our understanding of ongoing policy debates in China for minorities. Currently, social autonomists exert a discernible influence over prevailing policy frameworks, while the author astutely categorises the former United Front Work Department executive chairman, Zhu Weigun, as an integrationist. This circumstance elicits a disconcerting inquiry: by what rationale was a fervent integrationist entrusted with leading the Chinese delegation in the Sino-Tibet dialogue, which has remained deadlocked since 2010? Such a

choice profoundly underscores the Chinese government's apparent disinclination to pursue a genuine resolution to the Tibet issue. The concluding chapters of the book present a nuanced comparative analysis of religious, educational, and economic policies in Tibet and Xinjiang. Sun compellingly contends that the state's initial endorsement of religious revivalism—intended as a strategy integration—paradoxically facilitated articulation of distinct ethnic identities, thereby triggering increasingly repressive countermeasures. Her discerning contrast between Tibet's sectarian pluralism and Xinjiang's vulnerability to transnational pan-Islamic ideologies offers a cogent explanation for the Chinese state's divergent policy responses towards these two peripheral regions. Nevertheless, several limitations merit critical consideration. The book's methodological reliance on a historicalpolitical lens, while analytically robust, affords scant attention to the lived realities of ethnic minority communities. inevitably left pondering: how, civilisation steeped in Confucian principles of social harmony, did such deep-seated class and ethnic conflict emerge and Why in China? Why does the Chinese state persist in implementing policies that recurrently provoke resistance and unrest? And why is there a conspicuous absence of adaptive despite governance. the demonstrable sociopolitical costs of sustained repression? While the book skillfully outlines institutional tensions—centralisation versus autonomy, development versus identity. It is less attuned to grassroots perspectives and the emotional landscape of minority communities. Nonetheless, Sun's work remains a vital contribution to the field of Chinese politics and ethnic studies. It is an essential read for students and scholars alike, as well as anyone interested in the complexities of statebuilding in a multi-ethnic society of People's Republic of China 中 人民共和国.

China's Name War in Indian Arunachal Pradesh Continues

19 May 2025, <u>Bitter Winter</u>, Massimo Introvigne

China continues to "Sinicize" geographical names in an Indian state it claims as its own. Enough, says the Indian government.

In April 2024, "Bitter Winter" reported China's bizarre attempt to claim sovereignty over a part of India, Arunachal Pradesh, by changing the names of mountains, rivers, and cities on the map.

Arunachal Pradesh is an Indian state established by the Simla Convention between China, India, and Tibet during 1913–14. Nevertheless, China, which signed but never ratified the Simla Convention, asserts that Arunachal Pradesh belongs to its territory, modifies its maps to reflect this, and urges the international community to follow suit.

Certainly, to assert control over Arunachal Pradesh, China must invade the region. This was precisely what occurred in 1962 during the Sino-Indian War, when the area was known as The North-East Frontier Agency. The People's Liberation Army of China seized significant portions of Arunachal Pradesh, though it eventually withdrew. Nonetheless, China persists in its claim over Arunachal Pradesh, with a specific focus on the historically and religiously important city of Tawang, located close to the border with the PRC.

Following unsuccessful military attempts to conquer Arunachal Pradesh, hampered by robust Indian resistance, China has turned to its covert strategy: altering geographical names.

After thirty such changes in March 2024, this month, China continued with its renaming strategy by "Sinicizing" the names of fifteen mountains, five residential areas, four mountain passes, two rivers, and one lake. China calls the region "Zangnan" or "Southern Xizang," just as it insists on calling Tibet "Xizang."

The international community must ignore these attempts by the PRC to rewrite geography and history.

In a press release last week, India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "We have noticed that China has persisted with its vain and preposterous attempts to name places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Consistent with our principled position, we reject such attempts categorically. Creative naming will not alter the undeniable reality that Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India."

War over Taiwan is a real possibility

18 May 2025, <u>The Sunday Guardian</u>, Khedroob Thondup

Taiwan's growing sense of national identity has further complicated the situation

The possibility of war between China and Taiwan has long been a concern, but recent developments suggest that the risk is growing at an alarming rate. While diplomatic efforts continue, the geopolitical landscape has shifted in ways that make conflict increasingly likely. China has intensified its military presence around Taiwan, conducting largescale drills that simulate a blockade and invasion.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has modernized its forces, boasting the world's largest navy and an arsenal of ballistic missiles designed to neutralize Taiwan's defences. These actions signal Beijing's readiness to use force if necessary. Taiwan's growing sense of national identity has further complicated the situation. Polls indicate that fewer Taiwanese people support unification with China, making peaceful integration unlikely. Meanwhile, Beijing has made it clear that any formal declaration of independence would trigger military action. The gap between Taiwan's aspirations and China's demands is widening, leaving little room for compromise.

The US and its allies have reaffirmed their commitment to Taiwan's defence, increasing arms sales and military cooperation. This has led to heightened tensions, with China viewing these actions as direct interference in its internal affairs. The risk of miscalculation—where one side overestimates its position and triggers a conflict—has never been higher. A war over Taiwan would send shockwaves through the global economy. Taiwan is a critical hub for semiconductor production, supplying about 60% of the world's microchips.

A disruption in this industry would cripple supply chains, affecting everything from smartphones to military systems. While war is not inevitable, the conditions for conflict are more pronounced than ever. Military buildups, political rigidity, and international rivalries have created a volatile situation where a single misstep could lead to war. The world must tread carefully, as the consequences of such a conflict would be catastrophic.

China Is Enabling Pakistan's Proxy Terror Against India

18 May 2025, National Review, Jianli Yang



Chinese President Xi Jinping applauds after a a joint press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, May 13, 2025.(Tingshu Wang/Pool via Reuters)

Beijing's diplomatic protection of terrorist organizations is aimed at weakening India in South Asia.

For more than a decade, the Communist Party of China has positioned itself as a vocal opponent of terrorism in global fora, invoking the language of stability, responsibility, and multilateral cooperation. Yet, this carefully constructed image collapses under scrutiny when measured against Beijing's long-standing, strategically calculated support for

Pakistan's use of proxy terror groups against India. The recent escalation of violence, culminating in the April 2025 Pahalgam attack, demonstrates how China's diplomatic protection has emboldened terrorist organizations operating from Pakistani soil.

The April 22 Pahalgam attack represents one of the deadliest terrorist incidents in India since the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Five armed militants targeted tourists in the picturesque Baisaran Valley of Kashmir, killing 26 civilians including 25 tourists and a local Muslim pony ride operator. The attackers, armed with M4 carbines and AK-47s, specifically targeted Hindu tourists, forcing them to identify their religion before executing them at point-blank range. Several newlywed couples were among the victims, with husbands shot in front of their wives.

This massacre follows a disturbing pattern of including the 2019 Pulwama attacks bombing, which killed 40 Indian security personnel, and the 2016 Uri attack, which claimed the lives of 19 Indian soldiers. In each case, the operational trail leads back to organizations such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) — groups that are not only tolerated but, in many cases, sustained by elements of Pakistan's militaryintelligence establishment. (The Pakistani government, naturally, denies any connection or support to these groups.) Nevertheless, security agencies have identified Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafeez Saeed and his deputy, Saifullah Kasuri, as the masterminds behind the Pahalgam attack. Both men operate freely from Pakistan.

Many Westerners may not realize, however, that Beijing's use of procedural vetoes to block the listing of known terrorists has become a familiar and dangerous pattern of Chinese statecraft. At the U.N. Security Council's 1267 Sanctions Committee, China repeatedly blocked the designation of JeM chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist, despite overwhelming evidence of his involvement in numerous attacks on Indian soil. Between 2016 and 2019, China placed "technical holds" on proposals to list Azhar as a terrorist four times, creating years of delay

that allowed him to continue operating with impunity.

Even after the Pulwama attack in February 2019, China blocked a U.N. Security Council measure to blacklist Azhar in March 2019, only relenting in May 2019 after intense international pressure. China has similarly obstructed sanctions against other Pakistan-based terrorists and organizations, including Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Lashkar-e-Taiba's political arm. This pattern continues today, with China likely to veto any resolution against Pakistan regarding the Pahalgam attack, as predicted by former U.N. diplomat and Indian politician Shashi Tharoor.

China's protection of Pakistan-born terrorism stems from calculated strategic interests. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative worth over \$60 billion, traverses through sensitive territories including Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Launched in 2015, this 3,000-kilometer corridor connects China's northwestern Xinjiang province to the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar in Balochistan.

For China, Pakistan serves as more than just an economic partner. It represents a critical strategic counterweight to India's regional influence. By keeping India preoccupied with cross-border terrorism, China is effectively constraining a potential rival while advancing its own regional hegemony. As noted by strategic analyst Brahma Chellaney, "While Pakistan employs terrorist groups as proxies to bleed India, China uses Pakistan as a proxy to box in India."

What makes China's behavior particularly egregious is its blatant double standard on terrorism. While Beijing enforces sweeping measures against what it deems extremist threats in Xinjiang, including the internment of over a million Uyghur Muslims in "vocational education and training" camps, it adopts a strikingly different approach to Islamist terrorism directed at India.

In Xinjiang, China has created a dystopian surveillance state and implemented radical programs of "de-extremification" against Turkic Muslim minorities, actions that many consider tantamount to genocide. Yet when confronted with evidence of Pakistansponsored terrorism against its neighbors, China repeatedly calls for "dialogue" and "mutual understanding," reflecting a deeply cynical approach to international counterterrorism efforts.

For India, the challenge extends beyond individual attacks. After tensions escalated following the Pahalgam massacre, with India conducting airstrikes on targets inside Pakistan itself on May 7, 2025, the risk of wider regional conflict grew quickly. India must develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses both immediate security concerns and long-term diplomatic challenges.

Domestically, counterterrorism and intelligence efforts must remain robust. However, the larger battle is diplomatic and narrative-based. India must systematically expose China's strategic enablement of terrorism and build stronger coalitions with nations that share concerns about Beijing's selective approach to international norms. At the U.N. Security Council, recent closed-door consultations have already revealed growing skepticism about Pakistan's position, with members grilling Islamabad's representatives over Lashkar-e-Taiba's involvement in the Pahalgam attack.

By shielding Pakistan diplomatically and financing it economically, Beijing is playing an active role in normalizing asymmetric violence in South Asia. The Pahalgam attack must be understood not just as a tragic isolated incident, but as the product of a broader system of indirect enablement, in which China's diplomatic cover allows terrorism originating out of Pakistan as a lowcost, high-impact tool of asymmetric warfare. Each time Beijing blocks international action against Pakistan-based terrorist leaders, it sends a message that terrorism against India carries minimal diplomatic consequences. This calculated approach undermines global counterterrorism efforts and threatens stability across South Asia. Until the international community directly addresses China's role as a strategic harborer of terrorism, the deadly cycle of violence will

likely continue, with innocent civilians bearing the ultimate cost of this dangerous geopolitical game.

Dynamics and Geopolitical Interests in China-Nepal Relations

18 May 2025, Special Eurasia

Executive Summary

This report analyses the bilateral relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, considering Beijing's interests in South Asia according to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project. We examine the economic and strategic dynamics defining cooperation between the two countries, assessing the impact of the PRC's growing influence on Nepal's domestic affairs.

National autonomy and the economy remain two crucial factors guiding Kathmandu' foreign policy, because of its geographical location between China and India. Kathmandu, therefore, must balance its diplomatic manoeuvres, considering that New Delhi might perceive a rising Chinese-Nepalese relations as a threat to its nation.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Nepal has a crucial position for the Chinese economic and military interests in the South Asian region.
- 2. Katmandu, by implementing the policy of non-alignment and self-declared as Zone of Peace, has defined a diplomatic strategy to balance its bilateral relations with Beijing and New Delhi.
- 3. Since 2013, Nepal has identified the BRI as an opportunity to stimulate national economic growth and improve the efficiency of its military.

Background Information

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is in the heart of the South Asian region and plays an important role as a buffer zone between India and the People's Republic of China. Nepal shares borders with India to the east, south and west, while to the north it shares a 1,389 km border with the Tibet

Autonomous Region (TAR). TAR is for Beijing a strategic territory because of its position and water sources since: indeed, China's major rivers, which play a crucial role in the country's hydroelectric infrastructure, originate in this area.

Nepal's particular geophysical conformation has conditioned its diplomatic relations with the PRC (formalised in 1955) based on:

- 1. Since 1945, Nepal has remained neutral regarding conflicts in South Asia, as happened with the 1962 Sino-Indian War, fought along two disputed sectors of the Himalayan border: Aksai Chin, now controlled by Beijing, and Arunachal Pradesh, now administered by New Delhi. To ensure strategic and economic independence from China and India, Kathmandu officially adopted policies of non-alignment and a zone of peace.
- 2. In matters of diplomacy, Kathmandu's support for Beijing0s "One China" policy underscores the prioritisation of national security, specifically addressing the challenges posed by Taiwanese, Tibetan (in the TAR), and Uyghur independence movements.

Geopolitical Scenario

Since the launch of the BRI in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping described the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal as an indispensable player in increasing Beijing's economic-military influence in the South Asian region. Therefore, in this scenario, the People' Republic of China aims at achieving two primary goals:

- 1. Eroding India's influence over Kathmandu, which is partly facilitated by Hinduism as the majority religion in both countries
- 2. Strengthening cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan by implementing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This project, together with the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, represents a crucial instrument to

reduce the dependence of the Chinese industrial apparatus on the Malacca Sea Route, which is vital for the import of fossil energy resources from the Gulf countries.

Beijing strengthened Therefore, has economic-diplomatic influence in Nepal by several bilateral agreements, ratifying including the Memorandum of Understanding on Investment and Cooperation in Production *Capacity* (2017), the *Memorandum* **Understanding** on Energy Cooperation (2018), and Framework Agreement on the Promotion of Investment and Economic Cooperation (2024).

China and Nepal have agreed to long-term cooperation on infrastructure including the UT-1 Hydropower Project and Pokhara International Airport, following the ratification of these agreements. The Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower Project, located along the Trishuli River, is one of the major hydropower plants under construction in Nepal, which is expected to be completed in 2026, providing a capacity of 216 megawatts. The Nepal Water and Energy Development Company Pvt mostly managed the works; however, the Power Construction Corporation of China Ltd is providing important engineering support.

Conversely, China CAMC Engineering Co. constructed Pokhara International Regional Airport (opened in 2023), a project costing approximately \$215.96 million, funded by a loan from the Export-Import Bank of China.

Since 2016, the PRC has intensified foreign direct investment in Nepal, to increase Kathmandu's technological and financial dependence on Beijing. This situation increases the risk of Nepal falling into a "debt trap," where excessive debt to China could lead to a loss of autonomy and economic and financial instability. An analysis of trade flows between the two countries in the period July 2023 – April 2024 shows a gradual consolidation of this interdependence.

Bilateral trade between the two countries more than doubled in the first eleven months of the 2023/2024 fiscal year, reaching over

94.25 billion Nepali rupees (about USD 709 million), compared to 40 billion rupees during the same period the previous year. Nepal's imports of high-tech goods from China, totalling roughly US\$696 million, fuelled the growth. Conversely, while rising, Nepalese exports to China totalled a mere NPR 1.63 billion (around USD 12.3 million). The unbalanced trade structure highlights a trend toward unequal integration, bolstering China's influence while restricting Nepal's economic manoeuvrability.

In its bilateral dialogue with the Nepalese governments, Beijing also proposed military Kathmandu through cooperation in provision of military military aid and cooperation. Indeed, in 2017, Beijing delivered equipment worth some \$32.3 million to the Nepalese army and, six years later, Nepal signed a \$45 million contract with China North Industries Corporation to supply 26 armoured personnel carriers, 72 tactical vehicles and 10,000 5.56 mm calibre assault rifles. Always in 2017, China and Nepal established the 'Sagarmatha Friendship' exercise, designed to foster the exchange of procedures in counter-terrorism and emergency management operations.

