

FOUNDATION FOR  
**Non-violent  
Alternatives**

An Initiative for Developing Peace Studies

**More Than a Ceremony:  
Why India's Historic Tenshug is a Geopolitical Signal**

- Tenzing Damdul (Senior Researcher, FNVA)



*Indian delegates offering Tenshug (Life-Long Prayer) to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dharamshala, March, 2026.  
Courtesy Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Choejor.*

On 11th March 2026, a historic event took place in Dharamshala – the exile political seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the home of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama - where India and Tibet reaffirmed their civilizational ties in the 21st century. Led by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause – India national convenor, Shri Rinchin Khandu Khrimyey, Indian Tibet Support Groups offered Tenshug (Long-life prayer offering) to the Dalai Lama. There were more than 500 Indian delegates representing all Indian states, who were in attendance.

This event is seen more as a ceremony than a ceremony, as stated by the numerous participants of the Tenshug. Bringing shift to the static status quo rudder between India, Tibet and China.

The Tenshug was subsequently followed by the significant 8th All India Tibet Support Groups Conference Meeting – a Triennial Indian Tibet support groups meeting convened by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause – India and facilitated by the India Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO).

**India's Tenshug more than a ceremony:**

Tenshug, a long-life payer offering, is practised throughout Tibet and the Buddhist world. In India we are able to witness this frequently of late with several organisations and committees initiating this towards the long life of the Dalai Lama, who celebrated his 90th birthday last year.

A Tenshug, in more modern terms, can be seen as a collective petition for a spiritual leader to remain in this world, guiding sentient beings.



Hence, the Indian Tibet Support Groups offering this prayer is seen to extend beyond a ceremony because:

### 1. Assertion of Civilizational ties between India and Tibet:

- India and Tibet, as two cultural civilisations, share a unique relationship set up by geography, leading to various significant exchanges that shaped them, with the Guru-Shishya relation highlighted through this offering.
- Notable is how the Tibetan written script finds its origins in India. Likewise, Tibet embraced Buddhism and preserved the ancient Indian wisdom that flourished in Nalanda and other such important sites of learning then.
- The Indian TSGs presented to the Dalai Lama, **“The Karuna Ratna”**, symbolising his message of compassion and world peace.



*Senior members of Indian delegates presenting the Dalai Lama with ‘The Karuna Ratna’, Dharamshala, March, 2026.  
Courtesy Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Choejor.*

### 2. Geopolitical Signalling:

- The offering, which was captured by media from around the world, showcased India’s grassroots support to Tibet and particularly the Dalai Lama and its institution here.
- The delegates asserted the legitimacy of Tibet and its identity, which is under threat from Beijing’s policy on Tibet.
- In attendance was Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) senior leader Indresh Kumar, who is the patron of the Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch (BTSM). He, along with the Sarsanghchhak of RSS Mohan Bhagwat, was among the first key leaders to meet the Dalai Lama post covid in Dharamshala, 2021.

### 3. Soft power of the Himalayas:

- Among the Indian Support Groups in attendance from all over India, one group that stood out was the Himalayan states which share a strong bond with Tibet and Tibetans. The Chief Ministers of both Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, Prem Singh Tamang and Pema Khandu, respectively, supported this initiative unconditionally.
- Furthermore, amidst growing tensions, shifts and pivoting in the Himalayas between India and China, the solidarity shown by this community highlights how they are united for Tibet.

#### 4. The Dalai Lama's actions:

- A unique moment captured during Tenshug, was the Dalai Lama waving the Indian national tri-coloured flag.
- This image spotlighted the deep ties that India and Tibet share with the Dalai Lama, who has now lived in India for more than 60 years, calling it his home often.



*The Dalai Lama waving the Indian National Flag during the historic Tenshug, Dharamshala, March, 2026. Courtesy Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Choejor.*

#### **The Core-Group for Tibetan Cause – India:**

The genesis of the Indian Tibet Support Groups can be traced to the All India Tibet Convention held in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 30th and 31st May, 1959 and has since grown. This growth led to the formation of the All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet in the 1970's. All of which eventually led to the establishment of the Core Group for Tibetan Cause - India in 2002 during the 1st Asian Tibet Support Groups Conference held in Rewari, India. During its establishment, Dr N.K. Trikha was nominated as its national Convenor, a post he served till 2015. The following were also nominated as Co-Convenors during the inaugural conference.