China views its military and training support in Kathmandu as a strategic effort to enhance border security and counter migration and trafficking issues, as well as to limit Indian influence in the Himalayan region. Additionally, it aims to bolster the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and promote the Belt and Road Initiative by strengthening ties with Nepal and Pakistan.

Conclusion

Beijing's interest in South Asia is changing the geopolitical balance in the Himalayan area. Nepal assumes a strategic role for Chinese infrastructural and commercial investments and increased control along the 1,389 km long Tibetan border.

Since the launch of the BRI, Beijing has adopted a multi-level approach combining investment, technical help and soft power to merge its influence in Nepal, although this growing involvement entails risks to the sovereignty of the country, with possible

asymmetrical dependencies in terms of debt and strategic alignment to the Chinese interests.

Nepal is attempting to maintain a diplomatic balance between the PRC and India by adopting a non-aligned foreign policy, which is strongly influenced by its geographical location and regional rivalries. While it represents an opportunity to diversify international partners, opening up to Beijing may undermine traditional ties with India, which is keen to preserve its Himalayan sphere of influence.

In conclusion, Kathmandu will need to work to maintain its independence by taking advantage of the tensions between the major regional powers. At the same time, it must practice careful diplomacy to avoid becoming too dependent on any one country and to play an active, independent role in the region.

How Beijing's 1995 Disappearance of the Panchen Lama Enabled Crimes Against Humanity

17 May 2025, <u>The Diplomat</u>, Sophie Richardson

China weathered no consequences for abducting a 6-year-old in 1995. That same impunity continues to fuel collective punishment, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention.

Thirty years ago today, Chinese authorities disappeared a six-year-old Tibetan boy and his family. They haven't been heard from since – but the impunity enjoyed by the Chinese government continues to fuel threats to religious freedom, collective punishment, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention.

In early 1995, the Dalai Lama identified a young boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, as the incarnation of the Panchen Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's second highest-ranking monk. But the government, then headed by Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, refused to acknowledge the Dalai Lama's decision, and identified another child for the role. To prevent Tibetans from

becoming loyal to the boy chosen according to religious traditions, authorities opted to abduct him and his family.

But this story didn't end in 1995: the genuine Panchen Lama and his family are far from Beijing's only Tibetan victims of enforced disappearances arbitrary and detention. Databases of Tibetans wrongfully detained currently reflect grim descriptions: "life imprisonment," "forcible disappearance," and, chillingly, "no further government information." Chinese restrictions on information make definitive conclusions difficult, but research that likely underestimates counts of political prisoners shows that while Tibetans comprise only half a percent of China's total population, they made up 8 percent of all prisoners of conscience sentenced between 2019 and 2024.

In 2017, United Nations human rights experts tasked with tracking arbitrary detention assessed the case of Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan shopkeeper, and determined that he had been wrongfully detained for his wholly legal advocacy in support of Tibetan-medium education. In the same decision the experts also argued that the scope and scale of such abuses across China might be so great such that they might constitute a crime against humanity.

It is possible Beijing will never clarify how, let alone how many, Tibetans have died in state custody. Even in high-profile cases authorities have refused to provide the remains of and key information to family and religious community members. The body of revered monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, who died in July 2015 after being tortured in prison, was swiftly cremated, preventing an investigation. Questions are swirling about Tulku Hunkar Dorjee, a well-known monk who fled political pressure to Vietnam, where he died under highly questionable 2025; he circumstances in April was cremated without family consent, but with Chinese officials present.

Beijing's efforts to erase Tibetans' distinct identity is not limited to sometimes lethal illtreatment in detention, or to silencing community leaders. effort In an to permanently disrupt the transmission of culture from one generation to the next, Tibetan medium education has been virtually eradicated in coercive boarding schools for children as young as four. Beijing's claims of eradicating poverty across Tibetan areas are widespread built on human violations: seizures of land, water, and other resources; infrastructure development devoid consultation; deepseated discrimination against Tibetans in employment and education. State control of religion - from approving texts and clergy to managing monasteries – is pervasive, and violations punishments for Monk Choegyal Wangpo is scheduled for release in September 2039; his "crime" was to talk to fellow monastics in Nepal.

Some democracies continue to call on Beijing to release the genuine Panchen Lama and his family, and decry other violations against Tibetans, including enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention. Over the years many democracies' senior leaders have met with the Dalai Lama, and will no doubt send him good wishes as he marks his 90th birthday this July. But absent tougher measures, Beijing is unlikely to change its conduct. When diaspora Tibetans go to the polls to elect a new exile government, and when succession to the Dalai Lama begins, democracies should support choices. and publicly reject Tibetans' Beijing's efforts to undermine or control either process. No democracy should receive Chinese government officials representing Tibetan issues until the genuine Panchen Lama and his family have been released.

And when Chinese officials assert, as they occasionally do under pressure, that the genuine Panchen Lama and his family are fine and happy with their lives, democracies should ask to visit them in person and reject this unverified claim for what it truly reflects: an intent by Beijing to continue covering up its ongoing crimes against humanity. The arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances inflicted on generations of Tibetans should motivate the formation of international efforts to gather evidence of

these widespread, systematic violations with the goal of holding Chinese government officials accountable – an approach that might help spare people across China more decades of abuses.

Maintain status quo

17 May 2025, The Arunachal Times

India and China have once again engaged in a war of words over the renaming of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The two giants, with a history of frosty relations and a recent reconnection after four years of open hostility – including deadly border clashes – have quickly returned to a tense standoff.

China has released 27 new names, which include 15 mountains, four passes, two rivers, a lake, and five inhabited areas.

This is not the first time China has renamed places in Arunachal, which it claims as its own territory. China refers to the region as South Zangnan. It also refers to Tibet, under Chinese control, as 'Zangnan'.

The Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs released the first list of standardised names for six places in Zangnan in 2017. A second list of 15 places followed in 2021, and another list with names for 11 places was issued in 2023. India, in its latest statement, has dismissed these renaming attempts as "vain and preposterous," asserting that such moves will not alter the "undeniable" reality that the state "was, is, and will always remain" an integral part of India.

China's Foreign Ministry responded by saying the move falls within China's "sovereign rights."

The timing of China's latest move is notable, as relations with India had only recently begun to thaw. However, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that it comes at a time when India and Pakistan were on the brink of full-blown war. While China has advocated dialogue, it continues to be one of Pakistan's strongest allies.

What the future holds is difficult to predict, but for now, it would be in the best interest of both countries to maintain the status quo.

China is building the world's largest dam in Tibet, an energy giant with heavy consequences

17 May 2025, Farmingdale Observer

China's engineering ambitions reach new heights with its latest megaproject in Tibet. The nation is constructing what will become the world's largest hydroelectric dam on the Yarlung Zangbo River. This colossal structure will generate an unprecedented 60 gigawatts of electricity – almost three times the capacity of the current record-holder, the Three Gorges Dam.

Tibet's mega-dam: an unprecedented energy titan

The Tibetan plateau, already home to some of the world's highest elevations, will soon host humanity's most powerful hydroelectric project. Built on the mighty Yarlung Zangbo River, this mammoth dam represents China's bold push toward energy independence and carbon neutrality.

Unlike conventional hydroelectric projects, this Tibetan dam harnesses the unique geography of the region. The steep mountain gradients create exceptional potential energy that engineers will convert into electricity through advanced turbine technology. When completed, the dam will dwarf the Three Gorges Dam's 22 gigawatt capacity with its 60 gigawatt output.

China's ambitious infrastructure endeavors aren't limited to energy projects. The country recently unveiled a hypersonic aircraft capable of circumnavigating Earth in just two hours, demonstrating their commitment to technological advancement across multiple sectors.

The engineering principles behind the dam remain relatively simple despite its massive scale. Water stored in a reservoir flows through turbines under tremendous pressure, spinning generators that produce electricity. However, executing this concept at such an unprecedented scale presents enormous technical challenges that Chinese engineers are confidently tackling.

Energy transformation and climate goals

This monumental hydroelectric project represents a cornerstone in China's strategy to transition away from coal dependency. Currently, coal fuels about 60% of China's electricity production, creating significant environmental and health challenges for the nation's population and contributing substantially to global carbon emissions.

The Tibetan mega-dam aligns with Beijing's ambitious goal of achieving complete electricity decarbonization by 2060. This transition is especially crucial as China navigates the complex balance between maintaining economic growth and addressing climate change impacts that already affect the region.

Environmental concerns grow increasingly urgent as researchers have discovered mechanisms that could accelerate the collapse of many species due to human infrastructure development and climate change. These findings add pressure on China to ensure their mega-projects incorporate robust ecological safeguards.

While hydroelectric power offers a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels, critics argue that massive dam projects create their own ecological disruptions. The environmental footprint of such extensive construction in pristine habitats raises questions about whether the climate benefits truly outweigh the local ecological costs.

Ecological and human consequences

The environmental implications of this massive project extend far beyond Tibet's borders. The Yarlung Zangbo River flows downstream to become the Brahmaputra, a vital water source for both India and Bangladesh. Altering its flow could potentially trigger ecological disruptions comparable to other environmental disasters caused by human interference with natural systems.

Indigenous communities face potential displacement on a massive scale. Reports suggest up to 1.2 million people may need relocation to accommodate the reservoir. This echoes past megaprojects like the Three Gorges Dam, which displaced over a million

residents. Such large-scale population movements risk erasing cultural heritage and traditional ways of life unique to the Tibetan region.

Water management decisions in one region increasingly affect neighbors in today's interconnected world. Some communities have found creative solutions to their water challenges, as in the case of those who were assisted by beavers in creating natural dams after years of administrative struggles. However, the scale of China's project presents far greater complexities.

The biodiversity impacts remain particularly concerning. The Tibetan plateau hosts unique ecosystems that have evolved in isolation. Massive habitat transformation threatens numerous rare species, potentially triggering extinction events that would represent irreversible losses to global biodiversity.

Regional tensions and resource diplomacy

China's dam project has intensified geopolitical tensions with its downstream neighbors. India and Bangladesh have expressed serious concerns about potential water supply disruptions, especially during seasonal dry periods when river flow already diminishes naturally.

Beijing has officially committed to responsible water management but historical precedents have created skepticism. Previous Chinese hydroelectric projects have been accused of reducing water flow to downstream countries, creating diplomatic friction that this significantly larger project may exacerbate.

Regional infrastructure development presents complex challenges beyond just technical considerations. China's experience with investing \$86 billion in a city that now struggles to attract residents demonstrates how massive projects sometimes fail to achieve their intended outcomes despite enormous expenditures.

While hydroelectric technology offers significant benefits for clean energy production, the path toward sustainable energy transitions presents unexpected challenges that require careful navigation. China's approach to addressing these tensions

will significantly influence regional stability in the coming decades.

As humanity pushes technological boundaries in our quest for sustainable energy, we continue looking outward as well. Scientists using advanced observational tools are even searching for undiscovered planets in our solar system while we transform our own world through massive engineering projects like this Tibetan mega-dam.

India's MIDWIFE Strategy: Will It Suffice to Counterbalance China?

16 May 2025, International Affairs, Professor Patrick Mendis and Professor Antonina Luszczykiewicz-Mendis

India's emerging "MIDWIFE" strategy reflects a calculated response to China's growing regional assertiveness, balancing autonomy with deepening ties to the United States and Indo-Pacific allies. As China tightens its geopolitical grip, New Delhi is leveraging demography, diplomacy, and defence to quietly shape a multipolar regional order.

In our article on China's "peaceful war" and strategy published "MIDLIFE" the Australian Outlook, we distinguished the seven pillars of Beijing's ongoing competition with Washington. Although this comprehensive strategy primarily allows China to battle with the United States without resorting to kinetic and war-like conflicts, Beijing is also directly or indirectly targeting other countries, particularly India. However, New Delhi appears to have its own "MIDWIFE" strategy—by securing both American and Indian national interests—to counterbalance China.

China's Pressure Points of Indian Containment

China's playbook includes the encirclement of India—or "sandwiching" it—via the "string of pearls" in the Indian Ocean (or China's "Western Ocean"), in the south, and with coercive tactics along the Himalayan mountainous region in the north. Additionally, India is bordered by China's

"all-weather friend" Pakistan in the west and increasingly pro-Chinese Bangladesh in the east. Nepal and Bhutan—India's traditional spheres of influence—seem to have also shifted more favorably towards Beijing.

Far from seeking resolution, Beijing's strategy hinges on keeping the Sino-Indian border dispute simmering and continuously exploiting it as a leverage over New Delhi. As exemplified by the Doklam standoff in 2017 and the Galwan Valley clash in 2020, China has kept India "restless" in its efforts to secure its northern boundaries. China may also play a role in the unfolding India-Pakistan conflict following the Pahalgam terrorist attack in the Indian-controlled Kashmir in April 2025. Moreover, Beijing has intensified hydropolitical pressure on India through a range of dam construction and water diversion schemes on the transboundary Brahmaputra River originating in the Tibetan Plateau.

Nonetheless, India is not a passive observer; New Delhi has quietly been asserting its influence in the region through a multifaceted and deliberate foreign policy, which may be encapsulated in the acronym "MIDWIFE" (with a W—as opposed China's MIDLIFE strategy). In our view, the **MIDWIFE** collective approach encompassing Multipolarity, Indo-Pacific Strategy, Demography, Washington, Indian Ocean, Foreign Direct Investment, and English—seeks consolidate India's to demographic dividends and economic advantages as a regional power to stand up to Beijing's pressure.

The MIDWIFE strategy

M - Multipolarity: India has purposefully been championing "real multipolarity" that would allow New Delhi to maintain and strengthen its "strategic autonomy" in global affairs. Seemingly rebranding its historical Non-Aligned Movement approach, India has skillfully been upgrading cooperation and friendly relations with a range of regional powers—regardless of their political and ideological orientation—from Southeast Asia to the Middle East. Henceforth, New Delhi has tried to refrain from formal military alliances. Skeptical of decades-long American global dominance, India still views continued US leadership as preferable to Chinese hegemony driven by geoeconomic forces, geopolitical tensions, and technological advancements.

I – Indo-Pacific strategy: Once limited to the Indian Ocean, India's strategic reach has been expanding towards the Western Pacific Ocean since Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo enticed Prime Minister Narendra Modi to adapt the vision of the "free and open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) framework, which was meant to counterbalance the rise of China. Under Washington's leadership, India has been a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with Australia, Japan, and the United States. Having transitioned from the "Look East Policy" to the "Act East Policy," India is now expanding its presence in the South China Sea and the Western Pacific Ocean in a number of ways: 1) India and Indonesia decided to develop cooperation in defence manufacturing and facilitate supply chains and trade links; 2) New Delhi agreed to provide the Philippines with three batches of Russian-backed BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles; and 3) the Indian Navy has begun to train Vietnamese forces at the Cam Ranh Bay. With these links, India has been building its own "string of pearls" for maritime security within its Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) concept to encircle China. To the north and east of China, India has engaged with Mongolia—its distant but "spiritual neighbor"—at an unprecedented level and accelerated its economic, technological, and cultural diplomacy with Taiwan to keep Beijing guessing the intentions of New Delhi. It is apparently India's Ayurvedic remedy to reciprocate and keep China in a "restless" stage as well. For the sake of keeping the mask of strategic autonomy, however, India has continued its membership in BRICS—the original five members of the "Global South" coalition: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

D – **Demography**: India has a "demographic destiny." its workforce With young increasingly propelled by domestic consumption, foreign investment, economic growth, India contrasts starkly with China's aging population, a legacy of the onechild policy and the growing financial burden to raise children. India's "demographic dividend" offers long-term economic and strategic advantages. Equally important is the role of the dynamically growing Indian diaspora, composed highly-skilled of professionals and outstanding students—not just in English-speaking countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, but also in relatively new and increasingly destinations popular

like Poland and Taiwan.

Washington: The United States W remains India's most indispensable partner. Though not formal allies, India and the United States have deepened defence ties over the past two decades through a wide range of agreements. For example, after the signing of the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002, Washington and New Delhi adopted the US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement in 2008. Thus, the United States integrated the Indian subcontinent into its own "lasting geopolitical interests" in the nuclear domain despite concerns over nonproliferation issues raised by the international community. In 2016, the democracies signed the Logistics two Memorandum of Agreement Exchange (LEMOA) followed by the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement in 2018 (COMCASA) and the Basic Agreement Exchange and Cooperation (BECA) for Geospatial and Intelligence Cooperation in 2020. The Biden White House extended this list with the Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) in 2024. At the White House in February 2025, President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi announced the Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance (ASIA), whose aim is to codevelop and co-produce maritime drones and counter-drone systems, which is a part of the new "US-India COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce and Technology) for the 21st Century." New Delhi's rapport with

the successive Democratic and Republican administrations in Washington demonstrates the continuity of bilateral engagement despite the ongoing negotiations over tariffs imposed by the Trump administration to extract more benefits from India.

- Indian Ocean: New Delhi has traditionally been considered the guardian of the Indian Ocean—a vital role endorsed by Washington, as revealed by the "US strategic framework for the Indo-Pacific" document declassified in early 2021. India is also reviving foreign relations with key maritime neighbors like Sri Lanka and utilising the strategic location of its Andaman Islands to monitor China's "scientific" seabed surveys and navigational activities across the deep waters. Most importantly, India wants to minimise China's presence in Sri Lanka and the Maldives; hence, stopping Beijing from turning the Indian Ocean—the only ocean named after a country—into China's "Western Ocean," as described in the ancient literature and mythology of the Middle Kingdom. Former Indian Foreign Secretary and National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon identified Sri Lanka as India's "unsinkable aircraft carrier." It is similar to that of Taiwan for the United States. For China, however, Sri Lanka is the "crown jewel" in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (and potentially a "Chinese colony"), while Taiwan is a "renegade province." For geopolitical and geoeconomic reasons, both Sri Lanka and Taiwan have now become the "bookends" to the evolving Indo-Pacific strategy in Sino-American and Indian-American relations.

F – Foreign direct investment: Challenging the "Made in China" manufacturing sector, the "Make in India" initiative aims to position India as an industrial and export hub for the world. From a long-term perspective, it is designed to attract foreign investment and know-how to reduce Indian dependence on trading with China and to boost technological self-reliance. More recently, Indian conglomerates—like Adani, Reliance, and Tata—have been seeking joint ventures with American and other partners for investment in

both India and abroad. For example, New Delhi has expanded its 2022 bilateral UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement to include Sri Lanka in April 2025 by signing a three-way deal to develop Trincomalee—a strategic deep-sea port city on the east coast of Sri Lanka—as an "energy hub." Since WWII, Trincomalee has served as a refueling and supply-chain conduit for British and US aircraft and naval ships in addition to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. With the New Delhi-led trilateral cooperative agreement, Sri Lanka's energy sector and its strategic location have increasingly become a "political battleground." China has agreed in January 2025 to invest in a US\$3.7 billion oil refinery in Hambantota, the Chinese-built port city on the southern coast of Sri Lanka. Compared to China, India's investments in Sri Lanka are very modest; nevertheless, New Delhi can now assume that Beijing will not use Sri Lanka for military purposes.

E - English: With India's colonial British legacy, the mastery of English language has become comparative advantage international affairs. As China "clamps down" on English education, India leverages its linguistic alignment with the global marketplace, easing international business engagement, conducting diplomacy, and encouraging student mobility. United by democratic values and English language, India has, for example, embarked on a new era of collaboration in trade, technology, and education sectors with Taiwan, which, unlike China, is now trying to adopt bilingualism. Moreover, Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and India's Act East Policy, which synergise with the policies of the South China Sea nations like Indonesia and the Philippines, to diversify their economic seem dependencies away from the inward-looking, anti-English nationalism in China.

Strategic patience, not passive resistance

India's approach is not marked by dramatic moves, but by quiet persistence, long-term strategic planning and military posturing. Patience, arguably even greater than that of China, is what may be the key to New Delhi's continued success.

In February 2025, India's strategic approach has seemingly culminated with the signing of a stack of energy and defence deals with Trump, which are paving the way for India to acquire the coveted F-35 stealth fighter jets. Modi additionally invoked the now famous MAGA (Make America Great Again) slogan: "when America and India work together, that is when MAGA plus MIGA [Make India Great Again] becomes MEGA - it's mega partnership for prosperity." Modi then reiterated that "it is this mega spirit that gives new scale and scope" for the Indian-US umbilical cord-like relationship to shape the new strategic foundation and the new world order for the 21st century.

Yet this rise must be calibrated carefully to avoid the perception of neo-hegemonic aspirations. India's outreach to Sri Lanka, for instance, has sparked concerns about the secrecy surrounding the defence and trade agreements signed in April 2025 as well as the island's sovereignty—echoing New Delhi's constitutionally-guided influence over Bhutan's diplomatic and defence relations.

Amid the growing trade deficit and budgetary constraints in the United States and increasing pressure from China, Washington needs to preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific for its own advantage and global dominance. India has informally subscribed to align with Despite stated America. its strategic autonomy in foreign policy pronouncements, India's own national interests in economic growth and military ascendance overlap with American interests to jointly counterbalance an assertive China.

China accuses Taiwan of 'de-Sinicization' move, sounds familiar? 16 May 2025, Tibetan Review

In a twist of fate, China has condemned alleged attempts by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities to push "de-Sinicization" and sever the historical and cultural ties between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

However, China itself is accused of moving to destroy Tibetan and other so-called ethnic minorities' identities in the name of Sinicization, including by marginalizing their languages. It has also moved to Sinicize the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh by giving its own "standardized" names to various places in it in a series of moves since 2017. China's official Xinhua news agency May 14 said Chen Binhua, a spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, made the condemnation at a press conference in response to the DPP authorities' recent act of reclassifying people of the Han ethnic group as the island's "other" population in its official demographic data.

The report noted that earlier this month, Taiwan's executive body revised demographic information on its official website, removing the term "Han people" and replacing it with "other populations".

China itself is accused of trying to erase "Tibet" by replacing it with the Chinese name "Xizang" and compelling countries friendly with it to do the same. It is also accused of having moved to Sinicize the Tibetan children by coercively moving them to separate boarding schools, isolated from their families and ethnic community.

The *Xinhua* report said the DPP authorities' revision erased explicit recognition of the Han people – Taiwan's largest ethnic group, which has been the island's majority demographic for centuries.

Creativity by China: Tibetan question & Dalai Lama factor in Arunachal Pradesh 15 May 2025, Economic Times

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday rejected China's continued efforts to rename locations in Arunachal Pradesh and asserted that creative naming will not alter the undeniable reality that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.

"We have noticed that China has persisted with its vain and preposterous attempts to name places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh," the MEA stated.

"Consistent with our principled position, we reject such attempts categorically. Creative naming will not alter the undeniable reality that Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India.

China's efforts to rake up Arunachal Pradesh in the middle of India-Pakistan tensions is significant and may signal Beijing's efforts to keep India engaged in both East and the West. Earlier in 2024, MEA had rejected China's repeated attempts to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh. In its official statement last year, the MEA asserted that assigning "invented names" would not alter the reality that the state "is, has been, and will always be" an integral and inalienable part of India. Back in 2017, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs published the initial list of standardized names for six locations in Zangnan (Chinese term for Arunachal Pradesh). Subsequently, a second consisting of 15 places was released in 2021, followed by another list containing names for 11 places in 2023.

Last year, China published a fourth list containing 30 additional names for different locations in Arunachal Pradesh, as part of its ongoing efforts to assert its claim over the Indian state. Beijing claimed Arunachal Pradesh as part of south Tibet and the official website of the ministry has added 30 more names for the region.

China for decades has also opposed visits by Indian leaders to Arunachal Pradesh claiming that the area "belongs to them". Earlier it even issued stapled visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh drawing sharp reaction from India. Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh is of interest to China to bolster their claim over Tibet as the current Dalai Lama fled to India via Tawang and the sixth Dalai Lama was born in Tawang. China's argument is that since the sixth Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso was born in Tawang, it is close to the hearts and religious sentiments of the Tibetan people.

Pakistan's Chengdu J-10 Fighter Jet Is Way Stronger than Everyone Thought

14 May 2025, <u>National Interest</u>, Harrison Kass

The J-10 appears to be a capable fourthgeneration fighter, keeping pace with the Rafale—as the recent dogfight suggests.

The recent air battle between India and Pakistan—reportedly the biggest dogfight in a generation—has intelligence analysts scrambling to digest the implications of the lethal interaction and the lessons learned. American analysts in particular have taken a keen interest in the conflict. Naturally, the Americans have some interest in the military capabilities of India and Pakistan, for strategic reasons. But Washington is far more interested in what the conflict says about America's most capable rival, China.

Pakistan used aircraft from China, its main foreign ally, to participate in the dogfight. Most notably, the Pakistan Air Force employs a fleet of Chinese-made Chengdu J-10 Vigorous Dragon fighters, one of which is believed to have successfully shot down the French-made Dassault Rafale fighter. And with the United States pivoting her attention to China, the closest thing in the world to a peer state, the India-Pakistan conflict offers something of a first look at the newly improved Chinese military capabilities, which the Xi regime has spent billions upon upgrade. American billions The government is carefully studying the J-10, for of better understanding the the sake technologies that China could roll out in a conflict with the United States.

Introducing China's J-10 Fighter Jet

Known to NATO as the "Firebird," the Chengdu J-10 is a medium-weight single-engine multirole fighter. Like many European fighters of the fourth generation, the J-10 features both a delta wing and canards.

Despite its delta wing configuration, the J-10, at a glance, bears a certain resemblance to an American fighter, the F-16 Fighting Falcon. This is probably not a coincidence; the Israelis allegedly sold information to the Chinese about the IAI Lavi, a canceled Israeli fighter

based on the F-16. China denies the connection between the J-10 and the Lavi/F-16, but Russian engineers who have been granted a closer look at the Chinese fighter suggest that the J-10 is likely derived from it. For propulsion, the J-10 relies on a single AL-31FN Series 3, which offers 29,000 pounds of thrust. The AL-31FN permits the J-10 to reach Mach 1.8 (approximately 1,350 mph), with a 59,000-foot service ceiling. Thanks to a 1.04 thrust-to-weight ratio, the J-10 can reach its maximum 59,000-foot service ceiling in about one minute.

Pakistan's J-10s Held Their Ground Against Indian Rafale Jets

In terms of its weaponry, the J-10 is outfitted with a variety of guns, missiles, and bombs. During the recent India-Pakistan dogfight, the aircraft involved are understood to have stayed on their side of their respective borders, meaning the fight occurred entirely under BVR (beyond-visual-range) conditions. BVR fighting depends entirely on air-to-air missiles, and the J-10 is well-prepared for any such fight; it carries the PL-8 and PL-10 short-range missiles, the PL-12 and PL-15 medium-range radar-guided missiles.

Although the India-Pakistan dogfight occurred under BVR conditions, the J-10 is understood to be effective under WVR (within-visual-range) conditions, too. Indeed, the purpose of an aircraft's delta-wing/canard configuration is to allow it to execute tight turns, outmaneuvering enemy aircraft and giving it an advantage in a dogfight. Indeed, some J-10 variants are even equipped with a thrust-vectoring engine nozzle to further enhance the aircraft's maneuverability.

In sum, the J-10 appears to be a capable fourth-generation fighter, keeping pace with the Rafale—as the recent dogfight suggests. And if the J-10 is capable, it raises the likelihood that Chengdu's latest fighter, the J-20 Mighty Dragon, is also well equipped to keep pace with western technology.

Tibet: If You Are a Dissident, We Will Cut Your Electricity and Water

14 May 2025, Bitter Winter, Lopsang Gurung

Then, if you protest, the Chinese will arrest you. This is what happened to Kelsang, a 42-year-old man from Dêngqên County.



Romthang Neytramo monastery, the spiritual center of Dêngqên County. Credits.

China appears to have retaliated once again against a Tibetan dissident. First, his home was denied electricity and water. Now, he has been detained, as his family reported to human rights organizations earlier this month.

Kelsang, a 42-year-old Tibetan from Serdak Township, Dêngqên County, Chamdo Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region, has faced prolonged harassment from Chinese authorities. For over nine years, his family has been denied basic services like electricity and water, impacting their daily lives.

Kelsang has been identified as a dissident because he participated in the 2008 protests and his grandfather's death during the resistance against the Chinese army in the 1950s. He was never forgiven.

In 2016, Kelsang's home was excluded from a local infrastructure project providing essential services. Kelsang's children could not study at night as they had no electricity, so they withdrew from school. The family's isolation increased in 2024 when they were removed from a poverty alleviation program. Between 2016 and early 2025, Kelsang made at least five appeals to local authorities. In March 2025, his latest appeal stressed the ongoing hardships: "Even having electricity

in a very ordinary home has become like a dream for me... It has been nine years."

The appeal letter Kelsang shared on social media, which led to his detention.

On March 20, 2025, Kelsang shared a video on social media about their struggles, gaining significant attention. Four days later, he was detained by police, facing charges of "disrupting social order," which is often used for political suppression.

After his release, harassment escalated. By April 10, 2025, he and his family faced constant surveillance, and residents were prohibited from visiting. Kelsang was repeatedly summoned to the police station, where he was beaten and pressured to confess that his posts were fabricated, which he denied. Authorities removed all his social media content and prevented his family from discussing their situation. His children faced discrimination upon returning to school.

On April 18, 2025, Kelsang was detained again and denied family visits on April 22 and 24. Officials threatened his family, coercing them to sign false confessions.

The family expressed concerns about Kelsang's deteriorating health, citing high blood pressure and the secrecy around his well-being. They emphasized he merely sought equal treatment and did nothing unlawful.

This situation exemplifies the broader trend of criminalizing dissent in Tibet, with Chinese authorities employing intimidation and harassment. The forced confessions, service denial, and other punitive measures reflect the experiences of many Tibetans advocating for cultural and religious rights.

China Builds World's Largest Dam in Tibet: Threat or Innovation?

11 May 2025, <u>Modern Diplomacy</u>, Farras Kanza Amera

China has embarked on an ambitious dam construction project in Tibet, which is expected to be the world's largest hydropower plant.

China has embarked on an ambitious dam construction project in Tibet, which is expected to be the world's largest hydropower plant. The project was announced by the Chinese government as part of a national strategy for green energy relocation and decarbonization, as well as economic growth in remote areas for Tibetans. The decision to build the dam was not a sudden move but rather the result of a long-term plan included in China's five-year plan. The plan will see clean energy such as hydropower as one of the focuses, and the massive dam structure will be seen as a symbol of China's technology in response to future energy needs.

The dam, called Medog or Motuo, is built on the Yarlung Tsangpo River, a river that flows from Tibet to India and finally to Bangladesh. The dam is located in Medog County, southeastern Tibet, on the direct border with Arunachal Pradesh, India. This area is very remote, difficult to access, and surrounded by steep Himalayan mountains. However, this place also has a very large hydropower potential due to the strong river flow and extreme water levels. These geographical conditions promise the project to be very efficient in generating electricity.

expected to have a capacity of up to 60 gigawatts (GW). The dam is currently recorded as the largest hydroelectric power plant in the world, far surpassing the Three Gorges Dam with a capacity of around 22.5 GW. The construction cost for this project is also fantastic, estimated at 1 billion yuan, or 137 billion USD. With these figures, this project is one of the most expensive energy infrastructures ever built in the world. The Chinese government says this investment is worth the long-term benefits it will produce in terms of renewable energy, jobs, and stabilizing the national power system.

Construction of the Medog Dam is scheduled to continue from late 2024 to around 2033. During the construction process, China mobilized rigorous technology, excellent work, and extraordinary logistical support amidst extreme terrain. The project also involved some of China's largest state-owned construction companies. The Chinese

government said the dam is not only a source of clean energy but will also help become a pilot project for flood control, irrigation, and utilizing natural resources in high and remote areas.