- 1) Vijay Kranti, Delhi
- 2) Anand Kumar, Delhi
- 3) P.K. Devaiah, Bylakuppe (South)
- 4) Arvind Nikose, Wardha (West)
- 5) Surendra Kumar, Bihar (East)
- 6) Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri, Himachal (North)

This group coordinates with the Tibet Supporters throughout India and, along with the India Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO), initiates awareness among young Indians, mobilises support and leads advocacy programs for Tibet. They are the apex body when it comes to the Indian Tibet support groups in India, and they work closely with grassroots organisations in India supporting Tibet.

Among the key initiatives they hold is the triennial All India Tibet Support Groups Conference (AITSGC). This conference reviews past activities and outlines initiatives for future events throughout India for Tibet. They furthermore hold annual meetings among the Convenors and Co-convenors.



The current national convenor is Rinchin Khandu Khrimy, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Arunachal Pradesh, who has been the convenor since 2015. He has led and convened 4 such All India Tibet Support Groups Conferences:

- 1) 5th AITSGC, held in Guwahati, 2015
- 2) 6th AITSGC, held in Dharmshala, 2019
- 3) 7th AITSGC, held in New Delhi, 2022
- 4) 8th AITSGC to be held in Dharamshala, 2026

The 8th AITSGC was held immediately after the historic Tenshug at Dharamshala from 12th to 13th March, 2026.

### **The 8th All India Tibet Support Groups Conference:**

This meeting, as mentioned earlier, is convened by the CGTC-I and facilitated by the India Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO) and took place in the main auditorium of the Tibetan Performing Institute of Arts (TIPA). More than 300 delegates, including presidents and members of different Indian Tibetan Support Groups, took part in it.

The conference had Sikyong Penpa Tsering, his cabinet and the speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile addressing the conference, where they emphasised India's key role in sustaining the Tibetan movement. It further had a plenary session where India's role in the Sino-Tibet conflict was deliberated.

The president and representatives of the Indian Tibet Support Groups then proceeded towards sharing their triennial presentation, all of which culminated towards the formulation and eventual declaration of the joint statement of the 8th AITSGC. This declaration consists of 9 key resolutions and can be read in its entirety from this [link](#).

### **The path ahead:**

With Tibet being occupied by the Communist Party-led China from the 1950's, it was India that offered refuge to Tibetans during this plight. Even to this day, it hosts a large number of Tibetans, its exile government, institutions and the Dalai Lama, etc.

Key points proposed and set to be taken forward after 3 significant days of engagement include:

#### *1. India's Support to Tibet and advocacy at the grassroots and decision-making level:*

- Push for the history of Tibet, particularly how it was occupied by China in the National Council for Educational Research Training (NCERT) textbooks that students in India study growing up.
- Bringing in more Indian youths to the Indian Tibet Support Groups and increasing awareness programs on Tibet in Schools and Colleges throughout India.

#### *2. Resumption of Sino-Tibetan Dialogue:*

- Writing letters and lobbying with Indian political leaders advocating towards the resumption of Sino-Tibetan Dialogue. This is one of the key mechanisms in resolving the Tibet-China conflict.

### 3. Discussion on the issue of Tibet:

- The Indian Tibet Support Groups will continue and intensify its engagement on the discussion of the issue of Tibet in India with various initiatives at the grassroots levels.
- Coordination with the Core Group for Tibet Cause - India and to have these initiatives covered not only through magazines like the “Tibbat Desh” (Hindi magazine on Tibet) but on social media and other digital platforms as well.

### 4. Reincarnation of the Dalai Lama:

- India should take a stand on reincarnation and can draw inspiration from USA and other countries that have passed acts and resolutions on the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation.
- The institution of the Dalai Lama is important and to bring more awareness of this to the Indian public, especially on the fact that China has no major role in it.
- The Indian Tibet Support Groups will initiate strong protests against China if they interfere in the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.



Visuals from the 8th All India Tibet Support Groups Conference, Dharamshala, March, 2026.  
Courtesy Central Tibetan Administration.

### 5. Thank you, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for the celebration:

- This campaign was raised by the Himalayan Committee for Action on Tibet (HIMCAT) and support by the entire delegation. It is the 6th resolution of the 8th AITSGC declaration.
- Similarly in light of the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, they will continue to urge the Indian Government to award the Dalai Lama with India’s highest award, the “**Bharat Ratna**”.

The Tenshug on 11th March, followed by the 8th AITSGC on 12th and 13th March, symbolised a culmination of this long-shared connection between India and Tibet. Rinchin Khandu Khriemey stated:

*“The message of this Tenshug, that the people of India are with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama will be heard by China”.*