However, this large-scale project has raised concerns from various political parties, especially from countries that are tributaries of the river, such as India and Bangladesh. The Yarin Tsangpo River is of vital importance for agriculture and for the livelihoods of millions of people in the region. India has explicitly highlighted the risks of unilateral control of water flow infection or river discharge. This could affect water and nutrient safety in the northeastern part of the country. In addition, the location of the dam, very close to the Indian border, raises geopolitical sensitivities, especially amid tensions between the two countries in recent years.

From an environmental perspective, experts warn that building such a large dam in the Himalayas, which is prone to earthquakes and landslides, could pose a major risk. The Medog region is known to be active, and in early 2025 the Tibet region was rocked by a 6.8 earthquake, sparking a long-running battle with large dams in the region. In addition to the geological risks, the project also raises concerns that while the Chinese government has not yet designated a housing plan for affected communities, it will disrupt its own ecosystem in the catchment area, threatening biodiversity and forcing residents to relocate. Despite these threats, the construction of the Medog dam also reflects global technological innovation and global ambition in the energy sector. By harnessing the potential of renewable energy on an extraordinary scale, China is demonstrating its ability to develop large-scale infrastructure projects in extreme areas. The project also symbolizes China's position as a leader in the clean energy revolution, but it cannot be ignored by the geopolitical results that cannot be ignored. In the future, the balance between domestic profits, environmental compatibility, regional stability will be the biggest test of the world's largest dam project.

The construction of the Medog Dam also shows the dynamics of access to and control over countries' natural resources. As an upstream land, China has a geographical advantage in determining how water flows are handled, but countries like India and Bangladesh must rely on the politics of their neighbors. This inequality can lead to tensions if not compensated for by fair transparency and multilateral agreements. India has been promoting the establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism on the management of the Cross Rivers in recent years, but there is no comprehensive agreement between the two countries. The construction of this dam shows that the lack of an international legal framework on the Jarung Tsangpo River can open up space for control while endangering regional stability in the long term.

Furthermore, the project has also become part of a global variation in the development of clean energy infrastructure. Countries such as India, Brazil, and Ethiopia have also been continuously building large dams as a source of renewable energy. However, lessons from previous projects show that large dams often cause serious social and ecological problems. Therefore, projects such as Medog-Kämme must be dynamic to implement the highest standards for environmental protection and community rights. The lack of transparent public consultation in Tibet raises concerns that the project will repeat the mistakes of past developments by sacrificing local communities for national interests.

This project not only affects ecological and geopolitical aspects but also has implications for diplomatic relations in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Tensions between China and India, for example, have increased several times over the Himalayan border dispute. The development of large-scale infrastructure such as this dam, very close to the LAC (Line of Actual Control), symbolically strengthens Beijing's claim to territorial control in the region. This complex effort is to normalize relations between two fragile countries. If the project is not treated carefully in diplomatic dialogue, it can not only affect the two

countries but also worsen the stability of the entire Indo-Pacific region.

Finally, the construction of the Medog Dam reflects a new era in which energy challenges, the climate crisis, and geopolitical conflicts are closely linked. The world is now at the crossroads of the need for renewable energy and the need to maintain the sustainability of the global ecosystem. In this context, the success of this project is measured not only in the amount of electricity generated but also in the way the project is carried out responsibly. Fair for Local Communities, Governments, and Neighboring Countries' Interests. Therefore, the Medog Dam is not only a matter of electricity and concrete but also concerns the future of water, diplomacy, and sustainable development in the 21st century.

Pokhara airport: China's soft power, Nepal's hard landing

10 May 2025, <u>The Kathmandu Post</u>, Sangam Prasain

The Pokhara International Airport project, long touted as a landmark in Nepal's aviation history and a cornerstone for its tourism ambitions, has become a lightning rod of controversy.

From its early conception to its eventual completion, the airport's trajectory has been fraught with allegations of corruption, procedural manipulation, inflated costs, and emerging geopolitical entanglements.

Constructed with a \$215.96 million soft loan from China's EXIM Bank and built by a Chinese state-owned enterprise, the project has come to symbolise the complexities and consequences of foreign-funded infrastructure in developing nations like Nepal.

Although China has denied all allegations of wrongdoing, a recent parliamentary subcommittee report has unveiled serious flaws in the project's construction, bidding, and financial handling. These revelations have reignited public debates over transparency, accountability, and the nature

of Nepal's growing economic dependence on its northern neighbour.

This explainer unpacks the layers of the Pokhara International Airport saga—tracing its historical roots, mapping the evolution of controversies, and highlighting the broader implications for governance and foreign engagement in Nepal.

A dream in the making: Early years

The vision for a regional international airport in Pokhara dates back over five decades. In 1971, with assistance from the Asian Development Bank, the German consulting firm DIWI identified a suitable site at Chhinedanda and prepared a master plan for the airport. The Government of Nepal moved swiftly, acquiring over 3,100 ropanis of land in 1975 to secure the area.

Progress accelerated in 1989 when the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted a detailed feasibility study. The blueprint included a 2,500-meter runway and modern facilities, with an estimated cost of \$39.6 million. Local firm Joshi Associates refined the plan further in 1993 and JICA again reviewed it, with a proposal for phased construction between 1995 and 2010.

But Nepal's political turbulence disrupted these aspirations. The Maoist insurgency of the 1990s, coupled with instability in Pokhara's tourism sector, put off significant infrastructure investments. It was only after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 that attention returned to the project. Joshi Associates prepared a new concept paper in 2008, and by 2010, detailed engineering designs were finalised.

A political pivot: Enter China

Momentum surged in 2011 when the then Minister Prime Baburam Bhattarai's government began exploring alternative funding avenues. Talks with Chinese quickly gained traction. companies September 2011, an MoU was signed between Nepal's Ministry of Finance and China CAMC Engineering Co Ltd., witnessed by the then Chinese ambassador Yang Houlan and signed by then Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun.

This was a turning point. The MoU pledged Nepal's "solid and substantial support" for CAMC's bid, effectively favouring the firm even before the bidding process began. When Congress leader Deep Upadhyay leaked this clause, it created new suspicion. The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) seized related documents, citing potential irregularities in bidding. Though investigation was soon dropped, the damage to public trust had been done.

Political and civic pressure mounted. Frustrated by decades of delay, Pokhara residents and civil society activists staged protests demanding the airport's construction. These demonstrations, amplified by opposition leaders, pushed the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) to call for bids in February 2012. Yet the bidding process only deepened the controversy.

Questionable tender

Before the financial proposal was opened, the then Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Post Bahadur Bogati, was informed by the finance ministry that as the China EXIM bank had offered a concessional loan for the project, it had set a condition that the project should be built by a company 'recommended' by the lenders. This put the civil aviation body in a fix.

There was more drama to follow. On May 4, 2012, the final deadline for submitting the bids, the CAAN received only three confirmed bids to develop the airport.

Three of the 10 Chinese firms that obtained bid documents—China CAMC Engineering Co, Sinohydro Corporation and China International Water and Electric Corporation—returned them to the CAAN. The CAAN shortlisted three, all Chinese state-affiliated entities vetted by China's Ministry of Commerce and the China International Contractors Association.

Insiders claim the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu was involved in the entire process. Companies were reportedly instructed to verify their bids at the embassy with a pre-decided pricing framework. Only three firms returned the bid documents, and

the fate of the seven pre-qualified companies remains a mystery.

Joshi Associates had projected total cost at Rs12.72 billion (around \$169.69 million at \$1=Rs75 exchange rate) at that time. The government expected to secure a soft loan of approximately \$145 million. But many were shocked by the financial proposals.

CAMC's bid, though the lowest, was \$305 million. Sinohydro quoted \$337.82 million, and China International Water and Electric went even higher at \$349.28 million. All these figures were drastically higher than Nepal's estimates, even after accounting for inflation. CAAN officials, alarmed by the inflated bids, internally. protested The agency's employees' union accused CAMC colluding with certain political figures to inflate the project cost. Former Civil Aviation Minister Deep Kumar Upadhyay denounced process, terming it corrupt manipulative. By contrast, the then-ruling Maoist party staged rallies in Pokhara supporting the airport, arguing that any delay would hinder national development.

Revised estimates, reluctant approvals

As public pressure mounted, CAMC made a surprising move—it offered to execute the project at the government's estimated cost. This opened a new chapter. China Airport Construction Company, a CAMC affiliate, submitted a revised cost study totalling \$264 million in 2013. After including a 16 percent escalation and 13 percent VAT, the final figure aligned closely with CAMC's original bid.

But the Khil Raj Regmi-led government put the project on the back-burner. Then it was then-Tourism Minister Bhim Acharya in the Sushil Koirala-led government who revived it

Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat rejected the offer outright. Comparing it to the Gautam Buddha International Airport which was being built with ADB funding, he called the proposal "outrageous." A new independent evaluation was commissioned.

An expert panel from the Institute of Engineering, Pulchowk, finally determined that the airport could be built for \$215.96

million. This estimate formed the basis of a fresh proposal submitted to the Cabinet.

On April 7, 2014, CAAN's board approved the new plan. A soft loan request was submitted to China's EXIM Bank. On May 22, 2014, CAAN signed a revised contract with CAMC for \$215.96 million. Despite concerns that legal norms demanded a new tender due to the long delay of nearly two years, the project was pushed forward under ministerial orders.

Escrow account dispute

Yet progress was again derailed. China EXIM Bank demanded the creation of an escrow account—a financial mechanism to ensure repayment. Initially, it wanted revenue from all Nepali airports to be deposited into this account, effectively granting it control over the country's aviation income. CAAN refused. After prolonged negotiations, a compromise was reached in 2017. Only revenue from Pokhara International Airport would be deposited into the escrow account. The formal loan agreement was signed in March 2016 during Prime Minister KP

March 2016 during Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's visit to Beijing. Terms were finalised: 25 percent of the loan would be interest-free, and the remaining 75 percent would come at 2 percent annual interest, repayable over 20 years with a 7-year grace period. Nepal's Finance Ministry lent the amount to CAAN at 5 percent interest rate. The government also assumed the foreign exchange risk tied to yuan fluctuations.

Construction officially began on November 1, 2017. The first disbursement was made in April 2018. Finally, the airport was completed on March 31, 2022, and inaugurated on January 1, 2023, amid much fanfare.

Fresh investigations, troubling findings

Even as the runway opened to flights, questions lingered. A recent subcommittee report from the House of Representatives' Public Accounts Committee revealed alarming irregularities.

One major concern was the soil used to elevate the runway. The contract stipulated that the soil should be transported from at least five kilometres away. Approximately \$5.5 million was paid for this. Yet

investigators found no evidence that the soil came from outside sources.

The contract specified a runway elevation of 815 to 816 metres above sea level, but the actual elevation was just 804 metres. This not only violated contractual terms but also raised concerns about the airport's safety and ability to handle large aircraft.

There has also been new scrutiny of the environmental assessment process. The 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) did not call for hill flattening or deforestation. However, in 2020, as construction neared completion, officials discovered that Rithepani Hill obstructed aircraft approach paths.

Suddenly, a plan was pushed to cut down over 600 trees, including 80 large ones, and level two hilltops. Public outcry followed. A supplementary EIA was rushed through to legalise these changes. Critics now suspect the runway elevation was deliberately kept lower to justify cutting the hill, suggesting collusion between contractors and certain officials.

The larger picture: Lesson for Nepal

The Pokhara International Airport is more than a physical structure—it is a litmus test for Nepal's institutional capacity to manage large-scale infrastructure. It reflects both the country's developmental ambitions and its persistent failures in regulatory oversight, public procurement, and political governance. The involvement of Chinese state-owned firms and the soft loan terms also puts a spotlight on Nepal's growing dependency on Beijing, raising concerns over debt sustainability and strategic autonomy.

The final report from the Public Accounts Committee may soon recommend legal action against officials and contractors involved. But beyond punitive measures, the real challenge will be systemic reform.

If Nepal hopes to benefit from future infrastructure investment—whether from China, India, or multilateral institutions—it must address the procedural gaps and political interference plaguing projects like Pokhara.

With only one Nepali airline flying to an international destination a week, the airport

remains a paradox: a symbol of progress built on a foundation of flawed governance.

Ilham Tohti on Tibetan Struggle

09 May 2025, Phayul



Uyghur activist Ilham Tohti with Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser in an undated photo (Photo/International Tibet Network)

Translated by J. T. Nubkhang

[This is a work of translation of an interview by Beijing based Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser with Iham Tohti on 5th September 2009, a few days before he was accused by the government of China of secession and the 12th tribunal of Urumqi city Interim Court sentenced him to life imprisonment and confiscated all his personal property. The original Chinese interview is in Tsering book无腔白,雪域出版社,民 Woeser's 107.02; between pages 185 and 187. Ilham Tohti, apart from being Tsering Woeser's personal friend, was a Uyghur rights activist and Associate Professor of Economics at the Minzu University of China before his arrest. The title is the translator's creation.] Right now, even though life is very hard for Uyghurs and we receive less support compared to Tibetans, still I am relatively optimistic about our future. But in the long run, I actually believe Tibetan people's crisis seems far more serious.

One thing that Uyghurs have is perseverance. Uyghur people's culture, economy, etc. will survive even after Chinese people (leave our land); Uyghurs can count on ourselves and survive in perpetuity. For example, Uyghur

language, music, food, etc. are all intact, original. We even have our own cosmetics. But Tibetans are not like this. Even though Tibetans and Uyghurs face the same dictator and colonizer, yet Tibetan people's attitude and response are different (from ours). Tibetans are letting go of themselves, though some reluctantly, but some of their relinquishments are voluntary. For example, in Tibetan people's everyday conversations they use many Chinese words and phrases, and the food they consume are increasingly Chinese. Tibetans not only sing songs in Chinese, but also compose music imitating popular Chinese songs. Chinese experts and scholars like to incorporate Tibetan culture into Chinese culture. While they are carrying out so-called researches in Tibetan culture, they simultaneously employ their techniques to interpret and rewrite Tibetan culture, yet Tibetan intellectuals seem to go along and agree (with their narratives) consciously and unconsciously. Consequently, there are a lot of things that are not their own mixed in their culture, but they don't seem to know this.

Tibetan people's self-abandonment is extremely tragic; the consequences will manifest themselves in the future. The most important thing is one's own culture; if one fails to hold on to culture, it will disappear easily.

In addition, Tibetans mostly intermarry with the Central **Nationalities** Chinese. In University there are many Tibetan teachers, and most of them are either intermarried to Chinese or haven't given birth to children. Giving birth, actually, is one important factor. I have two children, and my wife is pregnant with another child. Having many children may be a little exhausting, but this much one has to sacrifice. I always tell Uyghurs that if they can't do anything for our people, they can at least give birth to children; even bearing only one child is a contribution. Because of my persuasion, my Uyghur friends, they are all intellectuals, who had just one child earlier now all have a second child. But Tibetans seem sluggish even in giving birth to children. Among Tibetan intellectuals it seems there are many who do not want children.

Tibetan youngsters, though many have national consciousness, know very little about their own religion and culture; it is even hard to say if they have religious belief. Those Tibetan Middle Schools across China are assimilating Tibetan children effectively; this can be seen in various reports.

In regard to culture, I think Tibetans should align themselves closer to those countries that have similar beliefs like India, Thailand, etc. Looking at the current situation, Tibetan culture is becoming more and more like Chinese culture. there and possibilities that it would be assimilated or superseded. But **Uyghurs** align themselves culturally with Central Asian countries; the mutual feeling of affinity and identification between Uyghurs and the peoples of these countries are based on the same foundation. Even in regard to language and other things, Uyghurs would keep distance from Chinese culture.

Furthermore, Tibetan people's complete reliance on the Dalai Lama is also a problem. One day in the future if he passes away, Tibetans will have nobody to rely on. What should they do then?

War for water

09 May 2025, <u>The International News</u>, Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani



A highway being built by the BRO passes by the confluence of the Indus and Zanskhar rivers in the Ladakh region, India. — Reuters/File

Before committing cowardly aggression against Pakistan, a statement by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also emerged in the media that India will not allow even a drop of water to go outside. Although he did not name any country, every sensible person can understand that he was referring to Pakistan, which is already facing suspension from the Indus Water Treaty in the wake of the Pahalgam incident. Reportedly, India has also targeted the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project during its attacks on various places in Pakistan.

Millions of people in our region depend on the water of the Indus, Brahmaputra (Chinese name: Yarlung Zangbo), and Sutlej rivers. Geographically, these rivers originate from the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and enter Pakistan after passing through India. Regarding the flow of the rivers, China and India are upper countries, while Pakistan is located at a lower level.

Immediately after Partition, a dispute arose between Pakistan and India over river waters, which resulted in the Indus Waters Treaty, mediated by the World Bank in 1960. Under the said treaty, Pakistan got complete control over the waters of the three western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab), while the three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) were given to India.

In recent years, after India took complete control of the waters of its own rivers, the construction of hydroelectric projects on rivers owned by Pakistan in the disputed territory of occupied Kashmir has become a matter of great concern for Pakistan.

On the other hand, China has decided to build the world's largest dam on the Yarlung Zangbo River, which flows from Tibet. After entering India, this river takes the name Brahmaputra and finally irrigates Bangladesh's territory. The dam will have the capacity to generate 300 billion kWh of power yearly.

China maintains that it has no intention of diverting the rivers flowing towards India. Still, due to the lack of any formal legal agreement between India and China regarding river water, India fears that China could block

the river from entering Arunachal Pradesh or suddenly release huge water during the rainy season by building a mega dam in the Tibetan region.

In my view, all three regional countries -- Pakistan, India and China -- seem to be striving to secure water and energy for their people. Without mutual trust and regional cooperation, unilateral efforts have taken a dangerous turn, a glimpse of which we have seen in the form of recent Pakistan-India clashes.

Apparently, the Modi government is deeply afraid of China using river water as a possible weapon of war in future. Irresponsible actions such as the Indian prime minister's abrogation of the Indus Waters Treaty and the attack on Pakistani territory indicate that India wants to increase pressure on Pakistan.

The Modi government wants China to come forward in support of Pakistan, which is, in fact, the victim of war aggression. Later on, if a peace agreement is reached after the war with the efforts of the international community, then Pakistan's cordial ally, China, should also be bound to share water with India.

However, Prime Minister Modi should understand that using force is not a long-term solution to any problem. For centuries, the rivers flowing in our region have benefited God's creatures without discrimination. Even today, the future of shared rivers lies not in conflict but in cooperation.

Today, keeping in mind the requirements of changing times, there is a dire need to devise a standard mechanism for the fair distribution of river water and energy, instead of rivers. Undoubtedly, every past Indo-Pak war has resulted in a peace agreement. My advice to Prime Minister Modi is to sit at the dialogue table this time before indulging the people of both countries in war.

Devotion and defiance: Highlights from RFA Tibetan

09 May 2025, <u>RFA</u>

Since Radio Free Asia's inception, it has reported epochal moments in the history of modern Tibet.

For nearly three decades, Radio Free Asia has provided critical Tibet coverage, serving as an information lifeline for Tibetan audiences living under China's authoritarian rule and connecting them to Tibetans in exile – and all the while offering a rare window into life in the highly restricted region.

Through shortwave radio and digital platforms, RFA Tibetan has reported epochal moments in the history of modern Tibet.

recorded first-hand It accounts of the widespread protests in Tibet in 2008 and the subsequent wave of self-immolations. RFA documented the Dalai Lama's historic voluntary devolution of his temporal powers 2011 and transfer of in it the democratically elected leader of Tibet's exile government, or the Central Tibetan Administration.

Audiences in Tibet have secretly accessed RFA broadcasts at great peril to their own lives. They have contended with China's sophisticated censorship apparatus, deliberate signal jamming, and the risk of prison.

RFA journalists and their in-country sources-partnerships of information-sharing nurtured over many years - have also risked their personal safety. They have shed light on under-reported events on Tibet and countered Chinese propaganda. They have exposed the impact of China's assimilationist policies, including its efforts to wipe out Tibetan religious, cultural, and linguistic identity.

RFA Tibetan has countered that trend through daily broadcasts in three different Tibetan dialects: Ukay, Khamkay, and Amkay. It has been a key source of information on Tibet for policymakers, governments, legislatures and rights groups.

On the 25th anniversary of RFA, Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, had this to say about the importance of the broadcasts:

I very much appreciate the work (of RFA). The world needs knowledge of what is really happening on this planet, particularly those areas where there are restrictions in information, and here, Radio Free Asia is really very, very useful.

So now, firstly, I want to thank those people who worked for that ... Your work is very relevant to today's world, especially in areas where (there is) no free information available.

— Dalai Lama

Coverage of the Dalai Lama's teachings and activities

Since it began broadcasting, RFA has offered extensive coverage of the Dalai Lama. That has featured exclusive provided interviews and our audiences unfiltered access to the Tibetan spiritual leader's teachings, public addresses, global travels, and engagements with world leaders. This is information that Beijing has sought to censor in Tibet, while punishing those found accessing it.

RFA has reported the Chinese government's persecution of Tibetans who simply possess images of the Dalai Lama. There have been arbitrary detentions, torture, and lengthy prison sentences handed to Tibetans caught sharing or listening to his teachings, displaying his photograph, or celebrating his birthday.

RFA has tracked the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to obstruct the recognition of Buddhist reincarnate lamas and to interfere in the Dalai Lama's succession - while publishing the Dalai Lama's statements to counter that: that he will be reborn in a free world, outside of Chinese control; that he rejects any Chinese government claims to authority over the reincarnation process.

A teacher helps a student to write the alphabet in a first-grade class at the Shangri-La Key Boarding School during a media-organized tour in Dabpa county, Kardze Prefecture, Sichuan province, China, Sept. 5, 2023. (Andy Wong/AP)

Religious and linguistic persecution in Tibet

RFA has meticulously documented China's systematic efforts to erode Tibetan cultural identity, where children and monks as young as five are being removed from Tibetan-language schools and are forcefully admitted in Chinese boarding schools. RFA journalists have revealed how new educational policies mandating Mandarin as the primary language of instruction have effectively marginalized the Tibetan language in Tibet.

RFA has exposed the Chinese government's intensifying control over Tibetan monasteries through new administrative regulations and forced closures. RFA has detailed China's efforts to accelerate the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism, where monastic education requires "patriotic education" and legal study.

Population caps in Buddhist academies such as Larung Gar have forced thousands of monks and nuns to disrobe, and admission criteria now include loyalty tests to the Chinese Communist Party. RFA reports have revealed the government's strategy of controlling religious institutions from within while publicly claiming religious freedom.

2008 protests in Tibet and self immolations In 2008, RFA was the first media outlet to break the news of the mass protests in Lhasa that quickly spread across the Tibetan plateau. RFA journalists provided rare, source-based coverage as Tibetans rose up to protest Chinese oppression in the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics.

According to official Chinese state media, over 150 incidents occurred between March 10-25, 2008, in Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan provinces.

While Chinese state media attempted to portray the events as isolated riots, RFA documented the geographic breadth of the demonstrations, their peaceful origins, and the subsequent harsh crackdown that led to numerous deaths, thousands of detentions, and the most severe restriction of movement and communication in Tibet in decades.

Beginning in 2009, RFA also documented a wave of self-immolations across Tibet, with the first monk setting himself alight in February 2009, followed by a dramatic escalation after 2011.

To date, over 157 self-immolations have been confirmed inside Tibet and in exile communities, with RFA carefully verifying each case. This reporting has preserved the final statements of many self-immolators, revealing their consistent demands for freedom, the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and an end to Chinese repression.

These acts of ultimate protest involved Tibetans from all walks of life—monks, nuns, students, nomads, farmers, and parents—ranging from teenagers to people in their 80s, though the majority were young monks between 18-30 years old.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, RFA provided rare insights into the situation inside Tibet, reporting on lockdown conditions and government prioritization of political stability over public health.

RFA coverage of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, as well as the recent 2025 Dingri earthquake, highlighted both the devastation in Tibetan areas, challenged Chinese government narratives, and shed light on the remarkable community-led voluntary response that outpaced official relief efforts.

Environmental and human impact of unchecked development

RFA's investigative reporting has exposed the environmental and cultural devastation resulting from China's aggressive development policies in Tibet, including the submersion of the historic Atsok Monastery due to a dam expansion.

RFA also broke the story of the recent Dege protests 2024, where hundreds demonstrated against planned construction of a massive dam on the Drichu River that would submerge at least six ancient monasteries and force the relocation of at least two villages. RFA revealed how Chinese authorities arrested hundreds of protesters in February 2024, including monks and local residents, with many facing beatings and interrogation.

RFA has revealed the devastating impact of mining on Tibet's fragile ecosystem and the local communities dependent on these resources. The coverage of China's massive forced resettlement programs has shown how more than two million Tibetan nomads have been forcibly relocated from their ancestral grasslands into urban settlements, destroying traditional sustainable livelihoods and creating new social problems while clearing land for resource extraction.

Democratic government-in-exile

RFA has chronicled the remarkable development of Tibetan democracy-in-exile, from the first direct elections of the Kalon Tripa to the most recent 2021 elections for Sikyong - the political leader of the Central Tibetan Administration. Following the Dalai Lama's devolution of political power in 2011, RFA documented the historic first democratic transfer of leadership to Harvard-educated legal scholar Lobsang Sangay, served two terms.

RFA reporting on the 2021 elections captured the vibrant democratic process that elevated Penpa Tsering to the Sikyong position, highlighting candidate debates, unprecedented voter participation across the global diaspora, and the peaceful transition of power.

RFA also provided in-depth reporting on Sino-Tibet talks that sought to negotiate prospects of "genuine" autonomy for Tibet under China as per the Central Tibetan Administration's Middle Way Approach – which urges greater cultural and religious freedoms guaranteed for ethnic minorities under provisions of China's constitution.

Nine rounds of formal discussions later, the talks ground to a halt in 2010 after China rejected the proposals although there was no call from the Tibetan side for independence. Foreign governments, including the U.S., have urged Beijing to resume dialogue without preconditions.

Stories of Tibetan resilience, defiance, and hope

Throughout it all, RFA has highlighted stories of Tibetan resilience, resistance, and achievement. RFA has profiled artists preserving traditional music despite restrictions on cultural expression; young entrepreneurs building sustainable businesses

that honor Tibetan craftsmanship; athletes overcoming political obstacles to compete internationally, and scholars working diligently to digitize ancient texts at risk of being lost forever.

RFA's coverage has celebrated the Tibetan spirit and determination to thrive against all odds, maintaining cultural identity through innovation and adaptation in both Tibet and exile communities worldwide.

China's fabrication of lies on Panchen Lama

08 May 2025, First Post, Yeshi Dawa

China's three decades of fabricated lies about the real Panchen Lama have led nowhere On April 25, the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima — the world's youngest political prisoner — turned 36 years old. Yet, his whereabouts still remain unknown to this day. On May 14, 1995, when the Dalai Lama proclaimed that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama, the Chinese authorities immediately abducted him on May 17 and anointed their own Panchen Lama— Gyaltsen Norbu (Gyaincain Norbu). Since then, his whereabouts have been completely untraceable. Nor has there been concrete evidence of his status, only fabricated lies from the Chinese authorities. China has been cognizant of the importance of the 11th Panchen Lama, given the historical relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas in their roles in identifying each other's reincarnation. Two possible scenarios could have ignited China to abduct Gedhun Choekyi Nyima chosen by the Dalai Lama. First, the Chinese authorities might have thought that the successor chosen by the Dalai Lama — would not lend his allegiance to them to rule over Tibet. This brings the second thought that he can't be made the puppet of the Chinese authorities in choosing the next Dalai Lama. Consequently, those scenarios led to the anointment of their own Panchen Lama.

China's Fabrication of Lies

If China can alter the historical facts, then fabricating lies about the 11th Panchen Lama is business as usual. Right after the abduction of the 11th Panchen Lama — recognised by the Dalai Lama — China fabricated four major lies about his status at various occasions.

First, the Chinese Spokesman for the Foreign Affairs Ministry said, as reported by the Press Trust of India on June 13, 1995, "The so-called issue of the reincarnated child being kidnapped does not exist at all." Conversely, on October 19, 1995, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian stated while responding to foreign reporters: "Choosing the successor of the Panchen Lama is an affair to be decided by the selection committee, the decision-making authority lies with the Chinese government." When a journalist asked about the status of the boy chosen by the Dalai Lama, as reported by AFP, he added: "As far as I know he is safe."

There was a global outcry about the 11th Panchen Lama's whereabouts, including the "US Senate's unanimous adoption of a resolution urging the Chinese government to support the Dalai Lama's selection of the Panchen Lama". Despite all the concerted pressure from the international community, China evasively undermined the global outcry.

Second, on March 8, 1996, Raidi, deputy secretary of Tibet's Communist Party committee, told the reporters (reported AP): "Like other children in China, he will enjoy an education of that I can assure you." Another striking lie was fabricated by Wu Jianmin, China's representative to the UN in Geneva, on March 30, 1996. As per AFP, he told the UN Committee Children's Rights: "China was protecting him from possible kidnapping by Tibetan separatists." These fabricated lies are a blatant attempt to gain leverage over their imprisonment of the Panchen Lama.

Third, on August 17, 1996, China's State media Xinhua said, "The Dalai Lama's illegal appointed 'Soul Boy' is leading a free life, just like other Tibetan Children." After three

decades, there has been no slight indication of his parents' whereabouts, let alone him.

Fourth, on April 26, 2022, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said while responding to the US calling on Beijing to disclose the real 11th Panchen Lama's whereabouts: "The so-called spiritual boy is a normal Chinese citizen living a normal life." This statement is the latest fabricated lie until the next one. One notable shift in China's approach to the imprisoned Panchen Lama is that he was labelled as "a normal Chinese citizen", which ultimately leads to the assumption that he is being completely assimilated into the Chinese community.

A Puppet Panchen Lama

On January 12, 1996, China's Communist Party chief Jiang Zemin met the Chinese-anointed Panchen Lama and said thus: "The Communist Party and government hope the 11th Panchen Lama will study well, grow up healthy and inherit the patriotic spirit of previous Panchen Lamas." However, if the Chinese-anointed 11th Panchen Lama tries to follow the footsteps of the predecessor, he would sooner or later land behind the bars. The 10th Panchen Lama spent 14 years in prison or house arrest for criticising the Chinese government's rules in Tibet and the plight of Tibetans.

Given the history, it is very unlikely that the 11th Panchen Lama — anointed by the Chinese government — would even attempt to challenge the status quo of Tibet under the Chinese authoritarian regime. Instead, China's anointed Panchen Lama made some rare visits to the parts of Tibet and urged the local Tibetans to uphold the spirit of the Chinese Communist Party. On the contrary, Tibetans in Tibet don't revere him, let alone the dictums mandated by him.

The lack of Tibetans' devotion to him resulted in paying 100 yuan to each Tibetan who would come to seek his blessings. This desperate gesture from the Chinese government indicates that the political investment in their Panchen Lama didn't reap any fruits so far, except a pending future representation when the Dalai Lama passes away.

China's three decades of fabricated lies about the real Panchen Lama have led nowhere, except to dodging questions from the international community. More importantly, this pathetic gesture has proven that China still has not been able to rule Tibet completely. Even if the Chinese-anointed Panchen Lama plays his trump card to choose the next Dalai Lama, history will witness yet another bitter episode — one where a fake Panchen Lama appoints a fake Dalai Lama.

China's Iron Grip and the Systematic Erasure of Tibetan Identity:

05 May 2025, <u>European Times</u>, Khedroob Thondup

For decades, Tibet has been at the center of China's efforts to consolidate control over its autonomous regions. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has employed a range of strategies to suppress Tibetan culture, religion, and identity, effectively ruling the region with an iron fist. From forced education policies to stringent travel restrictions and religious bans, Beijing's grip on Tibet has tightened, leaving little room for cultural preservation or self-determination.

One of the most alarming aspects of China's rule in Tibet is its use of education as a tool for forced assimilation. Reports indicate that Tibetan children are systematically separated from their families and placed in residential schools designed to instill allegiance to the Chinese state while erasing Tibetan identity. The curriculum prioritizes Mandarin over Tibetan language, and students are taught state-approved history that downplays Tibet's distinct cultural heritage. With over a million Tibetan children enrolled in these schools, the CCP is ensuring that future generations grow up disconnected from their roots.

Religious freedom in Tibet has been severely curtailed under Chinese rule. New regulations require religious venues to support the leadership of the CCP and promote "patriotic education" among believers. Monasteries, temples, and churches are banned from maintaining ties with overseas organizations,

and religious leaders are vetted to ensure loyalty to the state. The government has also prohibited large religious statues and restricted traditional practices such as circumambulation around sacred sites. These measures are part of a broader campaign to "sinicize" Tibetan Buddhism, effectively stripping it of its spiritual essence and transforming it into a tool for state propaganda.

Tibetans face severe restrictions on foreign travel, making it nearly impossible for them to seek refuge or share their experiences with the outside world. Activists who have managed to escape describe relentless surveillance and intimidation by Chinese authorities.

Even retired Tibetan government employees are banned from engaging in religious activities, with punishments imposed on those who defy these orders. The CCP's strategy is clear: isolate Tibetans, control their movements, and prevent any form of dissent from reaching international audiences.

China's policies in Tibet amount to a systematic effort to erase Tibetan identity and assimilate its people into the dominant Han Chinese culture. While Beijing frames these measures as efforts to promote "national unity," they are, in reality, a slow-motion cultural genocide. The international community must hold China accountable for its actions and advocate for the rights of Tibetans to preserve their language, religion, and traditions.

The world cannot afford to turn a blind eye to Tibet's plight. If these policies continue unchecked, an entire culture risks being erased—one school, one monastery, and one generation at a time.

Tibetan solidarity amidst Pahalgam Terrorist attack: The Tiger-Lion Kathak and the Elephant-Dragon Tango misstep

05 May 2025, FNVA, Tenzing Dhamdul

22nd April shook everyone in the world and particularly those of us in India as in the

beautiful and scenic region of Kashmir- at the tourist spot of Pahalgam, 26 people were brutally killed in day light by terrorist. In what can only be described as one of the worst terrorist attacks in India in recent times, people around the world condemned this heinous crime against humanity. I was not only taken aback but made to remember the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, where I experienced a similar feeling when studying in Dehradun then. I was flooded with news about this from the various news outlet that I followed and my friends both Tibetans and Indians on social media were quick to message of prayers their condolences to the victims - disgust and condemnation to the terrorist who carried out such a dastardly act.

Tibetans in India besides sharing their messages of condolences and supporting India on social media including the political Central head of the Tibetan Administration Sikyong (President) Penpa Tsering la, came together and rallied as a community and held prayer service. It showcased their solidarity with India and the victims of this heinous terror attack. Furthermore, in Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh, India) which is seen as the de facto exile political capital of Tibet by many, the Central Tibetan Administration led a prayer service with all its staff, bureaucracy and parliamentarians taking part in it. This was followed by Tibetan settlements in India likewise carrying out similar prayer service towards the victims for e.g. on 26th April, the Poanta Cholsum Tibetan Settlement in Himachal Pradesh conducted a prayer service. Read more <u>here</u>.

Home and away, China putting tight new squeeze on Tibet

05 May 2025, Asia Times, Richard S Ehrlich

China's tightening grip comes with memories of the CIA's attempts to stir rebellion in the annexed region during the old Cold War

China is tightening control over Tibet and flexing its strategic roof of the world advantage by cyber-spying on the Dalai Lama's supporters "worldwide from Lhasa to London," opening Tibet's international airport to Singapore and Nepal, and building the world's biggest hydroelectric dam on a glacier-fed river.

China prizes resource-rich Tibet's lofty Himalayan heights, which allow the People's Liberation Army to "look down" on India, China's regional rival, and provide a formidable buffer between Beijing and New Delhi.

The United Kingdom's GCHQ intelligence agency, meanwhile, is warning Tibetan and foreign activists, researchers and supporters of the self-exiled 14th Dalai Lama that they are in danger of infection from "malicious actors" who created international surveillance malware identified as MOONSHINE and BADBAZAAR.

The British government's National Cyber Security Center (NCSC), which is part of the GCHQ, said the Chinese also created snooping apps deceptively resembling WhatsApp and Skype, which allow text, audio and video.

Other surveillance tools are packed into a standalone app such as Tibet One, which operates in the Tibetan language, the same source said.

Chinese hackers made the Tibet One messaging app shareable on Telegram channels and Reddit forums where Tibetans and their supporters exchange information, the NCSC said.

"We are seeing a rise in digital threats designed to silence, monitor and intimidate communities across borders," NCSC director of operations Paul Chichester said in a statement.

Targets can be anyone "considered by the Chinese state to pose a threat to its stability," the NSCS said.

The NSCS said it shared the warning with the US National Security Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation, plus cybersecurity officials in Australia, Canada, Germany and New Zealand.

"The malicious software – dubbed MOONSHINE and BADBAZAAR – hides

malicious functions inside otherwise legitimate apps in a technique known as 'trojanising'," the NSCS said.

"Once installed, the apps have been observed variously accessing functions including microphones, cameras, messages, photos, and location data, including real-time tracking, without the user being aware," it said.

China's government-owned digital forensics company Meiya Pico, meanwhile, is penetrating deeper into Tibetan society.

"Digital forensics technology, training, and services as provided by Meiya Pico can play a role at both ends of a repression pipeline, facilitating the long shadow of transnational repression beyond the Belt and Road corridor – helping Beijing track, intimidate, and silence Tibetan dissent worldwide, from Lhasa to London," reported Turquoise Roof, an online Tibetan research site.

"When Chinese police in Tibet seize a phone from someone suspected of sharing information with Dharamsala, [they] exfiltrate and analyze that phone's contents," Turquoise Group said in an April 16 report titled, "A Long Shadow: The Expansion and Export of China's Digital Repression Model in Tibet."

Turquoise Group, in partnership with Canadabased SecDev Group, said it traced some of Beijing's alleged spyware to "SDIC Intelligence Xiamen Information Co Ltd, a digital forensics company better known as Meiya Pico, [which] won a contract in mid-2023 to build two labs at the Tibet Police College – one on offensive and defensive cyber techniques, and the other on electronic evidence collection and analysis," Turquoise Group said.

In 2021, the US Treasury said Meiya Pico was using "biometric surveillance and tracking of ethnic and religious minorities in China." The US Commerce Department blacklisted the company in 2019.

"For Tibetans, simply using a cellphone has become dangerous, and everyday activities like posting a humorous video or contacting loved ones abroad can bring arrest, detention, and torture," said Human Rights Watch's associate China director Maya Wang on April 13.

"Tibetans, particularly those living in remote areas, once celebrated the arrival of cellphones so they could stay in touch with friends and family, but their phones have effectively become government tracking devices," Wang said.

Crimes include praising the Dalai Lama, demanding Tibet's autonomy or independence, or opposing the Chinese Communist Party. Beijing has been crushing dissent in Tibet for decades.

A fresh crackdown is being waged against supporters of Tibetan Buddhist abbot and author Tulku Hungkar Dorje, 56, who fled to Vietnam in September 2024, fearing imprisonment in Tibet.

Among his alleged pro-Dalai Lama activities, the abbot was "not enforcing Chinese state education policies in schools established under his guidance," said Tibet's India-based parliament-in-exile, which is allied to the Dalai Lama.

Vietnamese authorities arrested Tulku Hungkar Dorje in March in Ho Chi Minh City, where he died on April 3 under Vietnamese police custody, according to media reports. Vietnam reportedly said the abbot died from a heart attack but provided no public evidence, sparking allegations that he was killed.

He was cremated on April 20 "without family consent...raising serious questions regarding China's involvement in his apprehension and death," reported Free Tibet, an activist news site based in Britain.

"Tulku Hungkar Dorje's body was secretly transferred late at night to Sakya Vietnam temple under heavy Chinese and Vietnamese security – the monks present having their phones confiscated, and no family allowed," said Zoe Bedford of the Australia Tibet Council.

"This is not a sacred rite, it's a forced cremation that looks like an attempt to destroy evidence and erase the truth," Bedord claimed.

Meanwhile, to utilize Tibet's strategic high ground, China recently expanded Lhasa

Gonggar International Airport on the outskirts of the Tibetan capital, enabling its first round-trip flight to and from Singapore in December 2024.

The airport's upgrade is part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, a global infrastructure development program.

Planes operated by China's governmentowned West Air, a unit of HNA Aviation Group, are scheduled to fly three times a week round-trip to Singapore with a stopover in China's southern city Chongqing, according to the company. Future international routes are to include Lhasa-Hong Kong and elsewhere in the region.

Lhasa's previous flights were only to and from next-door Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, and Chinese cities, including Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Xian, Guangzhou, Kunming and Shanghai.

"Looking ahead, West Air will expand its investments in Belt and Road countries, and open additional routes to meet growing passenger demand while supporting national strategies and regional development," the company said.

Beijing's real money-maker in Tibet, however, is expected to be its planned hydroelectric dams on rivers flowing down from the roof of the world, where Mount Everest and other peaks soar.

Rivers originating in Tibet reach hundreds of millions of consumers in plains across India, Bangladesh and Southeast Asia, when the glaciers' waters flow into the Brahmaputra, Salween, and Mekong rivers.

China is building the world's biggest hydroelectric dam on the country's longest river, Tibet's Yarlung Tsangpo, with expectations it will pump out three times more energy than the nearby Three Gorges Dam, which is currently the mightiest hydroelectric dam on earth.

The US\$137 billion Yarlung Tsangpo Hydroelectric Project would include four tunnels, each 12 miles (20 kilometers) long, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The Yarlung Tsangpo River already hosts several hydropower stations as it twists from

Tibet south toward India. The river's value is its huge waterfalls, making it attractive for hydroelectric plants despite the zone's earthquake-vulnerable tectonic plates.

"The sacred river is home to the deepest canyon on the planet, with a vertical difference of 25,154 feet (7,667 meters)," reported New York-based Interesting Engineering's website.

"The Chinese government intends to use this to its advantage and generate nearly 300 billion kilowatt hours (kWh) of hydropower from the project, sufficient to meet the energy needs of 300 million people every year," the engineering site said.

The Yarlung Tsangpo cascades east across Tibet before bending south across the China-India frontier through Himalayan valleys into India's Arunachal Pradesh and Assam states. In India, the river bleeds southwest into the Brahmaputra River, which empties through Bangladesh's delta into the Bay of Bengal.

"Control over these rivers [in the Tibetan Plateau] effectively gives China a chokehold on India's economy," warned the Australia-based Lowy Institute think tank.

China's vigilance over Tibet stems from the old Cold War. The US CIA began training Tibetans in combat and operations skills in 1957 – two years before the Dalai Lama escaped – and dropped them into Tibet as insurgents against Communist Chinese.

"The CIA had piloted the project with a group of [Tibetan] fighters who were trained at Saipan, Northern Mariana Island," Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported.

"The first radio team to be dropped back into Tibet by Operations St. Circus took place in September, 1957, but the training grounds were moved to Camp Hale [Colorado] when it became apparent that the Tibetans were not used to the hot weather conditions of the island, and Colorado was selected because its terrain and weather conditions resembled that of Tibet," RFA reported.

The CIA trained at least 259 Tibetan insurgents in Camp Hale from 1958 to 1964. "The Tibetans were trained in radio operation, surveillance and combat maneuvers, parachuting...intelligence collecting,

clandestine exchange of written material, and film, world history, and geography, and small armament training with bazookas, grenades, and rifles," RFA reported.

In July 1959, "the CIA began using C-130s, flying from a secret CIA base in Takhli, Thailand, to airdrop arms, ammunition, and US-trained Tibetans into their occupied homeland," Newsweek reported in 1999.

Nine out of every 10 guerrillas who parachuted into Tibet were killed by Chinese or committed suicide to evade capture, the Smithsonian Institution's Air & Space Magazine reported.

The Tibetan Buddhists' CIA-backed insurgency ended in defeat against China's revolution-hardened People's Liberation Army when President Richard Nixon visited Beijing in 1972, shook hands with Chairman Mao Zedong and improved their frosty relations.

The Dalai Lama lives in self-exile in McLeod Ganj, a small town nestled next to Dharamsala in India's forested northwest Himalayas, after escaping Tibet in 1959 aided by the CIA.

China's Communist government opposes the Dalai Lama, portraying him as a "splittist" working with foreigners to recreate an independent Tibet after China annexed it in the 1950s.

The Dalai Lama has described himself as a "Marxist" and consistently said he is agreeable to Tibet's autonomy within China, a stance Beijing does not trust.

Xizang, Not Tibet: What Explains China's Nomenclature Of Convenience 05 May 2025, StratNews Global, Tenzin Chemey

Beijing wants the world to know and remember Tibet in a way that serves its interests. It doesn't seem to mind the amount of time the campaign takes

White Papers on Tibet published by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China are a dime a dozen. However, the recent iteration displays a slight alteration from the time-bound, formulaic verbosity typical of the genre, evident in its title, "Human Rights in Xizang in the New Era".

The almost obsessive repetition of "Xizang" 231 times throughout the document reflects, on one hand, the recent push by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to replace "Tibet" with "Xizang" in the lexicon of global and nationalist discourse, while on the other hand, it exposes its increasing insecurity regarding its occupation of Tibet.

The White Paper was released on March 27, 2025, the day Beijing commemorated the 66th anniversary of the "democratic reform" that "abolished feudal serfdom". China describes the occasion as a "significant milestone" representing a "monumental leap in the history of human civilization and global human rights".

Superficial Data

As expected, the lack of substantial arguments to justify the appealing contents further Chinese validates the government's negligence in understanding the intricate elements of human rights or its failure to do so. The actual information in the document is superficial. The only data, limited as it is, that appears in the White Paper is focused on which. transport infrastructure, neither unsurprisingly, guarantees the protection of human rights nor ensures economic benefits to the Tibetans. Beijing's rhetoric concerning "safeguarding national unity" and "combating separatist forces" as its primary focus in the region (Tibet) does not effectively inform or persuade international community about the true state of human rights in Tibet.

Reading between the lines, the paper reflects broader policies and core principles that drive the Chinese government's management of religious affairs, as well as linguistic, educational and cultural rights. The White Paper fundamentally reiterates its fierce propaganda narrative claiming "undisputed" control and legitimacy over recognising the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist figures, including that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The mention of the State's rigorous

efforts to "ensure" that religions in China "conform to China's realities and remain compatible with a socialist society," along with multiple references to the words "law" and "lawful," in essence highlight Beijing's tenacious control over religion in Tibet through an extensive and intricate web of laws, regulations and policies.

Xizang Isn't Tibet

Evading the actual human rights situation in Tibet, the paper emphasises the use of the term 'Xizang' excessively. This is relatively a new practice, a fresh and rigorous approach that many perceive as a matter of identity, since 'Xizang' increasingly designates central and western Tibet rather than all of Tibet. Tibet comprises all of its three traditional provinces—U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo.

China's governmental push to refer to Tibet as 'Xizang' became more evident soon after Beijing hosted the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies on August 14, 2023. The South China Morning Post quotes a report on Tongzhan Xinyu, a WeChat account run by the United Front Work Department where Wang Linping, a professor at Harbin Engineering University's College of Marxism has called for the urgent need for the English translation of the word 'Tibet' "accurately" describes China's position. Beijing is attempting this campaign in an innocuous way as a corrective measure to make the international community understand its position on Tibet and not be "misled" by the universal name (Tibet) any longer.

Chinese Anxiety

Professor Tsering Shakya puts forth an argument that takes us beyond a mere corrective measure on the part of the Chinese government on naming places. Professor Shakya argues that the campaign is driven by China's anxiety over the international perceptions of the term 'Tibet', "which conjures an image of a distinct country rather than merely a region of China." Beijing's imposition of the term 'Xizang' to refer to Tibet is seen extending beyond the political arena to educational and cultural institutions in recent years, strongly reflecting China's increasing pressure and influence beyond its borders.

March 2025, Bhutan was bandwagoning the campaign by replicating Beijing's term in a press statement released by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade. The press statement mentioned a plan to host a cultural troupe from the "Xizang Autonomous Region". "Xizang Autonomous Region" is Beijing-designated a administrative area of Tibet that was hitherto named "Tibet Autonomous Region".

Before that, prominent educational and cultural institutions in the West, particularly in France and the UK, have also been seen using 'Xizang' for Tibet, prompting protests, criticisms and concerns. Some of these institutions continue to bow to diplomatic pressure, while others retracted Beijing's label under political pressure.

Multi-pronged Design

Besides evident efforts in renaming Tibet in official documents. domestic and international platforms, academic discourses, and bilateral and multilateral exchanges, the effort is even stronger and inconspicuous through social media channels using internet personalities, such as influencers YouTubers. Many of their audiences wouldn't even understand the political motive and geopolitical implications of calling Tibet, 'Xizang'. Hence, these nuanced tactics being used to shape the way this new generation of the world calls and perceives Tibet is a matter of concern, given the disturbing strength of their followers and the scope of influence.

Given the total absence of supporting measures and evidence of improved human rights in Tibet, the purpose of releasing the 'White Paper' seems to be a pretext for increasing the frequency of using the term 'Xizang' instead of the globally recognised word 'Tibet.' This strategy aims incorporate' Xizang' into everyday conversations, writings most and, importantly, official documents to reinforce its meaning and usage through mechanisms like the 'mere-exposure effect' or the 'familiarity principle' in social psychology.

Beijing wants the world to know and remember Tibet in a way that serves its interests. It doesn't seem to mind the amount of time the campaign takes. Nevertheless, the multi-layered pattern and medium (political and non-political) of this malicious campaign exhibit Beijing's aim for a lasting and impactful outcome. The level of strategy and the amount of effort invested in attempting to strengthen its propaganda and narrative not only confirm that Tibet continues to remain one of China's 'core' issues but also expose weakness in China's argument of its historical claim to Tibet.

Appeals court muddies plan to send Voice of America staff back to work

03 May 2025, <u>The Washington Post</u>, Scott Nover and Bart Schaneman

The U.S.-funded news service, which has been in limbo as its leaders wage a court fight against the Trump administration, faced legal whiplash over the weekend.

Voice of America staffers were preparing to go back to work this week after winning a court victory against the Trump administration. Now, that seems unlikely.

The broadcaster has been effectively shut down since the Trump administration issued a March executive order dismantling the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees VOA and doles out federal funding to other groups tasked with promoting democracy and countering propaganda overseas, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcasting Networks.

After nearly every affected network sued, U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth granted a preliminary injunction against the White House on April 22, saying that the executive order was arbitrary and probably exceeded the president's authority.

That seemed like good news for VOA. Michael Abramowitz, the agency's director and one of the plaintiffs in litigation against the government, told staff in an email Friday night that USAGM was restoring access to

employee accounts and preparing to bring staff back to the office next week in a "phased return."

But on Saturday, a three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a stay of the April 22 ruling. In a split opinion, the court decided the government was likely to succeed on the merits of its case, and that the district court judge didn't have the authority to block provisions of Trump's executive order regarding workforce decisions and disbursement of grants.

It was not immediately clear whether Voice of America's back-to-work plans have been halted in the wake of that ruling. Agency staff were awaiting guidance from the government as of Saturday afternoon.

"We knew from the start that this would be a long process," said Patsy Widakuswara, Voice of America's White House bureau chief and one of the plaintiffs in the VOA cases. "All that the journalists want is to get back into the newsroom and report to our audiences who rely on us. We are confident in our lawyers and in our case. We will continue to push for our full return to VOA's congressional mandate to tell America's story to the world through factual, balanced and comprehensive reporting."

"Three steps forward one step back," Steve Herman, Voice of America's chief national correspondent, added. "We always knew this would be a long battle."

The decision to stay was made by two Trumpappointed judges, Neomi Rao and Gregory Katsas.

A third judge, Cornelia Pillard, an Obama appointee, said in her dissent that Voice of America and other media organizations fighting Trump's order face "severe and irreparable harm absent injunctive relief."

"The purpose of a stay pending appeal is to maintain the status quo until a case can be fully adjudicated on its merits," she added. "This stay does the opposite, silencing Voice of America for the foreseeable future and eliminating Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcasting Networks' ability to see this case through to the end."

Radio Free Asia has already announced mass layoffs and shuttered many of its services on the continent after losing access to government funding while the court fight proceeds.

The USAGM did not respond to a request for comment, but Kari Lake, senior adviser to the agency, posted on X. She called the stay a "huge victory for President Trump and Article II," referring to the part of the Constitution that outlines executive powers. "Turns out the District Court judge will not be able to manage the agency as he seemed to want to."

As Vance Visits Delhi, India Deepens Ties—But Eyes China Too

03 May 2025, <u>Modern Diplomacy</u>, Amit Ranjan

Can India walk the tightrope between the United States of America (U.S.) and China without losing balance and maintaining strategic autonomy?

Can India walk the tightrope between the United States of America (U.S.) and China without losing balance and maintaining strategic autonomy?

As the U.S. and China lock horns in a bruising tariff war, countries around the world are being forced to choose sides—or at least, pretend they have not chosen a side but are securing their larger interests. Nowhere is this balancing act more delicate, or more consequential, than in the case of India. The ongoing trade war between the U.S. and China, as a result of the American administration's decision to impose a 10% tariff on all countries and reciprocal higher tariffs on countries with which it has the largest trade deficits, has left countries across the world with few choices: negotiate with Washington or fight against the raised tariffs. More than 75 countries have opted for the first and contacted the U.S. to discuss new trade deals with the American President Donald Trump's administration.

China has swiftly pushed back against what it sees as Washington's escalating economic

coercion, particularly Washington's strategy of using tariff exemptions to incentivize countries to reduce trade with Beijing. In a pointed statement published in the Ministry of Commerce's official O&A. spokesperson criticized Washington's decision to impose tariffs under the guise of 'reciprocity' and coerce countries into restricting trade with China in exchange for exemptions, condemning it as a hegemonic ploy and "unilateral bullying" masquerading as fairness in the economic and trade sphere. Framing its response within the language of global fairness and rules-based order, China is positioning itself as a defender of the global trading system, open markets, international trade governance amid rising protectionism from Washington.

Amidst the ongoing trade tensions, India is trying to balance its ties with the U.S. and China. The dilemma with India is due to the political character of trade and tariffs.

New agreements between India and the United States

Amid continued Sino-American tensions, U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance's visit to New Delhi is pivotal in U.S.-India relations. Arriving on April 21 for a four-day visit, Vance met with the Indian Prime Minister reaffirm Narendra Modi to bilateral commitments and discuss a trade roadmap ahead of Donald Trump's expected visit later visit coincides this vear. The with Washington's 90-day pause on heightened tariffs—a window during which several countries, including India, are working to secure more favorable trade terms with the U.S. India, which was previously set to face 27% tariffs and is currently being tariffed at 10%, is now engaged in fast-track negotiations to avoid such penalties.

Modi and Vance reviewed progress in various areas of bilateral cooperation outlined in February this year when the Indian leader met Donald Trump in Washington. It includes "fairness" in their two-way trade and growing their defense partnership. "We are committed to mutually beneficial cooperation, including in trade, technology, defense, energy, and

people-to-people exchanges," Modi wrote on X after meeting Vance.

Various media reports suggest that Delhi is considering tariff cuts on over half of U.S. imports—worth US\$41.8 billion in 2024—as part of the negotiations to pacify Trump. But sectors like agriculture—Washington wants greater access to it, but India fiercely protects it—are still sticking points. The U.S. is India's largest trading partner. In 2024,

U.S. total goods trade with India was an estimated US\$ 129.2 billion. The US export to India amounted to US \$41.8 billion, while the import from India totalled US \$87.4 billion. Hence, the trade deficit for the US with India was US \$45.7 billion. Some media reports say that the US wants to press India to give full market access to online retailers such as Amazon and Walmart. Even Vance said in Jaipur that the U.S. seeks greater access to the Indian market.

Beyond the economic agenda, Vance's visit is also seen as diplomatic groundwork for Trump's visit to India later this year for a summit of the Quad grouping, which consists of the US, India, Japan, and Australia. Modi and Trump enjoy a notably close personal rapport—Modi was among the first leaders to visit Trump following the start of his second term in January this year.

India-China relations

The recent momentum in U.S.-India trade talks carries far-reaching implications not only for bilateral ties but also for the evolving triangular dynamics among India, China, and the United States. For India, deeper engagement with Washington offers strategic and economic benefits, especially amid efforts to diversify supply chains and reduce overreliance on Chinese imports. Yet this alignment risks complicating India's already fraught relationship with Beijing, which remains marked by intermittent border tensions.

At the heart of the border tensions lies the Line of Actual Control (LAC). India and China hold differing perceptions of the LAC's length and alignment. For New Delhi, the LAC stretches 3,488 kilometers, whereas Beijing recognizes only around 2,000

kilometers. These divergent claims have resulted in regular friction along the border, manifesting in increased troop deployments and infrastructure development on both sides. Earlier, in 2017, the Doklam standoff had already exposed the fragility of peace along the borders. The face-off occurred near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction, when Indian troops intervened to stop Chinese road construction in Bhutan. The standoff lasted 73 days and was only resolved through diplomatic engagement, followed by two informal summit meetings between Narendra Modi and the Chinese President Xi Jinping in Wuhan in 2018 and Mamallapuram in 2019. Despite the meeting, bilateral political matters were never settled.

Tensions reached a boiling point again in June 2020, when a violent clash erupted in the Galwan Valley, marking the deadliest confrontation between the two countries in over four decades. The incident claimed the lives of 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers, escalating hostilities significantly hardening public sentiment in both countries. The tensions between the two countries began de-escalating after a brief meeting between Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping at the BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2023 and a talk on the sidelines of the next BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, in 2024. Recent overtures from China—including Xi Jinping's reference to a "Dragon-Elephant

tango" in marking 75 years of diplomatic ties—suggest that Beijing is open to a deeper engagement with New Delhi, even as both countries hedge against external shocks. Xi Jinping called on both sides to " enhance strategic mutual trust, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in various fields, deepen communication and coordination in major international affairs, jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the China-India border promote a sound and steady area, development of bilateral relations, and contribute world peace to and prosperity." Even Narendra Modi, in a podcast with Lex Friedman in March this year, stated, "We want India and China to compete in a healthy and natural way. Competition is not a bad thing, but it should never turn into conflic"t.

Conclusion

While India views the U.S. as a critical strategic partner, as New Delhi increasingly battles Beijing's presence in the Indian Ocean region, Washington, too, sees India as a part of its larger and longer strategy in Asia. But despite this apparent convergence of interests, economic tensions are brewing beneath the surface. The immigration and visa issues and attacks on Indians and Indian-Americans also strain their ties.

As India and China commemorate 75 years of diplomatic ties, their relationship stands at a critical crossroads, marked by what India's former foreign secretary Nirupma Rao describes as deep strategic mistrust, economic interdependence, and military tensions, yet layered with opportunities for calibrated cooperation and regional leadership. India-China, as Rao observes, is evolving a "competitive coexistence" approach that seeks to have India balance deterrence and dialogue with China while preserving its strategic autonomy amid intensifying U.S.-China rivalry.

Taking a side in the ongoing US-China conflict is not favorable to any country, including India. One of the global events that has divided the world in recent times is the Russia-Ukraine war. India's continued ties with Russia, while staying engaged with Ukraine, exhibit India's interest-based, skillful diplomacy of how to walk on a diplomatic tightrope. However, the US-China trade war is more complicated than the Ukraine-Russia war. This requires both rational and relational decision-making.

Letter from Tibet: A breathtaking journey through the tightly guarded spiritual heartland

01 May 2025, CNN World, Steven Jiang

A "no photograph upon landing" announcement punctured the serene silence of the cabin as I gazed at the snow-capped peaks outside our airplane window, a stark reminder

that we were entering a land of profound beauty and immense political sensitivity.

Our Air China flight from Beijing carried not just my cameraman and me, but also about two dozen other foreign journalists, all accompanied by a team of Chinese officials. We were headed to Tibet, a place where access is as guarded as its ancient treasures.

We usually avoid government-organized media tours, wary of the predictable agendas and restrictions. Yet, for Tibet, there is no alternative.

The Tibetan Autonomous Region remains the only place in China where all foreigners – especially foreign journalists – are barred entry without prior authorization.

Our requests to report from the ground have mostly been met with polite, but firm denials - including in January, when a powerful earthquake struck the region, killing more than 120 people.

For centuries, Tibet was mostly independent from China – with the Tibetans possessing ethnic, linguistic and religious identities starkly different from those of the Han Chinese. On a few occasions in history, Tibet fell under the rule of emperors in Beijing, most recently during the Qing dynasty starting in the 18th Century. After the 1912 collapse of Qing, China's last imperial dynasty, Tibet enjoyed de facto self-rule though it was never recognized by China or much of the international community.

The Communist forces, emerging victorious from a bloody Chinese civil war, marched into Tibet in 1950 and formally annexed it into the newly founded People's Republic of China the following year. Beijing has maintained a tight grip on the Himalayan region since the 14th Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule. In the decades since, the Communist Party has swiftly cracked down on any unrest and enforced policies that critics say are intended to weaken the Tibetan identity.

Landing in late March at Gonggar Airport, one of the world's highest at nearly 12,000 feet, just outside the Tibetan capital Lhasa, I realized the thin air was an immediate signal

to slow down as breathing grew labored and a headache began to develop. Stepping into Tibet, long known as "the roof of the world," was an immersion into a different rhythm of life, dictated by the altitude's power.

It had been 16 years since my last visit, a journey cut short by altitude sickness. This time, armed with ibuprofen, I was determined to document the changes that had swept through Tibet – or rather, "Xizang," the new official English name adopted by authorities and indicated in our schedule. The moniker – transliterated from the Chinese name for the region – is a linguistic battleground reflecting deeper geopolitical tensions between Beijing and critics of its Tibet policy.

En route from the gleaming airport terminal to our hotel in Lhasa, the nearly empty freeway and unoccupied high-rise apartments spoke to China's massive investments in developing infrastructure in Tibet. The region is still the country's poorest with the lowest life expectancy.

Imposing portraits of China's top leader Xi Jinping, alongside another picture featuring him and his four predecessors, dotted the highway and adorned almost every public building, an omnipresent emphasis on loyalty to the ruling Communist Party.

This overt display echoed the main themes – ethnic harmony and common prosperity – reinforced on every foreign media trip to Tibet, ours included. The weeklong itinerary was a curated mix: a high-profile press conference (on human rights achievements in Tibet), economic success stories (at, among others, the "world's highest cookware factory"), tourist hotspots (ranging from yak farms to peach blossom fields) and cultural spectacles (culminating in a lavishlv produced outdoor musical retelling the saga of a famous Chinese-Tibetan royal marriage in the 7th Century).

On the streets of Lhasa, banners and posters celebrated the 66th anniversary of the "liberation of a million Tibetans from feudal serfdom" – the official description of pre-Communist-takeover Tibet.

Perhaps due to the controlled access to Tibet and China's extensive high-tech surveillance network, I didn't notice visible heavy security – even around temples and other sensitive sites.

A spiritual destination

The region hasn't seen any major unrest in more than a decade. The last flareup in the early 2010s involved a string of self-immolation incidents that critics called a desperate cry against the Chinese government's ever-tightening grip on Tibetan society.

Since then, Tibet has seen an unprecedented surge in tourism, predominantly from mainland China with visitors flocking to the region for spiritual exploration. A record 64 million people visited Tibet in 2024, according to government records – a more than tenfold increase from the roughly 6 million visitors in 2010.

Although March wasn't peak season for Tibet travel, domestic visitors crowded tourist attractions. Clad in traditional local costumes and posing on Lhasa's bustling centuries-old Barkhor Street, Chinese tourists often seemed to outnumber Tibetan pilgrims, who prostrated themselves on the stone ground and walked clockwise around temples while spinning hand-held prayer wheels – under the curious gaze of selfie stick-wielding onlookers.

If not for the picture-perfect backdrop of golden roofs of Buddhist temples – surrounded by majestic mountains and glistening in abundant sunshine – Lhasa could sometimes look like just another small city in China, especially outside its historical center. Alongside gift shops and supermarkets, Sichuan restaurants dotted almost every street corner – a testament to the popularity of the Chinese cuisine as much as the main origin of Han migration from the neighboring province into Tibet – long said to be a source of tension between the two ethnic groups over perceived economic inequality.

A smattering of foreign tourists had also reappeared following the post-pandemic reopening of Tibet, including a group at our hotel, an InterContinental property. Western brands – from major hotels to fast-food chains – appear to operate in Tibet without notable protests or criticisms of the past.

The undisputed top tourist attraction in Lhasa remains the Potala Palace, the former winter residence of the Dalai Lamas, spiritual leaders of Tibetan Buddhism, until the current holder of that position was forced into exile.

Now living in Dharamsala, India, and revered globally as a Nobel peace laureate, the 14th Dalai Lama is labeled by the Chinese government as a "wolf in monk's robes" and an "anti-China separatist" — despite his declaration that he seeks only genuine autonomy, not independence, for his homeland.

More than two million people visited the Potala last year, paying up to \$27 to tour the sprawling structure. While guides offered details on the architecture and the palace's storied history, the current Dalai Lama was conspicuously absent from the narrative, especially his recent pronouncement that his successor, or reincarnation, must be born "in the free world" – meaning outside China.

When questioned, monks and officials in Tibet parroted Beijing's official party line: "The reincarnation of each Dalai Lama must be approved by the central government and the search must take place within China," Gongga Zhaxi with the Potala Palace administration told me.

"That the reincarnation should be recognized by the central government has been settled for many years," echoed La Ba, a senior monk at Jokhang Temple, the holiest in Tibetan Buddhism.

Their response – in line with Xi's increasing emphasis on "Sinicizing religions" in the country – contrasted with a memorable and unexpected moment from my 2009 trip. At Jokhang Temple, a young monk told me that, as a faithful Tibetan Buddhist, he recognized and respected the Dalai Lama – before being whisked away by officials.

The Tibetan government-in-exile in India dismissed the stance on the Dalai Lama's reincarnation proclaimed by the officially atheist Chinese government, stressing that

"His Holiness is the only legitimate soul who can decide."

The prospect of the process going smoothly seems to have all but vanished – after Beijing forced the disappearance in 1995 of a young boy recognized by the Dalai Lama as the new Panchen Lama, Tibet's second-highest spiritual figure who traditionally plays a leading role in the search for the Dalai Lama's reincarnation.

The boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who has never been seen since, is a college graduate who leads a normal life, according to a Chinese government spokesman in 2020. Despite denunciations by the Dalai Lama and his supporters, Beijing has installed its own Panchen Lama – triggering a three-decade-old dispute that continues to loom large, a sobering reminder of the stakes at play.

High in the Himalayas

Our journey continued via Tibet's only bullet train service, a marvel of engineering designed to withstand the harsh climate of the Tibetan Plateau. As the train sped through tunnels and over bridges at 10,000 feet above sea level, the landscape unfolded in breathtaking panoramas as we sat in carriages equipped with automated oxygen supply systems and special windows resistant to the area's high UV levels.

Yet, this 435-kilometer rail link between Lhasa and the eastern Tibetan city of Nyingchi is more than just a mode of transportation – it is a symbol of China's ambition to integrate this remote region with its distinct culture into the mainstream.

In Nyingchi, we visited a public boarding school – a hot topic as both the Dalai Lama and UN experts have voiced concerns over intensifying assimilation of Tibetans. About a million Tibetan children from rural areas have been reportedly sent to these government-run schools, where the language of instruction is allegedly almost exclusively Chinese, and living conditions are said to be cramped.

"All of our efforts have effectively safeguarded Tibetan children's right to receive a high-quality education," said Xu Zhitao, vice chairman of the Tibet

Autonomous Region, when I asked about the controversy surrounding the schools.

At Bayi District Junior High, most of the 1,200 students were Tibetan – some we talked to said they took an equal number of lessons in their native tongue and Mandarin. A group of giggling Tibetan eighth-graders spoke proudly of their culture and traditions – but when asked about Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, they became hesitant to answer and their voices trailed off. Young or old, people showed they knew the boundaries that could not be crossed.

With growing tensions between Beijing and Washington, China's uneasy relations with its neighbor India – a key US partner – has made Tibet even more strategically important as the two Asian powers jostle for territory and influence in the far-flung area.

Controversial infrastructure projects and even bloody military clashes have marred their disputed border region in recent years.

But a more pressing concern for both Beijing and New Delhi is perhaps the inevitable passing of the 14th Dalai Lama, who turns 90 in July. If a scenario of "dueling Dalai Lamas" were to emerge as a result of China's policy, it could shake the foundation of Tibetan religion and society – potentially unleashing fresh anger or even instability – in the high Himalayas.

Life of Beggar Lama, Tsanlha Ngawang Tsultrim

01 May 2025, Free Tibet, Sonam Topgyal

A biography of a dedicated and beloved Tibetan scholar, who devoted his life to preserving Tibetan language and culture in the face of China's colonialism.

On February 17, 2025, Tibet lost one of its most dedicated scholars with the passing of Tsanlha Ngawang Tsultrim at the age of 96. His life is a testament to the ongoing Tibetan struggle to preserve the Tibetan language and cultural identity in the face of increasing sinicization.

Born in 1930 in the Gyalrong region, Tsanlha Ngawang witnessed dramatic transformations

in Tibetan society throughout his lifetime. After retiring from his professorship at Southwest University in 1997, he dedicated his remaining years to preserving the Tibetan language and documenting the history of the Gyalrong people.

The Beggar Lama, The Life of the Gyalrong Kuzhap is a biography, written in English, that gives important insights into two pressing issues: China's sinicization of Tibet, with a particular emphasis on Tsanlha's home region of Gyalrong, and the Chinese leadership and their attitude towards the Tibetan language and Tibetan issues.

Gyalrong region lies at the easternmost fringe of the Tibetan Plateau, and its Tibetan status is often contested due to its unique political, cultural, and linguistic traditions. The late Professor Tsanlha Ngawang believed that defending Gyalrong's Tibetan status is crucial in safeguarding Tibetan civilization from perishing and for Tibetan cultural survival.

The Gyalrong Tibetans are among the most sinicized and integrated into the wider Chinese community, setting them apart from other Tibetan groups. Unlike other Tibetan areas of what China has named the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region or Prefectures, schools in the Gyalrong region do not include Tibetan language instruction in their curriculum. Tenzin Jinpa, his biographer, recounts in the book that in 2012, he accidentally met a few local Gyalrong Tibetans in the Wenchuan region (accidentally who could speak Tibetan. They told him that only a few others knew how to speak in Tibetan.

He wrote, "Wenchuan county had an 'official Tibetan' population of nearly 20,000, most of whom were Gyalrongwa". This demonstrates that most Gyalrong Tibetans in this area were no different or distinct from the Han in their language, cultural practices, and way of life. Tsanlha believed that the wider Gyalrong region would follow Wenchuan sooner or later in becoming fully sinicized.

China has intensified the teaching of the Chinese language among Tibetan children in recent years, especially through compulsory boarding schools for nursery education. With the education sociologist Dr. Gyal Lo exposing the systemic linguicide and Tibetan rights groups calling those boarding schools colonial, it cannot be misleading to say that the sinicization poses a serious threat to the survival of Tibetan culture, language, and identity.

This explains why, despite his advancing age, Tsanlha didn't step back from teaching and advocating for the Tibetan language classes in the Gyalrong region. He believed the dearth of opportunities for learning the Tibetan language in schools and a general lack of historical awareness would exacerbate the problem significantly.

If these issues are not addressed, the consequences could be tragic and irreversible. Especially after the 2008 Tibetan protests and the waves of self-immolation in Tibet, many Gyalrong Tibetans have chosen to distance themselves from their Tibetan heritage. For instance, Tsanlha is mentioned in the biography, quoting his nephew's reasons for choosing to identify as Han on his identity card: "If I didn't change my nationality on my ID card, I wouldn't be able to find any odd jobs in Chengdu." That left him speechless. Tsanlha's role as a former member of the

Tsanlha's role as a former member of the communist party and leader of a youth league in the early years of Chinese affairs in Tibet (in the early 50s) also reveals him as an eyewitness to the attitude of the Chinese leadership on the Tibetan issue. When Tibetan petitioners in his home county repeatedly appealed for the appointment of Tibetan language teachers, the Director of the Tsanlha County Education Bureau confronted them once, retorting:

"Tibetan is the Dalai Lama's language. Since you are enthusiastic about promoting this language, have you all been loyal to him?" The biographer's accounts also reveal the profound psychological impact of this cultural genocide. Tenzin Jinpa shared personal experiences of growing up in a Handominated town where Tibetans were routinely referred to as "barbarians" (Manzi). Jinpa recalled being educated in an environment that portrayed Tibetan culture as primitive, forcing students to internalize

feelings of shame about their heritage. In his words, he wrote,

"I received zero Tibetan language education and learned little about Tibetan history at school. The only "official history" that we learned about Tibet was that without the CCP as their great savior, Tibetans would have remained in a state of horrendous and "barbaric" serfdom. In this way, I grew up in a highly sinicized environment, and even worse, I internalised these images about Tibetans and felt ashamed to identify myself with this "barbaric" nationality, from time to time."

Despite dedicating his life to the preservation of the Tibetan language, Tsanlha viewed his efforts as having achieved only limited success. He believed that without immediate and significant intervention, the Gyalrong region would soon become completely sinicized, with other Tibetan areas facing the risk of following the same fate.

Tsanlha Ngawang Tsultrim's life represented more than just a scholarly career. It was a profound act of resistance—a continuous effort to keep a culture alive in the face of systematic erasure. His passing marks not just the end of an extraordinary academic life but potentially signals a critical moment in the struggle for Tibetan cultural preservation.

As he often emphasized, the loss of language is more than a linguistic challenge—it is the potential loss of an entire civilization's memory, identity, and soul.

China's Pakistan Strategy: A Calculated Disruption for India

01 May 2025, <u>European Times</u>, Khedroob Thondup

In the grand chessboard of South Asian geopolitics, China's partnership with Pakistan has long served as a key instrument in Beijing's efforts to unsettle India. While official narratives frame the China-Pakistan alliance as one of economic cooperation and regional stability, the underlying strategy suggests a deliberate attempt to check India's

rise through military, economic, and diplomatic maneuvering.

China's growing influence in Pakistan is deeply intertwined with its own global ambitions. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, offers China direct access to the Arabian Sea, bypassing potentially vulnerable trade routes. For Pakistan, these investments provide critical infrastructure, yet they also cement a dependency that Beijing can leverage to keep Islamabad firmly in its orbit.

For India, the expansion of Chinese control over Pakistani infrastructure—especially in regions bordering India—creates security concerns. CPEC runs through areas that India claims as its own, fueling tensions over territorial sovereignty and reinforcing friction between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Beyond economic investments, China and Pakistan maintain robust military ties. Beijing has supplied Islamabad with advanced weaponry, including fighter jets, missile systems, and naval assets, ensuring that Pakistan remains a formidable adversary to military India. Joint exercises intelligence-sharing agreements further cement this defense partnership, forcing New Delhi to expend significant resources monitoring threats from both its northern and western borders.

This dual-front challenge diverts India's strategic focus, preventing it from dedicating full attention to its aspirations as a global power. The mere possibility of coordinated military operations between China and Pakistan serves as a potent deterrent that keeps Indian defense planners perpetually on high alert.

China's diplomatic backing of Pakistan—especially on sensitive issues such as Kashmir—adds another layer to this strategy. Beijing has repeatedly blocked India's efforts to designate Pakistan-based militants as global terrorists in the United Nations, frustrating New Delhi's counterterrorism initiatives. Additionally, China's opposition to India's bids for leadership roles in international organizations ensures that India

remains entangled in regional disputes rather than focusing on broader global ambitions.

While China's alliance with Pakistan serves multiple strategic objectives, one of its primary functions is to keep India constantly engaged in subcontinental conflicts. By ensuring that New Delhi must continuously address security concerns along its borders, Beijing delays India's efforts to strengthen ties with other global powers or consolidate influence in Asia-Pacific affairs.

is adapting. Strengthened Yet. India diplomatic ties with the U.S., Japan, and Australia, along with growing domestic military capabilities, suggest that New Delhi is actively working to counteract Beijing's tactics. While China's Pakistan strategy may continue to unsettle India, the long-term trajectory will depend on how New Delhi leverages its own alliances and economic resilience to turn this geopolitical challenge into an opportunity for greater strategic positioning.

China parsimonious in opening Tibet for Indian pilgrims?

01 May 2025, <u>Tibetan Review</u>

China is to begin letting in Indian pilgrims to receive Mt Everest and lake Mansarovar blessings in eastern Tibet's Ngari Prefecture from Jan 30 for those joining the government-organized trip after a gap of some five years. However, the pilgrimage still remains closed to those who may wish to travel through tour operators in Nepal, according to the *kathmandupost.com* May 1.

Besides, only 250 pilgrims in batches of 50 will be able to undertake the government-organized trip this year. Before 2020, this programme facilitated approximately 1,000 to 1,500 pilgrims, according to Indian media reports. For example, in 2019, a total of 1,346 pilgrims took part —1,005 via Lipulekh in Uttarakhand state and 341 via Nathu La in Sikkim, according to the *financialexpress.com* Feb 23, 2025.

In addition to the two government-organized routes from India, far higher number of

Indians used to undertake the pilgrimage from Nepal. In 2019, the number was nearly 30,000, according to the *kathmandupost.com* Jan 18, 2025.

However, despite the reopening of Hilsa border point on Apr 30 last year, the closure of the Kailash-Manasarovar pilgrimage route has continued to leave the Hilsa area eerily quiet for the past five years, said the *kathmandupost.com* report May 1.

Since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic, China shut down access to this sacred site, halting what used to be an annual influx of nearly 15,000 pilgrims, mostly Indians, from May to October, the report said.

The main factor which contributed to this shut down has been the Galwan Valley clashes between Indian and Chinese border troops in 2020, which led to a freeze in bilateral ties.

The Chinese government traditionally opens this Tibet pilgrimage route from April to September each year. And it is said that when Tibet was free, Indians did not need visas to undertake the Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage.

The route through Hilsa was stated to have gained popularity after the 2015 earthquake, which led to the closure of the Tatopani dry port border. In fact, since 2006, Indian pilgrims had increasingly favoured the Hilsa route for their spiritual journey. The continued closure of this pilgrimage route has had a profound economic impact on western Nepal, particularly the Humla district, the report said.

Local government representatives have said the tourism industry in the district had collapsed due to the restriction on Kailash-Mansarovar visit. "Although China reopened the Hilsa border, it still hasn't allowed access to Manasarovar. Hotels are empty, local goods have no market, and investments in tourism are at risk," Shiva Raj Sharma, chief of the District Coordination Committee in Humla, has said.

Airport records from Humla are stated to show that prior to 2020, airlines like Tara, Sita and Summit operated up to 40 flights daily between Nepalgunj and Simikot to transport pilgrims. Chief District Officer Narayan Pandey has stressed that reopening the pilgrimage route is crucial to revitalizing Karnali Province's tourism.

The Kailash-Mansarovar sites are sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and the followers of Tibet's pre-Buddhist religion Bon.

Even locals with permit to work across the border in Tibet are stated to be subjected to tight restrictions. While local labourers continue to use Hilsa to reach the Tibetan town of Taklakot for work, even that is limited, the report said.

Chief District Officer Narayan Pandey has said that about 7,000 people have received temporary permits to work across the border. However, returnees are currently only allowed to bring back one sack of goods.